

### **Stirling IV LK567 crash landed in Plouglund moor on 27/4 1945.**

The aircraft belonged to RAF 295 Sqn Sqn 38 Group Fighter Command and was coded 8Z-L. T/O 21:12 Rivenhall OP: SOE to Denmark.

Shortly before take off, navigator F/S Thomas Jones was called to the Squadron Operation room where he was given another drop zone where the drop should be made. The original zone, which had the Danish code name "Arthur" and was located at "Holsteinshus" by Faaborg on the island of Fyn, had apparently been compromised. The Stirling with its six man crew flew low level over The North Sea and Jylland, and then turned to the south of Fyn to be able to approach the drop zone from the south. When the Stirling was over the drop zone the crew saw no signal lights as expected, and after having circled a couple of times they turned to a north-westerly course to fly back to base.



(Frank Fuller)

The crew

It should be mentioned that drop zone "Arthur" was manned this night. The resistance people waited until four o'clock in the morning, without hearing any aircraft, before they left.

Apparently there had been a slip in communication, so the resistance had not been informed about the change in plans.

Heading west, the Stirling flew at 150-200 feet altitude. When it reached Fliegerhorst (Airbase) Vejle flak started firing, and a fire started in the inboard port engine. The crew tried unsuccessfully to stop it, and when a fire started in the inboard starboard engine as well, the Pilot W/O Edward (Ted) A. Dax ordered the crew to bail out. After a look at the altimeter he changed the order to prepare to crash land.

At 01:00 hours the Stirling hit the ground in Plouglund moor to the west of "Fliegerhorst Vandel".





The sad remains of Stirling LK567

When it laid still Dax, Jones and W/Op F/S Frank Fuller got out of the front exit and jumped 10 feet to the ground.

They landed in mud and water to their knees.

They called for the rest of the crew, but receiving no reply. They ditched their parachute harnesses and Mae west and then started to walk away from the aircraft. Soon they decided to get rid of their pistols as these would do them no good if they were captured, and buried them in a sanded spot on the moor.

They walked the whole night to lay as much distance to the Stirling as possible. When daylight came they found a wood where the hid for the day. It started to rain and soon they were soaking wet. They only managed to sleep for a few minutes at a time due to the rain and the cold. After a while they gave up sleeping and left the wood and after a while found a farmhouse.

They watched it for about three hours to make sure that no Germans were inside it. Late in the afternoon they knocked on the door which was opened by a small girl. They were not able to make themselves understood and she closed the door again. They did not want to frighten her and left the door and started looking at the out houses.

Over the stables they found a hay loft where they decided to sleep. They found some turnips that they eat and then went to sleep.

The next morning they met with the farmer and his wife and were given a proper meal. At the same time they were informed about the whereabouts of the Germans in the area. The flyers left the farm about 11:00 hours and headed for a large wood to the south of the farm. The Danes had advised them to hide there for a few days as the Germans were searching the area for them. They arrived at the wood at about 04:00 hours but found it impossible to sleep due to the cold.

They decided to leave and when dusk fell they made their way to a farm and knocked on the door. No one answered and they continued to another farm. Here the door was opened by a young woman with a small baby in her arms. She invited them in and gave them food.

When they were ready to leave she insisted that they take some hard boiled eggs with them. The flyers headed south with the aid of the small compass from their escape kit. After about an hour they walked into what seemed to be a German rifle range. They hid on the

ground and started moving forward on the stomach. When they got out of the range they followed a road going southeast and made good pace. When dawn came, they found a hayloft to sleep on after having had turnips for breakfast.

At midday they were awoken by three children playing in the barn. The oldest, a girl at about eleven came to the loft and almost tripped over the flyers before seeing them. They tried to explain to her that they were English flyers and she told them that her name was Karen. The two other kids climbed the hayloft. One was a boy aged six and the other was a girl aged five. The flyers made the children understand that they were hungry and the boy went to the house and brought back their mother. After some talking between Karen and her mother the flyers were taken to the house where they were given a meal. An English speaking woman arrived and in broken English she tried to explain where the Germans were camping in the area.

