

# STICHTING WINGS TO VICTORY

AIRWAR MUSEUM / AIRMEN MEMORIAL ZEELAND



Crash No 107

Wellington T2620

09-06-1941

Noordzee



## 09 juni 1941

In de loop van de middag voerden zes Blenheims – drie van No.18 en drie van No.107 squadron – een shipping sweep uit naar de monding van de Schelde maar de twee formaties keerden onverrichterzake weer op hun basis terug.

Vier Wellingtons van No.9 squadron alsmede twee Stirlings van No.7 squadron werden door Bomber Command – bij wijze van proef – ingezet om gewapende verkenningen langs de Franse en Belgische kustgebieden uit te voeren. Ten noordoosten van Calais werden deze bommenwerpers onderschept door Bf 109's van 6./JG 26 van Maldeghem. Eén machine werd ter hoogte van het zeegebied van Zeebrugge neergeschoten en een tweede werd neergehaald door de op positie liggende Hafenschutzboot **822** van het Hafenschutzflottille Vlissingen. Deze machine stortte nabij de Wielingen in de monding van de Westerschelde.

### Operations Record Book HQ No. 2 Group

--/-- Beat 10 – three aircraft of No.18 squadron (Horsham) and three aircraft of No.107 squadron (West Raynham) took off at 16.03 and last landed at 17.40 hours. The six aircraft completed beat but no shipping was seen.

### Debriefing No. 9 squadron (surviving) crews.

--/-- K 5703 – Sqn.Ldr. Pickard with time up/down 1532 and 2000 hours.

All bombs brought back. 6 Me 109's encountered 4 miles northeast of Calais and evasive action taken by turning into cloud. Neither aircraft opened fire. Reargunner reported seeing aircraft (believed Wellington) being attacked by 2 Me 109's and black smoke seen coming from Wellington.

--/-- R 1763 – Plt.Off. Robinson with time up/down 1534 and 1840 hours.

?? x 250 GP bombs brought back. "B" bombs fell about 50 yards in front of convoy of 14 ships unescorted and proceeding north about 5 knots about 20 miles west of The Hague.

Own aircraft attacked by Me 109 for about half hour and fire returned but damage to enemy aircraft unknown. Own aircraft undamaged.

### Marine Flak Abteilung 703

1739 Mehrere unbekannte Flugzeuge in Richtung 10/2 mit Kurs Süd.

1754 Ein als Blenheim erkanntes Flugzeug in Richtung 9/3 fliegt mit Kurs NO ab.

1758 **Ein weiteres in 9/3 gemeldetes Flugzeug wurde von Jägern abgeschossen! Es handelt sich um eine Wellington.**

1800 Flakalarm! Anflug eines unbekanntes Flugzeug in 9/2 mit Kurs Ost und Höhe 1900 Meter.

1810 Das Flugzeug kreist in Richtung 8 über der Schelde und fliegt nach 8 aus.

1819 Ein unbekanntes Flugzeug in Richtung 10/2 mit Kurs NW.

1820 Ein als Blenheim gemeldetes Flugzeug in Richtung 9/3 über den Wolken. Das Flugzeug fliegt aus nach Richtung 7.

--/-- Nachts keine Flugtätigkeit.

0200 (am 10/06) Flugzeuggeräusche in Richtung 7 weit.

### **KTB Führer der Motorbootsverbände**

Bei Tonne Wielingen fliegt eine Wellington das Boot **822** unter der Wolkendecke (500 m) aus SSW an. **Auf 700 Meter Entfernung wird Feuer mit 4 cm Flak 28 eröffnet und nach den ersten Schüssen werden Treffer beobachtet!** Das Flugzeug stößt in die Wolken und taucht in NNO wieder auf.

**Auf 1000 Meter wird wiederum Feuer eröffnet! Die Schüsse liegen gut und Treffer werden beobachtet** (danach Ladehemmung).

Das Flugzeug dreht im Gleitflug zum Angriff auf das Boot zu worauf Boot nach Steuerbord dreht um MG's in der Breitseite zum Tragen zu bringen.

