

THE SEARCHLIGHT

YEAR EDITION
2018





LOST WINGS

"I would like to see a sign coming up ..." says Harrie Peters. ,, A sign indicating that a bomber crashed here in the war. With the names of the crew, the date ... " With this wish, a meeting in Zwartemeer was started in 2015.

Now, many meetings and many hours of research later, the one sign has become a route along all the crash locations of the municipality of Emmen.

COMMEMORATE

WRITTEN BY PETER VAN DER WEIDE

All crash locations in the municipality of Emmen, Allied and German, have been given an information panel that tells the story of the aircraft, the names and photographs of the crew members and a small remark that the board is part of the Lost Wings Route 40-45.

The SLO Drenthe has a clear objective: Most people do not know what happened here during the war. The crews fought for their country or ideals and that should not be forgotten. We must not forget what happened. That is why we want to pass this on to the current and new generation.

At the unveiling of the first panel, in Zwartemeer at the Kamerlingswijk, much attention was therefore given to presentation. Re-enactment groups F.A.A.A.C. Holland and the B.A.R. together with the Historic Depot Royal Marechaussee turned the time back to the war years.

The Royal Netherlands Air Force Historical Flight held a honorary flight with a Harvard AT-6 for the killed crew members.

The last panel was placed with special silence. It's finished!

A panel at Loeksham (Wilhelmsoord), about a failed emergency landing of a German Messerschmitt, was the last panel that closed the project.

"Thank goodness," sighs a satisfied chairman, Rob Wethly, "The questions and requests are pouring in. It is nice to be able to close a project now." Germany is getting more attention now. "

The next step is a cross-border route in the Lower Saxon border area. Together with Vermisstensuchgruppe Ikarus, the SLO has already investigated and mapped the many Allied and German crash sites in the border area, and here too a cycle route is being developed.



AIRWAR WITHOUT BORDERS



During the great unveiling of the first Lost Wings panel in Zwartemeer, herr Reinert was very impressed with the exhibition and the project. As chairman of the Heimatverein Twist he was a special invitee. Immediately after his speech, he expressed his wish that he would like to see a similar exhibition in Twist. On the 2nd of December, the Dutch-German exhibition "Air War without Borders" was opened in Twist. SLO-Drenthe cooperated with Heimatverein Twist and

Erdöl-Erdgasmuseum Twist at an exhibition about the air war at the time of the Second World War above the border area of Emmen, the Emsland and the Grafschaft Bentheim. The motive of the exhibition was: "Europe, from enemies to friends, time to build good bridges to the future. Special guests such as herr Winters of the Landerat and Mr. Bijl deputy of the province of Drenthe, expressed their appreciation for creating an image of an exceptional period in our history.

Initiator Herr Reiner indicated that he hoped that this would be the beginning of a special cooperation between Dutch and German organizations to give a shared past, a special place.

The exhibition was also well received by people from the area. The secretive question, whether the German population was ready for 'the war', was answered when twice the decision was taken to extend the duration of the exhibition.

There was careful thought about the content of the exhibition.

The material was a mix of crash locations from Germany and the Netherlands, Allied and German, neatly balanced. A good way to create an objective image.

A new aim was to highlight one day.

The 6th of March 1944, the day a big raid was held on Berlin.

On a large map, showing Great Britain all the way to Berlin, all locations of aircraft crashing during that mission were shown.

As a result, crashes became part of a whole and the image of all kinds of stand-alone plane crashes disappeared.



P-47 FROM THE PEAT



This summer, the article below caused a wave of extraordinary and amazing reactions. Luca Niccolai read the article by Harrie Peters about his great-uncle lieutenant Albert T. Niccolai. The Niccolai family was pleasantly surprised and very honored with the work the SLO did for Lieutenant Niccolai. We want to answer many questions in the coming year.

Thursday 24-2-1944, a sunny, but with 3 degrees and a little wind a chill February day in the Drenthe border area. It is 'Big Week' and the Eight Airforce sends 867 bombers from England to various targets this day including Schweinfurt and Gotha in Germany. This bomber stream is escorted by various Fighter groups and thus protected by hundreds of P 38 Lightnings, P 51 Mustangs and P 47 Thunderbolts.

One of these P 47 Thunderbolt fighters took off from East Wretham, belonging to the 359 FG, and flown by the 23-year-old pilot Albert T Niccolai from Wisconsin USA, who is battling a Me 109G over the Twister border area. This German aircraft plunges promptly to lower altitude followed by the P47 of Niccolai. Since it has a higher dive speed compared to the Me 109 he gets it diving in sight. Concentrated on his prey Niccolai does not notice that he is stalked by a 2nd Me 109 flown by Uffz Albert Boeckl of the 12./JG26 and took off from the base Florennes. Niccolai's aircraft gets the full low and dives down steeply at 650 km / h.



