



Volume 2 - number 3 - September / December 2015
This magazine appears three times per year

no. 6

AIRBORNE

MAGAZINE

SOCIETY OF
FRIENDS OF
THE AIRBORNE
MUSEUM



On 20 September 2014, King William-Alexander of the Netherlands lays a wreath at the memorial for the First Polish Independent Parachute Brigade at Driel.

(photo: berrydereusfotografie.nl)



COLOPHON

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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The best choice in books about the Battle of Arnhem you find in the shop of the Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein'



The Airborne Museum on a nice Summer's day (Photo: Airborne Museum collection)

IDEAS AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM "HARTENSTEIN"

On the 'theme day' of the SFAM that was held on 14 November 2015 in the Concert Hall in Oosterbeek, two special guests were invited: the Director of the Airborne Museum, Sarah Thurlings, and the member of Marketing and Sales, Natalie Rosenberg. They gave a presentation about the activities held in the Airborne Museum during 2015 and told of ideas and plans for the coming years.

A couple of the main points from their presentation were:-

In future, every year will see a large theme based exhibition. In 2016 a number of special people (British, Polish, Dutch and German) will form the central part of a display about their roles in the Battle of Arnhem. In the following years a number of exhibitions will be

held about the German side in the Battle of Arnhem, the Resistance movement and about the Poles.

Alongside these large exhibitions, will appear a regular number of smaller displays, covering various subjects. The exhibition "The Kuik brothers – teenagers in the Resistance", was an example of such a display.

The support given by the SFAM to the Airborne Museum is very important. This is not only by way of financial support, but also by the provision of the specialised knowledge held by various members of the SFAM to the young and new staff of the Museum.

At a time when museum subsidies are getting smaller, new future activities will have to be designed to attract more public visitors to the Museum. The "Afternoon

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Tea" is an example of this move.

There are plans for a small exhibition on the general history of the "Hartenstein" villa, that earlier served as a countryside villa.

In 2016 the Airborne Museum staff, together with people from a number of other organizations, will create a new and modern Information Centre about the Battle of Arnhem, close to the Rhine Bridge in Arnhem.

More information about the above mentioned matters will appear in the following numbers of the Airborne Magazine.

(Editors)

There are plans for a small exhibition on the general history of the 'Hartenstein' villa, that earlier served as a countryside villa.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 19 MARCH 2016

The 35th Annual General Members Meeting, together with the Annual Meeting of the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum will take place on Saturday 19 March 2016 in the Concert Hall, Rozensteeg 3, in Oosterbeek, starting at 14.00hrs

The agenda is as follows:-

1. Opening
2. Minutes of the Annual Members Meeting 21. March 2015
3. General Report 2015
4. Financial Report 2015
5. Budget 2016
6. Report by Finance Committee
7. Management election
8. Appointment of Finance Committee reserve member
9. Questions – A.O.B.
10. Close

Points 3 and 4: The General Report, the Financial Report and the Finance Committee Report will be

available for inspection 30 minutes before the Meeting opens, at the hall entrance. You can also request copies of the General and Financial Reports by sending an e-mail or post letter to the SFAM.

Point 7: This year sees the routine resignation of Frits Miedema. He is not available for re-election. The SFAM Management nominates Luuk Buist from Doorwerth as a candidate for this post. In accordance with Article 8 of the Foundation Statutes, members can propose alternative candidates. Nominations for this position must be delivered in writing to the Secretary of the SFAM not later than 10 days before the Meeting. This nomination must be signed by not less than 10 members and accompanied by a certificate of acceptance by the candidate, who must be of adult age and a member of the Society.

After closure of the meeting will be a PAUSE.

The program after the Pause will be later announced on the SFAM website and via an Airborne Newsflash.

"SOCIAL EVENING" ON 12 FEBRUARY

As listed in the Annual Program of the SFAM, on 12 February 2016, a "Social Evening" will be held in the Airborne Museum. At the time of going to print with this edition of the Airborne Museum, the whole programme was not entirely known. Thus, this will be made available using a News Flash and the SFAM website (VAM).

AIRBORNE MUSEUM RECEIVES AMMUNITION MAGAZINES FROM A RENAULT TANK, USED BY THE GERMANS.

