



Box Cemetery Chapel - German Luftwaffe Crewmen 1940

Beneath this memorial is the original wooden cross which marked plot number C1 which contained the remains of these five German Luftwaffe crewmen

Rudolf Beck aged 20 year
Rudolf Kirchhoff aged 31 years
Hans Fritz Merz aged 22 years
Gunter Wittkamp aged 24 year
Johann Schmidt aged 21 year

Four had been shot down in the same plane near Woolverton on the Somerset Border on the 25th September 1940. A fifth suffered a similar fate two days later.

In 1963 all five men were re-interred at a cemetery in Cannock Chase, Cheshire; specially built for about 5,000 German personnel from both World Wars. Most died in prisoner-of-war internment camps. Others were airman shot down or sailors washed up on our shores. The majority of them were buried elsewhere initially and then transferred to Cannock Chase after the second World War.

Source: Box Parish Council Cemetery – Box, Wiltshire.

OPC note:

Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery

On 16 October 1959, an agreement was concluded by the governments of the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the future care of the graves of German nationals who lost their lives in the United Kingdom during the two World Wars. The agreement provided for the transfer to a central cemetery in the United Kingdom of all graves which were not situated in cemeteries and plots of Commonwealth war graves maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in situ.

Following this agreement, the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgraberfursorge) made arrangements to transfer the graves of German servicemen and civilian internees of both wars from scattered burial grounds to the new cemetery established at Cannock Chase. The inauguration and dedication of this cemetery, which contains almost 5,000 German and Austrian graves, took place in the presence of Dr. Trepte, the President of Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgraberfursorge, on the 10th June 1967.