

Air crash on 29 April 1943 near Aadum

Sgt. Ronald James Barton, RAF 218 Sqdn. (Gold Coast).

P/O. Kenneth Sidney Hailey (Pilot), RAF 218 Sqdn.

Sgt. Arthur George Percival Sindrey, RAF 218 Sqdn.

Sgt. Andrew George Surtees, RAF 218 Sqdn.



At least 10 RAF planes crashed on Danish territory during a big minelaying operation in the night before 29 April 1943. At 0230 hours one of them, a Stirling, sent an SOS call on the radio. Nothing more was heard from the plane that had crashed near Aadum.

When the wreck of the plane had been excavated, the mortal remains of 4 airmen were buried on 23 May 1943 by Vicar S. Andersen.

2 of the perished members of the crew, Sgt. Head og P/O. Holliman, were buried in Esbjerg. A surviving airman, Sgt. Bliss, died in a German Prisoner of War camp. He was buried in Soltau.

(From the book Fallen Allied Airmen 1939-1945, Odense University Publishing 1995).

With great interest and knowledge of what happened to Allied planes shot down during World War II master carpenter Hans Vestergaard, Aadum, (born on 31 July 1937) has gathered information about the air crash on 29 April 1943.

Hans was then 6 years old and lived with his parents and a sister on Gammelgård, Odderupvej 18. He recalls

"I clearly remember that my mother woke us up in the middle of the night. She told us to get up. From the window we saw what looked like a big Midsummer-eve bonfire rushing past us." The next day he and his father went to the field near Aadum where the plane had crashed. He picked up what looked like a cartridge, but his father took it and threw it away.

Later Hans Vestergaard together with teachers and pupils have examined the site with metal detectors. They dug up a few pieces of metal presumably from the crashed plane.

Wall sheet with information gathered by Hans Vestergaard





218 Gold Coast Squadron – Downham Market 1943 England . The crew came from this airfield.

The crew of Stirling EF 356 (HA-O):

Pilot: Sgt. Kenneth Sidney Hailey

Flight Engineer: Sgt. Andrew George Surtees.

Navigator: Sgt. Arthur George Percival Sindrey.

Air Bomber: P/O Sidney. Michael Holliman.

Wireless Operator: Sgt. Ronald James Barton.

Mid Upper Gunner: Sgt. Harry Bliss.

Rear Gunner: Sgt. James Alfred Head.

The crew flew on 12 operations in 1943:

26-27 FEB	Stirling BF 416 (HA-T)	Minelaying near The Frisian Islands.
27-28 FEB	„ „ „	„ (Same area or near Texel).
3-4 MAR	„ „ „	Hamburg (Strafed 2 flak vessels on the return flight.
27-28 MAR	„ BF 413 „	Berlin.
29-30 MAR	„ „ „	Berlin.
4-5 APR	„ BK 706 (HA-Y)	Kiel.
8-9 APR	„ „ „	Duisburg.
10-11 APR	„ „ „	Frankfurt.
14-15 APR	„ „ „	Stuttgart. (Aborted. Oil leak and superheating).
16-17 APR	„ „ „	Mannheim.
26-27 APR	„ „ „	Duisburg. (Caught by searchlight twice. Hit by flak in nose and rear turrets, tail plane and rudder)
28-29 APR	„ BK 356 (HA-O)	Minelaying in the Fehmarn Belt. The plane shot down.

An inquiry from Hans Vestergaard to Ellen Margrethe Ellwood, DANFOLK, webmaster@danfolk.co.uk on 21 August 2007 gave this information on 25 April 2008:

"We know that they operated from the airfield Downham Market in Norfolk, 218 (Gold Coast) Squadron. The crew managed to fly on 12 operations between 16-27 FEB and 28-29 APR 1943.

The plane that crashed was a Stirling Mk. I of No. 218 Squadron, No. EF356, coded HA-O.

6 airmen from the crew of EF356 were killed in the air crash.

2 of them were buried in Esbjerg:

-Sgt. James Alfred Head, Air Gunner, 1302953, RAF(VR), 20, the son of J.R. Head of Hurstpierpont, Sussex.

-F/O Sidney Michael Holliman, Air Bomber, 128621, RAF/(VR), 21, the son of Sidney and Margaret Holliman of Cockfosters, Middlesex.