A while ago, SFAM members, Hans Timmerman and David van Buggenum, found two special French ammunition magazines, along the Van Borsselenweg in Oosterbeek. The magazines were found during a search for bodily remains of a missing serviceman relating to the Battle of Arnhem. This field search was conducted with the approval of the Renkum Council.

The magazines found originated from one of the French Renault Char-B2 tanks, which in 1940, the Germans had captured from the French forces and, during the Battle of Arnhem, had employed against the British forces on the western side of the Perimeter. During the Battle of Arnhem, in the area along the Van Borsselenweg in Oosterbeek, were sited "D" Company of the 1st Battalion of the Border Regiment, comprising roughly 140 men, split into three platoons. Their HQ was located in the large, white farmhouse on this road, which also held a casualty station. The "D" Company included control of two 6-pounder anti-tank guns.



*The Char B tank near the Van Borsselenweg in Oosterbeek, after it was destroyed by the British with a 6pdr gun.
(Photo: PK Kriegsberichter Rutkowski – Airborne Museum collection)*

On 21 September 1944, the Germans launched an attack on the western edge of the perimeter. The attack was supported by a number of French Char-B2 tanks from the *Panzer Kompanie 223*, that had been converted into flame-throwers. One such tank advanced via the country lane that emerges at the white farmhouse on the Van Borsselenweg. The tank fired with the machine-gun *Châtellerault M31* at the British positions by

the farm. They attempted to turn one of their anti-tank guns in the direction of the approaching enemy, but they were knocked out by the machine-gun fire from the German tank. The British Lance Corporal Bill Beck then attacked the tank with a Bren gun fired from the hip. Shortly after, Pte Parker came who, with another soldier, fired a PIAT bomb. This bomb caused some light damage but the tank continued to advance and finally was put out of action by the other 6pdr anti-tank gun, that in the interim was turned by another soldier and stood at a very short range from the Char-B2 tank.

Nearly all cartridges within the recently found magazines were exploded. This was due to the fact that the tank was finally hit by a British anti-tank grenade and as a result was burnt out. In the boxes found were 101 exploded cartridges of 7.5mm calibre, suitable for the French *Châtellerault M31 (Mle31)* machine-gun. One box can contain, in total, 150 of these cartridges. These were normal cartridges, an armour piercing version and incendiary types. These sat in sections of three in the box. The two cartridge magazines were, with permission from the responsible authorities, donated to the Airborne Museum, where they have been cleaned and preserved as much as possible.

(Roland Boekhorst – Airborne Museum staff)



*One of the two magazines found in 2015 which were from the French Châtellerault M31 (Mle31) machine gun from the Char B tank. The ammunition had exploded in the magazine.
(Photo: Roland Boekhorst)*

SPECIAL “HARTENSTEIN WINES” AVAILABLE

For many years in the Airborne Museum shop, the so-called “Airborne Wine” has been available. Just recently, two special additional “Hartenstein wines” were introduced. Via a wine sample provider, a white *Sauvignon Blanc* and a red *Cabernet Sauvignon* have been selected. These are quality wines to drink yourself

or to give as a present. The “Hartenstein Rouge” and the “Hartenstein Blanc” cost €9,95 per bottle at the Airborne Museum.

(Nathalie Rosenberg, Marketing and Sales)



CANDLES ON THE GRAVES AT THE AIRBORNE CEMETERY IN OOSTERBEEK

Since 1991, there has been a tradition that on Christmas Eve citizens (especially school children) place candles on nearly 1400 graves, at the Canadian War Cemetery at Holten in The Netherlands. This is an impressive and emotional way to commemorate those who died in the darkest period of the year.

On the initiative of Roland Boekhorst, staff member of the Airborne Museum, this tradition has recently been adopted and, in the evening of 24 December 2015, several hundred candles were placed on a number of graves in the Airborne Cemetery at Oosterbeek. About two hundred interested people took part. On 24 December 2016 it will be attempted to place candles at each of the approximately 1700 graves at the Airborne Cemetery. *(Editors)*



UNIQUE GIFT FROM GERMANY

Just recently, the Airborne Museum received a British tropical uniform shirt, that was worn by a member of Luftwaffe who served with the German Africa Korps. The father of the donor had the item in his possession. It was originally obtained from a German military person, who was a photographer and who was posted to aerodromes in North Africa, where he had to take propaganda photos. However it is not certain that he was an official member of one of the German *Propaganda Kompanieën*.

