

## The Memories of the Air War over Denmark Return



On 21 March 1945 English Mosquito bombers attacked the Shellhuset in Copenhagen where the Gestapo had their headquarters. During the approach one of the planes, MOS SZ977, hit a tower, veered off course and crashed near the French School in Frederiksberg. The smoke from the school made the following planes think that the school was the Shellhuset, and so they bombed it. This cost the lives of 124 Danes, among them 87 children in the French school. Peter Kleboe, the pilot of the Mosquito plane, and Reginald Hall, the navigator, were buried in Bispebjerg cemetery. Photo: Scanpix

More than 1.000 Allied airmen from England and the USA and other countries were shot down and killed in Denmark during the Second World War. A new homepage gives a survey of where they were shot down and where they were laid to rest.

By [Jens Ejning](#) Sunday 28 September 2008, 22:30. (Translated by Kirsten Klitgård)

One afternoon in May 1944 the quiet was broken in the eastern part of Als. The American Bomber "Stormy Weather" had to make a forced landing in a field near Skærtøft farm after a bombing raid to Berlin. Only one of four motors of the plane was functioning when Captain Robert Clay landed it in the field, and afterwards he and the rest of the ten-man crew were arrested by the Germans and sent to a prison camp in Nazi Germany.

Less than a year later, on 21 March 1945, the Mustang fighter of RAF pilot David Drews was hit by flak from the German cruiser "Nürnberg" in Copenhagen harbour in connection with the English attack on the Gestapo headquarters in the Shellhuset. The plane crashed in the Fælledparken, and the English pilot was afterwards laid to rest in Bispebjerg cemetery.

These two stories are just some of many told on the new homepage [airmen.dk](http://airmen.dk) where Anders Straarup, pensioned history teacher from Randers, tells of the many Allied pilots, gunners and navigators who were shot down over Denmark during the years 1939-1945 in the struggle against the Nazis.

## **Charting of crashes**

Among other things the homepage charts where the Allied planes crashed in Denmark and where the crews who were killed are buried today. 1.167 Allied airmen lost their lives in Denmark. To them should be added approximately 500 who crashed into the sea and have never been found, as well as another 500 who survived the crashes and were taken to German prison camps.

Anders Straarup has already spent many hours on (the construction of ) the homepage. However, his work is far from finished. All the time new information and new pictures are added, but even now it contains lots and lots of interesting information of the many young men who risked their lives for a better world during the Second World War.

"I have pictures of all the monuments which have been erected to the crews who were shot down, and I have given precise information as to where they can be found. I also have photos of all tombstones of Allied airmen who were buried in this country," explains Anders Straarup.

Among other things it is possible to see and read the heart-rending text on the headstone of air bomber Brian James in Broballe. He crashed in January 1944 together with the rest of the crew of the Royal Air Force Lancaster bomber. His parents have had the following text inscribed on the stone: "Here in this friendly land we leave our dear son." Brian James reached the age of 22.

## **Most crashes in the south of Denmark**

The aeroplanes crashed in connection with everything from transports and dropping of gear to Danish freedom fighters (people in the Danish resistance) to mine-laying and bombing raids. Many of the planes crashed over the south of Denmark, which according to Anders Straarup was due to the fact that many bombing raids to former East Prussia took place by way of the south of Denmark.

Few months after Captain Robert Clay and his co-pilot had landed "Stormy Weather" in the Skærtøft field, it was therefore also in the air over Als in the south of Denmark that extreme bad luck befell two Allied bombers. They collided with each other in the air in the night before 16 September. The two Halifax bombers from the Australian and the Canadian air force respectively were on their way back to the bases in England after a raid to Kiel when they crashed into each other. All 14 men died, and the fragments of the planes were scattered over a large area.

With his homepage Anders Straarup wants to ensure that "knowledge of the Second World War becomes available to all people who are interested in it."

German airmen also crashed. Why are they not mentioned in your work?

"Now, the fact was that it was the Allies who helped Denmark to become a free country again and the world to get rid of Nazi Germany. The Germans were the enemy," he says.

**Link: [Allied Airmen – Allierede flyvere 1939-45 DK](#)**