

Aernout Bergmann - Agent

Kruis van Verdienste (KV), Bronzen Kruis (BK)

Code Name - Rudolf; Robert Johnson

Field Name - Jan Hallema

Mission Codename - St Andrew

Aernout, known as Nout, was born on 7 March 1919 in Nieuwer-Amstel, Amstelveen, the son of Adolph Johann Heinrich Bergmann and Titia Jiskje Jelgersma. In January 1938, Aernout was enlisted in the Royal Netherlands Army where he served until the Dutch capitulated in May 1940.

The Royal Netherlands Army was disbanded during the German occupation; however, army personnel continued the battle against the German occupiers during the war. Army resistance began to rise again with the formation of the Free Dutch Forces in exile, and with army personnel active in the Dutch Resistance. By the Autumn of 1942, Aernout was in the Dutch Antilles where he worked his passage from Curacao to New York as a Galley Boy on a Norwegian Merchant Ship, and from there to London where he was recruited by the Dutch Military Intelligence and trained as a radio operator.



Aernout, together with another agent, were tasked with establishing a courier and escape line across the Pyrenees. Microfilm messages from the Resistance were to be delivered to the Dutch Consulate in Madrid by this new route.

At 22:20 on 24 March 1943, Aernout departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in 138 Sqn Halifax II HR665 (NF-L) together with the other Dutch agent "St John". When the Halifax crossed into Dutch airspace in the vicinity of the Afluitdijk, NW Friesland at 23:00, it was hit by Anti-Aircraft fire. A small fire was caused by a short-circuit, but this was extinguished by the crew and they were able to continue the op. Drops of equipment were made at Limmen, North Holland and they then set course for the drop zone of the two agents. At 01:26, the Halifax was attacked by Oblt D Schmidt from 8./NJG1 operating a Bf110 from Twenthe Airfield - this was the 1st of his 43 victories. Unable to control the Halifax, the pilot ditched in the IJsselmeer near Enkhuizen. The 7 man crew and "St John" crawled out through the emergency hatch and were rescued by a Dutch boat. Aernout was left in the aircraft having been fatally struck by a bullet from the night fighter. The following day, a Kriegsmarine patrol recovered Aernout's body.

The Agent "St John" was able to escape on reaching the harbour, the 7 man Halifax crew were all taken POW. "St John" completed the assignment and returned to London in December 1943.

Aernout is buried in Amsterdam New Eastern Cemetery, Noord-Holland

Aernout is commemorated on Wall Panel 130

Photo Source: oorlogsgravenstichting.nl