



# THE BELGIANS REMEMBER THEM

*PATRIOTIC ASSOCIATION*

*NEWSLETTER N° 07*

*ISSUE: 2022 - 4*



## **SUPPORT THE ASSOCIATION, JOIN US!**

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you help us achieve our objectives**

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## EDITORIAL



Dear friends,

The year 2022 draws to an end in neither glory nor fireworks except for the bombs which explode at the borders of Europe and the scandals that arise here and there. On the other hand, we thought from the first days of January that the health crisis that had so painfully impacted us was slowly abating and would allow people to return to normal life, after months of confinement and restrictions of all kinds.

Nothing in particular alerted us to the financial crisis that would hit us by seriously burdening everyone's finances. Moreover, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia is serving only to dangerously escalate the international situation. Are peace and posterity to be banished from our vocabulary in the coming months? Will we be condemned to no longer see Christmas lights light up our children and grandchildren's eyes?

It seems to me that these are existential questions that most of us are asking ourselves and to which we will be forced to provide an answer in the short term. This will probably not be easy in these times when certainties are shaken up and our previous achievements seem to be useless, according to some. We live in a time when multinationals and others make huge profits while hospitals are forced to refuse care to people for lack of means and children wander among the ruins generated by the hatred and thirst for power of their elders who have forgotten that, at one time, they too were fragile children...

As an individual who dedicates his energy to passing on to younger generations the example of those who have chosen to fight totalitarianism, xenophobia and the hatred of others, I constantly think back to the universal adage «Blessed are the instruments of Peace, for they will see the Light... ». From time to time, I stop to look at the trees, telling myself that, if I took the time to look at them even longer, I would eventually see them grow, inexorably, despite what disasters humans can dream up. This seems ridiculous as reasoning, but it helps me to understand the legitimate questioning of those younger than me and this thought further convinces me of the need to talk to them about the importance of keeping in oneself the desire for peace by respecting each other, and that hope is part of intrinsic human nature. If the young airmen had not had the hope of returning from their missions, they would never have boarded their planes, and if resistance fighters had not had that same hope, we would all currently be Nazis.

Despite the uncertainties mentioned above, we must pursue our mission and, this year again, focus on our aim of preserving the memory of our forefathers who, eight decades ago, took up arms to help us fight those whose intention it had been to reduce us to slavery.

The work done by the association in 2022 has proven to be useful and effective in many ways. Our struggle against the existence of the monument to Latvian SS men that was erected in Zedelgem has borne fruit because, since the beginning of the year that is now ending, it has been dismantled and stored out of public view. This will not prevent us from remaining vigilant and on our guard to ensure that this monument of shame and dishonour does not reappear in another place without everyone's knowledge.

Searches on our database «The Belgians Remember Them» continue internationally. Descendants of fallen airmen are full of praise for the efforts made to continually update the site. They write to us to congratulate us for mentioning their Hero and thereby honouring his Memory. Others report errors in the information we have published. We check all the information sent to us and make the necessary corrections. This monitoring is important if this database is to continue to be a valid and reliable reference and research tool.

Many readers contact us asking for more information about a family member who was the victim of a plane crash during WW2. The historical investigation that we then conduct very often leads to new revelations or provides additional information giving us the opportunity to develop the subject mentioned in greater detail. The most recent case relates to the Halifax that crashed in Loupigne on December 18, 1942, about which the Upper turret-Gunner's son had contacted us. We set out this story below.

This is how we see and continue our work of remembrance. This approach seems to be bearing fruit and leads to recognition from many people whose family members were involved in the fight against Nazism, both in Europe and in Belgium.

Our association is now recognized by the highest national and international authorities. This strengthens our resolve to continue to positively develop this mission in which we have decided to participate. At the end of the ceremonies commemorating the Armistice of 1918 in Brussels, I had the honour of being introduced to His Majesty the King. The Sovereign, on learning of the work done by the association, thanked me for the efforts made and encouraged me to continue the work of Remembrance by emphasizing its great importance.

Motivated, therefore, by this encouragement I am preparing to deal with the objectives envisaged for the year 2023. In this spirit, I express the hope that those who read these lines will begin the new year with courage, in the certainty that whatever they plan will be realized and that it will not be done in vain. I also hope that those who, today, have a failing constitution will regain strength, vigour and good health!

Happy New Year's Eve!

Wilfred Burie, President

***The English translation was done by Brian Simpson, Antrim-NI, whom I thank***

## **PROGRAMME FOR 2023**

### **General Assembly 2023**

The 2023 General Assembly will be held in the former Rebecq railway station on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 7pm.

Details will be communicated in due course.

### **Commemoration of the end of the Second World War**

We will be present at the commemoration that will take place at the Congressional Column, in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on May 8, 2023

### **Solemn Memorial Ceremony 2023**

We will commemorate the sacrifice of Royal Air Force airmen and Resistance fighters who hid survivors of RAF plane crashes on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. sharp. It will take place in the presence of the Representative of His Majesty the King. A Royal Military Band and Guard of Honour is planned and Rebecq Elementary School pupils will play an active part in the celebration ceremony.

Provided that all the conditions are met (acceptance of authorizations and favourable weather), a flypast of the last Lancaster bomber based in Coningsby will take place over the site of the ceremony.

Details of the event will be communicated in due course.

### **Belgian Cenotaph Parade 2023**

We will participate in the tribute paid by Belgians that will take place in front of the Cenotaph in London on July 15, 2023.



## MISCELLANEOUS ENGAGEMENTS

**Nieuwpoort - 4 August 2022:**

***National tribute to King Albert I and the Heroes of the Yser***

Our association was represented by President Wilfred Burie who laid a wreath in memory of those who, during the First World War, sacrificed their lives for Belgium.



**Oud-Stuivekenskerke (Diksmuide) - 24 August 2022:**

***Remembrance Ceremony at the Onze-Lieve-Vrouwehoekje Memorial***

President Wilfred Burie represented the association at the Remembrance Ceremony held in Onze-Lieve-Vrouwehoekje, near Diksmuide, where soldiers who fought on this battlefield during the 14/18 war were honoured. Many people were killed there.





## Commemoration of the Armistice in Rebecq - 7 November 2022

This year, due to difficulties in accessing the Rebecq Memorial monument due to road works, we cancelled the memorial ceremony that we usually hold a week before November 11. This did not prevent the Rebecquois from remembering the sacrifice made by the soldiers who, during the two world wars of the twentieth century, lost their lives fighting for our Freedom and our Democracy.

We include in this group of Heroes all the airmen of the Royal Air Force and Royal Air Forces of the Commonwealth killed in action in Belgium between 1940 and 1945 and, in particular, those who were part of 550 Squadron RAF North Killingholme.