On the shirt are the original emblems of the Africa Korps and an armband with *Kriegsbericht* on it (see illustration).

It is said that the wearer later served as one of the *Kriegsbericht*ers at Arnhem, but that is not so easy to confirm with certainty, because the name of the man is not known. The armband is very rare and, as far as we know, does not appear in the well known emblem record books. In 2011 a similar armband, but without the blue triangle, was sold at auction in England for a very high price.

(Wybo Boersma)



British tropical uniform shirt that was worn by a Luftwaffe military person with the German Africa Korps, with, on the sleeve, a “Kriegsbericht” armband. (Photo: Wybo Boersma)

“AFTERNOON TEA” IN THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM SEEMS TO BE A GREAT SUCCESS



The first “Afternoon Tea” that took place in the Airborne Museum on 27 September 2015. (Photo: berrydereusfotografie.nl)

On 27 September 2015 in the Airborne Museum, the first “Afternoon Tea” took place. This initiative from Director Sarah Thurlings, was a definite success. Not only on this first occasion was the event fully booked, but also the thereafter following dates were also immediately fully booked. Thus the Museum goes forward in 2016, with the organizing of a monthly

“Afternoon Tea”. If you would like to take part sometime, make contact with the Museum in person or via the website.

(Natalie Rosenberg, Marketing and Sales)

“ARNHEM BRIDGE, TARGET MIKE ONE”

The latest RN Sigmond publication was published to coincide with the 71st anniversary of Operation Market Garden and this is called Arnhem Bridge Target Mike One, written by David Truesdale, Martijn Cornelissen and Bob Gerritsen. Arnhem Bridge Target Mike One covers the story of the 1st Airlanding Light Regiment RA during its short life in the Second World War, covering the formation of the unit, their actions in North Africa and Italy and extensive coverage of their time at

Arnhem in September 1944. As you would now come to expect from a Sigmond book it is a high quality publication both in terms of production and facts. The book follows the usual format of a Sigmond work, with documents, official reports and personal accounts all woven together into an excellent history of the Airlanding Light Regiment. Over 200 photographs complement the book and at the end is a fold-out A3 aerial photograph of the area around the church in lower

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Oosterbeek showing the gun positions which is really useful. I understand 1,000 copies were printed and are selling fast. It really does not need me to endorse this book as the book sells itself. Highly recommended, a 'must have' book and I suggest you get a copy and don't wait too long!

"Arnhem Bridge, Target Mike One", has 282 pages and more than 200 photos, prints of documents, maps and air photos. The ISBN number is: 978-90-812703-6-6.

The price in Netherlands is €37,50 and in the UK £30. The book is available in the Netherlands from the Airborne Museum and at the Meijer & Siegers bookshop in Oosterbeek. It can also be ordered directly from the publisher by sending an e-mail to robert.sigmond@planet.nl.

In the UK, the book is available, amongst other sources, from the SFAM Secretary at his email address: niall.cherry@baesystems.com. (Niall Cherry)

DIARY OF ANJE VAN MAANEN GIVES A POWERFUL PICTURE OF THE WARTIME DAYS IN OOSTERBEEK



12 September 2015. Anje Brummelkamp-van Maanen with three young family members, looks at the first copy of her just published diary. (Photo: berrydereusfotografie.nl)

The recently published book "Noodhospitaal De Tafelberg. Diary Oosterbeek 17-25 September 1944" written by Anje van Maanen, is a very welcome issue, as much for Dutch readers as for English language interested parties. The text of the book was written shortly after the end of the Battle of Arnhem by the then 17 year old Anje van Maanen, daughter of Doctor G.H.O. van Maanen in Oosterbeek. He was a GP and lived with his family in a large villa on the Pietersbergseweg, close behind Hotel Schoonoord. Shortly after the start of the British air landings, Dr van Maanen moved into the Hotel de Tafelberg, which was converted into an emergency hospital. Anje and the rest of the family stayed in their own home, until 22 September when a group of British paratroops (of the 21st Independent Parachute Company) wanted to convert the villa into a stronghold. The family chose to also move into the Tafelberg and spent the rest of the Battle of Arnhem, which became the "Battle of Oosterbeek", in that building.

Anje wrote the nine day battle with a great eye for detail. Especially for readers who know Oosterbeek well, the situations described and the names of people and places will be easily recognised.

