

RAF Pembrey in World War II: Units and Their Roles

RAF Pembrey, located in Carmarthenshire, Wales, played an important and varied role throughout World War II. Originally conceived as a training facility in the late 1930s, the airfield evolved over the course of the conflict—from preparing anti-aircraft gunners and ground crews to serving as a frontline fighter base and later as a specialized training school.



Timeline of RAF Pembrey (1939–1945)

1939–1940: Establishment and Early Operations

- RAF Pembrey was established as a fighter station in 1939, shortly after the outbreak of World War II.
- Initially, it functioned as a training base and satellite station, supporting operational squadrons and providing air defence for the region.
- It played a key role in coastal patrols and the protection of shipping routes in the Bristol Channel.

1941–1942: Fighter Command and Operational Squadrons

- In 1941, RAF Pembrey came under the control of Fighter Command and became an active fighter station.
- The airfield hosted squadrons equipped with **Supermarine Spitfires** and **Hawker Hurricanes**, providing air cover and patrolling the Welsh coastline.
- Pembrey also served as a forward operating base for squadrons conducting offensive sweeps over the English Channel and occupied France.

1943: Role Expansion and Training

- RAF Pembrey expanded its role to include training, becoming home to **No. 53 Operational Training Unit (OTU)**.

- The OTU specialized in advanced fighter tactics and ground-attack training, primarily using **Hawker Hurricanes**.
- The airfield also supported **air-sea rescue operations** and **anti-submarine patrols**, leveraging its strategic coastal location.

1944: Support for D-Day and Allied Invasions

- As the Allies prepared for **Operation Overlord (D-Day)**, Pembrey hosted fighter and reconnaissance squadrons.
- It provided air cover for convoys and took part in **anti-submarine operations** in the **Bristol Channel** and **Western Approaches**.
- The airfield was also crucial for training and preparing aircrew for deployment to the European front.

1945: Transition to Post-War Operations

- As World War II neared its end, RAF Pembrey gradually shifted to peacetime roles.
- The airfield continued its training programs, though combat operations were scaled back.
- It became home to **No. 595 Squadron**, which specialized in **target towing** for anti-aircraft training.

Post-War RAF Pembrey

Following the war, RAF Pembrey's operational role declined, and it was eventually repurposed for military and civilian uses. It later served as a **weapons range** and **training facility**, maintaining its historical significance beyond the wartime years.

RAF Pembrey's wartime contributions were extensive, evolving from defensive air patrols to offensive operations and advanced training, making it a vital part of Britain's air defense network during World War II.

Role During World War II

During the war, RAF Pembrey served primarily as a Fighter Command base, with a variety of fighter squadrons stationed there over the course of the conflict. These squadrons were tasked with defending the South Wales coast and intercepting enemy aircraft that attempted to bomb key industrial targets in the region.

One of the most significant squadrons to be based at RAF Pembrey was No. 92 Squadron, which flew the iconic Supermarine Spitfire. The Spitfire's speed and agility made it the ideal aircraft for intercepting enemy bombers and engaging Luftwaffe fighters. RAF Pembrey's Spitfires were frequently scrambled to protect cities like Swansea and Cardiff, which were targets due to their industrial importance.

Transition to Fighter Command – The Battle of Britain

With the collapse of France in 1940 and the urgent need to bolster Britain's air defences against the Luftwaffe, RAF Pembrey was transferred on 20 June 1940 to No. 10 Group RAF

of Fighter Command. Its relatively quiet location in South Wales made it an ideal resting and re-equipping station for frontline squadrons after intense operations over southern England.

Several fighter units rotated through Pembrey during the height of the Battle of Britain:

- **No. 92 Squadron RAF**
From 18 June 1940, No. 92 Squadron – operating Supermarine Spitfires – was based at Pembrey. Their presence provided a crucial defensive cover while allowing the unit’s pilots to recuperate from the rigors of combat. The squadron later redeployed to RAF Biggin Hill on 9 September 1940 once operations intensified in the southeast.
- **No. 79 Squadron RAF**
Shortly after, from 8 September 1940, No. 79 Squadron took up station at Pembrey. Their operations contributed to the overall air defence of the region, safeguarding convoys, and supporting anti-invasion efforts.



Formation of Polish Units and Further Fighter Operations

RAF Pembrey also played a role in the expansion of the Polish contribution to the Allied air effort:

- **No. 316 Polish Fighter Squadron**
In early 1941, the airfield became the formation site for No. 316 Polish Fighter Squadron. This unit was part of the wider effort to integrate experienced Polish pilots—many of whom had already seen combat in the 1939 campaign and the Battle of France—into RAF operations. Although No. 316 later moved to RAF Colerne, its brief stay at Pembrey highlights the airfield’s role as a versatile platform for rapidly deploying new units.
- **No. 256 Squadron RAF**
Between January and March 1941, No. 256 Squadron operated from RAF Pembrey. Their presence further underscores the airfield’s importance as a staging and resting point for fighter units during a period when every available resource was critical to the defence of the British Isles.

Transition to a Gunnery and Flying Training School

As the intensity of the Battle of Britain waned and the air defence responsibilities in South Wales shifted to other airfields (notably RAF Fairwood Common and RAF Angle), RAF Pembrey was reallocated to training roles under RAF Flying Training Command. From mid-1941 onward, the airfield was transformed into an RAF Gunnery School. Here, pilots and aircrew were trained in ground attack and air-to-air gunnery techniques, with Spitfires serving as target aircraft for simulated enemy engagements. This training was vital not only for improving individual combat skills but also for enhancing the overall operational effectiveness of Fighter Command.

Legacy

RAF Pembrey's varied wartime career—transitioning from a training centre to a front-line fighter base and back to a specialized training facility—reflects the adaptability demanded by the war. The airfield's role in hosting both British and Polish units contributed significantly to the overall Allied air effort, particularly during the critical early years of the conflict. Its history remains a testament to the strategic importance of flexible airfield operations in wartime Britain.

Recalling RAF Pembrey's Past.

Acknowledgment

This account, originally recorded by Hugh Morgan Lewis, has been kindly shared by Michael V. Williams.

In mid-June 1940, as the Battle of France concluded with Germany's victory in mainland Europe, the Royal Air Force activated Pembrey as an operational airfield. It was designated a sector station for No. 10 Group. The first aircraft to arrive were Mk II Spitfires from 92 Squadron, a unit that had already seen significant action defending the evacuation at Dunkirk. The pilots were sent to Pembrey for rest in what was considered a quieter sector, though many found it frustrating to be stationed away from the escalating conflict over southern England.

92 Squadron was assigned patrol duties along the South Wales coastline and tasked with protecting convoys in the Bristol Channel, with their operations extending as far west as the Irish coast. They soon adapted to their new surroundings and frequently spent their evenings at the Stepney Hotel. The hotel's landlord, William Maloney, attempted to lift their spirits by promising a free bottle of champagne for every enemy aircraft they shot down. According to Squadron Leader Stanford Tuck, the pilots initially dismissed the offer, doubting they would have many opportunities to claim a victory.

However, German aircraft soon began probing the Bristol Channel in search of convoys. On July 4th, 92 Squadron achieved its sole aerial victory while stationed at Pembrey, when a Spitfire intercepted and shot down a Ju88 bomber over Wiltshire. That same month, Stanford Tuck had an unfortunate encounter with another Ju88. While engaging the enemy aircraft, the

bomber offloaded its bombs near St Donat's Castle before fleeing. Tragically, the falling bombs struck the boundary of an army camp, killing Private John King Spark—Tuck's own brother-in-law.

On September 9th, 92 Squadron received orders to relocate to Biggin Hill, where the Battle of Britain was reaching its climax. Tuck would go on to establish himself as one of Britain's most celebrated fighter aces.

By early 1941, Pembrey saw the arrival of detachments from two Boulton Paul Defiant squadrons. These turret-armed fighters were being repurposed for night-bomber interception. In August of that year, they were replaced with Bristol Beaufighters, and around the same time, No. 79 Squadron arrived with Hawker Hurricane IIbs. A few months later, on April 12th, 32 Squadron also deployed to Pembrey. Both Hurricane squadrons engaged German bombers before the responsibility for defending South Wales shifted to the newly established airfield at Fairwood Common in June 1941.

One of the most extraordinary incidents in Pembrey's history took place on the evening of June 23rd, 1942. During an aerial battle over Exeter, Oberleutnant Armin Faber, a Luftwaffe pilot flying a Focke-Wulf 190, mistakenly shot down a Spitfire before becoming disoriented. Running low on fuel and ammunition, he attempted to return to his base but inadvertently flew north instead of south. Mistaking the Bristol Channel for the English Channel, he spotted an airfield and landed—unaware that he had arrived at an RAF base. The ground crew at Pembrey swiftly took him into custody before he could sabotage his aircraft. The captured FW190 was transported to Farnborough for analysis, providing valuable intelligence that influenced the development of the Spitfire Mk 20.

Though Pembrey's frontline combat role diminished over time, the airfield remained instrumental in testing airborne depth charges—technology that played a crucial role in countering the U-boat threat in the Atlantic.

No. 256 Squadron RAF at RAF Pembrey



Formation and Early Role

No. 256 Squadron RAF was reformed on 23 November 1940 at RAF Catterick as a night-fighter unit, initially equipped with Boulton Paul Defiant aircraft. The squadron was part of the broader effort to counter the growing threat of German night raids on Britain, and its primary role was to intercept and destroy enemy bombers under the cover of darkness.

Deployment to RAF Pembrey

In January 1941, No. 256 Squadron was relocated to RAF Pembrey in Carmarthenshire, Wales. This move was part of a strategic redistribution of air defence assets to provide better coverage over southwestern Britain. At Pembrey, the squadron became operational in February 1941 and played a crucial role in defending the South Wales coastline and vital shipping lanes in the Bristol Channel.

RAF Pembrey served as an important outpost during this period, offering both a staging ground and a defensive hub. The airfield's location made it an ideal base for night-fighter operations, ensuring that enemy aircraft attempting to strike industrial and military targets in the west of England and Wales faced interception.

Combat Operations and Transition

Operating primarily with the Defiant, a turret-armed fighter designed for nocturnal engagements, No. 256 Squadron pilots engaged in defensive patrols against Luftwaffe bombers attempting to penetrate inland. However, the Defiant was already proving inadequate against more advanced enemy aircraft, leading to a gradual transition to the more effective Bristol Beaufighter. This twin-engine fighter offered greater firepower and superior radar capabilities, significantly improving interception success rates.

The squadron's presence at RAF Pembrey, though brief, underscored the station's role as a critical air defence facility. The experience gained in night-fighter operations at Pembrey provided essential tactical knowledge that would benefit the unit as it moved to other stations.

Relocation and Further Service

In March 1941, No. 256 Squadron moved to RAF Squires Gate near Blackpool to bolster the air defences of Liverpool and the Merseyside area, which were frequent targets of the Luftwaffe. The squadron continued its transition to the Beaufighter and later the de Havilland Mosquito, further enhancing its effectiveness in night-fighter roles.

Over the following years, No. 256 Squadron expanded its operational scope, conducting night defence, convoy escort missions, and intruder operations across multiple theatres, including the Mediterranean. Its adaptability and resilience allowed it to remain a formidable force until the end of the war.

Legacy at RAF Pembrey

Though their tenure at RAF Pembrey lasted only a few months, No. 256 Squadron's presence highlighted the airfield's importance during World War II. Pembrey provided a secure yet strategically vital location from which fighter units could launch operations to protect Britain's western airspace and shipping routes.

The squadron's time at Pembrey contributed to the broader effort to refine night-fighter tactics and proved instrumental in shaping future engagements. Today, the history of No. 256 Squadron's service at Pembrey remains a key chapter in the story of this important wartime airbase.

