



Stichting Herdenkingsmonument Mierlo-Hout

## News letter

Year 6 Volume No.2

April 2020

Another monument

NL-DOET

24 Roses

Dear Friends,

### Another Monument

This time a small monument at the crossroads Sonseweg/ Schietbaanlaan in Best.



**Lt-Col. Robert G. Cole**  
**502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment – 101 Airborne Division**

### Passing

September 18 1944, during operation Market Garden, Cole lead the troops of the 3rd battalion of the 502nd regiment in Best. That they he received a request from a pilot over the radio to place orange panels in front of the troops, Cole decided to do so himself While doing that he was deadly wounded by a German sniper.

Lt. Col. Robert G. Cole is burried at the American grave yard in Margraten: Section B, row 15, grave 27.



### **What preceded this event**

**Cole and his unit started above Normandy, during the American air drops. On the night of June 6 he gathered 75 soldiers. They concurred Exit 3 in Saint-Martin-De-Varreville behind Utah Beach and welcomed the men of the US 4th Infantry Division coming from the dunes.**

**The battalion of Cole was kept aside and defended the right side of the 101 Airborn division in their attempts to take the roads to Carentan.**

**In the late afternoon of June 10th, Cole lead 400 soldiers of his battalion across a long road without any cover, with swamps on both sides. On the right side, German troops dug themselves in behind the hedge. At the other end of the road, was the last of the four bridges across the river Douve. A bit further away was Carentan, that had to be concurred by the 101 division, to take care of a connection with the 29th Infantry Division coming from Omaha Beach.**

**During the rise the battalion was constantly under fire. The rise was slow, with crawling and slinking, and the battalion had to face many victims. Those that survived were taking shelter at the slope on the other side of the road. The bridge was nearly completely blocked by a Cointet-element (Belgian gate) and only one person at a time could pass. Attempts to force a passage failed, and the batallion stayed where they were during the night.**

**During the night, Coles men were revealed to granate fire of German mortars and attacked by 2 planes. Even more found themselves killed. Once the shooting got less, a part of the group managed to pass the obstacles and took position for a counter attack.**

**The Germans could hold the troops from passing the bridge and the German shooting could not be stopped. Cole asked for a smoke curtain around the dug in Germans and ordered an attack with bayonets, which was rare in WWII.**

**He attacked in the area of the hedge, where at first only a small group of his unit followed him. The rest followed when they saw what happened. Cole and his men fought male to male. The German survivors pulled back and had more losses on their way out.**

**Before the attack, which was known as Cole's Charge, a high price was paid. 130 out of 265 people died. Because his battalion was exhausted, Cole asked the first battalion to pass and continue the attack. The first battalion however also lost many men crossing the fourth bridge and they joined the third battalion instead of moving ahead.**

**The next day, at that spot at the surrounding of Carentan, heavy counter attacks were done by the German 6th parachute regiment. At the climax of this fight, around 7PM, Cole's artillery observer managed to contact help and arranged concentrated artillery support based on which the counter attacks stopped.**

**June 12th 2AM, the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment reached the German lines and concurred hill 30 south of Carentan. From there onwards at daylight, they attacked Carentan towards the north with 3 regiments, in front compagny E of the 2nd battalion of the 506th regiment (known by the name Band of Brothers). The German 6th parachute regiment had almost no ammunition lef tand departed the town during the night, leaving a small group behind. At 7.30AM Carentan was taken.**



This monument honors Medal of Honor Lt. Col. Robert G. Cole and is situated on the north side of Carentan, France (west of the D971).

### Tribute

Lt. Col. Cole's exceptional leadership skills deserve the biggest honor. He received the highest possible decorations, from left to right: Medal of Honor, the Purple Heart and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm.



( alle foto's Creative Commons)

Cole was nominated for a Medal of Honor related tot he bayonet attack June 11 near Carentan. He was awarded 2 weeks after his passing. His mother received the medal on his behalf, in the company of Cole's widow and their 2 year old son. This took place at a place where played a lot when he was a child, in Fort Sam Houston.

The Robert G. Cole High School in Fort Sam Houston and the area where he was raised, *Cole Park*, in Fort Campbell in Kentucky, are named after Cole.

Friday September 18 2009 the monument was revealed at the cross roads of the Sonseweg - Schietbaanlaan in Best, near the place where he lost his life. This was done by his son, joined by active soldiers and veterans of the 101 Airborn division.



## Roll up your sleeves!

Due to Covid-19, our planned activities for NL-Doet on March 13 were cancelled. Still we would like to thank OBS 't Hout that they were willing to take on the adoption year 2019-2020. The adoption for 2020-2021 is taken over by "KC in het Hart van het Hout".

## 24 Roses

Each year, carnival society "de Houtse Kluppels", celebrates the work of someone who did something significant for the community in Mierlo-Hout.

February 8th, the yearly booster evening was held and this year's receiver of 24 roses was announced. Harrie Raaijmakers, our secretary, was surprised with the 24 roses. He was clearly surprised and moved by this gesture.

As motivation was mentioned that Harrie supported different clubs, like soccer club RKS V Mierlo-Hout as sports masseur and head of materials, as instructor for first-aid club Mierlo-Hout and last but not least, the motor behind 75 years of liberation festivities in September 2019.



(foto Tom Pennings)

Chairman Riny van Oorschot handing over the roses to Harrie Raaijmakers

Harrie congratulations again with the well deserved nomination.

For more information : [www.monumentmierlohout.nl](http://www.monumentmierlohout.nl) where you can find and download all news letters published.

Stay safe!