



SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE AIRBORNE MUSEUM OOSTERBEEK

Utrechtseweg 232, 6862 AZ OOSTERBEEK, the Netherlands

Representative in Great Britain: Mr. F.M.Young,  
6,Kildown Gardens, Cliftonville, Kent CT9 3EG

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Editor: Drs.R.P.G.A.Voskuil  
Translation:Mrs.A.G.Meeuwssen

Re-opening of the diorama in the basement of the Airborne Museum.

One of the large diorama's in the basement of the Museum shows the British troops entering the village of Oosterbeek in September 1944. During the past months the painter Huub Milder of Arnhem has been painting a mural on the wall behind that diorama. It shows a detailed picture of an Oosterbeek street-scene in September 1944.

As we already told you in our newsletter no. 25, Mr.Milder has made an extensive study of the characteristic pre-war buildings in Oosterbeek. For this mural he decided to depict part of the buildings along the Wilhelminastraat and the Jagerspad.

The mural, which has a length of 9 metres and a height of 2 metres, was completed at the end of May. After the completion, the diorama was arranged anew. Messrs W.Boersma,B.de Reus and E.Vellinga were assisted by some members of the Society. Mrs. Willy Surquin, who works part-time in the Museum, was so lucky as to obtain some pre-war clothes, which she very carefully adapted to be worn by the civilian figures in the diorama.

In order to give an impression as authentic as possible, much attention was paid to even the smallest detail, including the lighting.

On June 3rd, the diorama was officially re-opened. A large number of people had been invited to attend this opening. Amongst them was Mr. Ch.B.Labouchère (84), who performed the official opening by placing a helmet on the head of one of the civilian resistance fighters in the diorama.

This is the place to tell you something more about Mr.Labouchère, who more or less by chance got involved in the Battle of Arnhem. He was a member of the Dutch resistance and on September 17th, 1944, he was returning from a journey by Red Cross car to Amsterdam. Late in the afternoon, on his way back to Arnhem, he was stopped near Heelsum by British parachutists who had landed there some hours before.

Needless to say that he was very much surprised by this event. He immediately offered his help. On the morning of September 18th, he was asked to act as a guide to the British troops. His first task was to take a jeep with supplies and ammunition to the troops which had been surrounded near the Arnhem bridge. One of the people who went with him was the Canadian Lieutenant Leo Haps. Mr.Labouchère and the others could not reach their destination, as the Germans covered all roads to the bridge with their machine-guns and mortars. It was tried to get through with the aid of a brengun carrier, they even tried to reach the bridge by rowing-boat, but they could not get through.

In the mean-time Mr.Labouchère had got wounded; he returned to Oosterbeek with Lt.Heaps, where he stayed in and around Hartenstein.

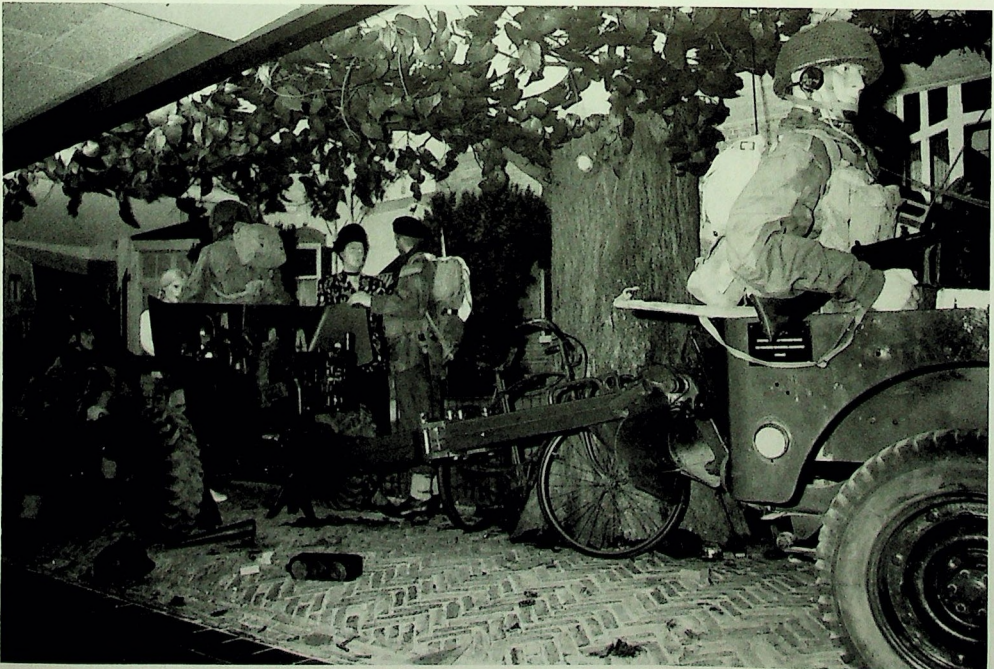
After the retreat of the 1st Airborne Division across the river Rhine, Mr.Labouchère managed to return to his family in Velp, from where he went on with his activities in the Dutch resistance till the end of the war.