Notable Pilots of No. 256 Squadron RAF

No. 256 Squadron RAF, formed as a night-fighter unit during World War II, not only played a vital role in defending Britain's skies but also became home to several pilots whose courage and skill left an enduring mark on the history of aerial warfare. Among these, two names stand out: Air Commodore John Watson "Ian" Allan and Sergeant Lincoln John Ellmers.

Air Commodore John Watson "Ian" Allan



Air Commodore John Watson "Ian" Allan was one of No. 256 Squadron's most distinguished pilots, known for his exceptional skill in night-fighter operations. Born on 6 May 1918 in Cathcart, Scotland, Allan joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve in 1938. He initially flew Spitfires with No. 266 Squadron, where he gained valuable night-flying experience. This expertise led to his posting with No. 256 Squadron as a night-fighter pilot, where he operated the Boulton Paul Defiant in the challenging role of intercepting enemy bombers under the cover of darkness.



Although Allan was unsuccessful in claiming enemy aircraft while flying from the UK, his career took a decisive turn in July 1943 when he led a detachment of No. 256 Squadron to Malta. There, alongside his observer, Flight Lieutenant Harold James Davidson, he built an impressive combat record. Between 12 July and 31 August 1943, he was credited with destroying 14 enemy aircraft, an extraordinary achievement. His most notable engagements included the night of 15/16 July, when he brought down five enemy planes, and further successful interceptions on 16/17 July and 25/26 July, where he accounted for two enemy aircraft each night. His outstanding performance during this period earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross, adding to his growing list of commendations.

Following his successful tour in Malta, Allan took a well-earned rest in September 1943 before joining No. 151 Squadron, where he conducted night ranger operations over Northern Europe. He later transferred to No. 29 Squadron and, in December 1944, assumed command of the unit. He remained with the squadron until the end of the war and beyond, demonstrating his leadership and tactical acumen.

Post-war, Allan continued to excel in his RAF career. He held various staff positions before taking command of the all-weather fighter wing at Coltishall in 1950. In 1953, he led a flight of Vampire NF Mk 10s during the Coronation Review flypast, further cementing his reputation. His subsequent assignments included a period at the Joint Warfare Establishment and several key positions at the Air Ministry. His final posting was as Commandant of The Officers and Aircrew Selection Centre at Biggin Hill.

Allan retired with the rank of Air Commodore, having built a remarkable career characterized by bravery, leadership, and an extraordinary combat record. He passed away on 9 July 1988, leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire those in the field of military aviation.

Citation for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross:

“Acting Squadron Leader John Watson ALLAN, D.S.O. (89617), Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 256 Squadron.

As observer and pilot respectively, these officers have displayed rare skill in night operations. In two recent nights, they have destroyed 3 enemy aircraft, bringing their victories to 13, all of which have been obtained in July 1943. Their record is outstanding and worthy of the highest praise.”

Sergeant Lincoln John Ellmers: A Tale of Valour and Tragedy



While many stories from No. 256 Squadron celebrate the triumphs of Allied airmen, some are marked by heart-breaking tragedy. Sergeant Lincoln John Ellmers, a fighter pilot from the Royal New Zealand Air Force who served with No. 256 Squadron, is remembered both for his exceptional skill and for the catastrophic circumstances of his final flight.

Ellmers, a 24-year-old pilot originally from Gisborne, New Zealand, had been flying with the Royal Air Force since the previous year after training in his homeland. He quickly qualified as a fighter pilot and was engaged in night-fighting operations—a role that demanded exceptional precision and composure under the cover of darkness.

On 27 August 1941, during a routine training operation over Blackpool, four Boulton Paul Defiants of No. 256 Squadron were conducting formation flying practice at about 2,000 feet. Simultaneously, three Blackburn Bothas from the General Reconnaissance School, based at Squires Gate, were flying nearby at a lower altitude of approximately 1,500 feet. In a fateful turn of events, the leader of the Defiant flight ordered a formation break. While the first two Defiants executed the manoeuvre without incident, the third aircraft failed to clear the formation properly and collided with one of the Bothas—specifically, the bomber bearing the serial L6509.

The collision was devastating. The impact cut the fuselage of the Botha in half, removing a motor and part of its wing. The damaged Botha plummeted and crashed into the booking hall of Blackpool Central Railway Station, where it exploded in flames. The explosion claimed the lives of the entire crew of the Botha—three men—as well as 14 civilians present in the station.



Tragically, the Defiant piloted by Sergeant Ellmers also suffered severe damage; it lost a wing in the collision and spiralled downwards. The aircraft crashed onto a house at 97 Reads Avenue, bursting into flames and demolishing the structure. Although two occupants of the house miraculously escaped injury, the incident proved fatal for those aboard the Defiant. The air gunner attempted to bail out, but his parachute failed to deploy in time, and his lifeless body was later seen on Regents Road. Sergeant Ellmers himself was found dead in the burned-out wreckage in the basement of the house.

The loss of Sergeant Lincoln John Ellmers serves as a stark reminder of the perils inherent in night-fighter operations. His life, though marked by promise and determination as he flew from New Zealand to the United Kingdom and earned his place among the brave pilots defending Britain's skies, was tragically cut short on that day over Blackpool. His sacrifice—and the tragic chain of events that led to the loss of additional aircrew and civilian lives—epitomizes the heavy price paid in the relentless fight against the enemy during World War II.

Ellmers' story endures as both a tribute to his personal valour and as a sombre account of the risks and sacrifices borne by the night-fighter pilots of No. 256 Squadron. Their legacy, forged in both moments of brilliant combat and devastating loss, remains an enduring part of the history of the Allied air effort.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/22095212/lincoln-john-ellmers>

The Polish Fighter Squadron 316



The Polish Fighter Squadron 316 project is a tribute to the 316 "City of Warsaw" Polish Fighter Squadron, honouring the bravery and sacrifices of the Polish pilots who fought for the Allies during World War II. Formed on February 15, 1941, at RAF Pembrey in Wales, the squadron was initially equipped with Hurricanes and later transitioned to Spitfires and Mustangs.

The 316 Squadron played a significant role in defensive and offensive operations. Initially, they conducted defensive patrols over southwest England, then later engaged in sweeps over northern France. By October 1941, they had upgraded to Spitfires and relocated to RAF Northolt. Throughout the war, they participated in numerous critical missions, including fighter-bomber and escort missions, and operated against V-1 flying bombs along the South coast.

The project, spearheaded by enthusiasts and historians, aims to compile, and preserve detailed information about the squadron and its personnel. Over the past fifteen years, the project has been collecting and archiving various documents, photographs, and personal accounts, gradually piecing together the squadron's comprehensive history, particularly focusing on its activities during the spring of 1941.

<https://tinyurl.com/Polish-FS-316-Map>

History of No. 316 Squadron

No. 316 "City of Warsaw" Polish Fighter Squadron (Polish: 316 Dywizjon Myśliwski "Warszawski") was formed in Great Britain as part of an agreement between the Polish Government in Exile and the United Kingdom in 1941. This squadron was one of several Polish fighter squadrons that fought alongside the Royal Air Force during World War II, highlighting the strong collaboration between the Polish forces in exile and the British military.

Formation and Early Operations:

- February 15, 1941: The squadron was established at RAF Pembrey in Wales, initially equipped with Hawker Hurricanes. The Polish pilots, many of whom had escaped from Nazi-occupied Europe, were tasked with defensive duties over southwest England.
- Initial Equipment: Flying Hurricane fighters, they defended against potential Luftwaffe attacks, protecting key installations and civilian areas.

Transition to Offensive Operations:

- Mid-1941: The squadron upgraded to Hurricane IIs and began offensive sweeps over northern France, engaging enemy aircraft and disrupting German operations.
- October 1941: Transitioning to the more advanced Supermarine Spitfires, No. 316 Squadron moved to RAF Northolt. This move marked the beginning of their participation in more aggressive offensive missions over occupied Europe.

Further Developments and Relocations:

- July 1942: The squadron was transferred to Yorkshire, continuing offensive operations from the north of England.
- March 1943: Returning to southern England, they resumed intensive offensive operations, contributing significantly to the air war effort over Europe.

Final War Years:

- April 1944: Equipped with North American P-51 Mustangs, the squadron relocated to East Anglia. The Mustangs, known for their long range and versatility, allowed the squadron to conduct crucial fighter-bomber and escort missions in preparation for the D-Day landings.
- July 1944: Redeployed to the South coast, No. 316 Squadron countered the threat of V-1 flying bombs, intercepting these early cruise missiles before they could reach their targets.
- October 1944 - End of War: The squadron resumed escort duties, protecting Allied bombers on raids deep into Germany and occupied Europe until the war's end.

Disbandment:

- December 11, 1946: After a distinguished service record, No. 316 Squadron was disbanded. The squadron's Polish airmen, through their bravery and skill, made substantial contributions to the Allied victory in Europe.

Legacy and Recognition

The history of No. 316 Squadron stands as a testament to the courage and dedication of Polish pilots who fought alongside the Allies during World War II. From defensive patrols over England to offensive missions across Europe, their efforts were crucial in the fight against the Axis powers. The squadron's legacy is preserved through historical projects and commemorations, ensuring their heroism is remembered.

Bohdan Anders

Bohdan Anders was born on February 27, 1918, in Poznań, Poland. With a strong sense of duty to his homeland, Anders joined the Polish Air Force, demonstrating exceptional skill and bravery. His service began in Poland, where he likely saw the early stages of World War II unfold, witnessing the invasion of his country by German forces.



After the fall of Poland, many Polish airmen, including Anders, made their way to France to continue the fight against the Axis powers. In France, Anders continued to hone his skills as a pilot, contributing to the efforts of the Allied forces. However, the rapid advance of German troops soon forced him and his fellow Polish aviators to seek refuge in Great Britain.

In Great Britain, Anders joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), which welcomed Polish pilots who had escaped the fall of their homeland. He became a member of the famed No. 303 "Tadeusz Kościuszko" Polish Fighter Squadron.

This squadron gained a legendary reputation during the Battle of Britain for its remarkable effectiveness and bravery. As part of No. 303 Squadron, Anders flew numerous sorties, defending Britain against the Luftwaffe and contributing to the eventual Allied victory in the Battle of Britain.

Later, Anders was transferred to No. 316 "City of Warsaw" Polish Fighter Squadron. This squadron, named to honour the capital of their occupied homeland, continued to fight valiantly in various operations over Europe. Anders' skills and dedication as a pilot were critical to the squadron's successes.

Tragically, Bohdan Anders' promising career was cut short on June 2, 1941. While flying a Miles Magister, serial R1838, from 316 Squadron, he struck a barrage balloon cable near Malpas, Newport Gwent. The collision was fatal, and Anders perished in the incident.



<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015059/bogdan-anders>

Olech Antoni Kawczyński

Olech Antoni Kawczyński was born on February 20, 1916, in Wudzyn, Poland. His early life in Poland was marked by a strong sense of duty and patriotism, leading him to join the Polish Army, where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant.



With the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent invasion of Poland, Kawczyński, like many of his compatriots, found himself compelled to continue the fight beyond his homeland's borders.

After Poland's fall, Kawczyński made his way to Great Britain, where the Royal Air Force (RAF) was integrating experienced Polish pilots into its ranks. Kawczyński joined the RAF and served with distinction as a Pilot Officer, initially with No. 32 Squadron.

His skills as a pilot were critical in the defence of Britain, contributing to the efforts to thwart the Luftwaffe's relentless attacks.

Kawczyński later transferred to No. 79 Squadron, continuing his brave service in the skies. No. 79 Squadron was actively involved in various operations, and Kawczyński's role as a pilot was vital to the squadron's missions.

His aircraft, a Hawker Hurricane, was a formidable fighter that played a key role in the RAF's defensive and offensive operations.