Although it was never Anje's intention to publish her diary, finally, after 71 years, the pressure from the family, persuaded her to agree and go ahead. The publication has used the original letter by letter text from 1944 and thus no extra additions or notes have been included. However, a number of photos and a map of Oosterbeek have been added. The presentation of the book took place on 12 September 2015 in the Airborne Museum. The now 88 year old Anje Brummelkamp-van Maanen, with great interest from her family, was presented with the first copy of her book.

"Noodhospitaal De Tafelberg" was published by "Kontrast" in Oosterbeek. The price of this attractively presented issue is €16,95. The book is naturally available at the Airborne Museum.

The English language edition is entitled "Tafelberg Field Hospital". Niall Cherry, the representative of the SFAM in the UK has copies in stock.

(Robert Voskuil)

NEW RESEARCH BY DILIP SARKER

In the Airborne Museum, we recently had a meeting with Mr Dilip Sarker MBE, one of our members from the UK. Mr Dilip Sarker is busy with the preparation for the writing of a book with stories about military personnel who died at Arnhem. Dilip is always very much moved by stories about the fortunes of soldiers who died during wartime circumstances and the sorrow and sadness that impact on the relatives. After his visit to Oosterbeek, Dilip Sarker wrote to us: "What I would like to do is to tell the stories about a number of men who are buried in Oosterbeek. I will do it with help from people who knew them and with the help from personal documents and photos, as it were, to bring them back to life". Dilip has earlier written a similar book about crewmen who died from the sinking of the British battleship Royal Oak that was torpedoed by the German U-boat U-47. That book, *"Hearts of Oak: The Human Tragedy of HMS Royal Oak"*, that was published in 2010, is, amongst others, used to give more understanding to the *War Widows Association*. With his other publications, such as that about the Battle of Britain, he has attempted to promote the *RAF Benevolent Fund*, the *Battle of Britain Fighter Association* and the *Battle of Britain Memorial Trust*.

Also he wrote to us "In my new book, I would like to promote further attention to the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek, and also the work of the *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*. Also it is very important to write about the role of the "flower children", as well as the close connection that since September 1944, has existed between the local population from the area around Arnhem and the *Airbornes*. I will emphasise that a war, in the first place, is remembered for "the suffering of the people" and not through the "glorious victories". Therefore I will write, not only about the losses of the British, Polish and the Dutch people, but also about the German dead."

Dilip Sarkar would very much like to make contact with people who may be able to share relevant information and/or material with him. The contact details of Dilip Sarkar MBE, FRHistS, BA(Hons) are:- Telephone in the UK: (Office: 01905 420441 – Mobile: 07971 677638.,

E-Mail: dilipsarkarbe@yahoo.co.uk.

See also his website: <http://www.dilipsarkarmbe.co.uk>

(Editors)



DVD "TEN DAYS IN SEPTEMBER '44"

A number of years ago, during the commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem, the Dutch journalist Maaïke Kuyenhoven met the British veteran Douglas Charlton. Maaïke was so impressed by the moving way in which Douglas told of his experiences during the September days of 1944, that she decided to make a film portrait about him. Together with documentary maker Jan-Cees ter Brugge, they filmed Douglas during his annual visits to Holland. They took him to the various locations which featured in his stories, such as the landing zones; on Onderlangs in Arnhem and in Oosterbeek itself. They also interviewed him in England.

Many hours of film material were, during the editing, reduced to 58 minutes. To finance the production of a DVD, the film makers used a crowd funding scheme and this brought in the required funds. The film was released in September 2015.

Douglas Charlton was part of R-Company (under command of Major Timothy), as a unit of 1st Parachute Battalion, that, on 17 September 1944, landed near Renkum. After the initial advance, during which they suffered large losses, the men entered the western part of Arnhem. On 19 September the Battalion at-

tempted to advance along Onderlangs, to reach the Road Bridge, where the 2nd Parachute Battalion under Lt Col Frost had been dug in since the evening of 17 September. The attack was a total failure. Charlton was taken POW but he managed to escape, after, with the agreement of the Germans, he brought a wounded colleague to the St Elizabeth Gasthuis (Hospital). He decided to try to reach Oosterbeek, where on arrival, he was sent to support the men in the area around the Old Church, that was being defended by the "Lonsdale Force". He took part, amongst other actions, in the fighting around the laundry of Van Hofwegen and in the garden of blacksmith Breman. At the end of the battle, he was part of the very last group who, in the night of 25/26 September, managed to cross the river.

