

# Commotion new monument

## Dreyeroord: they forgot about the gliderpilots

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Last week the Airborne Feelings Foundation launched a crowdfund for a new monument which should rise at the new Dreyeroord (the White House) in Oosterbeek, The Netherlands.

Not the monument, but the design of it provides a lot of commotion on social media and the comments are not kind. A monument in memory is well received: a great idea, but why aren't the right people, honoured in the right way?

The monument should recall the battle delivered by the allies in September 1944. Dreyeroord, or: The White House as the British called it, was part of the famous perimeter and there has been terrible fighting against the Germans.

**Do justice**



The monument has to do justice to the desire of veterans for a place for Memorial. According to Airborne Feelings it were the King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) who fought here.

But history tells us that not only men of the KOSB fought a heavy battle at Dreyeroord, at least 12 glider pilots fought along side by side. More than a quarter of the total number of allies that knocked on the door of the former hotel at September the 19th in 1944 .

A clear design is not showed yet, but a description in the press release of the Foundation says:

*Artist Ellen Brouwers from Oisterwijk has created the design. During her research on the King's Own Scottish Borderers every time the Glengarry (barret) with the badge of a St. Andrew's cross came to the surface.*

*The Glengarry was the pride of the veterans, despite they had to exchange it for the Red beret. In the design are the following symbols represented: 1. the st. Andrew's cross by the badge of KOSB, 2. the 23 bars as symbol for the many deceased and 3. parachute ropes (bars) as a symbol of the airborne operation of the battle of Arnhem.*

*On the spot of the 24nd rod a flag can be placed. Then there are 4 sheets of glass on the Memorial confirmed with descriptions of the history of the place (Dreyeroord) and the King's Own Scottish Borderers*

In the design is paid no attention to the glider pilots present. When asked Paul Tirion, President of the Airborne Feelings Foundation he says: "We also refer generally to the largest airborne operation battle of Arnhem. A part is by parachute, and a part (7 KOSB) with the landing (also called the ' Landing ') In the glass plates between the bars (vandal proof) comes a correct text. The bars are in form of the Saltire of the KOSB. And in the (not written yet) text the glider pilots will be mentioned."

## **Parachutes?**

Remarkable: a glider pilot obviously did not came by parachute, but neither did the KOSB. The complete battalion landed in Gliders along with the equipment during operation Market Garden. The claim that a part of the KOSB came by parachute is not correct.

This is also evident from *Off at Last*, a book by Robert Sigmond on the 7th (Galloway) Battalion KOSB 1939-1945. 65 gliders carried the whole KOSB battalion. Of these gliders 10 did not arrive at the Wolfheze area: 7 landed in England, 2 ditched in the North Sea and one landed at Schouwen-Duiveland, an area close to the south-west coast of the Netherlands.

The reason for the number of 23 (or 24) is also unclear. It is not the number of fallen around Dreyeroord. That number is not known, it may also have been 22 or even 28, the exact number is not possible to trace anymore.

The monument in this form is, according to Robert Sigmond, a missed opportunity: "It is very unfortunate and a missed opportunity: I still don't know how I should explain to 7 KOSB..."

Last year he was asked for advice in relation to the monument, which was clearly ignored.

## Des Page



(click to enlarge)

Glider pilot Des Page already worried in 1917 that the glider pilots would be forgotten at Dreyeroord. Des died in 1918 and his ashes were brought by [paratrooper Chris Wilmott](#) to the Airborne March for the 40 km track. In 2017 builder Amvest announced [the new Dreyeroord](#) will look as it did in 1944.

Before his death, Des wrote a letter in which he tells how 30 men of the KOSB knocked on the door of the hotel the 19th, on the same day that 12 glider pilots reinforced them. He talks about the heavy losses suffered in and around the hotel and ends his letter with:

"The names of the two regiments: King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Glider Pilot Regiment would be appropriate on any memorial plate."

A friend close to him says: "Des was all in favour for a monument or such kind at The White House. But I am sure he wouldn't be happy with this design."

## **KOSB**

Wiljo Pas, president of the foundation [Preservation WW2 Heritage Gelderland](#), the key driver of the protest around the demolition of the White House and Chairman of the former Preserve Dreyeroord Working Group doesn't understand:

"Everyone talks, if we talk about Market Garden and the landings around Wolfheze, always about the paratroopers. In addition to the paratroopers about 625 gliders landed with equipment and troops. Even more men than all parachutists together. "

"The KOSB but also the Glider pilots who have fought around Dreyeroord are 'gliderborne' troops and therefore have nothing to do with parachutes. It is a missed opportunity to give these units the remembrance that they deserve."

## **Veterans**

There are still a number of Veterans alive who fought at Dreyeroord. Ron Johnson commanded the glider pilots at Dreyeroord and will probably come over to the [Airborne March](#) at September 2nd, in the days before the monument should be unveiled. Geoff Roberts was one of the men of the 7th KOSB. He has also taken note of the plans for the monument.

Geoff, also very involved around the threatening demolition of The White House, has expressed on social media to not agree on this Memorial in this form either.

So it remains to be seen if a veteran will attend at the unveiling of the monument in this form.



Glider Pilot Regiment/King's Own Scottish Borderers

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