

STICHTING LUCHTOORLOG ONDERZOEK DRENTHE

# THE SEARCHLIGHT



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## RETURN TO ZWARTEMEER

On November 17th and 18th, the Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe will help to organize an exhibition about the war in and around Zwartemeer in Drenthe, for the second time. The reason is the presentation of a book by mr. Lübbers about the war in the village, on the basis of interviews with residents and former residents of the village.

## LOST WINGS EMMEN FINISHED!

After the big unveiling of the 1st Lost Wings panel in 2017 in Zwartemeer, the last



panel is now placed in Loeksham (Wilhelmsoord). Harrie Peters (SLO-Drenthe) placed the first panel of a British aircraft in Zwartemeer and now it ends here with a German fighter. The municipality of Emmen is ready and done. Next step; Germany!

## STORIES BEHIND THE GRAVES: HARDENBERG

On September 15th, SLO-Drenthe gave a lecture on the local air war around Hardenberg, in the Veterans Meeting Center. After a warm welcome, the presentation was prepared and the materials and objects were set up in the beautiful Indies Chamber. Secretary Peter van der Weide opened the lecture with an introduction and explanation of the many activities of the Foundation. Chairman Rob Wethly continued with the actual lecture. The crèches were held chronologically on the basis of nationality. This way the course of the air war became clear, without getting bogged down in a dry summary of facts. During the lecture lots of interesting questions were asked by visitors and interested associations. This resulted in a nice exchange of information and photos. Afterwards, treasurer Harrie Peters took the visitors to the Indies Chamber for the materials and many detailed questions. We would like to thank V.O.C. van Hardenberg for the invitation and the beautiful and stylish presents for the board and our active and special benefactors.

Peter van der Weide, secretary

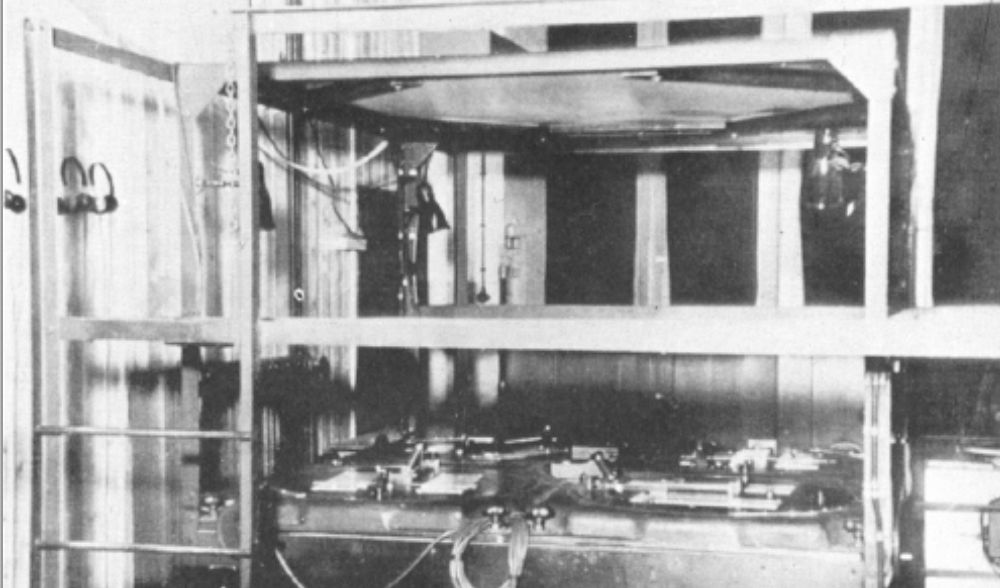
## LUFTWAFFE FUNKMEßSTELLUNG MARDER

In this edition of our magazine, we tell, in two parts, the story about the radar system: the Luftwaffe Funkmeßstellung Marder, Ten Arlo near the municipality of Hogeveen. In part 1 the origin and

operation of the Funkmeßstellung Marder was told, till the year 1943. In part two the story is told from 1943 to 1945.