What is very special about this story, is the unique way by which Charlton describes the fighting. It is not a simple military report or a romanticised glory tale, but his story is about the emotions of a 'simple' soldier, during the often gruesome situations where he found himself. Douglas can describe his memories in a very special way, mainly due to his amazing memory and his typical British humour. To place particular situations in its historical context, the film makers asked



Robert Voskuil, at some points in the film, to provide some extra explanations.

Sadly Douglas did not live to see the final result of the film. He died in October 2013. The film makers see their film as a tribute to him and to his comrades. The title of the DVD about Douglas Charlton reads: "10 dagen in September '44 – a documentary about the Battle of Arnhem through the eyes of an English soldier". The DVD is provided with Dutch sub titles.

There is also an English language version where the parts where Dutch is spoken have English sub titles. In Holland the DVD is on sale in the Airborne Museum and local book shops. It can also be ordered by sending an e-mail to: info@maaikekuyvenhoven.nl

(see also the facebook page: [10dageninseptember44](https://www.facebook.com/10dageninseptember44)). In the UK the DVD is available from Niall Cherry.

(Editors)

MUCH INTEREST IN THE EXHIBITION ABOUT THE KUIK BROTHERS



*After the opening of the exhibition about the Kuik brothers, Mayor Jean Paul Gebben from Renkum and Els Kuik look at the objects in one of the display cases.
(Photo: berrydereusfotografie.nl)*

murder of Bert and Hans and its aftermath, to the Airborne Museum, which made this display possible.

The well known Dutch historian and journalist Ad van Liempt spoke in depth at the opening of the exhibition about the role of young Dutch people in the Resistance against the German Occupation in the period 1940-1945. Until now, little thought has been given to this role, even though it appears to be a much more important aspect than the majority of people are aware of. And that is also the case about their contribution during the Allied "liberation operations" in 1944/45.

In the previous issue of the Airborne Magazine, we mentioned the exhibition "Gebroeders Kuik '44 – (Kuik Brothers '44 - Teenagers in the Resistance)" in the Airborne Museum. This small display which was held in the Hall of Fame in the Airborne Museum, attracted not only many visitors, but also resulted in surprisingly high levels of publicity.

At the opening on 1st October 2015, Mrs Els Kuik from Oosterbeek gave a speech. She is the widow of Wobke Kuik, the youngest son of the Kuik family and brother of Bert and Hans, who, on 3rd November 1944 were shot dead by the SD NCO Friedrich Enkelstroth, on the Rosendaelsche Golf Club in Arnhem. Els Kuik had presented the whole archive about the

As a result, in the coming years, amongst others, the 'Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogs Documentatie en Holocaust Studies' (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation and Holocaust Studies) in Amsterdam, will be undertaking further research about the subject. In the days after the opening, on the television (including the Dutch



National NOS Television News), the radio and in newspapers, in depth coverage was given to this subject, which resulted in many additional museum visitors.

At the exhibition, that continued until 31 January 2016, a brochure (in the Dutch language) was available, titled "Gebroeders Kuik '44 – Tieners in het Verzet" (Kuik Brothers '44 – Teenagers in the Resistance). This was produced by Tim Streefkerk, historical researcher at the Airborne Museum. The cost of this publication has been entirely met by the SFAM. Copies of the brochure are still available in the Museum shop.

In addition, the exhibition had an unexpected follow-up. The Management of the Rosendaelsche Golf Club, announced that they had approved the placing of a plaque at the tree beside which both lads were shot dead on 3 November 1944, in the centre of the golf course. On Tuesday 3 November



The simple plaque on the tree on the Rosendaelsche Golf Club, next to which on 3 November 1944, Bert and Hans Kuik were shot dead. The unveiling of this memorial took place on 3 November 2015. (Photo: Frank Versteegh)

2015, exactly 71 years after the event, this plaque was unveiled by Els Kuik, during a simple but moving meeting together with a large group of interested people. For Els, this was the lovely end to a long standing wish. The two brothers will not be forgotten.

