



Vrienden van het Airborne Museum

Utrechtseweg 232, 6862 AZ Oosterbeek

"NIEUWS- BRIEF"

News-letter NR. 3

May 1981

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM OOSTERBEEK
Utrechtseweg 232, 6862 AZ Oosterbeek, Netherlands

Representative in Gr. Britain: Mr. A. Maynard M.B.E.
49, Glenfarg Road, Catford, London SE6 1XN
Tel.: 01-698-8969.

FROM THE EDITOR:

Dear Friends,

At the General Membership Meeting which recently took place, you were able to meet our Society's first definite Committee. Since then, the positions on the Committee have been delegated, with the result that we now have a permanent Editor for the News-letter. Nevertheless, we have not yet been able to decide on the size of the News-letter and the frequency with which it will appear. This is much dependent on the available finances. Until now, the News-letter has been printed, free of charge, by a group with the interests of the Museum at heart. However, it is impossible for this Group to continue the printing work, and we shall therefore have to find another means of printing the News-letter, which will certainly incur costs. The high postal expenses also limit our possibilities. Nonetheless, our intention is to send three News-letters per year, which will not only contain news about the Society and the Airborne Museum, but also more general information concerning Operation Market Garden. Discussing newly published books on this subject, is one of many possibilities. And, naturally, any ideas or suggestions from our members are extremely welcome.

R.P.G.A. Voskuil

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY:

Information from the Secretariat:

The First General Membership Meeting.

As you well know, our first General Membership Meeting was held on the 14th February, 1981. The provisional Committee was extremely pleased to welcome 96 members, as well as Mr. A. Maynard M.B.E., our representative in Great Britain, who had managed to find the time to be present, at his own costs, for which we are most grateful. The Chairman opened the meeting with a warm welcome to all present. The Annual General Report for 1980 was presented and considered with no further comment. Thereafter, the Annual Financial Report for 1980 was considered, and accepted. The election of your first definite Committee was noted as No. 4 on the Agenda. The interim-Chairman expressed his gratitude to the members of the provisional Committee who were now resigning, namely Mr. C.G. Klaver and Mr. M.E. Mooy; their contribution in getting the Society onto its feet was most appreciated. Special words of thanks were also given to Major W.J.M. Duyts for all the support which he gives to our new Society in so many ways in his capacity of adviser. The two new candidates for nomination (presented by the provisional Committee) were introduced to the members present, and as there were no further candidates (presented by the members), the Committee was chosen without the need to vote. Since then, the various positions on the Committee have been delegated, and are as follows:

Mr. H. van Krieken - Chairman; Mr. J.A. Eykelhoff - Vice-Chairman; Mrs. S.G. Beek-Hobart - Secretary (1st); Mrs. M.H. Steinweg-ten Horn - Secretary (2nd); Mr. H.A. Hendriks - Treasurer; Mrs. J. Smit-Duchâteau - Member; Drs. R.P.G.A. Voskuil - Member. The Chairman thanked the members present for their confidence in the Committee.

Messrs. J. Kardol (Paasberg 17, Oosterbeek) and J. Smits (Boulevard 9, Velp) were nominated for the Cash Committee; in this respect, both the years 1980 and 1981 will be taken into consideration as the Society had no Cash Committee during its first year of existence.

At this point, the members were asked if there were any questions. This resulted in a most interesting amount of suggestions and ideas, many well-prepared, varying from matters of policy to practical points. In the meantime, these points have been discussed and the respective persons have been, or will be, informed of the results.

During the meeting, the Committee was most pleasantly surprised with a few gifts for the Museum, namely from Mr. Schagen (Zaandam) three books which cannot be found in the bookshops anymore, relating to the "Battle of Arnhem", and from Mr. Polderman (Zwijndrecht), a cap-badge of the Royal Artillery. The Chairman expressed his thanks for such generosity. On behalf of the Airborne Museum Foundation, Major Duyts thanked the provisional Committee for their initiative in setting up the Society of Friends, and for the time and attention which has been shown since. He wished the permanent Committee much success, and his words were much applauded by the members.

Finally, the Chairman thanked all the members present for their most enthusiastic participation, which had certainly contributed to the success of the afternoon. After the closing of the meeting, a few authentic films were shown, which the Museum had made available. Together with a number of guests, the members were shown extremely interesting and moving film material, by Drs. A. Groeneweg, who also explained and answered questions.

All in all, a most successful afternoon, which the Society can look back on with much pleasure and satisfaction.

Gifts from our members:

Since our last News-letter, the Society has received a few objects for the Museum. One member, who wishes to remain anonymous, surprised us by presenting six British maps from 1944; he also loaned the Museum a working 62 set (radio transmitter) with the relevant documentation. Yet another member presented a small tin used for water-purifying tablets. These gifts were gratefully accepted and have already found a place in the Museum collection. Maybe you could also see if you have anything which might be of interest to the Museum; documents and photographs are also most welcome.

We have also received a few donations. The Veterans' Club of the well-known 21st Independent Parachute Company, donated an amount of f500,-. One of our members, Mr. K.G. Prockter, has twice sent us (via Mr. Maynard) an amount collected together by veterans, and another member made a donation in remembrance of Cdr. H. Heukesfeldt Jansen. Such gifts are not only of great financial support, but also a moral support, and the Society is most grateful.

Number of Members:

We now have almost 300 members including some veterans of the 1st British Airborne Division, the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade, as well as of RAF Squadrons.