Tragically, Olech Antoni Kawczyński's service was cut short on May 8, 1941.

While on target practice over Cefn Sidan Beach, his Hawker Hurricane, Serial Z2324, crashed, resulting in his untimely death.



<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015273/olech-antoni-kawczynski>

Jacek Zygmund Fran Kinel.

Jacek Zygmunt Fran Kinel was born on March 28, 1924, in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Despite his young age, Kinel's early life was profoundly impacted by the onset of World War II. Driven by a strong sense of duty to his homeland, he joined the fight against the Axis powers, a decision that would lead him far from his native land.



As the war progressed, Kinel joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), a common path for many Polish airmen who had escaped the fall of Poland. His dedication and skill earned him the rank of Sergeant Pilot, and he was assigned to the 1st Air Gunnery School in Pembrey, Wales. This school was crucial in training airmen in the essential skills of aerial gunnery, which were vital for the success of bombing missions and air combat.



Tragically, Sergeant Pilot Jacek Kinel's promising career was cut short on May 8, 1944 at Cwrt Malle Farm. The specific circumstances of his death remain a sombre testament to the dangers faced by those who served in training as well as in combat. The rigorous training regimes and the ever-present risk of accidents meant that even those not on the front lines were exposed to significant peril.

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Waclaw Oyrzanowski

Waclaw Oyrzanowski was born on September 18, 1903, in Zawady, Poland. His early years were marked by a dedication to his country, which led him to join the Polish Air Force. With the outbreak of World War II and the invasion of Poland, Oyrzanowski's journey took him across Europe as he continued to serve with unwavering commitment.



Following Poland's fall, Oyrzanowski, like many Polish airmen, made his way to Great Britain. Here, he joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), where his expertise as a mechanic became invaluable. Oyrzanowski initially served with No. 302 "Poznański" Polish Fighter Squadron, a unit renowned for its bravery and effectiveness in aerial combat. His skills were critical in maintaining the squadron's aircraft, ensuring they were always ready for their vital missions.

Oyrzanowski later transferred to No. 307 "Lwowskie Puchacze" Night Fighter Squadron, another distinguished Polish squadron within the RAF. The squadron specialized in night-time operations, defending Britain from enemy bombers under the cover of darkness. Oyrzanowski's role as a senior mechanic was crucial in keeping the squadron's planes operational and combat ready.

On June 27, 1943, while serving as a mechanic aboard a Mosquito, Serial DD644, piloted by Kaptain Roman Grzanka, Oyrzanowski was fatally wounded in a crash at Pennard on the Gower.



Despite the best efforts to save him, Waclaw Oyrzanowski succumbed to his injuries the following day, June 28, 1943. This tragic incident underscores the constant dangers faced by airmen and support crews, not just in combat but also during training and operational flights.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015429/waclaw-oyrzanowski>

Roman Grzanka - The Legendary One-Legged Pilot

Roman Grzanka was born on February 8, 1903, in Ujma Duża, Poland. His early life was marked by a strong sense of duty and adventure, leading him to join the Polish Air Force. Grzanka quickly distinguished himself as a talented pilot, demonstrating exceptional skill and determination.



With the outbreak of World War II and the invasion of Poland, Grzanka, like many of his compatriots, continued the fight beyond his homeland. He served with distinction in Poland, and after the fall of his country, he moved to France, where he continued to combat the Axis forces. Eventually, Grzanka found his way to Great Britain, where his experience and bravery were highly valued.

In Great Britain, Grzanka joined the Royal Air Force (RAF), where he became a member of No. 307 "Lwowskie Puchacze" Polish Night Fighter Squadron. This squadron was renowned for its effectiveness in night-time operations, defending Britain from enemy bombers under the cover of darkness. Despite losing a leg, Grzanka's determination and skill allowed him to continue flying, earning him a legendary status as a one-legged pilot.



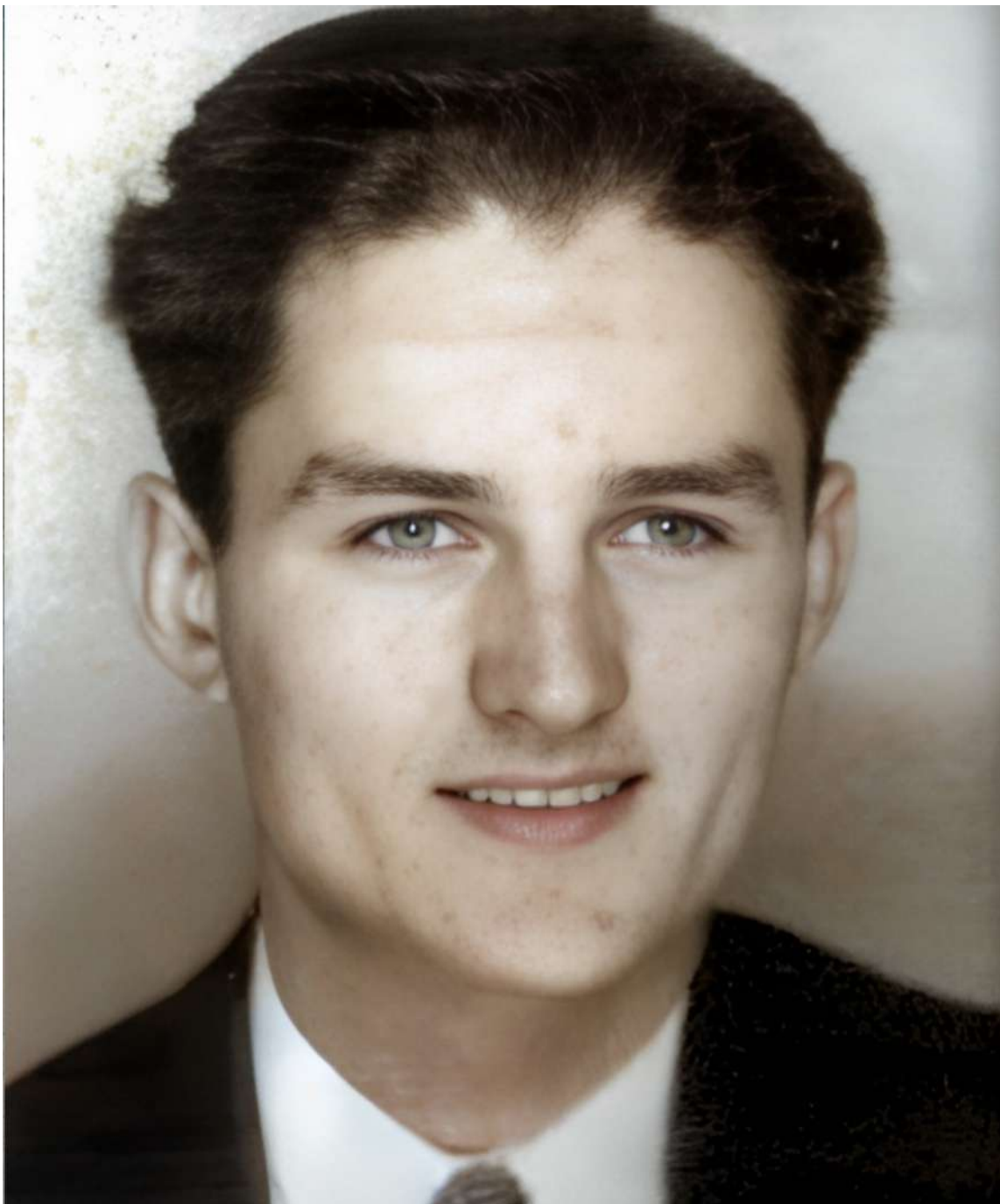
On June 27, 1943, Grzanka was piloting a Mosquito, Serial DD644, based at RAF Fairwood Common. Tragically, the aircraft crashed at Pennard on the Gower, resulting in Grzanka's death.

His co-pilot, **Sergeant Mechanic Waclaw Oyrzanowski**, succumbed to his injuries the following day. The loss of these brave airmen was a significant blow to their squadron and to the broader war effort.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015146/roman-grzanka>

Stanisław Piątkowski

Stanisław Piątkowski was born on May 1, 1912, in Jaroszkówka, Poland. From a young age, Piątkowski demonstrated a strong sense of duty and a passion for aviation, leading him to join the Polish Air Force. His dedication and skill as a pilot were evident early in his career, earning him the rank of Lieutenant.



With the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent invasion of Poland, Piątkowski, like many Polish airmen, sought to continue the fight against the Axis powers. He made his way to Great Britain, where he joined the Royal Air Force (RAF). His experience and bravery were a valuable addition to the RAF, and he was assigned to No. 79 Squadron.

No. 79 Squadron was an essential part of the RAF's efforts during the Battle of Britain. The squadron was equipped with Hawker Hurricanes, a key fighter aircraft in the defence of Britain. As a Pilot Officer in No. 79 Squadron, Piątkowski participated in numerous patrols and combat missions, contributing to the squadron's valiant efforts to repel the Luftwaffe and protect British skies.



On October 25, 1940, after a routine patrol over Linney Head, Piątkowski tragically crashed his Hurricane, Serial N2728, near Carew Cheriton. The circumstances of the crash underline the constant dangers faced by fighter pilots, both in combat and during routine operations. Piątkowski's untimely death was a significant loss to his squadron and to the broader war effort.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/227995950/stanislaw-piatkowski>

Stanislaw Waldemar Szmejl

Stan Szmejl's early life in Poland born May 6 1913 was marked by a profound sense of duty and a passion for aviation. His commitment to his country and his desire to serve led him to join the Polish Air Force, where he trained and developed his skills as a pilot.



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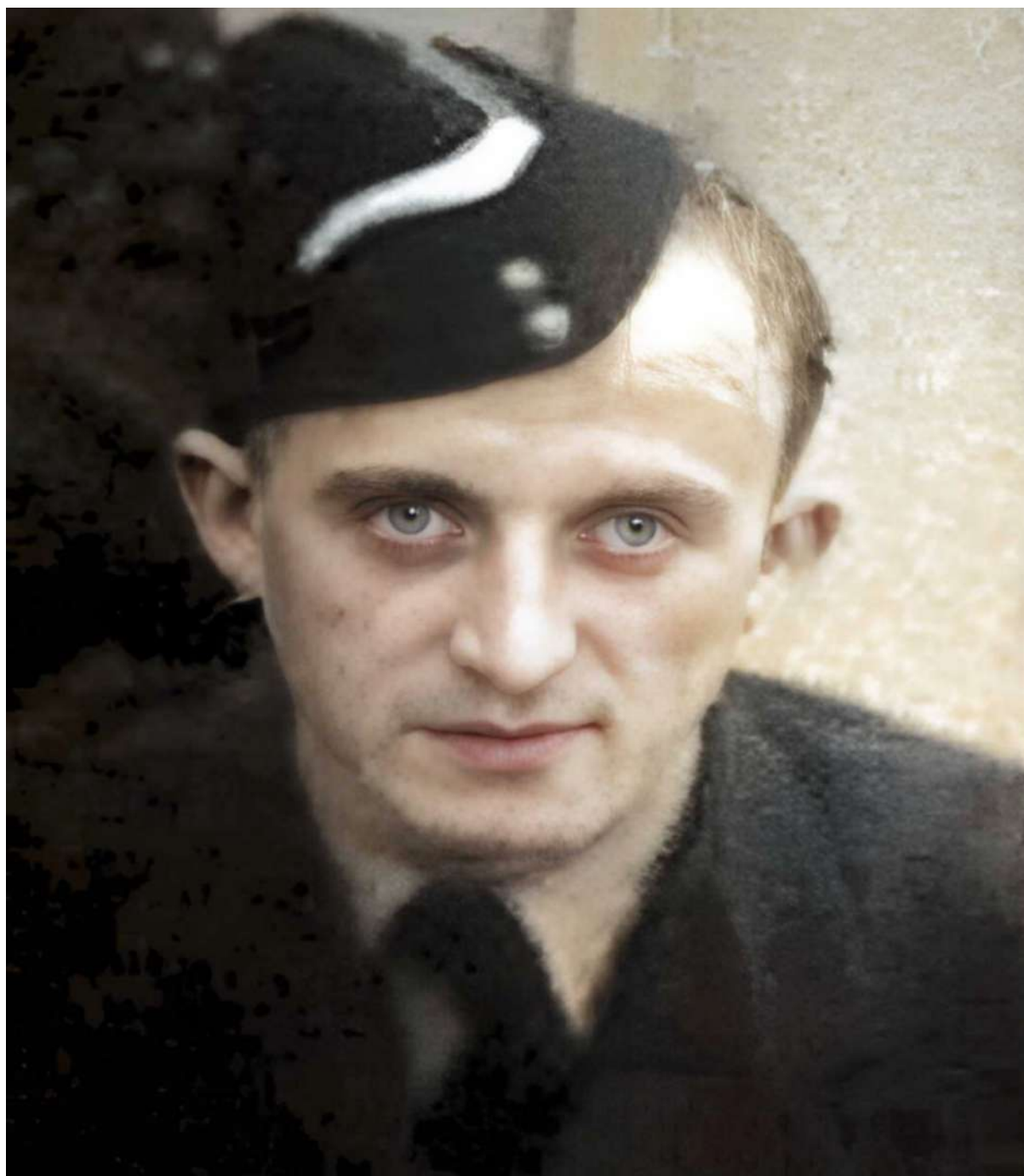


