

Pontchâteau

Lancaster PA968

La Porcherais La Porcherais

Prinquiau

Montoir-de-Bretagne

Trignac

Aérodrome Montoir

Dong

Lancaster LM643

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Google Earth

Paimboeuf

2/1/46

*35
6
41
9/4/46
59*

From: Air Ministry (P4 Cas), 73-77 Oxford Street, London, W.1

To: Officer Commanding, No. 1 Missing Research & Enquiry Unit,
Royal Air Force, c/o British Army Staff, Paris, France.

Date: *9th* January, 1946

Ref: P.420676/44/P4/104

Casualty Summary No. P.415 B.

1. Lancaster Mark III aircraft *W.643* was reported missing from operations on the night of *24/25th* July, 1944. The engine numbers were as follows:-

Merlin 3B	Port Outer	-	A16066/AF42-251-62/PP32483
	Port Inner	-	A15100/AF42-250096/PP32462
	Starboard Inner	•	A17276/AF42/252272/PP32478
	Starboard Outer	•	A14209/AF42/249205/PP32480

The crew comprised:-

30234	P/O R.W. Orbell	-	Pilot
610229	Sgt. J.R. Ward	-	Plt/Engineer
J.35044	P/O J.J. Komos ✓	-	Navigator
R.176578	P/Sgt. B.H. Murphy	-	Air Bomber
1713648	Sgt. G.H. Lucas	-	W/Op (Air)
1347303	Sgt. J.R. Scott	-	Mid-upper gunner
1593177	Sgt. S. Sinclair ✓	-	Rear gunner.

2. Two reports from the Gendarmerie Nationale have now been traced which refer to this crew.

6-11

a) The first is from *DOUZE* (Loire Inferieure), map reference *13/1166*. It states that an aircraft crashed there at *01.00* hours on *25th* July, 1944, and that five members of the crew were killed. Two are stated to have left the aircraft by parachute. It is presumed that these are included in the five dead, but this is not definitely stated. The names of two of the dead are given as *Sinclair* and *Komos*, three are not identified. These five were buried in the

/cemetery

cemetary at Donges. The names clearly refer to Sgt. Sinclair and P/O. Kennes.

b) The second report is from MONTOLR-EN-BRETAGNE, map reference 13/166, and states that a body was recovered from the sea wearing an identity disc inscribed with the service particulars of Flt Lt Sergeant Murphy. This body was buried at Montolr-en-Bretagne, but no dates are given either of recovery or of burial.

In neither report are grave markers given.

3. Will you please make further enquiries and if necessary have the grave at Donges examined to determine:-

- a) the identity of the "threeunknowns"
- b) the fate of the one member of the crew still unaccounted for.

Please state also the exact locations of all the graves.

A. Leach.

Flight Officer,
Missing Research & Enquiry Section.

Copy to:- C.L.O. ✓

REPORT

FROM: No. 1 Missing Research and Enquiry Unit, Royal Air Force,
British Forces in France.

TO: Air Ministry (P.4 Cas), 73-77 Oxford Street, LONDON W.1.

COPIES TO: Air Ministry (P.4 Cas (CAN)), 73-77 Oxford Street, LONDON W.1.

DATE: 30th May, 1946.

YOUR FILE OR FOLDER REFERENCE:

YOUR CASUALTY ENQUIRY NUMBER: F.415.S.

OUR REFERENCE: 1MREU/S.8/CE.F.415.S/AIR.

NAME OF SEARCH OFFICER AND NUMBER OF SECTION: F/Lt. E.R. GARDNER, No. 5 Section.

TARGET: Sub. Base, ST NAZAIRE.

AIRCRAFT TYPE AND SERIAL NUMBER: Lanc. IM or LM.643.

DATE REPORTED MISSING: 24/25 July, 1944.

PLACE OF CRASH: DONGES Loire Inf.

MAP REFERENCE: Sheet 5J.665658.

PLACE OF BURIAL: New Cemetery, DONGES.

MAP REFERENCE: Sheet 5J.665660.

CREW: 50234 F/O. ORBELL - Pilot.
J.35044 F/O. KOMMES - Navigator.
1713648 Sgt. LUCAS - W/Op.
1593177 Sgt. SINCLAIR - A/G.

610229 Sgt. WARD - Engineer.
R.176578 F/Sgt. MURPHY - Air Bomber.
1347303 Sgt. SCOTT - A/G.

RESULT OF INVESTIGATION AND FINDINGS:

On the 29.5.46 I was present at the exhumation of the 2 "Unknowns" buried in the New Cemetery at DONGES.

2. GRAVE NO.1 (Ref. Report and plan dated 21.5.46 submitted by F/Lt. HARMAN) contained a few badly decomposed and burnt pieces of body and clothing. A piece of battledress with an A/G's brevet was found, so that this grave must be that of 1347303 Sgt. SCOTT, J.R. as the other Gunner Sgt. S. SINCLAIR 1593177, is buried in GRAVE No.3.

3. GRAVE NO.2 contained 1 body badly decomposed. Amongst the papers found on this body was Form 125OR. - No.1713648 LUCAS, the W/Op. in this crew.

REMARKS:

4. (a) Grave No. 1 may contain pieces of more than one body, as the a/c crashed in flames in the factory and the French collected the pieces and buried them in DONGES cemetery. The bodies were left near the aircraft for 3 days as the Germans refused to bury them.

(b) As the aircraft crashed in the factory, and two of the crew were stated to be cut, it appears that F/Sgt. MURPHY, B.H. R.176578 came down in the sea, and was washed ashore at MONTOIR and buried on the 29-7-44.

