

Account of the events on July 28<sup>th</sup> 1943 by Jan-Willem Verwey

I was delivering mail together with my father to houses along the Lingedyke at the first bridge just outside of Asperen in the direction of Leerdam when an air battle started with heavy gunfire. My Father shouted "take cover". Shortly after that we saw a small plane coming down in flames and which crashed (1) on the left side of the "Nieuwe Zuiderlingedijk" in the direction of the provincial road next to a path which was known in Asperen Dialect as "Padakker" Not long after that we saw a number of parachutes in the sky (2). The German pilot landed next to the road leading towards Gellicum on the right hand side. He hit a telephone or electricity wire but survived. When it became known later that one of the Americans fell to his death this caused people to say "if only he....." (If only... the German pilot was killed instead of the American) I think the American fell to his death near Fort Asperen but I am not sure about that. (3)The Americans landed in a griend (4) about 70 meters past the above mentioned road (where the German pilot landed.) People came to watch and some went into the griend but soon the Germans came and stopped this. I vaguely recall that one American dressed in a blue overall got away with a local but I am not sure of that. The others were all captured by the Germans and the injured were taken to the local Doctor (5). After treatment they were taken to Gorinchem (6) The German plane remained at the crash location for some time before being dismantled and taken away in parts. All of this has made a lasting impression on me as a 10 year old.

*1. The Pilot of this plane was Herbert Kind. He was shot down by the 42-3116 and was badly burnt but returned to duty within 1 month. Than on September 9<sup>th</sup> 1943 he was wounded in action again in a battle with Spitfires near St. Omer in France where he force landed. He was Killed in action during aerial combat with an American P-51 fighter on July 26<sup>th</sup> 1944 almost 2 years after bailing out over Asperen.*

*2. These were the parachutes of Louis Peys, Vincent Tenisci, Albert Brown, Stephen Maksin, William Mahoney and Robert Martin and the German Pilot Herbert Kind*

*3. The American who died fell near Fort Nieuwe Steeg about 2 miles from where Mr Verweij saw the events*

*4. A griend is a swampy area with bushes and dutch willows*

*5. Co-pilot Louis M. Peys was badly injured and Mr. Verweij saw how he was taken into the doctors house. He probably stayed there for some days or weeks before being taken to the General Hospital at Gorinchem*

*6. Gorinchem is a city about 8 miles to the west where German regional headquarters were.*