Let us not forget to add to these the members of the Resistance who fought in the shadows, Belgians and Soviets, who, at the risk of their lives, did not hesitate to confront the enemy to help hide the survivors of RAF plane crashes from the occupying force.

**May they rest in peace!**

**WE REMEMBER THEM!**



# COMMEMORATION OF THE ARMISTICE OF NOVEMBER 1918 AND CENTENARY OF THE BURIAL OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER IN BRUSSELS ON 11/11/1922

## *History of the Unknown Soldier*

On November 11, 1920, France and England, which each erected a monument to remember the heroes who died for their country, inaugurated the commemoration of the Unknown Soldier. Following the example of these two nations, Belgium decided to do the same at the Congress Column.

Having taken this decision, the unknown soldier whose body would lie at the foot of the Congress Column had to be chosen. This choice took place at Bruges railway station on 10 November 1922, in the first-class waiting room transformed into a chapel of rest. In five coffins were the bodies of five soldiers who had fought in Liège, Namur, Antwerp, on the Yser front and during the Battle of Liberation in 1918. Chosen at random, five graves of unidentified Belgian soldiers who had fought in these five battles had been opened.

The honour of being designated the unknown soldier fell to a blind man Raymond Haesebroeck. Once this mutilated hero had been chosen from the five coffins in a moving ceremony, the population of Bruges was allowed to parade in front of the hearses on the evening of 10 November.



*Raymond Haesebroeck will designate the one who will become the «Unknown Soldier»*

The next day, the other four would be re-interred in Bruges cemetery, while the body of Haesebroeck was put on a train to the Gare du Nord, in Brussels.

The body was then transferred by gun carriage to the Congress Column. This funeral procession was graced by the presence of King Albert and Prince Leopold, both wearing military headgear, and by Allied special services personnel, relatives of fallen and unidentified Belgian soldiers and armed detachments of the American, French and British armies. Along the route, veterans, prisoners and deportees formed a guard of honour on the right with the army on the left. At the Place du Congrès, the Queen, Princess Marie-José, Cardinal Mercier, generals and war disabled awaited the arrival of the procession.



*The coffin has descended to the grave while those present are standing*



When the procession arrived, eight war invalids, four of whom had lost their right arm and four others their left arm, were among those responsible for transporting and depositing the coffin in front of what would be the tomb of the Unknown Soldier where it would be honoured by the Nation.



At 11:25 a.m. a cannon shot signalled the lowering of the body into the tomb and the covering of the tomb was sealed with the inscription: «Here lies an unknown soldier who died for his country- 1914-1918 - Hier rust een onbekende soldaat voor't Vaderland gesneuveld »

### ***One hundred years on ...***

On November 11, Eric Verly and I represented the association «The Belgians Remember Them» at the national commemoration at the Congress Column in Brussels.

After reviewing the troops present, the King took his place in the gallery reserved for the distinguished guests. Admiral e.r. Jacques Rosiers, President of Servio then delivered his speech in which he recalled the importance of commemorating the Armistice and the soldiers who sacrificed their lives during the various conflicts that punctuated the twentieth century so that their country regained its independence and democracy prevailed in the world.

Two doves were then released by two young teenagers and at this moment, in complete silence, two buglers played «Cessez les Combats», taken up by the buglers of the Royal Band of Guides formed up on the ground at the back of the stage.







The King then laid a wreath and observed a minute of silence. The sounding of the «Last Post» preceded the relighting of the flame of remembrance.





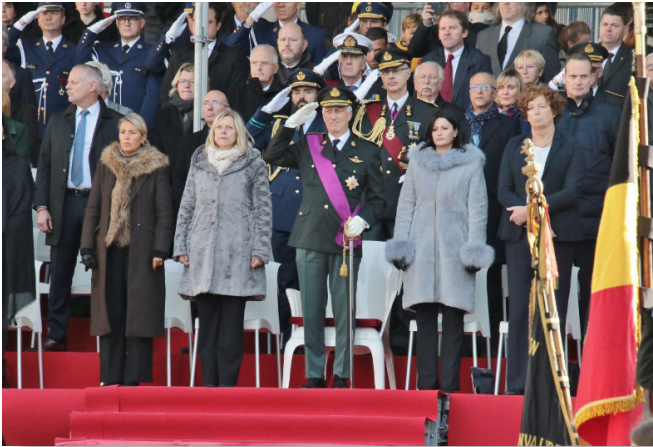
Five earth-removal ceremonies took place in the week preceding November 11, 2022 in five Belgian military cemeteries: Lier, Adegem, Liège, Namur and Keiem from where the five unknown soldiers had been exhumed in 1922.



In each cemetery, an urn was filled by young children with soil removed from the grave of an unknown soldier. The urns were transported to Bruges where a ceremony commemorating that of 1922 was held. A single urn was then filled with the earth from the five cemeteries. Brought to Brussels the urn was placed on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier where, in readiness, the medals awarded to him in 1922 had been placed. A descendant of Private Raymond Haesebroeck attended this memorial ceremony.



As he left, the King spoke for a few moments with the Presidents of national associations, including Wilfred Burie whom he congratulated on the work of Remembrance accomplished to date and encouraged him to continue this noble mission.





## **THE DRAMATIC EPIC ACCOUNT OF HALIFAX NR233-NP-J SHOT DOWN OVER LOUPOIGNE ON DECEMBER 18, 1944**

We recently received a letter from Graham Wray, a Canadian citizen, informing us that the plane which his father was the Mid-Upper Gunner during the war had crashed, according to the database «The Belgians Remember Them», in Braibant, in the Province of Namur. He went on to report that, according to the information he had from his father, the Halifax registered NR233 would have crashed in the Loupaigne region, Walloon Brabant.

When the related web pages were created, the information I found at that time referred to either Braibant or Brabant. There was confusion somewhere, but where? The village of Loupaigne being located in the area of Genappe, I consulted Anne Davin, the president of the local history circle and she quickly confirmed to me that this plane did crash in Loupaigne. She also sent me the account of a key witness, Jean Mommens who had taken refuge at the Havoy farm, located outside the village of Loupaigne. During the occupation, Jean Mommens sought to avoid the Compulsory Labour decree issued by the Germans. Originally from Melsbroek in the Brussels region, he had been able to hide on this farm, owned by the Dewulf family, where, more than three months after the liberation of the country, he was still working as an agricultural employee.