**Auf 500 Meter Entfernung wird das Feuer mit drei MG's eröffnet und gleich darauf schießt 4 cm Flak 28 wieder und (sowohl) Treffer von 4 cm und MG's werden beobachtet.**

Das Flugzeug dreht nach NNW ab und laufende Treffer wurden beobachtet wobei das 4 cm Geschütz BB-Motor in Brand schießt. Brand im Flugzeug vergrößert sich und es fällt schnell. **MG's und 4 cm stellen Feuer ein, da Absturz des Flugzeuges sichergestellt!**

In den Wolken erscheinen drei Jäger! **Ein Jäger stößt heran und gibt einen Feuerstoß ab, dessen Einschläge hinter dem Flugzeug im Wasser beobachtet werden!** Das Flugzeug schlägt gleich darauf auf der Wasseroberfläche auf und geht in Trümmer.

**822** fährt zur Aufschlagstelle um Überlebende und Trümmer zu bergen.

**Ein Jäger befindet sich im Luftkampf mit einer weiteren Maschine (engl.) und 822 erwartet neuen Angriff.** Die britische Maschine wird von den Jägern abgeschossen.

**822** rettet den Heckschützen, der von ihr abgeschossenen Maschine, sowie einen Brennstofftank und einen Fallschirm. Der Gefangene wird abgeliefert in Vlissingen.

### **Marine Artillerie Abteilung 202**

0640 Boot **Thyr** eingelaufen und um 2100 Uhr ausgelaufen (2210 Uhr auf Position).

1806 (bis 1830) Flakalarm der 1./- und 4./-

### **Het verlies van twee Wellingtons boven het Scheldegebied.**

- Wellington Mk.1C (R1758) van No.9 squadron – om 15.30 uur gestart van Honington – stortte ter hoogte van Zeebrugge in het vaarwater van de Wielingen.

Deze luchtoverwinning werd toegekend aan Oblt. Walter Schneider – Staffelkapitän van 6./JG 26.<sup>1</sup>

Wg.Cdr. Roy George Claringbould Arnold †

Zijn stoffelijk overschot spoelde aan nabij Blankenberge waarna hij op de gemeentelijke begraafplaats aldaar werd begraven.

Sgt. James Murray Pinkham pow

Stalag Luft III Sagan en 357 Kopernikus

Flg.Off. Dominic Bruce pow

Oflag IV C Saalhaus Colditz (vanaf oktober 1941)

Hij verwierf zich bij de Duitsers een reputatie als zijnde aanmatigend.

Sgt. Harold Arthur Wink pow

Stalag 357 Kopernikus

Sgt. Reginald Harry Barratt pow

Stalag Luft III Sagan en 357 Kopernikus

Flg.Off. Thomas A. Bax pow

Stalag 357 Kopernikus (o.a.)



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E.C.Newborn of the South African Air Force. Dominic Bruce – a navigation and bombing leader with No.9 squadron (Honington) and Thomas Albert Bax, the unit's gunnery leader, were captured on Monday, 9 June 1941, two days after Bruce's twenty-sixth birthday.

Bruce had joined the RAF in July 1935 and had originally trained as a wireless operator, then as an airgunner. In November 1936 he joined No.214 squadron at Scampton, equipped with Virginias and Harrows. In March 1939 he retrained as an air observer at the Bombing School, Stranrear and in September became an instructor at OTU Harwell. He was posted to the Wellington equipped No.9 squadron in May 1940 and in September, after twenty-five operations, became the squadron's Navigation and Bombing Leader, a staff appointment with restricted operational flying duties.

Bruce was commissioned Pilot Officer in January 1941 and by June had been promoted to Flying Officer. He had in fact flown on three operations with various crews when on 9 June he was selected to fly an extra operation with the CO, Wing Commander R.G.C.Arnold. Eighteen aircraft were down to carry out an armed reconnaissance of enemy ships off Dunkirk, The Hague and Terschelling.

This was a silly daylight raid, wrote Bruce later, with no escort against enemy fighters. The crew was formed from scratch, with Bax and the other air gunner, Sergeant R.H.Barratt, both being from Staff and flying to keep in touch. All the same, Bruce merely told his wife he would be late for tea. However the tea was ruined because the Wimpy was attacked over the Dutch coast by a gaggle of Me 109's off Zeebrugge. As the crew baled out of the blazing aircraft over the North Sea, Roy Arnold stayed on board, holding it steady and ultimately giving his life for his men. Bruce was recovered with slight burns, and on reaching Dulag Luft was sent to Hohemark for treatment.

