

Speech by Lars Damgaard

Honorary Consul,
British Embassy in Denmark

**Ceremony held at Englændergraven, Tarm
12 March 2015**

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

Photo by Birthe Holme Kasch



Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for giving me an opportunity today to say a few words today on behalf of the British Ambassador and the British Embassy to pay tribute to these brave and courageous airmen as we remember them 70 years ago today.

Today we not only remember the British Royal Air Force but also I would like to make a special mention of the Australian men who volunteered to fight for Britain and freedom. Today we especially honour the memories of Rear-Gunner Donald Morris of the Royal Air Force and Mid-Upper Gunner Harvey Porter of the Royal Australian Air Force. They paid the ultimate price for freedom.

On my way down here – I am living in Herning, which is not so far away from here – I was trying to imagine what it would be like to be a member of a Lancaster bomber during the Second World War. Obviously I have no imagination, and the only thing I could think of was fear of flying, something that most of us have in common. But I am also quite sure that these young men never thought about turbulent weather or mechanical problems; they were thinking about and they knew that there was a reasonable risk that they would never return to base and they might even lose their lives. But all these young men had one thing in common, they were fighting for their country, they were fighting for democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, and the rule of law. Ideals which are embedded in both British and Danish culture.

A special friendship has existed ever since between Britain and Denmark and continues to flourish. We see this today as our young men and women of the Armed Forces stand side-by-side in Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and more recently in Libya and Mali, still

upholding the principles Denmark and Britain value so greatly. And still these young people continue to make the ultimate sacrifice for freedom; we should also remember them today.

It is our hope the younger generation will not forget why they today live a life which could have been so very different if it were not for these extraordinary, courageous men and women.

Thank you to the community that has ensured these brave men are never forgotten.

Thank you to the people of Tarm who rescued the survivors on 12 March 1945, and who put their own lives in danger to save the lives of others.

Thank you to the organisers who have worked so hard to make today a successful and memorable event.

And finally thank you to all of you, who have come here today to pay your respects and to ensure the fallen will be remembered!

Thank you.

(Author: Susan Thamdrup, Ministry of Defence, British Embassy-Copenhagen)

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