



Stichting Herdenkingsmonument Mierlo-Hout
News letter
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Hello friends,

Just another monument

Fliegerhorst Havelte

The former Fliegerhorst Havelte was an airfield built by the German Wehrmacht in World War II near Havelte in the province of Drenthe. The construction of Fliegerhorst Havelte was the responsibility of the Organization Todt.

The Organization Todt was a German construction company during the existence of Nazi Germany, named after its founder Fritz Todt. The organization was founded in 1938. In 1945, when the Third Reich had fallen, the organization was disbanded.



Due to its strategic location, the relative height and the great openness, the Havelterberg was an ideal place for the German occupiers to build 'Fliegerhorst Havelte'. It was intended to relieve Schiphol.

In November 1942, the Overcinge estate was requisitioned by Bauleitung Steenwijk and construction of the airfield began in secret. The village of Darp was completely demolished and rebuilt at its current location.

From 1943 several thousands of Dutch workers were forced to work, A total of 5600 workers were deployed. All men, with the exception of doctors, clergy and bakers in Meppel and Hoogeveen, had to work at the airport for 14 days. The mayors had to select the men upon request of the Germans.

Another part of the workers, including many Jews and prisoners, were recruited by the Workers' Office in Meppel, also upon request of the Germans. These were accompanied by German workers from the Reichsarbeitsdienst (RAD).

A large area of 600 ha, a hilly area with forests, heaths and peat bogs, was completely leveled and drained with all associated installations and buildings.

The two dolmens present were buried. After the war, in 1949, the dolmens were excavated and restored.



F I H.Raaijmakers

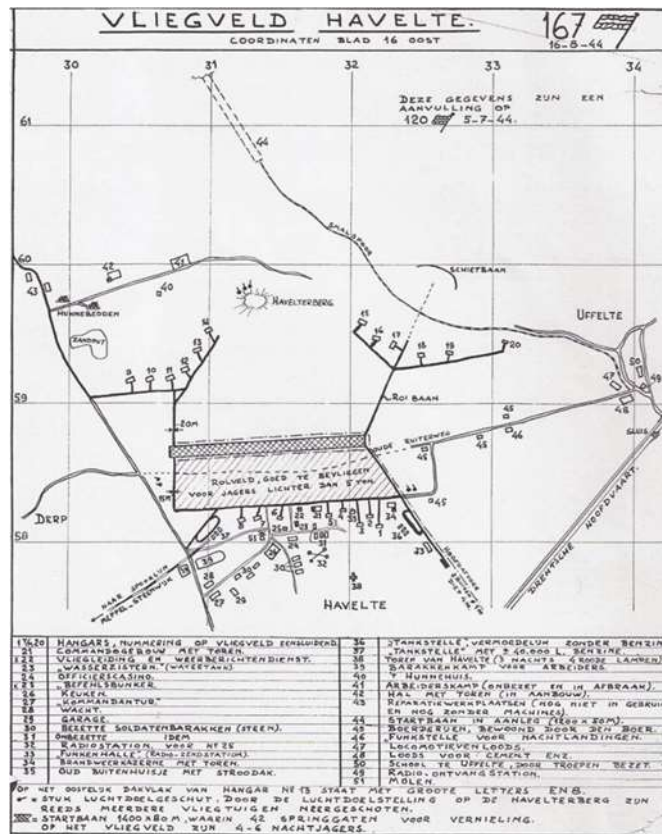
In addition to the runway, the airport had taxiways for the aircraft to taxi, 22 hangars, a firing range where the aircraft's firearms and ordnance were tested, and a gas station. Barracks, fuel depots, a water treatment plant, a fire station and a command tower were built around the airfield. There were four red lamps on the tower of the Dutch Reformed Church, as orientation points for the German pilots.

The workers were housed in three barracks camps on and around the site: at De Wal along the Helomaweg, at De Doeze along the Hunebeddenweg and at the Konijnenberg. The camp on the Hunebeddenweg was also called the Jewish camp, because from March 1944 about 500 mixed-married Jewish men were also housed here. These were men who were married to a Christian woman.



Bracelet of a worker who was employed by Organization Todt

When the workers were no longer suitable for the heavy work, they were taken to Camp Westerbork



A map of the Dutch secret service. Information was passed on to the Allies.