By the time he reached Spangenberg, Bruce was already in bad with the Germans, because he had become involved in an altercation with one of the guards at Dulag Luft and hit him on the head with a shelf.

He was now awaiting trial!

In the meantime, several officers had formed a tunnelling syndicate. Among them were Harry Bewlay (again), Peter Tunstall, John Milner, Dominic Bruce and the South African "Useless" Eustace Newborn, who in August began to sink a shaft from a groundfloor room.

On Wednesday, 3 September the RAF contingent brought off another brilliant escape attempt : the bogus "Swiss Commission", involving Dominic Bruce, John Milner, Peter Tunstall and Eustace Newborn.

Bruce, Newborn and Tunstall had discovered the locked attic room that the French lieutenant Merlin had originally found back in 1939. The door was close to the ceiling at the top of the stone staircase. Standing on a table and chair, Tunstall broke in with a four-foot crowbar, affectionately known as "Napoleon" because it could get through anything. Brushing off the shower of plaster and wood splinters, he poked his head inside the hole and nearly fell off his chair as panic-stricken bats flapped around the attic.

He had an even bigger fright when, studying the far corner, he saw a ghostly white face. Steeling himself, and firmly clutching "Napoleon", he climbed through the hole and into the attic, which was covered with dust and cobwebs. Creeping towards the white face, he was ready to commit mayhem. But the ghostly apparition turned out to be part of a bust of Franz Josef, former Emperor of Austria. Tunstall knocked the bust off its pedestal and "kicked its teeth in for frightening me".

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Continuing his recce, he found the room to be a cornucopia. There were engineers' files, still wrapped in fine tissue paper, several tools and even maps. Descending a flight of narrow steep chairs, closely followed by Bruce and Newborn, he discovered the secret entrance to the flat that Merlin had accidentally hit upon. The flat was well furnished and in the wardrobe the trio found a forest warden's uniform and a German officer's uniform. They also found a Luger with thirty-two rounds, a hunting rifle with, it seemed, a limitless number of rounds and a prismatic compass. Almost on the spot a new escape plan was forming in Tunstall's mind, and he and Newborn decided to give up their places in the tunnel.

They proposed instead to adapt the uniforms and escape through the gate, with Bruce and Newborn disguised as Swiss representatives and Tunstall as an escort. Once clear of the camp, they would make for one of the aerodromes near Kassel, steal a German aircraft and fly home. They were hoping to find a Ju 52, which Newborn had flown as a civil airline pilot.

This scheme involved elaborate preparation and careful timing. They set about making Luftwaffe uniforms to wear beneath their Swiss Commission outfits and Tunstall and Bruce decided to take the Luger with them to add a touch of authenticity. Newborn was against it as he did not feel that the usefulness of the weapon justified the risks involved. A fierce argument ensued and Joe Kayll got to hear of it.

"It is not reasonable", he told them, "for a prisoner of war to expect the protection of the Geneva Convention if he is armed". He sent a message to the SBO, Brigadier Somerset via the Army orderlies.

Somerset strictly forbade them to carry the Luger. He was less eloquent than Kayll. They would have to make a fake weapon and like it or lump it.

Make a replica Luger they did – carving it out of wood and covering it with lead "liberated" from the roof. They polished and "blued" it until it looked near-perfect.

While the intrepid trio were in the final stages of preparing their escape, the Germans discovered the tunnel and Hauptmann Schmidt was beaming with triumph. He boasted on Appell that Spangenberg was impregnable: "It is impossible for anyone to escape by tunnel or any other way".

Schmidt was about to be proved wrong – again!

Tunstall had timed the escape to coincide with the arrival and departure at midday of the orderlies, who carried out the pigswill. Their departure would prevent the guard from crossing the drawbridge to check at the gatehouse whether an officer and two civilians had in fact previously entered the castle.

Shortly after noon on 3 September, as the orderlies went about their usual business, Bruce, Newborn and Tunstall – none of whom could speak passable German – emerged from the castle into the courtyard attended by two British officers. One of them, John Milner, who spoke fluent German, kept up a conversation while the trio answered in monosyllabus.

