

'Forever marked'

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October 19, 2018

version 010

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SGLO T3342

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On January 30, 1944, the Lancaster Mk.III JA702 (GT-Z) crashed into the Noordoostpolder, just north of Marknesse, on lot N-33. A memorial post on the Oosterringweg now reminds us of this tragic event. Shown below are the fallen crew members: Jack Rule (28), Ken Ball (30), Ted Shorter (21), Jock Sloan (22) and Alan Race (22). They are buried in Vollenhove. They are also commemorated on the 'Monument for Allied Airmen' at the Groene Zoom / Breestraat in Marknesse, The Netherlands.



The Rule crew had taken off from the English base RAF Warboys on that Sunday in 1944, at 17:08 hrs., and was part of No. 156 Squadron R.A.F. Pathfinder Force Group No. 8. After the bomber had dropped the deadly cargo over Berlin at around 20:15 hrs., they were already 'visited' by a German night fighter north of Hanover, in which the bomb bay doors were damaged. Later on the 'hunter' attacked again, this time with a fatal outcome. A fire broke out. Initially pilot Rule got his 'ship' under control with help from Shorter and Ball and he immediately gave the order "bale out", but the other six didn't even have time to respond. The aircraft blew up. Oblt. Hans-Heinz Augenstein (22) of 7./NJG1 claims his 'prey' at 21:49 hrs.

Bill Cottam (22) and Paddy Coyne (29) were fortunate enough to open their parachutes, a few minutes later they were in the swampy polder clay. After 15 minutes the two met again and walked from 10 to 3 o'clock in an easterly direction, mainly on a path along one of the drainage dykes. They were discovered in a moored row boat by three Dutch boys, two of whom were Ruud Arnoldi (25) and Paul Crielaard (19). They brought their 'liberators' to their camp, after which they were helped further. Doctor J. H. Jansen (31) took care of Cottam's head wound. After a long stay in Friesland and briefly in the province of North Brabant, they were arrested in Antwerp, Belgium on 7 August 1944. Both survived the war, the remaining families were forever marked by the loss of their loved one.

SGLO member and WWII researcher Teunis Schuurman (aka PATS) received, in 2009, a crew picture from the daughter of Coyne. The names were written on the reverse. That should be a piece of cake, except the names Ken Ball and Charlie Evans raised some questions for Schuurman. The name Ken Ball could not be right anyway, first of all in terms of time and then with the personal photos of Ball as proof. Charlie Evans did not



appear on the 24 Rule crew listings. Last month PATS saw the 'cookie' photo again. Time to see who the real people were in that remarkable photo from 1943 with plane 'K2'.

Manley and Reeves of the original crew (August-September 1943) were the first candidates. Manley's cousin and a niece of Reeves were approached within two weeks, they provided proof of what I had already suspected in 2009. Ken Ball was actually Jack Manley, while the name Charlie Evans came close, it was really Charlie Reeves from Chepstow, Wales. Sgt. Frederick John 'Jack' Manley (20), from Bristol in the southwest of England, flew on December 24, 1943 with another crew, they never returned and are still missing.

Flt. Lt. Charles 'Charlie' William Reeves DFC (21) saw many around him disappear. After completing his first tour (32 missions) Charlie went for the second tour in 1944. After 41 missions, the navigator from Wales became another victim of war violence on September 11, 1944, and is now buried in the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery in Kleve, Germany.



Rule (New Zealand), Sloan (Scotland), Coyne (Ireland), Reeves (Wales), Race, Shorter and Manley (England) - photos collection (c) PATS

Jack sent a photo with text to his sister Joan Manley (24). "*All the Best. To Joan.*" This unique copy gave the solution, on the reverse it was marked with all names in their personal handwriting. A 'hit' for our sleuth who has been putting a lot of puzzle pieces together on this topic since 2006. The photo was taken at the end of August 1943 on the English base Elsham Wolds, No. 103 R.A.F., while Lancaster Mk.I W4337 (PM-K2) is in the background, with which they flew six missions to Italy and Germany.

Puzzle solved? As far as the crew picture is concerned, it certainly succeeded, but who was the third person who spent that night in the company of Ruud Arnoldi and Paul Crielaard? Which camp? Where was the row boat of Arnoldi and his buddies moored? Is the Irishman Pat Coyne born in 1912 or 1914? Tried to contact the Shorter/Norcutt family for a better photo of Ted. Were people on a targeted search for that specific night, or was it a chance discovery? Attendant Marechaussee Hermans, who was detached (at the beginning of 1944) to Camp Emmeloord II, is mentioned in the questionnaire of February 10, 1946 by Dr J. H. Jansen as being the contact person of the resistance who arranged the transport of Cottam and Coyne outside the polder. Is the name Hermans correct? In the same letter are the names of Engel Sap, Beerta (Gr.) and Muller, supervisor contractor Kingma.

Maybe this will ring a bell for one of the readers. I have been curious about any proof or additional information on this challenging search for more than 12.5 years. Contacted 705 families worldwide. SGLO stands for 'Study Group Air War 1939 - 1945' and the code SGLO T3342 refers to Lancaster Mk.III JA702 (GT-Z 'Zebra').

More than 330 crashes in this region are now described on www.teunispats.nl/ww2.htm.