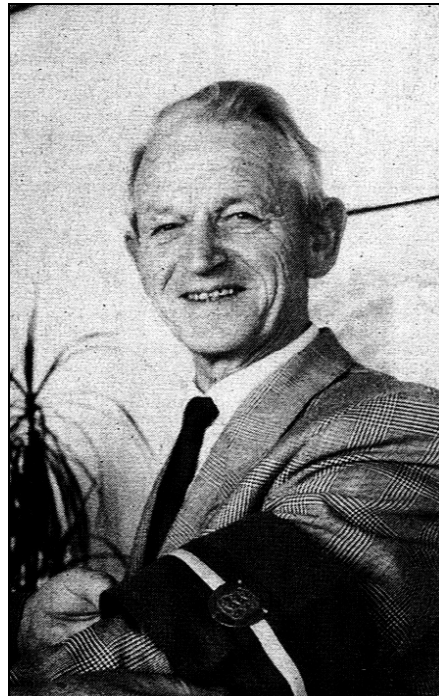


## The last weapon flight.

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### April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1945.

The heavy loaded 'Stirling' Short LJ645 from No. 570 Squadron took off from Tempsford Airbase at about 22:00 hours. F/O. Geoff A. Mombrun was again in action as a pilot. During the Arnhem-operation September 1944 in Holland his plane had crashed behind enemy lines, but he managed to avoid getting caught by enemy forces and got back to British occupied territory from where he returned to England. After a couple of months he was airborne again. Not as a bomber pilot but as captain on board a RAF/SOE plane flying special TABLEJAM missions to occupied countries delivering containers with ammunition, explosives and weapons to resistance groups on the continent, this time dropping places No. 172 and 179 in Jutland \*). The cargo consisting 24 containers was for resistance groups in Denmark. In the middle of Jutland a group from Herning District already had heard the secret message about a delivery on the BBC radio earlier in the evening, and the 8 – 10 men would be out at their dropping place after darkness waiting for the RAF weapon plane.



Flying Officer G. A. Mombrun. 'Eureka operator' – Ole Moeller Jensen, Herning.

\*) Probably it was place No. 251 in stead of 172 where a receiving missed. Reason: now plane came in.

In a church tower south of Herning a young man, Ole Moeller Jensen, was also in activity trying to get his 'Eureka' transmitter working. It was important for the incoming weapon plane to receive his signal, which would lead the plane to the dropping place.

The situation was almost the same out at eastern Jutland in the area of Horsens, where the second drop should take place at No. 179.

After crossing the North Sea flying extremely low the pilot, F/O. Mombrun, took his heavy plane in over the Jutland west coast south of Ringkoebing at a very low altitude. It was a dangerous mission, and he tried to avoid the German antiaircraft on the coast. Then a flight in about 500 feet across Jutland in darkness. The crew now hoped for, that German radar had not spotted their plane. In such case the German night fighters from Karup (Grove Jagdcenter) could be a bad confrontation with great danger.

Shortly after some thing missed – went wrong. They did not get the signal from the church tower at Lind, where young Jensen tried to do his best. The plane passed middle of Jutland, but the navigator did not find the dropping place. F/O. Mombrun went on hoping to find the place out at Horsens. Also there they missed. The plane passed shortly after the east coast of Jutland. It was bad luck now. Maybe it was worth with another try?

The ‘Stirling’ turned left and took course north along the coastline toward Aarhus. Maybe the intention was to cross Jutland from opposite direction and now again try to find those dropping places hidden in the dark? One can never find out, what really was going on and what the plane was. Anyway the aeroplane had to return in some direction westwards.



At a dropping place near Isenbjerg east of Herning. Old veterans from the Resistance, District Herning, having a reunion out at the spot, where they during the war picked up containers dropped from RAF/SOE weapon planes. The memorial stone was erected by local people in 1995. The inscription mentions three used dropping places.

South of Aarhus the German anti-aircraft batteries had spotted the lonely ‘Stirling’, and the three batteries opened fire, when the plane came into range. One of the heavy guns hit its target. Young P/O. Mombrun had to realise, that he was losing control over his plane. He continued flying north. The ‘Stirling’ had caught fire and it was burning heavily inside. They lost height. In the open landscape between Egaa and Skaerring north of Aarhus the plane crashed in a farm-field. In the dramatic crash three flyers were killed instantly. There were three survivors, and they were taken to a German camp hospital in Aarhus city. Next morning the perished airmen in the crashed plane also were taken to this hospital. The funeral of those three flyers took place on April 30<sup>th</sup> at Aarhus Vestre Cemetery.

In the hospital the three others were treated for their bad wounds from burning. F/O. Mombrun was badly wounded from burning, and it was not possible to save his life. After his death his body was on May 10<sup>th</sup> taken to the German section of above-mentioned cemetery by German forces and buried. A German priest committed the funeral. Later on the Cemetery authorities received information about the flyers funeral, and Danish authorities now became aware of this flyers identity and his hard destiny. The two others became POW a few days.

Later the four perished flyers from the plane were buried in a new arranged place called ‘Englaendergravene’ (The English Graves). The funeral was followed by a ceremony on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1945. Here the two survivors, Frank Rawling and Charles Flannigan participated after been very helpful in the process of identifying their comrades.



Photo taken shortly after the liberation of Denmark. In the picture are seen both Danish and German military personnel looking at the many pieces from the crashed plane. The weapon cargo consisting at least 24 containers would also have been here. It became *the last weapon flight* for Stirling LJ645 from No. 570 Squadron.

**Crew onboard Stirling LJ645 No. 570 Squadron.**

F/O. Pilot, Geoff A. Mombrun.

F/O. W. G. H. Hunt.

F/Sgt. John Herbert Hamilton.

F/Sgt. Kennet Ernest Johnson.

F/Sgt. Frank Rawling.

F/Sgt. Charles Flannigan.



RAF Stirling plane dropping load of containers with weapons, ammunition and explosives.

A small part of the RAF/SOE deliveries and droppings did not succeed and was lost in some way. But at the about 280 dropping places alone in Jutland some 6300 containers were received and the 'illegally' materiel brought to secret places and afterwards distributed to the resistance groups and used in the battle against the enemy. Around Herning it often was the railroad to German Air Base Grove the resistance picked out as target.