

SLO-DRENTHE

THE SEARCHLIGHT



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Wellington Z1143 BU-G

77 years ago, in the night of 25th-26th of March 1942, Bomber Command increased the campaign of strategic bombing against German cities. The 214 RAF Squadron Vickers Wellington Z1143 BU-G with its crew took off from Stradishall airfield near Haverhill, for their fatal mission. After a 11-day break in major operations, Bomber Command dispatched 126 aircraft for the second major attack on Essen. The force comprised: 254 Wellington's, Stirling's, Hampden's and Manchester's aircraft, 7 aircraft failed to return and were lost, 2.7 % of the force.

The bombing force encountered heavy Flak at the target area and many night-fighters on the routes.

Hits on the "Krupps works" and fires in Essen were claimed but the raid was actually another failure on this difficult target and the effective German decoy fires near Rheinberg drawn many bombers from their actual target.

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WILLIS FAMILY IN STAPHORST

Susan Willis visited, together with her son and her daughter, the monument that was placed in Staphorst last year to mark the crash of the American bomber "Flakstop" on this spot on March 6, 1944. Her father Alan Willis (survivor), was a co-pilot of the B17.

Susan, from South Carolina, came in contact with Henk Smit from Staphorst (initiator and sponsor of the monument) via Harrie Peters and Peter van der Weide from SLO-Drenthe

"06-03-44" SERIES

In the upcoming editions of "De Schijnwerper" a new part of the series "06-03-44" will appear.

All local crashes of this date are highlighted in this series. With this Harrie Peters wants to explain the coherence between crashes and make clear that all crashes are not isolated cases.

In this part the crash of the B17 Flakstop and Hauptmann Hugo Frey.

WHAT HAPPEND WITH HAUPTMANN FREY

In this issue of our magazine, lead researcher Harrie Peters explains how the last minutes of Hauptmann Hugo Frey must have been.

After months of research, many interviews with eye-witnesses, computer

simulations and on-site investigations, I have been able to form a picture of what must have happened to Hugo Frey on 6 March 1944.

Harrie Peters, Onderzoeker en Penningmeester SLO Drenthe

06-03-44 "HAUPTMANN HUGO FREY"



On 6-03-44, at 2:30 PM, a number of German hunters took off from Oldenburg to attack the 388 BG for the second time.

The four most striking pilots were; Hauptmann Anton Hackl (Fw 190), Hauptmann Hugo Frey (Fw 190 'Weise 1'), Oberfähnrich Karl Friedrich Lange (Fw 190 'Weise 2') and Unteroffizier Gluttig (Fw 190)

At Meppen they attack the 388 BG bombers. Hptm. Frey carries out a

successful frontal attack three times, claiming four bombers! The B17 42-31194 "Duchess of Dixie" of Lieutenant Grindle, the B17 42-31135 "Suzy Sag Tits" of Lieutenant Givens and the B17 42-37886 "Blitzing Betsy" of Lieutenant Watts. But the attacks hit Lieutenant Watts' aircraft, involving it in a collision with Captain Brown's B17 42-40054 and they crashed at Schoonebeek. The B17 42-31373 'Flackstop'

from Lieutenant Wagner is attacked from the front by a German hunter. Two engines fail and the aircraft falls out of the formation. Wagner wants to make another attempt to reach England, but is being shot again by Oberfähnrich Lange. A part of the crew decides to jump before the plane dives down in a spiral at Staphorst. During the 4th frontal attack, Frey is hit by B17's gunners at an altitude of 6000 meters above Erica-Nieuw Amsterdam. He is probably hit himself. He calls that he has been hit and goes down. Subsequently, the aircraft crashes to the ground at around 3 p.m. German reports speak of 14:48, the Dutch Military Police speaks of 15:15. A crater was created and the parts of the aircraft is spread over a distance of 200 meters.

06-03-44 "HAUPTMANN HUGO FREY"

The aircraft seemed controllable and fell down in a controlled manner for an emergency landing. This very experienced pilot knew very well when it was time to leave the test. When turning away, Hptm Frey was conscious. because he reported 'Ich bin getroffen und gehe nach unten'.

The situation on board was therefore not so bad at that moment that he would have to or want to jump immediately.

It is possible that Hptm Frey became unconscious during diving, but the device would probably have dived straight into the ground.

Given the arrival (dive angle, speed and speed) and the absence of smoke and fire (also at the crash site), everything indicates that an emergency landing would be carried out.

