

REDISCOVERING THE FORGOTTEN



Wilhelminasingel 71, Source: rhd

Tour in Maastricht on Collaboration & Resistance during the Second World War



Maastricht University

regionaal historisch centrum limburg

Duration: approx. 2 hours
Length: 5 km
Route: Starting Point: Central Station
Stop 1: Wilhelminasingel 71
Stop 2: Kamp de Grote Looier
Stop 3: Minderbroedersberg
Stop 4: Sint Servaasklooster 37
Stop 5: Oud Stadhuis
Stop 6: Het Bassin
Stop 7: Wolfstraat 6-8



Source: Google Maps

City Tour on Collaboration and Resistance

This tour will take you to seven sites that are linked to collaboration and resistance during the Second World War. The tour starts at Maastricht's station where you can view a plaque that remembers the death of employees that have worked for the NS (Dutch Railways). On this memorial you can read the name "J.S.H. Lokerman". Lokerman - who worked under the pseudonym "Thijs" - was a member of the local resis-

tance movement about which you will learn more on this tour.



From the station you follow the *Stationsstraat* and turn right onto *Wilhelminasingel*. The third house on your right hand side is:

WILHELMINASINGEL 71 (Stop 1)

Before the Second World War this house belonged to a Jewish family. However, shortly after the German occupation of Maastricht in May 1940 it was confiscated and turned into the Headquarters of the Sicherheitspolizei and Sicherheitsdienst (SiPo/ SD). One of the most important tasks of the SD in Maastricht was the finding and destruction of resistance-cells, anti-German movements and the Jewish community. The building was also used as a prison and torture-chamber. In the basement, behind thick oak-doors, suspects were questioned with brutal methods to obtain any type of confession. Suspects were often killed during 'Interrogation', as neighbours reported that metal coffins were taken from the basement and placed onto trucks. Two important persons of the SiPo/SD were Richard H. G. Nitsch (1st on the left) & Max R. Ströbel (4th on the right) who belonged to the most feared persons in Maastricht due to their enthusiasm and

ruthless efficiency with regards to the dismantling of the resistance.



SiPo/ SD members in Maastricht, Source: rhcl

Even though the SS-members in charge were German, one has to remember that SiPo/ SD had a variety of employees such as chauffeurs, a concierge and informants hired from the local population. Especially the informants were directly responsible for the capture and subsequent deportation and death of resistance-fighters.

From *Wilhelminasingel 71* you walk back to the *Stationsstraat*. Follow this street and turn left into the beautiful *Rechtstraat*. Walk down *Rechtstraat* and turn right into the second small alley. Go through the alley and turn left once you reach the river Meuse. Walk along the river promenade and cross the river via the bridge *Hogebrug*. You can now walk straight through the *Stadspark*. Turn slightly to your left and climb up the stairs onto the historic city wall. Follow the wall until you come down again; you are still in the city park. Cross the street *Hermanspark* and walk further through the park. Here you can see some animals

of the small zoo. After a few metres you have to cross the little wooden bridge on your right over the Jeker creek and through another part of the city wall. Follow straight to the *Zwingelput* and turn right onto *Grote Looiersstraat*. On your right you will see the colourful entrance gate to the university library. You have reached the second stop:

KAMP DE GROTE LOOIER (Stop 2)



Shortly after the liberation of Maastricht this place was turned into a camp for political prisoners. Former NSB members and other people that were considered to be German-friendly were arrested and taken to the regular jail at the *Minderbroedersberg*, the police jail at the *Vrijthof* and the *Kamp de Grote Looier*. Between 14 and 19 September 1944, more than 400 people were arrested and incarcerated. Yet not all of the prisoners were in fact collaborators, many paid their due for minor grievances with neighbours and others by being arrested in the first few days after the liberation. The conditions in the camp were truly horrid because the building was already on the verge of collapse when it was utilized. Built in the 18th cen-

tury it was first a workhouse for the poor, then a military hospital, a military station and finally used as a site for weapon-storage and dealings. The floors were barely holding, the walls were constantly wet and the plaster missing in many places. There were neither heatings nor toilets, and any waste was directed into the basement, leading to an unimaginable stench. In 1946 the first shower was installed, however, it did not stem the growing number of parasites and diseases which spread amongst the inmates. Despite opening other detention facilities the building accommodated twice as many persons as it was supposed to. Today, the place is occupied by the University library in a completely modern building. From the university library walk back to the *Zwingelput*, turn right and follow the *Looiersgracht*. Walk straight and go up the hill to the next stop:

MINDERBROEDERSBERG (Stop 3)

When you reach the top, go through a gate on your left hand side and follow the *Patersbaan* street for a few metres. On your right you will see a memorial that was erected in order to remember 24 resistance members. During the occupation, in April 1942, 24 men were accused, examined and sentenced to death for their activities in the *Orde Dienst*, a Netherlands-wide resistance organization. After the ruling they were directly deported to the concentration camp Sachsenhausen. In the early evening of May 11th 1942 they were summarily executed. However, the MBB was not only a site of defeat for the Maastricht resistance. On September 5th 1944 the *Knokploeg* (KP), part of the resistance-network in Limburg, organized a jail-break. One member of the KP disguised himself as a German officer and, using forged paperwork, managed to convince the staff that he had orders

to transport all 80 prisoners to another location. The plan worked and the entire jailed Limburg-resistance was set free in one go, hidden in safe-houses all across the region.

