



Vrienden van het Airborne Museum

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM OOSTERBEEK
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Successful co-operation between BLESMA, the Friends and the "Silver Cross".

Thanks to the intensive co-operation between BLESMA, the Friends and the Insurance Company the "Silver Cross", the visit to Oosterbeek by eight severely handicapped veterans was a great success. They were able to participate in all events. We were all happy to discover that the Dutch facilities with regard to advanced methods of adaptability did cause considerable improvements as to eye-sight and mobility. Mr.Drew, a veteran who fought with Richard Bingley's platoon (see Ministry IX), and who spent 13 years in hospital, told us that after all these years he could now read and write again, thanks to a donated TV-magnifying glass. Another veteran, whose left arm and left leg had to be amputated, was taught how to use some ingeniously constructed crutches; this meant that he could now move about without having to use his wheelchair. We were very moved by these examples and very happy for the people concerned.



General Sir John Hackett receives the "Roll of Honour" from its compiler, Mr.J.A.Hey. (photo: B.de Reus)

Although some people have accused us of performing a "commercial stunt", I am very pleased that we entered into this co-operation. It is rather easy to speak of gratitude towards those who have had to live now for 42 years with pain and handicaps, tangible memories of the offer they brought for us. Now we have been able to do something, let's hope we will be able to do more in the future. Our heartfelt thanks to the Board of the "Silver Cross", the Derksen Taxicab Company, the people of the Kievitsdel Hotel, the Wiltgraef Restaurant and to our member Mr. Ton Schemkes. They all spared time nor pains in order to make these days unforgettable for these so special veterans.

C.van Roekel

Special subject and contact-day.

On Saturday, November 15th, a combined special subject and contact-day will be organised for our members. The programme is as follows:

- 10.00 - 13.30 hrs: Contact-morning at the Westerbouwing Restaurant (can be reached by a no.6 bus from Arnhem Station). This morning can be used by members to meet other members, to discuss their special interests and to discover other people's interests. The book-service will be present with an extensive collection. The Westerbouwing Restaurant will also provide lunch.
- 13.30 - 14.00 hrs: Depart for the ELEKTRUM in Arnhem.
- 14.00 - 14.45 hrs: Lecture with slides about the 21st Independent Parachute Company. This élite unit, commanded by Major "Boy" Wilson, was in charge of the marking of the dropping- and landingzones. Afterwards they fought at several places in Oosterbeek.
- 14.45 - 15.15 hrs: Tea-break. Opportunity to visit the ELEKTRUM exhibition.
- 15.15 - 15.45 hrs: Lecture by Mr.J.A.Hey, the compiler of the "Roll of Honour" of the Battle of Arnhem. He will give background information and will be happy to answer any questions.
- 15.45 - 16.30 hrs: Film about the work of the British Commonwealth War Graves Commission and/or film about the Netherlands counterpart, the "Oorlogsgraven Stichting".

The ELEKTRUM is situated on the Klingelbeekseweg in Arnhem, some hundred metres from the road junction Onderlang/Bovenover. Telephone: 085 - 568020.

"Roll of Honour" for General Sir John Hackett.

During a special meeting in the Airborne Museum on Friday, September 19th, General Sir John Hackett received the "Roll of Honour" from the hands of its compiler, Mr.J.A.Hey.

General Hackett was deeply impressed by the book which contains the names of every British and Polish soldier who died during the Battle of Arnhem. In his short speech the General thanked Mr.Hey for the amount of work that had to be done in order to compile this book.

The interest in this book, both in Holland and abroad, is overwhelming; several hundreds of copies have already been sold.

Issue of a new commemorative envelope.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem, the Museum has again issued a commemorative envelope. It shows a picture of Sir John Hackett, taken in 1944. Sir John was then commander of the 4th Para Brigade. During a meeting in the Airborne Museum, Sir John Hackett received the first envelope from Major W.J.M. Duyts, secretary of the Board of the Airborne Museum.

Mr.Reg Curtis: life-member.

On September 19th, Mr.Reg Curtis, a Battle of Arnhem veteran, became a life-member. The Society of Friends now has six British and two Netherlands life-members.



Colonel P.R.R.de Burgh thanks Christien de Haan of Heelsum for the portrait drawing she made of him, using photographs taken in 1944.
(Photo: B.de Reus)

Former artillery-men visit battlefields.

