

Here is our research into *four* of the eight Luftwaffe Graves in the War Graves plot in Scampton Churchyard.

There are many graves of service personnel here due to its close proximity to the Scampton RAF Base to the east of this church. Among these are a number of German war graves.

After the War there was a process of re-interment of German dead from the Second World War into a large war cemetery in Cannock Chase. It is said that the relatives of these men declined permission to do this, opting for them to remain at Scampton. The graves are always immaculately cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and the German airmen are remembered alongside their RAF and Commonwealth counterparts on Remembrance Sunday and at other times.

The men we have researched all died in action on 12th May 1941 in Scampton, Lincolnshire, UK.

*Wilhelm August Christian **Hansen*** - Unteroffizier (Sergeant)

Born: 30.03.1916 in Herford

Died in action: 12.5.1941

*Kurt **Hanning*** – Leutnant (Pilot Officer)

Born: 11.09.1919 in Hannover

Military unit: Combat Squadron 76 - 9 Season

Died in action: 12.05.1941

*Johannes **Dietrich*** - Gefreiter (LAC)

Born: 8.12.1918 in Heinrichswalde

Died in action: 12.05.1941

*Helmuth **Wimmer*** - Gefreiter (LAC)

Born 19.05.1920 in Salzburg

Died in action: 12.05.1941

*E.H **Reidel*** – details unknown

Died in action: 12.05.1941

At this time, Luftwaffe Junkers Ju 88G-6 aircraft - each carrying a crew of four - were evidently 'cruising around', waiting for Lancaster bombers returning from operations.

According to the limited information available at the time of our research, these men were the crew of a Ju 88 A-5 (serial no. 5168), markings: F1+BS downed by the anti-aircraft artillery of Scampton airfield while on a low-level attack on the night of May 11th/12th, 1941 at 1.35 a.m. (British time). The aircraft crashed at Brattleby Lane (near Scampton airfield) and the whole crew was killed. Apparently, a couple by the name of Miller were near the crash site. Three crew members were found dead in the plane wreckage and it is said that *Kurt Hanning* died in the arms of Mrs. Miller.

On the 14th May 1941, the 4 crew members were buried here with military honours.

It is clear that one of the graves contains two bodies, those of *Wimmerder* and *Reidel*. Unlike the other men, *Reidel* has only initials and no date of birth. Local legend had it that *Reidel* was *Wimmerder's* girlfriend who had been illegally taken along on the raid. However, many years later (in the 1960's) a Scampton farmer ploughing his fields near the site of the crash, found a German identity tag. It was thought at first that the tag must have belonged to one of the aircrew who had perished, but this bore a different name. Searches of the German archives were carried out and the tag was found to belong to a male Gefreiter (Lance Corporal) of the ground crew at the aeroplane's base. This was thought to be *Reidel*, who had been reported as 'absent without leave' and was possibly on board the JU 88 unofficially, perhaps for a bit of excitement. It therefore appears that the story about a 'stowaway' aboard the aircraft is partially true, and the rank 'Gefreiter' indicates that *E.H Reidel* was not a woman.

Sources: Last accessed online April 2016.

<http://www.wingsofwar.org/forums/showthread.php?16273-German-war-graves-at-Scampton&s=4eb1f30ced79e4afea22fec81be76c60>

<http://www.wingsofwar.org/forums/archive/index.php/t-16273.html>

http://www.interment.net/data/eng/lincoln/stjohn_scam/index.htm

<http://www.rafcommands.com/forum/showthread.php?29-German-War-Graves-Commission>

<http://www.angelfire.com/id/100sqn/Scampton.htm>

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Mission: Operation Gisela (Intruder operations against airfields in eastern England)

Date: 3/4th March 1945

Time: 01.45 hours

Unit: 7 Staffel./Nachtjagdgeschwader 5

Type: Junkers Ju 88G-6

Werke/Nr.620397

Coded: C9 + RR

Location: Welton, Lincolnshire, England.

Pilot: Feldwebel. Heinrich Conze. 439 Lw.Baukomp.13/VI. – Killed. Born 19.01.1920 in Essen.

Radar/Op: Unteroffizier. Rudolf Scherer. 5154./Fl.A.Rgt.26. – Killed. Born 04.04.1922 in Dettingen.

Radio/Op: Obergefreiter. Werner Nollau. 1586.Ln.Ers.R.303. – Killed. Born 08.10.1923 in Oschatz/Leipzig.

Gunner : Unteroffizier. Alfred Altenkirch. 153./U.S.4d.Lw. – Killed. Born 20.09.1924 in Bergzow/Magdeburg.

Burial details: All crew rest in the Scampton Churchyard, Lincolnshire.

REASON FOR LOSS:

Took off Lubeck / Blankensee on "Operation Giesela", an intruder mission over British bomber airfields. Attacked car being driven by an Observer Corps Official and while diving to attack, the aircraft struck telegraph wires and crashed on top of the car. Both the aircraft and the car were completely wrecked with wreckage being scattered over a wide area. The driver of the car was also killed. Markings: Mottled pale blue all over. Engines: Jumo 213 A-engines, nos: 1021521729 maker jfr & 521859. Armament: four MG 151/20 fixed, forward firing in belly-fairing, on MG 131 free in dorsal position. Equipment: FuG 10 P, FuB12F, FuG 101 A, Fug 16 ZY, FuG 220 installed.

The C9 + RR attacked a motor car driven by an Observer Corps official (Mr J. P. Kelway) near the village of Welton apparently under the impression that its headlamps indicated activity on Scampton airfield. While diving to attack, the aircraft struck telegraph wires and crashed on top of the car. Both car and aircraft were completely wrecked, parts of the burning aircraft being scattered over a wide area. All the members of the crew were killed together with Mr Kelway. The sole documentary identification of the unit to which this aircraft belonged was a camp cinema ticket which was stamped III./NJG5.

REPORT by John Benson

In March 1945 - only a few weeks before the VE Day -the Germans carried out large-scale intruder operations. Cruising around, waiting for Lancaster bombers returning from operations, were Luftwaffe Junkers Ju 88G-6 aircraft, each carrying a crew of four. One of them shot down a Lancaster near Langworth and then made off towards Welton. Flying low, it attacked a car on the Welton-Hackthorn road, spitting cannon fire and machine gun bullets. But it came too low and crashed into the car, flinging it across two fields. The driver was the only member of the Observer Corps to be killed on duty in the war. He was the father of two boys from my school. The Germans were buried in Scampton churchyard.

Many years later, a farmer ploughing his fields found a German identity tag and it was thought at first that it must

have belonged to one of the aircrew who had perished. But this was a NEW name. Checks were made and it was found to belong to a member of the squadron's ground crew, who had been reported as "absent without leave". He had evidently "hitched" a lift in the JU 88, probably for a bit of excitement. So one of the gravestones of the Luftwaffe crew now has TWO names on it.



Feldwebel. Heinrich Conze pictured in his barracks (Hall).



Rudolf Scherer also shares the same barrack room (Hall)



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Heinrich Conze, the ill-fated pilot (Hall).cccc ccccccccccccccc Relatives of Heinrich visiting his grave (Hall).



Original war graves of the crew members at Scampton Churchyard, Lincolnshire (Hall).



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Burial details: All crew rest in the Scampton Churchyard, Lincolnshire.

Researched and compiled by Melvin Brownless with thanks to Steve Hall for Conze photos and report by John Benson, May 2013.

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