



*Elst, 23 September 2014*

## **Operation Market Garden relived like never before**

*Successful publicity campaign brings hundreds of thousands of visitors to regional events*

The commemorations for Operation Market Garden over the last few weeks attracted more people than ever before. Although the exact numbers are not available, we can be sure that the 250 or so events in the provinces of Brabant and Gelderland, attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors. According to the organisers, approximately 200,000 people came to see the parade through Brabant and an estimated 60,000 people came to watch the annual parachute drop at Ginkel Heath. Smaller events like the World Street Painting Festival in Arnhem also attracted unprecedented popularity.

September was also a busy month for commemorations in the province of South Limburg, where large numbers of people took the time to remember the events of World War II. One example was the popular Liberation Concert at the American War Cemetery in Margraten. Various towns in South Limburg had already been liberated before the start of Operation Market Garden on 17 September 1944. The aim of this Allied air and ground offensive was to capture a number of key Dutch bridgeheads and to force an entry into Germany. The offensive grounded to a halt near Arnhem, but did manage to liberate cities such as Eindhoven and Nijmegen during the September of 1944.

### **Very satisfied**

The Liberation Route Europe Foundation (SLRE) conducted a major publicity campaign in the Netherlands and abroad, to draw attention to all of the events and commemorations. The SLRE's activities were part-funded by the vfonds, the Dutch Foundation of Peace, Freedom and Veteran Support, which contributed a total of 1.5 million euros to 'MarketGarden70', half a million of which was dedicated to the publicity campaign. "We can be very satisfied with the results," concludes Victoria van Krieken, the director of the Liberation Route Europe Foundation. "We have worked together with a whole range other organisers, and it has been a huge success: more than enough reason to continue working together towards new campaigns, like the one for next year. After all, that's when the Netherlands will be celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its liberation."

### **Unique**

The cooperation in relation to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Market Garden has been unique. Never before have the various parties involved, cooperated so closely with the SLRE and the vfonds, to inform such a wide audience about the multiple activities taking place. Gelderland councillor Jan Jacob van Dijk (CDA) is extremely pleased with the number of visitors. "It is great to see how the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Market Garden has come to life in this part of the Netherlands and how many visitors have come here to join in the events."

Brabant councillor Brigitte van Haften-Harkema (CDA) referred to it as "a party comparable with the liberation of 1944". In her opinion, the fact that the events were attended by people who had been there back in 1944, made it extra special. "This made it a celebration as well as a very moving tribute. It was a magnificent day, not least for the many organisations involved in the south of the Netherlands who are committed to commemorating the war and celebrating the liberation."



### **The Battle of the Scheldt**

Incidentally, large-scale events are planned for next month in the province of Zeeland and in the western part of Brabant, for the commemoration of the Battle of the Scheldt. The goal of this battle was to oust the Germans from the mouth of the river Scheldt so that the Allies could reach the port of Antwerp. On 25 October, a procession of vehicles will travel through the province of Zeeland to the town of Bergen op Zoom. Brief stops at monuments commemorating the Battle of the Scheldt are planned along the way.

-----  
***(Note for the editors, not for publication)***

For more information about this press release, please contact Jeroen van Wieringen, the SLRE press officer on +31 (0)6 4671 0044 or via [j.vanwieringen@liberationroute.com](mailto:j.vanwieringen@liberationroute.com).

