

On the 1st July 1944, seventeen aircraft of 10 Squadron departed from RAF Melbourne on an operation to bomb the V-1 flying bomb site at St. Martin L'Hortier in France. Halifax MZ584 known as 'V for Victory' was piloted by Ray Rosen. The rest of the crew were:

Flight Engineer, Daniel Daley, 1890562, aged 20.

Air Gunner, Arthur Stanley Fordham, 1866501, aged 19.

Air Bomber, Jack Cyril Lelliott, 151978, aged 35.

Wireless Operator/Air Gunner, Gordon Seymour Lind, 1520883, aged 21.

Navigator, Henry Charles Williamson-Rattray, 646518.

Rear Gunner, Andrew McKinnon, survived and evaded.

The aircraft took off at 15.14 and was shot down and crashed near the hamlet of La Montagne. The crew are buried at Poix-De-Picardie Churchyard.

Sgt. Andrew McKinnon, the rear gunner survived, and his statement follows:

'As the aircraft was crossing the coastal belt, it was engaged by accurately predicted flak. One shell burst below the port inner engine, causing it to stop, and another close to the nose, blowing a large hole in the forward compartment. The air bomber was wounded, and the radio set was hit. A third shell burst near the tail unit, peppering the rear turret and the entrance door.

The mid-upper gunner was killed in his turret, and the pilot injured in the foot. The controls were apparently undamaged except for the rudder which the pilot said was stiff, although he may not have been able to move it because of this wounded foot. The pilot gave us the order to put on parachutes and asked us if we were willing to carry on to bomb the target. We agreed to go on, and he continued flying in a gentle weave to dodge the flak. About three minutes later the port engine caught fire. The flight engineer tried in vain to put the fire out. The pilot carried on and about a minute later the target was bombed.

After bombing, the mainstream of bombers turned in one direction, but 'V for Victory' could not do so and had to turn in the other. It was again hit, being caught in a heavy barrage which blew off the tip of the starboard wing. The damage affected the trim of the aircraft somewhat and the Halifax began shuddering violently.

About this time, I spotted a twin-bodied fighter which opened fire but scored no hits. I got in a burst of fire and the fighter disappeared into cloud below. Then I worked to clear two of my guns which had jammed when the feed mechanism was hit by flak.

By this time the fire had increased, and the shuddering continued, so the pilot gave us the order to abandon aircraft. I already had my 'chute on and I rotated my turret, baling out direct from it. Just before I went, I heard the flight engineer say the rear door was jammed. The height was about 12,000 feet. Almost immediately after I left the whole of the port wing dropped off and then there was an explosion as if a tank had blown up.

The aircraft went down in a fluttering spin and I saw a parachute sticking to the tail plane. On the way down, I was fired at from the ground, but I was not hit. I saw the aircraft on the ground. Four bodies were found in the wreckage and were buried by the Germans. The pilot's body was about 300 yards away.'

Sgt. Andrew McKinnon's statement regarding his evasion:

'I was a member of a crew of a Halifax aircraft which took off from Melbourne about 1420 hrs on 1 Jul 44.

I crash landed in open country near NEUFCHATEL (N.W. EUROPE 1: 250,000, Sheet 4, M 44) about 160 hrs. Two Frenchmen, who were members of the Resistance, had seen me bale out, and when I landed in a field, they were waiting for me. One of these men took me to his home in NESLE MODENG (M 5141) where I was given food and civilian clothes. He then sent me to stay with another man who sheltered me until Allied troops arrived on 1 Sep. I had injured myself baling out but when I was fit enough, I joined the local resistance group. I helped them to place charges on railway lines and other lines of communication.

I returned to the U.K. on 4 Sep and was then sent to Wroughton Hospital. I was discharged on 4 Oct.'

Andrew was awarded the DFM on 27 March 1945.

A memorial for the crew is located at [Halifax MZ584 - Nesle-Hodeng le 1 Juillet 1944 | Aérostèles \(aerosteles.net\)](http://Halifax MZ584 - Nesle-Hodeng le 1 Juillet 1944 | Aérostèles (aerosteles.net))