Should you wish to make any friends members, Information Sheets with Application Form attached, are obtainable in the Museum, or on written request. For members in Great Britain, requests can be made to Mr. A. Maynard M.B.E., 49, Glenfarg Road, Catford, SE6.1XN, London (Tel. 01-698-8969).

General Information:

In order to keep postal expenses as low as possible, we have had to decide to send only one copy of the News-letter to each address, even when there are more Society members living at the same address. However, extra copies are always available, and can easily be forwarded on request.

In this respect, we would also like to inform you that no personal titles will be used on the addressed envelopes simply because, in many cases, this is not known; for this reason, we feel it wiser to decline from mentioning titles which might be incorrect.

The Committee will be very pleased to hear about any new suggestions you might have (the suggestions at the General Membership Meeting gave much "food for thought"). Remember that this is your Society and your interest and contribution towards it, is of great importance.

S.G.Beek-Hobart

Secretaries

M.H.Steinweg-ten Horn

INFORMATION FROM THE TREASURER:

Mr. C.G. de Graaf, an Accountant living and working in Oosterbeek, has very kindly offered to help (with no financial reward) in the financial administration of the Society. Much of his assistance includes the use of a computer, and I would therefore ask you to kindly check your name and address, so that they be introduced correctly into the computer system. Any alterations deemed necessary can be sent to me.

May I also remind those members who have not yet paid their contribution for 1980 or 1981, to make the necessary amount over to the Society as soon as possible, for which I am most obliged. A duplicate "acceptgiro" card is hereby enclosed for those concerned.

The Society would like to especially thank those members who have contributed more than the minimum amount; such contributions are a great help to the Society.

At this point, I would like to elucidate somewhat on the minimum contribution of f15,-, half of which is handed over to the Museum in accordance with our objective: supporting the Museum. The yearly admittance card is provided from this amount. It is obvious that with the remainder (f7,50 per member) the Society does not have much leverage.

The Treasurer, H.A. Hendriks

PRESENTATION OF THE FILM, "THEIRS IS THE GLORY".

At the request of many members, "Theirs is the Glory" will be presented on Saturday, 13th June, at the Concert-hall in Oosterbeek. Most of the shooting of this film about the "Battle of Arnhem" took place in August and September of 1945 in the same places where the actual fighting had taken place a year previously. Soldiers (of all ranks) who had fought here in September 1944, returned to the former battlefield especially to participate in this film; no professional actors were used. This British film has no sub-titles.

Before the film presentation begins, Mr. Robert Voskuil will give a brief introduction, and explain how the film came into being. A few slides will also be shown in this introduction.

The presentation starts at 2 p.m. and is only open to members of the Society.

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM:

British 3 inch Mortar for the Museum.

Last month, a long-cherished hope of the Museum Board was fulfilled. The Museum finally came into possession of a British 3 inch Mortar, the type which was frequently used in the "Battle of Arnhem".

A year ago, Mr. McAnelly from Westervoort, informed his contacts in England that the Airborne Museum would be most interested in receiving such a weapon; in February, a positive reply was received from the Central Ordnance Depot in Donnington, that such a Mortar could be presented to our Museum. Special thanks here are due to Mr. McAnelly, Mr. A. Maynard, M.B.E., Liaison Officer R.M. Captain Langford and the Netherlands Military Attaché in London.

As far as we know, only the "Koninklijk Nederlands Leger en Wapen Museum" (Royal Netherlands Army and Weapon Museum) in Leiden possesses such a British 3 inch Mortar.

The "Ordnance, smooth bore, muzzle loading, 3 inch Mortar", as officially described, was developed from the 3 inch Mortar which Sir Wilfred Stokes evolved in 1915. The range was originally ca. 1500 metres, but this was improved to 2600 metres (Mark 2). It weighs 66 kilos. High-explosive shells, smoke and light-shells can be fired. The mortars used in Arnhem had a specially modified bottom plate; the bottom plate which is now to be seen in the Museum was found some years ago in the Hartenstein park.

The Mortar was portable in four separate parts. Special carrying equipment was used, and of the 52 such pieces of equipment dropped in Arnhem we do not have one, alas, in the Museum.

For the moment, the Mortar is exhibited in the Museum's cloak-room, but its final position will be in the cellar. The present show-case will have to be enlarged and adapted so that a sort of garden is created where the jeep now stands. In this space, the Mortar, with the men operating it, will be reassembled. The Museum is in need of a few additions for this show-case, such as helmets, shoes/boots, packing material for 3 inch mortar-shells (containers and wooden boxes), as well as shop-window dummies, or parts thereof.

W.Boersma.

The Airborne Museum is now accessible to visitors in wheel-chairs:

A short time ago, the Municipality of Renkum made an amount of f40.000,- available for the installation of 3 special wheel-chair lifts. There had been a continual problem that the main-door to the Museum was only reachable by a rather steep staircase. Visitors in wheel-chairs had to be therefore carried inside. The staircase to the first floor was much too steep to carry visitors in this way. For this reason, a wheel-chair lift has been installed at the front of the building, so that wheel-chair visitors can easily reach the ground floor of the Museum. There is a lift inside to the first floor as well as a lift at the back of the building for access to the cellar and the show-cases in the basement.

Increase in visitors to the Museum:

In 1980, 72,702 paying-visitors and 678 non-paying visitors (veterans etc.) came to the Airborne Museum. In 1979, there were 68,636 visitors.

We terminate this News-letter with the hope that you will be able to attend the film presentation on Saturday, 13th June, although we realise that members living outside the Netherlands will probably find this a problem,

And remain,

R.P.G.A. Voskuil

Dutch-English translation:
S.G. Beek-Hobart.