

**The story of Alfred Edward Kitchen and Maurice Williamson and their  
De Havilland Mosquito B Mk.XVI - ML 979 - HS – A**



Alfred Kitchen



Maurice Williamson

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### **A new story.**

In the autumn of 2014, Stichting Projecten Rndom het Greppelveld<sup>1</sup> contacted me<sup>2</sup> through Mrs Annie Haverkort from Dronten. The foundation was busy redesigning a forrest called Torenbosje, located on the N309 between Dronten and Elburg, near the exit Oudebosweg. The aim was to make this bush more accessible and to create a resting place for cyclists and walkers, a resting place that would also be provided with an information board and a work of art. For the opening, which was planned for June 2015, the foundation wanted a story to be written and told about this place. I was asked if I could and would like to take care of this. An interesting question, but before I agreed I asked why the forrest was called Torenbosje. 'Because they used to drill for oil', was the answer of Mrs. Haverkort, 'there has been a drilling tower'.

For me this is a completely new fact and so I continue to ask. I hear that no oil was found at the time, so the drilling tower was quickly demolished again. My imagination starts to play up, my brain is cracking. Drilled for oil, but found nothing? A fact that wouldn't be interesting for a story. For suppose that oil had been found, but that nevertheless the drilling tower had been quickly broken down for a hitherto completely secret reason! A story slowly but surely unfolds in my head.

On 27 June 2015, the Torenbosje is officially opened and I tell the story 'The secret of the Torenbosje' (Talens, 2015) to many visitors, including the commissioner of the King Leen Verbeek and mayor Aat de Jonge<sup>3</sup>. An improbable story in which fiction and facts are mixed together. Facts such as that drilled for oil<sup>4</sup> in 1965 by the American company Continental Oil Company (Conoco) and that after disappointing results the temporary drilling tower was demolished. But also facts about a dramatic event in the autumn of 1944. An English De Haviland Mosquito crashed, with two crew members on board. Parts of the aircraft would have been found during the reclamation of the polder near the location of the Torenbosje. During the crash the English pilot Alfred Kitchen was killed. Kitchen was the navigator of this aircraft. The pilot, Maurice Williamson, managed to escape with his parachute but was taken prisoner of war quickly after his safe landing on the mainland<sup>5</sup>.

My story is well received. All visitors listen attentively, after which they talk a lot about it. At the end of the afternoon I take my bike and drive back to Dronten. During the bike ride it happens; doubt strikes. In my story I perform the perished Alfred Kitchen. His death on 27/28 November 1944 plays an important role in the story. But is it ok that I am performing him? Imagine that his family would live? What would they think of this? When I return home, my mind is clear about what I have to do. I have to look for the real story of Kitchen and Williamson, the real story of the plane that crashed. A treasure hunt, that at that moment I can't imagine, would produce an improbable story<sup>6</sup>. A story that could only be revealed thanks to the cooperation of the Kitchen family and Williamson, who live in the United Kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rndomhetgreppelveld.nl/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gertspeelt.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.flevopost.nl/nieuws/dronten/395030/torenbosje-is-een-aanwinst-voor-dronten.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://leiden.courant.nu/issue/NLC/1965-11-08/edition/0/page/12?query>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.flevolanderfgoed.nl/home/erfgoed/oostelijk-flevoland-2/vliegtuigwrakken-2/mosquito-b-mk-xvi-ml-979.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.flevopost.nl/nieuws/human-interest/424595/gert-talens-speurt-naar-omgekomen-vlieger.html>

### The beginning of the search.

Imagine having family members of aviators Kitchen and Williamson living somewhere in England! With that in mind, I cycled home late in the afternoon June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. And if that family exists, how do you find out where they live?

My only support at that moment was the text as it can be read on commemorative pole 2 of the crash route as it stands near the Torenbosje<sup>7</sup>. In the Netherlands, several memorial poles have been placed that briefly tell the story of what happened at that location. These poles can also be found in Eastern Flevoland. Posts 2 shows for example: the aircraft type (De Havilland Mosquito, ML 979, B Mk XVI), which squadron (109 RAF) it belonged to and also from which airport this aircraft departed, in this case Little Staughton in Bedfordshire. Also the names of the two crew members offer possibilities. Through Google I visit several sites and soon it becomes clear to me that Kitchen is from Letchmore Heath in Hertfordshire<sup>8</sup>. Kitchen was 24 years old when he died on 27/28 November 1944 and was married to Edna Kitchen. Kitchens flight is reported missing on November 27, 1944. The aircraft in which Kitchen and Williamson were flying was part of a group of aircraft with the aim of targeting the German Neuss in the Ruhr area<sup>9</sup>. Williamson survived the crash and was made a prisoner of war<sup>10</sup>. The residence of Williamson remains unknown. Striking detail is that on commemorative pole 2 it says that the aircraft flew in German colours.

Several websites give a lot of information, sometimes the same, sometimes contradictory. The search for the families is stagnating however. There are no address details found, nor are there any direct indications that there are still relatives of Kitchen living there. For Williamson, the website mossie.org<sup>11</sup> makes it clear that there is family, but it is unclear where they live.

NON-DF.	YEAR	MONTH	DAY	HUNDREDS	TENS	UNITS	SQUADRON	TYPE OF A/C	CAUSE
DATE	27.11.44	11	27	100	00	00	109	De Havilland Mosquito	Neuss
TYPE	ML 979								
SERIAL NO.									
DF.									
SO.									
TIME OFF									
BASE									
TARGET									
E.T.A. TARGET									
FUEL									
A.U.W.									
CREW-NAME	Williamson, W.								
PILOT									
NAV	Kitchen, A.E.								
COPI									
FE									
SA									
AG									
AG									
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT				SOURCES OF INFORMATION			TARGET		

De loss card of De Havilland Mosquito, ML 979, B Mk XVI  
Bron: <http://www.teunispats.nl/t4736.htm>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.4meiherdenkingdronten.nl/sites/default/files/pictures/crashroute/Infobord\\_PL02.pdf](http://www.4meiherdenkingdronten.nl/sites/default/files/pictures/crashroute/Infobord_PL02.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2820534/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.airhistory.org.uk/dh/\\_DH98%20prodn%20list.txt](http://www.airhistory.org.uk/dh/_DH98%20prodn%20list.txt)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mossie.org/forum/read.php?1,124,152#msg-152>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.mossie.org/forum/read.php?1,124,152#msg-152>

### **The Kitchen family is alive!**

Then, at a certain moment, a breakthrough follows. On Facebook I search for Letchmore Heath and find a page of the local pub; The Three Horsehoes called<sup>12</sup>. I send a mail, a reaction follows from a Susan Moore and within three hours after my email it is clear that the deceased pilot Alfred Kitchen has a son (Adrian) who is still alive and that Kitchen's wife Edna is still alive. Both live in Letchmore Heath. Through Susan Moore a Simon Kitchen comes into the picture. He is the contact person of the family.

After this fantastic new information, things are going fast. By mail I exchange information with Simon Kitchen and it shows that widow Edna got married again in 1949. Her husband is Benjamin Kitchen, the youngest brother of her dead husband Alfred. From this marriage a child is born: Simon. With these data it becomes clear that Adrian and Simon are half-brothers, with the same mother (Edna) and different fathers (Alfred and Benjamin) who are brothers.

Various attachments with photos of Alfred, Alfred and Edna, as well as written documents about the flight and the discovery of Kitchen's body, are sent by e-mail. The latter is a written eyewitness account with the title 'Sunset'. This report was written in 1992 by Kampenaar Jan Westerink<sup>13</sup>. This Westerink comes into contact with the Kitchen family in the 1990s and is an important source for the family when it comes to what happened to Alfred Kitchen. Westerink writes to the family in 1992 that on March 4, 1945 he was involved in the recovery of the body of Kitchen (Westerink, 1992). He also describes that the wreck of Kitchen was near the Zeebeumpie. This is the location with the following coordinates: N52°33'43.8", E5°50'40.5". In his description Westerink gives a map of this area (Westerink, 1992).