*Rob Wethly, voorzitter SLO Drenthe*

# LUFTWAFFE FUNKMEßSTELLUNG MARDER 2



As soon as the Freya AN mit Kuh FuMG 450 radar antenna (the primary radar system) detected the Allied aircraft, this information was passed on to the combatcommand. The coordinates were then determined and passed on to the central German air defense and as soon as German night fighters were near the Allied planes' location, they were guided by the Funkmeßstellung by means of the Wurzburg Riese FuSE 65 radar systems to their target.

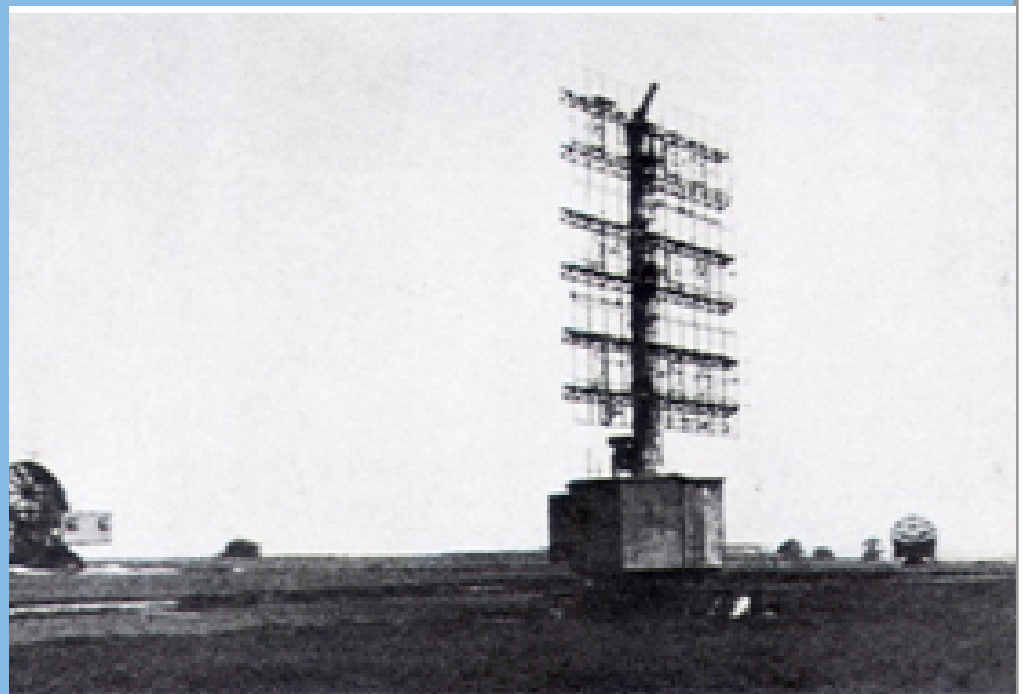
The Funkmeßstellung mostly sent night fighters of the type Dornier Do 17, Junkers Ju 88 or Messerschmitt Me 110. The Netherlands was divided into night hunting zones "Nachtjagdräum" of 40 kilometers around each radar set, these zones overlapped so that the radar positions

could seamlessly take over the guidance of each other. The area that was under control Funkmeßstellung Marder covered South and Central Drenthe, a part of Overijssel and Friesland. To the north of Funkmeßstellung Marder was Funkmeßstellung Gazelle (Veendam) and to the east was Funkmeßstellung Leghorn (near Lingen).

Radar positions such as Funkmeßstellung Marder were able to direct the German night-hunter to 100 meters from their target, the point that both radar signals overlapped.

As soon as there was only one signal left after the attack by the German night fighter and the German night fighter confirmed his descent by radio, the Allied plane was shot down. If there was only one signal left and the German night fighter no longer reported by radio, it was shot down by the allied aircraft.