The party dawdled a little before the gate and when it became clear that the guard was convinced by the subterfuge, Milner and the "Commission" exchanged formal farewells and approached the sentry.

He opened the gate immediately and the three impostors passed through without having to exchange a word. After crossing the drawbridge they passed the guardroom, where unsuspecting off-duty guards stood up and saluted. Tunstall, who had been carefully coached by John Milner, looked at his wrist-watch.

"Mein Gott!" he said loudly. "Schon viertel zwei!" Bruce replied: "Kommen Sie, Herr Doktor! Wir müssen weiter gehen!" He then dropped his Ausweis – actually no more than a stolen fishing permit that had been touched up and stamped with a large official looking seal – and made a show of picking it up.

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At this point, instead of turning right down the cobbled slope that led to the spiral road, they turned left and went down the stone steps until they met with one of the tracks. There they disappeared into the woods, where they doffed their disguises and emerged a minute or two later in their home-made Luftwaffe uniforms. Turnstall as a Feldwebel and the other two as Flieger.

The trio had arranged that, should their ruse be discovered, prisoners in the castle would burn wet grass in one of the stoves, thus creating a smoke-signal from one of the chimneys. As it happened, their escape had been discovered. One of the guards had had the presence of mind to check the time the Swiss Commission had arrived and in less than a minute the ruse had been found out and every member of the garrison that could be spared, had set off in pursuit.

As arranged the escapers' confederates had lit the warning fire, but as the three had been in the woods, they had not seen it. However, for the time being luck was on their side. There were two tracks away from the castle and by chance they had chosen the one the garrison considered least suspect. The first intimation they had that the Germans were in hot pursuit was when they heard lorries coming up from behind, filled with armed troops. To the surprise of the escapers, the lorries thundered down the other track, giving the three Luftwaffe Soldaten a friendly wave from a distance.

They ate some of their escape rations and marched along Melsunger Straße towards Kassel, spending the night in the forest, covered in bracken. Early the next morning they set off again. As they approached the city, an important military base, they passed a large number of German troops and their arms ached with having to continually return salutes.

Newborn began to get fed up having to keep repeating "Heil Hitler!" and his companions told him in no uncertain manner that unless he displayed more allegiance to "der Führer" they would knock his block off. Newborn saw the humour in the situation when hordes of children ran alongside them singing the popular Luftwaffe song "Bomben auf England".

As planned, they sneaked into the aerodrome through a hedge and then walked down the tarmac road as if they had every right to be there. Almost immediately they were approached by a uniformed official – some kind of airfield warden – who asked: "Was wollen Sie?"

Tunstall's German could not meet this kind of challenge. He altered course, waved and said airily: "Ich komme zurück!" The official looked annoyed, but the three walked on and searched the aerodrome for a Ju 52, unfortunately failing to find a suitable aircraft. They left the aerodrome and hid in the surrounding woods, where they discussed their next move. All agreed that they did not want to waste Newborn's experience on Ju 52's by trying to steal a strange aircraft.

Tunstall nevertheless wanted to stick around in case a Ju 52 flew in. The others thought this was dangerous and preferred to revert to plan B – walking to Belgium and France and contacting the Resistance.

Since they had walked openly through the streets of Kassel exchanging salutes with German officers, they felt some confidence in their disguises and were sure they could brazen it out on the road in broad daylight. The majority vote won and they decided to walk on, examining other airfields along the way.

They travelled west towards Cologne, living on apples and vegetables and in ten days covered a distance of more than a hundred miles. They nearly came a cropper on one occasion when, resting by a secluded stream, they dozed off.

Tunstall was suddenly awoken by a young woman and another young woman, holding a baby, was kicking Bruce and Newborn awake. Why the women had to do this the three escapers never knew; it seemed that all the young mother wanted to tell them was that her baby's father was in the Luftwaffe and had been shot down by British Flak. But instead of making sympathetic noises, Tunstall grinned and said enthusiastically: "Ja! Ja!" The expression on

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her face soon told him he had given the wrong response and the three escapers made a quick getaway.

Soon after that their luck completely deserted them. They were some seventy miles southwest of Kassel in the village of Frankenberg, when they passed a group of soldiers speaking to a civilian.

