

Speech by Svend Bjerregaard

Eye witness to crash of ME449

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to commemorate the 70th anniversary
of the shooting down of RAF Lancaster ME449

Translation by Anni Guldberg Madsen



Svend Bjerregaard
Photo by Birthe Holme Kasch

That day – 12 March 1945, around 9 or 10 pm – we were sitting in our living room. We could hear such a lot of noise from airplanes over our heads, and there was a German nightfighter pursuing the plane. We had blackout curtains, and they were drawn, so I went into the room next door and thought "I have to see" and suddenly a plane was on fire. I rushed back to the sitting room and said to my father "We have to go outside now."

Then we went out into the yard, and we heard a lot of motor noise from airplanes and the roar from machine guns - dududududu - they were shooting. At that time the fire in the plane went out. We looked up, and then we saw something like a big star moving over the sky, and it moved from southwest to northeast. The pilot had just taken a strong dive; that I have been told, I did not see it. Then the fire went out, and after that the bomber went up higher and the crew were able to parachute out, those five men, and then it went down. After that there was nothing more to see, and it did not burn when it landed. Then I was sitting indoors and doing my homework in preparation for my confirmation.

Next day I bicycled to Kvong for my confirmation lesson at the vicarage; I am born in Lyne, and Kvong is about 7 or 8 km away. We were told that a plane had crashed nearby. We found out where it was, but it was only part of the tail with the double rudder. When we came home, we were told that the crash site was a little north east of Lyne, so we bicycled over there. Three or four old German soldiers did not allow us to get close to the plane, but we could see that the plane had sort of belly landed, so that it was lying with the cockpit a little damaged and the wings to the side, and then the middle part of the fuselage. Strangely enough the fuselage had turned around so the big plane was lying to the rear and then the tail. We could see right into the plane, and the cartridge belts used for machine guns were hanging like festoons all the way.

So that was my experience from 12 March 1945 around 2100 h.