Tragically, Stan Szmejl's service was cut short on June 23, 1941 Flew his Hurricane into cliff in bad visibility on convoy patrol at Freshwater East, Pembrokeshire.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/207494665/stanislaw-waldemar-szmejl>

Leon Jan Watorowski

Leon Jan Watorowski from Chelmno Poland served with distinction in the Polish Air Force during World War II, specifically with 316 Squadron. This squadron, part of the Polish Air Force in exile, played a vital role in the defence of Britain during the Battle of Britain and later participated in offensive operations across Europe.



Leon Jan Waterowski served with distinction in the Polish Air Force during World War II, specifically with 316 Squadron. This squadron, part of the Polish Air Force in exile, played a vital role in the defence of Britain during the Battle of Britain and later participated in offensive operations across Europe.



Waterowski's duties as a pilot included escorting bombers, conducting reconnaissance missions, and engaging enemy aircraft in aerial combat.

His bravery and skill in the cockpit were instrumental in the squadron's successes and in ensuring the safety of Allied forces. Tragically, he died at the age of 24 on December 8, 1944, while piloting Supermarine Spitfire LF.IX MK986.

He was killed during a training flight in a mid-air collision over Port Talbot.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228057238/leon-jan-waterowski>

"RAF Pembrey's Lost Flyers: The Training Accidents that Shaped WWII Aviation".

[Map Link - https://tinyurl.com/WW2-SW-CS](https://tinyurl.com/WW2-SW-CS)



This article will focus on the untold stories of the airmen who tragically lost their lives during training operations at **RAF Pembrey**. Many of these individuals were not engaged in direct combat but played an essential role in the broader war effort. Their contributions were critical to shaping the future of the RAF, as the harsh realities of training accidents led to significant advancements in wartime aviation.

The incidents often occurred in the context of preparing pilots for battle, underscoring the inherent risks of mastering new technology and aircraft in challenging conditions. RAF Pembrey, primarily a training base, posed a high level of danger for both inexperienced pilots and seasoned trainers. Accidents were frequently caused by technical failures, poor weather, or inexperience in performing complex aerial manoeuvres. Despite these tragedies, each event brought important lessons that contributed to the refinement of safety protocols, improved aircraft design, and more effective pilot training programs.

The long-term impact of these training accidents cannot be overstated. The knowledge gained from these unfortunate incidents helped reduce future accident rates and ultimately increased the RAF's effectiveness in its wartime air campaigns. While the airmen lost during these missions were not always recognized as war heroes, their sacrifices were crucial to the overall success of the RAF during World War II.

By sharing these stories, the article aims to honour their memory and recognise the critical role that training, and preparation played in securing victory during the war.

Echoes of History: Air Crashes From Pembrey Airfield



This map highlights a few selected crash sites around RAF Pembrey Airfield it documents incidents like the 1941 Lysander crash on Mynydd Pembrey and others, weaving together the history of local aviation tragedies and the heroism of the pilots who trained there.

The map combines geographical details with archival research to preserve the memory of these events and honour those who served.

Link below for detailed crash reports with picture and video links.

<https://tinyurl.com/RAF-Pembrey-LF-Map>

Penrhyn Farm Martin B-26 Marauder Plane Crash 4th June 1943

The aircraft named MI LAINE was caught in thick fog on 4 June 1943 and was descending to find a place to land. It flew into a hay barn at Penrhyn Farm at Pwll, near Llanelli, and exploded. The report compiled on the incident noted that the B-26 was on a squadron transfer flight from Port Lyautey, Morocco, to St Eval when it crashed three miles southeast of RAF Pembrey at 16:15 hours. The plane was assigned to VIII AFBC, 322nd Bomb Group, 449th Bomb Squadron.



The weather ceiling and visibility were both zero, with a solid overcast and light rain. Investigators summarized the cause of the loss as an instrument let-down over hills with clouds in unfamiliar territory, with no radio or blind approach facilities available. The aircraft was flying level at quite a high speed when it hit a tree with its left engine, then struck a hayrick with its right engine, glanced off a bank, shed the left outboard wing panel and the left horizontal stabilizer, and dropped over a second bank on the other side of the field, dropping the left engine near the bank. It then crashed in the centre of the field, bursting into flames. The path of the main parts of the plane could be clearly followed. None of the control pedestal could be found to allow a check of the control positions.

Martin Marauder's Last Mission

By Fred Lyne, March 1988

In early January 1943, world leaders convened in Casablanca, North Africa, to strategize on how to bring World War II to a close. A significant focus was the proposed strategic bombing of Germany and occupied Europe. This led to the establishment of a combined bomber offensive, involving Bomber Command and the United States 8th Air Force, aimed at



The chronoscope from the crash site

A Martin Marauder's LAST MISSION

by Fred Lyne

Heads of world powers met at Casablanca, North Africa early January 1943 to discuss ways of ending World War II. The main discussion was the proposed strategic bombing of Germany and occupied Europe. A combined bomber

progressive destruction of the German Forces, industries and morale of the German people. Bomber Harris's main concern was shortage of aircraft, especially bombers and trained crews. The Italians and Germans had been



Disruption and spark plugs

offensive bomber command and the United States 8th American Air Force was created to conduct a series of raids, some of which would be to the heart of the Third Reich.

It was the wish of Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris that Area Bombing of war torn Europe would bring about an early and

cleared from North Africa and with surplus aircraft available it was inevitable that the deployment to other theatres of war was of immediate importance.

RAF Pembrey was expecting the arrival of aircraft from North Africa. One such aircraft was a Martin Marauder

B26B medium bomber being ferried in by a crew of four. Normal complement marauders would be seven: two pilots, one navigator, one radio operator, two gunners and one flight engineer. The crew on this aircraft consisted of three officers and one staff sergeant, all American.

The aircraft was by no means small, wing tip to wing tip measured 71ft, length 58ft, 3in and 21ft high. Power was produced by two Wrights radial engines producing 282 mph and a range of 1150 miles at 214 mph.

The weather for Pembrey was poor. The mountain range was enveloped in a thick wet mist, visual navigation from 500ft was bad. Ground control at RAF Pembrey made radio contact with the aircraft sometime between 1400 hours and 1500 hours (2:00pm - 3:00pm). The aircraft at the time was flying on an East South East course somewhere above the A484 Trimsaran to Llanelli Road in the direction of Llanelli.

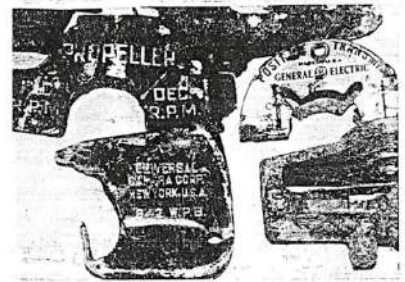
Receiving the new course over their radio the aircraft banked to starboard bringing it dangerously lower and directly over Penrhyn farm.

Penrhyn during this time - 5 June 1943 - was being farmed by Mr and Mrs Griffith Bonnell with their son Hugh and daughter Katie. Preparations were under way for afternoon milking, no supper had been begun when the drone of an aircraft turned into a frightening nightmare for the family as Katie (now Mrs Eynon) recalls over forty-four years later.

"The weather was very bad, it was foggy and wet. We had just started our milking when there was this terrific crashing noise. I rushed out from the milking shed to see what had happened, the first thing that I noticed was the hayrack had been completely demolished with its railway girder frame, uprooted, badly twisted and in places sheared by the forceful impact of a crashing aircraft. My mother went up the field to see if there were any survivors. Seeing three

dead crew she assumed that this was the total but on the following day a fourth crew member was found further up the field behind a hedge. At this time Hugh had his bike out and pedalled down to Pwll Police Station to report the accident.

all those years ago, one would never have guessed that anything had ever happened here! Inspection with the help of a metal detector showed that a considerable amount of metal still remained in the ground. The crash of the aircraft carried pieces



Remains of instruments

Later on just after the crash I noticed the fields were littered with aircraft parts, emergency food rations, towels, suitcases, clothes and among other things a yellow rubber ducky. The aircraft had completely disintegrated on impact, with its gummy remains scattered not only over Penrhyn farm property but that also of Barclay farm. One of the engines had careened on towards, and came to rest, close to Pant farm - some 300 yards from the point of impact.

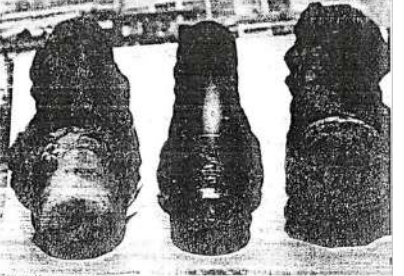
Within the hour the area was attended by crash tenders and other services of the RAF, including civil police, ambulance and local fire fighters. RAF personnel stayed at Penrhyn farm using an outbuilding from which they conducted their investigation into the crash.

When the RAF completed their investigation during those war years of June 1943, the aircraft remains were removed and the area restored. The dead crew were conveyed to Gwent-ridge and it is believed from there to the United States of America. Two years later the American Government paid compensation to Mr and Mrs Bonnell for damage caused to their property. Receiving permission from the farmers concerned I visited the site of the crash to see for myself the area first hand. Viewing the hayrack which had been rebuilt and the high bank and hedge where the Marauder had made its impact

glinted in the sun. Ammunition of various calibre, some of which had exploded or impact came to light, the bases of many brass shells displayed letters and numbers RA-41 meaning made by the Remington Arms Company USA 1941. On others DM43, Des Moines Plant USA 1943 and SL42, St Louis Ordnance Plant USA 1942. This ammunition along with some 30 were used in the aircraft machine guns. The 45 ammunition were used for the personal arms which most American air crews carried. Other items were instrument facial panel surround displaying instruction of how to increase and decrease the rpm of an engines propellers, another was from an inboard camera with the maker 'Universal Camera Corp., New York USA 1942 WPA.

Tom from engines
Just below the surface in another field were two brass uniform buckles, some engine spare plugs. Torn from engines as they careened across the fields, including some unused spark plugs still in their protective plastic covers, probably carried as spares, a small hand ratchet from a socket set, a bomb aimer's Elgin chronoscope, minus glass and hands and many other artefacts.

