



Friends of the **AIRBORNE** MUSEUM

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A present for the Airborne Museum to celebrate its Golden Jubilee. Friends' Society chairman Chris van Roekel presents Foundation chairman Mr J.W.A.M. Verlinden with an antique LEICA camera. The presentation was made during the jubilee boat excursion on 16 May 1999. (Photo: Peter Klomp)

Jubilee boat excursion an outstanding success

The sun shone brightly as if to add to the festive mood as some 250 people boarded a river cruise-ship in Arnhem on Sunday 16 May 1999, intent on enjoying a boat trip on the rivers Rhine and Waal. This special boat excursion had been organised to mark the Airborne Museum's Golden Jubilee and the approaching 20th anniversary of our Society's existence. Not only Society members and partners, and others involved with the museum were to be seen; many other interested 'outsiders' also made use of the opportunity to go on a day's 'cruise'. Proof that the 'Friends' excursion group had organised the trip to perfection was indicated, among other things, by the 33-page excursion guide, which contained many photos and maps, and provided comprehensive information on the river

banks and hinterlands past which we would be sailing.

With the Airborne flag fluttering at the bow, the vessel set off on the Rhine in an easterly direction, then, via the Panterden canal to the river Waal. Once on the Waal we sailed on to the point just beyond Nijmegen where, on 20 September 1944, men of the 82nd American Airborne Division crossed the Waal under heavy German fire.

However, attention was not focused entirely on the history of almost 55 years ago: it was clear just from the numerous remains of defensive works still to be seen, that the rivers and their shores had played a major role in sieges and battles down through the centuries. The excursion guide covered these events extensively, augmented where necessary with verbal commentary.

Those less interested in the historical aspects were also well catered for, not least by the beautiful views one could enjoy, and not forgetting the animated conversations that took place, for which there was ample opportunity, assisted if and when required by a drop of whatever one fancied.

The inner man was also well catered for, an excellent lunch being included as part of the boat trip.

The museum's jubilee was highlighted when Society chairman Chris van Roekel presented the chairman of the Airborne Museum Foundation, Mr J.W.A.M. Verlinden, with a new acquisition for the museum, namely a type IIIb LEICA camera complete with telephoto lens. This type of camera was used by German war photographers during the Battle of Arnhem.

Doubtless our Society's management board received many plaudits for coming up with the idea of such a boat excursion, an excursion attended by many and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Grateful thanks to the organisers!

(Han Kardol)

Excursion to Normandy

On Wednesday morning the 23rd of May, and splendidly on time, 53 members of the Society of Friends of the Airborne Museum left Oosterbeek for

a five-day excursion to Normandy. On the way down our tour guide Jacques Haegens gave a talk about the preparations for D-Day, the landings and the fighting. His explanations were illustrated with video films. By the time we arrived in Bayeux Jacques had added greatly to our knowledge of the subject.

The first excursion day began with a visit to Arromanches where we inspected the remains of the Mulberry harbour, followed by a visit to the D-Day museum. From there we went on to the artillery bunkers and associated observation bunker at Longues-sur-Mer. Then, via the American Cemetery at Laurent-sur-Mer, we arrived at Pointe du Hoc, captured by 2nd Battalion the US Rangers on 6 June 1944. The bomb craters and smashed bunkers made a great impression on those present. On the way to St. Marie du Mont we passed the dropping zones of the 101st American Airborne Division, and Jacques Haegens pointed out the problems that had arisen due to the scattered landings of units from both American Airborne Divisions. After visiting Utah beach and the museum we arrived at the Merderet river, where many photos were taken including several of the beautiful statue of the American parachutist 'Iron Mike'. We then left for St. Mère Église where we looked around the Airborne Museum and the famous church. On the return journey to Bayeux we stopped for a short visit to La Cambe German cemetery.

Friday was a slightly less hectic day, and our guide for the morning was Robert Voskuil. He gave a knowledgeable account of the landings and battles of the 6th British Airborne Division. We visited the Merville battery and the cemetery at Ranville, after which lunch was taken at the Café Gondree, close to Pegasus Bridge. At the bridge Robert Voskuil explained about the landing of three Horsa gliders nearby and the bridge's subsequent capture and defence. During the talk he also recalled the role of Major John Howard, who died quite recently. In the afternoon we visited Sword and Juno beaches.

Saturday, the last excursion day. In the morning we went first to the huge British cemetery in Bayeux and then on to the 'Musée de Bataille de Normandie'. In the afternoon we visited the Falaise area where a large number of German troops were cut off and surrounded in August 1944. One could have heard a pin drop in St. Lambert sur Dives church as Jacques Haegens told of the breakout from the pocket by the 10th SS Panzer Division 'Fruntsberg', a unit well-known to us. It was this division that played such a decisive part in Operation Market Garden in September 1944. According to Jacques it was going too far to suggest that the Battle of Arnhem was already lost at Falaise, but it gave us much food for thought. A trouble-free return journey saw us back in Oosterbeek on Sunday evening where we could look back on a successful, informative excursion. (Th.C.A. Mensing)

Henk van den Brand honoured

On 29 April 1999, Society member Henk van den Brand was made a Member of the Order of Oranje Nassau. Burgomaster Scholten performed the award ceremony in Arnhem town hall and recounted Henk's efforts on behalf of ex-marines, for our museum and its Society, and for a number of religious and social institutions. We congratulate Henk and his wife Lies on this well-deserved honour, and are proud to have contributed to it in some small way. (C. van Roekel)

In memoriam: Fokke Westra

On Saturday 10 July we received the sad news of the sudden death of our respected member Fokke Westra. For years he exercised careful control over the conference room during meetings and other Society events. He was a calm person who went about his work with great thoroughness. We offer his wife and family strength and courage at this dreadfully sad time. (C. van Roekel)

Photo book of Airborne Commemorations, 1989-1998

To mark the 55th commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem, the Airborne Commemorations Foundation, in which our Society participates, will be publishing a beautifully produced book of photographs of the last ten years' commemorations. The book comprises 64 pages and is of 20 x 15 cm format. There is a colour photo on each page with text in English, Polish and Dutch.

A free copy is available to all our members, but in order to obtain one you have to abide by the following 'rules'.

1. Host families, members of the Arnhem 1944 Veterans' Club and a number of other institutions will receive the book from the 'Lest We Forget' foundation or from their own organisation. Therefore, they do not need to contact us because the distribution lists are linked and their names do not appear on our list.
2. Members living in the Netherlands should send a strong, stamped (with 2.40 guilders-worth of stamps), self-addressed envelope (approx 25 x 18 cm) to; The Vereniging Vrienden van het Airborne Museum, Utrechtseweg 232, 6862 AZ Oosterbeek. The book will then be sent to you around mid-September in your s/a envelope. Members in England who are not participating in the 1999 Pilgrimage or are not members of the Arnhem 1944 Veterans' Club should send a similar envelope (self-addressed and with a min. 75 p stamp) to Mr Banks Middleton, Controller Airborne Forces Security Fund, Browning Barracks, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2BU. He is taking care of the distribution in England.

Members in other countries can obtain a copy by making this known to the Society in writing. These members are asked to include the cost of postage and packing in their subscriptions for next year (2000).

It is certainly not the intention that one should try to obtain more than one copy of this valuable book via us and other bodies. In this we are relying on everyone's integrity, because only in the ways described above can we ensure fair distribution of this publication to all interested parties.

If we haven't received your stamped, self-addressed envelope by 1 October we shall assume that you are not interested in this beautiful photo book, which is only available through one of the above channels and therefore not from or at the museum.

(C. van Roekel)

Help needed with exhibition

Various members of the Society of Friends are involved in research into aspects of the Battle of Arnhem. In practice it is often difficult to bring the results of such research to the attention of a wider public. Many members also collect objects or documents related to the battle, and these items would perhaps be interesting for others to see. For this reason the Airborne Museum would like to hold an exhibition from 27 November 1999 to 9 January 2000 in which Society members would have the opportunity of showing the results of their investigations and/or parts of their collections. The idea is that the exhibition be compiled by the various Society members themselves. Exhibits could include such things as objects or documents with a story, the history of a particular house that played a major role during the struggle, a specific event that has been researched in detail, information on servicemen who took part in the battle, background information about items of equipment, uniforms, badges, etc, or excavated 'finds'.

Members who are prepared to assist in the exhibition, either in an organisational capacity or through the provision of material, should contact W. Boersma before 1 October at; Binnenhof 38, 6751 DP Ede, tel: 0318 639633, e-mail: w.boersma@wxs.nl.

'The Gunners at Arnhem'

Last July a book entitled 'The Gunners at Arnhem' by Peter Wilkinson MC was published in England. The book deals with the role of the Royal Artillery units in the Battle of Arnhem. The main participants at Arnhem were the 1st Airlanding Light Regiment RA, the 1st Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery RA and the 2nd (Oban) Airlanding Anti-Tank Battery RA. Attention is also given to the 1st Forward Observation Unit (Airborne) RA and to the artillery units of 30 British Corps that provided artillery support to the airborne forces in

Oosterbeek from 21 September 1944 until the withdrawal.

In his book the author gives a summary of the day-to-day activities of the various artillery units.

Matter-of-fact descriptions of the progress of the battle are generously interspersed with personal accounts of servicemen who took part.

The author was also able to call on his own experiences because during the battle of Arnhem, Lieutenant Peter Wilkinson was Command Post Officer of No. 3 Battery, 1st Airlanding Light Regiment RA. His Command Post was located in a house in Kerkpad, Oosterbeek, between 'E' and 'F' Troop positions.

Wilkinson's book is written in a fast-moving, clear style which makes for easy reading. It contains 176 pages with 7 maps and 53 photographs. The foreword is by Brigadier M.D.K. Dauncey DSO, DL, who, as a Glider Pilot, took part in the defence of the artillery positions around the Old Church in the Benedendorp in Oosterbeek during the Battle of Arnhem.

'The Gunners at Arnhem' is published by Spurwing Publishing, PO Box 5273, East Haddon, Northampton NN6 8YN, England. The ISBN no. is 0-9535754-0-3.

In the Netherlands the book can be purchased at the Airborne Museum (price £ 37.95). In England it is available at bookshops, including the Airborne Forces Museum shop in Aldershot, at 11 pounds 50 pence. It can also be obtained from; Airborne Forces Promotion Ltd., Browning Barracks, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2BU, telephone 01252-316104, fax 01252-311228. There are no p&p charges for deliveries in England.

'Blik Omhoog' Volume III published

On 23 June 1999, Volume III of the book 'Blik Omhoog' was presented in Wolfheze. The 'Blik Omhoog' series covers the war as experienced in the village of Wolfheze and wide surroundings. For more than ten years the author Cor Janse has been engaged in gathering information on the subject and has interviewed literally hundreds of people. This third book covers the period following the Battle of Arnhem, and subjects dealt with include the evacuation, the experiences of people who stayed behind in Wolfheze, the construction of German defences, the liberation, the village's recovery and so on. The 400-page plus volume III contains a treasure-trove of information and personal recollections, and is liberally illustrated, many of the photographs being previously unpublished. The book costs 45 guilders.

A Supplementary section with index and additions will appear in September, at which point Cor Janse's wide-ranging project will be finished. The complete series will be looked at in a future edition of the Newsletter.

Exhibition in the town hall

On 4 August 1999, the annual archive exhibition was opened in Oosterbeek town hall. The emphasis this year, partly in connection with the publication of the 4th edition of the 'Roll of Honour', is on 'dead and missing servicemen from the Battle of Arnhem'. The title chosen was 'I regret to have to inform you'. In many cases this was the opening sentence of the telegram a family would receive if a family member serving with British forces was killed or missing. For the exhibition, the municipal archives were greatly assisted by the 'Arnhem Battle Research Group' (Philip Reinders from Rheden and Peter Vrolijk from Rotterdam), and by Alex Junier from The Hague. Hans Timmerman from Arnhem provided material, documents and photos relating to German servicemen who died. Exceptional within this section is the information made available by Dr. Lothar Dinkel from Heilbronn in Germany regarding his brother who, as a Wehrmacht soldier, was killed on 22 September 1944 near Ploegseweg in Oosterbeek.

The exhibition in the town hall runs until Friday 1 October 1999.



On 4 August 1999 the organisers of the Oosterbeek town hall exhibition were photographed by Berry de Reus; Hans Timmerman, Philip Reinders, Peter Vrolijk, and Alex Junier.

Appeal for information on German dead

For some years Society member Hans Timmerman, employed in the Gelderland Documentation Centre at Arnhem Library, has been compiling information on German servicemen who were killed during the Battle of Arnhem and were buried in the municipality of Renkum. As far as is known this concerns 479 dead, whose field graves were to be found in gardens, woods, cemeteries and at roadsides. In 1945 the Council Works Service exhumed the remains from these field graves and removed them to the German cemetery at Zijpendaal in Arnhem where they were reinterred.

Hans Timmerman would like to get in touch with any civilians who were involved, in whatever capacity, in the burying of German soldiers in 1944 and in the clearance of German field graves after the war. He is also looking for people who could indicate the location of former field graves or may have photographs of the same.

Anyone with information on the above subject is kindly asked to contact Hans Timmerman at; Mr D. van Ruyvenpad 1, 6814 NA Arnhem, telephone 026 4430904.

Pegasus Walk

On 23 October next the 16th Pegasus Walk will be held in the Bennekom area. The major part of the walk will follow the route taken on the night of 22/23 October 1944 during operation Pegasus I, in which a substantial number of allied servicemen managed to escape across the Rhine with the help of the Dutch Resistance. For more information and registration ring the Dutch Tourist Board office (in Ede) on 0318 614444

Airborne Battle Wheels

This year Airborne Battle Wheels Oosterbeek (ABWO) will be organising their fourth successive annual meet at the Bilderberg campsite in Oosterbeek. Because of the 55th commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem this year's event will have a special tint, and the programme will differ from that of previous years. The ABWO campsite will be open to participants from Tuesday 15 September. On Friday afternoon there will be a demonstration of 75 mm howitzers at Westerbouwing. On Saturday, after the parachute drop on Ginkel Heath, the 'Race to the Bridge' will be held, organised by Rob van Meel. This is a journey featuring authentic army vehicles from the 1940-1945 period. Following the race, at about 4 pm, the vehicles will be on display outside the Airborne Museum.

On Sunday afternoon the ABWO will be co-organisers of the 'Tour of Honour', a tour through all the villages in the Renkum municipality involving a huge number of military vehicles. This tour for the veterans will surely be the highpoint of the week's commemorations. This also applies in particular to its sequel, the so-called 'Farewell Parade' from Hartenstein to the Town Hall square. As usual, our camp at Bilderberg will again be well worth seeing. There will be many participants present with authentic clothing and vehicles, and some original wartime tents will be in use on the site. The ABWO camp is located just before the main entrance to the Bilderberg campsite, in the woods to the right. The way to the camp will be well indicated and everyone is welcome to pay us a visit.

(Dick Timmerman)