The Zeebeumpie is a tree near the former Zuiderzee and IJsselmeer coasts, well known to people in Kampen. This tree was a landmark and the place was often used for swimming, fishing, tanning and walking in the years before, during and after the war. The wreckage was a few hundred meters off the coast. From this source it is clear that the body of Kitchen was not directly removed from the wreckage of the plane after the crash in November 1944. Only after the ice of the IJsselmeer has melted in March 1945 is this done, where one leg of the body of Kitchen remained trapped in the wreckage. Remarkable about the location description is of course that it differs from the description on commemorative pole 2 near the Torenbosje. Although it says on this pole<sup>14</sup> that the plane crashed there, Westerink's report shows something else.

Because there are several data that seem to contradict each other, but also because there are more and more questions along the way, I make an appointment for a visit to Simon Kitchen in Letchmore Heath, England. On 4 November 2016 I will travel to England with my eldest son Erik to meet the Kitchen family. It should be mentioned that in the spring of 2016 the widow Edna Kitchen unfortunately passed away.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/ThreeHorsehoesHerts/>

<sup>13</sup> 'Sunset', report written by Jan Westerink (1992). Copy of report in possession of Gert Talens

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.4meiherdenkingdronten.nl/sites/default/files/pictures/crashroute/Infobord\\_PL02.pdf](http://www.4meiherdenkingdronten.nl/sites/default/files/pictures/crashroute/Infobord_PL02.pdf)



Alfred Kitchen in 1943

Bron: Simon Kitchen

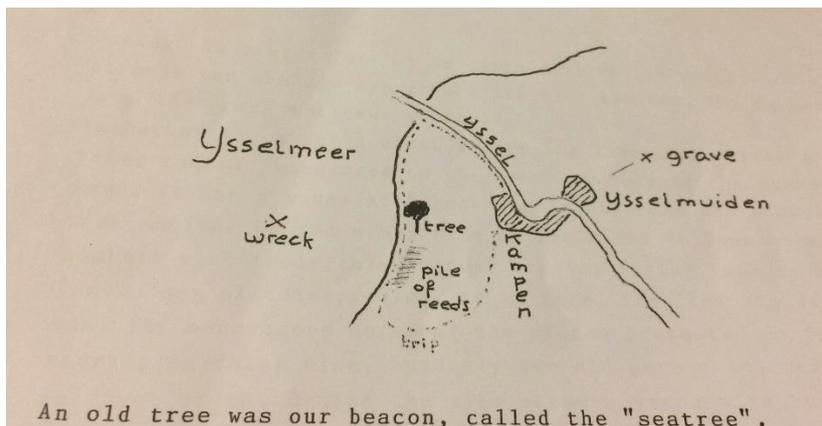


Weddingphoto 24-9-1943

Bron: Simon Kitchen



Edna and her two men  
(Alfred to he right, Benjamin above)  
Foto: Gert Talens



Signed map of location wreckage drawn in Westerink, J. (1992). Sunset.

### **My meeting with the Kitchen family.**

On November 4, 2016 I travel with my son Erik in the evening via London Luton airport by train to the station of St. Albans. Around 21.00 hours we meet Simon Kitchen there. A warm smile and hands are shaken. Simon Kitchen then takes us to a hotel in St. Albans and we meet for the next morning around 08.00 for a day with visits to various places that were important in the life of the deceased Alfred Kitchen.

This first meeting with a member of the Kitchen family impresses me. In front of me is a family member of an airman about which I have read and heard so much in the meantime. What can I ask him and his half-brother Adrian? Do they like my curiosity? How would Adrian like me to put his father in my story 'The Secret of the Torenbosje'? Will it be painful for them? Do I do things that the Kitchen family would rather leave to rest? That night I sleep restless.

The next morning Simon Kitchen drives ahead. He is accompanied by his son Dani le. We get in and then drive to the location where the airport Little Staughton was in the war years. Both the departure and landing runways are still there, as well as some buildings that have been used by the military as barracks, workshops and warehouses. There is also an old escape tower.

This airfield was built in 1941, belonged to the United States Army Air Forces from 1942 to 1 March 1944 and was then used by the British Royal Air Force. From April 1944 to April 1945 it was used by the 109th squadron of the RAF, the squadron to which Alfred Kitchen belonged. The airfield served until 1947<sup>15</sup>.

It is special to walk on this spot. From this airfield the aircraft of Maurice Williamson and Alfred Kitchen departed. It was the last flight for Kitchen.



The take-off and landing runway of Little Staughton  
Photo: Gert Talens (Nov. 2016)



Former flight tower Little Staughton  
Photo: Gert Talens (Nov. 2016)

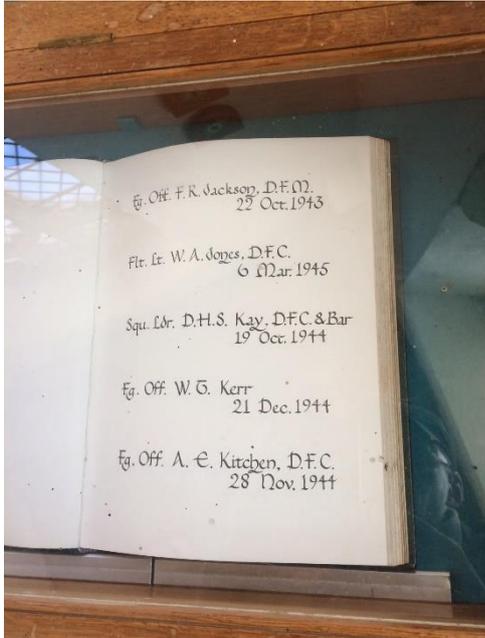
After the visit to Little Staughton Airfield we visit the All Saints Church in Little Staughton. In this church Alfred Kitchen is written in the book of fallen soldiers during the 1st and 2nd World War.



Commemorative altar in All Saints Church Little Staughton  
Photo: Gert Talens

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<sup>15</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF\\_Little\\_Staughton#cite\\_note-RAF-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Little_Staughton#cite_note-RAF-1)



Commemorative book for soldiers who died  
Photo: Gert Talens



All Saints Church Little Staughton  
Photo: Gert Talens

After visiting the All Saints Church we continue our journey to the De Havilland Aircraft Museum in Shenley<sup>16</sup>. In this museum you can see a De Havilland Mosquito that looks a lot like the plane in which Kitchen flew. An impressive aircraft where it is striking that this aircraft is made of wood. This makes it very light. The aircraft is equipped with two powerful Rolls Royce engines. An aircraft that could fly at an altitude of about 12 km, a wingspan of about 16 meters, a maximum speed of 667 km/hour and a flying range of 3200 km<sup>17</sup>.



De Havilland Mosquito B.MK.35 in the De Havilland museum in Shenley.  
Pictures: Gert Talens

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk/aircraft/de-havilland-dh98-mosquito-b-mk-35/>

### **Adrian Kitchen, the son of the deceased Alfred.**

After visiting the De Havilland museum we continue our trip to Radlet. In Radlet the most exciting part of my visit to England is planned for me, namely the meeting with Adrian Kitchen, son of the deceased Alfred. We made an appointment in the 'Three Horseshoes', the local pub<sup>18</sup>. The pub, which brought me into contact with the Kitchen family. After we find a place in the little pub and have a chat the door suddenly opens and a little old, somewhat fragile man enters. It is immediately clear to me that this is Adrian. Adrian is cordial and shakes my hand. We order and eat a delicious pie.

