82e HERDENKING

IN MEMORIAM

MEDAL OF HONOR · 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION

COMMEMORATION · OOSTERHOUT

Remembering John R. Towle

Speech at the John Towle monument — 82nd anniversary of Operation Market Garden

WHEN
September 2026
82nd anniversary

WHERE
Oosterhout
John Towle monument

SPEAKER
Robert Braam
Director, Museum Niemandsland

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening, tonight, we stand here together at this monument to remember John R. Towle. And that is precisely why one word fits this evening so well: working together.

Because remembrance can only continue when people come together, support one another, and share responsibility.

During Prinsjesdag, less than a week ago, our King once again emphasized the importance of cooperation. He spoke of the Netherlands as a country with a centuries-old tradition of working together. A tradition in which we seek each other out, support one another, and share responsibility.

Because ultimately, what is a society without cooperation?

Last April, we experienced that ourselves once again during the Betuwe Liberation Festival and the celebrations of freedom throughout the Betuwe region. Together with many different organizations, volunteers, and partners — including the John Towle Monument Committee — we were able to create something very special.

And over the past week, during the 82nd anniversary of Operation Market Garden and the 82nd Airborne Division, we witnessed that same spirit of cooperation once again.

We did not do this alone. We worked together with, among others, the Groesbeek Airborne Friends, Grateful Generation Tours, Forum Arenacum, Remember September '44, and many other organizations and volunteers.

But today, that cooperation reaches far beyond our own national borders.

> **“Americans, Germans, and Dutch people coming together more than 82 years after the war to preserve and pass on the same story.”**

We work closely with our partners in Germany, but also with service members of today’s 101st Airborne Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, who have supported us during the past year and especially over the past few days.

They have joined us during battlefield tours, helped us set up tents at our basecamp, supported the 82nd Airborne Remembrance Ride, and contributed to several other parts of our commemorative program.

And tonight, once again, we stand here together. Here in Oosterhout, to remember the remarkable and heroic story of John R. Towle, who gave his life here in this area during Operation Market Garden and who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage.

This commemoration, too, exists because people work together. Because people make the effort to preserve these stories. Because organizations, volunteers, local residents, service members, and families continue to find one another and keep these memories alive.

And here, in particular, the John Towle Monument Committee deserves our sincere appreciation — and a well-deserved round of applause.

> **“Because remembrance is not something we do alone.”**

We stand here together to make sure that the story of John Towle does not become merely a story in a history book. We pass it on to the next generation.

And perhaps that is one of the most important lessons we can take from this history: that freedom can never be taken for granted, that we carry responsibility for one another, and that, in the end, only by working together can we build something — and preserve it.

That is why I am grateful that we are all gathered here tonight. To remember John Towle. To pass on his story. And to show, 82 years later, that we have not forgotten him.

Thank you.

Robert Braam
Director
War Museum Niemandsland — Gendt (Gld)
Museum No-man’s Land