Niccolai gets no chance to jump out of the plane. Possibly unconscious by German bullets. At 12.30 hrs the P 47 D razorback with work no 42-8636 and sq code CR-F slams a hole in the 4 m thick swampy peat layer of the Ruhlermoor and disappears with the pilot. The only thing visible is a waterhole that is unreachable at that moment for those who would want it. It was not until the winter of 1946 that during the construction of a transport road for oil extraction, over the frozen ground, it was possible to reach the crash site at a distance of 200 m.

Then some aircraft parts are removed from the peat and also some human remains, with which the pilot can be identified. Niccolai has found his final resting place in Wisconsin. Later, a wooden memorial panel is placed on a tree at some distance. A few years ago this wooden sign disappeared without trace to resurface during the exhibition at the Ölmuseum in Twist.

During the reclamation of the peat area in the 70s, 80s and 90s of the last century, airplane remains and ammunition are regularly found in the various peat layers and employees sometimes make an "ill-conceived attempt" to excavate the deeper parts with excavators, but this does not work because of the thickness of the peat layer and the ever-present peat water.

In October 2016 yours truly is working on re-modeling work for the German State and on the relevant plot we encounter the last remains of the Thunderbolt, including the engine, tailwheel and many small aluminum parts, while digging watering trenches. After consultation with German authorities, it was decided to clean up the remains and after checking the material this was released and made available to us. SLO Drenthe, therefore, gratefully uses this tangible memory during exhibitions and lectures.

MAY EDUCATION

WRITTEN BY
HARRIE PETERS

SLO Drenthe has given guest lectures at 4 schools this year about the air war in the local area. In connection with the project week about the WW2, guest lessons were given for the third year in a row at the Esdal College in Klazienaveen.

As in previous years, the students showed a lot of attention, listened and watched with interest to the presentation and the aircraftparts on display.

There was a heavy German propeller blade from a Messerschmitt BF 109 which we could show at school for the first time because it can be lifted by 2 people.

Rob Wethly gave guest lectures in the following days at the primary schools of Schoonebeek and Nieuw Schoonebeek. In addition to the stories about the crashed bombers and hunters in their area, the children also found the fragments, parts and other materials very interesting.

Peter van der Weide took group 6 of RKBS de Banier from Zwartemeer to the Lost Wings sign of the Lancaster L 684 JIN. Impressed, children watched the crash site of the bomber. During this crash, amongst others, Ivor John Frederick Rich was killed. He would never get to know his daughter, because 2 months after his death she was born. "That seems terrible to me," said a student in awe.

Finally, as SLO-Drenthe we want to thank the school and the teachers involved for the invitation and the pleasant cooperation. We hope to make this generation of pupils realize that young crew members have also given their lives for our freedom here in Southeast Drenthe and that this freedom is not self-evident.

One of the MAVO3 students wrote for us her findings of that day:



'THAT WAS REALY SHOCKING'



Nikki van Leeuwen wrote:

Tuesday 10-04-2018:

Today we started at the cemetery in Nieuw Dordrecht. Mr. Bosman (Stichting RAF Nieuw Dordrecht) told us a lot about what happened there and showed us a lot. We walked around the cemetery and saw many things from the Second World War such as: tombstones for the English victims but also memorial stones for the Americans and so much more.

Then we passed the Puritfabriek and the monument to the Noorderkeerkring. At school we received a presentation from SLO-Drenthe and we saw real fragments and found things from the Second World War. I found this very very special to see but also quite intense. Then we went to Zwartemeer to scan a sign for our assignments.

AMSTEL

'IT IS THE
PASSING ON
AND TELLING
THAT IS
IMPORTANT'



BUNDLING

COMPOSED BY PETER
VAN DER WEIDE

Zwartemeer - Imagine, you are descended from German ancestors, you work across the border or your family lives in the land of the eastern neighbors. Suddenly those people on the other side of the border post are 'the bad guys.' Can you divide it so easily into black and white in wartime? Or is the reality grayer?

Anyway, the Second World War put the relations between the inhabitants of Zwartemeer and their eastern neighbors on sharp.

The book Zwartemeer Grensdorp In the Second World War by writers Herman Lübbers and his son Herman Lübbers junior gives an extensive picture of that tense and sometimes confrontational time.

'For the anniversary book about the village, I interviewed a lot of people, over a 100. Many people also knew a lot about the war. That became the basis for this book. '

The first copy of the book was handed over to Alderman of Monuments Affairs of the municipality of Emmen.

Apart from Alderman Otter, three other persons who had been closely involved in the Second World War were offered a book; Mrs. Schrijver who, as a two-year-old, was in hiding in Zwartemeer, Mr. Hoeksema, whose father, resistance man Reverend Hoeksema, helped 3 French soldiers and Mrs. Stuit, daughter of resistance man master Stuit.