During this lunch Adrian talks about his youth. He was born in January 1945, two months after the death of his father. Although Adrian inherited the grief of his father's death, he also tells us that he actually considers Benjamin as his father. Benjamin, Alfred's brother, who marries widow Edna on 3 February 1949. Adrian, then 5 years old, gets a 'new' father with this marriage and cherishes warm memories of him. Memories that he obviously does not have of his biological father.

I notice that Adrian is not afraid to tell me about his biological father, that it is not painful for him and that encourages me to finally tell him about my quest and ask him what he thinks of using his father Alfred in my story 'The Secret of the Torenbosje'. 'I think that is really wonderful', is his answer. And while he tells me that I see his eyes getting watery, and as to him, Simon and myself a emotional feeling comes to the surface. Totally unexpected, exciting, but also beautiful!

It's only now that it's becoming clear to me how great it is for the Kitchen family that I'm 'busy' with their family member Alfred and thus pay a kind of tribute to his life. Although it may sound a bit woolly, I feel a deep emotion and respect for that thought and that moment.

After lunch and a lot of talking, Adrian gets tired and leaves for his home a little later. But not after we take a picture in front of the pub, at the memorial with Alfred's name.



From left to right: Gert Talens, Adrian Kitchen, Simon Kitchen  
Photo: Gert Talens

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.threehorseshoes.info/>

After this photo opportunity Simon, his son Dani le, my son Erik and I stay behind. We are far from finished. And above all, we're far from bored. Because Simon brings out his bag. A bag that is full of all kinds of things that have to do with Alfred.

Simon tells me the story that he came into contact with a Dutchman named Dick van der Kamp through a symposium. This man in turn knew a Jan Westerink from Kampen who knew more about a crashed Mosquito in November 1944. While Simon tells me this story, he brings out a letter. It is a report, written in 1992 by Jan Westerink<sup>19</sup>. In the report Westerink describes how, as a young man, he often walked with friends along the dike at the 'Zeebeumpie'. He mentions that in the evening of November 28, 1944 an airplane flies over low. The next day they see from school that a tall English pilot in the barracks of the Van Heutz barracks is being held captive by Germans. In the months that followed, Westerink and a number of his friends often strolled along the coast and saw a wreck of an airplane some '100 yards' lying off the coast. During that winter they visit the wreck several times. They don't see the body of Kitchen.

Only in March 1945 this body appears when three of Westerink's friends have to pull a rowing boat to the wreck by order of two German soldiers. The Germans are sitting in the rowboat. When they arrive at the wreckage the body is found. The body is stuck, is pulled loose, leaving one leg behind. The same day the body was handed over to the police. Shortly afterwards the body was buried at the Kamper cemetery in IJsselmuiden. My first thoughts on this story are that the description of Westerink seems quite precise and therefore it seems unlikely that the story is made up. But I realize that in order to be more certain about the reliability I will have to do further research.

Simon hands me a copy of this story. In addition, Simon brings out a pile of papers. This is the complete RAF log of Alfred Kitchen. A 63 page document with all the missions that Kitchen has flown. Kitchen's first flight was on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942. In his log you can read that he was on board as a 'map-reader', that the flight started at 12.50 hours, that it was over England and lasted in total 2 hours and 20 minutes. On the penultimate page you can read that on November 27, 1944, Kitchen is on board as navigator and pilot Williamson leaves at 18.00 hours. At remarks you can read that it was a flight to Neuss. Immediately the word 'missing' is noticed. It is Kitchen's last flight. It is already clear that the date mentioned in the story of Westerink (28 November 1944) does not correspond with the date of the logbook of Kitchen (27 November 1944). It seems to me that the date of November 27, 1944 has to be used because this date was written on the day itself and the story of Westerink was written 47 years later, in 1992.

A total of 387 flights were recorded in Kitchen's log, 82 of which were to the European Continent. This involves a total of more than 459 flight hours during the day and more than 243 flight hours at night. Kitchen flies many training flights and various things are trained. On 24 February 1943 he performs an altitude test with pilot Little, they fly at 31,000 ft, about 9.5 kilometers. A first flight to occupied Europe followed on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1943. At 18.27 hours a 'target' was taken off for Malines in Belgium. They flew back via Turnhout and Tilburg. During its third flight to occupied Europe, the aircraft was fired at and hit by German anti-aircraft guns. His logbook says 'hit by flak near Amsterdam'. Kitchen also flies along as a navigator on D-day! A Mosquito ML 961 leaves on 6 June 1944 at 00.25 hours for a mission to Lisieux, about 20 km south of Le Havre. It is his 51st mission. It's special to read that Kitchen flew at the beginning of D-day! At Lisieux 2x TL red will be dropped. Probably these are light markings.

I have the log in my hands. It is impressive. It silences me. 82 flights to occupied Europe. Sometimes to throw bombs, often as a pathfinder, mark locations with light bombs for the big bombers. All kinds of thoughts are haunting my head. What did this man see? Did he see comrades getting shot? Was he afraid? Why did he fly? And then that last flight. He knew his wife was pregnant. How do you get on a plane? Simon notices my silence. He rummages around in his bag and then shows a piece of metal. A piece of a German grenade, fired by a Flak, a Flugabwehrkanone.

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<sup>19</sup> Westerink, J. (1992). Sunset. Copy in possession of Gert Talens.

Date	Hour	Aircraft Type and No.	Pilot	Duty	REMARKS (including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	Time carried forward: 447.30 240.50	
						Flying Times	
						Day	Night
15/11/44	1445	MOSQUITO 28	F/LT GIBBONS	NAVIGATOR	SPECIAL DUTIES HT 18,000'	2.25	
16/11/44	1340	MOSQUITO 122	F/LT GIBBONS	NAVIGATOR	1) OPERATIONS:- TARGET JULICH (NR COLOGNE) HT. 30,000' 4X TI RED - DAYLIGHT.	2.50	
18/11/44	1330	MOSQUITO	F/LT GIBBONS	NAVIGATOR	2) OPERATIONS:- TARGET MUNSTER - DAYLIGHT. HT 28,000' 4X SKYMARKERS RED.	2.50	
21/11/44	1130	LANCASTER Y	F/LT ACQUAT	SPECIAL DUTY.	TEST HT. 18,000'	1.10	
21/11/44	1930	MOSQUITO 362	F/LT GIBBONS	NAVIGATOR	3) OPERATIONS:- TARGET STEAKRADE (RHUR) HT. 30,000' 4X TI RED		2.50
23/11/44	1430	LANCASTER Y	F/LT GIBBONS	SPECIAL DUTY	BOMBING RUNS. HT. 18,000'	2.30	
27/11/44	1800	MOSQUITO	WILLIAMSON	NAVIGATOR	4) OPERATIONS:- NEUSS (MISSING)		
SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER.							
SIGNED: R. H. L. SDR. O. B. P. 109 SQDN. SIGNED: W. H. P. CAPT. O. B. 109 SQUADRON.							
Mosquito Flying Day Mosquito Flying Night LANCASTER DAY							
DEATH PRESUMED 11/12/44							
CENTRAL DEPOSITORY 2.30 MAY 1946 ROYAL AIR FORCE							
TOTAL TIME: 459.45 243.40							

Last page in the logbook of Alfred Kitchen  
 Copy log in possession of Gert Talens

Simon tells us that Alfred was posthumously decorated with a DFC medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, after the war. Simon tells that during a flight to Europe Alfred's plane was shot down by anti-aircraft fire. The plane was hit, the pilot was injured. Alfred then managed to remove the pilot from his seat and still fly the battered aircraft back to England. In this case it was his third flight to occupied territory, on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1943. A day later, when Kitchen's rescue parachute was checked, it appeared that it had a piece of grenade in it. This piece of grenade is still a relic in the Kitchen family today. Simon indicates that this piece of grenade, made in Germany to kill, brings his family happiness. And while he is telling this, he takes a small box out of his bag, opens it and shows the beautiful DFC medal! A medal, awarded to Edna at the Royal Buckingham Palace in London in 1946.



