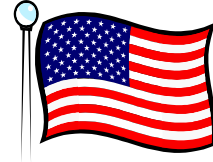


A Night to Remember



EXTRACT FROM THE CONTROL TOWER LOG, SEETHING AIRFIELD, 22ND APRIL 1944:-

“At 1706 26 Aircraft took off

5 Aircraft crashed at end of runway; 1 burnt out at end of runway, enemy aircraft made numerous attacks on all aircraft.

Two of our aircraft are missing, 608 Lt.Pitts & 843 Lt Pulcipher

9 aircraft from other bases landed here during this.

Lt. Alspaugh’s crew bailed out when their aircraft 744 was shot down, crew accounted for.

Our M.P.’s ambulances and crash tenders are out checking various crashes”.

On that day in 1944 those 26 aircraft from 715th Bomber Squadron USAAF, based at Seething in Norfolk joined a total of 831 aircraft, their mission was to attack and bomb the railway complex around Hamm in Germany and disrupt the German war effort.

Not much is known about what happened over the skies in Europe, but later events as the aircraft returned to their bases in East Anglia was to become one of the worst night for casualties that the USAAF were to suffer in WWII.

The planes flew back across the Channel at altitude, unknown to them they were being tracked at low altitude by enemy aircraft, deliberately to avoid coastal defences and radar. When the attack came it was carnage, and the events were witnessed by many people living along the coast, the time according to some witnesses was between 9pm and 10pm.

Of the aircraft that took off from Seething, one was going to change the lives of a number of people in Kessingland, children as young as 11 watched the evening sky as they saw one aircraft pursued and shot down by an enemy plane.

This was the B24 Liberator 843 piloted by Lt. Pulcipher.

The aircraft came down to the south of the village, in an area at the bottom of Coopers Lane, leading to the Kessingland Levels and Marshes. There were no survivors.

For those that witnessed the events that night, there was talk of having a memorial to commemorate the crew whose lives were lost. With that in mind, one of those people John Blowers, who was 11 years old at the time, contacted the local Church Council at St. Edmunds Church to see if it would be possible to do this and have the memorial in the vicinity of the Village War Memorial. He also wrote to the Parish Council (not to be confused with the Church) and asked for their support, also seeking financial support towards the cost of the memorial. It was agreed that the Council would support the project with a financial donation, and as Chairman of the Parish Council , I contacted John and offered my services to try and locate any next of kin/extended family, in order that they could be made aware of what was being planned in memory of their relatives.

Another person recruited for the search was Official Historian for the 448th Bomber Group based at Seething this was Patricia Everson. She too was a young girl of 11 years at the time, and remembers the night well.

Research started in February 2009 and a number of agencies were contacted but it was through an appeal on the USAAF website in June 2009 that contact was made with Roy Thomas, a 66 year old retired school psychologist from Monroe Wisconsin. He had experience researching, looking for families/next of kin of aircrew of the USAAF in W.W.II

The 10 crew members were identified as:-

Pilot	2 nd Lt. Eugene V. Pulcipher
Co. Pilot	2 nd Lt. Elmer P. Meier
Navigator	2 nd Lt. George S.Fahr
Bombardier	2 nd Lt. William Carcelli
Radio Operator	Staff Sergeant Chester J. Romanosky
Gunner	Staff Sergeant James R. Hardin
Gunner	Sergeant William H.Durant
Gunner	Sergeant William S.Davis
Gunner	Sergeant Maynard H.Young
Gunner	Sergeant Carl E. Spellman.

Roy's addition to the team researching the crew was a turning point. I was able to identify the family members of the aircrew through American Census Records accessed via Ancestry.com. Roy having received this information was able through his connections and additional research able to confirm or not if we had the right family.

By September 2009 all 10 families had been contacted and confirmed as next of kin/ extended family. Some of those contacted have expressed a wish that they would like to attend any dedication service that may be arranged, once the memorial has arrived from the stonemason.

As the project progresses towards that day, there will be further updates on this website.

Liam Martin

Chairman

Kessingland Parish Council