Half a century after the event, in 1994, he had provided members of the Genappe history circle with the story that we set out below:

In 1994, 50 years after the event, he had given his oral testimony which had been taken by members of the Genappe Historical association. Here is his story:

«The weather was still mild and slightly foggy. Between 6:30 a.m. and 7 o'clock, while cleaning a stable, I saw a gleam of light under the door leading to the Fonten meadow. As I looked up, astonished, I suddenly saw a huge plane on fire hovering overhead, its engines stopped and level with the roofs of the stables between the main building and the barn.

I heard the deafening sound of the aircraft, which came down in Hautain meadow, followed a few seconds later by a crash and an intense glow. The plane had touched down a hundred meters from the farm, had turned to the left and, a hundred meters further along, had struck the embankment of the road leading to Hautain and finally came to rest, half-broken up, on its right side in a nearby field.

When we got to within some tens of meters of the wreckage, Henri and I saw two men running down the embankment and hiding on the ground in the meadow feeling their bodies and shouting «We still alive!» (we are alive). A third, his clothes in tatters, joined them and crawled towards us. One of them waved at us by raising four fingers and pointing to the plane. Henri (farm worker) and I went up the field and near the on-fire wreckage, with the fire growing worse, we found a man moaning (he was the rear gunner). With great difficulty, we extricated him from the blaze. Henri saw yet another man trapped under the fuselage and yet another lying motionless in a turret. We tried in vain to reach them, but the intensity of the fire and the explosion of ammunition forced us to withdraw. We then took the two injured to the farm where a nurse, whose name I do not know, gave them first aid while Mrs. Dewulf phoned for Dr. Minne. Shortly after American Military Red Cross from Nivelles airfield arrived as did firefighters.

The survivors were greatly relieved when they learned that they had crashed in Belgium and in the liberated part of the country.

When they had recovered a little recovered from their experience, they told us that they had participated in the bombing of the city of Ulm, that their crew consisted of seven men, that their plane was a four-engine Halifax of the R.C.A.F., that it was very cold at altitude, -18 °, that they were hit by the DCA while bombing Ulm, that their commander was killed and the aircraft navigation system destroyed. One of the engines caught fire, followed shortly by a second, causing the remaining two to overheat. Losing altitude, they were trying to reach the West. They had no idea of their height and were surprised when they hit the ground. The pilot and co-pilot were twin brothers, young Canadians of French origin, which made conversation very easy.

This report shows some errors regarding the mission of the crew and some of the surviving airmen. This is quite understandable given that the «testimony» of the witness was made about fifty years after the

crash and that, despite everything, things gradually fade from memory. For example, the objective of the mission was Duisburg and not Ulm, for example. The crew members were all English-speaking, but perhaps one of them knew French.

Following this, a member of the Genappe historical circle, a specialist in issues related to Allied aviation, provided me with useful information, including the investigation report of the RAF services into this accident.

Meanwhile, my Canadian correspondent had sent me official documents from the Royal Air Force confirming the thesis that the crash had indeed occurred in Walloon Brabant. I have therefore corrected the error relating to the location of the accident in the database and on the website. I then began to compare the various accounts in my possession: that of the farm worker, the RAF investigation report into the mission and the crash and the information of William Julian Wray, the top gunner who recorded his testimony in the 1980s. His son Graham Wray gave me a copy of the recording. W.J. Wray died in 1989.

***Here is the account of this adventure based on the testimony of W. J. Wray, an adventure in which, let us remember, three men lost their lives.***

From the outset, according to W.J. Wray, on the night of December 17, 1944, both in England and on the continent, it was extremely cold. The thermometer had dropped to -10°. The RAF Staff had planned two bombing missions that night: one targeting the city of Ulm and the other Duisburg in the Ruhr.

The entire Duisburg aircraft group consisted of 523 Halifaxes belonging to several bomber units scattered throughout the United Kingdom. The Halifax aircraft registered NR233-NP-J was part of the mission. It belonged to the Royal Air Force's 158 Squadron based in Lissett, northern England.

***There was a seven man crew:***

**BROWN, Duncan Stewart, Sergeant, J/94612, Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian, Bomber.**

**GRANT, James Wallance, Sergeant, J/94549, Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian, radio operator**

**RHUDE, Ernest Ashley, Sergeant, J/94110, Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian, Navigator.**

**BOULTON Robert George Thomas, Sergeant, R128676, Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian, Rear Gunner.**

**KELLOCK R W, Sergeant, 1880381, Royal Air Force, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, British, Flight Engineer.**

**LYND Wesley Laurel, Pilot Officer, J35309, Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian, Pilot.**

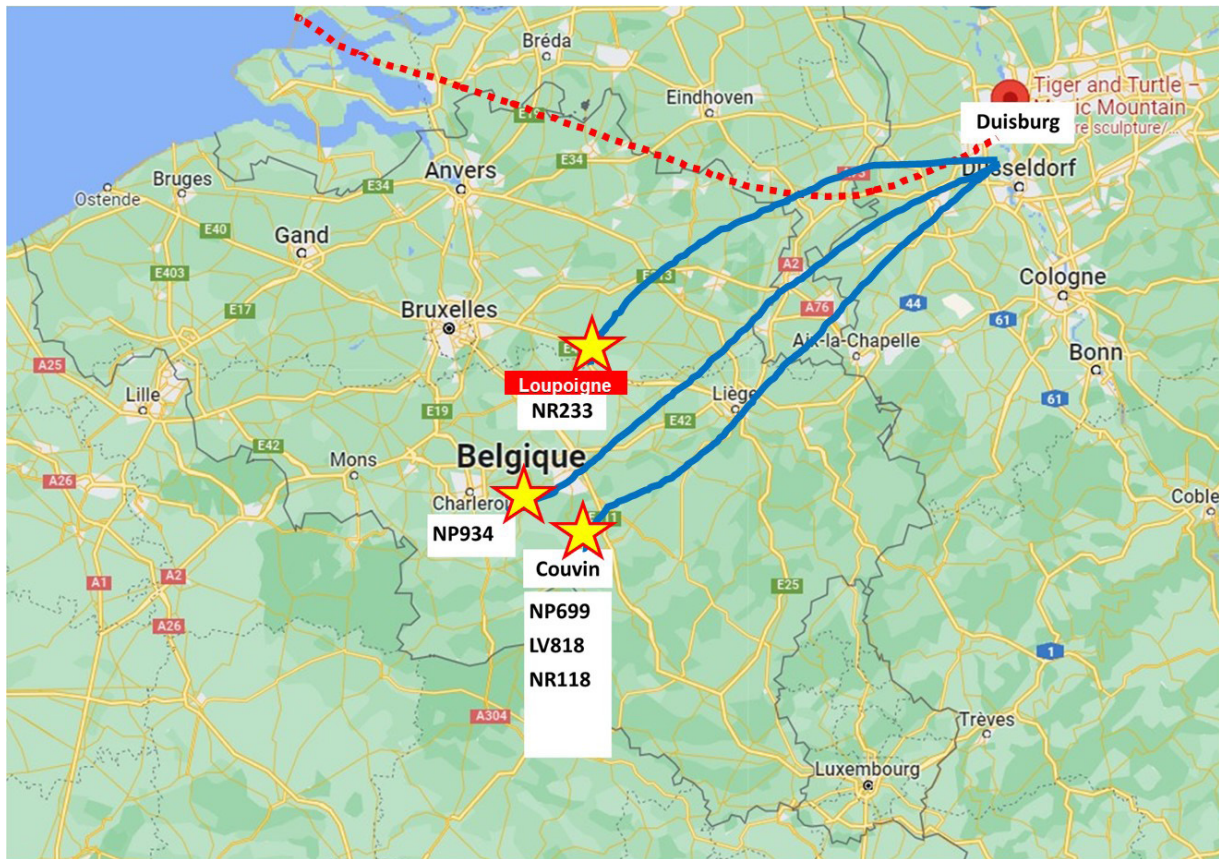
**WRAY William Julian, Sergeant, R251775, Royal Canadian Air Force, Canadian, Top Gunner.**