If the Allied bombers were flying close together, it was not possible to determine how many Allied bombers there were from the signal.



# LUFTWAFFE FUNKMEßSTELLUNG MARDER 2



demolished in 2002 to make way for industrial buildings including a flowerbulbfarm. From one Wurzburg Riese FuSE 65 radar system, the concrete pedestal Regelbau V229 has been preserved to this day.

Various barracks of the former NAD camp were in use until the 1960s for housing various groups of residents.

Rob Wethly  
Chairman SLO-Drenthe

The occupation of Funkmeßstellung Marder consisted of Luftwaffe personel (including women). The following Luftwaffe companies were stationed here: 13./ Flugmelde-Leit Kompanie, III./LnRgt 201 and from 2 September 1944 22./ Flugmelde-Leit Kompanie, III.LnRgt 223.

Funkmeßstellung Marder has contributed to the German air defense since May 1942 and has had a very important part (within a radius of about 40 kilometers around Ten Arlo) in the demise of Allied bombers during the many night attacks of Bomber Command on Germany.

Funkmeßstellung Marder was destroyed to a large extent on 9 April 1945 by the German troops present, and several barracks were set on fire, after which Funkmeßstellung Marder was abandoned by

the German troops. After the war Funkmeßstellung Marder was further evacuated and during the construction of the A-28 a number of existing foundations were removed. The stone bunker was



## CANADIAN GIFTS

As appreciation for the work of our foundation, regarding to the war graves in Schoonebeek, we received a special surprise. Nine English booklets from the series "The Dutch in Wartime".

This series originated after a article from the Canadian resident Tom Bijvoet in the Canadian-Dutch newspaper "De Krant".

In this article he asked the Dutch whom emigrated to Canada and experienced the Second World War, to share their stories and experiences from that time.

The response was massive and the many special and impressive stories have been recorded after being verified in this series of nine booklets:

The Invasion.

Under Nazi Rule.

Witnessing the Holocaust.

Resisting Nazi Occupation.

Tell your Children about us.

War in the Indies.

Caught in the Crossfire.

The Hunger Winter.

Liberation.

Thank you, Gus van Heusden, for this special gift .



## F/SGT GEORGE HERBERT GITTINS DFM



George was the youngest of four children born to Harry and Annie Gittins, a farming family from Herefordshire, England. When George was 12, the family moved to Clifton Court Farm, Worcestershire, where he finished his education at the local grammar school. He was known for his spirited and adventurous nature.

He joined the RAF shortly after the outbreak of WW2 and trained as an Air Gunner. Having completed his training he was posted to 150 Squadron and completed two tours of duty and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM) for bravery in action; he completed 30 missions with 150 Squadron.

When 150 Squadron was posted to North Africa, he joined 101 Squadron. On the evening of 18th November 1943 the Squadron was part of a larger force over Berlin when George's plane was shot down and crashed just outside Schoonebeek with all lives lost, the bodies of these airmen are buried in Schoonebeek Cemetery.

On receiving a file containing George's Service Medals and other relevant historical documents and papers, I decided to do some more research. This coincided with Rob Wethly doing the same from Schoonebeek. By pure chance we met on-line and I was able to give him all my information about George and he has helped me with my research.

This encouraged my wife June, brother John and myself to visit Schoonebeek, meet Rob, see George's grave and hear what Rob and others were doing. That trip was so successful, June and I have been back twice for May 4th, meeting other relatives. We have become good friends with Rob, Claudia and family and also other members of his historical group. We have also been made to feel so welcome when staying in Schoonebeek that it is a pleasure to visit, not just a duty.

Clive Gittins - nephew



# THE SEARCH FOR STIRLING BF579 LS-V RAF 15 SQN

## IN REMEMBRANCE OF WIRELESS OPERATOR AND AIRGUNNER FRANK A. DALTON

### German combat reports:

An estimated six aircraft of the Luftwaffe IV./NJG1 were sent up in reaction to a force of 14 British Short Stirling's that laid mines off the Dutch Frisian Islands between 01.20 and 01.33 hrs.