Future farming generations in this area may wonder what the metal pieces are and decrease the rpm of an engines propellers, another was from an inboard camera with the maker 'Universal Camera Corp., New York USA 1942 WPA.



Martin Marauder spark plug

of the fuselage, etc in the intended direction of travel, scattering its broken assemblies over several fields.

Through the bare soil of a stubble field protruded a stainless steel hose clamp with the maker's name 'Witten Mfg Co., Chicago, USA. Further on and closer to the hedge, exposed pieces of plexiglass

aluminum who came from afar only to die on a lonely Welsh mountain top. "Taddy Penrhyn" is farmed by Mr R. J. Evans and son Wyn. Barely sowed and farmed by Mr and Mrs B Samuel of Ty-Gwyn farm. Post was formed during the war years by Mr Jack Evans flow retired and living in Pwll-Llanelli. 128

conducting a series of raids on the heart of the Third Reich. Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris believed that area bombing of war-torn Europe would hasten the war's end by targeting German industries and demoralizing the German populace.

Harris's primary concern was the shortage of aircraft, particularly bombers, and trained crews. With the Italians and Germans cleared from North Africa, surplus aircraft became available for deployment to other theatres of war. RAF Pembrey anticipated the arrival of several aircraft from North Africa, one of which was a Martin B-26B Marauder medium bomber, being ferried in by a crew of four. Normally, a Marauder would carry a complement of seven: two pilots, one navigator, one radio operator, three gunners, and one flight engineer. However, this aircraft was manned by only three officers and one staff sergeant, all American.

The B-26B Marauder was a sizable aircraft, with a wingspan of 71 feet and a length of 58 feet 3 inches. It was powered by two Wright radial engines, capable of producing a top speed of 282 mph and a range of 1,150 miles at 214 mph.

On the day of the incident, weather conditions at RAF Pembrey were poor, with the nearby mountain range enveloped in thick, wet mist. Visual navigation at an altitude of 500 feet was challenging. Ground control at RAF Pembrey made radio contact with the aircraft sometime between 1400 and 1500 hours (2:00 PM - 3:00 PM). At this point, the aircraft was flying on an east-southeast course above the A484 road from Trimsaran to Llanelli.

After receiving new instructions, the aircraft banked to starboard, descending dangerously low and passing directly over Penrhyn Farm. At that time, Penrhyn Farm was managed by Mr. and Mrs. Griffith Bonnell, along with their children, Hugh, and Katie. As they prepared for afternoon milking, the drone of the aircraft suddenly transformed into a terrifying roar.

Katie, now Mrs. Eynon, recalls the incident vividly more than forty years later: "The weather was very bad; it was foggy and wet. We had just started our milking when there was this terrific crashing noise. I rushed out from the milking shed to see what had happened. The first thing I noticed was that the hay shed had been completely demolished, with its railway girder frame uprooted, badly twisted, and in places sheared by the forceful impact of a crashing aircraft."

Initially, Mrs. Bonnell saw three dead crew members and assumed that was the total. However, the next day, a fourth crew member was discovered further back in a field behind a hedge. At that moment, Hugh pedalled down to Pwll Police Station to report the accident. Shortly after the crash, Katie noticed the fields littered with aircraft parts, emergency food rations, towels, suitcases, clothing, and, among other items, a yellow rubber dinghy. The aircraft had completely disintegrated upon impact, scattering its remains not only across Penrhyn Farm but also onto Barclay Farm. One of the engines had careened off and come to rest about 300 yards from the point of impact, close to Pant Farm.

Within an hour, crash tenders and other RAF services, including civil police, ambulances, and local fire brigades, arrived at the scene. RAF personnel remained at Penrhyn Farm, utilizing an outbuilding as they conducted their investigation into the crash. By June 1943, when the investigation concluded, the wreckage was removed, and the area was restored. The deceased crew members were transported to Cambridge, from where it is believed they were sent back to the United States. Two years later, the American government compensated Mr. and Mrs. Bonnell for the damage inflicted on their property.

After receiving permission from the farmers involved, I visited the crash site to see the area first-hand. The hay shed, which had been rebuilt, stood alongside the high bank and hedge where the Marauder had met its fate so many years ago. Today, one would hardly guess that anything had ever occurred there. However, an inspection with a metal detector revealed a significant amount of metal still buried in the ground. The crash had scattered pieces of the fuselage in the direction of travel, spreading debris across several fields.

Among the findings, a stainless-steel hose clamp with the maker's name, "Witten Mfg. Co., Chicago, USA," protruded from the bare soil of a stubble field. Further along, closer to the hedge, pieces of plexiglass glinted in the sunlight. Various calibres of ammunition, some of which had exploded on impact, were unearthed. The brass shell casings bore markings indicating their origins: "RA41," from the Remington Arms Company, USA, 1941; "DM43," from the Des Moines Plant, USA, 1943; and "SL42," from the St. Louis Ordnance Plant, USA, 1942. This ammunition, along with .30 calibre rounds, had been used in the aircraft's machine guns, while the .45 calibre rounds were for the personal weapons that many American aircrew carried. Other items discovered included instrument dials—one indicating how to adjust the RPM of an engine's propellers, another from an onboard camera manufactured by "Universal Camera Corp., New York, USA, 1942."

Just below the surface in another field lay two brass uniform buckles, some engine spark plugs that had been dislodged during the crash, including unused spark plugs still in their protective plastic covers, likely kept as spares. Among the debris, I also found a small parachute, a socket set, a bomb, an Elgin chronoscope missing its glass and hands, and numerous other artifacts.

Future generations of farmers in this area may uncover these metal pieces while ploughing, unaware of the World War II plane crash and the airmen who travelled from afar, only to meet their fate on a lonely Welsh mountaintop.

Today, Penrhyn Farm is managed by Mr. R. Evans and his son Wyn, while Barclay Farm is owned and managed by Mr. and Mrs. B. Samuel of Ty-Gwyn Farm. Pant Farm was operated during the war years by Mr. Jack Evans, who is now retired and resides in Pwll-Llanelli.

The crew members who perished were:

- **Lt John Reiss**, Pilot
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/56293661/john-w-reiss>
-
- **Lt Eugene Carby**, Navigator
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/202854355/eugene-manning-carby>
-
- **Sgt Raymond Shoemaker**, Engineer
- <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/40704568/raymond-john-shoemaker>
-
- **Lt William Shoop**, Passenger

Pwll – Hawker Hurricane W9231 May 1941

The Story of F/Lt Waclaw Wilczewski and Hurricane W9231



On a stormy day in May 1941, a dramatic event unfolded in the skies over Pwll, a small village near Llanelli in Carmarthenshire. It was wartime, and brave pilots from various Allied nations were putting their lives at risk daily in the battle against Nazi forces. Among these pilots was Flight Lieutenant Waclaw Wilczewski, a Polish airman flying with the Royal Air Force's No. 316 Polish Fighter Squadron, stationed in the UK at Pembrey. His story, one of courage and quick-thinking, is remembered as a testament to the resolve and bravery of the Polish pilots who fought for freedom in a foreign land.

F/Lt Wilczewski was flying the British single-seat fighter, **Hurricane W9231**, a reliable aircraft used extensively during World War II. On May 17, 1941, however, his mission took a perilous turn. While navigating through the skies near Pwll, his Hurricane developed serious engine problems, leaving him with no choice but to attempt an emergency landing. But this was not just any routine landing – it became a race against time and circumstance, with the lives of civilians and his own hanging in the balance.



As his aircraft lost power, Wilczewski began searching for a safe place to land. His first option was the playing fields at Penyfan in Llanelli, but he quickly abandoned the idea. The fields were crowded with people, and a landing there would almost certainly have led to a tragic disaster. His second attempt was aimed at the cricket grounds at Stradey, but once again, there were too many civilians in harm's way.

Things went from bad to worse when his Hurricane struck power cables near Stradey, increasing the difficulty of controlling the damaged aircraft. Despite the mounting danger and the additional obstacles, Wilczewski remained calm, fully aware that crashing in a densely populated area could cause catastrophic loss of life. It was then that he made a decision that highlighted his exceptional skill, composure, and heroism.

Spotting a small, vacant field behind **Isfryn and Bethlehem Chapel** – now home to the Pwll Cricket Ground – Wilczewski saw his final opportunity. The limited space in the field and the already critical state of his Hurricane made a regular landing impossible. In a moment of sheer expertise, the pilot intentionally brought the plane down on its wing, using the angle of impact to slow the aircraft's forward momentum. By the time it hit the ground, the Hurricane was traveling at just 70 mph, a dangerously low speed but slow enough to avert a full-blown catastrophe. The wreckage came to a stop within the small field, sparing both Wilczewski's life and the lives of Pwll's residents.



The pilot's cool-headedness and precise actions undoubtedly prevented an unthinkable disaster. Had he lost control or been unable to direct the aircraft away from the village, the consequences could have been deadly for the people living there. Thanks to Wilczewski's actions, no civilians were harmed, and the heroic pilot himself emerged from the crash with no life-threatening injuries.

The wreck of Hurricane W9231 was a sobering sight in the field that day, but the man who piloted it lived on to fly again. The courage and skill he displayed on that fateful day in May 1941 were later acknowledged in official records, including the **316 Squadron Operational Record Book**, and he was forever remembered as a hero who risked his own life to save others.

Today, Pwll has changed, but the memory of that day lingers on. The field where Waclaw Wilczewski crash-landed is now part of the Pwll Cricket Ground, where games are played in peace—a far cry from the crisis that unfolded there during World War II. The name Waclaw Wilczewski, once known only to the RAF and his comrades in the **316 Polish Fighter Squadron**, is now remembered and honoured in Pwll as a symbol of bravery and selflessness.

F/Lt Wilczewski's actions remind us of the immense sacrifices made by Polish pilots during the war. They had left their homes behind, fought for the freedom of nations not their own, and became part of the fabric of Allied efforts to bring peace to war-torn Europe. To this day, we salute their courage, and we remain grateful for the cool-headed decision-making of pilots like Wilczewski, who on that day in 1941 ensured that no lives were lost in the small Welsh village of Pwll.

Five Roads - Handley Page Hereford I L6036 September 30 1940



Handley Page Hereford I L6036 Near Five Roads

On the evening of **September 30, 1940**, a significant aviation incident took place near **Five Roads**, a small village in South Wales. The aircraft involved was a **Handley Page Hereford I** (L6036), one of 100 planes delivered to the **Royal Air Force (RAF)** by Short & Harland of Belfast between 1938 and 1940. Although never used in active combat, the Hereford was a crucial part of RAF training, particularly with Hampden training units, and was assigned to the **14 Operational Training Unit**.



On that day, **Flight Lieutenant N.W. Timmerman** was flying the Hereford on a routine ferry mission from **RAF Cottesmore**. The flight was uneventful until the aircraft approached

Pembrey Airfield just after 7:00 PM. Suddenly, one of the engines failed, leaving Flt. Lt. Timmerman in a dire situation. Flying alone, he had no assistance from other crew members and had to make quick decisions to avert disaster.

With the aircraft rapidly losing power, Timmerman made the critical decision to attempt a forced landing. He scanned the landscape below and identified a small grove of trees near **Caerbigyn Farm**, just outside the village of **Five Roads**, around four miles northwest of Llanelli. His options were limited, and a successful landing seemed increasingly difficult. Nonetheless, Timmerman expertly guided the Hereford toward the trees, doing his best to reduce the severity of the impact.

The aircraft crash-landed into the coppice of trees, suffering severe damage in the process. L6036 was a complete write-off, its wreckage scattered across the field. Remarkably, despite the violent landing and the destruction of the aircraft, **Flight Lieutenant Timmerman** emerged from the crash unscathed. His skill and composure in the face of danger had saved his life.

