



1

CAPTAIN TIMMERMANS

German War Cemetery, Ysselsteyn

As a voluntary conscript, Lodewijk Johannes Timmermans is imprisoned for a short time after the capitulation in May 1940. When the occupying force calls on him to go into captivity again in July 1943, he goes into hiding with his sister in Venray.

After the liberation of the southern Netherlands, Timmermans returns to military service, to the mine and ammunition clearance. But within a week, on 23 March 1945, he gets wounded when a German wood mine explodes. He partly loses sight in both eyes. In the Canadian military hospital in Turnhout, Timmermans befriends a German soldier, a farmer's son from the Bodensee area. The friendship will forever change his prejudices against Germans.

In 1948 Timmermans becomes in charge of the German War Cemetery in Ysselsteyn. He builds graves, takes care of them, identifies the dead, informs relatives, shows visitor groups around, and organises youth meetings at the cemetery for the first time. Until his retirement in 1976, Captain Timmermans commits himself to the Dutch-German reconciliation. After his death in 1995, his ashes are scattered at the cemetery. A memorial stone has been placed left of the central memorial site, opposite the carillon. The identity of the German soldier has never been traced.



ON THE OTHER SIDE

A special bicycle route between two remarkable places: the German War Cemetery in Ysselsteyn in Limburg and the War Museum in Overloon in Brabant. It's special, not only because the route takes you through a beautiful rural area, but also because it regularly confronts you with the tensions of the Second World War: 'allied' versus 'German', 'right' versus 'wrong' and, above all, 'alive' versus 'dead.' That's where the name of this bicycle route refers to: "On the other side."

The bicycle route has several stops, each offering a different perspective to the liberation operations in this area. You will experience what the military went through as well as how civilians came out of the war.

If you visit by car, you can park for free at the German War Cemetery or at the War Museum. From there you cycle through the area. Don't forget to ride through the War Museum over the new bicycle bridge (for free!). And also stand still for a moment at the German War Cemetery. Both in their own way, those locations are the largest of their kind in the Netherlands and they display the madness of war at a glance.

We wish you a nice ride!



2

GEORGE RENDA ALOYSIUS GONSOWSKI

N270 near the Brabant-Limburg border

October 1944. Heavy fighting ravages Overloon. On the Kamphoefweg George Renda and Aloysius Gonsowski, two soldiers 1st class of the C Company of the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 7th American Armored Division, are hit by German artillery fire.

February 1977. Two boys with a metal detector find a helmet along the Kamphoefweg. While police and the war graves service in Bussum are informed, War Museum curator Harrie van Daal immediately goes there and witnesses how another helmet, shoes, a wallet, some letters, a golden ring and the remains of two people are being dug up. Two identification plates are also found. Renda and Gonsowski have been buried in a shallow hole by German soldiers, according to Van Daal, as the civilians of Overloon had been evacuated at that time and the Germans had taken over the area after the Americans' withdrawal.

October 2009. One of the boys who discovered the grave takes the initiative to erect a monument on the exact location for George Renda from Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, and Aloysius Gonsowski from New York. Gonsowski has found his final resting place at the American cemetery in Neupré, Belgium, and Renda at the cemetery in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.



3

KARL SCHIPPER

Dalland forest, Merselo

Karl Schipper, born on 26 December 1921 in the former Schakenhof in East Prussia, voluntarily reports to the Wehrmacht at the end of 1939. He completes the basic training with the technical ground staff of the Air Force. In 1940 his brother Fritz also volunteers, allowing their father to leave the Wehrmacht to take care of his wife and four daughters.

After his recruitment training, Schipper is sent to Palermo in Sicily. He participates in the Balkan and Africa campaigns, and in October 1944 in the Battle of Overloon. The Allies are trying to reach the German Empire and the 8th British Army Corps has to push back the Wehrmacht between Roermond and Overloon. Days of bitter battles follow. Overloon gets almost completely destroyed, but the Allies can push on to Venray.

Schipper's platoon is stationed in Dalland, the forest between Merselo and Overloon. On 6 October 1944, around 5:15 pm, a grenade from the British army strikes nearby. A shrapnel penetrates his lungs. Comrades carry him to the medical help but Schipper dies of his injuries on the way. He is buried with honour in Merselo, and reburied at the German War Cemetery in Ysselsteyn in 1947. Karl Schipper now rests in block H, row 5, grave 117.