Piece of grenade from Kitchens parachute  
Photo: Gert Talens



Distinguished Flying Cross  
Photo: Gert Talens

As I look at these things, touch them, try to understand them, I realize that this story, the story of Alfred Kitchen, suddenly brings that distant WW2 of long ago close by. I see Alfred more and more in front of me as a human being, a person with a life of his own. Someone I'm gradually getting to know more and more.

Simon stands up, pays the bill and we walk to the house where until recently his mother Edna lived. Before we go inside Simon points out to me a sign at the front of the house. I am nailed to the ground. The sign shows the name of the house: Kampen Kot.



The house of Edna Kitchen; Kampen Kot  
Photo: Gert Talens

When we come in, I see some pictures on the wall. Edna with two men. It is clear to me that this is Alfred and his younger brother Benjamin.

Simon goes upstairs and comes back with a painting shortly after. The painting was made by Jan Westerink. You can see the IJsselmeer, a boat with soldiers, a couple of figures pulling the boat, in the distance something lying in the water. It is a representation on canvas of the day in March 1945 when Jan Westerink was involved in clearing the body of Kitchen.



Events on March 4, 1945, painted by Jan Westerink  
Photo: Gert Talens

During the visit to Edna Kitchen's house Simon and I have a few more discussions. Discussed is the commemorative pole 2 as it stands near the Torenbosje near to my village Dronten. I tell Simon that it says on the pole that the Kitchen plane flew in German colours. Simon is dumbfounded. For him this is completely new and he has serious doubts about the truth of this. I promise to find out. I also tell him that I will continue to look for the right location. Although commemorative pole 2 at the Torenbosje describes that the location must be near this Torenbosje, in his report Westerink speaks of a location just west of Kampen. The two locations differ about 7 kilometres from each other.

Simon also tells about the visits Edna, his father Benjamin, Adrian and he made to the grave in Kampen. Edna had already been to Kampen in 1946. She then visited the grave. Adrian visited the grave in 1975, and Simon, Adrian, mother Edna and Benjamin visited the grave again in 2001. Simon said that he would now want to visit the grave again very soon.

We conclude the visit. We drink some more tea at Simon's house and around 21.00 hours he puts us on a train to London. My head is full. A lot of information has been added, but there are also more questions. It is clear to me on this 5th of November 2016 that this story is far from over.

### **Back in the Netherlands.**

Where to start? How to make a follow-up in this research? Which questions should I ask first? What about the location? What about the German colours? If there is family of Kitchen, is there also family of pilot Williamson? Would Westerink's family still be alive? Would Jan Westerink still be alive? Is there any information about the salvage operation? Who are the makers of the memorial pole? These are just a few of the many questions that haunt my mind. Because I don't know a good sequel, I'll leave it alone for a while first.

However, this doesn't take long. Now that Simon and I are connected via Whatsapp and mail, many documents are exchanged. Simon sends copies of letters Alfred wrote to his wife Edna. Furthermore, links are sent from sites with more information about the last flight. In the National Archives of the United Kingdom you can read that on 27 November a group of 290 planes will fly to Neuss in the Ruhr area. The group consists of 173 Halifaxes, 102 Lancasters and 15 Mosquitos. The message says that Neuss was heavily bombed, that many fires were caused by these bombardments. It can also be read that one Mosquito was lost during this operation<sup>20</sup>. This is the Mosquito of Kitchen.

I find the letters Alfred wrote to his wife poignant. It almost feels like peeking into someone's private life without his permission.

Alfred misses his wife. In his penultimate letter of 24 November 1944 he writes: *Just a few lines before I go to bed tonight, I know how you like to hear from me each day and are disappointed when you don't get one. I was unlucky myself today and I missed your letter darling, although I can't expect you to write every day without fail*<sup>21</sup>. He concludes his letter with: *It seems a long time since I saw you sweetheart and I almost forget what its like to sleep with you- It just seems like a dream to me.*<sup>22</sup>

Alfred's last letter to his wife, sent on November 26, 1944, dealt with his and Edna's concerns. *In your last letter darling you seemed a bit fed up because you hadn't received a letter for a couple of days, sorry darling. What makes you worry, because you think I am operating Ed?-I never told you I was doing any ops so I don't know where you got that idea from*<sup>23</sup>.

In that letter, he also refers to 48 hours of free time that he may be able to get now that he has flown more than 80 missions. He wants to continue his efforts so that he can record these 48 hours at the time of the birth of their first child. He concludes his letter with a description of his miserable feeling about Edna's loss.

*I felt a bit fed up with the camp yesterday so I went into Bedford with the boys in the Liberty Coach. Nothing much to do except have a pint or two, I am getting over it this afternoon but I felt lousy this morning. When I got there I felt as though I ought to be jumping on the train to come and see you- it made me feel quite homesick for you sweetheart. Cheerio darling longing to see you. All my love Alf xxxxxxxxxxxx*<sup>24</sup>

I find it impressive and moving. Alfred, who continues to do his best to win 48 hours of leave to witness the birth of his child. The lack of his wife, the undoubtedly strong feeling of powerlessness. The chance of not being present at the birth of your child. And then, then unexpectedly have to flee for surgery in the Ruhr area.

Unexpectedly, because as will become clear later, Alfred would not have to fly because his regular pilot 'Gibby' is ill. However, Maurice Williamson's regular navigator was also ill, Alfred was asked to take over the service. Alfred's thoughts were with those 48 hours of leave, with the birth of his child, in supporting his wife. And so Alfred said yes and went with him on November 27, 1944. He would never return.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20070706055325/http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/nov44.html>

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Alfred to his wife Edna, 24 November 1944. Copy in possession of Gert Talens

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Alfred to his wife Edna, 24 November 1944. Copy in possession of Gert Talens

<sup>23</sup> Last letter from Alfred to his wife Edna, 26 November 1944. Copy in possession of Gert Talens

<sup>24</sup> Last letter from Alfred to his wife Edna, 26 November 1944. Copy in possession of Gert Talens

I felt a bit fed-up  
with the camp yesterday so I went  
into Bedford with the boys in  
the Liberty-coach. & Nothing much  
to do except have a pint or two,  
I am getting over it this afternoon  
but I felt lousy this morning.  
When I got there I felt as though  
I ought to be jumping on the  
train to come & see you - it  
made me feel quite homesick for  
you sweetheart.  
Fred's darling longing to see  
you,  
All my love,  
A.F. XXX  
XXX  
XXX

Alfred's last letter, his last words in his letter of 26 November 1944 to his wife Edna.  
Copy in possession of Gert Talens

### Visiting the Airgunnersroom in Dronten.

After my trip to England I receive a lot of information. Information that sometimes contradicts each other, sometimes supports each other. To get further I decide to contact the Stichting 4 May commemoration Dronten<sup>25</sup>. The Stichting 4 May Commemoration Dronten aims to organize the annual commemoration in Dronten of the fallen Airgunners. The foundation also maintains a specially equipped room in the Meerpaal in Dronten where a permanent exhibition about the Airgunners<sup>26</sup> can be seen. After I get in touch by phone with board member Willem Visscher and I hear that the Airgunnersroom is open every Wednesday, I will visit the next opportunity. Present include chairman Dirk Drogd and board member Willem Visscher. After I have introduced myself, information is exchanged. I hear that the foundation is partly responsible for the 16 crash poles in Oostelijk Flevoland. I tell about my quest, about my findings and also about the information I found to be contradictory. Mr. Drogd tells that they are based on the information as documented by the late salvage officer Gerrit Zwanenburg.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.4meiherdenkingdronten.nl/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.4meiherdenkingdronten.nl/content/airgunnersroom>

During this first meeting, the transfer of the Airgunners monument, which takes place every year in April as a prelude to the commemoration on May 4<sup>th</sup>, will also be discussed. Each year a new group of one of the Dronter primary schools is responsible for the cleaning of this monument. During the handover in the town hall, mayor De Jonge will have a chat, supplemented with a story by another guest. This other guest is for the year 2017 a woman from the north of the country who was active in the resistance during the war. However, Mr. Drogts asks that if this lady is not able, I could take her place to tell about the crashed Mosquito. I agree.