The crash site, now a quiet grazing field near the **Tir John bungalow**, bears no visible marks of that event. The Hereford's remains were cleared, and the land was returned to farming. Today, only the memory of that near-tragic day remains, a testament to the dangers faced by RAF pilots even in training flights during the war.

This incident occurred just two weeks after the loss of **Hampden P4311**, another RAF aircraft that crashed nearby, underscoring the hazards faced by both trainee and experienced pilots during World War II. Though **L6036** never saw combat, its crash serves as a reminder of the bravery and quick thinking of pilots like **Flight Lieutenant Timmerman**, who survived a potentially fatal event with his life intact.

Miles Martinet HP366 November 20 1943



On **November 20, 1943**, tragedy struck near **Ty Newydd Farm**, just north of **Burry Port, Wales**, during a routine training mission. The aircraft involved was a **Miles Martinet HP366**, which was being used for simulated air gunnery practice, a common sight in the skies above the sparsely inhabited areas of **Mynydd Pembrey** during the war years.

The incident unfolded at around **09:35 hrs**, when two aircraft were seen flying in close formation over the farm. **Glyn** and **Irfon Davies**, who were working on the farm under the supervision of their grandfather **Tom Davies**, were accustomed to the sight and sounds of planes overhead. However, on that morning, the familiar noise of aircraft engines was shattered by a distinctive thud—a mid-air collision.

Looking up, the Davies family saw the **Martinet HP366** begin to spin uncontrollably. The aircraft spiralled downward, crashing into a hedge near the farmhouse. Upon impact, the Martinet burst into flames.

Acting swiftly, **Tom Davies** grabbed a billhook and rushed to the crash site to break open the aircraft's canopy and rescue the crew. Unfortunately, the heat from the fire was too intense, forcing him to abandon his rescue efforts. Despite the quick arrival of emergency services, they were unable to save the two airmen aboard the aircraft.

Both men perished in the crash, despite the brave attempts to save them. The crash site, with stunted undergrowth and traces of molten aluminium where the Martinet burned, remains a solemn reminder of the incident.

The crew of the Martinet HP366

Sgt. Richard Williamson Rigby - Pilot

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/89467246/richard-williamson-rigby>

LAC Harold "Lal" Egerton - Tow Operator

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/32674482/harold-egerton>



The site, now quiet, is marked by the presence of scattered aircraft debris. The nearby **Carmarthen Bay Power Station** chimneys, once visible from the crash site, have since been demolished, but the memory of the two airmen remains intact. The wreckage and the events of that day continue to stand as a poignant reminder of the perils faced by RAF crews, even during training missions.

This crash underscores the significant risks involved in wartime training exercises. Despite not being on active combat missions, RAF crews like **Sgt. Rigby** and **LAC Egerton** faced constant danger as they honed the skills necessary for the war effort. Their sacrifice is commemorated, and their memory lives on through accounts of their bravery and the lasting impact of their loss.

Bristol Blenheim Z6348 May 11 1943

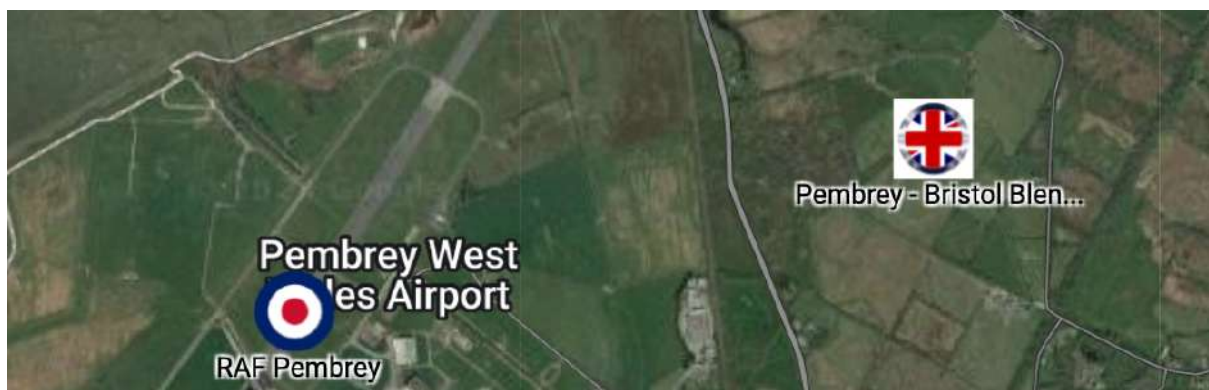


On May 11, 1943, a tragic incident unfolded at Pant Teg Farm in Pinged, near Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, when a Bristol Blenheim Z6348, assigned to the 1 Air Gunnery School, crashed during a routine training mission. The aircraft, an essential part of the Royal Air Force's operations during World War II, was designed for versatility and was commonly used for reconnaissance and light bombing missions. However, on this fateful day, the Blenheim was being used in gunnery training, and a malfunction led to catastrophic consequences.

The accident occurred when the aircraft experienced a possible flap failure while flying in a circuit above Pant Teg Farm. Flaps, critical for controlling an aircraft's speed and manoeuvrability during landing or take-off, are essential to safe flight. Their malfunction can lead to a loss of control, and, tragically, this seems to have been the case with Blenheim Z6348. As the plane spiralled out of control, the four-man crew on board had no chance to regain stability. The aircraft plummeted to the ground, crashing into the farmland, and killing everyone on board.

The crew of the Blenheim included Warrant Officer Frederick John McDaniel, who was the pilot of the aircraft. His responsibility for the operation and navigation of the Blenheim reflected his high level of training and experience as a senior non-commissioned officer. Alongside him were three air gunners under training: Leading Aircraftman John Charles

Noble, Leading Aircraftman Kenneth Taylor, and Leading Aircraftman Reginald R. I. Smythe. All three were in the process of mastering the skills necessary to become air gunners, learning to operate the aircraft's defensive weaponry and protect the crew from enemy threats.



This incident serves as a stark reminder of the dangers that RAF personnel faced, even during training exercises far from the frontlines. Though these men were not engaged in combat, they were participating in vital preparations that would eventually ensure the effectiveness of the Royal Air Force's operations in World War II. Training flights were an essential part of the RAF's strategy to ensure that crews were fully prepared for the challenges of war, but they were not without risk, as this crash tragically demonstrated.

Despite the valiant efforts of the crew, the malfunction proved insurmountable, and the aircraft's final moments were spent in a doomed descent. The community around Pant Teg Farm was shaken by the event, and the loss of these four young men left an indelible mark on those who witnessed the aftermath. Their sacrifice, though occurring far from the battlefields, was no less significant. They died in service to their country, performing the crucial work of preparing for the larger war effort.

Today, the site of the crash stands as a quiet testament to the lives lost. The memory of Warrant Officer McDaniel, Leading Aircraftman Noble, Leading Aircraftman Taylor, and Leading Aircraftman Smythe continues to be honoured. Though their mission was tragically cut short, their dedication to their roles and the ultimate sacrifice they made in service to their country are remembered with great respect.

Crew.

Warrant Officer Frederick John McDaniel, the experienced pilot of the aircraft, served under service number 335302. His expertise and responsibility as the aircraft's leader reflected his high-ranking status within the RAF.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/24333060/frederick-john-mcdaniel>

Leading Aircraftman John Charles Noble was one of the air gunners under training. His work in mastering the Blenheim's defensive capabilities was crucial to the operation of these aircraft.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/167811817/john-charles-noble>

Leading Aircraftman Kenneth Taylor, another air gunner trainee, was dedicated to becoming a fully-fledged member of the RAF's defensive air teams.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/147215270/kenneth-taylor#add-to-vc>

Leading Aircraftman Reginald R. I. Smythe, the third air gunner in training, was focused on developing the skills necessary to protect his crew in combat.

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/70293691/reginald-r_i-smythe

Bristol Blenheim L1218 May 24 1942



On May 24, 1942, a Bristol Blenheim L1218, part of the Air Gunnery School at RAF Pembrey, tragically crashed during a training exercise near the village of Pinged, just a mile east of Pembrey Airfield in Carmarthenshire, Wales. The crew of four was conducting a camera gun exercise, a standard training flight designed to simulate combat scenarios.

The flight seemed to be proceeding normally until a catastrophic event occurred. Residents, including Percy Jones, witnessed the aircraft in distress, with flames pouring from its starboard side. Jones was on a bus near the Pinged Post Office at the time and recalled the moment when the Blenheim began its rapid descent.

In a horrifying series of events, the Blenheim L1218 narrowly missed the Pinged Post Office, crashing through a hedge and landing in flames. The violence of the impact was so severe that one of the engines was torn from the aircraft and came to rest near a nearby house. Fire quickly consumed the wreckage, and further explosions from the ammunition aboard made any rescue attempts perilous.

Percy Jones and other bystanders rushed to the scene, desperately trying to help. Jones himself attempted to pull one of the crew members from the wreckage but was unable to save him as the man had already succumbed to his injuries. Rescue services arrived shortly after, but there was little they could do to prevent the devastating outcome.

The investigation into the crash could not definitively conclude the cause, but there were suggestions of a fuel leak that may have ignited on the hot exhaust of the aircraft, leading to the fatal fire. All four crew members lost their lives in the crash, marking a tragic end to a routine training flight.

Crew Members:

- **Pilot: Sergeant Kenneth Ramsdale**
 - Service Number: 566865
 - Role: Pilot

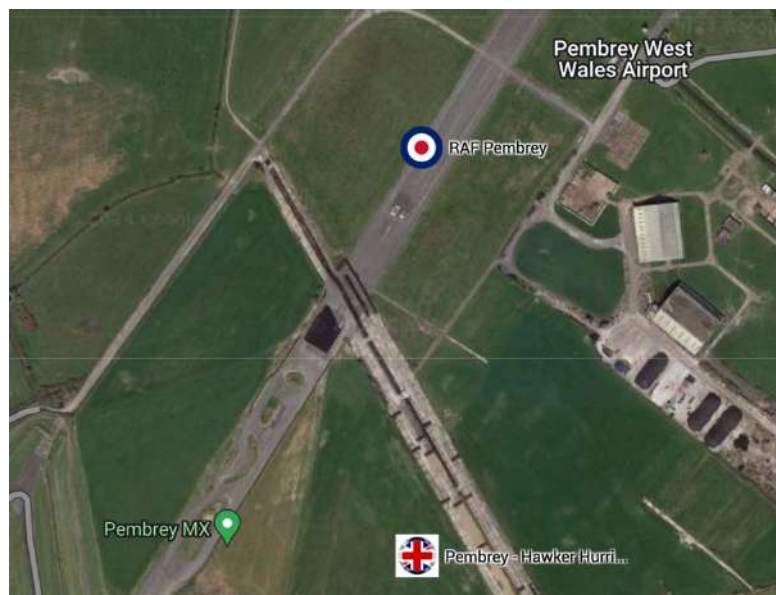
- Age: 25 years
- Burial: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/60092480/kenneth-ramsdale>
- **Crew: Leading Aircraftman Harold George Henry**
 - Service Number: 625978
 - Role: Air Gunner (under training)
 - Age: 20 years
 - Burial: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98180501/harold-george-henry>
- **Crew: Leading Aircraftman Edward Cecil Pledger Moore**
 - Service Number: 625842
 - Role: Air Gunner (under training)
 - Age: 20 years
 - Burial: Barking (Rippleside) Cemetery, Essex, England
- **Crew: Leading Aircraftman George Arthur Layton**
 - Service Number: 624269
 - Role: Air Gunner (under training)
 - Age: 21 years
 - Burial: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98180505/george-alfred-layton#add-to-vc>

Hawker Hurricane P3871 January 12 1941



The skies over Carmarthenshire witnessed yet another tragic incident during World War II, as one of Britain's most iconic fighter planes, the Hawker Hurricane, was involved in a fatal mid-air collision. The aircraft involved, Hurricane P3871, was assigned to 79 Squadron of the Royal Air Force, a squadron that played a crucial role in the defence of Britain during the early years of the war.