(Robert Voskuil)

MINISTORY 123: AN EXAMPLE OF A DETAILED HISTORICAL STUDY

Recently we received from our member Scott Revell in Australia, a story about the German General Kussin who, on the first day of the Battle of Arnhem, was killed in Oosterbeek. Scott Revell has a military background and is a reserve officer in the Australian forces. He has always been interested in the history of the Battle of Arnhem, especially in the role of the German units. In his research project into the German side of the Battle of Arnhem, he works thoroughly and is a real specialist in this subject. He works closely together with a number of amateur historians in the Netherlands and the UK and together with them, he has written a number of books, including "Retake Arnhem Bridge: An Illustrated History of the Kampfgruppe Knaust September to October 1944 [2010]", "Arnhem, a few Vital Hours: The SS-Panzer Grenadier-Ausbildungs und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 at the Battle of Arnhem, September 1944 [2013]" and "A Piece of Coloured Ribbon, an insight into German Award Winners at the Battle of Arnhem" [2015].

This story is to focus on a particular event that occurred on the first day of the battle; the now infamous ambush of General Kussin's vehicle by men of the 3rd Parachute Battalion.

Because the length of the story sent by Scott Revell was too big for one number, we have divided his article into two parts. The second part will be published in the next issue of the Airborne Magazine.

(Editors)

MINISTORY 123

THE DEATH OF A GERMAN GENERAL AT ARNHEM (PART 1)

Scott Revell

This Ministory is dedicated to the memory of Bart Leyte

On the 17th September 1944 the first elements of the British 1st Airborne Division dropped or landed west of Arnhem. Expectations were high as pre-operational briefings had indicated minimal resistance and that the ground forces of XXX Corps would relieve them before the third lift had even arrived. The plan for the British 1st Airborne Division was to send the 1st Parachute Brigade towards Arnhem via three distinct routes with the 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron racing ahead to secure the Arnhem Road Bridge. As we know, things didn't go to plan and thousands of airborne soldiers were to embark on a 9-day struggle with German Forces in and around Arnhem.

This short story is to focus on a particular event that occurred on the first day of the battle; the now infamous ambush of General Kussin's vehicle by the 3rd Parachute Battalion. The story will provide a small background to Kussin's command, a narrative of the actual event and set the record straight regarding the number of German occupants in the vehicle at the time of the ambush.



Major General Friedrich Kussin, in September 1944, Commanding Officer of Feldkommandantur FK642
(Photo: Scott Revell collection)

Feldkommandantur 642
Generalmajor Friedrich Kussin was appointed to the position of commander of Feldkommandantur 642 (FK 642) in early September 1943. Born in 1895 Kussin was a 49 year old pioneer veteran of WWI and also held command positions during the invasion of France as well as on the Eastern Front. Transferred to the Führer Reserve in April 1943 after promotion to General, Kussin waited for his next appointment before

taking up his final position which was headquartered in Arnhem.

In quite a number of publications in the past, Kussin has been wrongly assigned as the Arnhem Stadtkommandant (City Commander). In fact, his position was

the area commander with the designate of 642 which incorporated the city of Arnhem. The size of FK 642, from a personnel perspective, was relatively small and if it followed the official establishment (KStN 2201). This establishment would have had the following posted positions:

Officers: 7
Officials: 3
NCOs: 21
Soldiers: 12

Sometimes these area administrative commands would have security or police type units attached to them if the threat warranted it. This was most prevalent on the Eastern Front when these commands had to deal with partisans. The purpose of the Feldkommandantur could include, but was not limited to, securing supply lines, depots and traffic lines, vital asset protection and keeping the rear area secure. If forces were not allocated to achieve these tasks then where possible the staff of the Feldkommandantur would recruit locally to complement its establishment. It has been widely written that FK 642 had a security platoon or two that manned the bridge on the 17th September 1944 however to date no sources of information in official records have come to light to confirm or deny this.

17 September 1944

The 3rd Parachute Battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Fitch together with a troop of 6-pounder anti-tank guns from an airlanding anti-tank battery, a section of medics from 16 Parachute Field Ambulance and about half of C Troop from 1st Parachute Squadron RE, were to take the center route which was to move along the main Utrecht-Arnhem road (code named 'Tiger' route) into Arnhem to assist the 2nd Parachute Battalion to capture and hold the road bridge.