At the end of my visit it will be mentioned that Simon Kitchen intends to come to the Netherlands in the first week of May. Drogts promises that if this happens, Simon and I will be very welcome as guests at the commemoration on 4 May.

A few weeks later both things are confirmed. I will be giving a presentation for the primary school children at the town hall on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 and Simon will be a guest with his son Dani le during the commemoration on May 4.

### **The Kitchens in Dronten.**

On May 3, 2017, at the Stadshotel in Kampen, I will meet Simon Kitchen and his son for the second time in my life. After this renewed acquaintance, we immediately leave for the cemetery and lay flowers at Alfred's grave. I find it special. These two are at Alfred's grave, laying flowers and all this after I had been asked to write a story about the Torenbosje two years earlier. How special life can be sometimes. The next day I take both gentlemen to the Torenbosje and to the location of the Zeebeumpie. In the afternoon Simon is interviewed by a journalist from the Dronter weekly De Flevopost<sup>27</sup> and after that we are guests at the commemoration.



Dani le(l) and Simon(r) Kitchen at memorial post 2  
Photo: Gert Talens



Dani le(l) and Simon(r) Kitchen at Alfred's grave  
Photo: Gert Talens

These are special moments for Simon and his son. The acquaintance with the two locations is extremely alienating. The information at commemorative pole 2 that says that the plane had German colours makes both men find strange and disturbing. Simon indicates that Jan Westerink, the man whose eyewitness account for the Kitchen family is leading, Adrian, mother Edna and father Benjamin visited the location with him in April 2000. Dick van der Kamp was also present, the man through whom all contacts between the Kitchens and Jan Westerink

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<sup>27</sup> [https://flevopost.nl/artikel/493118/de-eeuwige-zoektocht-van-simon-kitchen.html?harvest\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.nl%2F](https://flevopost.nl/artikel/493118/de-eeuwige-zoektocht-van-simon-kitchen.html?harvest_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.nl%2F)

were established. If we look at the pictures of that meeting in 2000, it also shows that they were made in the vicinity of the Zeebeumpie.



April 2000. On the dike at Zeebeumpie. from left to right: Simon Kitchen, Jan Westerink, Adrian Kitchen, Dick vd Kamp.  
Photo: Simon Kitchen



April 2000. With painting on the dike at Zeebeumpie. from left to right: Mrs. vd Kamp, Edna Kitchen, Jan Westerink, Benjamin Kitchen  
Photo: Simon Kitchen

In the evening of May 4, Simon and his son are welcomed by Mayor De Jonge during the memorial service in de Meerpaal. Then Simon and his son put flowers at the Airgunners monument. The next day, May 5, Simon and Daniéle leave the Netherlands again. With all the stories and new information that has been shared these two days, the contours of what happened that fatal night become increasingly clear.



Simon Kitchen puts flowers at the Dronten Airgunnersmonument.  
Photo: Gert Talens



Simon and Daniéle Kitchen as guests during the commemoration meeting in the Meerpaal Dronten, 4 May 2017.  
Photo: Gert Talens

### **The research in gear.**

After the visit of the Kitchens, the investigation accelerates. Contact is sought with various experts. Thus for example the recovery officer of the Royal Netherlands Air Force approaches Arie Kappert and his successor Bart Aalberts. Both come with interesting data. They indicate that the documentation of the late Zwanenburg is not always complete and correct. Kappert sends a picture of the escape hatch of the Mosquito and also provides a link to a publication called *Beam Bombers* by M. Cumming from 1998. It describes what happens in the night of 27 November. It can be read that the plane catches fire on the way to the mission and ends up in the 'Southern Sea'. The navigator is killed and the pilot is taken prisoner of war.



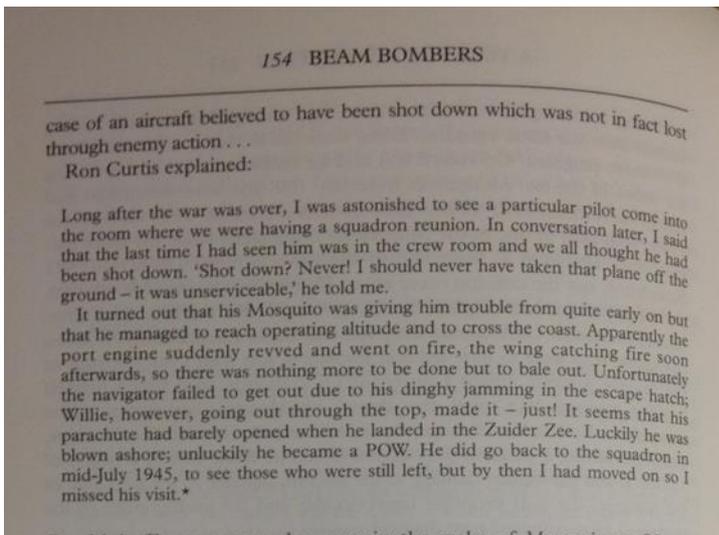
Escape hatch crashed Mosquito of Kitchen.

Photo: Salvage officer Aalberts.



Caption associated with escape hatch crashed Mosquito

Photo: Salvage officer Aalberts



Cumming, M. (1998). Beam Bombers: Secret War of no. 109 squadron.

Sutton Publishing: United Kingdom.

From Willem Visscher of the Stichting 4 May commemoration Dronten I receive a picture from the book 'Uit rivier en zee geboren' by Van der Linde (2015) in which you can read about the crashed Mosquito near the Zeebeumpie. From the same Visscher I also receive a photo from 1941 from his family album in which the Zeebeumpie is depicted. It is clear to see how shallow it was for that coastline.

In de nacht van 27 november 1944 stortte een geallieerde *Havilland Mosquito* (jachtbommenwerper) neer in het IJsselmeer, voor de kust van de Zuiderwaard. De bemanning bestond uit twee personen: een vlieger en een navigator, die naast elkaar in de cockpit zaten. Een van de bemanningsleden verongelukte tijdens de crash, de ander kon het vliegtuig levend verlaten. Doordat het water ondiep was kon hij zijn hoofd boven water houden terwijl hij op de bodem stond. Omdat het nacht was en vanwege de verduisterende maatregelen van de bezetter, was het voor de vlieger lastig om zich te oriënteren. Toen zijn ogen aan het donker gewend waren kon hij in de verte, net boven de denkbeeldige horizon, vaag iets onderscheiden. Op goed geluk waadde hij in de richting van het object, wat het "zeebeempien" bleek te zijn. Eenmaal aan wal strompelde hij in de richting van de boerderij op erf 74.

