

Lancaster W4319 at Dormanstown, Middlesbrough.



On the night of 17th/18th December 1942 the crew on this aircraft set out from Holme-on-Spalding Moor for a mine laying operation to the Heligoland area, and the six mines were dropped without incident. On their return the weather over the North Sea was very bad, with 10/10ths cloud was reported. With the cloud base all the way down to sea level in places the aircraft drifted off course and ended up to far north by the time they reached land fall.

At the same time the Luftwaffe were making their attack on York (which would see two of their aircraft crash on the North Yorkshire Moors on the same night - and detailed on this website in the Moors section). As well as this attack on York, enemy aircraft were also operating further north, incendiaries were dropped on a Starfish Decoy site at New Marske. A short time after this, bombs were dropped near New Marske at around the same time as this Lancaster crossed the coastline near Warrenby Ironworks.

By this stage in the flight the Lancaster's IFF transmitting device had ceased to work, or was not switched on, as a result the radar on the ground could not tell it was a friendly aircraft and given the attacks were being made by enemy aircraft at the time assumed it to be hostile. Flying over the Warrenby Ironworks at around 250 feet the Bofur guns sited at the plant could hardly miss. Several hits were scored on the Lancaster which eyewitnesses describe as quite literally blowing it out of the sky.

The majority of the aircraft crashed near what is now Steel House, Dormanstown at 22.10hrs. The airmen on board did not stand a chance, they sadly were all killed.

Immediately after the crash a message was sent from Redcar to 6 Group control stating that they thought they had shot down an enemy aircraft, it was only later that this was found to be incorrect and the truth of what had happened been discovered.

Thankfully this kind of incident was not common, I believe it to be unique to the North of England with regard the aircraft type.

Lancaster W4319 was built by A.V. Roe Ltd at Manchester to contract B69274/40 and delivered directly to 101 Squadron on 21st January 1942. The AM Form 78 states it suffered Cat.E2(Burnt) damage on 18th December 1942. It was struck off charge on 23rd December 1942 with only 17 hours flying time made.

The CREW – they sadly were all killed

Pilot - Sgt Marcel Alec Fussell RAFVR (1316055), aged 20, of Dorchester, buried Dorchester, Dorset.

Bomb Aimer - Sgt Sydney Stewart McLean RNZAF (404392), aged 29, Dunedin, NZ.
Buried: Thornaby on Tees Cemetery, Yorkshire.

Flight Engineer - Sgt Jack Worsnop RAF (568572) aged 23, of Bradford.
Buried: Bradford, Yorkshire.

Navigator - Sgt Monte Alan Gray McIntyre RNZAF (405298), aged 29, of Gisborne, NZ
Buried: Thornaby on Tees Cemetery, Yorkshire.

Wireless Operator / Air Gunner - Sgt Michael James O'Malley RNZAF (413278), aged 21, of Wairoa, NZ. Buried: Thornaby on Tees Cemetery, Yorkshire.

Air Gunner - Sgt George John Warren RAFVR (1292464) aged 19, of Dagenham, Essex.
Buried: Thornaby on Tees Cemetery, Yorkshire.

Rear Gunner - Sgt Gregory Manuel Georges RCAF (R/117661), aged ? of Whitman, Massachusetts, U.S.A. Buried: Thornaby on Tees Cemetery, Yorkshire.

This crew listing appears slightly different elsewhere. McIntyre is quoted as being the wireless operator (which his headstone shows), Warren as navigator and O'Malley as air gunner. McIntyre's service records have him down as a navigator.



No account of this incident would be complete without drawing the reader to **Bill Norman's "Failed to Return" book** in which this incident appears in detail. Mr Norman and Mr David Morris were behind a memorial being erected close to the crash site on 18th December 2008. The plaque is sited on the Lord McGowan Bridge.



Monte McIntyre and his headstone at Thornaby Cemetery.

Monte Alan Gray McIntyre (b. 1913 - in Gisborne was the son of Daniel P McIntyre and his 1st wife, Margaret Leena Williams). He had a sister – Hazel Vera b. 1909. Mrs Margaret McIntyre died in March 1915 aged 25yrs in Gisborne. Monte's father, Daniel Phillips McIntyre decided he would go and fight for his country, and left his children with his brother, James, in Paeroa. Hazel McIntyre the only daughter, died 12 July 1918, aged 9 yrs from influenza in Paeroa.

In 1916 - Rifleman Daniel Phillips McIntyre # 32216 of Gisborne joined the NZ Rifle Brigade, 13th Reinforcements 2nd Battalion, F Company.

(By Lorraine James daughter in-law of Daniel & Elsie (2nd wife) McIntyre's only daughter, Janet Barbara McIntyre who married Ian Wilson James of Tolaga Bay)

Monte's parents and Mr Poynter's parents were great friends. In 1918 at the end of WW1 New Zealand (like the UK) had a flu epidemic with quite a loss of life including Monte's mother. He was then about five and an only child it would have been difficult for his father to bring him up so he lived with Mr Poynter's grandparents, who were dairy farmers in Gisborne. They already had a son and five daughters so one more was no problem for them. The 1930's depression was a tough time for him, with very little employment. For a time he lived with Mr Poynter's parents on a dairy farm in Waihi, but for no wages, just his keep.

When he joined the RNZAF in July 1940 his occupation was given as "Medical Attendant, Seaview Mental Hospital, Hokitika". He started training as a pilot but obviously didn't make it and was remustered as an Air Observer.

Mr Poynter's memory of him was when he stayed with us on final leave, he was about six and half years old at the time and he helped him understand early arithmetic which he was struggling with at the time.

He left NZ for Canada in July 1941 and on to England in February 1942 to finish his training. (It is odd that CWGC list him as a WOp/AG, and as a result the aircraft appears to have had no navigator, CWGC appear to have made an error in Monte's case). His service records state that "On the night of 17th December 1942, Sgt. McIntyre was the Navigator of a Lancaster aircraft which took off on a mine-laying operation in the Baltic Sea and crashed near Grangetown, Yorkshire.

The aircraft completely disintegrated and it was difficult to identify the crew".

Photo and additional information kindly provided by Mr Ben Poynter, of Napier



Sgt Michael O'Malley (of Wairoa) RNZAF and his gravestone.



Sgt Sydney McLean (of Dunedin) RNZAF and his gravestone.



It is not know the exact location of where the aircraft crashed but it must have crashed onto the area shown on this photograph, taken from the Eston Hills.