More likely is that Hptm Frey, despite his injuries, still was somewhat able to control the aircraft and even flatten the last part of the flight.

It must have gone wrong during this last stage. At the last minute, the plane hits a large and deep crater in the sand surface.

This does not fit with the level approach. The fighter would then be 'etched' on the surface. My view is therefore that the plane became uncontrollable just above the ground and

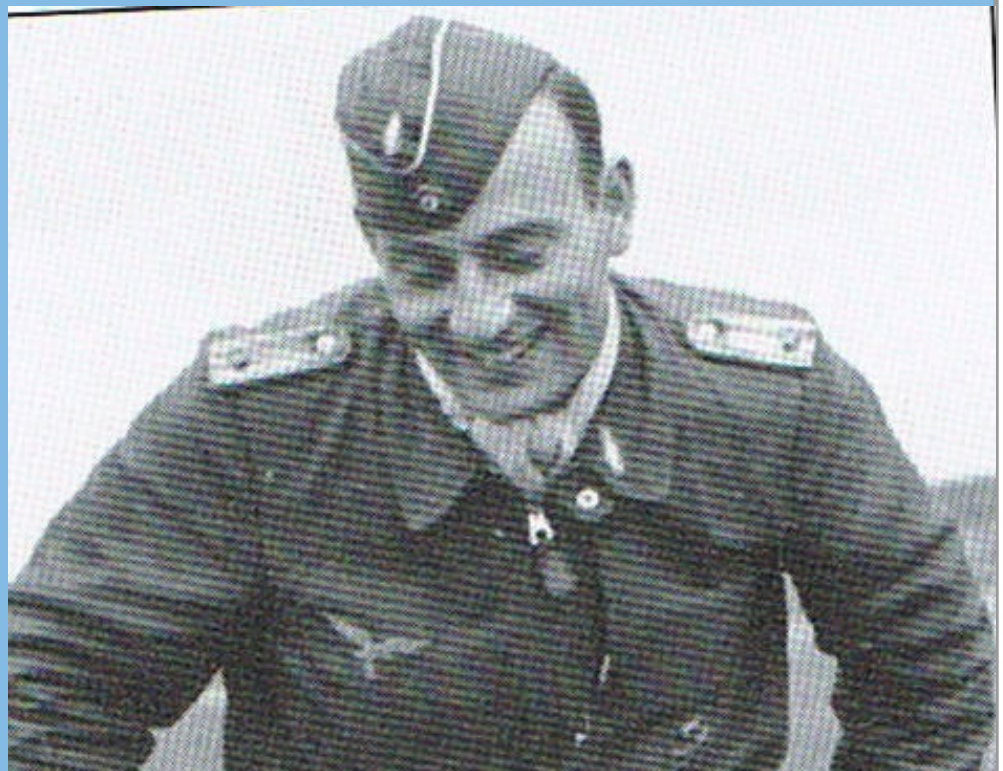
crashed on the land surface.

However, this could also be due to the 'loss' of the pilot, for example due to loss of consciousness.

The device could have made a final short dive to the ground by moving the stick forward consciously or unknowingly.

Given the consequences and condition of the aircraft and the pilot (totally destroyed and maimed), the crash itself was not controlled.

Harrie Peters



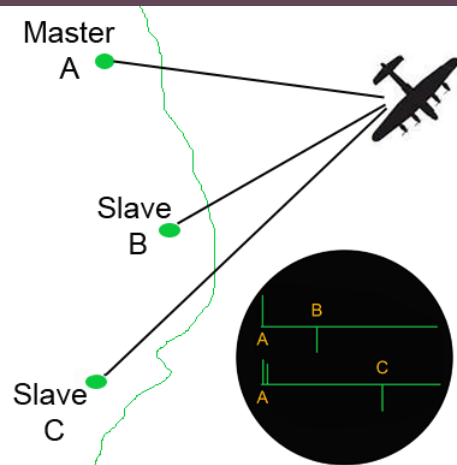
"GEE RADIO NAVIGATION SYSTEM"

Gee, sometimes written as GEE, was a radio navigation system used by the Royal Air Force during World War II.

It measured the time delay between two radio signals to produce a fix, with accuracy of a few hundred meters at ranges up to about 350 miles (560 km).

The need for accurate navigation during the day and at night during a radio or radar silence, in all weather types, for all aircraft, required a new device that was easy and fast to operate.