(c) The other member of the crew who parachuted must be either F/O. ORBELL 51234 or Sgt. J. WARD 610229. For further information on the suggested burial place of one of these two, refer to my report dated 29.5.46 on the exhumation of an unknown aviateur buried at LA TRANCHE on the 1.8.44.

Signed: E.R. GARDNER. F/Lt.

E.R. Gardner
Squadron Leader, Commanding,
No. 1 Missing Research and Enquiry Unit,
Royal Air Force.

REPORT.

FROM: No. 1 Missing Research and Enquiry Unit, Royal Air Force,
British Forces in France.

TO: Air Ministry (P.4 Cas), 73-77 Oxford Street, LONDON W.1.

COPIES: TO: Air Ministry (P.4 Cas (CAN)), 73-77 Oxford Street, LONDON W.1.

DATE: 30th May, 1946.

YOUR FILE OR FOLDER REFERENCE:

YOUR CASUALTY ENQUIRY NUMBER: F.415.S and F.38.S.

OUR REFERENCE: 1MREU/S.8/CE.F.415.S. and F.38.S/AIR.

NAME OF SEARCH OFFICER AND NUMBER OF SECTION: F/Lt. E.R. GARDNER, No. 5 Section.

TARGET:

AIRCRAFT TYPE AND SERIAL NUMBER:

DATE REPORTED MISSING:

PLACE OF CRASH:

MAP REFERENCE:

PLACE OF BURIAL: LA TRANCHE Cemetery,
ST. NAZAIRE.

MAP REFERENCE:

N.56.

CREW:

RESULT OF INVESTIGATION AND FINDINGS:

On the 29.5.46 I witnessed the exhumation of the "Unknown Aviateur" buried next to 45539 F/Lt. LAWSON, H. in LA TRANCHE Cemetery. Ref. Para.1 1MREU/S.8/F.38S/AIR dated 11th April, 1946.

2. The body, although badly decomposed, was intact and it was impossible to state the cause of death. Unfortunately the battledress jacket had gone, and no means of identification was obtained. The singlet was of Navy pattern (white material with a blue braid square cut neck); a double ended small spanner was found in one of the pockets.

REMARKS.

3. I think that there is a possibility that this may be the body of Sgt. WARD J. 610229 from the crew of Cas. Eng. F.415.S. Ref. my report dated 30.5.46 Para. 4 (c). My reasons are, that the aircraft crashed on the 24/25 July, 1944. Two airmen are said to have baled out; one of these F/Sgt. MURPHY, R.176578 was washed ashore and buried at MONTOIR, which suggests that the two airmen baled out over the sea. (The a/c crashed in the refineries on the banks of the River LOIRE); if this is correct, the second could have been washed up near ST. NAZAIRE.

4. The body referred to in this report was picked up near ST. NAZAIRE and buried at LA TRANCHE on the 1.8.44. Mr. Paris of the "Health Dept." Mairie ST. NAZAIRE who has examined hundreds of bodies during the war, stated that the corpse had been in the water 5 or 6 days, which would make the date that he was actually drowned, around the 25.7.44.

5. May Sgt. WARD 610229 be checked for any previous connection with the Navy. I suggest Sgt. WARD because he was the F/Eng. and a spanner was found in one of the pockets. Failing any connection, the records of F/O. ORBELL 50234 could be also searched.

Signed: E.R. GARDNER. F/Lt.

E.R. Gardner
Squadron Leader, Commanding,

No. 1 Missing Research and Enquiry Unit,
Royal Air Force.

R E P O R T

FROM: No. 1 Missing Research and Enquiry Unit, Royal Air Force,
c/o British Army of the Rhine.

TO: Air Ministry, (P.4 Cas), 73-77 Oxford, Street, London, W.1.

COPIES TO: Air Ministry, (P.4 Cas-Can), 73-77 Oxford, Street, London, W.1.

DATE: 11th April, 1946.

YOUR FILE OR FOLDER REFERENCE: P.420676/44/P4/104; dated 9th Jan/46.

Your CASUALTY ENQUIRY NUMBER: F.415.S.

OUR REFERENCE: IMREU/S.8/F415.S

NAME OF SEARCH OFFICER AND NUMBER OF SECTION: F/Lt A.J. Harman, No. 5 Section.

TARGET: Sub. base St. Nazaire.

AIRCRAFT TYPE AND SERIAL NUMBER: Lancaster Mk. III, L.M.(or L.M.) 643.

DATE REPORTED MISSING: 24 or 25 July 1944, at 0100 hour.

PLACE OF CRASH: Donges. Loire-Inferieure MAP REFERENCE: G.S.G.S.4249 Sheet 5J
665658 (13/N66)

PLACE OF BURIAL: Donges. Loire Inferieure MAP REFERENCE: ~~EXSEXS~~.665660 (13/N66)
Montoir. La Bretagne 605685 (13/N66)

CREW: 51234 F/O R.E. Orbell 1713648 Sgt. C.H. Lucas
 610229 Sgt J.W. Ward 1347303 Sgt. J.R. Scott
 J.35044 F/O J.J. Kommes 1593177 Sgt S. Sinclair
 R.176578 F/Sgt B.H. Murphy

RESULT OF INVESTIGATION AND FINDINGS:

The aircraft crashed in the factory at Donges. All the crew were killed. The Germans carried away all the debris of the aircraft.

Of the crew of seven, the graves of F/O Kommes and Sgt Sinclair are in the new cemetery at Donges together with 2 unknown (plan attached). An arm was found on the scene of the crash and was buried with the other remains. This arm did not belong to any of the four members of the aircrew.

