



Volume 1 – number 1 – Jan/April 2014  
This magazine appears three times per year

# AIRBORNE

## MAGAZINE

SOCIETY OF  
FRIENDS OF  
THE AIRBORNE  
MUSEUM

The Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein' in Oosterbeek  
(Photo: collection Airborne Museum)



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The Airborne Magazine is a publication of the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum Oosterbeek (SFAM) and appears three times per year. The objective is to promote the Airborne Museum, the SFAM and the history of the Battle of Arnhem.

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**Special offer from the Airborne  
museum shop:**

especially for members of the SFAM:  
A 'military' USB stick (8 gigabite) for  
only **€12,50**

succeeded in preparing an interesting year's programme, but this was not entirely without problems. As Chairman, I must still recognise that the number of people who organise all these activities for the Society has become very small. It is only the Management, together with a few members and Niall Cherry, who aim to arrange the year's programme and all other activities and thus, so to say, "to keep the dreams alive". That is sometimes a bit weak and can occasionally go wrong. It just cannot and should not be the case that, within a Society, with about 1000 members, all activities are planned, organised and performed by a handful of active members. This is underlined because I know what an enormous reservoir of knowledge and experience exists within the Society membership. Knowledge, that I would so much like to make available to the Society. In this Jubilee year 2014, I hope that I might count on your support to our Society, to help keeping it in a growing strength and contribution, to ensure it may continue to keep the stories and history of those men in September 1944 very much alive.

Ben Kolster, Chairman SFAM



## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM

**You cannot live without friends! In good and bad times! In the Airborne Museum that is very obvious. In times of War, soldiers in battle, must be able blindly to rely on each other. Civilians in need who, for example must flee from their home and/or thereafter, must build a new life, are dependent on each other. Friendship is perhaps the most important in every-one's life. To celebrate your successes, and to share your problems. To support each other if everything goes downhill.**

For a museum it is the same. We must be glad that, in spite of the economic recession, and a somewhat less favourable cultural climate in the Netherlands, the Museum is doing well. That is based on the fact that we survive on more than 90% of our own income. That happens only if you keep your overheads low. How? Not only with a small staff, to save money, but most importantly through the unselfish support and efforts of innumerable friends, male and female. Daily more than 70 volunteers make themselves available for the Museum in Oosterbeek and the Information Centre in Arnhem. Without them we would have to immediately shut the doors. And also, we are so exceptionally lucky with the SFAM, our Friends of the Airborne Museum. A group of people who are interested in the history of the Battle of Arnhem and Operation Market Garden.

People who in good and bad times, live with and for the Museum. A group having an enormous amount of knowledge regarding this still revealing high point in WW11 from whom we can always make an enquiry. They support us financially and materially. No, without friends you cannot survive.

In a good friendship, you walk together through your lives. Sometimes you follow your own path but then you reunite together even closer. So it is also with the SFAM and the Museum. When I joined the Museum 3 years ago, the paths were more divided. I am glad that in the past years we have been able to bring these paths closer together. Not only do we know how to jointly exchange information and ideas, but also to take on various matters together. In this fashion, I am very pleased that, in the last year, the launch of our combined website, under one modern umbrella has happened. In this manner it has become obvious to the outside world that we are inextricably tied to one another.

The new attractively designed 'Friends Magazine' that is before you, is once again a milestone. Was the old Newsletter no good anymore? On the contrary, the members of the SFAM still value it immensely. Especially because of the enormously interesting Ministories which, due to the great expertise of the SFAM, contain a specific mint of information about the Battle of Arnhem. Nevertheless the steps were taken towards a renewed form for the magazine. It offers not only the possibility for a more intense partnership between the SFAM and the Museum, but also through the fresh design, it potentially can attract a new membership of young people. Also for the SFAM, stagnation means a decline. Most importantly, through this new co-operation, the supply of reliable information from the SFAM can be enhanced with exclusive news from the Museum.

The Editors will henceforth consist of people from the SFAM and the Museum. They will work together very closely. Thus a nice friendship emerges in a renewed magazine that, with your continued support, hopefully will continue for many years. You can also contribute by bringing it to the attention of people who you suspect, may be interested in this, in spite of the current expensive time, it is in every way a reasonably priced membership. I wish you much future reading pleasure and thank you for your continued support for the SFAM and with it, the Museum. That's what friends are for!

Jan Hovers -  
Director Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein'





## A NEW PUBLICATION FROM THE SFAM

You are reading the first issue of the 'Airborne Magazine', the renewed newsletter from the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum. This periodical replaces the Newsletter that for nearly 33 years, acted as the regular publication of the SFAM. The 'Airborne Magazine' will appear three times each year, in March/April, June/July and in October/November.

In the magazine, we will tell you about, amongst others, the activities of the SFAM, news from the Airborne Museum and we will publish interesting articles relating to the Battle of Arnhem. In each issue, you will receive a number of regular features, such as the well-known 'Ministry' and the calendar of activities and events. We will also look back on the previous period. In each edition, we will advertise a product from the Museum shop, which will be for sale at a special price, only for members of the SFAM.