On the fateful day of January 12, 1941, Flying Officer Alec Cyril Chapple was leading a practice formation flight of three Hurricanes over the airfield near Cefn Sidan. At approximately 11:35 a.m., the flight was being conducted at an altitude of 1,000 feet as part of a routine exercise designed to sharpen the pilots' manoeuvring skills. The mission quickly took a tragic turn during a manoeuvre to change positions within the formation.



Sergeant Boucher, a new pilot flying in Hurricane P3716, approached the leader, Flying Officer Chapple, too quickly during the position change. Unable to avoid contact, Boucher's Hurricane collided with Chapple's aircraft, striking the wing of P3871. The collision caused Chapple's aircraft to flip onto its back, sending the Hurricane into an uncontrollable descent. Tragically, Flying Officer Chapple's Hurricane crashed on the airfield, resulting in his untimely death.

This incident was part of a broader pattern of Hurricane losses at RAF Pembrey in the early months of 1941. The airbase saw significant action and training activity during this period, and several Hurricanes from various squadrons were lost in accidents. Just a few weeks after Chapple's crash, RAF Pembrey would become the home of the newly formed 316 (Polish) Squadron in February, followed by the arrival of 32 Squadron between April and June.

The crash of Hawker Hurricane P3871 remains a sombre reminder of the risks and sacrifices made by RAF pilots during World War II, even during training exercises. Flying Officer Alec Cyril Chapple's death adds to the long list of airmen who gave their lives in the line of duty while preparing to defend Britain from the looming threat of the Axis powers.

Hawker Hurricane I V6958 Crash - June 13, 1941



The Hawker Hurricane I V6958 was among the many aircraft delivered to the Royal Air Force (RAF) by Gloster Aircraft between August 1940 and January 1941. Serving with both 249 and 316 Squadrons, it was a vital part of Britain's defence during a critical time in World War II. However, on June 13, 1941, this aircraft met with disaster near the town of Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, after a mid-air collision.

The Hurricane V6958 collided with another aircraft during a training flight. Though the exact identity of the second aircraft remains uncertain, it is thought to have been another Hurricane, possibly designated as V9523. The collision forced the pilot of V6958, Pilot Officer Stanley Gordon Hillman, to abandon the aircraft. The Hurricane was left to crash near Kidwelly, where its remains were found abandoned against a hedge.

Remarkably, the wreckage of the Hurricane did not go unnoticed. During ditching work on a farm, the engine, a Rolls-Royce Merlin, was discovered by a local farmer. Further investigations led to the discovery of substantial parts of the aircraft, including the fuselage, which was still intact enough for the Abergavenny Air Training Corps (ATC) to retrieve them from the hedge a year or two after the crash. One of the more significant discoveries was the aircraft's maker's plate, which confirmed its identity as Hurricane V6958.

The recovered engine was housed at the 2478 Squadron ATC Museum for many years. After the museum closed roughly 15 years ago, the engine was saved and eventually placed on display in Kidwelly, where it serves as a relic of the area's wartime aviation history.



Though details about Pilot Officer Stanley Gordon Hillman, the pilot involved in the crash, are scarce, the incident and subsequent recovery efforts underscore the importance of preserving these fragments of history. Artifacts like the engine of Hurricane V6958 serve as tangible reminders of the risks and sacrifices faced by RAF pilots during the war, as well as the vital role such aircraft played in defending Britain during its darkest hours.

Vickers Wellington LN553 Crash - January 6, 1945



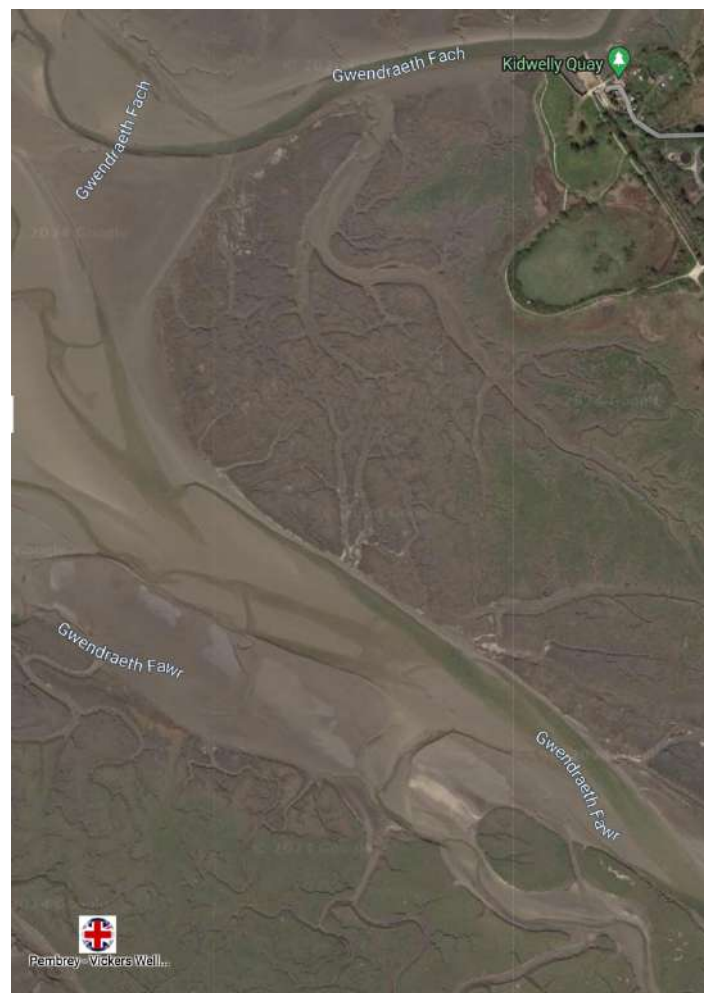
On January 6, 1945, a devastating air disaster occurred on the mudflats just outside the boundary of Pembrey airfield in Carmarthenshire, resulting in the loss of six airmen's lives. The aircraft involved was a Vickers Wellington LN553, which was part of the training

operations conducted by the airfield's gunnery school. This day became known as the worst air disaster in Carmarthenshire's history.

By 1945, the Wellington had become the primary training aircraft used by Pembrey's gunnery school. With its larger crew capacity compared to the Anson and Blenheim, the Wellington carried more risk during accidents, leading to greater loss of life. On this tragic day, Wellington LN553 was engaged in a routine air firing exercise.

At 13:55 hrs, the aircraft took off from Pembrey with a crew of seven, including five trainee gunners. The exercise proceeded uneventfully, and the gunners were likely eager to learn how well they had performed. Upon returning to Pembrey airfield, the pilot, Flying Officer Beverley John Wentworth Thomson, encountered a north-westerly breeze. He opted to land on the shorter NW/SE runway to accommodate the wind conditions.

The initial touchdown was heavy, prompting the control tower to instruct Thomson to overshoot and go around for a second attempt. As the Wellington gained height over the Gwendraeth Estuary to reposition, it suddenly entered a nosedive from around 300 feet while turning across the wind. Tragically, it never recovered and crashed onto the marshes at 15:00 hrs.



The crash resulted in the deaths of six crew members. Flying Officer Beverley John Wentworth Thomson, the pilot, was a 21-year-old member of the Royal Australian Air Force.

He was the son of Harold Wentworth Thomson and Madge Thomson, and the husband of Mary Thomson of Llanelly. Alongside him were several trainee gunners, all of whom paid the ultimate price during this routine training exercise.

The victims of the crash were:

- **Flying Officer Beverley John Wentworth Thomson**
https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98180519/beverley-john_wentworth-thomson



- **Warrant Air Officer (AG) Cecil Gordon Dear**
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/125512301/cecil-gordon-dear>
- **Aircraftman 2nd Class John Frederick Bartholomew**
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/59701814/john-frederick-bartholomew>
- **Aircraftman 2nd Class Peter Hixon Cain**
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/142270604/peter-hixon-cain>
- **Aircraftman 2nd Class Cecil Maurice Field**
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/44815680/cecil-maurice-field>
- **Aircraftman 2nd Class Barry Campbell Hay**
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/59790402/barry-campbell-hay>

Handley Page Hampden I P4311 Crash - September 17, 1940



On September 17, 1940, a Handley Page Hampden bomber, P4311, met a tragic fate when it crashed onto the Gwendraeth marshes near Kidwelly, Wales. The incident occurred during a training exercise, claiming the lives of all seven crew members on board.

P4311 was part of a small detachment of Hampden bombers stationed at RAF Pembrey, a fighter station during the Battle of Britain. The Hampden, nicknamed the "flying suitcase," was a vital component of Bomber Command during the early years of World War II.

The crash occurred as the aircraft was returning to base after an air-to-air firing exercise. A combination of engine failure and strong crosswinds contributed to the loss of control, leading to the fatal impact. Despite efforts from emergency services, the crew members were unable to survive the crash and subsequent fire.



The remote location and difficult terrain hindered rescue efforts. Local resident Bill Wright recounted the events of that day, describing the frantic response of those who witnessed the crash. Despite their best efforts, the crew members were tragically lost.

The Hampden P4311 crash serves as a poignant reminder of the dangers faced by aircrews during wartime. It highlights the sacrifices made by those who served in the Royal Air Force and the tragic consequences of accidents in the skies.

Bristol Blenheim Z6187 February 16th, 1942



Pembrey, Wales - February 16th, 1942: A routine fishery protection patrol over the Irish Sea ended in tragedy for the crew of Bristol Blenheim Z6187. The aircraft, stationed at RAF Carew Cheriton with No. 254 Squadron, RAF, crashed near RAF Pembrey in Carmarthenshire, Wales, during its return flight.

Mission and Disorientation:

On the afternoon of February 16th, Blenheim Z6187, piloted by Pilot Officer John Tully of the Royal Australian Air Force, embarked on a patrol of the Irish Sea alongside another Blenheim. They monitored the waters off the southern coast of Ireland for over two hours before setting course back to base at approximately 6:10 PM.



However, as darkness descended and weather conditions worsened, visibility deteriorated significantly. While navigating over Carmarthen Bay, Pilot Officer Tully lost his bearings. Fortunately, at around 8:25 PM, the crew managed to locate RAF Pembrey's runways using radio signals.

Fatal Miscalculation:

During the landing approach, Pilot Officer Tully determined a go-around manoeuvre was necessary. However, a critical error occurred. The aircraft's flaps were retracted prematurely, at an altitude too low to maintain safe flight. This resulted in a sudden loss of lift, causing the Blenheim to plummet towards the ground near the airfield. The impact ignited a fiery explosion, destroying the aircraft.

Crew

Crew Details:

- * Pilot: Pilot Officer John Leahy Tully (Service No. 404189), Royal Australian Air Force
- * Status: Injured
- * Observer: Flight Sergeant Reginald Fenney, Royal Air Force
- * Status: Seriously injured, died two days later (buried in Hoylake, near Liverpool)
- * <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/180216714/reginald-fenney>
- * Air Gunner: Sergeant H. Carey, Royal Air Force
- * Status: Injured

Crash Investigation:

An official investigation cleared Pilot Officer Tully of any blame for the accident. The inquiry revealed a malfunctioning altimeter in the Blenheim, potentially contributing to the pilot's difficulty in maintaining proper altitude during the landing attempt. However, the premature retraction of the flaps was identified as the primary cause of the crash.

Pilot Officer Tully's Fate:

Following his recovery from the crash, Pilot Officer Tully was assigned to No. 1 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) at RAF Benson. Tragically, his story took another turn on July 30th, 1942. While on a reconnaissance mission over Norway in his Spitfire AA800, the aircraft vanished over the North Sea. Pilot Officer Tully was presumed lost in action.