F/Sgt Murphy was picked up on the banks of the river Loire near Montoir la Bretagne by Mr. Jean Brosseau on the 28-7-44. The Germans buried him in the cemetery at Montoir (plan attached). They gave Sgt Murphy a military funeral.

The dates of burial are as follows:

F/O Kommes, Sgt. Sinclair, 2 unknown on the 27-7-44. These graves are not numbered. ed
Sgt Murphy, 29/7/44.

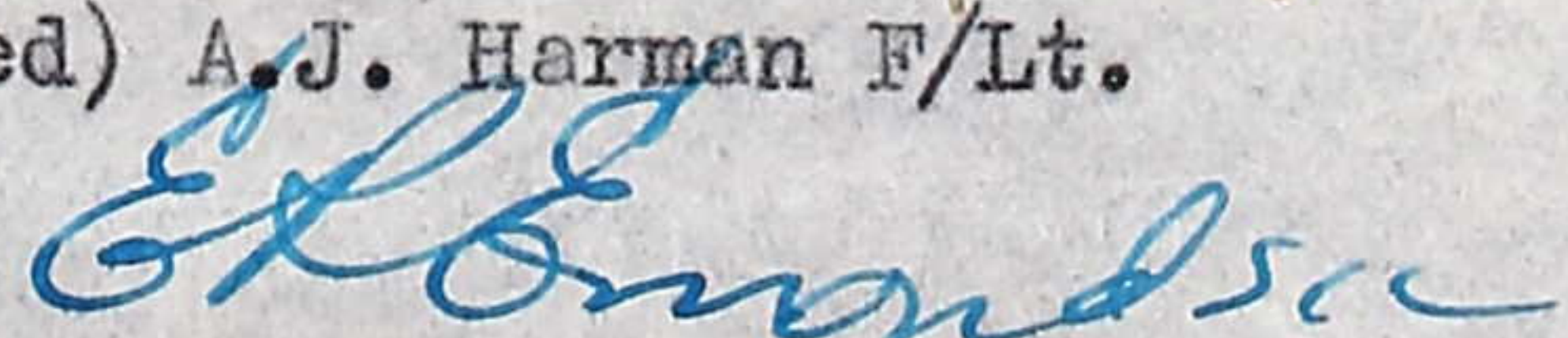
Unfortunately no trace of the other member of the crew can be found. None of the graves have been visited by the G.R.U.

It is suggested that exhumation at Donges (New) cemetery may furnish data to enable the two unknown to be identified.

Attached herewith are the following articles found by me:

- 1 Identity Card form 1250 R No. 864001 in respect of Sgt S. Sinclair.
- 1 Photograph believed to be that of CAN/J35041 F/O J.J. Kommes.

(Signed) A.J. Harman F/Lt.


for Wing Commander, Commanding
No. 1 Missing Research and Enquiry Unit,
Royal Air Force,
c/o British Army of the Rhine.

Crew Name Sorties Flown Report

Serial No: LM643 **Sqn/Unit:** 619 Sqn **Call Letter:** PG-E

Raid Date: 18-7-44 **Target:** Caen

Take Off: 0402 **Returned:** 0734 **Aborted:** No

Crew Names: F/O R.W. Orbell; Sgt. J.R. Ward; F/O J.J. Kommes, RCAF; Sgt. D.M. Murphy, RCAF; Sgt. G.H. Lucas; Sgt. W. Kennard; Sgt. S. Sinclair

Comments: The primary target was attacked and bombed from 8,500 feet at 0605 hours. Weather conditions clear with smoke and haze. The target was identified by yellow and red Tl's. Bombs being dropped on furthest red Tl as instructed. Marking good and bombing very well concentrated. Photographic failure due to thick smoke. Returned to base.

Bomb Load: Not Recorded

Serial No: LM643 **Sqn/Unit:** 619 Sqn **Call Letter:** PG-E

Raid Date: 20/21-7-44 **Target:** Courtrai

Take Off: 2259 **Returned:** 0227 **Aborted:** No

Crew Names: F/O R.W. Orbell; Sgt. J.R. Ward; F/O J.J. Kommes, RCAF; Sgt. D.M. Murphy, RCAF; Sgt. G.H. Lucas; Sgt. J.R. Scott; Sgt. S. Sinclair

Comments: The primary target was attacked and bombed from 13,700 feet at 0101 hours. Weather conditions clear with some haze. Target identified by red and green Tl's, slightly overshooting, as instructed. Plotted target area. Photographs showed ground detail. Returned to base.

Bomb Load: Not recorded

Serial No: LM643 **Sqn/Unit:** 619 Sqn **Call Letter:** PG-E
Raid Date: 23/24-7-44 **Target:** Kiel
Take Off: 2251 **Returned:** 0346 **Aborted:** No
Crew Names: F/O R.W. Orbell; Sgt. J.R. Ward; F/O J.J. Kommes, RCAF; Sgt. D.M. Murphy, RCAF; Sgt. G.H. Lucas; Sgt. J.R. Scott; Sgt. S. Sinclair
Comments: The primary target was attacked and bombed from 16,000 feet at 0127 hours. Weather conditions 10/10 th's thin cloud. Special equipment H2S and Monica V. Bombs dropped on one green and one red TI. Photographic failure due to cloud. Returned to base.
Bomb Load: Not recorded

Serial No: LM643 **Sqn/Unit:** 619 Sqn **Call Letter:** PG-E
Raid Date: 24/25-7-44 **Target:** Donges
Take Off: 2227 **Returned:** - **Aborted:** No
Crew Names: F/O R.W. Orbell +; Sgt. J.R. Ward +; F/O J.J. Kommes, RCAF +; F/Sgt. D.M. Murphy, RCAF +; Sgt. G.H. Lucas +; Sgt. J.R. Scott +; Sgt. S. Sinclair +
Comments: Nothing heard from this aircraft subsequent to take-off.
Bomb Load: Not recorded

erb Binn

F. V. 12 24/44

Fliegerhorstkommandantur E(v)

Offen versenden!