The airfield has never really been in operation, because the Allies were well aware of all progress through Drenthe's espionage work by Jan Poortman, among others. When the airport was almost ready, it was systematically bombed to pieces. On March 24, 1945, the entire airfield including the runway was thoroughly destroyed in a large-scale air raid. This resulted in at least 2000 bomb craters.

However, Fliegerhorst Havelte has also given the landscape of the Havelterberg an added value.

Thanks to the many shallow bomb craters, for example, the runway has become a beautifully hilly, sparse grassland on which orchids soon grew after the war.

The most recognizable are the open-air hangars. These were laid out as a curved open space surrounded by a high embankment, in which aircraft could be parked invisibly from the surrounding area.

In retrospect, the Germans, Americans and English unintentionally carried out large-scale nature development here at the end of the Second World War. There are many plant species that can only be found here or in only a few places elsewhere in our country.



F I H.Raaijmakers

The memorial, made of rust-colored metal, shows a map of the former camp. "You see the twelve barracks, the other buildings, but also the trenches. All the 'dimples' are craters of the bombardment."

A Star of David is depicted in the top left corner. "Referring to the five hundred Jewish workers. You can also see the barbed wire that was built around the camp"



F I H.Raaijmakers



With thanks to, Stichting Museum Vliegveld Havelte WWII

www.museumvliegveldhaveltwo2.eu

www.provincie.drenthe.nl;

Model builder Ton Spoormakers handed over his 'pride' to the Mierlo-Hout Memorial Monument Foundation

The first time that we as the HMMH foundation had the pleasure of meeting Ton was in 2019. In that year we organized an exhibition in the Geseldonk in Mierlo-Hout as part of the 75th anniversary of the liberation.

Ton also made an important contribution to this exhibition about the Second World War. He proudly showed his collection of self-assembled model vehicles.



The collection of Ton Spoormakers during the exhibition in the Geseldonk.
Photo: Henk van Dijk

In September 1944, the liberation of our region was imminent. Little Ton was deeply impressed by the amount of different types of vehicles and other war material with which the Allies rolled into our city.

That image of the liberation period stayed with him and it motivated him to start building scale models of various vehicles and even airplanes at a young age. First he used documentation and after that detailed drawings. All his models were made from various types of waste material. This created a wonderful hobby for Ton, which he managed to keep busy in his spare time.

In view of Ton's advanced age, we sometimes asked him whether he had ever thought about what should happen to his collection in the future. This question to Ton arose from the fact that we within our board believe that his unique creations should never be lost.



Secretary Harrie Raaijmakers (r) visited Ton in February, where the many buildings were still displayed in his hobby room. Photo: Mario Coolen.

Immediately after the end of the exhibition in 2019, we investigated the possibilities of setting up a permanent exhibition space within the Geseldonk. Because then his collection could also be viewed by young and old during the opening hours of the community center. Unfortunately, due to lack of space and the arrival of a different zoning plan, our wish could not take place at the intended location.

But Ton had also thought further in the meantime and so our foundation was approached by him in mid-2022.

He considered transferring his entire collection of building models to us.

On February 27 of this year we were invited to his house for coffee and he made a final decision. "I am confident that my life's work is in good hands with you," he said during the visit.

Our board is very grateful for Mr. Spoormakers to entrust his collection to our foundation. We think it is a great honor that his 'pride' is now housed with us.



On March 6, 2023, the official transfer of model construction to the HMMH foundation took place. Ton Spoormakers received a symbolic amount for this from chairman Mario Coolen.
Photo: Harry Raaijmakers.

Subsequently, we informed him about what will take place next year during the 80-year liberation celebrations within the municipality of Helmond. An exhibition about the Second World War is also on the program. This exhibition is this time planned in the center of Helmond. We thought it would be a good time to exhibit the modeling collection in public again.

The liberation event will take place in Helmond in 2024.

You can read more about this in one of our next newsletters.

Mierlo - Hout Then & Now



Slegersstraat spring 1945



Slegersstraat spring 2017



War Cemetery Mierlo 2022

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For more information about our Foundation, please refer to our website:

<https://monumentmierlohout.nl>