The guards saluted them but one of them stared hard. Through ignorance of what Luftwaffe uniforms looked like, he had become suspicious of their dress. He claimed – quite wrongly as it happened – that the caps were incorrectly made and declared: “I think you are Englishmen!” Any attempt at argument was beyond the limited German of the three escapers. The guard unslung his rifle and instructed one of his fellows to call for the Bürgermeister and the Polizei. The burgomaster arrived first, a huge man with a grey handlebar moustache, waving a Luger. He reached for Tunstall’s holster. Tunstall took out his replica pistol and the burgomaster snatched it out of his hand, obviously convinced it was real. The three escapers were then marched towards the town gaol, the burgomaster bringing up the rear with his (real) automatic.

Back at Spangenberg, Schmidt was incensed at their audacity. How dare they escape when he had declared the camp escape-proof! And as for their Luftwaffe uniforms! He sentenced each of them to fifty-three days solitary, two weeks longer than the punishment permitted by the POW Code of the Geneva Convention.

Bruce told him:” The Germans have no Geneva Convention but only a German Convention”. Peter Tunstall was more succinct! “Fucking Germans”, he said. There were already five prisoners undergoing solitary: Joe Barker, Harry Bewlay, Bob Coste, Eric Foster and John Tilsley.

The tower did not have enough cells for the returned escapers so Foster and Barker had their sentences curtailed. Tunstall found himself in Foster’s old cell and Bruce and Newborn shared Barker’s.

They took advantage of the traps Foster had made and within hours there was once again traffic between the two cells. One night the three sat playing cards in Tunstall’s cell but became so caught up in their game that they forgot about the impending inspection by the guard.

He was a pretty dim specimen! He entered the cell and counted””Eins, zwei, drei, stimmt! Gute Nacht!” Then he left. The three looked at each other, without moving a muscle, waiting for the Pfennig to drop. Then “Mein Gott!” Result: another ten days each in the tower.

On Tuesday, 16 September the Upper Camp was evacuated. Before they left, the prisoners were lined up in the courtyard as usual and, again as usual, counted in fives and issued with a bread ration.

Hauptmann Schmidt then screamed the warning that old lags such as Bewlay, Syd Murray, Alf Thompson and John Tilsley had already heard several times before:”You will march from the castle in formation! You will not step from the ranks! Any attempt to do so will be regarded as an attempt to escape and you will be shot without warning!”

As Eric Foster remarked many years later, in a masterly piece of understatement:”It would be quite untrue to say that these warnings did not give rise to serious thoughts for those of us who were ever vigilant and looking for an opportunity to escape.

On the way to the rather rustic Spangenberg railway station, they were once again the objects of local curiosity, especially for the women, who had seen very few healthy young men during the past two years. However, neither side was in a position to satisfy the urges of the



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other, so the prisoners threw the women German bread, which was in any case too heavy for its size.

The German civilian population received the same bread ration as POW's – one fifth of a loaf per day – so the women were grateful. The German officers in charge of the POW's were embarrassed and annoyed and the guards were simply jittery.

As the British officers stepped out of the ranks to hand the bread over, the guards unslung their rifles and shouted: "Zurück oder ich schieße!" But once they realised it wasn't a trick and that no one was trying to escape, they slung their rifles back over their shoulders and their behaviour from then on was less neurotic.

The train journey to Menne, where the prisoners were to alight for the march to Oflag VIB at Dössel was less eventful than the previous journeys to Thorn and back. The guards were on the alert and in any case the journey lasted less than two hours, so no opportunity to escape short of the sheer bloody suicidal presented itself.

### **09 juni 1941 – Blankenberge**

Toespraak(je) vrijdag 10 juni 2005

Dear Malcolm and Jean, dear family and relatives of the late Wg.Cdr. Roy George Arnold, Mr. burgomaster and members of the civil service of the City of Blankenberge.

My name is Wim de Meester and I am researching in full detail everything about the airwar over the province of Zeeland and the estuaries of the Scheldt rivers and that may reach sometimes even far beyond the national boundaries. Up to and including 31 December 1942 – after almost 40 months of war – 1497 airmen, sailors and soldiers were killed or went missing in that region and – as you know – many more still to come and there were also altogether 370 aircraft losses up to that date.

