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History

Ever since my earliest childhood, aviation has always been a fascination for me. I can dimly remember how I used to beg my parents to regularly take me to the Osnabrück-Atterheide Airport so that I could marvel at the small Einmot aircraft starting and landing.

Later on I became more interested in the military aviation, and above all, the aerial warfare during the Second World War. In the 80's this had become omnipresent in my hometown. All around the area, one had started digging out unexploded, dud bombs. We had to regularly leave our homes during the deactivation times and were only allowed back when the sirens gave the all-clear signal. When my friends and I played in the woods back then, we were often amazed about the many round bomb craters which dated back to the war.

Even before the re-unification of Germany, I used to spend part of my holidays with my relatives in Thuringia, where my mother had also spent her childhood, after her escape from Upper Silesia, and where she later met my father.

I can remember them talking about a certain **Uncle Hans**, who had crashed into a mountain with his plane. Nobody knew any more about this, although I had then asked many questions. I was fascinated by the idea that a great-uncle of mine had been a pilot in the war.

Because of the lack of further information, I never thought about this topic for many years, but a few years ago, after ending my military service in the airforce, I actively started becoming interested in the history of the old military airbases (Achmer, Hesse, Vörden) in the area around Osnabrück. While finding out information on the internet, I came across the website forum www.luftarchiv.de.

More because of curiosity, in the summer of 2007, I asked whether anyone knew anything about the fate of my great-uncle **Hans Auschner**, who had crashed to his death during the war, but I didn't believe I would really find out anything. It was then to my great surprise that an 'expert' referred me to an article in the Jet/Prop magazine 4/92 edition, which dealt with the fate of the crashed plane. Contrary to expectations, I was able to reorder this magazine!!

Somehow I was bewildered by this article after reading it. The author, Rolf Hölterhoff from Solingen, without any apparent association to the deceased crew members, had written in meticulous detail, about a plane crash dating back to the Second World War, although at that time, planes had been incessantly crashing all over. I asked myself how much this man really knew and what his motivation had been to write about this. Furthermore, I was hoping he could possibly tell me about my great-uncle and his background and history. However, the problem was that this article in the Jet/Prop magazine was over 15 years old. One could see the author as a fit, middle-aged man in the photos in the article, but they themselves, were also over 20 years old.

Through the internet I found out that this man was as a matter of fact, still alive and even had his own website.

Sometime in the autumn of 2008 I plucked up enough courage and simply phoned the man. After all, in his article he had written that relatives and next of kin of the crew should get in touch with him.

Rolf Hölterhoff was at a fair in Düsseldorf at the time but phoned me later that day. Totally perplexed, he told me that I was the only person so far who had ever got in touch with him so far. Since then we have maintained a cordial contact to each other and exchange information regularly. Rolf has provided me with numerous documents and about parts of the wreckage. In return, I promised to get my relatives to search for a photo of Hans Auschner.

Through my cousin, Anneli, I have received invaluable help. Within the scope of her “ancestry search project”, she visited one of Hans Auschner’s nephews and was given numerous amounts of photos, or rather, army postal letters to see. She then provided me with these in copy.

Hereupon, Rolf and I have decided to change all incorrect information in the internet and to produce our own website which deals with the plane crash and the fate of the crew. Perhaps in this way we will succeed in contacting other descendents and next of kin.

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