225/XII Nantes

Absendende Dienststelle
Ersatztruppenteil mit Standort

*Engländer Kriegsgefangene
gefertigt d. 18.9.44*

Vordruck 511

Wehrmachtauskunftsstelle
23. AUG. 1944
Unt. _____ Ref. _____
Nr. _____

7.9.44

Nachtrag

Namentliche Verlustmeldung

Nr. 6 *)

über

**Offiziere, Wehrmachtbeamte, Unteroffiziere
und Mannschaften**

Berichtszeitraum 6. Juli bis 31. Juli 1944

Verteiler

- Auf dem Dienstweg an ~~den Wehrz~~
- unmittelbar an ~~Gen. Qu. 6. Abt.~~
- » ~~XXXX~~ Wehrmachtauskunftsstelle für Kriegsverluste
- » ~~XXXX~~ und Kriegsgefangene,
Berlin W 30, Hohenstaufenstrasse 47/48
- » ~~XXXX~~ Chef L. P.
Kdo. Fl. H. Ber. 8/XII Abt. IIb
Aussenstelle West Oberursel
- ~~XXXX~~
Fl. H. Kdtr. E(v) 225/XII

*) Von absendender Dienststelle mit laufender Nr. ausfüllen.

Lfd. Nr.	Ort und Tag des Verlustes, Feindflug? ja oder nein?	Staffel usw.	Dienstgrad Dienststellung	Vorname	Familiennamen Truppenteil Nr. des Erkennungs-marke	Geburts-		
						tag	ort	kreis
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	unbekannt		Flying Officer	Thomas William	Warwick Nr.138313			
2	unbekannt		Flying Officer	Kenneth Gordon John	Gratton Nr.152323			
3	Abschuss 1 B 26 Bl, 19.7.44		S/Spt.	James E.	Fox jr.	-	-	-
4	1950 Uhr in Trois Moulis		1 St.Lt.	J.M.	Deen	-	-	-
5	5 km süd. Nantes		1 St.Lt.		Gonet			
6			2 nd.Lt.		Sinn			
7			Techn.Spt.	J.F.	Williams			
8			St./Spt.	L.T.	Abady			
9	Abschuss 1 B 26 B 1, 19.7.44 1950 Uhr in Vertou bei Nantes.				4 Tote festgestellt, Namen unbekannt, ✓ 1 Ralph V. Hehl ✓ Nr.35650495 T 43 - 44 A Colonel John Simpson 36/3 32 Jahre USA			
10	Abschuss 1 Feindmaschine unbek. Type, wahrsch. Halifax, 27.7.44 0140 Uhr in La Boissiere 5 km nordw. Montreault 40 km Nordw. Nantes.				5 Tote festgestellt, Namen unbekannt.			
11	Abschuss 3 Feindmasch. wahrsch. Lancaster oder Halifax 25.7.44 1 = 0151 La Pocheraie 1 = 0145 Donges 100% Bruch 1 = 0143 Paimboeuf				8 Tote festgestellt, Namen unbekannt übrige Besatzung unbekannt			

Standort, den 1. August 1944

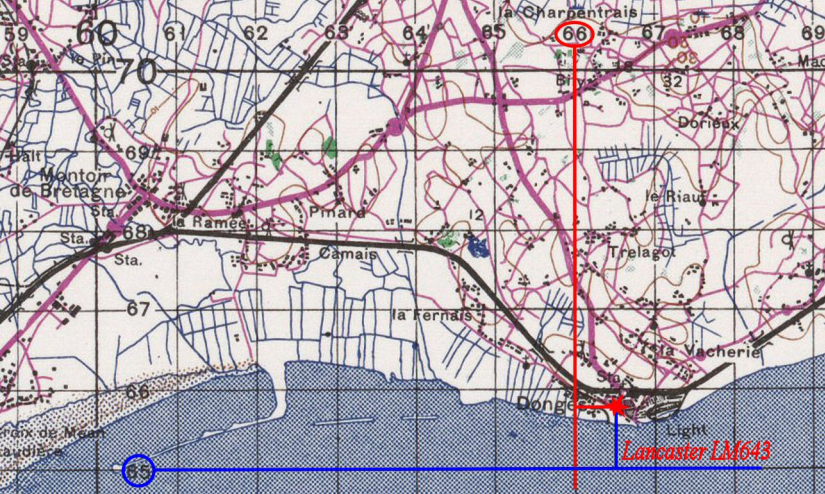
Ge-fallen*)	Verwundet*) Körperstelle und Waffe*)		Vermisst		Gestorben ausserhalb der Lazarettbehandlung infolge				Abgegeben an welche Behörde des Feindes (Krankenhaus) und werhalb?	Bemerkung : z. B. : Grablage, oder bei 14 vermutlich übergelaufen Art und Stärke der feindlichen Waffenwirkung, bzw. nähere Umstände. Letzter Wohnort des Toten.
	schwer	leicht	ge-fangen	sonstig	Verwundung*)	Krankheit	Unfall	Selbst-mord		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
angen										Gefangenen-Sammelstelle Chartres
angen										" "
gefangen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Gräb Nr. 11	Gefangenen-Sammelstelle Chartres.
gefallen									15	Ehrenfriedhof Nantes
gefallen									12	Sektor L Rhine 4
gefallen									14	Nr.
gefallen									16	
gefallen									11	
									13	
gefallen.									10	Übrigen 7 Toten Grablage unbekannt da durch franz. Bürgermeister beerdigt. 2 in Vertou, 5 in La Boissiere.
										Grablage unbekannt da durch franz. Bürgermeister beerdigt