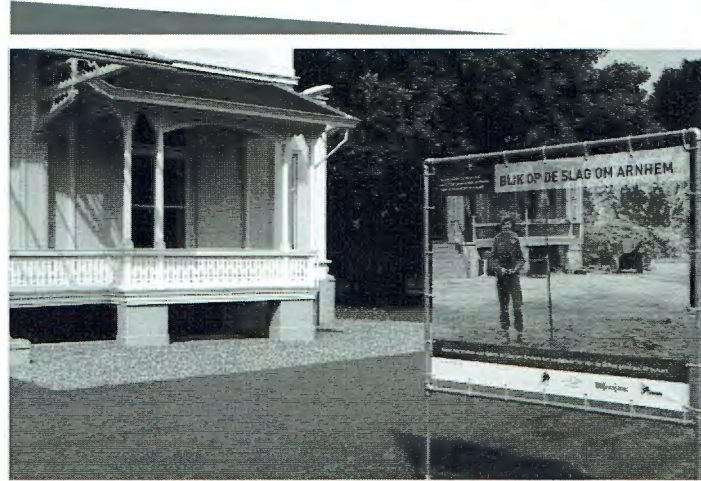
We advise you also to regularly visit the SFAM (VAM) website, because this will keep you up-to-date with the latest developments. Also the Museum invites you to become a 'friend' of the Facebook page, where the latest announcements will be posted. In addition, our trusted 'Newsflash' e-mail will be used to inform you about the latest news.

The new Airborne Magazine requires an editorial staff team, within which the SFAM, as well as the Airborne Museum are represented. Robert Voskuil, who has acted as the Senior Editor of the Newsletter, retains this position with the new Magazine. Wybo Boersma and Robert will carry the responsibility for all items relating to the history of the Battle of Arnhem. The editorial staff will be complemented with two members from the Museum. Marketing Representative, Tessa Jansen will be responsible for news from the Museum. The new Curator (a University educated historian who is, at the time of writing this article being recruited) will also contribute articles relating to the extensive Museum collection.

Obviously, the editorial team will not fill the magazine alone. We also hope that we can receive from others who can contribute interesting items. One example is our indefatigable representative in the UK, Niall Cherry who regularly sends us such articles.

As you know, our issues also come in the English language. For many years the translation has been done by Peter Burton. He does this sizeable task with great care and the SFAM is very grateful to him for this.

We wish you much pleasure in reading this brand new magazine.



*Behind the Museum, exactly on the spot where Maj.Gen Urquhart posed in Sept 1944 for one of the photographers from the Army Film and Photographic Unit, now stands an enlargement of the photo taken then. Thus the visitor can see that he/she stands on very historical ground. (Photo Robert Voskuil)*

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SFAM

In every respect, 2014 will be a historical year, certainly for people such as us who are interested in history, especially in military history. This year is after all, 100 years since the outbreak of WW1, a War that "sowed the seeds" of a second World conflict with an unknown scale or consequence. Exactly 70 years ago, in June 1944, began the definitive and positive turn in WW11, with the Allied invasion in Normandy. An operation that marked the beginning of the long march through West Europe, that would lead to the fall of the Third Reich in May 1945. This year will mark the 70<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the D-day landings and of the Battle of Arnhem. In this jubilee year of commemorations, our Society has again organised an interesting programme, full of various activities including lectures, excursions and battle-field tours. You will find the programme in our totally renovated Newsletter that, from this edition, is called 'Airborne Magazine' and in our section of the Airborne Museum website. The Management of the SFAM has





## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON THE 22ND OF MARCH

The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, also annual meeting of the Society of Friends of the Airborne museum, was held on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2014 in the Concert-hall, in Oosterbeek. Seventy members attended this meeting.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2013, the General report 2013, the Financial report 2013, The Budget 2014 and the Report of the auditing committee, were all approved by the members present.

"Every day more than 70 volunteers offer themselves for the Museum and Information Centre"

Director: Jan Hovers

Vincent Luiten (treasurer of the SFAM) had announced to step down as member of the Board. The Board had suggested as a new member Mr Eric Arnold Paap from Oosterbeek. There were no other candidates, so Eric was elected. After the break Wybo Boersma gave a lecture about 'Some special objects from the collection of the Airborne Museum'.

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## TEMPORARY EXHIBITION: 'VAN HUIS EN HAARD (FROM HOUSE AND HOME) – AIRBORNE MEMORIES'

### Opening of the temporary exhibition

At the moment that you receive the renewed Friends Magazine, the preparations are at full speed and the plan is that, on 25 April 2014 (all being well), the temporary exhibition 'Van Huis en Haard – Airborne Memories' will open for the public. The new exhibition from the Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein' is about the evacuation of thousands of civilians that followed the Battle of Arnhem.

### The Evacuation

In September 1944, after the last part of Operation Market Garden had failed, the Allies retreated from the area around Arnhem. The German occupiers were determined not to be surprised again and enlarged their presence around Arnhem. With help from Dutch forced labour, the South Veluwe was changed into a strong defence line, to defeat any possible Allied attack from the south. This line consisted of many kilometres of trenches, artillery positions, observation posts, machine gun nests and foxholes. To simplify the defence line construction and security, and to punish the local citizens for their help to the Allied, the German High Command ordered the complete evacuation of the 150.000 citizens of Arnhem and surrounding districts.

