

HAXEY PARISH COUNCIL MILITARY MEMORIAL WORKING GROUP

1. Parish Residents will probably be aware of the considerable number of Royal Air Force airfields located around the Isle of Axholme that were active during WW2 and provided both training and front line air support to the War effort by British and Multi National aircrews flying a myriad of aircraft types. As a consequence of this activity, a significant number of accidents occurred, resulting in substantial fatalities and injuries to aircrew. Residents may also be aware of the work being carried out by volunteers in Owston Ferry since 2017 to research and memorialise the loss of a Lancaster Bomber PB 855 and crew which crashed at 3 Bridges Owston Ferry, close to the Haxey Parish boundary in 1945. A Memorial Dedication Day for the crew of this aircraft is planned for 15 Apr 20.

2. Following an initial period of investigation into local air accidents, in May 2019, Haxey Parish Council formed a Military Memorial (Working) Group (MMG) to carry out detailed research into any air crashes that ended up in the Parish. After a preliminary search of relevant military databases and visits to Sandtoft, the closest WW2 airfield to Haxey Parish, several major incidents were revealed and following further wider research, the MMG concluded that there were 2 major incidents of note, which resulted in crashes, in the Parish. As was the custom at the time to maintain the morale of the population and deny the enemy intelligence of losses, evidence of the crashes was quickly removed and there are no local memorials of the events, although there are still some local recollections of the crashes. In total, 21 aircrew fatalities were caused by both crashes; however, there were no casualties caused on the ground. Short details of the incidents follow:

a. **7 February 1944 – Halifax Mk 2 V9983 of 1662 Heavy Conversion Unit (HCU) – Lost control during evasive action to avoid a mid-air collision.** Halifax V9983 from 1662 HCU was based at RAF Blyton (Gainsborough) and flown by a UK crew with a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) pilot. The aircraft lost control during evasive action to avoid a mid-air collision with another aircraft and crashed near the East Lound/Graizelound Rd Haxey. There were no survivors.

b. **7 March 1944 - Halifax Mk 5 EB184 of 1602 Heavy Conversion Unit (HCU) – based at RAF Sandtoft - Mid-Air Collision with HR 657 whilst on Night Flying/Bombing Practice.** Halifax EB184 from 1602 HCU was based at RAF Sandtoft and flown by a UK crew. The aircraft was involved in a bombing exercise over Misson Bombing Range and it is evident that it collided with HR 667 and crashed between Graizelound and Haxey. There were no survivors.

c. **7 March 1944 - Halifax Mk 2 HR657of 1667 HCU based at RAF Blyton - Mid-Air Collision with EB184 whilst on Night Flying/Bombing Practice.** Halifax HR 667from 1667 HCU based at RAF Blyton and flown by a Polish Crew attached from 300 (Polish) Sqn. The aircraft was involved in a bombing exercise over Misson Bombing Range. During the flight, the aircraft collided with EB 184 over the Bombing Range and crashed near Graizelound. There were no survivors.

3. To date, the Parish Council has initially agreed to consider a plan to provide a memorial to the 2 crashes and work on this continues by the MMG. North Lindsey College has been approached and requested to come up with the suitable design for a memorial with a view to them providing the fabrication at a future date, as a project for their students. Further details of progress on the Memorial Project can be found on the Parish Council website.

4. Any local information on the crashes or any comments from Residents on the proposed project are welcome and should be sent to the Clerk to the Parish Council. Contact details can be found above.