

Testimony from Miss Pierrette DUPUIS widow Leclercq March 23rd 2014 in Iwuy (behind the church)

I remember that I saw a high speed plane on fire at low altitude through the roof window of my room. It seemed to me that the pilot tried to avoid the chimney of the sugar works and the village in general.

The next morning we went with friends at the crash site. We could not approach because the Germans framed the perimeter.

I remember that there was everywhere wreckage, I was shocked by this apocalyptic vision and even today it is impossible for me to describe the scene due to the emotion.

Testimony from Mr Paul SAUTIER June 12th 2014 in Iwuy (rue du 4 Septembre)

I was 11 at the time. We heard the noise of an engine which failed. The whole family went out to see a plane on fire that was losing altitude but struggled to stay online. We saw the bomber landing hard on its belly and exploded immediately after the impact. That left no chance to the crew. The next day I went at the crash site where the fire was still active. There were scattered shards of "mica" which I picked up some samples. Children later built fake guns with pieces of sheet metal they found here and there. We surprised a German who stripped the body of a crew member from his ring. He put it in his pocket and he drove aggressively those who watched. This traumatic image is forever lettered in my memory.

Testimony of Mr Alfred Trioux March 2013

I was 17 at the time. The day after the plane crashed my curiosity led me to the scene of the tragedy. The Germans guarded the site and I hid in a cornfield near to watch. I now realize how dangerous my position was at this very moment. Around me there was a vision of horror so difficult to speak about due to the images that come back to me. Suddenly near a piece of paper shuddered, it was a picture of a young soldier that later I returned to the BBC. I received shortly after a document of thanks from the RAF.

Testimony of M Paul GARDEZ June 12th 2014 (rue de l'égalité)

I was 19 and worked in an electricity production company in Escaudoeuvres. I went there daily by bike. That evening I returned home 10 pm due to problem that had delayed me. Time to freshen up and take my meal I lingered listening to the waves of bombers above me. It was well after midnight when I heard the sound of an airplane in trouble, I went and saw behind the house of M Sanchez the dark mass of the device that moved away at high speed. It seemed to me that the two right engines were on fire. I think the altitude 150 m at that time. This lasted between two and three seconds and then I heard an explosion.

Testimony of Mrs DEFOSSEZ SEMAILLE Simone from Rieux en Cambrésis

I remember going to the funeral with Rieux people and this despite the ban on Germans. When we arrived there were 4-5 Germans who monitored the work of the gravedigger. One of them was upset and annoyed to discover that people could defy. He shouted to mark his displeasure. I got scared. A lady came forward and discussed with the German. Her name was Mrs. Lefebvre. She lived rue Alexandre Cousin. The discussion was vehement. The soldiers lay in white wood coffins. They have been buried head to tail. A quest in the village was organized and flowers and a plaque were laid.

Testimony of Mr Robert PARMENTIER living at that time at « 36 rue Carnot »

I was 19 and that night we took refuge in the basement with my parents at 36 rue Carnot. I remember hearing the sound of an airplane engine in trouble. It seemed that this engine was crazy. Suddenly there was an explosion which triggered a fire so violent that the firelight lit the staircase of the cellar behind which we were sheltered. Shortly after, a neighbor, M Philippe Hainaut entered with great panic in the cellar. We asked him if he saw where the plane had fallen. The poor man was confused and he replied: "At the lockbehind the church" direction that was actually the opposite of the place of the fall. We then rushed to the end of our garden to see the fire raging around the "Pont du Moulin." I wanted to go there but my mother feared that bombs were left inside the bomber. The next day I went there and I found myself confronted with a nightmarish scene. Near a mutilated body, an anonymous hand had filed a "Blue, White and Red" bouquet of poppies, cornflowers and daisies. A German soldier who was guarding the place respected this tribute and let the flowers in place. Someone said that at one point an engine had stalled, which had unbalanced the plane reason why he had fallen. The aircraft appeared to have come from the station then passing over the « rue de l'égalité ».