On Saturday, August 30th and Sunday, August 31st, a group of men belonging to the "Royal Artillery Historical Society" visited Oosterbeek and its surroundings. Four of its members served with one of the artillery units during the Battle of Arnhem. They were guided around the battlefields by Colonel P.R.R.de Burgh, who in 1944 served with Major-General Urquhart's headquarters. Colonel de Burgh is now attached to the Royal School of Artillery in Larkhill. His preparations for the two-day excursion started a year ago and centred round the role played by the various artillery units during the Battle. Attention was also paid to the role played by the 64th Medium Artillery Regiment, which gave fire support from Nijmegen to the encircled British and Polish troops in Oosterbeek. The group visited the dropping- and landingzones near Wolfheze and Ede, former artillery positions around the Old Church in Oosterbeek, and the bridge at Arnhem. They also visited the Airborne Cemetery and the Airborne Museum. During the visit to the Airborne Museum, Colonel de Burgh received a portrait of himself as a young man, drawn by Christien de Haan from Heelsum. She made the drawing from photographs of the then lieutenant de Burgh, which she found in the Museum-archives. Colonel de Burgh was very surprised and pleased, the more so as he did not know that these photographs existed.

Donation by Mr.Pelkman.

Our member Mr.Pelkman donated to the Museum a case for 15 smoke hand-grenades and a supply basket, dropped in 1944.

H.R.H.Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands unveils memorial tablet.

On Sunday, September 21st, H.R.H.Prince Bernhard unveiled a memorial tablet in the building of the National Sports Centre "Papendal" near Oosterbeek. This tablet reminds visitors of the fact that this area was the scene of fierce actions during the Battle of Arnhem.

During the official meeting preceding the ceremony, a brochure was presented, called "The Battle of Arnhem, September 17th-26th, 1944 - The history of Papendal and the Johannhoeve area during the Battle". The brochure contains 30 pages, with maps and pictures and is written by our member, Mr.O.Luursema from Arnhem.

The first copies were presented to H.R.H.the Prince and to General Sir John Hackett. The brochure is meant to tell the story to the, mostly young, visitors of the Sports Centre, and to make them aware of the fact that many lives were lost in the area where they can now pursue their favourite sports.

During the meeting H.R.H.Prince Bernhard was also presented with a copy of the "Roll of Honour".

Memorial tablet in Oosterbeek Old Church.

During a short service, a memorial tablet was unveiled in Oosterbeek Old Church in memory of the men of 156 Para Battalion who fell during the Battle of Arnhem. The ceremony took place on Sunday, September 21st, and was performed by Mrs.Elisabeth Aird, daughter of Lt.Colonel Sir Richard des Voeux, in 1944 commander of 156 Para Battalion. Lt.Colonel des Voeux was killed in action in Oosterbeek on September 20th, 1944.

With this service ended a Battlefield Tour for former members of 156 Para Battalion, led by Colonel Geoffrey Powell and Colonel John Waddy. In 1944 they commanded "C" and "B" Company. Major Rh.J.Pott, former commander of "A" Company, also took part in the tour.

Donation of chair and set of medals to Museum.

A chair with inscription has been donated by Arthur Brawn and his wife Rene, in memory of Arthur's brother Fred Brawn, who was killed in action in Oosterbeek in 1944. The inscription reads: "In Loving Memory of our Fred, Tpr.F.Brawn, 1st Airborne RECCE, killed Oosterbeek 19-9-1944, donated by Arthur and Rene."

Tpr. Brawn's set of medals were also donated to the Museum. On behalf of the Museum, Major W.J.M.Duyts received both gifts.

Polish badges of Honour.

During a special meeting in the Airborne Museum, the head of the Polish delegation from England, Captain Z.R.Gasowski, has presented Badges of Honour of the Polish Parachute Association to the following persons: Teresa Wasselkamp, Mr.H.Duinhoven, Mr.J.A.Hey, Mr.K.Parmer, Mr.J.J.Rudolphie and Mr.J.Smits.

The badge intended for Mr.J.Schanstra was received by his daughter, as Mr.Schanstra sadly died some time ago.

Museum guide in Polish.

Some weeks ago the Polish guide for the Airborne Museum was published. Mrs.M.T. Saras-Janiszewska did undertake the translation.

A French guide will hopefully appear before long.

Exposition in the Airborne Museum.

During the commemoration week, the Museum showed a small exposition of portrait drawings by Christien de Haan, of commanders of the Battle of Arnhem.

Both General Sir John Hackett and Colonel Geoffrey Powell were presented with a portrait of themselves when they visited the Museum.