

Airplane Collision above "Nørreskoven" in World War II

At 01.05 hours on September 16, 1944 two Halifax bombers collided in the airspace above "Nørreskoven" forest and wreckage was spread over a large area between the villages Elstrup - Østerholm - Hundslev. Each bomber carried seven crew members and all were killed instantly. The tragic event took place after the bombers had participated in an air raid on the city of Kiel, Germany and were returning to their home bases in England.

Halifax III MZ 915 belonged to Squadron 466 Royal Australian Air Force and was stationed at Driffield, Yorkshire, England.

Halifax VII NP 719 belonged to Squadron 432 Royal Canadian Air Force and was stationed at East Moore, Yorkshire, England.

The Australian aircraft, commanded by the English F/Lt. A. Hutchinson, crashed here in the middle of the forest whilst the Canadian bomber, commanded by the Canadian P/O J. C. Gallagher crashed near fringe of the western forest.

The corpse fragments of the 14 crew members were identified as far as possible and gathered, whereupon they were buried at the cemetery for allied airmen in Aabenraa, September 18 1944.

A number of corpse fragments were left behind by the Germans but later gathered by the then forest ranger Angelo and some local residents.

A propeller blade was set up as a memorial.

On June 5 1945 a memorial ceremony was held here at this hillock.

After the war, the corpse fragments buried in this hillock were taken to the cemetery for allied airmen in Aabenraa and a memorial stone with the inscription "RAF 16-9-1944" was unveiled here. The propeller blade can now be seen in the museum at Sønderborg Castle.

This information table was set up on September 16 2004, the 60th anniversary of the tragic collision.