### Return and Rebuilding

The exhibition 'From House and Home – Airborne Memories' tells the dramatic story of civilians, who, a few months before the 'Hunger Winter' would start, had to leave house and home. Often with no more than a suitcase with clothes, they had to leave, heading north or eastwards,

looking for a place to stay to survive the approaching heavy Winter. These refugees returned after eight months and found, in most instances, plundered and/or destroyed homes. For these people the liberation in 1945 was not only a feast of celebration, but also the start of a laborious period of reconstruction.

Using the personal stories from three different people who were part of the evacuation, this tragic and penetrating episode from Netherlands history appears in a very informative and interesting way. With help from authentic documents, photos, video and sound recording, a picture is painted of people in the last 10 months of WW11, their evacuation, their return to Arnhem and the impact made by the evacuation on them and their descendents.





*This is how their looted house in the Weverstraat in Oosterbeek looked like, when the owners returned after 8 months evacuation (Photo Willink)*

### Citizens participation project – Airborne Memories

The fact that the current temporary exhibition carries the same name as our continuing 'citizens participation project' is not an accident: the two projects are closely linked. What does a War do to people and how are the traces of it still apparent generations later? Amongst others, these questions have led to the 'Oral History Project – Airborne Memories'. The special aspect of this project is that citizens come to talk to each other; that one interviewed another and the resulting stories are all recorded. Thus 'Airborne Memories' is also a project of the residents in the same area. Thus, long since buried citizen's stories about the Battle of Arnhem, the evacuation and the subsequent rebuilding, are now recovered, written down and preserved.

The stories of ordinary people are still not all told. This, because the sometimes traumatic events were difficult to talk about, but also because these delayed the rebuilding process, practically and mentally, but also because some people found such personal stories not important enough when compared to the distressing experiences of the soldiers. But the events of those days come now closer by if we hear the emotional stories from people who were part of the trauma of those days. On the one hand, it creates growing understanding by current generations and on the other side, gives them an insight about the citizens who experienced those days. Today, more and more eyewitnesses pass away and, with them, their stories about ordinary civilians are lost.

Thus, the Airborne Museum wishes to record and preserve the memories and stories of these eyewitnesses. In the current exhibition 'From House and Home – Airborne Memories', a number of the stories from the 'Citizens Participation Project' are utilised.

### Exhibition area

In the basement, past the dioramas of the Staff HQ of Maj Gen Urquhart and the Aid Station, you enter the totally renovated exhibition area. To make this a satisfactory future exhibition area, extra room has been created.

**Curious about the exhibition? 'From House and Home – Airborne Memories' will be open from 25 April 2014 until the end of March 2015. Keep an eye on our website and social media to keep abreast of special events that you can attend free of charge. Hope to see you soon!**

The exhibition has been made possible with the help of: DOEN Foundation, VSB Funds, Zabawasen Foundation, Rabobank Arnhem and surrounding areas, together with the Gelderland Archive and the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation.  
(Tessa Jansen)





## BERRY DE REUS REMEMBERS...

So as we reported in the last issue of the Newsletter, on 28 November 2013, Berry de Reus retired as Curator of the Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein' in Oosterbeek. Shortly before his departure, he looked back on his 35-year long role and hereafter follows a short summary of that time.

Berry's interest in the Battle of Arnhem began when he was just 10 years old. He lived then in the Beekstraat in Arnhem and during the annual Airborne Commemorations in the month of September, at least one and often more veterans stayed in the De Reus house. Berry still remembers the names of Jack Rawley (1<sup>st</sup> Para Btn), Ron Linton (156<sup>th</sup> Para Btn) and Titch Orrell (3<sup>rd</sup> Para Btn). Jack Rawley gave him a yellow identification triangle and that was the beginning of Berry's collection. That grew quickly, because he received from many people objects from the War as presents. Also, just as so many schoolboys in those days, Berry intensively searched the former battlefields in Arnhem and Oosterbeek for 'War souvenirs'. His collection became well known, especially after an article in the local paper, the 'Arnhemse Courant', entitled "Berry de Reus is obsessed with the Battle of Arnhem".

In the early 1970's Berry was branch manager with the hardware store Lijberse on the Utrechtseweg in Oosterbeek. At that time he was asked to look after the technical aspects of the Airborne Museum that was, at that time, based in a side building of the Doorwerth Castle.

In 1978 the Airborne Museum moved from Doorwerth Castle to Hotel Hartenstein in Oosterbeek. From 47 applicants, Berry was chosen to become Curator and he began his service on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1978. The new Museum was opened on 11 May 1978 by Maj Gen Roy Urquhart. One month after the opening of the new Airborne Museum a second permanent staff member was employed. That was former Oosterbeek florist Eef Vellinga. During the Battle of Arnhem, Eef was part of the 'Oranje Bataljon' (the Orange Battalion), a small group of Dutch people who helped the British with, amongst other tasks, acting as guides and with the collection of dropped supplies.

