



Friends of the **AIRBORNE** MUSEUM

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6 April 2002. Chris van Roekel receives a book voucher for the standard work 'Market Garden, Then and Now' from the hands of Robert Voskuil on the occasion of Chris's retirement as chairman of the Friends' Society. The book is due for publication in September this year. On the right is Chris's successor as chairman, Ben Kolster. (photo G.J. Koster)

Chris van Roekel's farewell

During the AGM of the Friends' Society on 6 April 2002, Chris van Roekel relinquished his post as Society chairman. He is succeeded by Ben Kolster. Chris served on the board of management for 19 years, and in those 19 years he got through an unbelievable amount of work of an extremely varied nature.

Chris joined the board on 12 March 1983 under Jan Smits's chairmanship and from the very beginning it was obvious he was full of energy and new ideas. One of his first proposals was the addition to the Newsletter of a so-called 'Ministry' in which a specific and independent aspect of the Battle of Arnhem would be explored. Chris wrote the first. It was about the use of carrier pigeons during the Battle of Arnhem and appeared with Newsletter No. 10 of May 1983. Many more Ministories were to flow from his pen.

He also tackled the organisation of theme days with great energy, and under his leadership the first big theme day was held on 2 July 1983. Walking tours, bus tours and even boat trips followed.

Later he proposed the organisation of excursions

abroad as well. This resulted in the outstandingly successful trips to Normandy, England and to Hamminkeln in Germany.

As an ex-headmaster, the passing on of knowledge has always had his special interest. In February 1984 he took the initiative for a 'Schools Project' whereby students could learn about the events of September 1944 in a particularly educative manner at the Airborne Museum. It was obviously a hit because the project created a lot of interest and continues to do so. It must have given Chris a great feeling of satisfaction when, on 22 June last year, he was able to welcome the project's 50,000th participant at the Airborne Museum.

His organisational skills came well to the fore in this project and on many other occasions. Chris knew everyone and therefore had easy access everywhere. Few people could resist his friendly boldness, and once he had an idea fixed in his head it was difficult to remove.

He was the first to entice sponsors into helping with the financing of various society projects, such as the printing of instruction folders for the Schools Project and the issuing of publications. This saved the society considerable amounts of money. He also played a very active part in the sale of items. For years he and Mieke de Langen took care of the stock in the society shop. Whenever the society had a stall at one or other event he was often to be found nearby.

And another fact that is not generally known. Thanks to his efforts, disabled veterans who were not in a position to meet the costs themselves were able to attend the commemorations of the Battle of Arnhem at the expense of a large Dutch health insurance company. This continued for a number of years. It is a hallmark of his character: he is always there for people who are a little less well off.

In addition to the Schools Project he contributed greatly to the dissemination of knowledge of 'September 1944' through the stimulation of publications and by writing books himself.

By 1984 he had already taken the initiative in compiling a number of walking, cycling and motorists guides through the Arnhem battle area. He gave his full support to the publication of the 'Roll of Honour' which appeared in 1986 and has been reprinted many times. The booklet 'De Tommies Komen' (The Tommies are Coming) followed in 1987. He carried out thorough research for his own publications 'Who was who during the Battle of Arnhem', 1992, and 'Verscheurde Horizon' (Torn Horizon), published in 1998. He was a daily presence in the museum for many years. He organised everything, from the building of the plinth for the Sherman tank in 1987 and the painting of the guns, to the planting of flower bulbs around the museum.

When plans for the modernisation of the Airborne Museum were tabled in 1993, he and a team of people implemented the 'Facelift' Lottery to help defray the cost of the project. This demanded a great deal of his time and energy, but the profits from this action made it all worthwhile.

A small bulldozer of the type used in the Battle of Arnhem was discovered in Belgium and Chris would not rest until it had been bought by the society. Following a long period of restoration, in which he himself took part, the vehicle is now a showpiece in one of the Airborne Museum's dioramas.

In March 1999 Chris answered the call to become our society's chairman, and from that moment his life became much more hectic. Many pleasant as well as less pleasant things had to be dealt with, which he did with great verve because he was always fully behind what had to be done.

For health reasons Chris must now take things a bit easier and has therefore resigned from the board, much to our regret. However, he has said that he still intends doing some work for the society, and that pleases us no end. We very much appreciate it!

The society owes Chris a great debt of gratitude for all the work he has done over the last nineteen years. Chris, A THOUSAND TIMES THANKS!!
(The board of the Friends' Society)

Walk on 15 June

On Saturday 15 June next the Society of Friends is organising a walking excursion through part of the 1944 'Perimeter'.

The walk will begin at 10.00 hours at the Airborne Museum. In the morning a number of points in the northern section of the 'Perimeter' will be visited, including the positions of the 7th Battalion The King's Own Scottish Borderers. Participants will then head for the Schoonoord restaurant for lunch.