*From left to right: D. Brown, J Grant, E Rhude, R Boulton, W Lynd, W Wray.  
We have no photos by flight engineer R. W. Kellock (Photos: Gr. Wray)*

The aircraft took off at 2:58 a.m., according to the official report. Apart from one of its members who was British, the rest of the crew were Canadian. Lynd had only recently qualified as a pilot. He had completed only





*This map shows the journey to and from Duisburg after the bombing of 5 of the Eight planes crashed that day. a few hours of solo flight time and this was his first mission as pilot.*

The weather was clear, visibility excellent and the intense cold prevented any cloud cover, both over England and over the North Sea. It was the same on the continent and the group of bombers flew speedily towards Germany after crossing the coastline of the continent. Men who could see outside of the planes saw lights along the way. According to some, it could have been Paris, but perhaps Brussels which was also liberated in September. The usual flight path to the Ruhr for night flights followed the route of the Belgian-Dutch border.

When they arrived over their target, the men saw an horrific sight. The whole city was in flames. Throughout the day, USAF aircraft squadrons had pounded the area leaving no industrial buildings standing. The waves of Halifax advanced over the inferno that was Duisburg, and each aircraft released the bombs it was carrying. On hitting the ground they caused tremendous explosions and fires that illuminated the sky as if it was broad daylight. The view that airmen had was that of an inferno. In addition to the effect of the explosions of the bombs hitting the ground and the release of flames and heat that they produced, they also felt the vibrations generated by the incessant Flak fire, the anti-aircraft defenses. The German airforce continued to resist and, in the sky, among the Allied planes carrying out their deadly mission, German fighters were observed to have infiltrated the bombers formation and were firing from their unwieldy aircraft for all they were worth.

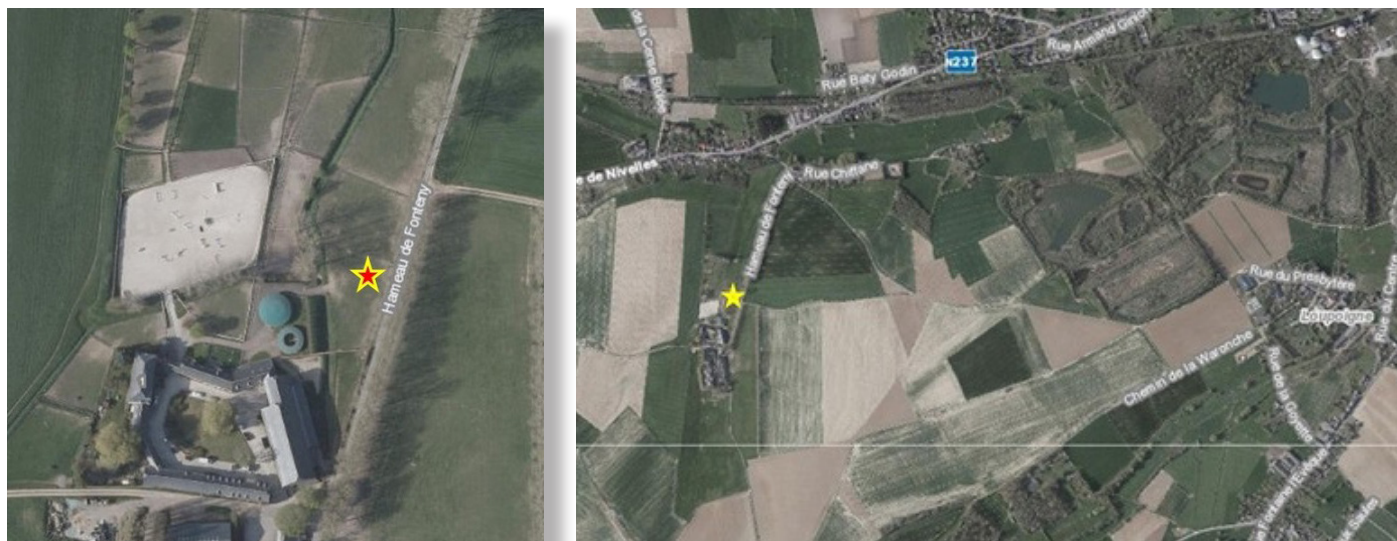
Once their bombs had been dropped, the Airmen began the journey back to base. Casualties occurred and aircraft were shot down during the bombing. Other crews watched with horror as several aircraft caught fire, taking their brothers in arms to an inevitable death. According to William Wray, many collisions between RAF aircraft caused them to crash and, after turning west to begin the path back to base, some German fighters continued to pursue and strafe them.

The Halifax arrived back at the German-Dutch border. The Top and Rear-Gunners watched the sky for any signs of danger. The cold was so severe that frost built up on the main wings and on the tail as well as on the fin. At one point, the plane was surrounded by a strange phenomenon called «St. Elmo's fire», manifested by a light effect produced by static electricity.