Mr.Charles Bernard Labouchère showed much dedication and courage. From the side of the British he received "The King's Medal for Courage in the Cause of Freedom" and a "Certificate of Service", signed by Field Marshall Montgomery. He also received the Netherlands "Bronze Lion".





To mark the official re-opening of the large diorama in the basement of the Airborne Museum, Mr. Ch. B. Labouchère places a helmet on the head on one of the figures of the civilian resistance fighters in the diorama. (Photo: B. de Reus)



Detail of the new diorama. British troops invading Oosterbeek. (Photo B. de Reus.)



Second Excursion "Market Garden in het Rijk van Nijmegen", on October 3rd.

As so many people wanted to take part in the excursion, it has been decided to organize another excursion to the same region on October 3rd.

The programme will be the same as on May 30th, you can find it in newsletter no. 26. Time and place of departure are also the same.

Those who booked for the first excursion and had then to be disappointed, will automatically be put at the head of the new list, unless they inform the treasurer in time that they cannot take part. Apart from these participants, a very small number of seats is still available. Money should be paid before September 10th and bookings will be handled in order of receipt of payment. So be quick!

Booklet "The Tommies are coming!" will appear in September.

In our newsletter no. 26 we wrote about the booklet which will be given to the Oosterbeek schoolchildren. We can now tell you that the booklet is almost ready. It is the authentic diary of a schoolgirl about her experiences during the days of September 1944. She lived in that part of the Benedendorp that was defended by the "Lonsdale Force".

This booklet, titled "The Tommies are coming!" will appear in September. A limited number of the booklet will be for sale at the Museum from September 20th. It will cost f 10.--. (Chr.v.R.)

Large gift from Renkum Lions' Club.

On the occasion of its 15th anniversary, the Renkum Lions' Club donated the sum of one thousand guilders each to three institutions in the municipality of Renkum. One of these institutions was the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum. The handing over of the money took place during a meeting in the Museum. The President of the Lions' Service Clubs, Mr. Bob Koerten, gave a short survey of the objectives of the Clubs. For the Society, our chairman, Mr. Drs. J. Smits, thanked the Lions' Club for its princely gift, which shall be used for activities relating to the Society's Educational Project.

New address of our representative in Great Britain.

Our representative in Great Britain, Mr. F.M. Young, has moved to a new address: 6, Kildown Gardens, Cliftonville, Kent CT9 3EG, England.

Gift from Mrs. Lipmann Kessel.

Dr. Lipmann Kessel, who sadly died last year, was a surgeon with the 16th Parachute Regiment during the Battle of Arnhem. He was made a prisoner of war but succeeded in escaping from the Germans. The other day his widow donated some personal belongings of Dr. Lipmann Kessel to the Museum. Among other things they consist of his original RAMC cap badge, his para wing and the small compass which he used during his successful escape.

Donation of very special charts.

The Airborne Museum has received two air navigation charts from Sgt. H.D. Charrington of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Sgt. Charrington flew as an observer with the Stirling LJ 890 of 570 Squadron RAF. This plane flew missions on September 18th, 19th and 20th, 1944. On the charts Sgt. Charrington has marked the routes flown.

The Chair Project.

The "Chair Project" which we announced in our last newsletter, is proving a great success. Both British and Netherlands members have announced their wish to donate a chair with inscription to the Airborne Museum.

All these chairs have in the meantime been ordered. Some people have also donated

gifts of money. This money will in due time be used for the purchasing of the table.

Plans for placing the SHERMAN tank on a concrete socle.

After the liberation of Oosterbeek in 1945, one of the many things to be left behind was a SHERMAN tank of the Canadian Army. For some years this tank stood West of Hartenstein Hotel. In 1949 it was taken to Doorwerth Castle, when the Airborne Museum was started there. When in 1978 the Airborne Museum was moved to Hartenstein House, the tank also came back again.

Nowadays it stands East of the Museum, together with a British 17-pounder gun which was used in 1944.

If we want to preserve the SHERMAN tank in the right way, it should be put on a concrete socle.

Our member Mr. H. van de Brand, who has helped us before with the preservation of the tank, has already made a blueprint for an appropriate socle.

In the mean time we have also been able to discover some information about this tank. We hope to dedicate a mini-story to this subject as soon as we will have received some missing information from Canada.

Burial of Head-gardener Mr. Percy Dawson in the Airborne Cemetery.

Mr. Percy Dawson, who was Head-gardener of the Airborne Cemetery for 32 years, died in May of this year. He reached the age of 71.

He performed his task with great care and scrupulousness. In 1972 he received the "British Empire Medal". He retired in 1980.

It is a privilege of the head-gardener that he may be buried in "his" cemetery. Percy Dawson was buried in the Airborne Cemetery on May 27, 1987.

Book about the Polish Para Brigade.

The American author George Cholewczynski has for some years now been writing a history about the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade Group. He has done research for his book in America, England and Holland. Because of his knowledge of the Polish language, he has been able to make use of original Polish sources as diaries and reports. He has also interviewed a large number of Polish veterans, who provided him with many authentic photographs.

The book will appear in a Dutch as well as in an English version, and will come out in 1988.