4

HARRIE VAN DAAL

War Museum, Overloon

Visiting the battlefield in Ypres, Belgium, after the First World War has left Harrie van Daal, a civil servant of the former municipality of Overloon-Maashees who was born in 1908, deeply impressed. In the Second World War his Overloon remains free of substantial war violence for more than four years. But in September 1944, German troops chose the village as the basis for their fight against the Allies. All inhabitants of Overloon are being chased out of their homes. After three weeks of heavy fighting, the village is completely destroyed. Or, like Van Daal sees it, has become a second Ypres.

When he sees the remains of the battle in the destroyed forest a few months later, Van Daal and a forest worker suggest to set up a museum. 30 residents of Overloon contribute 50 guilders each, although the reconstruction of their village is yet to begin. On 25 May 1946 the museum of the Second World War opens, the first of its kind in Western Europe. On that day Van Daal places the famous memorial stone:

"Stand still for a moment, visitor, and remember that the land on which you now stand once was one of the most hard-fought parts of the Overloon battlefield, with bitter fights in man-to-man battles. Many young lives, after escaping the battlefields of Nettuno and Normandy, ended under these trees."



5

JOHN LINCOLN

Venrayseweg, Overloon

The 20-year-old John Lincoln is platoon commander of the 1st battalion of the Norfolk Regiment. Being part of the British 3rd Division, he and his men hike on the Venrayseweg in Overloon towards Venray. A week earlier the British have taken over the front at Overloon from the Americans. Instead of tanks, the British mainly deploy their infantry against the entrenched German troops.

Lincoln's peloton is one of the two that start the attack along the Venrayseweg. They begin with heavy artillery bombardments, closely followed by the infantry pushing forward. But persistent rain has made the area between Overloon and Venray soggy. The German Schmines are barely visible and many British are left wounded in the field. The conquest of the area, with the Loobeek as the deadliest obstacle, takes three days. The British in open field and are target of German cannons, machine guns and snipers. Out of the 30 men in Lincoln's peloton, only 12 remain unharmed, including himself. But the senseless death surrounding him touches him deeply.

Later Lincoln will be wounded in fights around Kevelaer in Germany, but he survives the war. Afterwards he will be visiting the region regularly to commemorate his fallen comrades.



6

DAVID A. BRIGDEN HANS WULFF

Ossendijk, Ysselsteyn

On Hitler's personal orders, the Luftwaffe attacks the allied airports in northern France, Belgium and the southern Netherlands on 1 January 1945. Taking part in this Operation Bodenplatte, Lieutenant Hans Wulff in his Focke-Wulf Fw 190A-8 opens fire at the airport in Helmond, which is still under construction. When he pulls up again, he is also able to hit the Spitfire of flying officer David A. Brigden of the Canadian 442 Squadron.

Brigden attempts to land on a construction site between Rouwkuilen and Steegbroek in Ysselsteyn, but the aircraft flips over as it hits the ground and catches fire. Brigden does not survive. Since the autumn of 1945 he has been resting on the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave XVII.A.12.

Wulff's plane has also been hit. His Focke-Wulf smashes to the ground at the Haantjeshof farm on the Deurneseweg, about 50 metres from the crashed Spitfire of Brigden. But Wulff has been able to rescue himself in time with his parachute. He bruises both legs when landing. Four men carry him to the Janssen family's farm on the Pottevenweg, where he is eventually arrested by the English.

After 19 days in a British hospital, Wulff moves to a prisoner of war camp in England. There he meets his later wife, whom he marries in 1948. He lives in England until his death in 1997.



This route has been made possible by:



This themed bicycle route has no start or finish. You can pick it up at any point as the route is a loop connecting the German War Cemetery in Ysselsteyn and the War Museum in Overloon, so you will always return to the same point. The route is designed for one-way traffic. The legend of the map contains the order of the junction numbers. Stick to this order and you will ride in the right direction. You will find six landmarks (see photo) during your trip. Each landmark has a number, referring to one of the stories in this folder. Take your time and have a seat on the bench to read the respective story.

This route takes you over the bicycle bridge in the War Museum Overloon. It means that you can only complete this part of the route during its opening hours of the museum. If you arrive at the museum from junction 50 to 31 directly, you can take a shortcut by riding from junction 50 to 31 directly.

