

*The Discovery, Recovery
and Identification of the*

Durston - Crew

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website: <http://www.fg-orl.de>

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and their plane

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Discovery of the crashsite and identification of the aircraft



Kaiser-Kaserne
1997-01-01

1997-01-01
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1997-01-01

Werner Gierig

Feldpost: 28
8779 Hildersheim
Tel.: 06190-3442
30.09.1997

Herrn
Kaiser-Kaserne
Vierthaler, 12
14015 Granitzburg

Sehr geehrter Herr Gierig,

Ich habe sehr viele Freude, dass Sie die Aufgabe der Suche nach den
vermissten Flugzeugen sehr erfolgreich durchgeführt haben und mich von Ihnen die
gleichen Ergebnisse.

Nach dem Flugzeug habe ich sehr viele Freude, dass Sie die Aufgabe der Suche nach den
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Sehr viele Freude

Kaiser-Kaserne

1997-01-01



Avro Lancaster

Avro Lancaster

Avro Lancaster

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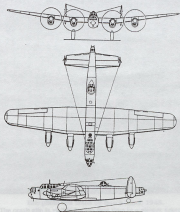
1881

Avro Lancaster

The Lancaster occupied a prominent position as the RAF's standard bomber in World War II. It is one of the best known of all the British bomber aircraft and became among the most celebrated while in use as a heavy long-distance fighting machine. This four-engine bomber, of which 7,366 were manufactured in total, was capable of carrying a bomb load of almost 7 tonnes. During World War II, 3,378 Lancasters failed to return to base. A large number of these aircraft were shot down by German night fighters or flak. This resulted in the death of most of the crew members. Hundreds of these planes are still missing, and with them their seven crew members.



- Wingspan: 31,09 m
- Length: 21,11 m
- Engines: 4 Rolls-Royce Merlin-22 zu je 1280 PS
- Crew: 7 Mann
- Armament: 8 7,7-mm-MG's
- Bombload: 6.430 kg
- Range: 2.640 km
- Service Ceiling: 7.500 m
- max. Speed: 461km/h



The Avro Lancaster bomber, the most famous of the four-engine heavy bombers, was developed by Avro Aircraft Ltd. in 1942. It was the only four-engine bomber to be built in large numbers.

Name: ...
 Geburtsdatum: ...
 Geburtsort: ...
 Dienstgrad: ...
 Dienstnummer: ...
 Dienststellung: ...
 Dienstzeit: ...
 Dienstort: ...
 Dienstzeitraum: ...
 Dienstort: ...
 Dienstzeitraum: ...



The aircraft shown in the photograph is a four-engine heavy bomber, specifically a Boeing B-29 Superfortress. It is shown from a side profile, highlighting its high-wing design, multiple engines, and tail section. The aircraft is depicted in flight or on a runway, with a clear sky in the background.

Boeing B-29 Superfortress



Windows found at the crashsite



"Windows" were used for the first time in an attack on Hamburg on July 25th, 1943. These tin foil strips were dropped subsequently in large quantities on every raid in order to interfere with enemy radio. This bomber must therefore have crashed after July 25th, 1943.

Aerial photo



This photo was taken on March 22nd, 1945. The crash site is visible for the first time in a picture taken on September 13th, 1944. Therefore, the bomber must have crashed before September 13th, 1944.

During the recovery work, it was discovered *inter alia* that the bomber crashed with a full bomb load on board, in other words it must have been flying to attack Berlin from the north.

[illegible]

Map of the Study Area

The map shows the Gulf of Mexico coastline from Texas to Florida. A dashed line indicates the location of the study area, which is labeled 'Study Area' and 'Gulf of Mexico'. A scale bar shows distances from 0 to 100 miles. A north arrow is also present.



Year	Country	Population (millions)	Life expectancy (years)	Sex Ratio (male/female)
1950	USA	150	70	1.05
1950	USSR	160	65	1.05
1950	China	600	45	1.05
1950	India	360	35	1.05
1950	Japan	90	75	1.05
1950	France	45	75	1.05
1950	Germany	50	75	1.05
1950	Italy	45	75	1.05
1950	Spain	25	75	1.05
1950	UK	50	75	1.05
1950	Sweden	8	75	1.05
1950	Norway	3	75	1.05
1950	Denmark	2	75	1.05
1950	Netherlands	15	75	1.05
1950	Belgium	10	75	1.05
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1950	Japan	90	75	1.05
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1950	Germany			



101-102	101-102	101-102	101-102
103-104	103-104	103-104	103-104
105-106	105-106	105-106	105-106
107-108	107-108	107-108	107-108
109-110	109-110	109-110	109-110
111-112	111-112	111-112	111-112
113-114	113-114	113-114	113-114
115-116	115-116	115-116	115-116
117-118	117-118	117-118	117-118
119-120	119-120	119-120	119-120
121-122	121-122	121-122	121-122
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125-126	125-126	125-126	125-126
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131-132	131-132	131-132	131-132
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135-136	135-136	135-136	135-136
137-138	137-138	137-138	137-138
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141-142	141-142	141-142	141-142
143-144	143-144	143-144	143-144
145-146	145-146	145-146	145-146
147-148	147-148	147-148	147-148
149-150	149-150	149-150	149-150
151-152	151-152	151-152	151-152
153-154	153-154	153-154	153-154
155-156	155-156	155-156	155-156
157-158	157-158	157-158	157-158
159-160	159-160	159-160	159-160
161-162	161-162	161-162	161-162
163-164	163-164	163-164	163-164
165-166	165-166	165-166	165-166
167-168	167-168	167-168	167-168
169-170	169-170	169-170	169-170
171-172	171-172	171-172	171-172
173-174	173-174	173-174	173-174
175-176	175-176	175-176	175-176
177-178	177-178	177-178	177-178
179-180	179-180	179-180	179-180
181-182	181-182	181-182	181-182
183-184	183-184	183-184	183-184
185-186	185-186	185-186	185-186
187-188	187-188	187-188	187-188
189-190	189-190	189-190	189-190
191-192	191-192	191-192	191-192
193-194	193-194	193-194	193-194
195-196	195-196	195-196	195-196
197-198	197-198	197-198	197-198
199-200	199-200	199-200	199-200



