

PRESS RELEASE

EAGLE BEACH ANCHOR PROJECT
THREE SHIP ANCHORS TO BE SALVAGED FROM THE EAGLE BEACH

We will remember that on April 18th of this year, six of our local professional divers salvaged the SS Oranjestad's propeller at a depth of 225 feet (69 meters) in the Lago Colony. At the moment the propeller is located at Mr. Percy Sweetnam's home in Savaneta awaiting approval of the government to install it as a WWII monument to honor all those who lost their lives during an attack on Lago in the early morning of February 16, 1942. A total of 47 sailors lost their lives in this tragic incident.

On February 16, 1942, a German submarine, the U-156, torpedoed the lake tankers "SS Pedernales" and "SS Oranjestad" anchored off the reef at the San Nicolas Bay. The submarine then continued towards Oranjestad since the captain of the submarine previously observed a tanker tied up at the Eagle Pier, which was the Texas Company tanker "Arkansas". Three torpedoes were fired on the "Arkansas", one hit the tanker at amidships causing only the force of the explosion and a large hole in the hull. There were no deaths or injuries of the crew. The second torpedo disappeared into the ocean and was never found while the third landed on the Eagle beach. To disarm the stranded torpedo, four members of the Royal Dutch navy demolition team came from Curacao and they were: Messrs. Dirk Adriaanus Cornelis de Maagd, Pieter Joose, Leonardus Kooyman, and Johannes Vogelenzang. Unfortunately, while disarming the torpedo, it exploded causing the death of all four militaries. Two other Aruban soldiers, Messrs. Bruno Bremen and Kock who were in the vicinity also suffered severe damage to their sense of hearing. The funeral of the militaries took place in Aruba and on May 29, 1999 their ashes were sent to their respective families in Holland.

The Eagle refinery in those days, same as Lago, played an important role during the Second World War. Due to this historic area, on September 27th of this year, under the leadership of diver Dick de Bruin, with his team of divers who salvaged the SS Oranjestad propeller decided to dive in this area and encountered three anchors lying at the bottom of the sea at a depth of 18 feet. Their size is about 14 feet high. Dick and his divers, Andre Loonstra and Toine van der Klooster, did not sit still but continued to work hard preparing to salvage these anchors to bring them onshore. Their goal is to donate one to Lieutenant Colonel E. Hofma of the Dutch marines at the Savaneta Camp to be installed as a monument in honor of the four Dutch militaries who lost their lives at the Eagle beach. The second anchor will be offered on sale to raise money to install the propeller monument and the third anchor has no destination yet.

By means of this letter the SS Oranjestad Memorial Committee kindly invites the press and the public in general to come share with us this historic moment on November 22 at 2:00pm at the Varadero harbor when a crane will be lifting the three anchors on the Varadero pier. Varadero harbor is situated west of the Bucuti Yacht Club, south of the old airport, at Bucutiweg. Varadero Bar/Restaurant will be open from 12:00nn for this occasion and the Rumbero band will be there to entertain all those present. The committee has recently ordered 500 books on the propeller, but this time in color, so there will also be an opportunity to buy this beautiful historic book. Your presence will highly be appreciated.

Dufi Kock, President
SS Oranjestad Memorial Committee