

The Final Flight of Lancaster III EE110:

A Tribute to the Crew of 619 Squadron



On the evening of October 1, 1943, Lancaster III EE110 of 619 Squadron took off from RAF Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire on what would be its final mission. Piloted by 20-year-old Flying Officer Derek McLean Joss, the aircraft was part of a larger force of 242 Avro Lancaster's and eight de Havilland Mosquitoes dispatched to bomb Hagen, a critical industrial city on the south-eastern edge of Germany's Ruhr region. This mission, carried out during World War II's intense air campaign, highlighted both the strategic effectiveness of the RAF Bomber Command and the immense risks faced by its crews.

Hagen, the 41st-largest city in Germany, was a significant target due to its industrial infrastructure, particularly its contribution to the Nazi war effort in producing accumulator batteries for U-boats. On this night, the skies over the Ruhr were obscured by heavy cloud cover, but the raid was still marked as a complete success. The Mosquitoes, equipped with the new "Oboe" navigation system, led the way, marking the target through the overcast conditions. As a result, two of Hagen's four main industrial areas were severely damaged, while a third sustained lesser impacts.

The destruction inflicted by the raid was catastrophic for the city's war production capabilities. Post-war assessments confirmed that 46 industrial firms were destroyed and 166 more were damaged, significantly hampering the production of U-boat components. Albert Speer, the Nazi Minister of Armaments and War Production, later acknowledged that the raid substantially reduced U-boat output, a crucial aspect of the German war strategy.

The success of the raid came at a heavy cost. The bombing resulted in 241 German civilian deaths, along with 25 foreign workers. Additionally, 2,386 Germans and 135 foreign workers were injured,

and a staggering 30,000 people were left homeless because of the destruction. Despite the extensive damage inflicted on the ground, the RAF incurred minimal losses, with only two Lancaster's failing to return. This was an unusually low casualty rate for a night operation, reflecting both the effectiveness of the RAF's tactics and the formidable defences that typically surrounded such targets.

One of the Lancaster's lost was Lancaster I ED348/KM-M of 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron, which was struck by flak near the target. The aircraft crashed in flames near Matienberghausen, Nümbrecht, Nordrhein-Westfalen. Of the crew, three were killed, and four—including the pilot, Pilot Officer Anthony Smith—were taken prisoner.

Lancaster III EE110, however, initially completed its mission successfully, dropping its bombs on the target before turning for home. Yet, what should have been a routine return flight took a tragic turn. Seemingly off course and possibly affected by flak damage, the aircraft found itself over North Devon or the Bristol Channel.

At approximately 01:00 on October 2, the crew, likely unaware they were over water, bailed out. The unmanned bomber crashed onto the beach at Col-Hugh Point, Llantwit Major, in South Wales. Despite a crash call that prompted the Duty Boat from 46 Air Sea Rescue Unit in Porthcawl to search the area, no survivors were found. The bodies of the seven crew members washed up on both sides of the Bristol Channel over the following days, marking a sorrowful end to their brave service.

The wreckage of Lancaster EE110 was secured by personnel from RAF St Athan, and over the years, parts of the aircraft were recovered by a local man, Mr. Stephen Wilmot. These fragments have since been donated to the South Wales Aviation Museum (SWAM) as a tribute to the fallen crew.

The Crew of Lancaster III EE110

- **Pilot:** Flying Officer Derek McLean Joss, aged 20, R.A.F.V.R.
- **Flight Engineer:** Sergeant Terence Monaghan, age unknown, R.A.F.
- **Navigator:** Flying Officer Charles Francis "Paddy" Bale, aged 28, R.A.F.V.R.
- **Air Bomber:** Flying Officer Francis Victor Anderson, aged 22, R.A.F.V.R.
- **Wireless Operator/Air Gunner:** Sergeant Paul Engel, aged 28, R.A.F.V.R.
- **Air Gunner:** Sergeant Joseph Lowe, aged 30, R.A.F.V.R.
- **Air Gunner:** Flight Sergeant Kenneth George Mortlock, aged 20, R.A.F.V.R.

The mission of Lancaster III EE110 stands as a testament to the bravery and sacrifice of those who served in Bomber Command during World War II. The loss of the aircraft and its crew reflects both the perilous nature of their duties and the vital role they played in the Allied war effort. Their story, now memorialized through the remnants of their aircraft at the South Wales Aviation Museum, serves as a poignant reminder of the cost of war and the courage of those who fought.

Crash Report.

Llantwit Major - Avro Lancaster III EE110

Date: 2nd October 1943

Aircraft: Avro Lancaster III, Serial No. EE110

Squadron: No. 619 Squadron, RAF

Mission: Bombing mission, successfully completed

Incident Description:

In the early hours of 2nd October 1943, Lancaster III EE110, belonging to No. 619 Squadron RAF, was returning from a successful bombing mission when it likely encountered unknown difficulties over North Devon or the Bristol Channel. The aircraft, possibly damaged by flak, became disoriented and the crew mistakenly believed they were over land when they were over water.

Tragically, the entire crew bailed out over the Bristol Channel, and none survived. The now unmanned aircraft continued and crashed onto the beach at Col-Hugh Point, Llantwit Major, at approximately 01:00.

The crash site was one of the first attended by a Crash Tender crew from RAF St Athan. Additionally, an Air Sea Rescue Unit from Porthcawl was dispatched, but despite their efforts, no survivors were found. In the days following the crash, the bodies of the crew washed ashore on both sides of the Bristol Channel. The wreckage of the Lancaster was guarded by RAF personnel before being salvaged, with some parts eventually being preserved and displayed at the South Wales Aviation Museum (SWAM).

Location Details:

- **Crash Site:** Col-Hugh Point, Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan, Wales
- **Approximate GPS Coordinates:** 51.39486° N, -3.50291° W

Crew Details:

- **Pilot:** Flying Officer Derek McLean Joss (Service No. 128952, R.A.F.V.R.), Age 20
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/54391979/derek-mclean-joss#add-to-vc>
- **Flight Engineer:** Sergeant Terence Monaghan (Service No. 530301, R.A.F.), Age unknown
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/139269990/terence-monaghan>
- **Navigator:** Flying Officer Charles Francis "Paddy" Bale (Service No. 141333, R.A.F.V.R.), Age 28
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/239564525/charles-francis-bale#add-to-vc>
- **Air Bomber:** Flying Officer Francis Victor Anderson (Service No. 132958, R.A.F.V.R.), Age 22
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/58710629/francis-victor-anderson>
- **Wireless Operator/Air Gunner:** Sergeant Paul Engel (Service No. 1381754, R.A.F.V.R.), Age 28
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/149269180/paul-engel#add-to-vc>
- **Air Gunner:** Sergeant Joseph Lowe (Service No. 916013, R.A.F.V.R.), Age 30
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/54395803/joseph-lowe#add-to-vc>
- **Air Gunner:** Flight Sergeant Kenneth George Mortlock (Service No. 1324729, R.A.F.V.R.), Age 20
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/24346288/kenneth-george-mortlock#add-to-vc>

Summary:

Lancaster III EE110 from No. 619 Squadron RAF was tragically lost during a return flight from a bombing mission on 2nd October 1943. The crew, misjudging their location, bailed out over the Bristol Channel, leading to the loss of all seven airmen. The crash at Col-Hugh Point serves as a stark reminder of the dangers faced by Bomber Command crews during World War II. The memory of the crew is preserved through the display of recovered wreckage at the South Wales Aviation Museum, honouring their sacrifice.

Map Crash Location:- <https://tinyurl.com/Lancaster-III-EE110-MCS>