

Lady Julie Beelaerts van Blokland

Lady Julie Beelaerts van Blokland was 21 years old during the Battle of Arnhem. She and her family had been living on the Hemelsche Berg estate, which lay on the perimeter of Oosterbeek when the country became under the occupation of the Germans.

The manor house became a shelter for people who lived nearby. Lady Julie describes,

“There must have been 250 people sheltering all over the place. This influx gave enormous catering problems; all we had were potatoes and some preserves.”

During the battle the mansion was torched by the Germans and was destroyed to such an extent that it had to be demolished after the war. Julie writes,

“The terrible climax came on Sunday the 24th. At about 10.30am, German artillery and tiger tanks took Hemelsche Berg under fire. The noise was ear splitting, we got at least 15 direct hits and in a short while the hall was a sea of flames. The Airbornes rushed to carry out the wounded and the civilian refugees made a mad dash to the coach house. We stayed behind with our two dogs, sheltering in a vaulted corridor.”

Lady Julie’s eldest brother served with the Princess Irene Brigade in the Second Army.

Lady Julie became an artist after the war, she died in 2006.