



Vrienden van het Airborne Museum

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM OOSTERBEEK

Utrechtseweg 252, 6862 AZ Oosterbeek, The Netherlands

Representative in Great Britain : Mr. A. Maynard, M.B.E.
49, Glenfarg Road, Catford, London SE 6 IXN
Tel.: 01.698.8969

NEWS-LETTER No. 20

Editor : Drs. R.P.G.A. Voskuil

October 1985

Translation : Mrs A. Meeuwsen

The news-letter is printed four times a year.

"MEN OF COURAGE STILL NEED OUR CARE"

After a military action human losses are counted in numbers: the dead, the wounded and the missing. At the yearly commemoration services our attention is expressly called to the dead and the missing. Fortunately, many wounded recover after a relatively short time. They can take up again their work as civilians or soldiers, albeit sometimes changed both mentally and physically. However, there are also wounded people who are confronted with a very harsh reality: their injuries are such that there is no remedy. After their wounds have healed they cannot continue their former life. Their expectations for the future have been crushed, their prospects look dark.



Arnhem veterans during the Silent March to the Arnhem Bridge Monument on September 21st, 1985 (Photo: C. van Roekel)

One must try and accept being an invalid, one has to rebuild the relationship with one's wife, fiancée, children, family and friends. One must try to overcome the difficulties of revalidation and of the struggle for a new and independent existence.

The battle that must be fought is heavier and lasts longer than the battle of Arnhem, it needs one's complete dedication, and cannot be won without the help of others. Just as the soldier on the front relies on the assistance of many others, the disabled soldier also needs help.

In Great Britain there are organizations like the "St. Dunstons for Men and Women Blinded on War Service" and "British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association (BLESMA). These organizations possess the knowledge and experience necessary for being able to give practical help and encouragement on the painful road to revalidation, to work and to independence. By means of close personal contacts the members try to care for each other and to prevent that someone gets into trouble, is lonely or neglected.

This work is primarily done by members who have lived through these problems themselves. They are all volunteers and are dependent on donations for the money they need to do their work well.

Every year we bring flowers and wreaths to the monuments and the graves of the dead. For the crippled survivors we reserve the best seats in the front row. Do we really think that this is all we have to do?

J. Smits, Chairman.

BLESMA needs your help, too !

In Great Britain, since 1932 BLESMA has given aid to people who lost their limbs or became blind as a result of participating in both world wars and many other military conflicts. Amongst other things, BLESMA administers some special homes for warinvalids, assists in the development of artificial limbs, provides revalidation, helps to find work and fights for reasonable pensions. BLESMA is an independent organization which depends on donations for money.

If you want to help these soldiers who were so grievously wounded while doing their duty, you can send your donations to your Society's English Representative, Mr. A. Maynard. If you mention "BLESMA", he will see to it that it reaches the organization.

Special subject afternoon with lecture and films on Saturday, November 23rd 1985

On Saturday, November 23rd, the Society will organize another Special Subject afternoon. This time we will be guests at the ELEKTRUM in Arnhem. The programme is as follows:

- 13.30 hrs : reception of the participants. If you want to, you can visit the exhibition about the part electricity plays in our daily life.
- 14.15 hrs : lecture by Mr van Roekel : The rôle of the Hohenstaufen Division in the Battle of Arnhem.
- 15.15 hrs : interval of about 30 minutes.
- 15.45 hrs : "Impressions of the commemoration-service held at Oosterbeek Airborne Cemetery on September 22nd, 1985", a video-film by Mr B. de Reus.
- 16.00 - 16.30 hrs : "Comrades at Arms" : a television documentary made by Yorkshire television in 1984 concerning the experiences of General Sir John Hackett and Dr Lipman Kessel during the Battle of Arnhem.



Mr R. Beasley hands over to Major Duyts the set of medals belonging to Staff Sergeant John Douglas Brooke, who sadly died in 1984.
(Photo : B. de Reus)

The ELEKTRUM is situated on the Klingelbeekseweg between Arnhem and Oosterbeek, a few hundred metres from Onderlangs/Bovenover. The new telephone-number is: 085-568020.

New edition of the pastel-drawing poster.

The poster made by Arnhem artist Johan Paulus Pieters, which was brought out by the Society in 1984, has appeared in a new edition, this time in the A-4 size. It costs hfl. 3,--.

