

## **Memorial speech to the crew of Halifax LL235 - 23 Apr 2015**

*Welcome to the Memorial Ceremony on 23 APR 2015  
here at Karlsminde on the 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the air crash.*

### The crew:

Pilot:	<b>Edward N. Thompson</b>	<b>DFC</b>
Navigator:	<b>Gerald Mc Clelland</b>	<b>DFM</b>
Bomb Aimer:	<b>Alfred E. Robbins</b>	<b>DFC</b>
Wireless Operator:	<b>Frederick W. Harvey</b>	
Flight Engineer:	<b>J. Armstrong</b>	
Mid Upper Gunner:	<b>Roy Redall</b>	
Rear Gunner:	<b>D. M. M. Harris</b>	

They are the names of the members of the crew that we are gathered here today to commemorate.

At about 21:00 this crew and a number of others took off from **RAF Elvington** in Mid England. About 2 hours later they passed the west coast of Jutland.

They flew a four-engined bomber of the type Halifax Mark V, and their mission that night was to lay sea mines in the Baltic Sea in the area just south of Møn.

They were spotted about half an hour after having entered Danish territory, and they did not reach the target of the operation that night.

Over North Als the plane was intercepted by an enemy fighter, a Messerschmitt Bf 110 that was beneath and behind the Halifax, when it fired at it at about 23:30.

The experienced pilot Thompson continued even if the bomber was now ablaze. They flew over Svenstrup heading east and here at Karlsminde the pilot presumably tried to make a forced landing in the fields near the coast.

However, the burning plane went on several hundred metres over the water till it crashed - right off the place where we are standing today.

Only Rear Gunner Sergeant D.M.M. Harris was rescued.

Harris was rescued by a local fisherman Christian Hansen and by Erik Agergaard of Danfoss, after having spent a little more than an hour in the cold water.

Harris was taken to a house near this place, where he had dry clothes and a cognac to strengthen him.

An ambulance was called for and it headed for the hospital in Sønderborg.

On the road at Bro in the eastern part of Augustenborg the ambulance was stopped by the German Wehrmacht heading for the crash site. Harris was captured. As a Prisoner of War he was taken to the barracks in Sønderborg.

Today we commemorate the crew that took off from Elvington 71 years ago on Sunday 23rd April 1944 at about 21:00. They were heading for their target in the Baltic Sea, but they did not reach it. All of them were killed in the air crash, except rear gunner Harris.

This year we commemorate the fallen – also in this country. We also have our fallen soldiers – from earlier battles and in present battles. Right now Danish soldiers are deployed to many of the hot spots of the world – and losses follow.

We will not forget the 6 men killed near this spot, even if the incident occurred way back in 1944.

In short

**We will remember them – they will always be in our hearts**

**With these words I lay the bunch of flowers from the Army.**