De komst van de piloot gaf de nodige opschudding op de boerderij van Zwier Kanis. Hoe nu te handelen? Er waren al onderduikers, maar het verbergen van een geallieerde piloot was een daad die vele malen zwaarder gestraft zou worden dan het verbergen van een onderduiker. Betrokkenen liepen een groot risico om standrechtelijk te worden geëxecuteerd. De communicatie met de

From: Van der Linde, G. (2015) River and sea born



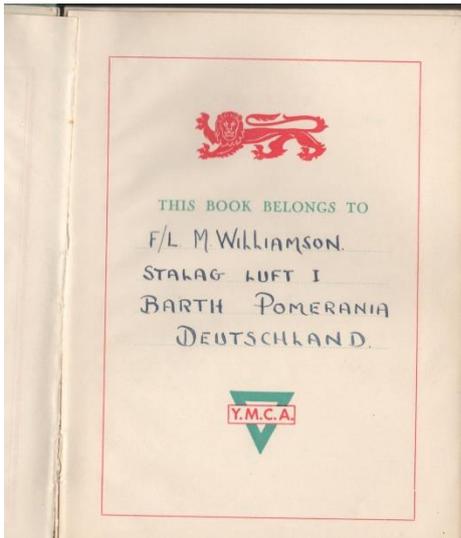
Photo from family album Willem Visscher

Then, thanks to an e-mail from the webmaster of [flevolanderfgoed.nl](https://www.flevolanderfgoed.nl)<sup>28</sup>, an interesting link is made to a website [mossie.org](https://www.mossie.org). On this site you can read a web discussion<sup>29</sup> by a man named Paul Williamson. This Paul Williamson writes about his grandfather, Maurice Williamson. This is the pilot of the crashed Mosquito. It's about a Canadian navigator who did not survive the crash and washed ashore. It can also be read that Paul asks his grandfather Maurice (the pilot) about the crash. Paul Williamson writes on October 30, 2001: *He (his grandfather red.) wasn't shot down, he had engine failure and had to ditch the plane in the sea, which is why his co-pilot was able to bail out earlier than my grandfather.*

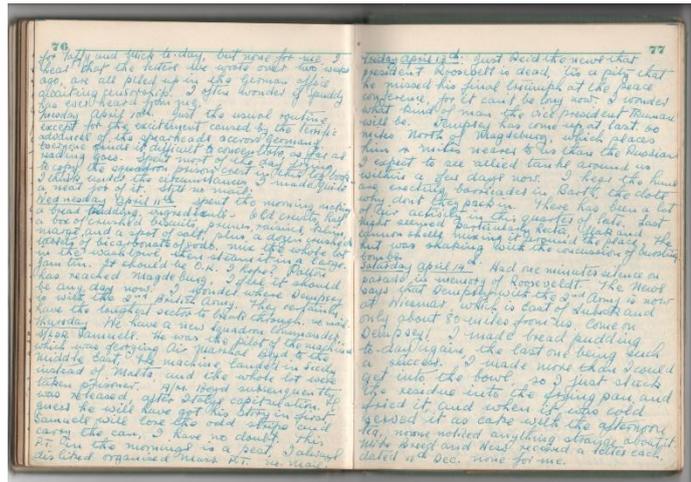
I decide to search the internet for this Paul Williamson. After some time it's hit. Paul Williamson, the grandson of pilot Maurice, lives in Maryport, Cumbria, a town in the northwest of the United Kingdom near the Lake District. Paul turns out to be in possession of the flight log but also of the diary that his grandfather Maurice Williamson writes during his captivity after being surrendered to the Germans after the crash. In subsequent emails, Paul sends copies of the diary and a letter that his grandfather wrote in May 1945 to widow Edna Kitchen. Striking about the diary is that Stalag Luft 1, Barth Pomerania is reported as a prison camp. This location, located in the far north of Germany, is completely different from the location indicated on memorial post 2. At this pole we talk about Camp 13 Weiden in the south of Germany. From the copy of the diary this fact appears to be wrong. Paul sends the complete diary. It is a moving story of a man who tries to survive in very difficult times. In the camp they suffer from hunger and as the Russians get closer the tensions increase enormously. A few days before the official liberation, all German soldiers have disappeared. There was disorder. Then the local population, mainly women, come and beg for protection from the former prisoners. There is great fear of the Russians. All this is described by Williamson in a clear way in which he does not shy away from his own thoughts and feelings. On one of the last pages Williamson describes that on Thursday May 10, 1945 the women of Barth are forced to go to the camp to take care of the ex-convicts. It is a poignant story in which it is also striking that Williamson does not write a single letter about the crash of the Mosquito. In that sense, this diary does not offer any new information about the night of November 27, 1944.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.flevolanderfgoed.nl/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.mossie.org/forum/read.php?1,124,152#msg-152>



Inside page from Williamson's diary  
 Photo: Paul Williamson



Part from Williamson's diary.  
 Photo: Paul Williamson

Dulag-Luft. Kriegsgefangenenkartei.		Gefangenen-Erkennungsnummer 6893	Dulag-Lad Empfänger am 22.12.44.
NAME: WILLIAMSON		Vorname des Vaters: John	
Vorname: Maurice		Familienname der Mutter: Mary McMind	
Dienstgrad: F/lt. Funktion: Pilot		Verheiratet mit: ja	Anzahl der Kinder: 2
Matrikel-Nr.: 106 108		<b>Heimatanschrift:</b> Mrs. M. Williamson 15 Christian Street Maryport, Cumberland	
Geburtsort: Maryport			
Religion: Presb.			
Ziviler Beruf: Tabakhändler			
Staatsangehörigkeit: Brita			
Abdank am: 27.11.44 bei: Kruppen Fliegerwsp. 4881110			
Gefangennahme am: wie oben bei: wie oben Notenschaden			
<b>Nähere Personalbeschreibung</b>			
Figur: mittel		Augen: braun	
Größe: 1,74		Nase: gerade	
Schädelform: mittel		Bart: ja	
Haar: braun		Geburt: 22. Februar	
Gewicht: 65 kg		Besondere Kennzeichen: 2	
Gesichtsform: oval			
Gesundheitszustand: gesund			
Front		Profil	
Kf. G. A. W. I. F. L. Williamson 6893		Kf. G. A. W. I. F. L. Williamson 6893	

Prisoner of War card of Williamson, 22 December 1944  
 Photo in possession of Paul Williamson



Maurice Williamson  
 Photo in possession of Paul Williamson

Simon Kitchen is pleased to hear that more data is being released through the Williamson family. For Simon, these contacts are new. So he is surprised himself but also manages to surprise the family members of Williamson with a letter that pilot Maurice Williamson wrote on May 24, 1945 from Maryport England. In this letter Williamson describes the events during the last flight. He writes about a fire, that Kitchen and he do not control the fire. Kitchen gets stuck with his parachute in the escape hatch, gets unconscious through the smoke. Williamson barely manages to escape. The plane crashes with Kitchen on board.

Next to this letter Simon Kitchen sends another letter that the wife of pilot Williamson wrote to widow Edna Kitchen. Paul Williamson reports to be pleasantly surprised with the copies of these letters. He immediately sends them to Australia, where his aunt Helen lives. Helen is the daughter of the pilot. In an email to me, Helen writes that she is deeply moved by the letters. Among other things, she writes: It was sad for me to see my mothers writing, as I have nothing of hers in the written form.

9.2.45.  
15, Christian Street,  
Maryport  
Cumberland

Dear Mrs. Kitchen,

I understand your husband was navigating for my husband when they took off for their unlucky trip on

Part from letter from Mrs. Williamson to Edna Kitchen 9-2-1945  
Photo: Simon Kitchen

is very small. I immediately bent down and tried to free him, but found he was firmly wedged by his chute which was fixed to his chest, and the dinghy which was attached to his seat.

The cockpit was full of smoke and fumes by this time, I pulled and struggled hard to free him, but he was absolutely immovable. He then lost consciousness, I think it must have been the fumes, I thought then that it was all over for both of us, for there is only one exit.

