



Defeating the U-Boat Menace: The Last Victim of the Dover Barrage?

by Graham Scott

Multibeam image of the UB 109. Image: Swath Services

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Defending the Coast

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A Mustang in the River Meuse near Gennepe

Joost van den Besselaar and Peter Seinen

Peter and Joost are on the board of the foundation Mergor in Mosam (www.mergorinmosam.nl), which is involved in all kind of underwater archaeological and paleontological projects. Here they report on the discovery of a Mustang I in the river Meuse in the Netherlands.

On 26 September 1944, in the course of operation Market Garden in the aftermath of World War Two, Royal Air Force Flight Lieutenant Frank Bolton of the 168st squadron made a reconnaissance flight close to the German border near the Dutch city of Gennepe.

His Mustang I P-51 with identification AM-101 was hit by an American fighter, who mistook the Mustang for a Fokker Wulf.

Bolton managed to pull his plane over the city avoiding a disaster for Gennepe. His effort not to hit the city cost him his life as, when he was ready to jump from his burning plane, the altitude of his plane was insufficient for his parachute to deploy.

His plane flew on for only a few hundred meters before crashing into the river Meuse. Although various inhabitants witnessed the crash, opinions on the exact location were controversial.

Based on various accounts, the most likely trail was reconstructed, which immediately led to the discovery of the wreck.

After the very first find, a propeller blade sticking out of the riverbed,

hundreds of parts in fair condition were also found, providing a positive identification of a Mustang I. As the records and literature only mention this particular loss in this area, this wreck must be Bolton's plane.

The distribution of the parts over the riverbed, however, suggests that the site has been disturbed. Further investigations revealed activities for repairs of the riverbank, which involved shifting material from the riverbed close to the riverbank. Moreover, at extremely low water levels, the engine was discovered by locals and quickly salvaged as scrap.

The parts will be displayed at an exhibition in Gennepe in 2015, commemorating the operation Market Garden and specifically the heroic act of Bolton. Frank Bolton was buried at the war cemetery Jonkerbos at Nijmegen. ♦

One of the propeller blades of the Mustang I P51.
Image: Joost van den Besselaar