The medal show-case in the Airborne Museum.

In our Newsletter no. 18 of April 1985, we told about the purchase of a special medal show-case for the Museum. From Major Duyts, the Secretary of the Society, we received the following information about the show-case:

"For some time now the Museum has been in the possession of the show-case which was donated by the Society of Friends of the Museum. We can now exhibit the sets of medals given to us by veterans of the Battle of Arnhem, in a dignified way. The show-case has been given a place in the so-called "medal corner" of the large room and has been adapted to the forms of the other presentations of veterans who received the Dutch Military William Order and the Victoria Cross.

The show-case has a background of maroon felt and a beautiful oak frame. With its many silver and bronze medals and their colourful ribbons it pays an impressive homage to the Arnhem heroes. We have tried to accompany the medals by photographs of their former owners.

Since George Gatland donated his medals to the Museum some years ago, several other veterans have done the same. These medals are an outward symbol of the courageous deeds of the members of the 1st British Airborne Division and the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade Group.

The Museum has also received sets of medals from relatives of Arnhem veterans, so that these medals will be kept and honoured amongst the others. Many medals were accompanied by the message that there is only one place where they belong: in the Hartenstein Airborne Museum at Oosterbeek."

New commemorative envelope.

Last September the Museum issued a new commemorative envelope. It shows the portrait of Lt-Colonel W.F.K. Thompson, commander of the 1st Airlanding Light Regiment R.A. in September 1944, together with the Royal Artillery emblem. It costs hfl. 5.-- and is obtainable from the Museum.

Medals for the Airborne Museum.

Former Staff sergeant John Douglas Brooke was one of the veterans who regularly attended the commemorations of the Battle of Arnhem. The last time he was present was in September 1984; he died some weeks later.

One of his last wishes was that his medals, received during a many-sided military career, be donated to the Airborne Museum. The donation took place on September 20th by former Gunner Royal Artillery, Mr. R. Beasley, who was accompanied by Mr. R. Laing. The set, which consists of ten medals, was received by Major W. Duyts, secretary of the Airborne Museum. The medals will be given a place in the special show-case.

Questionnaire for our Dutch members.

On May 4th, 1985, we held our annual Special Subject day. It was organized by three of our Dutch members. As we knew the special subjects they are interested in, we could ask them to take the organization upon them, confident that they would succeed. There has been a growing awareness of the fact that the more we know about the special subjects that our members are interested in, the greater the chance that we will be able to organize events that will interest and please them. As the Society has shortly been offered the use of a computer with printer, we are now able to compile information about the special interests of our members, together with other important data.

In order to do this as efficiently as possible, Mr O. Luursema has drawn up a questionnaire which our Dutch members will find with this newsletter. Dutch members are kindly requested to answer the questions as extensively as possible, so that we may obtain accurate information about your special interests and hobbies. We guarantee that this information will be for our use only, nobody else will be able to obtain this information.

New start of the Educational Project.

Thanks to the generosity of various members and firms it has become possible to have Mr van Roekel's documentation printed. The documentation has been sent to all primary and secondary schools in the Arnhem region, together with an invitation to visit the Museum at a reduced entrance-fee. Many schools have already reacted positively and we expect that during the coming winter-season our Museum will play a well-earned part in many history-lessons. We are very happy about this special activity of our Museum.

New booklet about the destruction of Oosterbeek.

For the second time, Mesrs G.H.Maassen Sr. and Jr. have compiled a booklet with photographs about the destruction which took place in Oosterbeek between September 1944 and May 1945. It is called : "Oosterbeek Verwoest, 1944-1945".

The first part came out exactly five years ago, in September 1980. It sold well and the publishers received many favourable reactions. Since that time many new photos have been obtained and as there were many requests for another booklet, it was decided to issue a follow-up. The new booklet contains 99 photographs, most of them were taken shortly after the liberation of Oosterbeek and they were taken both by professional and amateur photographers. It is obtainable from bookshops in Oosterbeek and Heelsum, from fa. van Doorne in Wolfheze and at the Museum, and costs hfl. 18.--. It can also be obtained from Mr. G.H.Maassen Jr, Jan van Riebeeckweg 82, Oosterbeek, via Rabobank at Renkum, bankgiro 82.32.97, account no. 38.50.32.056. The costs are then hfl. 20,80.