The Staffelkapitän Oblt. Szameitat (who was detached to IV./NJG1 at Leeuwarden between 13 June and 25 July 1943) made a 1. Welle (sortie) patrol in box Tiger in a Do217 N D5+MN between 00.17 and 02.17 hrs., shooting down the 15 Squadron Short Stirling BF579 LS-V.

The German air defense for box Tiger was coordinated by radar from the Tiger stellung on the Island Terschelling and the Short Stirling BF579 LS-V was detected and attacked 01.28 hrs. on the height of 700 meters above sea-level about 30 kilometer North-West of Terschelling.

### De bemanning van de Short Stirling MK III, BF579 LS-V



Back row left to right: Wireless Operator/Air Gunner Sgt Frank Albert Dalton, Bomb Aimer Sgt Victor Harrison Shea, Flight Engineer Sgt Joseph Eccles and Air Gunner Sgt William Henry Dickinson.

Front row left to right: Navigator Sgt James Joseph Close, Pilot Sgt John Hall and Air Gunner Sgt James Anderson Davie.

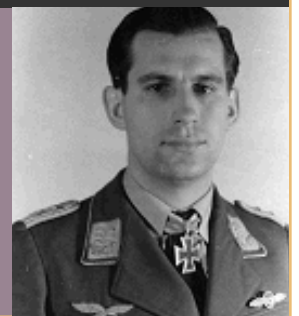
In the night of 3/4 July 1943 the Short Stirling MK III, BF579 LS-V took off from RAF Mildenhall for a "Gardening" mission close to the Dutch Frisian Islands that night and is lost without a trace .

Nothing is heard since, none of the crew members survived and ally have an unknown grave in the North Sea, their names are listed on the Runnymede Memorial.

## STAFFELKAPITÄN OBLT. SZAMEITAT

The Staffelkapitän Oblt. Szameitat (19-12-1919 / 2-1-1944), was a German nightfighter 'Ace' and awarded with the knights cross of the Iron cross. Szameitat

claimde 29 victories of which 28 at night. He got killed during a forced landing on the Bückeberg near Berggasthaus in January 1944.



## 75 YEARS LATER

12 July 2018.

Sarah Jane sends me a message through Facebook:

I was given your name on the British and Commonwealth page. They still haven't recovered my Great Uncles Short Sterling shot down in the nectarines region near Holland and he is still missing in

action - do you have any information that could help my family he is still missing in action.

Thank you, Sarah. Unfortunately, my research these last months, did not provide any crucial information and the questions remain unanswered.

*Rob Wethly, Voorzitter SLO-Drenhte*



# LOST WINGS ALPHEN AAN DEN RIJN



I would like to tell you something about our Project Halifax MZ 297 in Alphen aan den Rijn.

My father Gerrit Vos, 87 years old, saw and experienced a lot during the Second World War. Often he told me the stories about the war, usually something romanticized because as a young boy he thought it was very exciting and adventurous.

In recent years he told more and more about the plane that crashed near his house on the night of 16 to 17 June 1944.

He told me that it was very restless that night in 1944, and that planes came for hours on end. In the distance he heard a whining sound that was getting closer and getting louder. Suddenly it became very light above his bedroom and a heavy, burning bomber came over. He heard the screaming

sound of full-powered engines because the pilot desperately tried to keep the aircraft in the air. The crew probably did not see that the polder is 4 meters higher because the plane crashed against the dike of the dikeditch about 150 meters from my father's house. The burning fragments spread over the meadows and some houses were damaged. My father looked through the roofwindow and heard the cries of the crew members. The place was quickly blocked

off by the Germans and the killed crew members were put in coffins and taken to the General Cemetery Oud Leusden.

This event made a deep impression on my father, and later on he realized the scale and tragedy of the war.