By around 1700h the leading elements of the 3rd Battalion encountered some minor resistance just short of the Utrechtseweg and Wageningen crossroads. The Germans located here were outposts set up by SS-Panzer Grenadier Ausbildungs und Ersatz Battalion 16, under the command of SS-Sturmabführer Sepp Krafft, which was aimed at providing his battalion with early warning. These outposts would have quickly withdrawn after engaging the British and moved back to the main defensive position. The spearhead of the 3rd Battalion had the order to advance into Arnhem at lightning speed so unless they were fully engaged they

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were required to move past these minor skirmishes. With Krafft focussed on these enemy troop movements to his west and south-west, he was surprised by the arrival from the south of a Citroën 11CV Traction Avant staff car just prior to the sounds of gun fire to his south. Stopping in the grounds of the Hotel Wolfheze was the Wehrmacht Area Commandant General Friedrich Kussin who stepped out of the vehicle and greeted SS-Sturmabführer Krafft. According to Krafft's report the General provided Krafft with the latest intelligence of the Allied landings and informed him that overall command of the area is now the responsibility of the IInd SS-Panzer Korps. Kussin calls upon Krafft's battalion to show all endurance and he then prepared to leave via the same route he came on.

Krafft was concerned for the General since he had received the report of enemy forces to the south. General Kussin assured Krafft that he had visited one of Krafft's sentry posts on the Arnhem - Wageningen road and that all was good before he had arrived. Even though Krafft put in one last objection based on recent reports and suggested a different route, the General would not be put off. Krafft watched with disbelief as the Citroën staff car carrying General Kussin and his passengers, sped off south back towards the crossroads.

Krafft records in his report a small entry relating to the outcome of Kussin heading off towards the enemy in his staff car. It states:

"A few minutes later we hear a burst of machine-gun bullets and we have lost a gallant soldier and his three companions. He is surely the first of the German dead in the intense fighting now beginning."

The burst of machine gun fire at 1715h came from the leading elements of the 3rd Parachute Battalion which had now passed the crossroads. Then men of No. 5 Platoon, B Company under the command of Lieutenant James Cleminson had seen the vehicle travel at speed from their left rear and they had opened fire with the platoon's weapons. The fire had the desired effect and stopped the vehicle in its tracks killing all of its occupants.

After the war a member of the platoon was a little more descriptive than Krafft in detailing the events of Kussin's car at the crossroads:

"The platoon had been selected to lead the 3rd Parachute Battalion's march to Arnhem, and for the first two hours we made good progress, scouting ahead of the main force. As we approached Battalion Krafft's blocking line east of Wolfheze, a German Citroen staff car suddenly appeared at a junction between the platoon's positions, prompting the unit to open fire with rifles and Sten guns, killing all inside. So enthusiastic had been the firing that

both the vehicle and passengers were riddled with bullets and it took Cleminson's intervention to get the men to cease fire. This prize put the platoon on a high. Cleminson did not discover until after the war that his men had killed General Friedrich Kussin. He had been visiting Krafft when he unwisely decided to return to the town and his own headquarters."

Captured on Camera

The results of the ambush was later captured for ever more when Sergeant Dennis Smith and Sergeant Gordon Walker of No.5 AFPU (Army Film and Photographic Unit) took three photos and some film of Kussin's shot up car. The stationary vehicle sat in the middle of the road at the junction of Wolfhezerweg and Utrechtseweg with the dead occupants still inside. Smith positioned himself on the passenger's side and took his first photo (Photo 1 - Smith, roll 2, frame 4) of Generalmajor Kussin who had been hit several times in his seat. In the same photo it is possible to see the body of the driver, the 42 year old Gefreiter Josef Willeke, slumped over the centre of the car with his cap still on.



The first photo taken by photographer Smith, after he arrived at the German staff car, shows the dead Major General Kussin, in the front passenger seat. Next to him, the chauffeur Josef Willeke. [Photo. Dennis Smith, AFPU, IWM London collection]

For some reason, either Smith or someone else decided to remove the bodies of Kussin and Willeke from the front of the vehicle in order to capture the next two photographs (the Dutch Commando Lieutenant Maarten Knottenbelt had already removed the General's rank insignia from his collar on the 17th September 1944 and LCPL Wilce of No. 4 Section, 1st Airborne Provost Company had removed the shoulder rank slides on the 18th September 1944). It would have been without doubt that they would have been surprised on how Kussin appeared after being removed from the car. It was quickly deduced that the fire from the air-



borne soldiers had been so ferocious and accurate that one bullet had struck the right lower cheek of General Kussin exiting out the back of the head giving the appearance that he been scalped when he was removed from the vehicle. Smith captured this infamous photo (Smith, roll 2, frame 5) which has since been published hundreds of times.



