

Friends of the **AIRBORNE** MUSEUM

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Newsletter No. 71, August 1998

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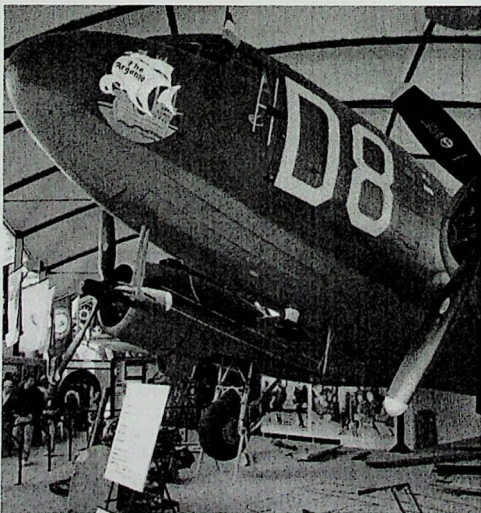
Normandy excursion

The plans for an excursion to Normandy announced in the last Newsletter have now taken shape.

The 5-day trip will take place from 26 to 30 May 1999 inclusive. The association considers itself lucky to be able to call on the help of one of our members, Mr Jac. Haegens from Sittard. In the last ten years Mr Haegens has organised many battlefield tours in the region and his knowledge of the history of D-Day and the days following 6 June 1944 borders on the encyclopaedic.

Further information about the excursion can be found on the application form enclosed with the Dutch edition of this Newsletter.

If you would like to go on this bus trip, your quick response would be greatly appreciated.



*A Douglas C-47 Skytrain (known to the British as the Dakota) in the Airborne Museum at Ste. Mère Église. This is one of the museums that will be visited during the excursion to Normandy in May 1999.
(Photo: Berry de Reus, 1998)*

'Verscheurde Horizon' (Torn Horizon)

At the end of 1995, Chris van Roekel thought it was time to dedicate a Ministry to the part played by British and Polish army padres during the Battle of Arnhem, there being so little known about the subject. With great determination Chris began gathering, sorting and studying all available information on the topic, and it soon became clear that he had enough information to fill a book. Now, almost three years later, this publication has appeared under the title 'Verscheurde Horizon, de Airborne Chaplains van Arnhem' (Torn Horizon, the Airborne Chaplains of Arnhem).

Eighteen British and Polish padres were involved in the area in September 1944; three lost their lives during the fighting. All chaplains were allotted to a specific unit, so their experiences, particularly in the first days of the Battle of Arnhem, are closely linked to the experiences of those units. The longer the fighting in and around the capital of Gelderland continued the more their efforts became concentrated on the countless wounded in the various aid posts, emergency hospitals and hospitals in Arnhem. Eventually a number of chaplains arrived at the hospital in Apeldoorn, and subsequently in various prisoner-of-war camps in Germany.

The book deals systematically with the role fulfilled by these army chaplains in all phases, and their post-war experiences are also not overlooked. The 140 page book is illustrated with numerous photographs, many previously unpublished.

The 'Verscheurde Horizon' is available at the Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein' for 27.50 guilders (25 guilders to Friends' Society members).

Increase in subscriptions

The Society's annual subscriptions are to be increased from 1 January 1999 as decided during the AGM on 4 April 1997. In the Netherlands, individual membership will go up to 30 guilders and family membership to 40 guilders. Subscriptions for members in Britain will be 10 pounds sterling, except for Arnhem veterans.

A payment form for our members in the Netherlands will be included with the next Newsletter, No. 72. Your prompt payment of subscriptions is kindly requested so that your 1999 membership card can be enclosed with Newsletter No. 73, due out in February 1999. This will help to save on postage costs.

(Erik van de Meiden, treasurer)

Bargain offers

September is 'Airborne month': first the Airborne Walk and then the Commemoration, and the society thought it appropriate to reduce the price of some of its sales items for the occasion.

Kate ter Horst's book 'Cloud over Arnhem' will be offered at 12.50 guilders. The price of the poster of the painting by artist Paulus Pieters will be reduced to 2.50 guilders, the Border Regiment badge to 7.50 guilders and the colouring picture for children to 4 guilders.

The poster, colouring picture and Border Regiment badge will only be available at society's sales stands, for example at the forthcoming Airborne Walk (Saturday 5 September). 'Cloud over Arnhem' can be bought at the sales stands and at the Airborne Museum.