During the Commemorations on the May 4th and 5th, there was always a sense of importance in our home because we must never forget how valuable freedom is. And because there are so many people who gave their lives for this freedom.

My father had for years wanted to have a memorial spot on the site of the crashed Halifax. There is now a shopping center called the Herenhof. Another eyewitness had previously gone to the municipality of Alphen aan den Rijn with a plan for this.



# LOST WINGS ALPHEN AAN DEN RIJN

Unfortunately, this man died and my father took over the case. On the 5th May 2015, the regional broadcaster Studio Alphen broadcasted a documentary about the war and this plane crash. The story of Gerrit Vos. In this documentary he expresses his wish for a place of remembrance.



Jarno Haze contacted my father after seeing this documentary. He also knew these stories about the Halifax through his family. Jarno brought us into contact with Rob Wethly from Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe. Rob has done a lot of research through this foundation about the plane crash. We received a lot of information, facts and images. The crew members were given a name and a face. It was the crew of Halifax MZ 297 WL-Z from 434 squadron Royal Canadian Air Force. We received an extensive file of photos, names, rank, function, task and country of origin and awards they received. Even family information and the number of missions.

With all this information we went to the municipality and submitted a request for a memorial. Eventually we

received a grant from the Heritage Fund. On May 4th, Jarno and I gave a live interview for broadcaster West about this project. My father had been interviewed in advance. We also linked a school project to it and we gave a guest lecture. On June 13th the memorial was unveiled by the alderman and my father and the son of Jarno. There was a lot of media attention. The school was also present and have recited a poem. We find it important that the younger generation is also involved.

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe has made a sign with the names and photographs of the crew members. And the story of the event at this place. There is also a concrete bench with a graffiti painting of the plane. In addition, seven peace pigeons are depicted that symbolize the 6 Canadian and 1 British crew members. Finally, we are very grateful to Rob Wethly and Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe for their help and research.

*Anjo Duijkers-Vos en Jarno Haze*



# THE FOCKE WULF OF WEITEVEEN

**In our previous issue of the Searchlight, we announced that after 10 years, the investigation into a German crash at Weiteveen could finally be concluded and closed down. Harrie Peters, treasurer of the SLO-Drenthe and leading investigator of this crash, had almost given up hope.**

It is Thursday, February 10th, a cold, clear winter day. The US Air Force stationed in England has planned an attack on Braunschweig this day. Around 9 o'clock in the morning hundreds of bombers of the type B-17 and B-24 have taken off, of these English airports. They merge into formation above the North Sea, to follow a route over the south of the IJsselmeer and then fly over Zwolle and Almelo, to fly into Lingen Germany.

Between 10:15 and 10:30 hours, dozens of German fighter planes take off at various German airports around Emsland and the Netherlands to fight with these American bombers. This happens around 11 hours above the border area. During this dogfight, several aircraft are shot down from both the American and German sides. Around noon, Braunschweig is bombarded, after which the entire air fleet flies westwards via the Netherlands, towards England. Between 12:45 and 13:15 another air battle developed between Meppen and Nordhorn.

## **My father saw it happen.**

In my younger years, my father regularly told me about the two bombers he had seen crashing and that he had been present at the crash locations around Zwartemeer. A third crash of which he was an eyewitness was a "fighter" that went down near Weiteveen in the south, while he was walking to school at the end of the Kamerlingswijk (Zwartemeer).

In the seventies and eighties of the last century, several people told me about the crash site of a German Focke-Wulf 190 at the Ing. Steehmanstraat between Weiteveen and Nieuw Schoonebeek. "The plane completely disappeared there in the four meter thick peat layer." Some people thought that the pilot was still in during the crash.

## **5 facts in a row**

About ten years ago I started an investigation into the identity of the pilot and his aircraft. After many hours of archival research, consulting the internet, conversations with eyewitnesses, research in old newspapers and many visits to the crash site, I was able to list a number of facts.

