

Besætningen på HK537 fra eskadrille 463 RAAF–station Waddington

The crew of HK537 from 463 Squadron RAAF–station Waddington



F/Lt	Norman Percival Cooper	RAAF	pilot
Sgt	Francis Charles William Bull	RAF	flight engineer
F/Sgt	Lewis Havelock Christmas	RAAF	bombaimer
Sgt	Ronald James Grist	RAF	mid upper gunner
P/O	George Jeffreys Kerr	RAAF	navigator
Sgt	Frederick Ernest Robson	RAF	w.t.operator
F/Sgt	Harold Suthers	RCAF	rear gunner

At about midnight, on the 28th/29th January 1944, nearly 700 bombers flew from their bases in Eastern England to penetrate deep into Germany –Their target was Berlin (“The Big City”).

83 Squadron (Pathfinders) from RAF Wyton together with 463 Squadron and 467 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, based at Waddington all took part in the sortie. As allied bombers approached Danish airspace they were engaged by German night fighters and Lancaster JB412 from 83 Squadron was shot down near Varnaes at 02.20 hrs. Possibly, Lancaster JA967 from 83 Squadron was also hit during this attack, as there were bullet holes, along the tip of the starboard wing.

Minutes later, Lancaster HK537 from 463 Squadron was in the area above Augustenborg Fjord. The bomber was probably struck by “friendly bombs”. Seriously damaged, the pilot decided to try and return to England in order to save his crew and aircraft. In the cloudy airspace above the village of Broballe, whilst turning back into the oncoming bomber stream, HK537 collided with JA967 causing the latter to lose both outer wings and its starboard outer engine.

Following this collision HK537 crashed in open countryside, 300 meters west of Pommersgaard, close to the village of Mjels and blew up together with its bomb load.

With only 3 engines and no outer wings, the burning JA967 plummeted towards Broballe. The aircraft crashed and exploded in a field at a position just 100 meters north east from this place.

All 14 crew members from the two aircraft were killed. 13 of them were buried in Aabenraa cemetery, early in the morning of 2nd February 1944.

Sgt. F.C.W.Bull’s body was later found near the crash site of HK537 and was unofficially buried close by. After the war, this grave was officially consecrated but later levelled and his body was moved to Aabenraa cemetery for allied airmen where he was buried with his crew.

This memorial place is dedicated to the perished airman. It was raised and consecrated 29th January 1994 on the 50th anniversary. – All honour to their memory.