(Erik van de Meiden, treasurer)

Battlefield Tour

Forty-eight people took part in the Battlefield Tour held on 6 June 1998 and organised by Wybo Boersma. One third of the participants were Friends' Society members, one third came from the Documentation Group '40-'45 with 'others' making up the final third.

In view of the excursion's great success, the Airborne Museum is arranging a similar trip to be held on Saturday 12 September 1998. The programme will be the same as that for 6 June 1998 (see Newsletter No. 69).

The cost of the excursion is 45 guilders per person and applications close on 7 September. More information can be obtained from Wybo Boersma: daytime at the Airborne Museum, tel 026 3337710, evenings at home on 0318 6396633.
(W. Boersma)

Unusual acquisition

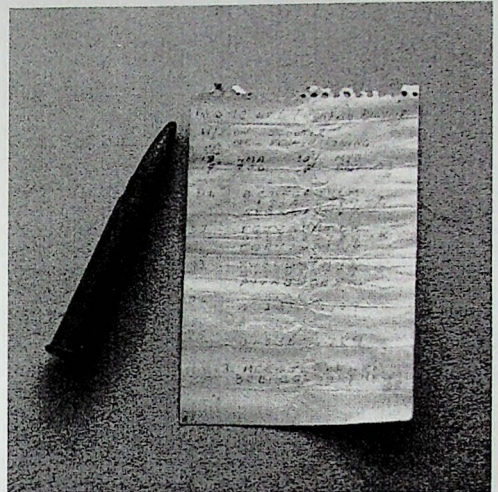
Society member M. Verhoef from Arnhem recently presented 'our' museum with an unusual British .303 cartridge. He found it last March alongside the Johannahoeveeweg.

It seems that the cartridge had been modified and used for the concealment of radio data. This was a mandatory practice laid down in appendix C of the British signals instructions. The bullet was removed from the cartridge case and hollowed out. A message form for pigeons, containing frequencies, slidex and other information, was inserted in the hollow bullet which was then re-fitted to the cartridge case.

The discovered form contained call-sign data from 18 September onwards and probably originates from

one of the 4th Parachute Brigade units. Considering the spot where it was found the cartridge could be from 156 Parachute Battalion or from Brigade Headquarters. Unfortunately the information is insufficient to identify the unit to which the call-signs belonged.

Mr Verhoef has given the bullet to the Airborne Museum on long-term loan.
(W. Boersma)



The British cartridge and message form found by Mr M. Verhoef alongside the Johannahoeveeweg in March of this year.

(Photo: Roland Boekhorst, April 1998)

Exhibition 1999

Although it seems a long way off, the Airborne Museum is already busy with the organisation of a new exhibition scheduled for the spring of 1999. The chosen subject: Operation Pegasus I and II.

As was the case for the current exhibition on British and Polish prisoners-of-war, a working group will be formed for the setting up of this exhibition. This will encompass the following activities: the writing of a schedule/plan, the gathering of photographs and other material, the making of a lay-out for the exhibition, the writing of texts, the design of a poster and the recording of (video)interviews with former participants and/or resistance members.

Those interested in becoming part of this working group can contact W. Boersma on the previously indicated telephone numbers.

Appeal for volunteers

The Airborne Museum possesses many films, video and sound recordings relating to the Battle of Arnhem. These archives include official films, video recordings of TV broadcasts, interviews with veterans on video tape and sound tape, radio broadcasts from the Second World War and so on. However, much of it is poorly arranged and

documented, making access rather difficult. The Airborne Museum is therefore looking for one or more volunteers to catalogue the film and sound archives. For this the tapes will first have to be viewed and/or listened to and then a description made of the contents of each tape. This is time-consuming work which the permanent museum staff are never able to get round to. Anyone willing to help is asked to get in touch with W. Boersma.

Is 'De Tafelberg' to be demolished?

Many of our members not living in the Arnhem area will be unaware of the fact, but this frightening question reflects the actual situation.