Für das Übernahmekommando

Oberleutnant und Nachrichtenoffizier

*) Abkürzungen: K. = Kopf, H. = Hals, Br. = Brust, Ba. = Bauch, R. = Rücken, l. A. = linker Arm l. G. = Infanteriegeschoss, H.Gr. = Handgranatenverletzung, Gs.V. = Kampfstoffvergiftung, A.G. = Artilleriegeschoss, L. = Luftkampf, A. = Abstupte.
**) Hierzu rechnen auch Verstauchungen und Verrenkungen durch stumpfe Gewalt infolge feindlicher Einwirkung, durch Verschiebung usw.



66

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Lancaster LM643

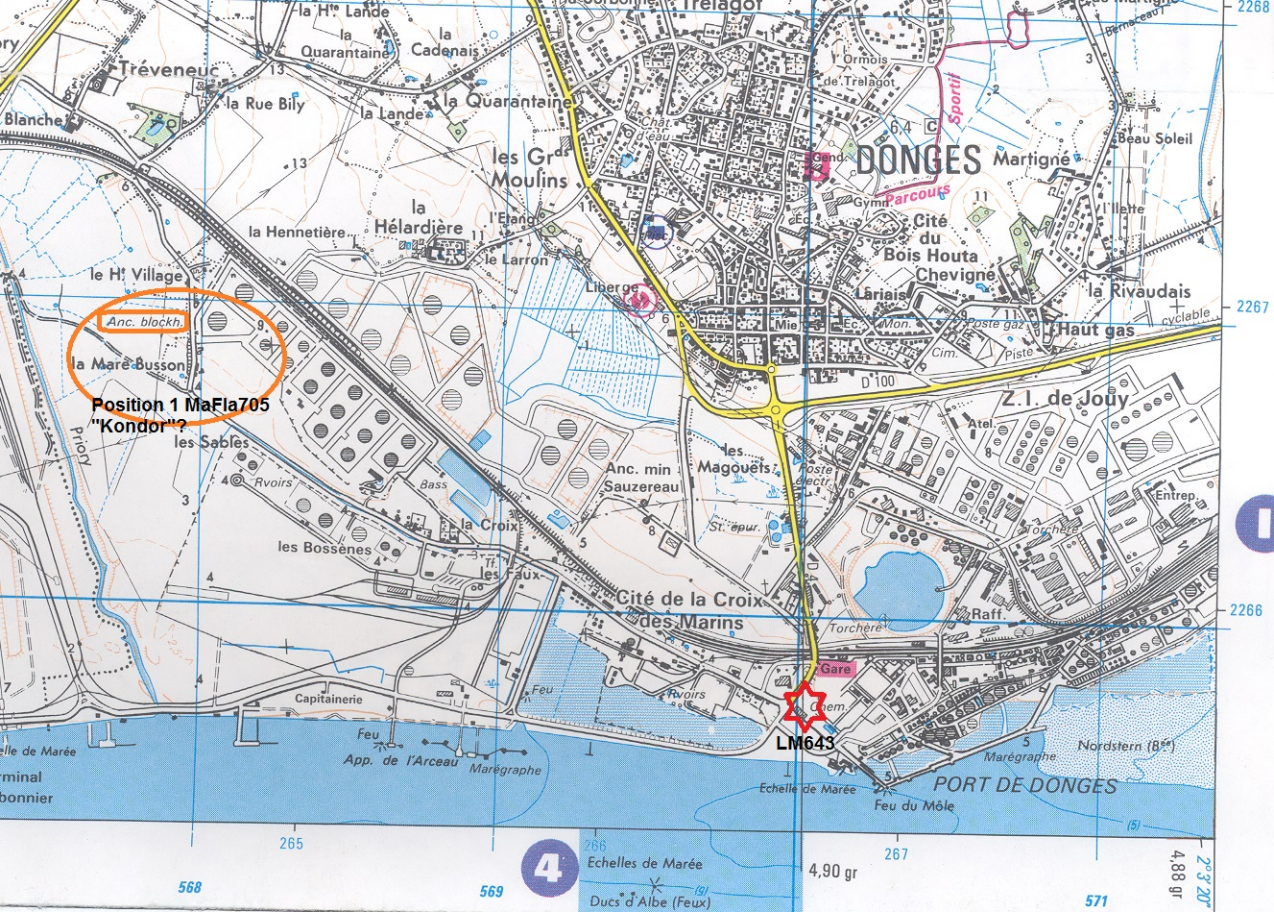
*La Croix des Marins
New Cemetery*

Gare de DONGES

*Crash Lancaster LM643
619 Squadron RAF*

© 2018 Google

Google Earth



Anc. blockh.
la Mare-Busson
Position 1 MaFla705
"Kondor"?

LM643
Gare
Chem.

4

568

569

571

4,88 gr
23 20

FRANCE : Lancaster III LM643 - DONGES

Google Translation (French-English) it is not perfect.

Bonjour Monsieur FUSS,

I may be getting more information about the more accurate location of the crash in about 1 month. So I send you these military archives immediately.

As it is written in the archives, **the Lancaster fell into the factory of Donges (inside) on the banks of the Loire.** The Donges refinery was closed, secured and occupied by the Germans. Maybe that's why you didn't get any information but French were present at the crash site.