After lunch the excursion will continue to Annastraat (10th Battalion), the Dam and the Old Church in Benedendorp, where a number of the Light Regiment Royal Artillery positions will be visited among others. The excursion will then carry on to the Pietersberg and from there to the Tafelberg, where

the participants will be able to see for themselves how the demolition work that began at the end of April is progressing. The walk will end at about 17.00 hours at the Airborne Museum.

If you would like to take part you are kindly requested to contact Eugene Wijnhoud, Bernhardlaan 41/1, 6824 LE Arnhem, telephone 026 3513100, email: E.Wijnhoud@I2move.nl, before 10 June. The cost of this walking excursion is € 20, which includes the cost of the lunch and an excursion guide. The number of participant is limited to a maximum of 50 members.
(E. Wijnhoud)

'Market Garden in miniature'

The exhibition 'Market Garden in Miniature' opened in the Airborne Museum on Thursday 18 April last, and will continue until 3 November.

A number of 1 : 76 scale dioramas made by Guy S. DeLillio from America are on display in the exhibition. Guy has been a Friends' Society member for some years. The dioramas depict various actions that took place during Operation Market Garden, including the liberation of Eindhoven, the Bailey bridge at Son in Brabant, and Hell's Highway. Items relating to the landings and fighting at Arnhem and Oosterbeek include models of Hartenstein and the Old Church, the advance of British troops under the viaduct in Benedendorpsweg, and the actions of L/Sgt J.D. Baskeyfield in Acacialaan.

Besides the dioramas, objects that relate to the actions shown in the dioramas are also exhibited. Some of these objects were found recently during excavation work.

The opening ceremony was performed by Mr M. van Etten from TWENOT Society. The members of this society build models of military vehicles as well as dioramas.

The publication in America of the book 'Arnhem:



Model maker Guy DeLillio and his wife Nina at the opening of the 'Market Garden in Miniature' exhibition on 18 April 2002.

(photo: Berry de Reus)

Defeat and Glory, A Miniaturist's Perspective' coincided with this exhibition. In ten chapters, Guy DeLillio provides an overview of Market Garden. The 160-page book is beautifully produced, contains clear maps and is richly illustrated with colour photographs of the dioramas. Not many new facts are revealed, but that was not the author's intention. Therefore, clear reference to sources is made at the end of each chapter. Although the exact price is not yet known it is expected to be around € 40. The book will be on sale in the 'Hartenstein' before long.

'Arnhem: Defeat and Glory, A Miniaturist's Perspective', by G.S.W. DeLillio, is published by Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 4880 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, PA 19310, USA, ISBN 0-7643-1443-2. (Wybo Boersma)

News from Niall

Niall Cherry, our representative in Britain, has sent us the following message. 'Various people who took part in the successful 'British Weekend' in June 2001 have asked us when the next such event is to be organised.

The answer is that we intend holding a comparable weekend in June or August 2003. The programme will again consist of a day during which the former battlefields will be explored on foot, and a day visiting a number of other locations by car. It should be noted that the programme will definitely not be the same as that of June 2001.

Any British members interested in this weekend in 2003 are kindly requested to get in touch with Niall Cherry as soon as possible (e-mail: niall.cherry@baesystems.com). The maximum number of participants is limited to 25.'

Acquisitions

Last December, Mr G.R. Castendijk from Rotterdam presented a number of Battle of Arnhem souvenirs to the Airborne Museum via the Renkum Municipal Archive. The souvenirs included a British aircraft recognition instruction booklet, a booklet with information on German uniforms and badges of rank, a booklet entitled 'The new dictionary for nurses', various German and British emblems, and a small British tin used for detonators. Most of the material was found by Mr Castendijk on the 'Ommershof' estate in Oosterbeek shortly after the fighting in September 1944. In those days the Castendijk family from Rotterdam used the estate as a summer residence.

Appeal

In Newsletter no. 84 we reported the death of Dave Morris. In the article we mentioned a German photograph showing Dave being interrogated by a German. We are interested to know where this photo

was taken, hence the print in this Newsletter. The question is therefore: by which house (in Oosterbeek, Arnhem, Velp??) was this photo taken? Note in particular the half-round window vaguely visible over the front door. Other information (who else is in the picture and which units do they belong to? When was it taken and who was the cameraman?) would also be very welcome.

If you can help please contact Geert Maassen, Gemeentearchief Renkum, Postbus 9100, 6860 HA Oosterbeek, tel. 026 3348303, email gmaassen@renkum.nl.



The interrogation of Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant Dave Morris (11th Battalion) following his capture on 24 September 1944 in Beneden-Weverstraat in Oosterbeek. Where was this (German) photo taken? (photo: R. Voskuil collection)

Diorama maintenance

Every year during the winter months, one of the Airborne Museum's dioramas undergoes a thorough servicing. This year it was the turn of the 75-mm Pack Howitzer diorama. During the Second World War the British introduced a number of modifications to this, by origin, American high-trajectory artillery piece. These included an adjustable fixing between the underside of the barrel and the gun axle plus alterations to the towing bracket. These modifications were not to be found on 'our' gun because it only arrived from America in 1993, therefore it was not used by the British in the Battle. These changes have now been added to the museum gun with the assistance of Mr Van Vugt

from Soest, known from the annual demonstrations with a 75-mm howitzer.

The uniforms were removed from the various diorama figures during the maintenance service, resulting in two remarkable finds. After being cleaned one of the parachutist's helmets showed a red-green coloured emblem on the side. This indicated that it had belonged to a soldier from the Pioneer Corps. However, no unit from this corps served with the 1st British Airborne Division. Unfortunately it is no longer possible to trace how and when this helmet came into the museum's possession.

One of the gas mask cases had also a small identification plate with the same name written on the inside. The gas mask case belonged to Private Frederick William Ment Peacock, No. 4805802, 17 Platoon, C Company, 1st Battalion The Border Regiment. Private Peacock was taken prisoner by the Germans on 25 September 1944. He is shown in the photograph on page 99 of the book 'When Dragons Flew', which describes the history of this Border battalion. The case has been in the museum's possession for more than 30 years, but the name was never really looked at. Only now, through the recording in detail of all the material by Roland Boekhorst of the maintenance staff, has the identity of the original owner become known.

Gift

Frank Steer, author of the book 'Arnhem, The fight to sustain' – published two years ago – has presented some of the profits from this publication to the Airborne Museum. The total amount is € 1590. It goes without saying that the Airborne Museum Foundation is absolutely delighted with this wonderfully generous gift.

Tiles in the refreshments room

In the past, a number of old Delft Blue tiles had been fixed to the wall of a former storage cupboard on the first floor of the Airborne Museum used by the Friends' Society. These tiles were removed recently with great care by Henk van de Brand and Chris van Roekel, following consultations with the Renkum council (the owners of Huize 'Hartenstein') and with the Tile Museum in Otterlo. After a clean up they were fitted behind the hearth in the museum's refreshment room. This job was carried out by Bas Sanders from the Zegers' Tiling Company in Arnhem. The costs for the work were met by the Society of Friends.

Obituary: Richard Bingley

On 26 April 2002 we received the sad news that Richard Bingley, former platoon commander of S Company, 1st Parachute Battalion, had died. With Captain Dick's passing we lose one of the most colourful of Airborne soldiers. He wrote about his

experiences in Ministry IX.

Dick had already completed his parachute training by October 1940 and joined the 1st Parachute Battalion via No. 2 Commando and 11th. SAS. He was involved in all that unit's actions, during which he was wounded four times. He lost no less than 14 men of his platoon at Arnhem, something he was never able to forget.

After being seriously wounded again in the Korean war, a wound that cost him his left eye, he worked hard and continuously for the benefit of wounded ex-servicemen, including in the BLESMA Foundation (British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association).

He was always a valued guest of society members Jan and Marian Fogtelo from Wageningen, was among the first to present his impressive set of medals to the museum, and was our first non-Dutch life-member.

We remember him in friendship and with respect.
(Chris van Roekel)

Steel Masters No. 11

The French language magazine 'Steel Masters', that features tanks and military models, is the publisher of a so-called 'Hors-serie'. Issue number 6 was entitled 'Operation Market Garden', part 1'. Number 11 appeared recently, 'Operation Market Garden', part 2. The magazine first shows a number of good photographs of Arnhem (mentioning sources). Then comes an explanation of how to make models of the various vehicles. The text is in French with only the photo captions being in English and French. There are a fair few mistakes in the captions. One need not expect new photographs or viewpoints. Nevertheless, it is quite a nice magazine for the enthusiast and the price is very reasonable.

Steel Masters, Hors-serie No. 6 'Operation Market Garden', tome 1 and Hors-serie No. 11 'Operation Market Garden', tome 2, can be ordered from: Histoire & Collections, 5 Avenue de la République, 75541 Paris Cedex 11, France. Tel. 00 31 140 21 18 20, e-mail: ypc@histcoll.com, price per copy € 10,52 + € 3,98 p&p. Payment can be made by credit card. (Wybo Boersma)

Battle of Arnhem question box on the Internet

Anyone with questions concerning 'Operation Market Garden', and in particular about the Battle of Arnhem, can now put his/her question(s) to the 'Arnhem, The Online Forum' on the Internet. It is possible that other interested parties can provide answers to such questions.

In order to reach as many people as possible the forum's English is the language of choice, but questions in Dutch or German are just as welcome. The forum can be found on the Internet at <http://116.parsimony.net/forum28518/> or via the web page of the Arnhem Battle Research Group, <http://back.to/arnhem> or www.arnhembattle.com.