Now walk back down the hill and turn left at *Tongersestraat* and turn left again into *Bouillonstraat*. To reach the following stop turn left into *Sint Servaasklooster*:

SINT SERVAASKLOOSTER 37 (Stop 4)



Aldegonda Boere after her arrest in 1944, Source: rhcl

House number 37 was inhabited by Aldegonda Boere who was one of the most active police informants in Maastricht. She had an affair with SiPo/ SD member Ströbel which allowed her to act as a middleman between the SD and the resistance movement: The resistance group around Lokerman asked Boere to bribe the SD in order to release some members of the underground. This release was successful and hence the resistance group trusted her. However, this release was actually authorized by Ströbel, in order to create and strengthen Boere's reputation with the underground. The trust she gained through the

'successful' release allowed her to infiltrate the resistance group on its highest levels. Lokerman's trust in Boere ultimately led to his own arrest. Investigations after the war revealed that she was responsible for the betrayal of 50 to 60 resistance members, including Lokerman. On May 9th Boere sent a letter to Lokerman in which she asked him to visit her at her place. When he arrived, Ströbel was already hiding in her living room to arrest Lokerman. Later on, other members of the resistance were caught at *Wolffstraat 6-8*. Lokerman was deported and executed on 11th February 1945 in the concentration camp Neuengamme.

To continue the tour, follow the street and turn right onto the *Vrijthof*. Cross the square and continue via *Helmstraat* to *Grote Gracht*. Turn right and walk straight until you reach the market square.

oud Stadhuis (Stop 5)

Now you can see the city hall which is a place for both collaboration and resistance as different mayors choose for different options:



Kessenich after the war, Source: rhcl

Willem Baron Michiels van Kessenich became mayor of Maastricht in 1937. On May 10th 1940 the German invasion started and Maastricht was quickly occupied by the German military. At first Kessenich tried to find a good working relationship with the occupying forces. However, when the NSB commissioner for Limburg explained to the mayors that they should govern with Nazi ideology Kessenich resigned from his position as a mayor and left office September 20th 1941.



Peeters, Source: rhcl

Mayor Louis Phillip Joseph Peeters, on the contrary, joined the anti-Semitic *Zwart Front* early and later on, switched to the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB)*. He was named mayor of Maastricht by *Reichskommissar* Arthur Seyss-Inquart in 1942. Here, Peeters saw his foremost task in the nazification. He left his post in 1943, to voluntarily join the *SS* and fight at the Eastern Front. On May 7th 1945 Peeters was captured in Berlin, brought back to the Netherlands and sentenced to 8 years in prison because he had voluntarily

joint the enemy's armed forces. Already after half his sentence he was released in 1950.

From the stadhuis continue via *Boschstraat* to the *Maasboulevard* where you turn right to reach:

HET BASSIN (Stop 6)

Pierre D.J. Dresen was sergeant in the Dutch military and was taken into captivity after the occupation of the Netherlands. Upon release he started to set up a resistance organization, the RAF. One of the group member's ship, the 'Maria' anchored in 'Het Bassin'. Here, the RAF-group met and discussed their plans.

The group helped prisoners of war and allied pilots to escape. Moreover, they conducted counterintelligence and acts of sabotage: They gathered and stored weapons of all sorts and pilfered explosives from the E.N.C.I. With their ammunition they unsuccessfully tried to blow up the railway bridge crossing the Maas. While this mission remained unsuccessful, they were far more successful in cutting telephone lines used by the German *Wehrmacht* and punctured tires of army vehicles. Furthermore, the group distributed flyers discrediting the NSB and they established an illegal newspaper. The RAF-group was betrayed by a secret police informant. Inevitably, nearly the entire group was arrested in December 1941. In April 1942 Dresen was sentenced to death. He died in the concentration camp Neuengamme.

WOLFSTRAAT 6-8 (Stop 7)

This place constituted a central meeting point for Lokerman and his fellow resistance members. It was the butcher shop and flat of Mr. Ummels. Here Ummels and his wife provided hiding places for Jews and allied pilots. Due to the betrayal by

Boere, butcher Ummels was also arrested and executed.



Wolfstraat shortly after the war, Source: rhcl

Lokerman himself was perhaps one of the very first resistance-fighters in Maastricht. Following the fall of Fort Eben-Emael, the German soldiers transported Belgian Prisoners of War to the station in Maastricht in order to deport them to Germany on May 11th 1940. Lokerman began a fist-fight in the middle of the crowd, distracting the German soldiers. As a result, several prisoners were able to escape. Lokerman himself managed to flee as well, went underground and continued to conduct acts of resistance. He made use of his occupation as a train mechanist with the NS to distribute flyers and organize the transport of freed foreign soldiers across the Dutch-Belgian border.

Thank you for joining our tour.

ABOUT US

This tour is part of the Research Based Learning Project (MARBLE) "Mapping War Memories in the *EUREGIO* Maas-Rhine Border Region" offered at Maastricht University under the supervision of Dr. Meike Wulf, Barbara Beckers & Dr. Rüdiger Haude (RWTH Aachen). The tour was written and designed by three European Studies students in the course of this project. The tour aims at informing locals and tourists alike about collaboration & resistance by linking stories found in the archives to places in Maastricht.

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Written and designed by:

Maike Hans

Gregor Konzack

Malena Rottwinkel

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Historical photos provided by:

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FURTHER INFORMATION:

Regional Historic Center Limburg (rhcl)

Frans Roebroeks

Sint Pieterstraat 7

6211 JM Maastricht

<http://www.rhcl.nl/>

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE:

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