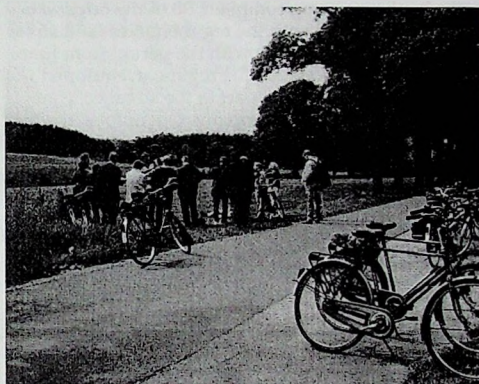
Various articles on the subject have appeared recently in the local and regional press. It is true: 'De Tafelberg', an historic building from the Battle of Arnhem, refuge for wounded civilians and servicemen in September 1944 and featured in the 1945 film 'Theirs is the Glory', is on the 'wanted' list of a property developer with one aim in mind; demolition and re-development.

Naturally enough this has not escaped the notice of the Friends' Society, and 'De Tafelberg' was an agenda topic at the management meetings held in April and May of this year. On the 20th May it was decided to send a letter to the board of the Airborne Museum Foundation setting out a number of possible plans for the use of 'De Tafelberg' and the part the museum might be able to play in these. The most important points are detailed below.

1. We find the newspaper suggestion that the building be used as a cultural/historical museum/centre very appealing.
2. In our view this provides a 'golden opportunity' to realise the desired and necessary extension to the museum. Larger objects such as a Bren gun carrier, a Morris truck plus 17 pounder, part of a glider, a Sturmgeschütz and an 88 mm Flak gun could be exhibited there. An historic walk could be set out between Hartenstein and 'De Tafelberg'.
3. Other museums and organisations, such as the Local History Society, the Veluwezoom Museum Foundation, the 'Kneppelhout' Foundation and the Dutch Aircraft Examination Group Foundation's Air War Museum 1940-1945, could find a home in 'De Tafelberg'.
4. The building has a large room ideally suited to the holding of lectures and film shows.
5. We realise that this plan would cost money, but which of the proposals in the 'Plan 21st century' for the Airborne Museum costs nothing?
6. Let us not get bogged down in an attitude of 'This simply isn't possible!'. Reacting attentively and the grasping of this opportunity show a policy of awareness.
7. We urgently request the foundation to investigate this option seriously and from a positive aspect.

That, in essence, is our letter.
Alas, the Society management has to report that up

to 21 August, three months after our letter was sent in fact, no reaction has been received from the Foundation, not even a confirmation of receipt or an explanation for the delay in handling the matter. And we are simply showing enthusiasm! Meanwhile, totally separate from the above issue, the Society has asked the municipal leaders to place the premises at Pietersbergseweg 46 ('De Tafelberg') on the municipal monument list. The same request has been made by the Local History Society, the 'Vijf Dorpen in 't Groen' Association and the Airborne Museum Foundation. The municipal Monument Commission has given the burgomaster and aldermen positive advice on the subject, on the understanding that it refers to the more recent northern section of the building. The council leaders have not yet come to a definite decision, but moves are being made to see that the advice is followed. (C. van Roekel)



Explanation is given at Johannahoeve during the cycle tour held on 13 June 1998.

(Photo: Joost Egberts)

In Memoriam: Ben de Vries

Mr Ben de Vries passed away in April of this year at the age of 81. Towards the end of 1957, career officer De Vries became board member of the 'Local Museum for the Renkum Municipality, Airborne Museum department' Foundation. He became chairman of the foundation in June 1965, a position he held until 1978 when he was succeeded by Jhr. mr. H.G. van Holthe tot Echten. During his long period as board member he carried out a tremendous amount of work for the Airborne Museum, which at that time was housed in the former stables at Kasteel Doorwerth. Through his extensive contacts with all manner of bodies in England, he was able to acquire much missing equipment for the museum over the years. He was also closely involved in the museum's modernisation in 1967.

With Ben de Vries' passing we have lost a remarkable personality who meant a lot to the Airborne Museum.

112th (Wessex) Field Regiment RA, TA, 1938-1946

Most books on the parts played by allied units in the liberation of Western Europe appeared within 10 years of the end of the war. Then it was relatively easy to produce these publications; events were still fresh in the memory and the majority of those who had been involved in the struggle were still alive.