Gee became operational about the time that the thousand bomber raids commenced in 1942, it was the first serious attempt to provide the navigator with a rapid means of determination of position.

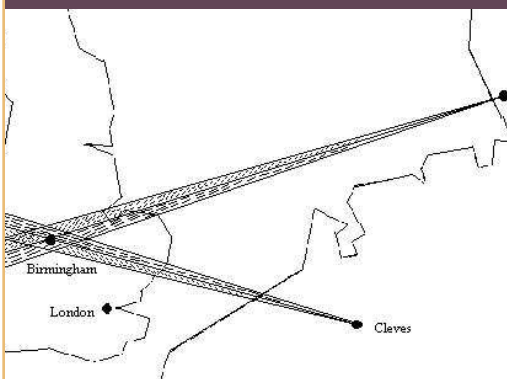


Two or more Slave stations, working with a common Master station, constituted a complete Gee Chain. The time difference between signals from two pairs of stations were measured simultaneously. When the readings were referred to precomputed lines on a special chart, the two simultaneous position lines obtained

combined to give a position fix for the navigator. To secure a position line, an aircraft had to be within range of two transmitters, and to secure a position fix, within range of three stations, a common Master station and two Slave stations. The principle of Gee was quite simple. Measuring the time it takes to receive signals (pulses) from two (or occasionally three) ground stations. These two signals (called B and C) are locked to a master transmitter A. The first step is to lock the Gee aircraft receiver onto the pulses coming in from master transmitter A. In order to find its own location, the next step is measuring the time it takes for two more radio pulses to arrive at the aircraft receiver from both transmitters B and C. Once these two timings are known, they are plotted onto a chart (map) overlaid with hyperbolic lattice lines. From this information it could be estimate the whereabouts of the aircraft.

The complexity of the Gee indicator made is possible to accurately measured position.

BATTLE OF THE BEAMS



Cross-polling the signals from two or more Knickebein beacons allowed German bombers to find their targets in England with great accuracy. The British were able to disturb the signals early in 1940, but the Knickebein beacons remained in use until

1944.

The "X-Gerät" was a radio navigation system that was later used by the Luftwaffe to navigate their bombers to England.

The concept was similar to the older "Knickebein" system but with a much higher frequency.

COLD WAR

The tower in Schoonebeek was built in 1954 by the Korps Aviation Service of the Ministry of Defense and is therefore a remnant of the Cold War. During the Cold War at the time, these towers served as a warning system for enemy aircraft from the Soviet Union that flew below 500 meters and could not be detected by the radar equipment of the time. In the 1980s, these towers were taken out of use and most were demolished. There are two more in Drenthe: one in Echten and the other in Schoonebeek. The intention is that the Schoonebeeker tower will be transferred to Het Drents Landschap after restoration by the Drents Monument foundation.

Information points about the history and the surrounding landscape will be built around the tower. The tower will be open to the public on weekends and by appointment under supervision.



"GEE RADIO NAVIGATION SYSTEM"

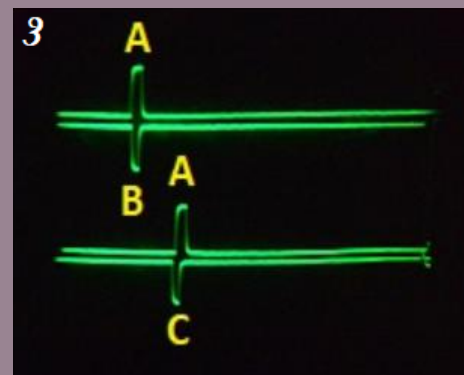
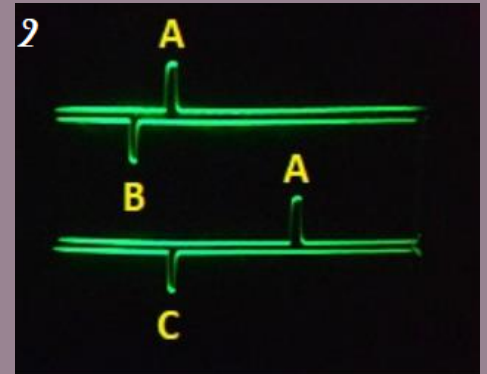
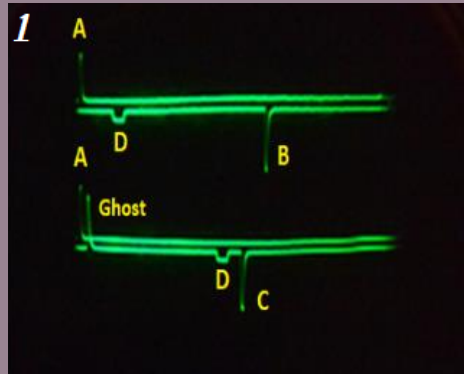