The crash of Bristol Blenheim Z6187 serves as a poignant reminder of the dangers faced by aircrews during World War II, even on seemingly routine missions. It highlights the importance of proper equipment and the split-second decisions made under pressure that can determine the outcome of a flight. The sacrifice of Flight Sergeant Fenney and the bravery of the crew will not be forgotten.

Pilot Officer John Leahy Tully (Service No. 404189), Royal Australian Air Force



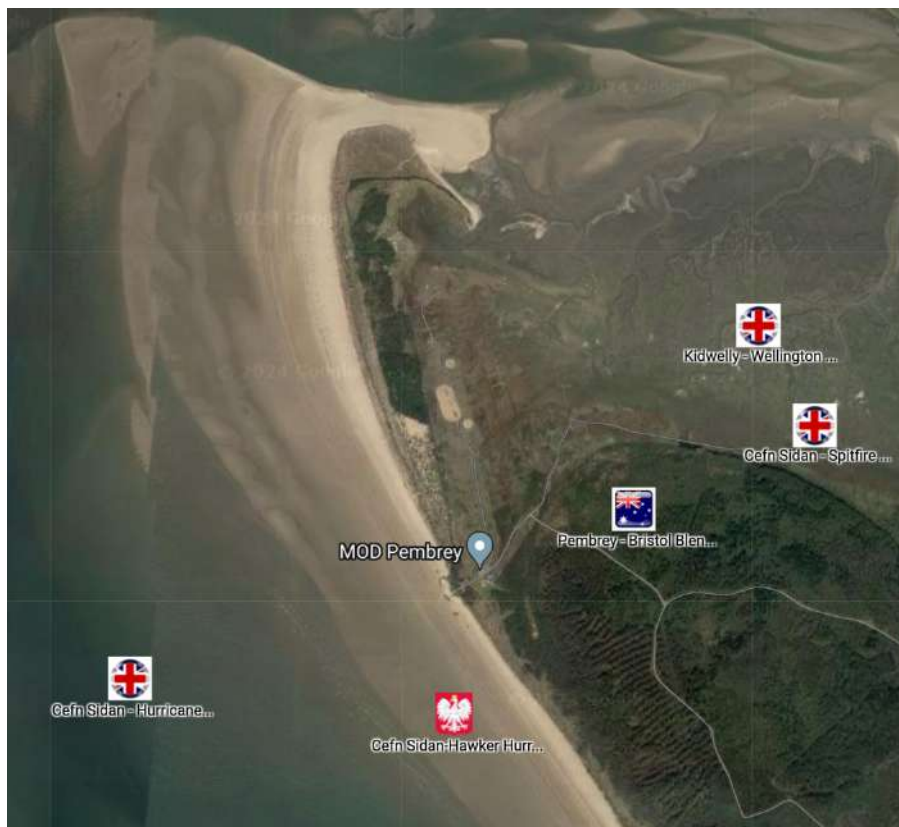
D.O.B 4/8/1913 – 30/7/1942

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P11029131>

Hawker Hurricane, Z2324 May 8, 1941.



Tragically, Olech Antoni Kawczyński's service was cut short on May 8, 1941. While on target practice over Cefn Sidan Beach, his Hawker Hurricane, Serial Z2324, crashed, resulting in his untimely death. The exact circumstances of the crash remain a poignant reminder of the perils faced by those who took to the skies in defence of freedom.



Olech Antoni Kawczyński was born on February 20, 1916, in Wudzyn, Poland. His early life in Poland was marked by a strong sense of duty and patriotism, leading him to join the Polish Army, where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant. With the outbreak of World War II and the subsequent invasion of Poland, Kawczyński, like many of his compatriots, found himself compelled to continue the fight beyond his homeland's borders.



After Poland's fall, Kawczyński made his way to Great Britain, where the Royal Air Force (RAF) was integrating experienced Polish pilots into its ranks. Kawczyński joined the RAF and served with distinction as a Pilot Officer, initially with No. 32 Squadron. His skills as a pilot were critical in the defence of Britain, contributing to the efforts to thwart the Luftwaffe's relentless attacks.

Kawczyński later transferred to No. 79 Squadron, continuing his brave service in the skies. No. 79 Squadron was actively involved in various operations, and Kawczyński's role as a pilot was vital to the squadron's missions. His aircraft, a Hawker Hurricane, was a formidable fighter that played a key role in the RAF's defensive and offensive operations.

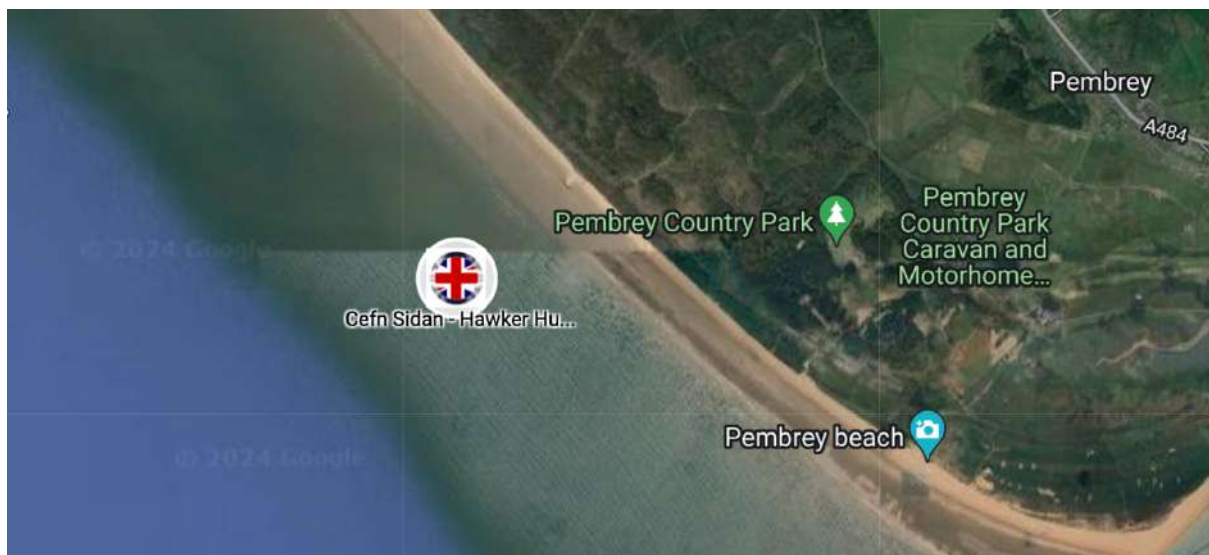
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<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228015273/olech-antoni-kawczynski>

Hurricane Mk I P3122 February 24, 1941



Cefn Sidan Beach, Wales - February 24, 1941: A routine training exercise for the Royal Air Force turned into a tragedy when Hawker Hurricane Mk I, P3122, crashed on the shores of Cefn Sidan Beach in Carmarthenshire.



Training Gone Wrong:

Sergeant Charles Albert Venn, a young pilot who had earned his wings just three months prior, was participating in an air-to-ground strafing practice session. With only 12 hours of flight time on Hurricanes, Sergeant Venn was honing his skills in attacking ground targets.

During the exercise, Sergeant Venn descended lower than intended while firing his guns. This critical misjudgement left him with insufficient altitude to pull up safely before encountering an obstacle on the beach, likely an anti-invasion pole. The Hurricane, unable to clear the obstruction, plunged into the sea.

Solemn Loss:

The investigation concluded that pilot error, specifically Sergeant Venn's miscalculation during the strafing dive, was the cause of the accident. Sadly, Sergeant Venn, at the young age of 26, perished in the crash. [Link to Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/98180520/charles-albert-venn>

Capture of the Focke-Wulf FW 190A-3

On June 23, 1942, one of the most extraordinary events of the Second World War unfolded at RAF Pembrey in South Wales. It involved the unexpected capture of a Focke-Wulf FW 190A-3, the Luftwaffe's most advanced fighter aircraft, and highlighted the unpredictable nature of wartime aviation.



At the time, the FW 190 posed a significant threat to the Allies. Introduced in 1941, the aircraft was superior to the RAF's Spitfire Mk V in terms of speed, manoeuvrability, and firepower, giving German pilots a considerable advantage in aerial combat. For the RAF, understanding and countering the FW 190 became an urgent priority.

The incident began with Oberleutnant Armin Faber, a pilot serving with Jagdgeschwader 2 "Richthofen" (JG 2), an elite Luftwaffe squadron. Faber was engaged in a heated dogfight with RAF Spitfires over Devon. During the chaos of the battle, he became disoriented and mistakenly flew north, believing he was heading south over the English Channel toward German-occupied France. Exhausted and low on fuel, Faber spotted an airfield and performed a textbook landing, confident he was back on friendly soil. Unbeknownst to him, he had landed at RAF Pembrey, an active Royal Air Force base in Wales. Ground crews at Pembrey watched in astonishment as the sleek, unfamiliar fighter rolled to a stop. It quickly became clear that this was not a British aircraft but a pristine example of the Luftwaffe's formidable FW 190.

Faber, still unaware of his mistake, was promptly taken into custody as a prisoner of war. His navigational error turned out to be an unexpected and invaluable gift for the Allies. The

captured aircraft was immediately transported to the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) at Farnborough, where it underwent exhaustive testing. Allied engineers studied every aspect of the FW 190, including its aerodynamic design, engine performance, and combat capabilities. These tests revealed crucial insights into the fighter's strengths and weaknesses, allowing the RAF to develop improved tactics and aircraft to counter it.

The capture of the FW 190 directly influenced the development and deployment of the Spitfire Mk IX, an upgraded version of the Spitfire capable of matching the performance of the German fighter. This technological leap helped restore a balance in the skies and provided RAF pilots with the tools they needed to effectively challenge the Luftwaffe.

For the Luftwaffe, Faber's mistake was a humiliating and costly blunder. The prized FW 190, which had dominated aerial combat, was now in the hands of their enemy. Meanwhile, RAF Pembrey, primarily a training and defensive base, became the unlikely site of one of the most significant aviation intelligence coups of the war. This event underscored the importance of readiness and quick thinking, as the RAF was able to seize the moment and turn Faber's error into a decisive advantage.

The capture of the Focke-Wulf FW 190A-3 at RAF Pembrey remains a remarkable story of chance and consequence during World War II. It highlights how even a single mistake can influence the broader course of the conflict. The Allies' ability to capitalise on this incident demonstrated ingenuity and adaptability, while the lessons learned from studying the FW 190 ultimately helped secure success in the air. For RAF Pembrey, the event marked its place in history as the unexpected setting for one of the war's most important breakthroughs.

A Legacy Remembered

As we reflect on the tragic losses sustained around RAF Pembrey during World War II, it is important to remember that not all sacrifices were made in combat. The airmen who lost their lives during training exercises, often far from the front lines, played an essential role in the success of the Allied war effort. Their dedication, perseverance, and bravery ensured that those who went on to fight in battle were well-prepared and ready to defend their country.

These men, who gave their lives in service to a cause larger than themselves, are remembered not just for the tragedy of their loss but for the vital part they played in the overall victory. The lessons learned from these accidents helped refine the skills of future airmen and ultimately contributed to the success of Britain's air defence.

Today, the quiet landscapes around Pembrey stand as silent witnesses to their sacrifices. Though the roar of aircraft has long faded, the memory of those who served and trained at RAF Pembrey remains etched in the heart of the community and the nation. Their legacy lives on in the peace and freedom they helped secure, reminding us that every life lost in service, whether in battle or in preparation, has shaped the course of history.

RAF Memorials at St Illtyd Church Pembrey

<https://www.findagrave.com/virtual-cemetery/1890914>

Graham T Emmanuel 2025