Now, more than a half century after the war, writing such a book is a little more difficult. It is therefore the more remarkable when the occasional regimental history is published. And such was the case when, last year, the book '112th (Wessex) Field Regiment RA, TA, 1938-1946', by Douglas Goddard, Eric Rankin and James Vigers, arrived on the scene. The authors, all veterans of the 112th, reconstructed the eight-year history of this artillery regiment from official reports and eye-witness accounts. At the time the book was being compiled, 90 of the original 670 men who served with the regiment were still alive! Much of the book deals with the period from June 1944 to May 1945 when the regiment, equipped with 25-pounder guns, took part in the advance from Normandy to North Germany. Operations in which the regiment was involved include the battle of Odon and Hill 112, and operation 'Bluecoat' in Normandy, and after 'Arnhem' the Seine crossing, the defence of the area around Groesbeek, the 'Geilenkirchen Offensive' and operations 'Veritable' and 'Plunder'. A short chapter is given over to Operation Market Garden, when, from 23 September onwards, the regiment provided fire support to the 1st Airborne Division in Oosterbeek, initially from Oosterhout and later from Lienden in the Betuwe.

The book comprises 207 pages and contains maps and photographs. The book is not for sale at the Airborne Museum but can be ordered by sending 15 pounds sterling to Douglas Goddard, Quinells, 38 The Ridgeway, Wargrave-on-Thames, Berkshire RG10 8AS, United Kingdom. The book will then be sent to you as quickly as possible.

The Annual Air Despatch Memorial Service

This year once again a service will be held at the Air Despatch Memorial situated on the 'Van Limburg Stirumweg', 200 metres to the right of the main entrance of the Airborne Cemetery. The service will commence at 16.00 hrs on Sunday 20 September 1998.

The service is held in memory of the Air Despatchers of the Royal Army Service Corps who gave their lives in valiant attempts to resupply the Airborne forces during the Battle of Arnhem (operation Market Garden 18 - 25 September 1944).

The service is to be conducted by the Rev. Don Irvine (an ex-Air Despatcher) assisted by Lt Col C. Lawrence and Mr Frank van den Bergh, together with the 'Aerend Heem Scouting Groep'.

No 'Muur van Ortner' (Wall of Ortner) at Arnhem bridge

On Tuesday 30 June 1998, the Arnhem council voted by 21 votes to 16 against the placing of the 'Muur van Ortner' on the northern approach to the John Frost Bridge in Arnhem. This brought to an end a long period of discussion between those for and against this work of art. Austrian artist Manfred Ortner's creation was to consist of a tall steel structure intended to suggest a red, transparent wall.

A questionnaire showed that the majority of the Arnhem population was overwhelmingly against the placing of the artwork at a spot which had played such a dramatic role in the Battle of Arnhem. Protests against the sculpture were also received from Britain, namely from the Arnhem 1944 Veterans' Club and from Tony Hibbert, this year's Leader of the Pilgrimage.

Correction 1

In the previous Ministry (No. 58, 'Remembering General Sir John Winthrop Hackett' by C. van Roekel) a photograph appeared with the following caption: 'During the time in 'The Hollow' (a series of depressions in the Bilderberg woods), Staff Captain Jasper Booty took the opportunity of photographing Brigadier John Hackett (r) and Captain B.A.B. Taylor with his personal camera. Captain Taylor was Battery Captain of the 2nd Airlanding Battery, Light Regiment Royal Artillery. (photo: 20 September 1944)'.

A further check in the Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein' archives showed this caption to be incorrect. It should have read: 'During the time in a trench close to the Hartenstein, Captain Jasper Booty, Staff Captain of the 4th Parachute Brigade HQ, took the opportunity of photographing Brigadier John Hackett (right) and Lieutenant H.G. Taylor, commander of the Defence platoon, with his personal camera. (Photo 23 September 1944)'. See also the 'Photographs' section in the book 'The Harvest of Ten Years'.

The above means that an inclusion in 'Who was Who during the Battle of Arnhem' (bottom of page 35) will also have to be altered. (Geert Maassen)

Correction 2

We have received the following correction from Mr Steffen from Huizen.

'I read Newsletter No. 69 with interest, particularly the story of Flight Lieutenant David Lord's Victoria Cross. The article stated that 106 VCs were awarded during the Second World War.

Alas, this number is incorrect. The total number of VCs awarded was 182, of which 81 were posthumous awards. This covers all branches of the armed forces including those from British Commonwealth countries. Thirty-two VCs were awarded to members of the RAF, including of course David Lord.

For the total of 182 may I refer you to page 23 of Taprell Dorling's book 'Ribbons and Medals'.