Finally the port wing tanks exploded, and the machine began to spin to earth out of

Part from letter from Maurice Williamson to widow Edna Kitchen 24-5-1945  
Photo: Simon Kitchen

### More information.

I decide to continue searching after all this new information. For example, the story of Jan Westerink remains very interesting. As it seems, his report is the only eyewitness report on the Mosquito. After some research on the internet I find out that Jan Westerink died on April 18, 2016. So he was still alive when my search started! I contact his family and son Hans becomes a contact person. After some e-mailing we make an appointment with widow Joke Westerink and her son Hans in Hooerveen in the province of Drenthe. During this visit I tell about

my quest. Mrs. Westerink tells me that the experiences in the war have made a deep impression on her husband. He never talked about it. For son Hans it was new to hear about the Kitchen family. For him, the story of the painting was also new. Hans does come up with something that is remarkable. It is a photo that has always been hung in the Westerink house. It is a photo from the 40's. For Jan Westerink this was an important photo, but the family did not know why. With this picture and the picture of the painting this suddenly becomes clearer. Jan incorporated the events of March 1945 into a painting in which he was inspired by a photo from the war years of the sky above Kampen.



Events on 4 March 1945, painted by Jan Westerink  
Photo: Gert Talens



Photo of the sky above Kampen in the 1940s  
Photo in possession of family Westerink

During the journey back home from Hoogeveen I think that there might be more eyewitnesses alive. That's why a few days later I contact [brugnieuws.nl](http://brugnieuws.nl). This is a news site that is mainly active in Kampen. The editor agrees with my proposal to place a call on his site in which I make it known that I am looking for eyewitnesses of the crash on November 27, 1944. After a week I have ten telephone responses from different people from Kampen in the age of 82 to 93 years. Independently of each other, six of these ten declare that an airplane crashed near the coast, near the Zeebeumpie, in the autumn of 1944. One witness indicates that he saw a body in the wreckage when he visited it with some friends. Another indicates that in the spring of 1945, while visiting this wreck, a leg was seen. Several witnesses indicate that they visited the wreckage and took parts of it with them for use. A witness stated that he was the brother of Jan Westerink. This 83 year old Roelof Westerink told me that his brother was not present himself to remove the body from the aircraft. This is what others have done. He also says he does not know about the contact his brother Jan had with the Kitchen family. On a second call this Roelof again indicates that his brother Jan could not have been present during the removal of the body. Another witness indicates that he saw the aircraft on fire and finally two witnesses indicate that the pilot went to farmer Zwiër Kanis to ask for shelter there. Witnesses state that this farmer was an NSB-er, but also had people in hiding. It is not clear whether this Kanis played a role in the arrest of the pilot by the German occupier.

# Getuigen gezocht voor historisch onderzoek naar neergestort vliegtuig

(ingezonden door Gert Talens)

Mijn naam is Gert Talens, woon in Dronten en doe onderzoek naar een neergestort vliegtuig in 1944.

In de nacht van 27-28 november 1944 is in de nabijheid van Kampen een Engels luchtmacht vliegtuig neergestort. Het ging om een de Havilland Mosquito B Mk XVI ML979. Het vliegtuig kende twee bemanningsleden. Piloot Maurice Williamson kon dankzij zijn parachute ontsnappen, maar werd op de grond gearresteerd en overgedragen aan de Duitsers. Hij werd krijtsgevangene en kwam terecht in het krijtsgevangenen kamp Stalag Luft 1 te Barth in Pommeren, Duitsland.

**Drie Kamper jongeren**  
Het andere bemanningslid, Alfred Kitchen, kon niet ontsnappen en is omgekomen. Zijn lichaam is na de winter, begin maart 1945, uit het vliegtuig gehaald door drie Kamper jongeren, dit gebeurde op last van de Duitse bezetter. Deze groep van drie bestond uit vijf, maar drie jongens werden opgedragen het lijk te halen. Alfred Kitchen is daarna begraven op de begraafplaats te IJsselmuiden, waar zijn lichaam nu uiteraard nog steeds ligt. Een naam van een van de jongens uit Kampen die betrokken was bij het bergen van het lichaam van Kitchen is bekend: Jan Westerink. Andere mogelijke betrokkenen zijn



*De jongens die van de Duitsers het lichaam moesten bergen.*



*Gert Talens met de zoon van de omgekomen vlieger.*

Part from [brugnieuws.nl](http://brugnieuws.nl) about the search for witnesses, May 2018.

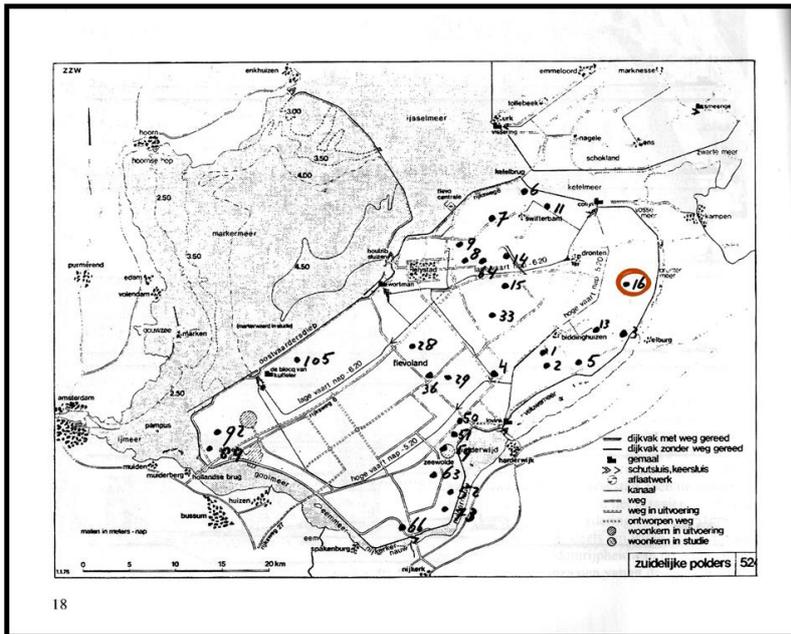
Photo: Gert Talens

## The investigation comes to an end, but questions remain.

In the period from May 2018 to June 2019, information keeps coming in. Sometimes it is about things that are already known, sometimes it is about new things that are unknown to me. For example, Dick Breedijk e-mails information about a found wing of a Mosquito near the location of Torenbosje. Source is the book 'In de schaduw van de Glorie' written by Veenstra in 1992. It is mentioned that on November 14, 1963 large parts of the wing were recovered. "Because large parts of the wing of this machine were made of wood, it was not too far away and it protruded quite a bit above the ground". In the same publication the location 16 is circled. This indicates the area where the Torenbosje can now be found.

Is this find and publication now in conflict with the eyewitness report of Jan Westerink and the oral reports made by me to the ten people from Kampen who called me in response to an appeal in the local Bridge of Kampen?

I don't think so. Considering the fact that the Mosquito was a wooden plane and parts could have moved very well floating, it is possible that this part, as described by Veenstra (1992), was driven towards location Torenbosje, while the crash location was near the Zeebeumpie. The many (oral) reports about the location near the Zeebeumpie seem to be decisive.



18

Overzicht van vindplaatsen van door de Kon. Luchtmacht geborgen vliegtuigwrakken 1960 - 1975.

Kavel aanduiding ontleend aan het "Verkaveling plan Flevoland" van de dienst Zuiderzee werken.

No.	Type	Jaar	Kavel	No.	Type	Jaar	Kavel
1	Meteor	1960	Y-9	29	Halifax	1967	V-11
2	Lancaster	1960	Y-20/Y-21	33	Wellington	1967	S-20
3	Spitfire	1960	Z-104	36	B-17	1968	E-61
4	ME-109	1960	U-61	50	Mustang	1970	PZ-50
5	Lancaster	1960	Z-39	51	ME-110	1970	GZ-12
6	Wellington	1961	H-54/H-55	52	B-17	1970	PZ-4
7	Hampden	1961	J-23	63	ME-110	1971	GZ-38
8	JU-88	1961	G-118/G-119	64	JU-88	1971	J-104
9	Lancaster	1961	G-85/G-86	66	Lancaster	1971	GZ-45/GZ-55
11	ME-110	1962	H-79	73	Stirling	1972	PZ-53
13	ME-109	1962	Z-28	84	JU-88	1973	AZ-115
14	Lancaster	1962	J-52	92	HE-115	1974	AZ-104
15	Gotha	1963	S-55	105	Liberator	1975	DZ-1
16	Mosquito	1963	P-53				
28	Stirling	1967	D-26/D-27				

Copy from Veenstra, S.L. (1992). In de schaduw van de Glorie. Veenstra: Zutphen.