The role of Curator was, at that time, a broad description, in that, due to financial constraints, most jobs had to be done in house. So, Berry acted as electrician, carpenter, painter and was also responsible for the management and maintenance of the collection. Also he looked after the library and the archive. One of the



*One photo from the 1980 years in the last century. Berry de Reus and Director Carel Wilhelm pose in the basement of the Museum near the (now no longer existing) large diorama of the British troops entering Oosterbeek. (Photo collection of Berry de Reus)*

advantages of being Curator was that he and his wife had to live upstairs in the Museum, but they did not have a problem with that! The top floor, where now the staff rooms and the library/archive are found, were for the following 21 years his home.

The first Director of the new Museum was General (rtd) Touber. He was followed a year later by Colonel (rtd) Carel Wilhelm who would stay for 10 years and was much appreciated for his sympathetic personality. In these years, a small staff and a few volunteers coped with an enormous amount of work. Every year, a temporary exhibition was organised, usually under the leadership of Wybo Boersma. Historical research was done and material collected and finally, thanks to staff members and a couple of volunteers, it was all put together. In this way, the costs were kept as low as possible. Through the good relationships the museum staff had with many organisations and people both in the Netherlands and abroad, those involved learned how to obtain even more unique objectives and items that thus far, were missing from the collection, like the 75mm Pack howitzer and the small American bulldozer. Also many veterans donated special objects and documents. The contact with veterans was, for Berry, always very enjoyable and interesting, especially when they began to tell about their experiences during the Battle of Arnhem.

Berry also remembers vividly how he, with Wybo Boersma, travelled to England to visit the gigantic British Army Depot at Donnington. There lay still, large quantities of equipment that was used in WW11 and they were permitted to freely search for items that could be used in the Airborne Museum collection. The support of the British Army went further such that the





*One of the many people who attended the reception on 28 November 2013 to mark Berry de Reus' retirement and to bid him farewell, was Jaap Korsloot, who earlier, amongst others, did a lot of work on the Museum archives. To the right stands Berry's partner Jeannette. (Photo Robert Voskuil)*

items they had selected were transported in a very large Army lorry and delivered to the Museum!

One of the absolutely highest points in his time was the 1984 commemoration. In that year, very many well-known personalities came to Oosterbeek such as, Urquhart, Hackett, Frost, Warrack, Mackenzie and many others. The appearance of Vera Lynn on the

steps of the Airborne Museum was unforgettable, as well as the visit by Prince Charles.

Berry's interests were really not only aimed at the Battle of Arnhem. Photography was becoming even more important in his life and he took photos regularly for the local press. Also, he made wedding records and was active as a portrait taker and sport photographer.

Around 2005, it became clear that the Museum was in need of renovation. This resulted in a radical programme, through which the Museum was closed to the public for eight months. All the contents had to be temporarily re-housed which was an enormous task. After everything had been moved back, the Museum had to have a totally new installation. Those were hectic months for the workers in the Museum.

The last years before taking his pension saw Berry principally keeping busy with the recording of the archive and the storage of this data in a digital database. Now he has retired from the Airborne Museum he is directing himself totally into photography.

## LARGE DONATION TO THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM

On 29 October 2013, the Airborne Museum received a large donation of military items from WW11. The donated material was owned by Arie, a Dutch private collector. This man had arranged that, after his death, his collection must be divided amongst a number of large military museums, including the Soesterberg Military Museum, the War and Resistance Museum in Rotterdam and the Airborne Museum Hartenstein.

When WW11 began, Arie was 14 years old and he grew up in Delft. During the first years of the War, he already began, together with some friends, to collect war material from, amongst other locations, the Ypenburg airfield near Delft. The passion for the searching, rapidly grew further than only Ypenburg. After the War, amongst other locations, he also searched the Arnhem area. As a 19-year-old lad, he went there with his friends by bicycle and collected a large number of bits and pieces from the former battlefield.



*A small selection from the collection of a private collector that has been donated to the Airborne Museum (Photo Roland Boekhorst)*

One of the most notable stories was that, during one of their searches at the German Koningstiger tank, left in the Beneden-Weverstraat in Oosterbeek, they clim-



bed inside the tank. They recovered a telescopic sight from the tank but later, they had a difference of opinion as to who now owned the item. The binoculars were then taken apart and the lads shared the various pieces. Sadly the pieces held by his friends, were later lost. The parts owned by Arie are now part of the donation. Arie has spent his whole life busy in connection with the Battle of Arnhem. For many years, with his wife, he attended the annual commemorations. He was a member of the SFAM and every year, visited the museum on several occasions.

**"The number of items forming this donation runs to many hundreds"**

A large portion of the donation consists of material from the Battle of Arnhem. For example it includes, uniforms, webbing equipment, a container (CLE.111), parachutes, various types of ammunition boxes, helmets, emblems, bayonets, knives, telephone sets, radio sets and very many small objects. Also it includes books about the Battle of Arnhem. A complete inventory of all this material, can not yet be provided, because it includes hundreds of items. Everything is being examined, treated, cleaned, photographed and then registered in 'Adlib' a special computer programme for the insertion and categorizing of museum items. (Roland – Staff member for management and preservation)

## MEETING OF THE 'INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF BATTLEFIELD GUIDES' IN THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM

In Great Britain, the worldwide battlefield tourism is an important industry. Thereby we must not only think about 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars, because people investigate much further back in history. Until fairly recently, there was no guarantee that a battlefield guide is an expert in historical affairs. As a result, in 2003 in Great Britain, the 'International Guild of Battlefield Guides' was established. The purpose of this Guild is to promote guided tours over historical battlefields and to improve the quality of battlefield guides. This is done by organising meetings, in which experience can be exchanged, the giving of lectures over a broad spectrum of subjects related to battlefield tourism and about the organising of longer exploratory visits to battlefields. The members are full time battlefield guides, guides who incidentally lead similar tours, tour operators but also people interested in history. The Guild has introduced a 'Guild Badge', to obtain which candidates must pass nine qualifying sections, including verbal and written areas. The Guild guarantees that a guide with the Guild badge is qualified in the requirements that a visitor might expect from a good battlefield guide. In Great Britain, a number of tour operators exist, with only Guild guides. The top language in the Guild is English. The majority of members outside the UK, live in the Netherlands and Belgium. In the Netherlands, on Saturday afternoon of 29 March, for the first time, we held a test in the Dutch language. This took place in the Airborne Museum

**"The Guild guarantees that a Guide with a Guild badge, is fully qualified to answer enquiries that may be made by a visitor"**

in Oosterbeek. Joël Stoppels from 'Battlefield Tours Groningen', was successful in his 'Assignment 1'. This took 20 minutes and was a lecture about 'The liberation of Groningen city'. To broaden knowledge in the Netherlands about the Guild, several interested parties were invited to attend this event. The programme was opened by Chris Scott, who came over from the UK especially for this event. He gave an explanation of the origin and functions of the 'International Guild of Battlefield Guides'. Thereafter, Wybo Boersma explained the qualification system of the Guild. After Joël Stoppels' assignment there followed a short walk through Hartenstein Park, during which Hans van der Velden gave a talk about past discoveries he had made in the soil there. The afternoon ended with a drink in the Schoonoord restaurant. (Wybo Boersma)



# INFORMATION CENTRE IN DRIEL ABOUT THE POLISH PARACHUTE BRIGADE

This year, Driel village will see the opening of an Information Centre, about the role of the Polish Parachute Brigade, during WW11. It will be located in the Roman Catholic church in Driel and will have a permanent character. It will include display panels with photos and text, in Dutch, English and Polish. There will also be a clear overview map of Driel and the surroundings, where the actions of the Polish Brigade took place. Perhaps the Information Centre will open to the public in July this year, but the official opening will take place in September.



*The remains of the dismantled Air Despatch Monument in Oosterbeek photographed on 16 December 2013. (Photo Robert Voskuil)*

## AIR DESPATCH MONUMENT IN OOSTERBEEK WILL BE TOTALLY REBUILT

At the end of December, we received from various sources, the disturbing news that the Air Despatch monument, close to the Airborne Cemetery in Oosterbeek, had been heavily damaged. Ice forming in cracks in the monument had split and totally destroyed the edifice. People who visited the site, found only a pile of rubble (see attached photo). But quickly we learned that staff of Renkum Council, had shortly before, dismantled the remains. The white stone panels that were on the outside, were removed by the staff and the

visible pile of rubble, was only the remains of the core and the foundations.

It appeared that this dismantling was necessary because it was indeed the case that splits in the monument had occurred, in which water could have entered. In a frost period, this had led to the damage.

Sadly the Council had omitted to place a notice board at the site explaining what had happened or to put an article in the local newspaper, as this would have resolved the worldwide rumours that the monument had 'exploded'. Very shortly, a brand new core will be built, on which the original white sculptured panels (currently being cleaned) will be replaced. The Air Despatch monument will thus shortly be restored to its original glory in the well-known location.





## 'SIMS, GET ME A PRISONER'

Last year, the Council Archives in Ede published a new book, in the series covering Historical Reports Ede, about 'the incredible patrol'. It is entitled 'Sims, get me a prisoner' and was written by Evert van de Weerd.

In October 1944, the southern bank of the Rhine at Heteren was defended by the 501<sup>st</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment, a part of the 101<sup>st</sup> US Airborne Division. In an effort to obtain more information about the German units on the north bank of the Rhine, the Americans tried, several times, by sending over patrols, to capture some German POW's. Eventually, in the night of 30-31 October 1944, the intelligence officer, Lt Sims, decided to cross the Rhine himself with five soldiers, to capture some Germans. Crossing through the German lines, the patrol reached via Wolfheze the Planken Wambuis restaurant on the N224 road between Ede and Arnhem. At the forester's dwelling, a little further towards Ede, Sims set up a listening post. During the day, various passing Germans were taken prisoner. During the patrol's return journey the following night, these prisoners were taken with them. Eventually, Sims and his patrol, together with 32 German POW's, safely reached the American lines. When Sims made his report, his CO, General Higgins said 'Incredible'.

A report about this patrol, appeared on 15 January 1945 in the American weekly magazine 'LIFE' and a year later, there followed a Dutch translation in the magazine, 'PEN GUN'. In his book, Evert van de Weerd wrote the result of that journey. The story is illustrated with photos, partly from the original 'LIFE' weekly and from patrol reports.

In the Heteren village in the original Town Hall, can be found a memorial stone, recording these events, while, on the N224 (the County road Arnhem-Ede, opposite the animal sanctuary), a 'listening stone' has been placed, that provides a brief version of the story. This can be listened to on 0900-5423728 (Listening stone No: 54) or via [www.liberationroute.com](http://www.liberationroute.com).

