

Speech given on September 4<sup>th</sup> 2013 at Lancaster EE138 crash site Stadil, Denmark by:

Mr. Anders N. Andersen

Thank you for the opportunity to tell this history about the propeller blade we have to unveil here today, this has followed me for 45 years from a very young boy, so its history for me to leave it now where it belongs. About the history it started that night, when my mother who is sitting here was 19 years old and at lived at home two kilometres straight North from here at a farm. She had gone to sleep but suddenly her room was bright day and she was scared and jumped out of the bed and went to the living room where there was a South window, and the plane at very low height flew over the farm and went South here, there was a tremendous noise, there was extremely big flames from the plane and suddenly everything was silent.

Then five years later Helge Frederiksen the son of the priest in Stadil would try to recover the propeller blade and he has written this history and unfortunately due to health problems is not able to be here today, but I have promised him to read out the history he has made.

*“When my father a couple of years after the Liberation acquired the position as Vicar for the Stadil Parish I was a boy of 15 years who already twice during the war had had the experience of watching Royal Air Force planes being shot down. On one occasion just above our heads when attacked by German fighters and crashed a few miles away. All crew members were lost. At the other occasion, the pilot managed to crash land the airplane. One died in the flames and the other crew members were saved and escaped with the help of Danish resistance people to Sweden and from there back to England.*

*When I therefore heard about the Lancaster which had been shot down just few miles from the place where we lived in Stadil, I was keen to see the place which was located at a very wet farming area close to Farmer Ingemann Halkjær.*

*At the time when I first visited the crash area still a lot of smaller parts from the airplane could be seen spread over the area while a few bigger items buried in the ground, but partly visible could be observed. Everything else had disappeared in the very muddy area and oil was noticeable on the water surrounding the place. A typical oil/fuel smell was noticed when small bubbles reached the water surface.*

*Of course it was a strong and sad experience to stand there knowing that the brave air-men had lost their lives here in their fight to liberate Europe from the Germans and to be left here so far away from their loved ones and Home Countries.*

*I was a keen angler and used my long Waders when investigating the very wet area to see if I could find other items from the plane. During one of these excursions I discovered the end tip of a propeller blade and I decided that I would try to have it recovered if at all possible. .*

*However, shortly after the area was fenced in, and some people, who obviously had been engaged with the aim to recover the wreck started working. A Crane was put up and they tried to lift the visible parts of the plane. But only few smaller items were recovered as the crane was sinking down in the wet area as soon as they tried to pull up and eventually they gave up without result.*

*Not knowing if other people would come to continue the job of recovering I decided to do my own modest recovering job, and after difficult digging and pulling I finally got the propeller blade up and with the permission of Ingemann Halkjær I transported the blade to my home on top of my new bicycle which unfortunately got some bad scratches in the process. It was about 3 Miles across difficult field area but finally I reached home.*

*The Blade was then placed in my room nicely decorated by a Royal Air Force flag I had received from one of the Royal Air Force soldiers who came to Denmark after the Liberation. Time went by and I was now working in West Africa for a Danish Company and when my father reached the time to go on pension my parents presented the blade to Anders Andersen who had shown much interest in the blade when visiting my parents.*

*The same Anders, who together with Erling Halkjær, son of Ingemann Halkjær now are preparing the way for the Blade finally to be placed where it belongs together with the original Monument.*

*It will be remembered that Erling's father Ingemann Halkjær was the person who initiated a committee consisting of Ingemann, my father and Aksel Koldby, chairman of the Local Parish. This committee started a local collection with the aim on the 5th of May 1950 to raise a Monument in honour of the brave Royal Australian Air Force and Royal Air Force airmen who lost their lives in Stadil in their fight for Freedom in Europe."*