- ON THE OTHER SIDE -
Liberation Route



- 59 kms -

Shared stories of
War Museum Overloon and
German War Cemetery Ysselsteyn



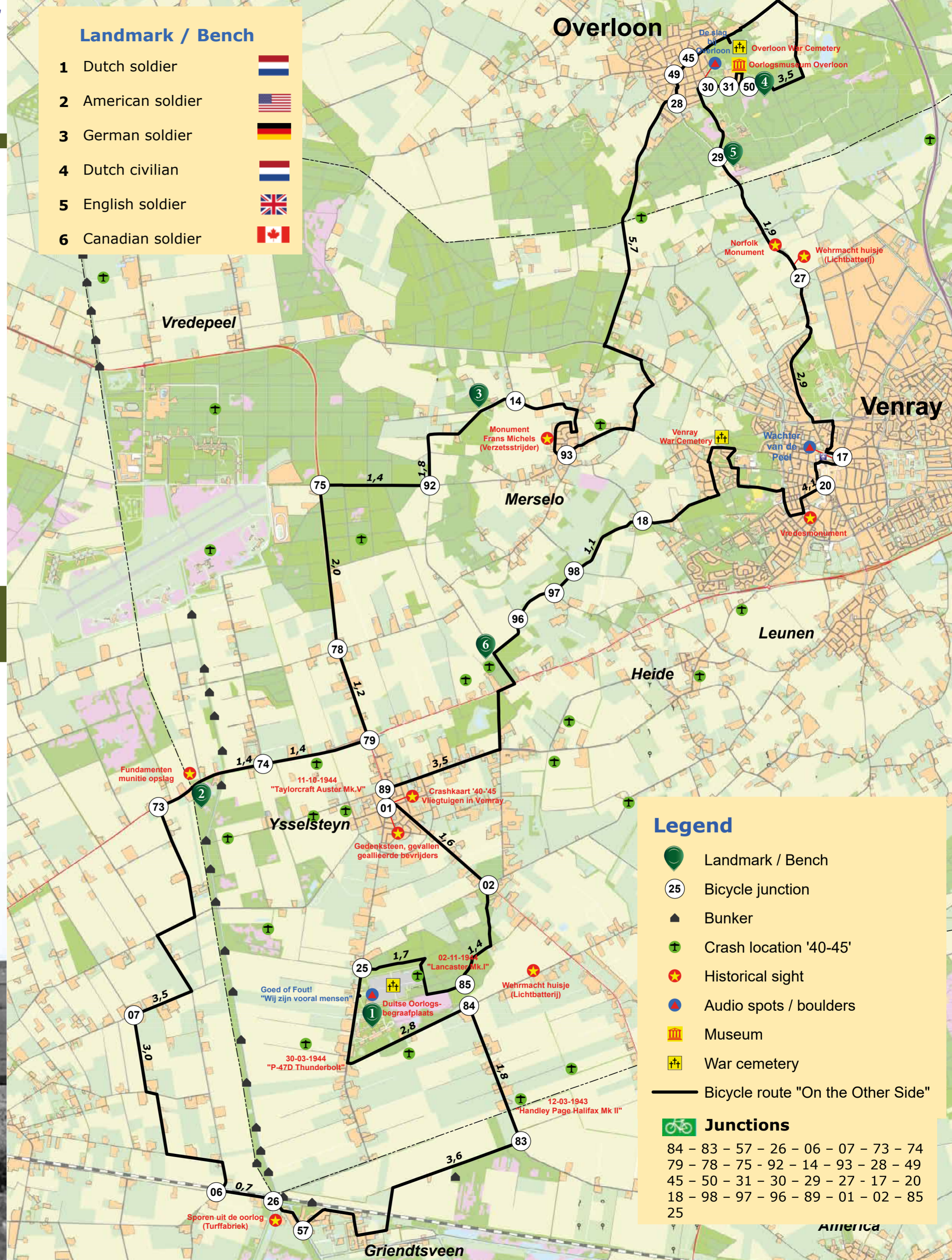
LIBERATION ROUTE

Six poignant stories of life during the war.



Landmark / Bench

- 1 Dutch soldier
- 2 American soldier
- 3 German soldier
- 4 Dutch civilian
- 5 English soldier
- 6 Canadian soldier



Legend

- Landmark / Bench
- Bicycle junction
- Bunker
- Crash location '40-45'
- Historical sight
- Audio spots / boulders
- Museum
- War cemetery
- Bicycle route "On the Other Side"

Junctions

84 - 83 - 57 - 26 - 06 - 07 - 73 - 74
 79 - 78 - 75 - 92 - 14 - 93 - 28 - 49
 45 - 50 - 31 - 30 - 29 - 27 - 17 - 20
 18 - 98 - 97 - 96 - 89 - 01 - 02 - 85
 25

America