When the book had been printed, Evert van de Weerd received a further number of photos from America. Sadly it was too late to include these in the book. The author presented them to the SFAM, so that enthusiasts could see them. One of them accompanies this article. In the second part of the book, Evert writes a brief history of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in the



Lt Hugo Sims (101<sup>st</sup> US Airborne Division), the leader of the 'Incredible Patrol'. (Photo via Evert van de Weerd)

Netherlands. It begins with the air landings on 17 September 1944, followed by the fighting at Best, Son, Veghel and Koeving. There follows the posting to the Betuwe, during which amongst others, Operation Pegasus 1 took place. The main text is made clearer with a number of very good colour maps Also, 'Mary of Arnhem' (Helena Sensburg) who, as an English speaking announcer, worked for the Germans at Radio Hilversum, comes into the story. Her ID card is now in the collection of the Airborne Museum.

"Sims, get me a prisoner" is a simple but well written book in Dutch, that gives a clear summary of the various actions covered. Those interested in the Battle of Arnhem and its aftermath don't have to look at

the price, as it is only €10. The issue is small, only 250 copies have been printed. The book is only available at the Council Archive in Ede.

Those interested may contact W. Boersma, Tel: 0318-639633, e-mail: [w.boersma@wxs.nl](mailto:w.boersma@wxs.nl). As long as enough stock remains, he can collect them from the Council Archive and will post them to you.

Publisher: Gemeente Ede, Gemeentearchief 2013, ISBN: 9789079623174, 75 pages and some colour, price €10 (Wybo Boersma)





*Aerial photo of the Sinderhoeve and the immediate surroundings, taken during the landing of the 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Brigade. Diagonally opposite the farm, the men of the 21<sup>st</sup> Independent Parachute Company had laid the identification panels – an “X” (code for the drop zone) and a “T” (indication of the wind direction). (RAF photo – Robert Voskuil collection)*

## MINISTORY 119 IT RAINED PARATROOPS AROUND THE FARM <sup>1)</sup>

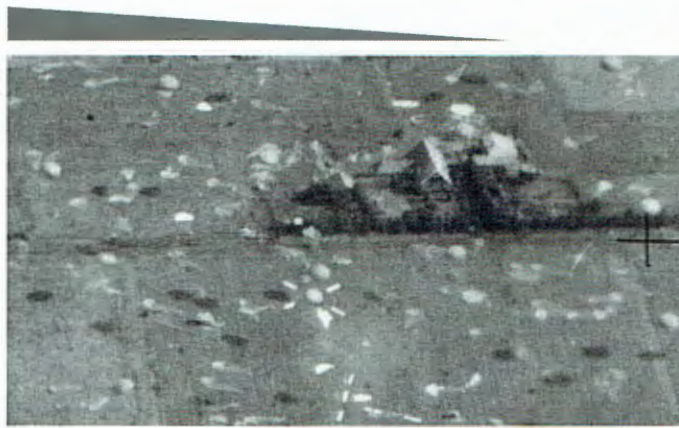
by: Robert Voskuil

In the middle of the fields in Renkum, that on 17 and 18<sup>th</sup> September 1944 were used by the 1<sup>st</sup> British Airborne Division as a dropping and landing zone (“X”), on the east side of the Telefoonweg, lies ‘Sinderhoeve’ farm. In September 1944, here lived the Pennings family, that consisted of Jan Pennings (aged 34), his wife Gerdina Pennings-Schut (aged 30), their two small children Jan (aged 2) and Gerrit (aged 1), Jan’s brother Marinus Pennings and their parents, Mr & Mrs Pennings.

On Sunday 17 September 1944, Jan and his parents went to the Reformed Church on the Utrechtseweg in Heelsum. Gerdina stayed at home with the children and Marinus. During the church service the electricity supply cut off and the churchgoers began to hear in the distance, the rumbling sound of bomb explosions, but the service continued. Because there was no electricity, the Minister left the pulpit and led the service standing between those attending. When the service was over, Jan and his parents sped home to the farm. Half way home, they saw in the sky over the village of Wolfheze, dust and smoke clouds hanging. It appeared that the village and the Psychiatric Hospital were heavily damaged by the bombardment.

At the farmyard Jan met his brother Marinus, who told him that Gerdina and the children were sitting safely in the cellar. They decided to go together to the bombed Wolfheze to see what had happened to the family members living there. They cycled along country lanes, past ‘Boshoeve’ farm to Wolfheze. There they saw everywhere smoking heaps of rubble and people totally confused after this sudden bombardment. The majority of wounded people had already been taken to the Hospital. From the family, fortunately nobody had been wounded. They cycled back alongside the railway in the direction of the level crossing at the Buunderkamp. There they saw bomb craters everywhere, because it appeared the crossing had also been bombed.

