



Friends of the **AIRBORNE** MUSEUM

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On 6 September 1998 a simple monument was unveiled at the spot in the Plancken Wambuis woods where Stirling LJ-883 from 570 Squadron was shot down on September 23rd 1944. The unveiling was carried out by Christine Watkins, sister of the pilot who died in the crash, Flying Officer W. Kirkham, and her husband. On the right is Society member Cees van den Bosch, who instigated the placing of this memorial. See also Newsletters 71 and 72. (Photo: Luc Enting, Lunteren)

19th General Members Meeting

The management invites you to attend the 19th General Members Meeting and AGM of the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum Oosterbeek. The meeting will be held in the Zalencentrum Lebret, Lebretweg 51, Oosterbeek (tel. 026 3333168) on Saturday 10 April 1999 starting at 2 pm.

The agenda is as follows:

1. Opening
2. Minutes of the General Members Meeting of 4 April 1998
3. General Report 1998
4. Financial Report 1998
5. Audit Committee Report
6. Budget for 1999
7. Election of Officials

8. Appointment of a reserve member to the Audit Committee
9. Questions
10. Closure of the meeting.

Point 4: Financial reports and information are enclosed.

Point 5: The Audit Commission report will be available for perusal half an hour before the meeting begins.

Point 7: Messrs C. van Roekel and E. Wijnhoud have reached the end of their terms of office and have declared themselves available for re-election.

Mr J. Smits will also be stepping down. The board of management have proposed Mr C.C. van den Bosch from Arnhem for a seat on the board.

Article 8 of the Statutes allows for the proposal of alternative candidates. In this case a written nomination should reach the secretary (Sportweg 2, 3871 HH Hoevelaken) at least 10 days before the meeting, signed by a minimum of 10 members and accompanied by a declaration of availability from the candidate. The candidate must be a Society member and adult.

Lecture on Fallingbostel

After the AGM on 10 April, Society member Marcel Anker will give a lecture entitled 'The German prisoner-of-war camp Stalag XI-B at Fallingbostel'. Many servicemen who fought at Arnhem were imprisoned there.

Marcel Anker originally intended to give this lecture during the theme day held on 31 October last year, but was unable to do so because of unforeseen family circumstances.

Annual report 1998

During the General Members Meeting on 4 April 1998, retiring board members Mrs J.M. de Langen and Mr W.T.B. de Ruyter were re-elected.

Twelve meetings of the board were held and a

number of consultations took place with the 'Publications' and 'Events' work groups. Mr W. Boersma represented the Foundation board at our meetings and his input was very much appreciated.

Membership. We started the year with 1282 members, but sadly 13 Society members passed away during 1998. They were the ladies C.N. van Dijke and T. Klaassen-Keller, and the gentlemen G. van Brenk, M.F. Kelderman, M.A. ten Horn, Ph. Zwijnenberg, G.A. Versteegh, J.A. Jaspers, G. Gatland, R.J. Brough, R. Cook, E.C. Wedgbury and W.G. Fillingham. Eighty-three members were removed from the membership list during 1998 through resignation or non-payment of subscriptions, but thankfully a membership increase of 153 meant we closed the year with a total of 1339 members.

Newsletters. Thanks to the efforts of the editors and the valiant few who are always on hand to get things ready for posting, it was again possible to publish four Newsletters complete with Ministories.

Work groups. Last year the 'Events' work group was extremely busy with the organisation of the excursion and the theme day (see below). The 'Publications' work group advised on the production of the book 'Verscheurde Horizon' (Torn Horizon).

There is still much interest, both here and abroad, in the Schools Project, which provides young folk with information on the Battle of Arnhem. More than 3,000 schoolchildren visited the Airborne Museum within the framework of the Schools Project. The Airborne Commemorations Foundation also cooperated in this educational scheme.

Excursion/Theme Afternoon. The cycle trip held on 13 June with the '4th Parachute Brigade' as its theme was a great success, thanks mainly to the efforts of the 'Events' work group. The Theme afternoon held in the Zalencentrum Lebet on 31 October, during which Mr W. Boersma gave a talk on the Allied prisoners-of-war after the Battle of Arnhem, was very well attended.

Unfortunately Mr M. Anker had to postpone his lecture on the German prisoner-of-war camp at Fallingbostal for personal reasons. In its stead Mr Boersma explained one or two things about the Airborne Museum.

The special Battlefield Tour held on 6 June was such a success that there was a repeat performance on 12 September. The tours were organised by Mr Boersma from the Airborne Museum Foundation.

During the year the Airborne Museum received as gifts a WS no.18 Radio Set, a uniform and pieces of equipment, and a contribution towards the cost of an investigation into a future vision for the Airborne Museum.

The books 'Krijt onder de schoenen' (Chalk under the shoes) by Society member Mr W. van Houten and 'Verscheurde Horizon' (Torn Horizon) by Mr C. van

Roekel were our new items for sale. Sales stands were present at the General Members Meeting, the theme afternoon, the Royal Netherlands Air Force Open Days, the Airborne Walk, Resistance Day and the Pegasus Walk. Proceeds for the Society amounted to 3,709 guilders and 50 cents.

All in all, 1998 was a good year.
(M. de Langen, secretary)

Normandy 'travellers', watch out!

Preparations for the trip to Normandy are proceeding apace. Agreements on accommodation bookings have been reached and the programme has been established. At the moment a comprehensive excursion guide is being compiled.

We propose holding a preparatory talk with all participants, which will take place at the Airborne Museum on Friday 7 May at 8 pm. During the talk the programme will be run through and the excursion guides will be handed out. The subject will be introduced with the aid of some video films about D-Day. We hope to see the participants at the above time, date and location.

The outstanding payments for the excursion need to be made before 1 March 1999 so that we can pay the necessary deposits.

(C. van Roekel, on behalf of the Normandy excursion committee)

Unique boat journey on 16 May 1999

Using the application form included with this Newsletter, you can register for a unique boat trip that will take you from Arnhem to beyond Nijmegen and back via the river Rhine, the Panmerden Canal and the river Waal. This exceptional day trip, which does not appear in the normal boat operators' programme, is being offered as part of the celebrations surrounding the approach of our Friends' Society's 20th anniversary and the fact that our museum celebrates its 50th birthday this year. As well as passing many places that played a major role in Operation Market Garden, the tour will take you through one of the most beautiful parts of our country and will acquaint you with the international waterways that are so important to our economy. Everyone - non-members included - is welcome! This means you can also reserve places for partner, children and acquaintances on the enclosed application form. But don't wait too long, and don't allow this unique opportunity to pass you by!
(C. van Roekel)

50 years Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein'

The Airborne Museum was set up in 1949. It was then part of the Renkum Local History Trust and was

initially housed in a wooden barracks in the inner courtyard of the largely destroyed Doorwerth Castle. Some time later the exhibits were moved to the castle's former stables. A quick calculation tells us that, in 1999, the Airborne Museum will have been in existence for 50 years, and so numerous activities related to this anniversary will be held throughout the year. An overview of events is given below.

10 and 11 April: National Museum Weekend. Guides will lead the 'Perimeter walk'. Starting times 12.00, 14.00 and 15.00 hours. Distance 5 km.

The guides will provide explanations on the way. Free route map for all participants. A discount will be given on the museum entry charge during that weekend. Any member prepared to act as a guide can make this known at the museum. The battlefield tours will be under the overall direction of Mr A. Groeneweg.

16 April - 1 November: 'Ontsnapt van de Veluwe' (Escape from the Veluwe).

Exhibition about the escape to safety from the Veluwe by 138 servicemen from the 1st Airborne Division and other allied units, plus a few Dutch civilians, on 22/23 October 1944.