When the flyers left, the mother led them to a road she suggested that they should follow. They walked all night and when dawn broke, they found a barn and climbed to the hayloft and went to sleep.

In the morning they awoke at seven when a farmer started moving around in the barn. Soon after a hen came into the loft and laid an egg. After having looked around a little the flyers found two more eggs. That made one for each for breakfast.

When darkness fell, the flyers went to the house, but when they looked in at the window the farmer said something that sounded like "go away". They left the farm and headed south.

They found some milk churns and filled their bottles and walked on. At a house near the road they were given a sandwich and something to drink before they moved on. During the night they crossed streams and bogs and marshes as well as going through small woods.

They were hungry when they found a hayloft to stay at for the day. They were awoken at 09:00 hours by a dog that stood barking in the barn for half an hour before someone called it and it went to the house. At half past eight in the evening it returned and started barking for a long time. After a while a boy came to fetch it, but on seeing the flyers he returned to the house.

He returned with his father and when the flyers stood up covered with mud and hay the son and father burst into laughter. The flyers came down and were taken to the house. A kettle was put on the stove and soon after the flyers could have their first wash and shave in warm water since their arrival in Denmark.

Then they were given a meal prepared by the farmer's wife. The name of the farmer was Lars P. Jensen.

Lars had told the flyers where the German camps in the area were found and by heading east for a couple of miles and then heading south would take them around the largest of the camps. They followed the road for a while and then left it to be able to travel east. Suddenly they heard a shout followed by three shots. The flyers froze in their tracks and waited for a while. Nothing happened and they turned back towards Vorbasse again. After a while they turned south again this time came to a marshy ground. They tried to cross it but had to give it up and head north again. Then east and then south again. They were now near the village of Bække and it was 09:00 hours. They found some milk churns and started drinking. A door opened at the nearby house and a man came out and stood looking at them smiling. By signs they asked if they could sleep on the hayloft and he smilingly agreed. They awoke at five in the afternoon when the man and a girl came to the barn with trays of food, three beers and milk. The farmer then returned to the house to listen to the radio while the girl stayed with the flyers until they had finished eating.

At 20:45 hours in the evening the farmer and an older man and the girl returned to the barn laughing.

The war in Europe was over.

The flyers followed the farmer to the house and listened to BBC on the radio. A bottle of wine saved for the liberation of Denmark was opened and a toast proposed.

The flyers were invited to stay at "Grandal" until the British troops arrived by Farmer Hans, his wife called Mor and his son Lauge. The name of the daughter was Karen. Later the flyers were picked up by members of the underground movement and taken to Kolding. In Kolding they received the news that Day and Tate were in Vejle and went there to meet them at Store Grundet.



(Fredericia Byarkiv)

Dax and Jones visiting the crashsite

Air Gnr. F/S Edward Tate and Flt. Engr. F/S Ronald S. Day had managed to get out of the rear exit and to bring the severely injured Air Bomber F/S John Ayers out as well. They were not able to bring him along, so they left him a short distance from the Stirling before they started walking away.