- 1)** February 10th 1944, Thursday at 13:00 hours a FW-190 crashes in the moor at 600 meters from the Masselink family
- 2)** This crash site is nowadays directly along the road in a nature reserve managed by Staatsbosbeheer.
- 3)** In 1951, "iron traders" tried to

dig out the plane, but this was not possible because of the thick layer of peat and the high water level, they only found a little aluminum parts. But a traveling bag came up from the wreckage of the plane under water. This contained personal belongings of the pilot, including a toothbrush, shaving gear, a military passport, and the logbook of the aircraft, some of which could still be deciphered in spite of the seven years under the ground. The bag was apparently watertight. The photographs of the pilot in the passport and the one of his mother were still clearly recognizable. These pictures would prove to become important years later on. This material was photographed and an article appeared in the Emmer Courant on 14-9-51. This photographed belongings were sent to the Red Cross in The Hague the next week and from thereon to Germany with the goal to deliver it to family. Unfortunately this never happened and it is not known what happened to the possessions.

**4)** Around 1960, when the Ing. Steehmanstraat was constructed, material could have been cleaned up when digging this road. This is confirmed by several people, but this has never been mentioned and nothing was mentioned in the media.

**5)** Even in the seventies, searching and digging seemed to have been carried out by third parties without permission.



# THE FOCKE WULF OF WEITEVEEN

Resten van Duitse jager uit het veen gehaa



## Double trouble

The German fighters, that took off into the air in the morning, were all on the ground around noon, because of their flight time of one and a half hour (with air fight) and a maximum of two hours (cruising flight). They all had to be refueled and provided with new ammunition. These aircraft were no longer used. However, 25 Focke-Wulf fighters rose from Rheine airport at 12:20 pm. These aircraft had not taken part in the fighting in the morning and now attacked the returning bombers. This happened around 12:45 hours above the area Meppen / Lingen just when the P-47 fighting escort of the Americans was relieved by new (fresh) fighter groups. This meant a big disadvantage for the German fighters, because they had to deal with a double amount of American planes.

## Jagdgeschwader 11 en 1

These 25 German fighters came from the I./JG 11 and some from the Stab / JG I. Seven of these aircraft were shot down.

1) Leutnant Hans Schrangl near

Lingen, parachuted

2) Unteroffizier Rudolf Kuhrz near Diffelen, k.i.a.

3) Unteroffizier Arno Mattes near Emlichheim, k.i.a.

4) Feldwebel Berthold Jochim near Bathorn, parachuted

5) Unteroffizier Martin Weiprecht near Heseperwist, k.i.a.

6) Unteroffizier Franz Keller bij near Lingen, parachuted

7) Feldwebel Alfred Gaedicke near Ruhle, k.i.a

## Exclude and recognize

After investigating these crash cases, two candidates remained for the Weiteveen crash, namely Unteroffizier Mattes and Feldwebel Gaedicke.

Later it turns out that Mattes aircraft crashed at Emlichheim and that this pilot is buried at the Neuer Friedhof in Lingen. Gaedicke jumped above the Ruhler field and did not survive the jump. He is buried in Oranienburg Berlin. The aircraft flew unmanned at Weiteveen and crashed in the moor. The last doubt, regarding a positive identification of

Feldwebel Gaedicke, was taken away during a visit to our highly esteemed colleague Herr Eickhoff in Bramsche (Germany). There the photo from 1951 was clarified and compared with other photos of Gaedicke. It was clearly visible that this is him. This ultimately results in the placing of a new Lost Wings panel on which his name will be stated.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### November 17th

Boekpresentation by mr. H. Lübbers with a 2day exposition about the war in and around Zwartemeer.

### Christmas Eve

Many candles will be lit again on wargraves. volunteers and help are very welcome!

### End of December

Appearance of a special annual publication of the Searchlight. A magazine with the highlights of 2018.

### Donators

**Would you like to support our work? Feel free to contact us via facebook or look at our website.**