8 May: National Cycling Day. Cyclists following the Tourist Board Cycle Route can visit the Airborne Museum at group rates.

21 May - 20 June: "Invasion '44 - '99". Members of the '40 - '45 Documentation Group will be exhibiting material from their collection relating to the Normandy invasion on 6 June 1944.

15 May: The now traditional book fair in the Airborne Museum selling second-hand books and documents concerning the 2nd World War. Those taking part will include the SFAM (Mr O. Luursema) and members of the '40 - '45 Documentation Group.

19 June: Battlefield Tour. Led by guides, a visit will first be made to the Airborne Museum followed by a bus trip and walk over the former battlefields. Starting time, 10 am at the museum. The Battlefield Tour will last until approximately 4.30 pm. Cost, 52.5 guilders including lunch and information folder. There are 47 places available. (W. Boersma)

Part of Pack Howitzer found

A unique find occurred during a military-archeological investigation near a footpath alongside the Valkenburglaan in Oosterbeek on Saturday 10 October 1998.

While digging, the investigators came across a supply container with crash pad and small board with lights and battery still attached. Other WW II items found near the container included a German 5 cm shell case, bullets, a German pocket torch and a Sten gun magazine. Once the container was removed there appeared to be another sizeable piece of metalwork in the excavations. It turned out to be a piece of cast steel with two handgrips, weighing about 50 kilograms. The experts on hand quickly identified it as the top sleigh of a 75 mm Pack Howitzer.

Never before has such a large, complete section of a 75 mm gun been found in Oosterbeek. The guns are best known for the positions they occupied in the meadows and farmland around and about the Old Church in Lower Oosterbeek during the greater part of the Battle of Arnhem. (Dick Timmerman)

Editors' note: These guns were used by the 1st Airlanding Light Regiment, Royal Artillery, during the Battle of Arnhem. The two Troops of No. 1 Battery that landed on 17 September 1944 were moved on 18 September from their positions south-east of landing zone 'Z' to new positions on the eastern and south-eastern edge of the farmland between the Bilderberg Hotel and Valkenburglaan. Sergeant Dennis Smith of the Army Film and Photographic Unit took two photographs of a gun from one of these units in action in that area. During the afternoon of 19 September, No. 1 Battery was ordered to leave the Bilderberg and take up new positions in Lower Oosterbeek: A Troop to the north of the Concert Hall and B Troop to the south of the Van Hofwegen laundry near Ploegseweg. There they remained until the end of the battle.



Top sleigh from a 75 mm Pack Howitzer. It was found on 10 October 1998 near a footpath bordering a field between the Bilderberg Hotel and Valkenburglaan in Oosterbeek. (Photo: Dick Timmerman, Arnhem)

Items from Huize De Tafelberg brought to safety

On 1 January 1999, Huize De Tafelberg in Oosterbeek came under new ownership. For fifty years it was owned by the fathers of the Society for African Missions, but they have now sold it. The last inhabitants left for Cadier and Keer in the province of Limburg on 21 December 1998.

Those of you who have ever visited the building will know that photographs and a plaque that hung in the hall recalled the days in September 1944 when the building served as an emergency hospital, and the summer of 1945 when it was used during the shooting of the film 'Theirs is the Glory'. Shortly before the last inhabitants left, these unusual souvenirs were removed from De Tafelberg in order to avoid their being stolen, and they are now safely

stored in the Airborne Museum.

According to the latest reports there are plans to build 21 luxury apartments on De Tafelberg site. Efforts will be made to ensure retention of the present building's characteristic front elevation plus the hall and staircase.

When the new apartment complex is completed it is hoped that a place will be found in the building for the plaque and the photographs.

Request for assistance

Brigadier Frank Steers has sent us an appeal from England, the gist of which is as follows:

At the moment an investigation is under way into the Logistic Support of the 1st Airborne Division. Brigadier Steers would like to get in contact with former members of the Royal Army Service Corps (RASC), including from Air Despatch, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC) and the Army Catering Corps. All information on the above units, however modest, could be of value to this research. He is especially interested in former cooks and others who were involved in the provision of food.