What remains strange is that my search did not answer the question how it is possible that Kitchens Mosquito at the Zeebeuimpie has not been officially salvaged and that no documentation has been found by me about this. Possibly there is one, but not found by me.

Another question is the fact that commemorative pole 2 says that the plane flew in German colours. As mentioned before, this mention is an unpleasant description for the Kitchen family.

In an answer to an e-mail from me to Mr. Kappert, salvage officer of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, Kappert states that it is unknown to him that during the war English aircraft flew in German colours. Also in the national archives of England I haven't come across anything about the possible German colouring of English machines. Probably a message, mailed by Breedijk, also provides clarity here. In his mail Breedijk refers again to the publication of Veenstra in 1992. The following can be read: "For example, the paint that covered the wings of this aircraft turned out to be of a white-grey color that was not used by the English Air Force" (Veenstra, 1992). And a little further on it is written: "The most probable assumption the Air Force can give to this machine, is that it must have belonged to KG/200, which was a German Air Force unit that operated with captured English and American aircraft. Unfortunately a guess because until now the facts have never become outdated" (Veenstra, 1992).

It seems that the makers of commemorative pole 2 based themselves unilaterally on data from Veenstra's book. And although Veenstra himself clearly states that it is a guess, the text on commemorative pole 2 leaves no ambiguity. The fact is presented here: "What was special about this plane was that it wore the colours of a German plane" (commemorative pole 2, Stichting 4 mei commemoration Dronten).



## Vliegtuigroute



In de nacht van 27 op 28 november 1944 is hier: "De Mosquito, type ML 979 B Mk XVI van het 109 squadron neergestort".

De gehele bemanning:

F/O A.E. Kitchen DFC kwam hierbij om het leven, zijn lichaam werd pas op 4 maart 1945 geborgen.

F/L M. Williamson werd krijgsgevangenen gemaakt en gevangen gezet in Camp 13 Weiden Duitsland.

Bijzonder aan dit vliegtuig was dat het de kleuren droeg van een Duits vliegtuig

De oorzaak van de crash is niet bekend.

Part of memorial pole 2 at the Torenbosje Oudebosweg Dronten

However, the mail from Breedijk offers solace when it comes to these German colours. According to Breedijk there was indeed a KG200 air force unit and they had a Mosquito. However, in this case it was a type B.IV and not a type B.XVI, the aircraft in which Kitchen departed from Little Staughton. Breedijk refers to the book *Geheimflüge* by Smith, Creek and Petrick from 2006. As far as the colours are concerned, Breedijk further indicates that the white/grey colours as described in Veenstra (1992) can also be the colours of English Mosquito's. He mentions here the type B.IV, a photo reconnaissance plane that did fly in these colours. By the way, the Mosquito I saw in the De Havilland Aircraft Museum in Shenley was also of a grey colour. So it seems unlikely that the find as it was done at the location Torenbosje was an airplane in German colours.

### **Something more about commemorative pole 2.**

It has been proven that the description on the current post about Maurice Williamson's prisoner of war camp is not correct. Williamson was in Stalag Luft 1 in Barth, Pomerania and not in Camp Weiden. Secondly, it can be concluded that the suggestion that it was an airplane in German colours is very unlikely. Probably it is that publications and opinions have been mixed up and thus a kind of new truth has arisen. Finally, it can be said that the Mosquito which contained Williamson and Kitchen did not crash at the location Torenbosje but at the location Zeebeumpie, with coordinates: N52°33'43.8", E5°50'40.5"

A number of times I have informed the board of the Stichting 4 May commemoration in Dronten of my findings. Again and again I received the answer that they keep to the facts they know. And they left it at that. When I inquired about these facts, the same answer came: we adhere to the facts known to us. So far I have not seen the facts of this Foundation, I have not been able to see the documentation that underlies the descriptions as they can be read on commemorative pole 2.

I have also presented my described findings to various other experts. The following people were approached: Arie Kappert and Bart Aalberts salvage officers of the Royal Netherlands Air Force, Jan Nieuwenhuis of <http://www.airwar4045.nl>, Teunis 'Pats' Schuurman of [www.teunispats.nl/ww2.htm](http://www.teunispats.nl/ww2.htm), Nico Kwakman of <http://www.zzairwar.nl>, Fred Vogels of <https://www.backtonormandy.org/> and Bert Wijs of Stichting Ongeland. All parties indicated in various terms that my found facts are closer to the truth than the facts as written on the commemorative pole 2. My findings were compared to data from the various other sites and often turned out to be similar. It was also striking that my frustrations with regard to the answering and arguing of Stichting 4 May commemoration Dronten were recognized.

To the above findings I have the following proposal to the Foundation 4 May Commemoration Dronten, the foundation that manages the memorial poles. For the sake of the Kitchen and Williamson families I request to replace as soon as possible the text stating that the device was in German colours. The mention that Williamson was a prisoner of war in camp Weiden replaced by Stalag Luft 1 at Barth, Pomerania. Furthermore the cause of the crash is known, namely 'engine faillure' resulting in a fire, as described in Williamson's letter to the widow Kitchen. Also this has to be changed on the description. Last but not least, parts of the aircraft were found at this location (Torenbosje), but the aircraft crashed near the Zeebeumpie at location N52°33'43.8", E5°50'40.5". The nice thing is that there is still a descendant of this tree on the dike and on the dike at the Kamper side there is a bench with a description of the fact that the Zeebeumpie used to stand here.

With this proposal I think it is possible to keep commemorative pole 2 where it is now, but with the improved text. For example, the Torenbosje keeps its memorial pole, but it does refer to the original crash site about 7 km to the northwest. Described proposal seems to come to the wishes of all parties to know: foundation around the Greppelveld (the Torenbosje), foundation 4 May commemoration Dronten, the families Kitchen and Williamson and the historiography.

## Thank you

I am aware that there are possible errors, ambiguities or omissions. In order to ensure that they are absent as much as possible, I have presented my text to many people. People with knowledge, passion and commitment to what has ever happened. I am grateful to these people for their feedback and information. Where applicable, I have incorporated their feedback into my text.

The Stichting 4 May commemoration Dronten I am grateful for their request to me to give the presentation for primary school children in 2017. I am also very grateful to the same foundation for the fact that Simon Kitchen and his son Dani le were guests of honour at the 2017 commemoration. It made a deep impression on the family, I won't forget that very soon.

I would like to thank the salvage officers Kappert and Aalberts for their insight into documents and their detective work. The photo of the escape hatch was an insane surprise. The Kitchen family was touched by this material. We hope to be able to really see this hatch one day. The hatch that prevented Alfred from escaping.

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I found it very impressive and encouraging that I could 'bother' all these people to a greater or lesser extent with my questions. The enthusiasm of all the informants mentioned was very encouraging for me.

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Finally I would like to thank Simon Kitchen and Paul Williamson, both of whom have provided me with very impressive documentation. The diaries and letters, the personal stories, it was very impressive to me.

Special thanks to Simon Kitchen who had to listen to my questions over and over again and went on to explore his own family history. During my search, I realized more and more that Alfred and Maurice were men who even wanted to live. Not heroes, but just guys who lived in a time when things were going badly. They did what they had to do but would have preferred to do something else.

Alfred's last words in his letter to his wife Edna often haunt my mind: *I felt as though I ought to be jumping on the train to come and see you- it made me feel quite homesick for you sweetheart.*

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