Yesterday I phoned the Assistant Director and the communication Department, Madame DESCHAMPS, of the refinery of DONGES. They informed me that the archives were transferred to the Departmental Archives of Nantes. I made a request to the archives of Nantes who actually possess these documents. There may be documents in the archives of the Donges refinery for this story. We have to wait.

The time of the Lancaster crash:

The report of the French National Gendarmerie says that the Lancaster crashed at 1:00 a.m. I think that is approximate. Also I searched for additional information:

- The report of the German Archives of 1 August 1944 **indicates 1h45.**
- The English military archives of the 9 Lancaster of the 619th Squadron indicate the time of the dropping of the bombs on Donges:

9th mission Lancaster – bomb drops on Donges:

- Lancaster I DV326 PG-P	F/O PETTIGREW	8,500 ft.	1h45
- Lancaster I LM209 PG-H	S/L SMITH	11,200 ft.	1h47
- Lancaster III LM630 PG-D	F/O LOCKWOOD	9,500 ft.	1h45
- Lancaster III LM643 PG-E	F/O ORBELL	MISSING	
- Lancaster III LM420 PG-R	F/O BROWN	9,000 ft.	1h49
- Lancaster I LL778 PG-A	F/L SQUIBBS	10,000 ft.	1h43
- Lancaster III LM484 PG-H	F/O SCRIPPS	9,500 ft.	1h44
- Lancaster III EE134 PG-Y	F/O DOCKREY	11,000 ft.	1h46
- Lancaster I ME568 PG-F	F/O LEONARD	10,500 ft.	1h48

So the Lancaster III LM643 was shot on 25 July 1944 at 1:45 a.m. inside the Donges refinery on the banks of the Loire.

The Lancaster III PA968 VN-S, 50th Squadron, was shot down by the FLAK at 1h51 in the morning.

- Archives 216, 217, 220, 221, 222
- German Archives Box116_Folder1_17 and 18
- Military archives MURPHY 199, 200.
- Military archives KOMMES 284, 285

Best Regards, René

French

Bonjour Monsieur FUSS,

Je vais peut-être recevoir un complément d'information sur le lieu plus précis du crash **dans environ 1 mois.** Aussi je vous envoie immédiatement ces archives militaires.

Comme c'est écrit dans les archives, le Lancaster est tombé **dans l'Usine de Donges (à l'intérieur)** sur les rives de la Loire. La Raffinerie de Donges était fermée, sécurisé et occupé par les allemands. C'est

peut-être pour cette raison que vous n'avez pas obtenu d'information mais pourtant des Français étaient présents sur le lieu du crash.

Hier j'ai téléphoné à l'Assistante de Direction et au Service Communication, Madame DESCHAMPS, de la Raffinerie de DONGES. Elles m'ont informée que les archives ont été transférées aux Archives Départementales de Nantes. J'ai fait une demande aux Archives de Nantes qui effectivement possèdent ces documents. Il y a peut-être des documents dans les archives de la Raffinerie de Donges pour cette histoire. Il faut attendre.

L'heure du crash du Lancaster :

Le rapport de la Gendarmerie Nationale Française dit que le Lancaster s'est écrasé à 1 h du matin. Je pense que c'est approximatif. Aussi j'ai cherché des informations complémentaires :

- Le rapport des archives allemandes du 1^{er} août 1944 indique 1h45.
- Les archives militaires Anglaises des 9 Lancaster du 619th Squadron indiquent l'heure du largage des bombes sur Donges:

9 Lancaster de la mission – Largages des bombes sur Donges:

- Lancaster I DV326 PG-P	F/O PETTIGREW	8,500 ft.	1h45
- Lancaster I LM209 PG-H	S/L SMITH	11,200 ft.	1h47
- Lancaster III LM630 PG-D	F/O LOCKWOOD	9,500 ft.	1h45
- Lancaster III LM643 PG-E	F/O ORBELL	MISSING	
- Lancaster III LM420 PG-R	F/O BROWN	9,000 ft.	1h49
- Lancaster I LL778 PG-A	F/L SQUIBBS	10,000 ft.	1h43
- Lancaster III LM484 PG-H	F/O SCRIPPS	9,500 ft.	1h44
- Lancaster III EE134 PG-Y	F/O DOCKREY	11,000 ft.	1h46
- Lancaster I ME568 PG-F	F/O LEONARD	10,500 ft.	1h48

Donc le Lancaster III LM643 a été abattu le 25 Juillet 1944 à 1h45 du matin à l'intérieur de la Raffinerie de Donges sur les rives de la Loire.

Le Lancaster III PB968 VN-S, 50th Squadron, a été abattu par la FLAK à 1h51 du matin.

- Archives 216, 217, 220, 221, 222
- Archives allemandes Box116_Folder1_17 et 18
- Archives militaires MURPHY 199, 200.
- Archives militaires KOMMES 284, 285

Cordialement, René

'and in the morning...'

Lancaster Mk.III LM643 coded PG-E

On the night of Monday 24th July 1944 Bomber Command operated a total of 1,088 sorties: 839 from the main force aircraft were assigned to attack the following targets: 614 aircraft to attack Stuttgart, 113 aircraft to attack Donges and 112 aircraft to attack the flying bomb site Ferfay, Pas-de-Calais. A further 249 aircraft would carry out Minor Operations: 107 aircraft on a Diversionary Sweep, 46 aircraft to carry out an Intruder Sweep, 36 aircraft assigned to carry out Radio Counter Measures, 27 aircraft to attack Berlin, 12 aircraft to carry out Resistance Work, eight aircraft to attack Frankfurt, five aircraft to attack Aachen, four aircraft to lay sea mines off the coast at Brest Harbour and Lorient and four O.T.U. aircraft to operate. From the night's operations a total of 28 aircraft (2.57%) became non-effective and struck off charge: 23 Lancasters and five Halifaxes. From these 28 aircraft there were a total of 190 casualties; 152 airmen died, 22 became Prisoners of War and 16 airmen evaded capture... The crew of Lancaster Mk.III LM643 coded PG-E captained by F/O R.W. Orbell RAF(VR) had been briefed along with the other crews of the Squadron operating that night to attack the oil depot at Donges, roughly 350-hectare site alongside the River Loire, France. The aircraft took off from RAF Station Dunholme Lodge, Lincolnshire (No.5 Bomber Group) at 22.27 hours, nothing was heard from the aircraft after take-off, aircraft crashed at 02.30 hours near Essey-les-Nancy in the NE outskirts of Nancy, France. All seven-crew perished...