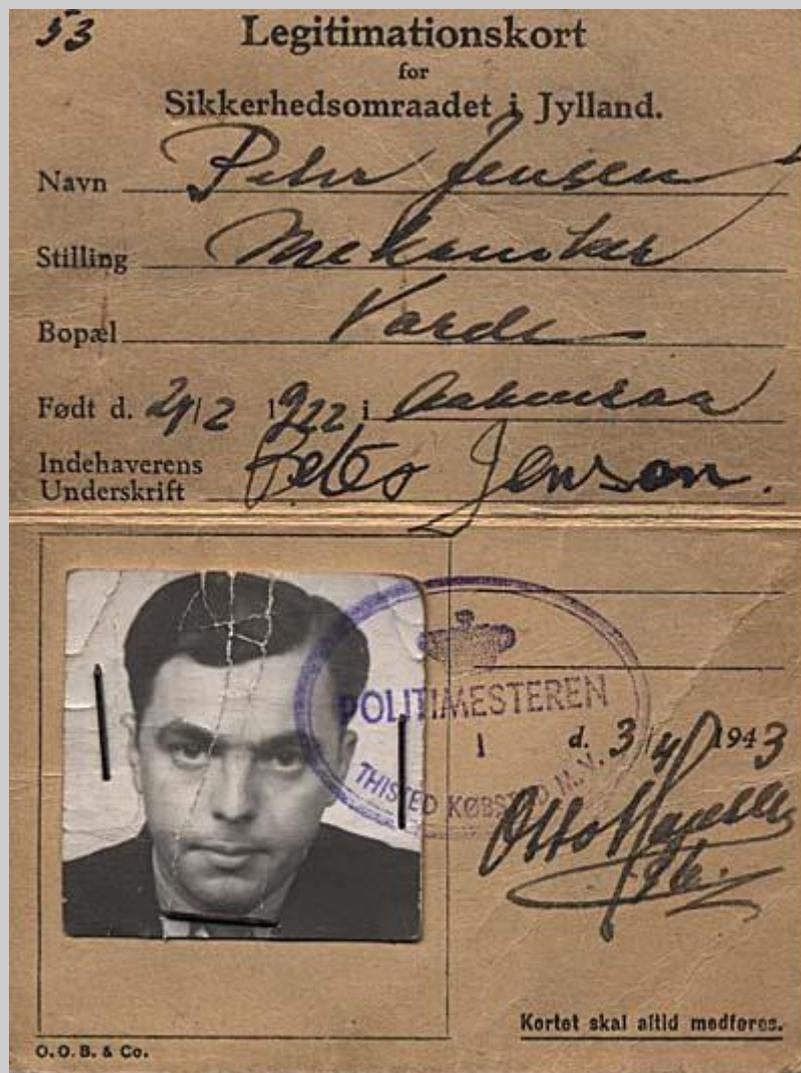
When they reached a collection of temporary huts a few hundred metres away they stopped next to a horse stable to smoke a cigarette before they continued.

After a couple of days they were addressed by smallholder Søren Ohlenschlaeger, Frederiknaade while walking on the road to Vorbasse.

He had tried to buy cigarettes from them before realising that they were English. He took them to his home and then contacted Doctor O. Clausen of Vorbasse.

The Doctor arranged for them to be hidden in a smallholding belonging to Jeppe Nikolajsen and his wife Mia just outside Hovborg and picked the flyers up in his car and took them there.

They stayed by Nikolajsen until the liberation of Denmark, when they were taken to "Store Grundet" near Vejle where they met the rest of the crew.



(Stephanie Tate)

Tate's fake ID-card in Denmark issued by the resistance



(Stephanie Tate)

Tate and Day with Danish friends



(Stephanie Tate)