Suddenly, Jan and Marinus, looking in the direction of Renkum, over the woods, saw three large low flying aircraft coming their way. Jan shouted “they are coming to bomb the railway line – we must get away fast”. They cycled as fast as possible towards Sinder-



hoeve. They shouted at each other that, if the aircraft started bombing, they would have to jump into the drainage ditch alongside the path as a form of shelter. The three aircraft came steadily closer by and they saw that, under the belly of one of the aircraft, something was moving. It looked as if something was coming out of the aircraft. Suddenly Jan realised that these were parachutists and that this could be the beginning of an airborne landing. He knew that they were also used during the landings in Normandy. It looked as if they were hanging on a rope, after which, a second later, they dropped down. They saw three paratroops coming down. They both cycled home as fast as possible. There, Jan raced to the cellar and called “Come out, we are free!”

In front of the house, they saw the first paratroops who, when they saw Jan, gave him the V-sign. They made it clear that within 30 minutes, many more parachutists would be landing. They definitely would not come indoors at the farm and therefore the family brought water out to share with the troops. One of the first things the troops asked was “Are there any Germans in the vicinity?” But the only thing Jan knew was that German soldiers were stationed in the Van Beeck Calkoen School, on the Parallelweg, next to the railway line. The British behaved a little nervously and kept the whole area under observation, with their weapons at the ready. <sup>2)</sup>

A little later, they heard aircraft approaching again. The noise grew and became deafening. It was as if a cloud was blocking the sun. From the armada of aircraft hundreds of paratroopers jumped. It ‘rained’ paratroopers onto the farmland around the farmhouse. They also landed on the farmyard and in the trees around the farm. One paratrooper landed with a loud bang on the roof of Sinderhoeve. In doing so he hit the chimney pipe. With a couple of large steps, he landed on the edge of the roof when, with his parachute and everything else, he jumped off the roof. Once he released his parachute and harness, he went to lie under one of the trees to rest after his hard landing. <sup>3)</sup>

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When Jan stood looking behind the farmhouse, at all the magnificent coloured parachutes descending, he was suddenly pulled aside by a soldier from where he stood. One second later, another parachutist landed with a bang on exactly the same spot.

On the farmyard it was full of amazing things. The paratroopers handed out cigarettes and chocolate to the Pennings family. Jan did not know why but the British soldiers would not enter the building. Therefore Jan and Marinus carried buckets of water outside, so the troops had something to drink.

In the meantime, all the population of Renkum and Heelsum went to the landing zones to view there the amazing spectacle. Many people picked up a parachute and took it home. At one moment, Jan saw a Dutch civilian man coming, with next to him, a British soldier who had a film camera with him. The citizen said that the British soldier was looking for a dark room, because there was a problem with his camera. Jan directed him to the cellar. After a short time, the British soldier returned. He made a film of the farm and from the board carrying the name 'Sinderhoeve'. Jan immediately thought: "After the War, I must see that"! <sup>4)</sup>

At the same time, the farm was still surrounded by a swarm of paratroops. Here and there stood a Jeep with a radio set in the back. The fields around the farm were full of containers and supply panniers. It appeared the troops had not taken much of this material, because there was such a large amount and they had left probably half lying. Jan had noticed that, when a parachutist had landed and had released their parachute, they also removed a sort of overcoat without sleeves. These coats they left behind. In one pocket of these coats, it appeared a hand grenade was kept and in the other pocket, a flat tin can containing five cigarettes. Jan went to all these coats, removing the cigarette tins, but he left the grenades behind!

About 4.00pm, Jan and Marinus went by bike to Gerdina's parents who lived on the Duitse Kampweg in Wolfheze. On the extended Duitse Kampweg, they suddenly saw a number of British troops, who had dug themselves in. Jan and Marinus tried to hold a conversation but it did not go well as they knew so few English words. Suddenly the British became nervous. They made it clear that Jan and Marinus should take cover in their foxhole. They themselves took cover behind the raised sand banks, placed behind the foxholes. Probably they had spotted a danger. After a while they signalled that the boys should return home. Jan and Marinus could not understand why the British were so worried about their well-being. Cycling home, they saw to the left and right, unloaded



*'Still' from a film scene, that was taken by Sergeant Mike Lewis (AFPU). The picture shows part of the front face of the Sinderhoeve building with the name of the farm. (AFPU – film from the Imperial War Museum. Film still: Robert Voskuil collection)*

gliders. Also a lot of material was still lying there. They assumed that the paratroops would come to collect this material and thus it would not be an idea to take some themselves. But when they saw in a pannier, amongst other things, some white bread, they grabbed some and ate it there and then.

Once again, it had become quieter at the Sinderhoeve farm, because most of the paratroops had now left. Gerdina was a bit scared; the whole day was an amazingly interesting time with all the military around their home and that made her feel safe. But when Gerdina saw them leave, she got a scary feeling that the Germans would perhaps return. She was suddenly no longer certain that they had been really liberated.

The night of Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>/Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September, was really quite quiet around the farm. On Monday morning Jan went rummaging a bit around the fields. He pulled a pannier containing tins to a path, where he knew that sometimes paratroops had passed by. He took a bicycle and a can of petrol back home.