Image 1 is displaying the unaligned A pulse appears twice. Once at the far left hand side of each of the two lines. The second pulse on the lower line right next to the A pulse is the 'ghost' pulse. The 'ghost' pulse identifies that the preceding A pulse belongs on the lower line to the C transmitter. The unaligned B pulse is the downward spike on the top line, whereas the unaligned C pulse is the downward spike on the lower line. The two little buckets D are generated in the Gee indicator and need to be lined up, or 'phased' with the two spikes from the B and C transmitters. The indicator adjustment controls on the unit are used to shift the little buckets D either to the left or right until they line up with the inner left hand edge of the buckets D.

Image 2 is displaying the strobe time base settings with the pulses not phased (lined up). On the top line the A pulse, with the B pulse underneath, on the lower line the A pulse, with the C pulse underneath.

Image 3 is displaying that the pulses are now lined up properly with each other and the navigator would then go through a process which would cause the numerical coordinates of each signal to appear on the indicator.

Image 4 Display Indicator Unit type 62, property of SLO-Drenthe voorzitter Rob Wethly

Rob Wethly, voorzitter SLO Drenthe

WELLINGTON Z1143 BU-G

The Wellington Z1143 BU-G was on its route homewards from their target Essen, with the Australian pilot Pilot Officer Eric William Cuthbert Creed and his crew, when they were attacked close to the Dutch/German border by the German night-fighter pilot Oberleutnant Herbert Lütje flying a Bf 110 or Do 215 B-5 of the III/NJG 1 from Luftwaffe airbase Twente. Oberleutnant Herbert Lütje was guided from Luftwaffe radar Himmelbett sector 4A to the Wellington Z1143 BU-G.

The Wellington Z1143 BU-G crashed at 23.50 Hrs. close to Vriezenveen in The Netherlands after the attack of the German night-fighter. None of the six crewmembers could bail out in time and unfortunately no one didn't survived the attack and crash.

Let's keep the remembrance alive of what RAAF pilot Eric William Cuthbert Creed, RAAF 2nd pilot William Wynes Robey Norton, RAAF navigator Walter Irvine Christsen, RAF 1st wireless operator air gunner Albert Frederick Mons Emms, RAF 2nd wireless operator air gunner John Routledge Payne and RAF air gunner Alfred Peter Mair did for our freedom.

Rob and Yannic Wethly

LANCASTER OVER SCHOONEBEEK



An Avro Lancaster bomber from the Second World War will bring an honorary salute to the 24 crew members buried in the war graves at the cemetery in Schoonebeek on 4 May by flying over the cemetery during Remembrance Day.

The aircraft, owned by the Royal Air Force, Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF), flies

during its journey over various war cemeteries, war monuments and special locations throughout the Netherlands. At the end of the afternoon this rare and special aircraft can be seen above the village. He makes several laps around the cemetery and then continues his tour to England.

According to initiator Rob Wethly, chairman of Air War Research Foundation Drenthe, it is unique that the Lancaster visits the war cemeteries. "I think this is the first time since the Second World War that such a plane can be seen above Schoonebeek."

According to the expert, depending on the weather, the bomber can be seen well on 4 May. "Go out from a very low height.

You can almost touch it, so to speak. "Chairman Wethly has been trying to get the device to Drenthe for years.

"That never worked because the major war cemeteries, war memorials and important events were given priority."

Enthusiasts from different places throughout the Netherlands then joined forces and managed to find the right entry.

The result is that the Lancaster will visit many locations especially now. He starts in the morning in the south of the Netherlands and leaves our country again at the end of the afternoon at Petten.

According to chairman Wethly, only the weather or a technical problem can throw a spanner in the works on the 4th May.

"But if everything goes on, we get it to see something really impressive, I can hardly wait. "

The board of the Air War Research Drenthe Foundation is exceptionally excited with this success. The striking aircraft was the flying symbol of the liberating 'Tommies' and not without reason, the logo of the foundation.



