

## Statement by eye witness Mrs. Jeanne De Feyter

Statement by Mrs. Jeanne De Feyter, Sint-Antoniusbaan 358, 2980 Zoersel, now 82 years old (interview 10 September 2011). Jeanne is the daughter of Mr. Alfons De Feyter who had a farm called 'Schriekhuis' along the road leading from the village of Zoersel towards Sint-Antonius, Belgium. It was behind their farm that Joe Schreppel landed and it was Alfons De Feyter who took Joe's body to the town hall of Zoersel by horse and cart.

Jeanne De Feyter :

"I do remember that day very well. That airman fell into a small wood of young pine trees. Those trees were still small and just an arm thick. This all happened before noon. The man had raised a fire as to draw attention to him.

Later the whole area burned down because of this. My father was at work on the fields behind our farm and saw how the parachute came down (at present that farm track is called Middeldreef, Zoersel).

Our fields were just opposite that small wood so my father was very close by. The parachute was caught in the trees, and my father helped him to get down. In fact that aviator died on my mattress! This was because my father ran back to our farm and fetched the mattress from my bed and a blanket for the wounded man.

Very carefully they moved the airman onto the mattress and then started to move him towards the road, with utmost care. After that, my father went back to the farm to get his horse and carriage.

With the airman on the mattress, they carried him to the cart with great care, but he died. I don't know exactly when he passed away, was it when he was still on the ground or when he was on the carriage?

I came home from school at 12.00 o'clock and that is when I saw my father with the dead airman on his cart close to our home. Many other people were witnessing this too.

I still have this clear vision of seeing that dead young airman lying on the carriage. The place in the woods where the fire had been was an open space for a very long time and for us considered as a landmark.

I remember that there were some troubles afterwards as someone had taken the man's wallet. If my memory serves me well, this wallet was given to the village priest who in turn had to hand it over to the Germans when he was arrested for having done a mass service in the memory of this fallen airman.

My teacher in school, Mrs. Daems, was also imprisoned for having laid flowers for the fallen airman.

My father was very impressed by the events. He would say that had it been a German, he wouldn't have cared so much. But this was one of 'ours'. And he was such a nice looking young man. Such a shame."