At one point, a twin-engine aircraft emerged from the darkness. The aircraft disappeared, then reappeared several times in a row helped by the cloud cover present at that altitude. Boulton, the Rear-gunner, after receiving confirmation of the threat from Wray, radioed the Pilot and told him to begin an evasive manoeuvre by putting the plane into a nose dive as they descended. The pilot made the aircraft dive to his left and then made a rapid ascent to the right. At this point, the pilot should normally perform a righting manoeuvre on the aircraft. But the amount of frost accumulated on the wings prevented this from happening. It was at this point that the enemy aircraft, that was eventually identified as an enemy JU88, fired from its machine guns and hit the far right engine. *(Luftwaffe reports seem to correlate the actions of a Bf110 crew who took action on Halifax that morning in the same area and around the same time - see at the end of the article)*

It happened so quickly that the Canadian gunners could not react. The Bf110 opened fired again and hit two more engines. All this happened while the pilot was trying to right the plane but the controls were no longer responding. It appears that when it reached the top of the climb, the aircraft, having reached a breaking point, was doomed. The aircraft began a vertical descent resulting in the inevitable crash.

At last, Lynd managed to straighten the Halifax 300 metres above the ground. But without three of its engines the aircraft was out of control. Lynd ordered the crew to prepare for evacuation. Both machine gunners complied. Due to their job on the aircraft, the bomber, the radio operator and the navigator were at the front of the aircraft, in what could be called «the nose» which had been greatly lengthened. In order to get to the back of the aircraft, these three men must go through the cockpit. However, the pilot and flight engineer cannot abandon their positions while the aircraft is in such a situation. Finally, the Halifax plunged to the ground. In a last-ditch effort, the pilot shaved the roof of a farm and came to a stop a little further along where the plane crashed at the edge of a meadow.



*The star is the exact location of the Halifax NR233's impact with the ground near Hazoy's farm.  
The farm is located 1 km from Baisy-Thy where two Lancaster crashed on May 28, 1944*

As indicated above, the three airmen trapped at the front of the Halifax died instantly. The four survivors were wounded to varying degrees and were cared for by farmers and farm staff on Hazoy farm which is isolated and quite far from the village of Loupoigne. Few other people were able to testify to what they might have observed before the plane crashed, especially since it was only 7 a.m. and we were a few days away from Christmas.

The emergency services and military authorities based in Nivelles were alerted and arrived at the farm quickly. The fire was extinguished, the risk of explosion was eliminated and investigations into the causes of the accident began. Royal Air Force authorities stationed in Belgium at that time took care of the survivors who had received first aid from the inhabitants of the farm and a doctor summoned to the scene. They were taken to the hospital in Brussels and as soon as possible they would return to England. They would have to answer to RAF investigators responsible for establishing the facts that led to the crash of the Halifax NR233 as well as identifying those responsible for the crash.

The Royal Air Force investigation report concluded: «The main cause of this accident was the pilot's mishandling of the controls. In particular, he did not take into account the effect of the increase in stalling speed on the wings and tail when the aircraft stalled, the pilot turned the rudder fully to the right, which caused



it to nose dive and, in this case, resulted in the aircraft banking vertically, subsequently losing altitude and control...

... A secondary cause of this accident was the icing encountered in the extremely high altitude. Another contributing cause was his relative inexperience in piloting this type of aircraft. This was his first operation. "

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY ?

ROYAL AIR FORCE R.A.F. Form 412 (Revised Aug. 1943)

**PROCEEDINGS OF COURT OF INQUIRY OR INVESTIGATION**

opened on (date) 15.1.45

at (place) R.A.P. STATION LISSETT by order of A.C.O. 4 GROUP

with instructions to inquire into the FLYING ACCIDENT on (date) 17th/18th DEC. 1944

at (place) BRABANT BEACH (nearest town)

\*Here insert any special terms of reference and whether recommendations are called for.

(a) To establish the facts called for in the Findings set out below.

(b) To inquire specially into:

**COMPOSITION OF THE COURT (OR NAME OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER)**

Rank	Name	Unit
Investigating Officer		
President	P/L	102 SQUADRON
Members	RABBITT W.P.	
In attendance (a)		

**LIST OF WITNESSES**

Rank	Name	Unit (if civilian say so)	Rank	Name	Unit (if civilian say so)
P/O	BAGLEY, J.W.	R.A.P. STN LISSETT	S/L	READ, G.B.	158 SQUAD.
P/O	FREEMAN, N.	R.A.P. STN LISSETT	P/O	MEREDITH, R.	158 SQUAD.
P/O	LYND, W.L.	158 SQUAD.	P/SGT	BOULTON, A.G.T.	158 SQUAD.
SGT.	KELLOCK, R.W.	158 SQUAD.			
SGT.	WRAY, W.J.	158 SQUAD.			

**FINDINGS (b) OF THE COURT OR INVESTIGATING OFFICER**  
(NOTE—THE COURT OR INVESTIGATING OFFICER MUST REFER TO A.P. 837, SECTION 51.)

1. Description of aircraft.

Type, Mark and Number	Dual or single control	Damage to Airframe (c)	Engine(s) Type and Series	Engine Number(s) A.M. No. Makers No.	Damage to Engine(s) (d)	Whether aircraft was fit for the flight
HALIFAX III NR 233	SINGLE	TOTAL	HERCULES XVI	AI338339 AI338400 AI338410 AI3391908	AC91885 AC91746 AC91856 SS22910	YES

2. Description of Occupants.

Service Number and Name (a)	Rank	Unit	Duty, e.g. Pilot, A.G. etc.	No. of aircraft in which he was occupant	Where seated	Extent injured (f)
1. 135509 LYND, W.L.	P/O	158 SQUAD.	PILOT	NR 233	NORMAL	SLIGHTLY
2. R184104 RHUDE, E.A.	SGT	"	NAVIGATOR	"	"	FATALLY
3. R186684 BROWN, D.S.	SGT.	"	AIR BOMBER	"	"	"
4. R191901 GRANT, J.V.	SGT.	"	W/OPERATOR	"	"	"
5. R251775 WRAY, W.J.	SGT.	"	M/U/GUNNER	"	CRASH POSITION	SLIGHTLY
6. R128676 BOULTON, A.G.T.	P/SGT.	"	REAR	"	REAR FUSELAGE	"
R1860381 KELLOCK, R.W.	SGT.	"	P/ENGINEER	"	NORMAL	"

NOTES—(a) If present by reason of Specialist qualifications, nature of these to be stated (vide A.P.837 S.51, para. 1360 (iii)).  
(b) The Findings must be based on and supported by the recorded evidence.  
(c) and (d) Indicate as "Total," "serious," "slight" or "no damage."  
(e) If more than one aircraft involved, insert here first, in order, names of occupants of aircraft entered first above. Captain of each aircraft to be stated.  
(f) Classify as "Fatally, missing, seriously, slightly or uninjured."

