

The Telegraph

Memorial marks bravery of Second World War Canadian pilots

A memorial has been unveiled at the site where a Vickers Wellington bomber crashed 67 years ago killing all five Canadian aircrew.



Gerald Plant witnessed the crash in 1944 Photo: DAVID ROSE

By [Sean Rayment](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/sean-rayment/) (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/sean-rayment/), Defence Correspondent

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The ceremony took place at Cresswell Crag in Derbyshire and was attended by James Wright, the Canadian High Commissioner, who praised the bravery of the aircrew and those members of the local community who built the memorial.

The crash, in 1944, was witnessed by schoolboy Gerald Plant, who still lives nearby. A sum of money bequeathed by his brother was used to build the stone memorial.

During the service the Canadian High Commissioner said: "I would particularly like to thank Mr Plant and his late brother Arthur for their vision and generosity which have made this memorial possible. Mr Plant was just a teenager when he witnessed the Wellington coming in low and fast and crashing at Henny Moore Farm. It was an image that he never forgot. Over the years he wondered where these young men, some of whom were little older than himself, were from, and what they were like. And he thought about their families, too.

“Pilot Willis Murdie, navigator Lowell Brehaut, wireless operator James Clarke and bomb aimers Walter Cooper and John Lee are symbols of the enduring relationship between Britain and Canada.

“Like thousands of other Canadians, they answered the call to fight for freedom and for Britain in its hour of need. They came from all parts of Canada and all walks of life. And along with over 46,000 of their comrades, they never made it home.”

[Interactive graphic: the Vickers Wellington](#)

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/britainatwar/8528054/Interactive-graphic-the-Vickers-Wellington.html>)

On August 4, 1944, the Vickers Wellington HE 821 took off with its crew on a routine training flight from RAF Gamston, near Worksop in Nottinghamshire. But on the way back to its base the aircraft ran out of fuel and suffered a catastrophic engine failure. Despite the efforts of the pilot, it spun out of control, crashing into a field near the village of Creswell.

Gerald Plant, who also attended the ceremony said: “We have been working hard to fulfil the wishes of my late brother.”

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