06-03-44 "B17 FLAKSTOP"



Last month the SLO Drenthe was present at the unveiling of a monument for the B-17 Flakstop accident at Staphorst, after mediation between relatives from America and the initiator of the monument Mr. Henk Smit from Staphorst. Beginning in 1944, the American 8th Air Force was still expanding its bomber fleet at English airports. As part of this, about 60 B-17G flying forts land on 3-1-44 at Deopham Green airport in England after an overflight from America. One of these aircraft was the B-17G serial number 42-31373, it was controlled by the commander 2nd Lt Charles F Wagner. From the first moment in action, the aircraft usually flew in a low position at the back of the bomber formation, so closest to the ground and anti-aircraft guns, also known as Flak in German. The aircraft was called Flakstop, as a kind of buffer against the Flak.

The entire crew consisted of:

2nd Lt Charles F Wagner; commander, 2e Lt Allan H Willis; 2nd pilot, 2nd Lt Henry H Gladys; bombardier 2nd Lt Clyde J Martin; navigator S/Sgt Lloyd J Freeman; ball turret gunner T/Sgt Francis Shaffer; radio operator S/Sgt Fred V Richmond; right waistgunner T/Sgt George I James;

tailgunner Sgt Paul A Caffee; left waist gunner T/Sgt Donald A Porter; engineer and top turret gunner On 6-3-44, Sgt Paul A Caffee was replaced by Sgt Josef Tracy due to illness. On 6-3-44 the Flakstop was involved in the first major successful day attack on Berlin, carried out by more than 700 escorts with bombers. The aircraft was already slightly damaged by Flak above Berlin but was able to maintain its position in the formation. The route back to England ran globally between Meppen and Lingen via Southeast Drenthe to the west. The formations were somewhat scattered at the time and dozens of German fighters were trying to get a bomber out of it.



LOYD FREEMAN, FRANCIS SHAFER, FRED RICHMOND, GEORGE JAMES, PAUL CHAFFE, DONALD PORTER
KNEELING L/R: CHARLES F. WAGNER, ALAN R. WILLIS, HENRY H. GLADYS, CLYDE J. MARTIN

Flakstop and Crew

06-03-44 "B17 FLAKSTOP"

The 388BG and 452BG (including the Flakstop) were attacked by four German Focke Wulf 190s in the area globally between Meppen and Hoogeveen. These four Focke Wulfs were flown by Hptm Anton Hackl with wingman Karl Friedrich Lange and Oblt Hugo Frey with wingman Karl Gluttig. Every time Hackl supports a b17 formation supported by Lange, they are hindered by P-47 Thunderbolts and have to stop the attack to defend themselves. However, Oblt Hugo Frey can carry out 3 successful frontal attacks with the support of Gluttig and a victim falls with each attack.

It were these 3 victims in order of landing:
B-17G 42-31194 Duches of Dixy of Lt Gridley crashed between Schoningsdorf and Twist.

B-17G 42-31135 Suzy Sag Titz of Lt Givens between Weiteveen and Erica.

B-17G 42-37886 Blitzing Betsy of Lt Watts crashed in Zwartemeer.

These 3 aircraft are claimed by Oblt Hugo Frey. For a long time it was assumed that the 4th aircraft was claimed by Frey (and also recognized) was the Flakstop. But

recently family documents have surfaced and made public in which it is stated how K. F. Lange shoots this aircraft and also claims it. He was therefore responsible for shooting this device. That Hugo Frey is responsible for destroying a fourth device is correct, however, as "by-catch".

The Blitzing Betsy of Lt Watts slapped, after the attack by Hugo Frey, against the bottom of the B-17G 42-40054 "Jinny" flown by captain Job causing this aircraft to land in Schoonebeek. So it was Frey's fourth victim, without firing a grenade at it.

The Flakstop flew by in the direction of Zuidwolde. In that neighborhood, the aircraft was attacked from behind again by a Focke wulf from JG 11, flown by Karl Friedrich Lange.

Shot by the tail gunner, he

made a second attack from the front right near the Dutch place of De Wijk. The emergency on board of the aircraft became so high that the first crew members started to jump between Ijhorst and Staphorst. It was Richmond, Tracy and Freeman who left the plane and were immediately shot at the parachute by a German fighter. This killed Richmond and Tracy. They landed lifeless with a broken parachute. Freeman survived, albeit badly wounded. Porter and Martin landed safely just like Gladys and Willis.

The dead were ordered on Friday, March 10 at the Staphorst General Cemetery. Thanks to the initiators, there is now a monument on the verge of the crash site.

*part 1 of the "06-03-44" series
Harrie Peters*