10. (Continued)

The reason for the Navigator's, Air Bomber's and Wireless Operator's deaths was that, the order to assume crash position was given too late, but this is understandable since the aircraft was out of control down to 1,000 ft and was impossible to move about the aircraft, and height from 1,000 ft was lost rapidly. The Flight Engineer was also standing in the second Pilot's position helping the Pilot with the engine controls, and thus blocked the passage way from the nose to the rest position. The cause of the fire in the Port Outer and Starboard Inner was no doubt due to the overspeeding of the engines and this too was the cause of the Starboard Outer seizing, with reference to the 8th Witnesses statement about the Gravinor system being used, this evidence is rejected by the Pilot's statement that the system was not used, and I accept the Pilot's statement.

A secondary cause for this accident was icing which was encountered in the Stratos cloud. A further contributory cause was his comparative inexperience on the type, this being his first operation.

11. This accident (is not) being investigated by the Accidents Investigation Branch.

Signature of President (or Investigating Officer) Sgd. (?) P/L

(Member of Court)

Date of signing 7.2.45.

**REPORT OF COMMANDING OFFICER** File Ref. No.

I agree with the conclusions drawn by the investigating officer. I recommend that no action be taken against the pilot owing to his inexperience and to the icing conditions which contributed towards the loss of control.

**REMARKS OF BASE COMMANDER**

I concur in the remarks of the Station Commander and consider that this accident was due to a combination of inexperience, icing and poor airmanship.

Sgd. R.H. Waterhouse C/O  
for Base Commander,  
No. 43 Base,  
R.A.F. Driffield.

Date of signing 10.1.45. Signature Sgd. (?) C/O

For A.C.O. in C. Bomber. Command.

The first and last page of the RAF investigation report

It is very possible that the frost was the main factor in the drama that played out that morning of December 18, 1944 in Loupaigne. Already at the beginning of the return journey, a build up of ice had been noticed by the two gunners who had a clear view of the wings and tail of the plane. As soon as emergency manoeuvres had to be made, the controls no longer responded properly, resulting in the loss of control in flying the aircraft and when it lost three of its engines, the game was up, the die was cast.

The report also noted that Lynd was only on his first operation. Perhaps his lack of experience may have been one of the causes of the accident, but when you suffer such setbacks in such a short time, it takes a miracle for the pilot to get out of this situation unscathed, which, alas, was not the case for the Halifax NR233.

Of the 523 aircraft engaged in the mission to Duisburg on 17/18 December 1944, 8 did not return to the base at Lissett. This seems small compared to the number of aircraft shot down by German fighters and air defenses throughout the war. Bomber Command paid a heavy price. They lost a third of the airmen enlisted, i.e. more than 50,000 young men who for the most part were under 25 years old.

To them we owe the regaining of our freedom and independence. On May 17, 2023, if all the conditions are met, the last, still airworthy, British bomber will take off from Coningsby, Lincolnshire and cross the North Sea to perform a fly past between 10:00 and 11:00 above the site of the solemn memorial ceremony that the association «The Belgians Remember Them» will organize in Rebecq to honour the memory of all the



airmen of the Royal Air Force shot down on national soil. The plane will continue its journey to Baisy-Thy (Genappe) where a similar commemoration will take place at the monument «l'Arbre Sainte-Anne». It will fly over Hazoy farm where the Halifax NR233-NP-J crashed 78 years ago, to commemorate the sacrifice of the crew members.

**We will remember them !**, as they say back home.



*Five of the seven crew members from left to right:  
J. Grant, W.J. Wray, A.L. Boulton, D. Brown, E. Rhude (photo: G Wray)*



*Up, Pilot Wes Lynd - Down: Albert Boulton & Wes Lynd*



*Duncan Brown & Wes Lynd  
(Photos: G. Wray)*



Walcher, Leutnant  
4./Nachtjagdgeschwader 1

O.U., den 21. Dezember 1944

Gefechtsbericht

zum Dunkelnachtjagdabschuss der Besatzung Lt. Walcher-Fw. Biermann-Uffz. Flor  
in "Ungeführter Zahmer Sau" am 18.12.1944 um 06.37 Uhr.

Am 18.12.1944 startete ich mit dem Flugzeug Bf 110 G9+EM zum Dunkelnachtjagdeinsatz "Ungeführte Zahme Sau". Durch das späte Anspringen des linken Motors flog ich direkt zum Objekt Duisburg. Das SN 2-Gerät war durch Düppel restlos gestört. Ich flog in Schlangenlinien hin und her und schlusste mich dann in den rückfliegenden Bomberstrom ein. Um 06.33 Uhr sah ich vorn unter mir ein Flugzeug, dass ich auf Grund der Wolkendecke als viermotorigen Feindbomber erkannte. Mein Grundkurs betrug etwa 290°. Ich setzte mich sofort zum Angriff von hinten oben an, jedoch blieb der Schusserfolg aus. Beim zweiten Angriff hatte mich der Heckschütze erkannt und erwiderte das Feuer. Nach meinem zweiten Angriff schlug aus der rechten Fläche eine ungefähr 3 - 4 m lange helle Flamme. Der Feindbomber ging dann in einer steilen Linkskurve auf den Kopf. Durch die darunterliegende Wolkendecke wurde er meiner Sicht entzogen. Der Angriff erfolgte etwa 30 - 40 km nordwestlich (300° etwa) vom Objekt Duisburg. Der Aufschlag wurde vom Augenzeugen Lauven um 06.40 Uhr beobachtet.

Walcher

Biermann, Feldwebel  
4./Nachtjagdgeschwader 1

O.U., den 21. Dezember 1944

Luftkampfzeugenbericht

zum Dunkelnachtjagdabschuss der Besatzung Lt. Walcher-Fw. Biermann-Uffz. Flor  
in "Ungeführter Zahmer Sau" am 18.12.1944 um 06.37 Uhr.

Am 18.12.1944 startete ich mit meinem Flugzeugführer zum Dunkelnachtjagdeinsatz "Ungeführte Zahme Sau" in Essen-Mülheim. Da die Kaskaden beim Start bereits über dem Objekt standen, flogen wir auf direktem Kurs dort hin. Während des Steigens sichteten wir auf Gegenkurs die erste Feindmaschine. Auf Kurs 290° vom Objekt bekamen wir durch optische Sicht um 06.33 Uhr Feindberührung. Der viermotorige Bomber wurde sofort von hinten oben angegriffen. Beim zweiten Feuerstoss erwiderte der Schütze des Feindflugzeuges das Feuer. In der Kurve sah ich, dass die Feindmaschine mit brennender rechter Fläche in die Wolken verschwand.