951 members belonged to the allied forces the majority being British better to say Commonwealth and French and of these 951 we now arrive at the date of 9 June 1941, the date where 4 Wellingtons of No.9 squadron and 2 Stirlings of No.7 squadron received orders to carry out an armed reconnaissance along the occupied Belgian and Dutch coastal area's.

With the advantage of looking back we can only conclude that it was a ridiculous order and the mission close to suicidal to sent such big and slow lumbering planes without any escort on such missions and – one could rely on that like a Swiss watch – trouble was in the offing! Two Wellingtons were intercepted by the Messerschmitt's (6./JG 26) from Maldegem and at almost the same time the anti-aircraft guns of the Flushing based harbour flottilla opened up and so they succeeded in shooting down two Wellingtons and with them 12 crew

The first crew suffered 2 dead, 3 still missing and only one survivor whilst the second crew – the crew of Roy Arnold counted for 5 survivors and one killed and that one is Roy Arnold himself. From testimony of one of these survivors we now know that Roy Arnold kept his shot up and doomed Wellington steady for several moments giving his crew the opportunity to jump and by doing so he saved their lives and their futures. For him it was all too late and

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he crashed to his death into the sea, the sea which gave him up so that at least he was given a proper burial.

Today we remember Wg.Cdr. Roy George Claribould Arnold but with him we also have to remember the courage of those airmen, who flew with the bomber squadrons in the spring and summer of 1941, a courage which cannot be overstated. Few, if any, had any illusions of the danger facing them and yet, they rose magnificently to the challenge.