Only five attacks were flown from the north during the potential time frame: in the nights of 2nd/3rd January, 1944, 20th/21st January 1944, 28th/29th January 1944, 30th/31st January, 1944, 15th/16th February, 1944, and 24th/25th March 1944. Over that period a total of 19 Lancaster Bombers went missing, but the exact crash site is not mentioned in the current literature (RAF Bomber Command Losses, W.L. Chorley, 1994 to 1997).

"The Sun Herald" in Sydney, Australia, 5. August 2001

Peace at last for the lost crew of ED86

By FRANK WALKER and DANIEL DABET

In 1944 a Lancaster bomber with four Australians aboard flew from England for its final mission over Nazi Germany. It never came back. What happened to the Australian airmen on ED 867 has remained a mystery. All that their families have been told for the past 57 years is that the men were missing in action.

Until now

Thanks to the dedication of a group of German amateur historians and the forensic detective work of Australian defence officers, the mystery of ED 867 is close to being solved. The Germans have found the wreckage of the Lancaster near their town of Oranienburg, 30km north of Berlin. They dug down for 3m and found the remains of three, possibly four, crewmen still inside the wreckage of the plane. A wing revealed the serial number: ED 867.

Australian forensic experts will soon go to Berlin to try to make final identifications of the airmen so they can be given a marked grave and buried with full military honours.

The Lancaster bomber of the Royal Australian Air Force's 467 Squadron, crewed by four Australians and three British airmen, took off from Waddington, England, on January 29, 1944, on a bombing raid over Berlin. It was their 27th operation and was to be the Australian crew's last mission. The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Ivan (Joe) Durston, 32, of Windsor in Queensland, had been told he had already completed his number of missions and could be transferred out. The chances of being killed in raids over Germany were so high that airmen were limited to 30 missions. But the Aussies had made a pact that they would all finish together. So the commanding officer told Durston and wireless operator Pilot Officer Robert Ludlow, 31, of Glen Niven, Queensland, gunner Flight Sergeant Philip Gill, 20, of Coorparoo, Queensland, and gunner Flight Sergeant Jack Butterfield, 22, of Prospect, South Australia, that this would be their last mission before being transferred to other duties.

It was a tough one. Berlin was heavily defended and the Germans threw up all the flak they could at the bombers. Durston's plane was bringing up the rear as he had to photograph the result of the raid. It would draw maximum enemy fire. As they made their final approach to Berlin over the town of Oranienburg the Lancaster was hit by flak or fighters and crashed in flames. Three bodies were quickly found and later buried near the crash site. After the war, one was identified as Englishman Flight Sergeant Sidney Griffiths and he was reburied in the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Berlin. The two others, whose nationalities have not been determined, were placed in graves marked "unknown airmen". Back in Australia, Durston's sister, Betty James, was told he was missing in

action. She has carried his photo in her wallet ever since, hoping that somehow he might still be alive. It was not until Mario Schultze, 33, a local cabinet maker and amateur historian, last year started searching the fields around Oranienburg for crashed warplanes that answers to the mystery started to surface. "The plane had been set aside for military manoeuvres by the East German Army and was only opened up to the public recently," he said. "We found parts of 14 warplanes that had crashed around the town. We decided it would be our mission to identify them all so relatives could know what happened to their missing men. "Some were Russian, some American, some British. We found part of a wing of the Lancaster just sticking above the ground. We dug and found the serial number ED 867. "With the help of the German Army we dug further and found the remains of three, possibly four, men about three metres under the ground. It seems the plane exploded on impact and so it buried itself deep in the ground." The German Army gave the airmen a temporary grave and notified British authorities. RAF records gave the name of the crew and dental records indicated the remains found were of Flight Lieutenant Durston.

In October defence experts from Canberra will go to the site to examine the remains. It is hoped all the remaining bodies can be finally identified and reburied with full military honours in the Berlin Allied War Cemetery alongside 252 other Australians. The bodies of all seven crewmen appear to have been found now and, even if individual remains can't be identified, they are no longer missing and can be buried in a grave marked with the names of the full crew of ED867.

Betty James, 83, said finding her brother's body after almost 60 years had at last brought peace to her and the family. "When you lose someone like this you are still waiting and wondering. You wonder where he is, was he captured, was he kept overseas?" she said from her Adelaide home. "I always thought he was lost over the sea. We weren't told much about how it happened. "Now we are at peace because he is going to be officially buried. I am not looking for his body to be brought home, just for him to be buried. It closes a chapter. It's peace of mind." She said her brother, a motor mechanic, had been a steady influence on the crew because he was regarded as the old man. He was 32. He had a girlfriend waiting at home. Betty James's son, Greg Siskford, said he had heard three crewmen had parachuted out and later died in POW camps. Mr Siskford said: "That story seems to have been disproved. My uncle trained pilots at Bankstown before they sent him to Britain. He never came back, but his photo has been on our family's mantelpiece ever since. "It has been marvellous for my mum to put an end to the chapter of what happened to her brother."

Ross Stanford, 83, was a pilot in A-flight of the 467 Squadron alongside Durston. "It grips you a bit after all this time, particularly when you know that bloke and used to see him every day for six months. Joe was a quiet, steady man. He was a regular guy." Some 1,500 Australian airmen are still listed as missing in action over Germany in World War II.