Biermann

The report clearly explains that the German aircraft that attacked the Halifax NR233 was a Bf110.

# THE CRASH OF THE MOSQUITO DZ358-KN-O IN SILLY

## Introduction

Since its launch, the database «The Belgians Remember Them» has been constantly visited by an ever-increasing number of Internet users from all over the world. Many contact us for additional information about one or another plane crash or crew member. Most of the users are family members whose sometimes tragic fate during the Second World War we report.

It seems that our readers are concerned about the accuracy of certain facts because they point out errors present in the database, or any shortcomings. We attach great importance to these contributions that allow us to provide the most reliable research tool possible. We therefore quickly correct the pages of the database when necessary.

Recently, a correspondent reported that a plane crashed in Silly in 1942. This is the village where I currently live and until then, I had been unaware that a Royal Air Force aircraft had been shot down in this commune. I did some research and quickly learned that a Mosquito type plane did crash in the area of Silly, between the hamlets of Saint-Marcoult and Mauvinage. The two airmen ejected from the aircraft before it crashed into a meadow and they landed a little further away, blown there by the wind.

As you know, the aim of the association is to preserve the memory of RAF airmen shot down in Belgium or buried in our country after crashing outside our borders. In our mission we include the «Missing in Action» (those who disappeared without trace), the POWs (airmen taken prisoner by the enemy after landing) and the «Escaped» (those who survived and were able to end the war without being captured by the Germans).

When the database was first set up, we took as a reference point the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) reports which list only cases of death (KIA) or disappearance (MIA) of airmen. The survivors were not included in these listings, so it was up to us to fill in the gaps in the crews for whom we had information concerning only the killed or missing. Since then, we have been made aware of several cases of plane crashes that had escaped our attention and so we have added them to the base. One such omission is the crash that occurred in Silly, the story of which we set out below. The story of this crash is as follows.

## The mission of Mosquito DZ358-KN-O



On December 8, 1942, a reconnaissance plane flew over Salzburg in Austria and took aerial photos of the area. They would be used to select possible bombing objectives that could be targeted later. The aircraft was a Mosquito Havilland DH.98 type PR Mk IV. Its registration was DZ358-KN-O and it belonged to the RAF 540th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, based in Benson (Oxfordshire, England). The pilot was Frederick W. McKay of New Zealand, and the radio operator/navigator was the Briton, Stanley Forster Hope, Flight Sergeant (FI/Sgt).

The mission was carried out normally and the aircraft began its return when a problem occurred with the right engine. A coolant leak caused the engine to overheat and shut down. It was therefore with a single engine that the crew kept the aircraft in flight until the second engine locked while it was over Silly, near the city of Enghien. The two men decided to eject from the plane before it crashed. They landed apart, each carried in different directions by the wind.



*The Mosquito of Haviland*



We do not have many details about P/O Frederick McKay, but we do know that he was taken prisoner in Paris by a corporal of the Wehrmacht, then interrogated at Le Bourget aerodrome where he had been taken. In the prisoner of war questionnaire that he filled out on 3 May 1945, he detailed his capture in Paris on 19 December 1942 and his periods of captivity at Dulag Luft (22 December 1942 - 10 January 1943): OFLAG XXI-B (14 January 1943 - 6 April 1943): STALAG LUFT III (7 April 1943 - 9 January 1945) and MARLAG NORD (4 February 1945 - 9 April 1945).

It also refers to work on five separate tunnels (four of which were found and the other «unused») as well as an attempt to escape the «cooler» at OFLAG XXI\_B. He returned to New Zealand on the SS Arundel Castle arriving in Wellington in July 1945.



As for FI/Sgt. Stanley Hope, he landed in a meadow among a herd of cows and quickly buried his parachute. He went to a farm where people promised to destroy his parachute. From there, he arrived at a church where a mass was in progress. He was still in uniform and the priest, after conducting the service, took him to a café where a Resistance member of the Comet escape network took care of him. From that moment, Stanley would receive civilian clothes, new papers and would be transported from Enghien to Brussels and then Paris eventually arriving in Urrugne on the Spanish border, on January 15, 1943. Along with those who accompanied him on this escape, he was arrested, imprisoned in Bayonne, Bordeaux and Fresnes and ended up in the prison camps Stalag Luft I, then VI and IV and in the prison of Fallingbomel, in Germany. On 11 May 45, he was repatriated to Cosford (UK) from Celle airfield (Lower Saxony) and returned home to Halifax (Yorkshire) on the 12th. He was demobbed in October 45 after a few weeks of rehabilitation in Scarborough.



Sources:  
Aviation Safety  
Line-Comet-Line

Stanley Hope with fellow soldiers.  
We have no photos by Frederick McKay

## FLANDERS RESISTANCE FIGHTERS: PIETER ALBERTYN, THE UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE FIGHTER



Petrus (Pieter) Albertyn was born in July 1908 in Sint-Niklaas. He spent his childhood and youth there until, in 1939, like most Belgians of military age, he was mobilized and attached to the 17th Line Regiment. As the international situation and the threat of conflict became increasingly worrying, Belgium, despite its policy of neutrality, decided, on 26 August 1939, to begin a gradual mobilization. On 3 September,

King Leopold III took command of the Belgian Army. For some time, the country had been preparing to counter a possible offensive while strengthening our neutrality. Among other things, the military law of 1936 had provided the country with an army of 600,000 men, of whom about 375,000 belonged to the field army. Mounted units had been motorized, the Albert Canal had been formed as a strong defensive line and the forts of the Liège region modernized.

In May 1940, all these efforts and the months of mobilization of the army were undone by the lightning invasion of German troops who swept over the country trying to reach the north of France. The Belgian army was surrounded on all sides by the Germans, who took thousands of prisoners. Many soldiers were lucky enough to escape capture and fled into hiding, most often with their families. For two weeks, the troops still in defensive positions tried to hold out against a much more powerful enemy but the inevitable came on May 28, when the King ordered the army to surrender. From then on, our compatriots arrested by the invaders would experience captivity in Germany and most of them would not return to their homeland until five long years later.

Pieter was in Lokeren with his unit when the surrender occurred. He managed to slip through the net and ended up in Sint-Niklaas where he looked for work. The months of mobilization and the German invasion had a catastrophic effect on the functioning of industry and commerce. Deprived of their mobilized workforce for months, many companies had to reduce their production or close permanently. As soon as they arrived in our country, the occupying troops took over all the machinery of the administration and issued regulations intended to prevent any hint of rebellion on the part of Belgians forced to prove that they had a valid job when asked to do so. If a person could not prove that he was working legally, he was immediately sent to Germany as part of the STO (Compulsory Labour Service) set up by the occupying force at the beginning of the war.