Malcolm en Jane

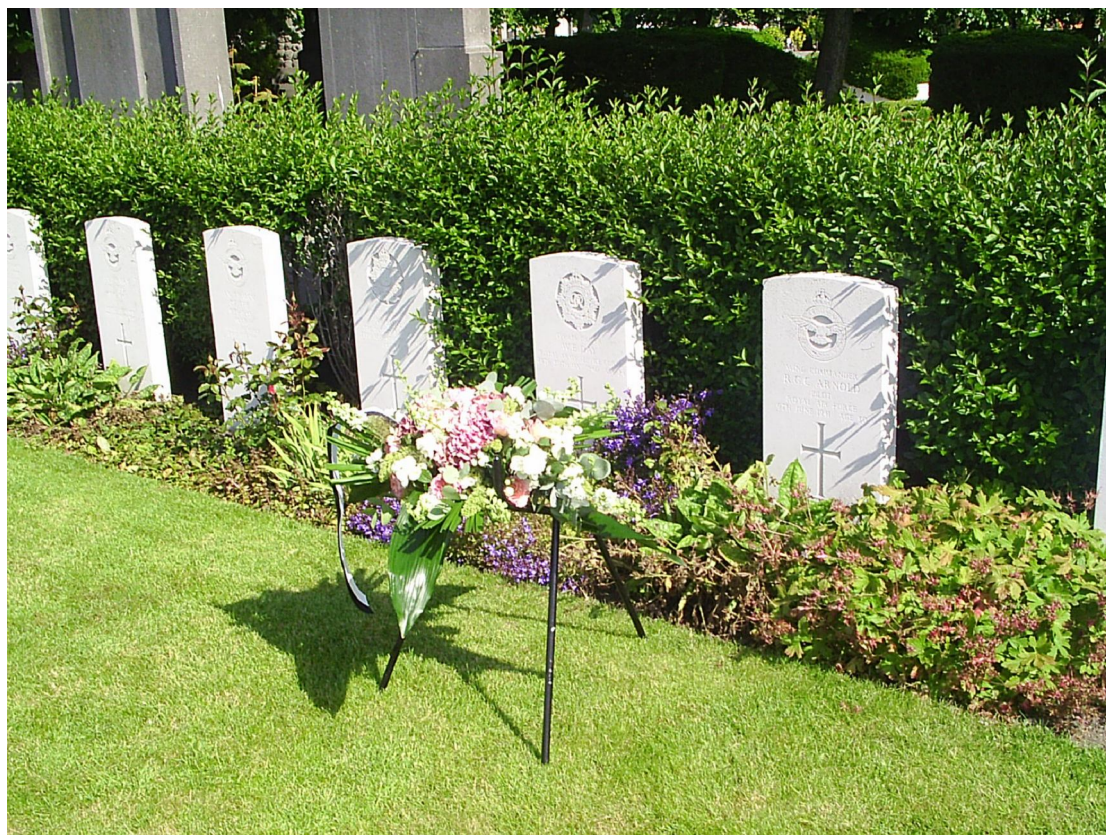


The whole family

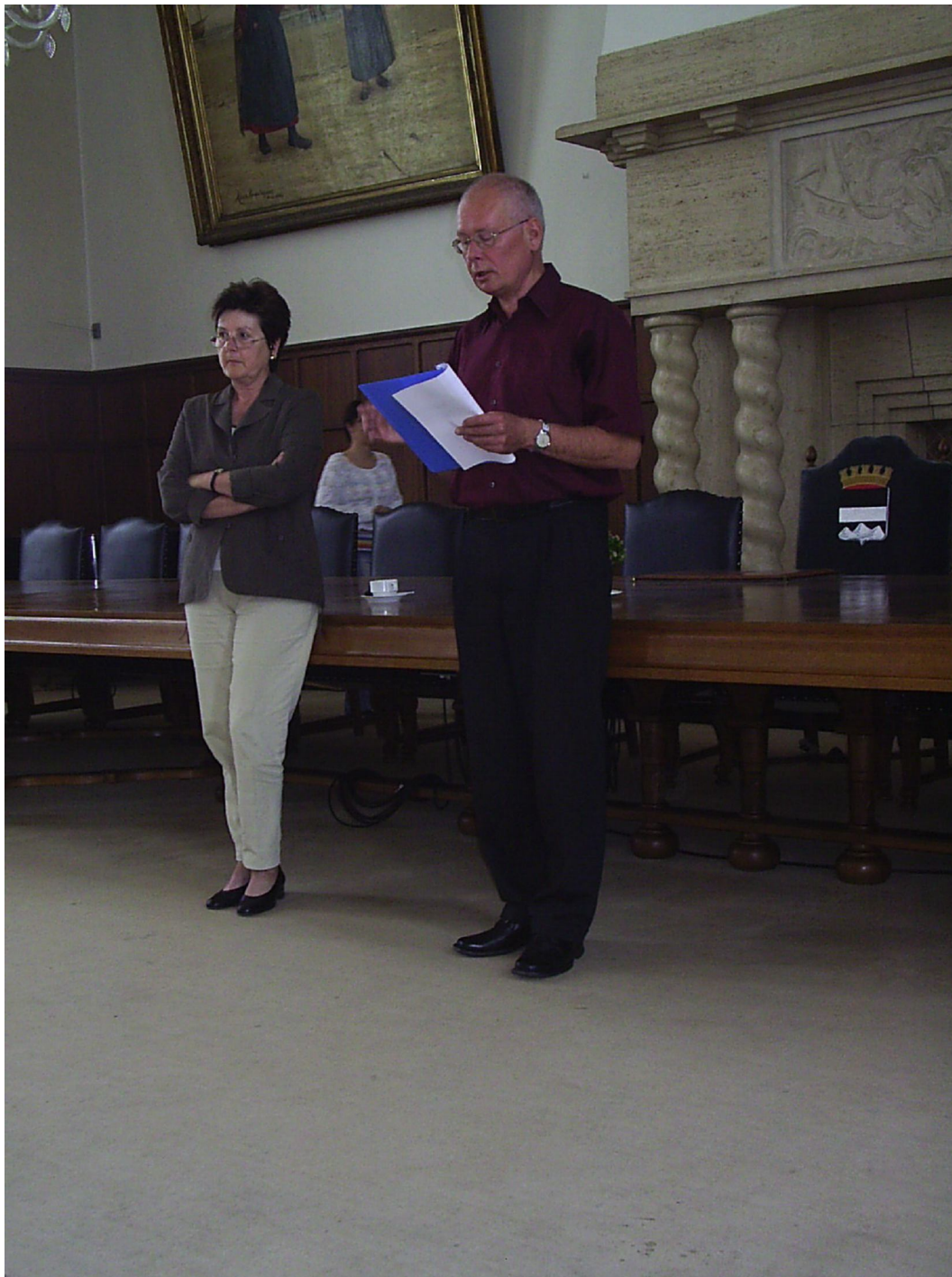


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Eresaluut van de Klaroenen



Bloemstuk bij graf



toespraak in het gemeentehuis