

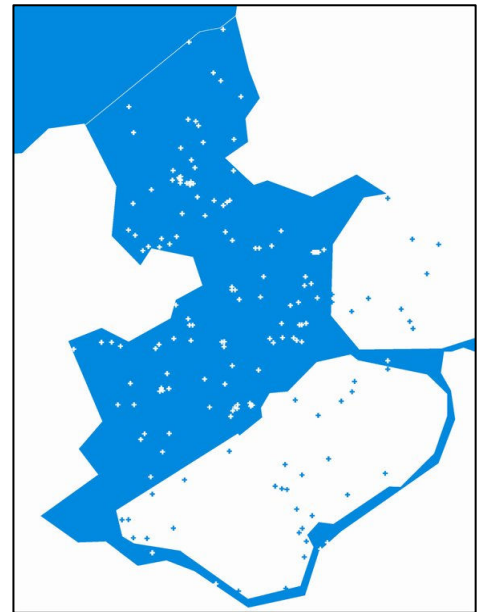
THE UNVEILING OF THE HARDERWIJK MEMORIAL

(by Erik van der Meiden)
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In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom there are a lot of monuments to remember unknown soldiers. Every city or Army Unit has got such a monument.....and that is very good!



A monument to remember the crews who perished when their planes crashed into the IJsselmeer during WWII



Map of IJsselmeer with crashed planes
(every point is a crashed plane)

10/11 April, 1942; ESSEN (NICKELS):

Despite forecasts of clear weather conditions over the target, a main force consisting of over 250 bombers, found Essen covered in cloud. 49 Squadron had 13 Hampdens airborne of which 8 attacked the primary target but were unable to see the results. Bomber Command suffered the loss of 14 aircraft on the Essen raid, mainly due to the heavy flak defences in the Ruhr. Of the five Hampdens reported missing, 2 were from 49 Squadron:

F/Lt Marshall (AT190) and Sgt Webster managed to escape from their downed bomber, but two fellow crew members perished when the aircraft came down in Germany.

F/O Reg Worthy (AE421) and crew were shot down by a German night fighter. The combat took place over Holland, with the doomed Hapden falling into the IJsselmeer.

The body of F/O Reg Worthy was recovered from the water's edge on 22nd May and buried in Oud-Leusden.

Sgt Anthony Considine was found at Laaxum four days later; his watch had stopped at 02.16hrs. He is buried in Scharl. Sgt John Wilkinson is buried in Stavanger, Norway whilst the body of the fourth crew member, Sgt Tom McGrenery was never found, still missing in 2012; he is remembered at Runnymede Memorial, Panel 88.

This monument is to remember 117 crew members who lost their lives into the IJsselmeer lake. Their names are remembered on a list on the website of the local City Museum of Harderwijk. The list with the names starts with the text; date unknown, unknown Sgt from the United Kingdom.

49 Sqdn lost 1 crew and plane in this lake.

Three of the four crewmen of plane AE421 were found, buried and their names are standing on their gravestone.

Now we know that the unknown Sgt mentioned on the list of the City Museum of Harderwijk is not our missed Sgt Tom McGrenery but standing next to this new monument give us the feeling to remember Tom McGrenery and all those who are still missing and found their grave in this IJsselmeer lake. We will remember them.

Before the unveiling of this Monument there was a meeting at the Townhall of Harderwijk.

Mr. Dim van Rhee of the Allied Monument Harderwijk Foundation and the mayor of Harderwijk held their speeches for a well people filled Townhall. A professional education programme for the schoolchildren of Harderwijk was presented to the alderman of education.

After the the meeting in the Townhall we went to the IJsselmeer lake which is just a few hundred meters from the Townhall. A Chinook helicopter of the Dutch Royal Air Force took the monument, which symbolises a WW2 bomber, up into the air to put it down into the lake. It was so nice to see. It was spectacular without being a showpiece. By doing this, the Dutch Royal Air Force brought homage to the aicrews of the past.



After the Monument was put into the lake the remembrance stone was unveiled by the mayor and the Queens Commissior. The Last Post was followed by one minute of sillence. After that 117 names of the perished crewmenbers were mentioned.

It gives a good feeling that even after 67 years people like Mr. Dim van Rhee and his helpers take the initiative to erect such a beautiful monument like this monument.

During the war, the planes high in the air above occupied Holland were for the people on the ground a sign that they were not forgotten; it gave hope and would bring them freedom.



On the left with blue ribbon the wreath of 49 Sqdn Association followed by the wreath of the Brittish Embassy

Wreaths were laid by Millitary Attachees of different countrys. I had the honour to lay a wreath on behalf of 49 Sqdn Association.

At the end of the ceremony Mr Dim van Rhee of the Allied Monument Harderwijk Foundation thanked the people for being there and their attention and asked the schools in Harderwijk to adopt the 45 graves of the perished men and take care for them.