Information about these servicemen is difficult to come by because they were attached to the various divisional units.

Anyone who can provide names or has other relevant information can get in touch with Brigadier Frank Steers MBE at 9 Goldfinch Close, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6XW, England. His telephone number is 01264-363582 (from England) and his E-mail address is 101706.1162@Compuserve.com.

'Gevangen op de Veluwe' (Trapped on the Veluwe)

The book 'Gevangen op de Veluwe' was published in October of last year. It was written by Mr Wolter Noordman from Heerde and is about operation Pegasus 2. This operation took place on 18 November 1944 with the intention of getting a group of nearly 100 allied airmen and airborne soldiers back across the Rhine to their own lines. Most of the airmen had made emergency landings in the Netherlands and the airborne soldiers had been left behind on the Veluwe following the failed Battle of Arnhem.

Earlier, on 22 October 1944, a 138 strong group of servicemen escaped across the Rhine at Renkum: this was operation Pegasus 1. For all sorts of reasons Pegasus 2 was a failure. Only seven men succeeded in crossing the Rhine and of the others, seven were killed. About thirty men ended up in German prisoner-of-war camps, some wounded. Those remaining took the opportunity of re-contacting the Resistance.

Mr Noordman spent eight years investigating the background of this operation. He researched 51 escape stories, but since the inclusion of all of them would have resulted in a complicated and unreadable book, he has selected the experiences of eight servicemen who tried to find their way about the Veluwe, including those of pilots and airborne soldiers.

The stories are written in such a way that the servicemen's own words are used. The various experiences overlap one another to a degree and give an excellent picture of the Resistance's work in Central Holland. A number of well-known names appear in the book, for instance Brigadier Hackett, Captain Noble (RAMC), Tex Banwell and Lieutenant Du Bois (SAS).

A number of men were nevertheless brought back over the Rhine via the Biesbosch and elsewhere following the failure of operation Pegasus 2. 'Gevangen op de Veluwe' shows in particular the efforts made by the Veluwe inhabitants in the hiding and re-location of these allied servicemen. Without the help of the Resistance many more of them would undoubtedly have finished up in German POW camps.

The book is lavishly provided with footnotes and contains a comprehensive bibliography, sad to say something that is often lacking in other publications. A book to read beside the open fire in the winter! 'Gevangen op de Veluwe' by Wolter Noordman is published by Voorhoeve in Kampen. It comprises 192 pages, is illustrated and costs 29.50 guilders. It is available in bookshops and at the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek.
(W. Boersma)

Message from the Treasurer

Most members have now paid their subscriptions for 1999 and will find their membership card enclosed with this Newsletter. Those who have not yet paid are kindly, though urgently, requested to do so as soon as possible, otherwise it will be assumed that one is no longer interested in membership of the Society and will result in automatic removal from the membership list.

The subscription fees applicable per 1/1/1999 are given below.

For members in the Netherlands, Individual Membership is 30 guilders, Family Membership is 40 guilders and Life Membership 400 guilders. Payment can be made in the Netherlands into Postbank account number 4403641 under the heading, Vereniging Vrienden Airborne Museum, St. Bernulphusstraat 8, 6861 GS Oosterbeek. For members in the UK, Individual Membership costs 10 pounds sterling, Family Membership 13 pounds sterling and Life Membership 125 pounds sterling. Payments in England can be made (in pounds sterling) to the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum, Lloyds Bank, Paignton, Devon TQ3 3ER, account number 7136514. Members elsewhere in Europe pay 35 guilders for Individual Membership and members outside Europe, 50 guilders. They can make their payments in Dutch guilders into account number 53.66.21.128 of the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum, ABN-AMRO BANK, PO Box 46, 6860 AA, Oosterbeek, The Netherlands.
(E. van de Meiden, Treasurer)