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe has taken on a part of the design of the exhibition. 'Historical foundations help each other'. says Peter van der Weide. 'And we have been working together successfully for years.'

An important and extra interesting part of this exhibition are the three planes crashed on Zwartemeer's territory.

The B-17 Blitzing Betsy (March 6 '44), The Lancaster LL 684 (March 22nd '44) and the Lancaster DV 287 (January 14th '44).



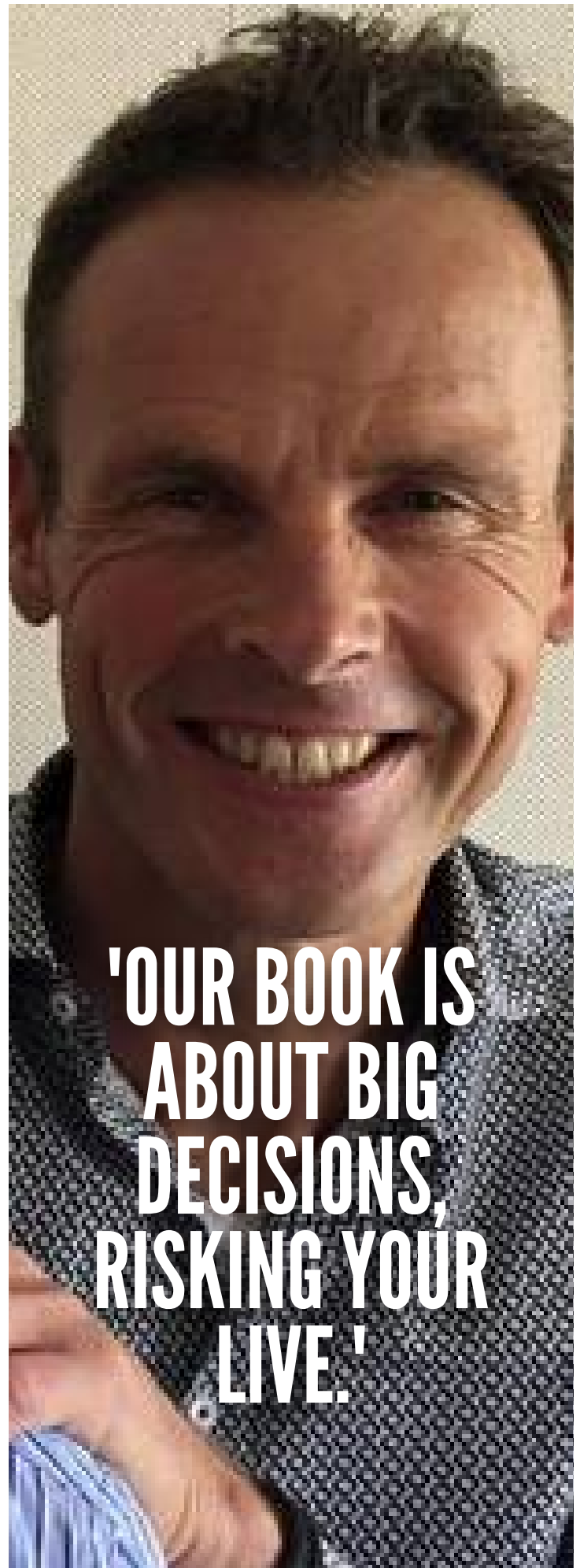
What is small?

Is that the number of inhabitants? The number of famous inhabitants? Is that the influence on important events? The number of important events in a village? The importance of events on a global scale?

On a global scale, Zwartemeer is a small village in a quiet and stable environment. Maybe a bit boring even. But are the events in Zwartemeer unimportant? No! If all the interviews and our research show one thing then it is that small is not the same as unimportant. Personal choices are based on human characteristics. Whether they are made on a world scale by great leaders, or by a resident of Zwartemeer, the qualities are the same: Courage, justice, helpfulness, unselfishness and modesty. All properties that strongly influence the course of history. It is a challenge for everyone to comply with these characteristics, but it is even more challenging when their compliance can lead directly to death! That is why you can say that it is even easier for big leaders at a distance and without risking their own lives. Despite the fact that the impact of their decisions is greater. After all, they often do not put their own lives in the balance. With a so-called small decision to help a refugee or a person in hiding, a resident from Zwartemeer immediately puts his own life at stake. So this small decision with a small impact on a global scale is actually a big decision.

In our book it is very often about big decisions, about real courage, about unselfishness, modesty and about help with danger to your own life. About modesty. 'My uncle and aunt Kolmer also received an award for that once,' says Hendrik Peters casually in an interview. It then emerges from further research that Harm and Marie Kolmer received the highest award in 1982 from the State of Israel for providing shelter to a Jewish girl. And who knows, there will be another family from Zwartemeer who will receive the same honor. About helpfulness: We must realize that the Kolmer family, like most people, did not live in luxury at the time and had 4 children of their own. Then a fifth mouth to feed is a very serious extra burden for a family! Passing on and passing on the importance of these kinds of personal decisions is one of the most important lessons from our book!