Pieter was lucky. He found a job, which would allow him to evade controls and arrest and to live more or less normally. He was already married before the mobilization of 1939 and in June 1941, his wife gave birth to a son, William.

This was the time when, in secrecy, Belgians united to fight the occupier. Networks were formed. Already in 1941, sections of the Belgian Legion were established in the region of Sint-Niklaas. This resistance movement drew its members from what remained of the Belgian army. Its headquarters were in Brussels and from there they ran its detachments throughout the country. In 1942, the Belgian Legion took the name of Secret Army (AS).



*Fighters of the maquis «Kalkoen» - Germans arrested in St-Niklaas by the Resistance of Secret Army*





*Resistance of the Secret Army are buried with military honours*

It included thousands of men ready to fight the occupier. The military command structure had been established and actions were decided by HQ which took its orders from London. If, at the beginning of the occupation, the members of the SA were mainly military, civilians also joined the movement later. The same applied to the FI (Independence Front) created by people of left-wing tendency, most of whom came from the Communist Party. The armed wing of this movement was made up of Armed Partisans. The FI distinguished itself by carrying out armed actions against the occupier intended to disrupt its communications and its functioning.

Pieter joined the resistance and rejoined the AS. From the beginning of his involvement, he participated in missions to destabilize the enemy - sabotaging power and telephone lines, scattering special nails intended to puncture the tyres of German vehicles on the roads of the province, etc. These shadowy activities and treason led him to be wanted by the Gestapo. He then went into hiding. While in hiding he managed to see his family from time to time during the night. He entered the maquis «Kalkoen» or as they say in Flanders, the «Kalkoen refuge».

Throughout 1944, Pieter was permanently on call from his leaders and, like his comrades in the struggle, permanently active. The surveillance of German movements was one of the important activities of the group because, thanks to the information gathered, missions could be carried out in a targeted way. This did not prevent tragedies and in Belsele, on September 5, 1944, 9 of his comrades were surprised and immediately shot. The Nazis left the corpses in the ditch from where, after their departure, Pieter and some comrades-in-



*During the Liberation in Sint-Niklaas, the Resistance marched in front (Photos: private coll W. Albertyn)*



arms came to retrieve them and took them to the local school while waiting to give them a decent burial. Other operations in the Sint-Niklaas sector resulted in the execution of SA Resistance fighters or their deportation.

Pieter was involved in the liberation of the «Kalkoen» maquis and the town of Sint-Niklaas. He joined the War Volunteers and participated in the liberation of Doel and the Belgian-Dutch border region alongside Polish Allied troops. Many German pockets of resistance still remained in this area, and it was important to clear them from the banks of the Scheldt.

He was demobilized as a War Volunteer in 1947. Back home, Pieter Albertyn unfortunately did not enjoy this happiness for long and died unexpectedly in 1951.

Pieter Albertyn, like many Flemish people of his time, did not hesitate to defend his homeland when it was attacked. Like his comrades-in-arms, he risked his life and dedicated his youth to the most important thing in his eyes: the honour of his country.

It is thanks to such men who have shown courage, self-sacrifice, and an unshakable faith in their homeland that we can enjoy the peace that reigns in Belgium even today. They may have withdrawn discreetly into anonymity, but the memory of their actions will undoubtedly shed some light on them – a light which they are entitled to expect from all of us.



*The martyrology of the Sint-Niklaas section of the Secret Army*



## NEWS ABOUT ELI MOLNAR, LANCASTER BOMBER SHOT DOWN OVER REBECQ

Recently, we came across the following article in «*Les Cahiers de Petit-Enghien*», by the Union des Groupements patriotiques de Petit-Enghien, volume 3, p. 23, published in 2001:

«May 1944.

*The maquis can no longer come up with ways to repatriate to England the Allied airmen shot down in our country. The danger is permanent and growing. Arrests of resistance fighters involved in these rescue missions are numerous and almost always lead to deportation and death. We must constantly be wary of everything and everyone.*

*Victor Willems, a Canadian airman who had gained the trust of the Secret Army section in Petit-Enghien, was given the responsibility of conveying this heavy but precious «parcel» to the convent in Lombise where the Mother Superior, Sister Gabrielle, took charge of the rest of the operations.*

*The Canadian pilot was dressed in the uniform of a country guard (trousers from Marcel Vrancks, a uniform jacket and a kepi from Georges Ghislai and a belt provided by Paul Desaegher, country guard of Marcq and Resistance fighter).*

*The convent of «La Sainte Union» in Lombise was evacuated on May 17, 1940, but the sisters had already restarted their classes on June 4. They distinguished themselves by their dedication to the population and proved their patriotism by taking in, in 1944, the resistance fighters wanted by the Gestapo as well as three Allied airmen all of whom were hidden in a secret room. »*



*Sister Gabrielle - The convent «La Sainte Union» at Lombise*

Eli Molnar was part of the crew of the Lancaster JA712-BQ-H that crashed at Rebecq on May 28, 1944. He had been able to eject from the plane before it crashed, landing in a field on high ground above Rebecq.

Helped by Resistance fighters from Rebecq (Léon Decrême and Joseph Mahy), he was taken to the Marsille farm from where other Resistance fighters led him to Petit-Enghien and then to Lombise, 20 km from Rebecq. He remained hidden in Lombise until the liberation. Handed over to the British military authorities, he returned to England and then to Canada at the end of the war.



*Eli Molnar with his Rebecq rescuers, disguised as a country guard in Lombise and with his Lombise rescuers*

## JEAN-CLAUDE PAULY HAS PASSED AWAY

Our friend Jean-Claude Pauly passed away last Thursday, December 8, 2022.

Born on May 30, 1942 in Jalhay, he died peacefully after a long illness.

With André Deroanne, Jean-Claude Pauly had been a driving force in the erection of the monument dedicated to the crew of the Lancaster LM 425-BQ-N of 550 Squadron North Killingholme shot down over Jalhay on March 31, 1944.

Together, we turned this monument into a Memorial that was unveiled by Alison Rose, Ambassador of the United Kingdom on 9 April 2016.

I remember Jean-Claude as a good, gentle and endearing man.

Wilfred Burie, President



### MORE THAN EVER, HELP AND SUPPORT OUR ASSOCIATION



### PROMOTE THE BELGIANS REMEMBER THEM DATABASE

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*In North Killingholme, «the Tree of the Belgians» continues to grow... Like our association.*

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*We have partnership with the municipality of Rebecq, the «Souvenir Français, 550 Squadron RAF North Killingholme and the Province of Walloon Brabant*