After the two dead men in the front of the car, were pulled out, Smith photographed first, Major General Kussin (Smith Photo 2. This photo is not shown in this article) and then on the other side of the vehicle, the chauffeur Josef Willeke (Smith photo 3). He lies out of the car with a Dutch carbine Model 1895 on his body.

[Photo: Dennis Smith AFPU; IWM London collection]

Smith then proceeded to the other side of the vehicle where he took a photo (Photo 2 - Smith, roll 2, frame 6) of the driver Gefreiter Josef Willeke. The photo was somewhat staged where they had removed Willeke from the car and placed a Dutch Model 1895 carbine across his body giving the impression that the driver had tried to make ready his rifle and return fire. Willeke never stood a chance as the men No. 5 Platoon, B Company of the 3rd Parachute Battalion had riddled the fast travelling vehicle with enough bullets to kill all its occupants. What is interesting, and a shame in hindsight, is that Smith never took any photos of the remaining occupant(s) in the back of the car. If he had, the question that has pondered researchers and military historians for over 70 years would have been answered years ago. That is, who else was in the car?

The number of occupants in the vehicle has been a point of contention for over 70 years with various sources stating different numbers. The majority of publications have specified that there were three occupants in the vehicle which was made up of General Kussin, Gefreiter Willeke and the 44 year old Unteroffizier (Sonderführer) Max Köster born in Arnhem. Conversely there have been a number of eye witness accounts that have stated there were four occupants in the car. So why contradicting numbers and if there were four occupants, then why don't we know the name of the fourth occupant?

There is no disputing that at least there were three occupants of the car that were killed and buried together. This is confirmed from a report written by the Reverend Captain George Pare MID of 1st Wing, Glider Pilot Regiment A.A.C. where he stated:

"On my return, Mr Harlow [Reverend Major Albert Harlow D.S.O., MID of HQ 1st Airborne Division] asked me to bury a German General, whose body was still leaning out of a car, where he had been shot about half a mile away along the main road towards Wolfheze. It had been arranged that prisoners should do the digging. A pilot arrived as an escort bringing two young SS soldiers aged 17 and 18 who were both wearing their camouflage smocks. They sat on the bonnet of the jeep and we drove off. The body of the German General was certainly badly shot up and with it were those of his batman and interpreter. His car had been ambushed on Sunday and was riddled with bullets.....The two Nazis started to dig the graves at the roadside, for I decided to have common burial for all three."

However as stated previously in this article, SS-Sturm-bannführer Krafft mentioned the loss of a gallant soldier [Kussin] and his three companions when the car was ambushed. Could Krafft have been wrong during the heat of the Battle? Would Krafft, or any officer for that matter, notice the number of staff officers accompanying the General when under pressure?

What is sure is that there are a number of eye-witness accounts from both sides that confirm Krafft's account.

(To be continued)



PROGRAMME 2016

- 12 February: Friday evening 19.00-22.00hr:
Social evening in the Airborne Museum.
- 19 March: Saturday afternoon: 13.30-15.00hr:
Annual meeting of SFAM in the Concert Hall in Oosterbeek.
15.30-17.00hr Themed lecture.
- 16 April: Saturday afternoon: 13.30hr:
Battlefield tour – the fighting on Onderlangs
and Bovenover in Arnhem 18-19 September 1944.
- 23 April: Saturday 09.30-15.00hr:
25th Book Fair with second-hand books
and documents from and about WW2 in Hartenstein Park, Oosterbeek.
- 18-22 May: Battlefield Tour Normandy.
- 10 September: Battlefield Tour Arnhem.
- 30 September - 2 October: Battlefield Tour Hürtgenwald, Germany.
- 8 October: Saturday afternoon: Battlefield Tour around the Old Church in Oosterbeek.

N.B: Subject to alterations and additions.

For additional information about the various activities and events and any eventual alterations, please see the website: www.vriendenairbornemuseum.nl



Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the population of Driel built a simple memorial as a tribute to the First Polish Independent Parachute Brigade. In 1961 it was replaced by the present memorial.

(photo: Collection Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein')