

Sgt. Dennis Alford 1430574 RAFVR

Dennis was the son of Sidney and Ethel Lilian Alford of Longlevens, Gloucester. Dennis was Navigator on Wellington Z1466 when the plane was shot down; he was 20 years old. All five crew were killed, (Flt. Sgt. Harold Heath, Flt. Sgt. Chipman Fraser RCAF, Sgt. Dennis Alford, Sgt. Herbert Hill, Sgt. Charles Hagan).

The five young airmen who formed the crew of Z1466 had teamed-up at No 26 OTU where they received the last part of their training, between June and August 1942. Having joined 142 Squadron on 15 August 1942, the mission to Karlsruhe was their 5th operational flight together. After being briefed about their target, Z1466 took off from RAF Grimsby at 2244 hours on the night of 2 September 1942. Eight aircraft of 142 Squadron, all carrying a bomb load of one 1000 lb and three 500 lb bombs, set course to Karlsruhe. The force of bombers was attacked by German night-fighters over Holland.



Feldwebel Heinz Oloff, who shot down Wellington Z1466. Bron: Marcel Hogenthuis.

Wellington Z1466 was attacked by Messerschmitt Bf110 flown by Feldwebel Heinz Oloff and his radio operator Obergefreiter Josef Schaffer of 3./Nachtjagdeschwader 1. They had taken off from air base Venlo to prey on the allied bombers who were heading for Karlsruhe. At 0147 hours Oloff attacked and moments later Z1466 exploded in mid-air. The explosion must have been caused by the bomb load of the Wellington. The burning remnants of the plane came down in a field near the Lilbosch monastery in the village of Echt, in the province of Limburg in the Netherlands, close to both the German and Belgian border. It was Oloff's second combat victory.

The next day, the monks of the monastery and inhabitants of the village collected the pieces of wreckage. Amongst the debris were various body parts of the crew members. The bodies were recovered by the monks and inhabitants of the village and taken to Venlo where they were initially buried in a temporary military cemetery.

After the war the crew was re-buried on 28 October 1947 at Mook Cemetery and finally, on 1 December 1947, at the Jonkerbos British War Cemetery in Nijmegen. The crash site is marked by a small memorial. It consists of a wooden pole with a steel plaque and the letter 'V' on top. The plaque mentions the date of the crash and the names of the five airmen who were killed in the crash.



Dennis is remembered on Beacon Insurance Company Roll of Honour, located at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire and also on St Andrew's Church memorial Barnt Green, Worcestershire.

Sgt Dennis Alford is commemorated on Panel 1.

Sources

www.tracesofwar.com
www.wartimeheritage.com
<https://www.british-genealogy.com>

Pictures

www.tracesofwar.com
www.wartimeheritage.com
www.rememberthefallen.co.uk