Herman Lübbers Jr.



**'OUR BOOK IS
ABOUT BIG
DECISIONS,
RISKING YOUR
LIVE!'**

THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN'



On Christmas Eve, candles were burned at war graves in various places in Drenthe.

This year too, Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe (SLO Drenthe) organized a total of 46 graves at the war graves in Ruinerwold, Hollandscheveld, Geesbrug, Dalen and Schoonebeek.

A few associations and foundations have 'taken over the baton' for their village and lit candles themselves.

This gives the SLO the opportunity to include other cemeteries and to provide a light.

Chairman Rob Wehtly knew this year to make an appeal to RTV Drenthe. 'It is important to remember the burning of candles that gave their lives more than seventy years ago for our freedom.'

This resulted in unprecedented responses, support and help. The goal for Christmas Eve 2019 is that the SLO will include a few cemeteries in Salland (near Hardenberg).



CHRISTMAS EVE

WRITTEN BY
ROB WETHLY

Christmas Eve at the War Graves in Kropswolde 2018.

Pieter Bergman is living in Zuidlaren, a small village in the North of The Netherlands near Groningen and is very interest in anything what has to do with World War Two and in special the air war from that time.

Every year at Christmas Eve there is a tradition of lighting candles at war graves, to remember those who gave their lives for our freedom. When Pieter was asked to take part in this tradition three years ago, he didn't hesitate and choose the five war graves in Kropswolde a mixed Canadian and British crew, who he regularly visit. This tradition also triggered a wish of Pieter in getting to know more about this crew. All we see is a headstone with a name and age they passed away at such young age!

Pieter thought "how wonderful it would be, to give them a face again". On a wintry Sunday afternoon, some weeks ago Pieter took the next step, he already found the portrait pictures of four crew members, the search for a picture of RAF Sergeant Kenneth Witty Tindall remains a difficult one and still unsuccessful.

Pieter choose to make use of the modern social media, Facebook and Internet and recorded a small YouTube movie in which he did make his call for help, for the remaining and untraceable picture of RAF Sergeant Kenneth Witty Tindall.





The You Tube message of Pieter Bergman:
<https://youtu.be/nEHTwUzgZGk>

On Facebook I was alerted to Pieter's message and his plea for help, I picked up this challenge with the knowledge that this search could be a difficult one and time was short. But the thoughts of, how wonderful it would be to help Pieter, give RAF Sergeant Kenneth Witty Tindall also a face and make this Christmas Eve a little special was enough to get started.

My basic research in national and international archives, internet sources, my own library and contacting colleague researchers turnout with nothing. My next and the most time consuming option was preforming a family tree research of RAF Sergeant Kenneth Witty Tindall. That turnout with a possible lead and contact

was very fats established and luck was on our side and it turned out that my possible lead was direct related to RAF Sergeant Kenneth Witty Tindall and within a couple of hours I received a portrait of RAF Sergeant Kenneth Witty Tindall and informed Pieter about this very great success and shared the missing photo with him.

Lest we forget what RCAF Pilot Flying Officer John Albert Frampton, RCAF Navigator Pilot Officer John James Astles, RCAF Air Gunner Pilot Officer Kenneth Hugh Bennett, RCAF Pilot Officer Air Gunner Kenneth Smith and RAF Sergeant Wireless Operator /Air Gunner Kenneth Witty Tindall did for our freedom. Rest in Peace.

STADSGROUWINGEN.
WASH/ TEL. 6.

1702

25. III. 1944

V E R B A A L
van een Engelsch-
vliegtuig in den avond van
Zwartemeer, gemeente Emmen,

Naar aanleiding van het op Woensdag 22 Maart 1944, te on-
gevoer 21,30 uur, neerstorten van een brandend Engelsch Vlieg-
tuig (bomwerper) aan de Westzijde van de Kamerlingewijk on-
der Zwartemeer, gemeente Emmen, heb ik -
Sietze van der Hoek, Hoofdwachtmeester, behoorende tot opgemeld
Groep, na bekomen opdracht van mijn Groepscommandant een onder-
zoek ingesteld.

Bij aankomst bleek mij, dat het omlaag gestorte Engelsch
vliegtuig was een vier motorige bomwerper, waarvan de wrak-
stukken over eenige honderden meters verspreid lagen.

In verschillende deelen daarvan woedde een hevige
Bij het vliegtuig werden geen brisant- of brandbom-
gevonden.
De motoren en de overgrootste deel van de wrakstukke
onder het veld en over het veld lagen ver-



SLO Drenthe