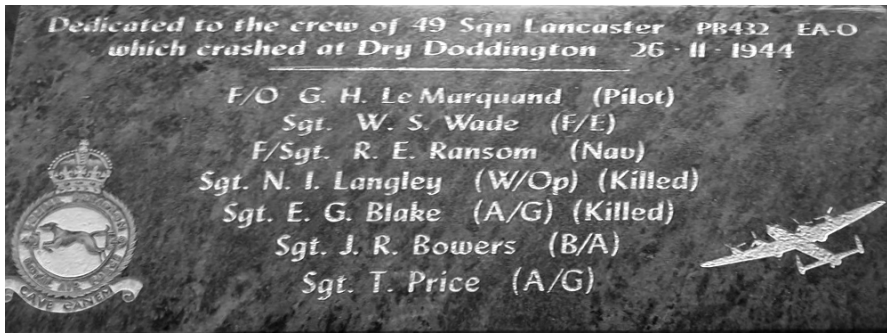


Dry Doddington Air Crash 1944

49 Squadron was founded at Dover, Kent in 1916 and was based at later RAF Fulbeck during WWII. The seven aircrew were bound for Munich in a 270 Lancaster Bomber raid. The aircraft failed to gain sufficient height after take off and crashed on the Coach Road at Dry Doddington. The village street was crammed with crash tenders which couldn't get to the crash site as the coach road was a rutted muddy quagmire at that time and partly blocked by many small thorn bushes and brambles.



Bernard Braithwaite's family were asked to show a route through their land to the crash site. Other who tried to help were Jack Dickson, Jack Harrison, Albert Kerr, Reg Pacey and Mr & Mrs Johnie Collins who lived in a bungalow down the coach road 150 yards from the actual crash. The site] was in the corner of Neville Arnold's field. The villagers were evacuated to the village school room which was then on the site of the existing village hall

The courageous crew did a great job saving the village from obliteration by jettisoning the 4000 lb unarmed bomb. The bomb slid along the lane for a considerable distance before coming to a rest deep in the bank hedge-side. Had it still been on board when the plane crashed it would have been catastrophic..

The five crew members who survived were carried to the old chapel building on main street which was used for many years by the late Roy Stanger as a milking parlour for his dairy herd. The RAF Regimental, Bomb Disposal and Royal Engineers teams were temporarily placed there for several weeks during the recovery operations.

Mrs Kerr senior was on duty as an auxiliary ambulance driver that evening. Three days later Jack Harrison brought the two fatalities from the crash up into the village on his pony and trap. Several days later Mr Kerr was marshalled to pull out the monster bomb with his Fordson tractor.

A report taken from a book "Beware of The Dog at War" states that it was quite late on Sunday night and dark when 10 aircraft from 49 squadron were



marshalled on the perimeter track at RAF Fulbeck along with aircraft from 189 squadron in preparation for take off. The pilot of one of the last aircraft to take off at 10.46 recalled it was bad weather with a cloud base at just 300-400 feet. He had only just entered the clouds when he saw the aircraft which had taken off just before him, crash and burst into flames. This was the aircraft that crashed at Dry Doddington. He learned afterwards that the aircraft taking off behind him had also crashed at Saltby near Melton Mowbray. That meant two aircraft were lost before group had left the vicinity of the airfield.

After the dedication of a memorial in Dry Doddington church by Rev G Munn, only two crew members were traced. Walter Wade and Tom Price had met up after the war but had lost touch as the years went by. Walter had died in 1997 aged 87 and Tom lived near Harrogate in North Yorkshire.

Sgt Norman Langley the wireless operator and Sgt Edward Blake the mid upper gunner were both killed.

A total of 55,000 bomber command aircrew gave their lives in pursuit of our freedom.