Crew of Lancaster Mk.III LM643

F/O (50234) Ronald William Orbell RAF(VR) aged 30, son of Wilfred and Ethel May Orbell; husband of Frances May Orbell, of Oxford and now rests in Joint grave 2. E. 1-2. Escoublac-La-Baule War Cemetery France (Reference No.64123 – Royal Air Force Roll of Honour 3rd September 1939 to 31st May 1945)

Sgt (610229) John Ronald Ward RAF(VR) aged? and now rests in Plot 2. J. 5. Pornic War Cemetery France (reference No.64174 – Royal Air Force Roll of Honour 3rd September 1939 to 31st May 1945)

F/O (J/35044) Joseph John Kommes RCAF aged 22, son of John B. and Katherine M. Kommes, of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada and now rests in Plot 2. E. 5. Escoublac-La-Baule War Cemetery France (Reference No.12947 – Royal Canadian Air Force Roll of Honour 3rd September 1939 to 31st May 1945)

F/S (R/176578) David Matthew Murphy RCAF aged ? son of James and Mary Murphy, of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada and now rests in Montoir-De-Bretagne Communal Cemetery France (Reference No.12953 – Royal Canadian Air Force Roll of Honour 3rd September 1939 to 31st May 1945)

Sgt (1713648) George Henry Lucas RAF(VR) aged 20, son of Henry John Lucas, and of Lilian Amelia Lucas, of Bushey, Hertfordshire and now rests in Plot 2. E. 3. Escoublac-La-Baule War Cemetery France (Reference No.64111 – Royal Air Force Roll of Honour 3rd September 1939 to 31st May 1945)

Sgt (1347303) James Rattray Scott RAF(VR) aged 23, son of John Campbell Scott and Jeanie Rattray Scott, of Glasgow; husband of Annie Scott, of Glasgow and now rests Joint grave 2. E. 1-2. in Escoublac-La-Baule War Cemetery France (reference No.64134 – Royal Air Force Roll of Honour 3rd September 1939 to 31st May 1945)

Sgt (1593177) Stephen Sinclair RAF(VR) aged 19, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Sinclair, of Dunstan Northumberland and now rests in Plot 2. E. 4. Escoublac-La-Baule War Cemetery France (Reference No.64142 – Royal Air Force Roll of Honour 3rd September 1939 to 31st May 1945)

Escoublac-La-Baule War Cemetery France is the 284th cemetery in alphabetical order in French Graveyards and Cemeteries, here rests 78 airmen from five Air Forces whose average age was 26 years 226 days

Montoir-De-Bretagne Communal Cemetery France is the 596th cemetery in alphabetical order in French Graveyards and Cemeteries, F/S Murphy RCAF is the only airman interred in the cemetery...

Pornic War Cemetery France is the 683rd cemetery in alphabetical order in French Graveyards and Cemeteries, here rests 49 airmen and a single Airwomen, (Section Officer (9111) Muriel Tamara Byck of the W.A.A.F) from five Air Forces whose average age was 25 years 274 days

Lancaster Mk.III LM643

Lancaster Mk.III LM643 was one of 350 aircraft built by A.V. Roe & Co. Ltd. Yeadon, Yorkshire under Contract No.1807 and delivered to No.619 Squadron for operational use on Tuesday 11th July 1944 and became non-effective on the night of Monday 24th July 1944 and eventually struck off charge on Wednesday 9th August 1944. Lancaster Mk.III LM643 was the 63rd aircraft from the Squadron to become non-effective and the 99th Squadron aircraft to become non-effective and struck off charge flying out of RAF Dunholme Lodge, Lincolnshire, the 3rd aircraft to become non-effective and struck off charge having been briefed to attack Donges and the 2,022nd aircraft from No.5 Bomber Group to become non-effective and struck off charge, the 1,825th aircraft from operations. (A.M. Form78 records that Lancaster LM643 had 28 hours 40 minutes flying time logged against the airframe)

