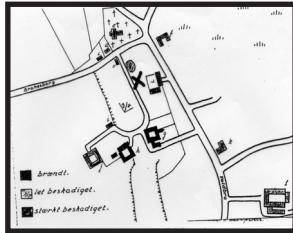


Flystyrtet i Gamtofte maj 1944.

The plane crash at Gamtofte May 1944.



Tirsdag d. 16. maj 1944 kl. 1:50 styrtede en Lancaster B1, ME 726 ned i Gamtofte Præstegårds have

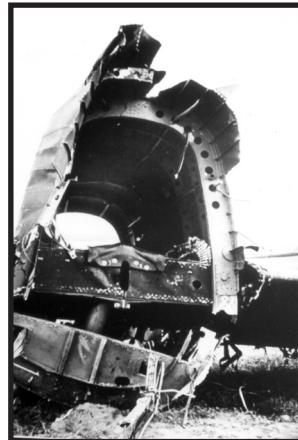
Flyet startede fra flyvestation Elsham Wolds i Lincolnshire, fortsatte over Vesterhavet til Jyllands kyst nær Esbjerg og videre til Lillebælt, hvor der skulle nedkastes miner.

Flyet blev angrebet af tyske jagere over Lillebælt. Svært beskadiget fortsatte det ind over Vestfyn og styrtede ned i Gamtofte (x). Kirken, præstegården, to gårde og flere huse blev ødelagt.

Thursday May 16 1944 at 1:50 a.m. a Lancaster B1, ME726 crashed into the garden of the vicarage at Gamtofte in the western part of the island of Fyn in Denmark.

The mission started at Elsham Wolds in Lincolnshire. The plane crossed the North Sea to the coast of Jutland near Esbjerg and continued to the target area in Lillebælt, where it was to lay mines.

The aircraft was attacked by german fighter planes and continued severely damaged over the western part of Fyn where it crashed at Gamtofte village (x). The church, the vicarage, two farms and several houses were demolished or severely damaged.



Ved nedslaget eksploderede minelasten, hvorfod præstegården blev stærkt beskadiget, ligesom kirken fik taget revet af og murværket beskadiget. To nærliggende strætakir gårde nedbrændte, og fem huse blev ødelagt. Flere beboere blev såret, men ingen dræbte.

De otte besætningsmedlemmer blev alle dræbte ved styrtet og den efterfølgende eksplosion, og deres lig blev fundet spredt over et stort område.

At the impact the mines exploded, causing severe damage to the vicarage and the church. Two nearby thatched farms burnt down to the ground and five houses were destroyed. Several inhabitants were wounded, but all survived.

The eight crew members were all killed in the crash and the subsequent explosion, and their remains were found spread over a large area.

Skader på kirken, præstegården og landsbyen.

Damage to the church, vicarage and village.



Gamtofte kirke blev alvorligt beskadiget ved ekspllosionen. Taget blev løftet, så tagstenene faldt ned, og der var betydelige skader på murværket. Skaderne var dog ikke værre, end at kirken kunne repareres. Billedet til højre viser krateret i præstegårdshaven, hvor flyet ramte.

Gamtofte church was severely damaged by the explosion. The roof was lifted, causing the tiles to fall down, and there was considerable damage to the walls and vaults. However, the church could be repaired. The photo to the right shows the crater in the garden of the vicarage created by the impact.



Præstegården blev totalskadet og kunne ikke genopbygges og en ny præstegård måtte bygges. Sognepræsten og hans hustru overlevede i husets kælder. Husassistenten, dersov på første sal, overlevede i sin seng.

The vicarage was totally damaged and beyond repair, and was later replaced by the present building. The vicar and his wife survived in the basement. The maid, who slept on the upper floor, survived in her bed.



To gärde i landsbyen brændte ned og blev bygget op fra grunden. Flere huse blev beskadiget og nogle måtte rives ned. De dræbte flyvere lå i flere dage, inden tyskerne fjernede dem og begravede dem i en fællesgrav på Assens Kirkegård. Egnens beboere samlede, hvad de kunne bruge af vragedelene, og tömte flyets tanke for bændstof, inden tyskerne kunne nå at gribe ind.

Two farms in the village burnt to the ground, and were later rebuilt. Several houses were badly damaged and some of them had to be demolished. The bodies of the crew were found over a large area, and were left until the Germans collected them and buried them in a common grave at the churchyard in Assens. People from the area salvaged what could be used from the wreck and emptied the fuel tanks before the Germans could intervene.

Mindestenen i Gamtofte.

The memorial monument at Gamtofte.



The crew members.

Ernest James Presland, pilot.
Albert Edward Slade, 2nd pilot.
Benjamin Johnson Hudson, air gunner.
Mark Leslie Abramson, navigator.
Alan Wilfried Knapp, flight engineer.
Charles Ashcroft, air bomber.
Robert Edward Leatham, air gunner.
Arthur George Wright, air gunner.



Efter en indsamling blandt beboerne i Gamtofte, blev der den 16. maj 1949 indviet en mindesten tæt ved det sted, hvor nedstyrningen skete. Afsloringen af mindestenen blev foretaget af den engelske luftattaché i Kobenhavn, wing commander N. A. N. Braig. Begivenheden blev overværet af flere hundre personer fra egnen og det officielle Danmark. Blandt deltagerne var også den dræbte pilots forældre hr. og fru Presland,

After a collection among the people of Gamtofte, a memorial stone with the names of the members of the crew was erected near the place where the plane crashed. The memorial was inaugurated by the British Flight Attaché in Copenhagen Wing Commander N. A. N Braig, and witnessed by several hundred people from the neighbourhood and official Denmark. Among the participants were also Mr. and Mrs. Presland, the parents of the pilot.



Billederne herover stammer fra indvielsen af mindestenen den 16. maj 1950. De nederste billeder er fra 1994 og 2004.

The pictures above are from the inauguration of the memorial on May 16 1950. Below from 1994 and 2004.