4 of them were buried in Aadum Churchyard:

-P/O Kenneth Sidney Hailey, 143386, RAF(VR), 21, the son of Sidney Laurence and Violey of Southgate, Middlesex.

-Sgt. Arthur George Percival Sindrey, Navigator, 1315664, RAF(VR), 21, the son of William Percival and Fanny Elizabeth Sindrey of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

-Sgt. Andrew George Surtees, Flight Engineer, 944647, RAF(VR), 21, the son of Ernest Dickinson Surtees and Annie Alice Surtees of Morpeth Northumberland.

-Sgt. Ronald James Barton Wireless Operator/Air Gunner, 1271695, RAF(VR), 22, the son of Robert James and Sarah Isabella Barton of Bethnal Green, London; and the husband of Maisie Rose Barton of Bethnal Green.

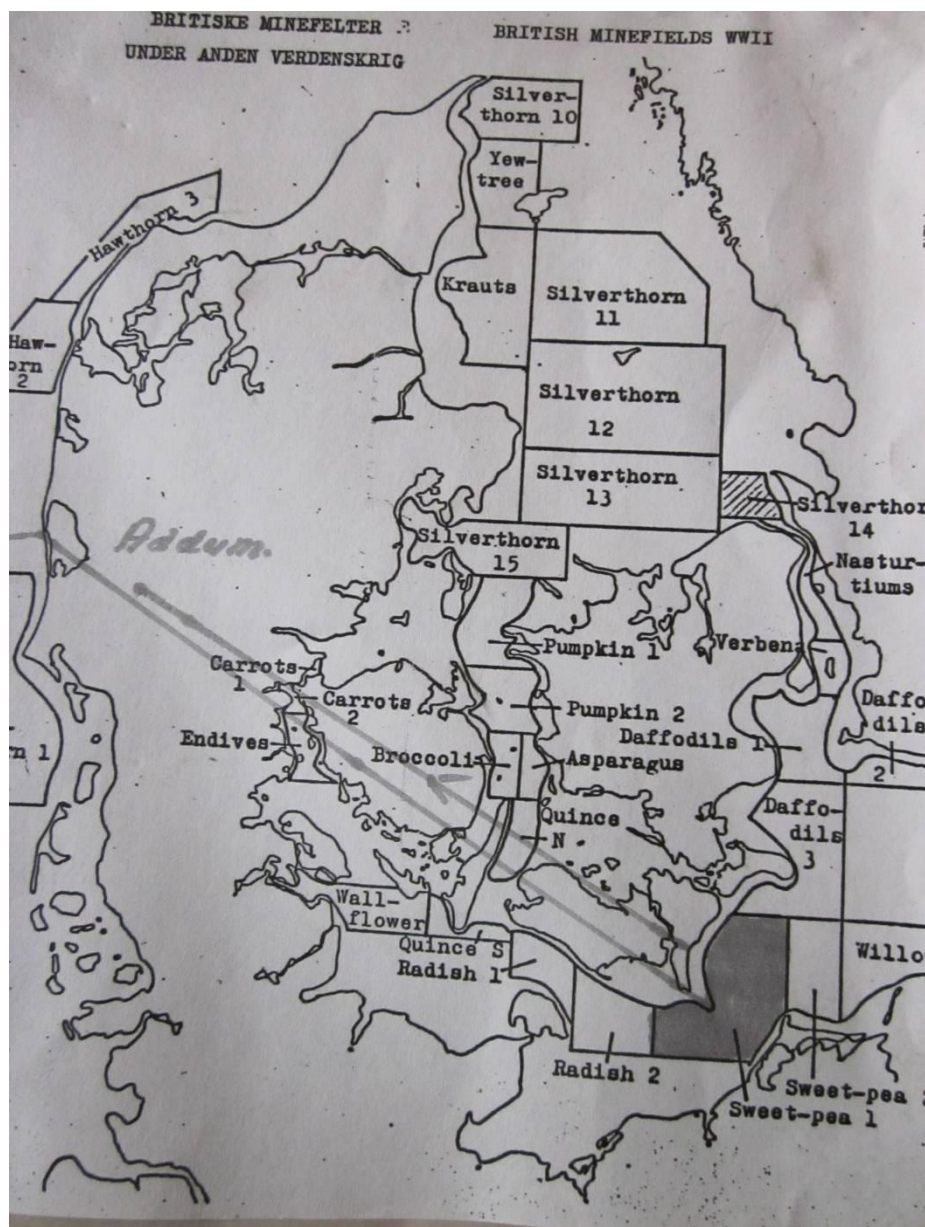
The crew comprised 7 airmen. One of them saved his life by bailing out:

-Sgt. (later Warrant Officer) Harry Bliss, Mid Upper Gunner, born on 28 October 1919, the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Bliss, Dover. Bliss became a Prisoner of War and died on 30 March 1945 as a POW. Buried in Soltau south of Hamburg."

*The headstones in
Aadum Churchyard*



The map shows their flight path till the plane was shot down near Aadum on 29 April 1943.



More information about the perished airmen:

1315664 Sgt. Arthur George Percival Sindrey.

Born in April 1922. The son of William Percival and Fanny Elisabeth Sindrey, 11 Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham Gloucestershire. He had married a girl who lived in Torquay.

He attended Cheltenham Grammar School. His optimism and sense of humour were said to have given him many friends. After he left school he worked as an employee at Cheltenham Market. Later he was employed in a company named Rotol.

Enlisted in the Royal Air Force in January 1941. Trained in the USA as an Observer (Navigator) and posted to No. 218 Bomber Squadron. Flew on operations February - April 1943.

Killed 28-29 April 1943 a few days after his 21st anniversary on a minelaying operation to the Fehmarn Belt, when Stirling EF 356 (HA-O) was shot down at 0045 hours near Aadum by Oberfeldwebel Mangeldorf from 12/NJG3, (other crew members: Unteroffizier Plath and Oberfeldwebel Schröder).



In 2014 these pictures were placed at the headstones in Aadum Churchyard by unknown visitors.

On the reverse side of the photo to the right the text Sgt. A.G. Surtees can be read.



Mid upper gunner: 650927 Sgt (later Warrant Officer) Harry Bliss, born on 28 October 1919. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Bliss, Dover. Prisoner of War. Died on 30 March 1945 in confinement 25 years old. Buried in Becklingen, Soltau

Information from CWGC:

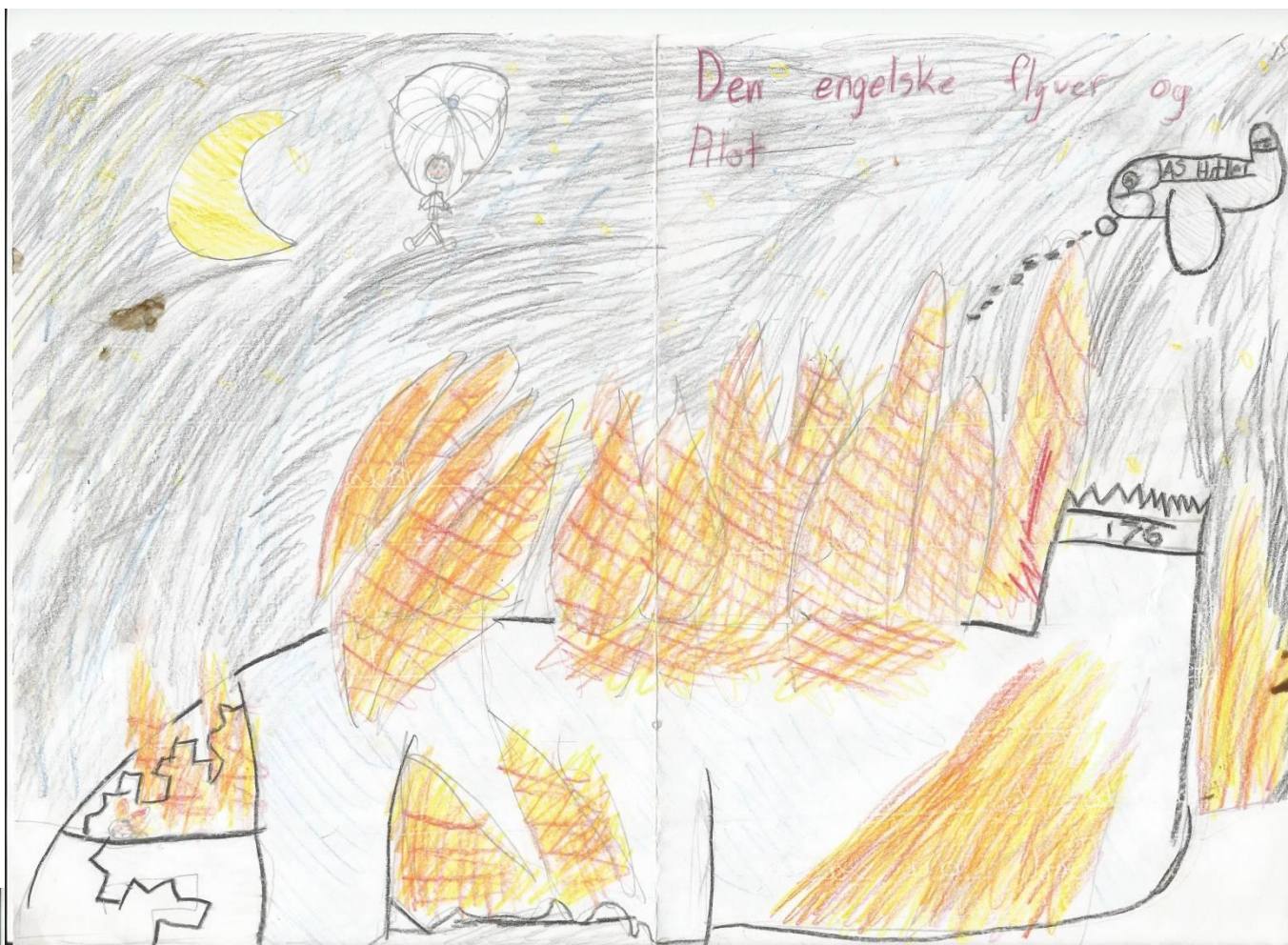
Becklingen War Cemetery has 2.374 Commonwealth World War II casualties, Verdenskrig, 97 of them unidentified. There are also 27 war graves of other nationalities, many of them Polish.



Picture of Sgt. Harry Bliss taken at the home of parish executive officer Otto Mortensen in Aadum. He bailed out and was taken to a German Prisoner of War camp.



Hans Vestergaard and his two daughters have visited the cemetery and found the grave of Harry Bliss.



Kære Hans.

Tak fordi du
ville fortælle os om
den engelske flyver,
det var meget
spændende.

Tak fordi du kunne
finde den store
cylinder.

Tak fordi du ville
"spilde" tiden på os.

Tak fordi du ville

vi se os marker,
hvor den styrtede
ned.

Kærlig hilsen
4.-5. Klasse

Skrævt af Rasmus
Carl Victor Heidi
og Talita!

Translation of the letter from the children:

Dear Hans,

Thank you for telling us about the English plane. It was very exciting. Fancy that you could find the big cylinder. Thank you because you cared to "waste" your time on us. Thank you because you would show us the field where it crashed.

Kind regards,

4.-5. form.

Written by Rasmus, Carl Victor, Heidi and Tabita!

Subject:

Air crash near ved Aadum

On 29 April 1943 Stirling EF356 crashed "near Aadum" but I would be pleased to be told exactly where.

The information will be included on the page www.airmen.dk/p178.htm

Kind regards,

Anders Straarup

Karetmagervej 25, 8920 Randers NV

7 November 2014:

In reply to your e-mail I can inform you that the air crash concerned was at Rosendalvej in the field opposite the entrance to number 4, Google Maps coordinates 55.881412, 8.610218.

I have the information from former master carpenter Hans Vestergaard, Aadum, who with great interest has gathered information about 29 April 1943. I have made a fair copy of the information from him, see the attached file.

samlet oplysninger omkring den 29. april 1943. Jeg har renskrevet de oplysninger, han har samlet, og sender dem hermed som vedhæftet fil.

I hope that the information is useful to you.

Kind regards,

Aadum lokalhistoriske Arkiv

/Dagmar Vestergaard

Head of the Archives

9 November 2014:

The 7 pages as a pdf-file are now included in the page **STI EF356** www.airmen.dk/p178.htm and pages about the 7 airmen.