When the family sat quietly in the lounge, suddenly a rifle shot was heard. They all jumped, because the bullet flew at an angle through a window and buried close to the spot where 2-year-old Jan stood. They flew into the cellar. Shortly after, they again heard the heavy drone of aircraft engines and they assumed that a further airborne landing was about to happen. That proved to be the case. Now it was gliders that landed in large numbers in the fields near the farm, where yesterday, the paratroopers landed. During their landing the gliders were shot at. After their landings, the gliders were unloaded. They carried mainly heavy material such as jeeps and anti-tankguns. <sup>5)</sup>

A couple of troops winked at Jan and took him to a glider. They gave him some tools and a large aerial



photo of the area around the farm. Jan was amazed, because the photo was so sharp that he could identify all details, even the type of crops that were growing on various fields. The aerial photo must have been taken a few days before the landings started, because it shows the since harvested crops were still standing,

Tuesday 19 September. In the distance is heard the noise of machine guns and suddenly Germans again appear at the farm. But not all British troops had gone. Suddenly a couple of British men were in the house, while Germans walked around the building. A fire fight started and from the cellar, the Pennings



*Mr and Mrs Pennings Senior on the road in front of the farm, give water to the just dropped paratroops. To the right Jan Pennings in his best suit. (Photo Sgt Mike Lewis (AFPU) – Collection: Imperial War Museum London.*

family heard screaming and shooting. They sat hidden away in the corner of the cellar, terrified that a hand grenade would roll into the cellar entrance. Then the British surrendered and the Germans streamed into the house.

Wednesday 20 September and the Pennings family decided to escape with a wagon in the direction of Bennekom. But before they left, Jan and Marinus first repaired the fencing around the pasture where their animals, four cows and three horses stood. When Gerdina went upstairs to collect some clothing, she saw there the traces of the fighting that had occurred the day before indoors. There lay, amongst others, a yellow identification triangle, full of bloodstains. She was so scared that she flew back downstairs, without having taken anything.

The following day, Jan Pennings went from Bennekom briefly back to Sinderhoeve, to collect the animals. It was obvious that the house already had been looted by the Germans.



*Gerdina Pennings gives a glass of water to the driver of a jeep, who stopped on the road in front of the farm. (Photo: Sgt Mike Lewis (AFPU) – Collection: Imperial War Museum London.*

## Notes

1) This story was written by the Author in 1971, following an interview that he had then with Jan and Gerdina Pennings. This is one of the many interviews with people, which were made at the request of the American author Cornelius Ryan, who was occupied with the preparation for his book 'A Bridge Too Far'. This is the original text from 1971.

2) These were men from the 21<sup>st</sup> Independent Parachute Company (the 'Pathfinders') who had the task of marking the landing zones for the main force. The identification panels for Drop Zone 'X' were laid in the field close to the farm, but Jan Pennings had not seen them, as he had not wandered over that area.

3) Many years after the War, an English speaking man knocked at the door of the Sinderhoeve, and asked if he might look around the farmhouse, because on 17 September 1944, he landed there in his parachute. It turned out he was the man who, on the Sunday, had made such a hard landing on the farm roof!

4) This must have been Mike Lewis of the Army Film and Photographic Unit (AFPU) because in one of his 'Dope Sheets' (the reports of the AFPU films and photos, that are preserved in the Imperial War Museum in London) he describes the film scenes at the Sinderhoeve.

5) This was the transport and heavy material of the 4<sup>th</sup> Parachute Brigade, who landed the same day on the Ginkel Heath.





## PROGRAM OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM, 2014

### Friday 28 February: Social Evening

19.30-22.00 hrs. Meeting for members of the SFAM in the Airborne Museum.  
Lecture about the of German Luftwaffe bunker 'Diogenes' near Arnhem.

### Saturday 22 March: AGM of the SFAM in the Concerthall, Oosterbeek.

14.00 – 17.00 hrs. Only for members.

### Saturday 29 March: Meeting of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides

13.00 – 17.00 hrs. Presentation and exam (Assignment 1). Location: Airborne Museum.

### Saturday 5 April: Battlefield Walk with Niall Cherry

10.00 – 16.00 hrs. Walk from Wolfheze to Oosterbeek. Only for members.

### Saturday 12 April: Battlefield Tour: 'The Battle of Delfzijl, 1945'.

(in co-operation with the Documentatie groep '40-'45).  
09.30 – 17.00 hrs. Bus tour and walk. Guide: Joël Stoffels.

### Wednesday 28 May – Sunday 1 June: Battlefield Tour to Normandy.

With guides from the SFAM and the GBG.

### Saturday 14 June and Sunday 15 June: 'Weekend of the War Book'

Saturday 14 June: Book fair of second hand books on World War II.

Sunday 15 June, afternoon. Presentations about War Books in the Airborne Museums.

### Saturday 21 June: Battlefield Tour 'The Battle of the Betuwe, 1944'.

13.30 – 17.00 hrs. The actions of the Hampshire Regiment and other units in the Betuwe area, during and after the Battle of Arnhem.

### Saturday 13 September: Battlefield Tour '70 Years after, in the Footsteps of the 1<sup>st</sup> British Airborne Division'

09.30 – 17.00 hrs. Bus tour. Visits to the most important locations of the Battle of Arnhem.

### Friday 3 – Sunday 5 October: Battlefield Tour 'The Liberation of Zeeland, 1944'.

Three day bus tour to Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and Walcheren.

### Saturday 15 November, afternoon: lecture.

Topic will be announced later this year.





"Hartenstein" House in 1945  
(Photo: collection Airborne Museum)