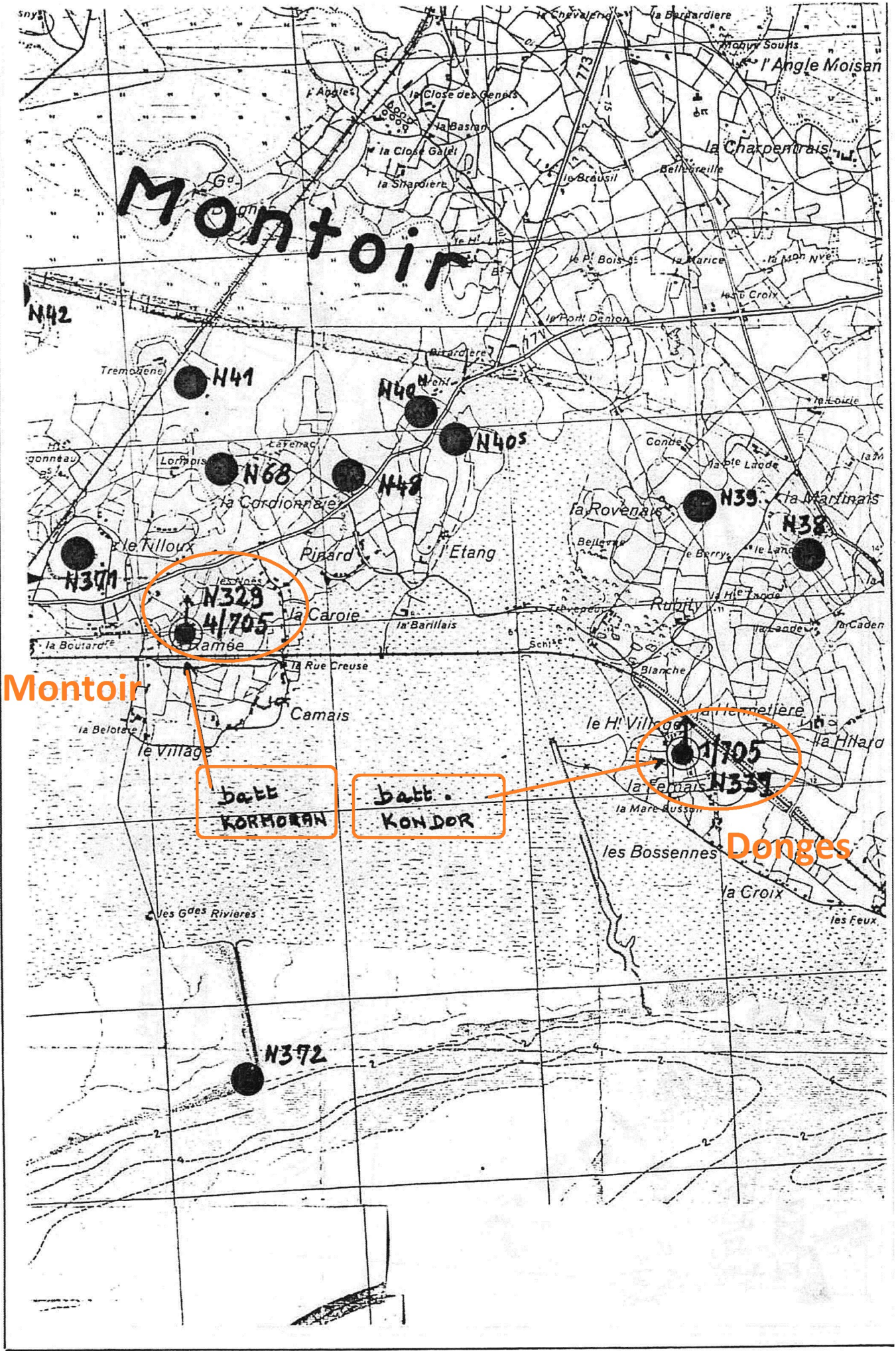
(Information from 'and in the morning... data base – Photographs Air Ministry)

Known Operational History

Known = Currently my files can only prove the raids listed, others may exist

Serial No	Sqn/Unit	Call Letter	Target	Raid Date	Take Off Time	Return Time	Aborted	Crew Names
	ORB / Raid Comments							
LM643	619 Sqn	PG-E	Courtrai	20/21-7-44	2259	0227	No	F/O R.W. Orbell; Sgt. J.R. Ward; F/O J.J. Kommes, RCAF; Sgt. D.M. Murphy, RCAF; Sgt. G.H. Lucas; Sgt. J.R. Scott; Sgt. S. Sinclair
	Crew positions to be confirmed. The primary target, Courtrai, was attacked and bombed from 13,700 feet at 0101 hours. Weather conditions: clear with some haze. Target identified by red and green TI's, slightly overshooting, as instructed. Plotted target area. Photographs showed ground detail							
LM643	619 Sqn	PG-E	Kiel	23/24-7-44	2251	0346	No	F/O R.W. Orbell; Sgt. J.R. Ward; F/O J.J. Kommes, RCAF; Sgt. D.M. Murphy, RCAF; Sgt. G.H. Lucas; Sgt. J.R. Scott; Sgt. S. Sinclair
	Crew positions to be confirmed. The primary target, Kiel, was attacked and bombed from 16,000 feet at 0127 hours. Weather conditions: 10/10 th's thin cloud. Special equipment H2S and Monica V. Bombs dropped on one green and one red TI. Photographic failure due to cloud.							
LM643	619 Sqn	PG-E	Donges	24/25-7-44	2227	-	No	F/O R.W. Orbell +; Sgt. J.R. Ward +; F/O J.J. Kommes, RCAF +; F/Sgt. D.M. Murphy, RCAF +; Sgt. G.H. Lucas +; Sgt. J.R. Scott +; Sgt. S. Sinclair +
	Nothing heard from this aircraft subsequent to take-off							

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Montoir

Montoir

Donges

Batt
KORMORAN

Batt.
KONDOR

N329
4/705

1/705
N331

N372

N42

N41

N40

N405

N68

N48

N39

N38

N371

le Village

le H. Village

la Belote

les Gdes Rivières

Camais

la Rue Creuse

la Mare Buisson

la Semais

les Bossennes

la Croix

les Feux

snys

gonneau

Lorripis

la Cardonnais

Ripard

l'Etang

la Rovenais

le Berry

le Lang

la Boutard

la Caroi

la Barillais

Schise

Blanche

le H. Village

la Semais

les Bossennes

la Croix

snys

gonneau

Lorripis

la Cardonnais

Ripard

l'Etang

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la Croix