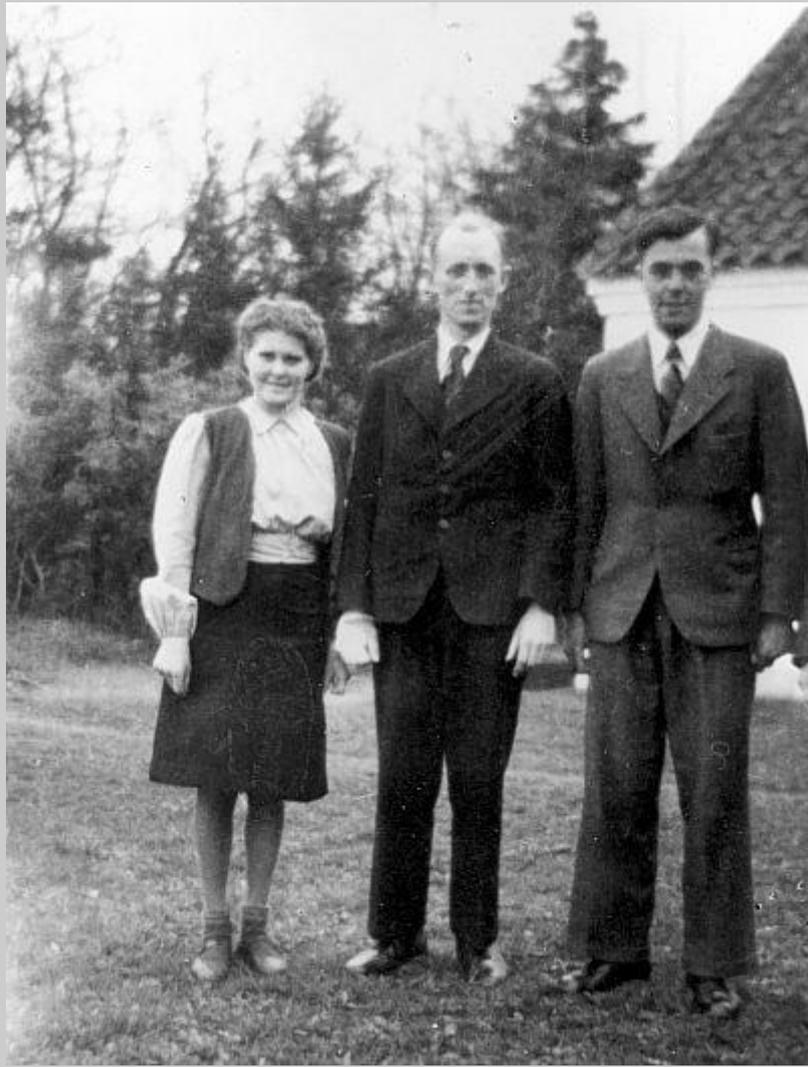
Tate and Day



(Vejle Byarkiv)

### Day at the City Hall in Vejle

Tate and Day also found time to visit Mia and Jeppe Nikolajsen together with three British army officers.



(Fredericia Byarkiv)

Mia Nikolajsen with Day and Tate



(Fredericia Byarkiv)

Mia and Jeppe Nikolajsen with British officers



(Fredericia Byarkiv)

Unknown resistance member, Mia and Jeppe Nikolajsen with parachute used for dropping supplies



(Fredericia Byarkiv)

Mia and Jeppe Nikolajsen after the war



(Stephanie Tate)

The men in Vejle



(Frank Fuller)

The crew in Vejle with members of crew of Halifax NA672

Roberts (Halifax NA672), Day, Tate, Jones  
Fuller, Dax, MacDougall (Halifax NA672)

They all stayed at Store Grundet for a few days and took part in the celebration in Vejle.

They went to where the Stirling had crashed and searched for the pistols they had buried. By help of the resident peat cutters they formed a line abreast and walked east-west thru the moor, but did not find anything.

They also met people who told them that the Germans had brought the injured Ayers to a German Lazarett.

It turned out to be in Fredericia where he had passed away on 30/4. On 4/5 he was buried in a common grave with 24 Germans.

On 31/5 he was transferred to his present grave at "Nordre cemetery" in Fredericia and given a proper Christian funeral. Six members of the resistance movement carried the coffin and Reverend Erik Christensen officiated at the graveside ceremony that was attended by numerous Danish citizens as well as a detachment honor of English soldiers.



(Fredericia Byarkiv)



(Fredericia Byarkiv)



(Fredericia Byarkiv)



John Ayers grave as seen today

After a while the flyers were informed that they would be driven to København on 12/5. In København they spent the time sightseeing and celebrating.



(Roberts, Jones)

The crew in København with Danes and the crew of Halifax NA672

Dane, Dax, Hay, Jones, Dane, Dane, Dane, Fuller, Dane, Mervyn Roberts, Roberts, Dane

On 19/5 1945 they were flown back to England.

On 27/4 1995 a memorial was erected near the crash site.



Jones and Fuller unveils the memorial



NATTEN TIL DEN 27 APRIL 1945  
BLEV ET ENGELSK BOMBFLY  
SKUDT NED AF TYSK ANTILUFTSKYTS  
OG MÅTTE NØDLANDE I PLOUGSLUND MOSE  
500 M. SYDVEST HERFOR.  
ET MINDE REJST I TAKNEMLIGHED.  
1995



On 27/4 2005 a propeller from the Stirling was added to the memorial.

Fuller and Jones were also present on this occasion.

Sources: Frank Fuller, Thomas Jones, AIR 27/1644, Yearbook of Ribe County.

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