

War veterans remembered.  
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It was only the second time paratroopers had been involved in an attack during the war. The first time was the attack on Sola airfield April 9th 1940. At Sola, it was all over in a short time. At Dombås Norwegian and German forces were fighting for four days. On Friday April 19th the Germans surrendered.

-The fighting effort at Dombås was of immense importance for the whole military strategy in Norway at that time and it boosted Norway's reputation in the rest of the world, former chief of the armed forces, general Sverre Hamre told.

-For the rest of us who fought in other parts of the country, the victory was a real inspiration, although the number of dead and wounded soldiers frightened us.

Hamre was in charge of the ceremony when the new memorial park was inaugurated at Dombås on Saturday, commemorating the events of those April-days in 1940. In the presence of the King, three memorial stones were uncovered: one for the 29 Norwegians who died in the battle at Dombås, one for the American captain William Losey, who was killed during the German air raid on April 21. and one for the sufferings of the local population at Dombås during those five years of war.

It was the former U.S. ambassador Mark Evans Austad, who got the idea to commemorate those who lost their lives at Dombås. But he wanted to create a memorial place where people could come and contemplate and seek peace in their struggle with to-morrow's problems.

- I have no words for this day, he said, neither in Norwegian nor in English.

The present U.S. ambassador in Norway, Robert Douglas Stuart jr., uncovered the memorial tribute to his fellow countryman, captain Losey. Losey, who was U.S. military attache, came over from Finland and was supposed to join the U.S. ambassador who travelled in Gudbrandsdalen (the valley between Lillehammer and Dombås) at the

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time, escaping from Oslo. Losey was killed by the German air raid and he was thus the first American officer to be killed during W.W.2.

- No one can understand what these memorial stones and this park mean and symbolize for the relationship between our two countries, ambassador Stuart told. He also asked for the memorial park to reflect the efforts being done to-day to prevent what happened in 1940 to happen again.

The two other memorial stones were uncovered by general Granviken on behalf of the chief of staff, and of the Mayor of Dombås, Arne Kåre Os.

Five hours after the German paratrooper's attack in 1940, the King, the Crown Prince and three Ministers passed through Dombås in a railway car. They were under way to Otta under top secret conditions.

On this Saturday, a smiling King was welcomed by a cheering crowd. They greeted him with flowers, applause and cheers, and one of the locals shouted "Vælkomen åt Dovre" (Welcome to Dovre (the mountain area surrounding Dombås)). After the opening seremony the King met with 28 war veterans who had contributed to the victory at Dombås. Several of them wanted a short talk with the King and one of them wanted to ask the King if he could remember a maid from one of the mountain farms which he had greeted in 1940. Yes, said the King, - I can remember that.

## DOMBÁS MEMORIAL PARK

## A SHORT HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Dombás was, and is, a central road and rail junction linking West and East Norway, and South and North Norway, and both sides in the war had early had their attention focused on the area. The Norwegian and allied forces had to hold Dovre and Dombás to be able to transport troops and supplies from the west and to the south, while the Germans on their side had to do everything to obstruct the transport of such reinforcements.

The first 5 days after the outbreak of the war traffic through Dombás continued more or less as usual. A small battalion of the More Infantry Regiment no. 11 was deployed to Dombás on April 13., as sabotage against the railway system was feared, as well as air attacks against the station area. ~~Attack by parachute troops was considered less likely, as parachute troops had by this time in history only been used once before.~~ ✓

Sunday April 14. what was feared, but thought not likely, happened. 15-18 German Junker 52 airplanes flew over Dombás center and dropped their cargo of parachute troops and equipment.

Most of the troops were shot or captured during the night and the next day, but close to 70 troops gathered round their leader Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Schmidt 5-6 kilometers south of where we are now.

The attack came as a big surprise on this Sunday afternoon. The intention probably was to jump as close to the Dombás Station as possible, but machine guns were grouped as anti-aircraft defense, so that most of the aircraft maintained a respectable distance from this central target.

It is in this connection a little frightening to remember that only 5 hours before King Haakon and Crown Prince Olav had travelled by train through Dombás on the way from Hjerkin to Otta. Later in the day, and probably in view of the developments at Dombás, King Haakon spoke to the Norwegian people over the radio, and ended his speech like this:

"I ask you all to honor and preserve the memory of those who have already given their lives for this country.  
May God preserve and protect Norway."

~~When the German High Command were aware that the parachute attack was planned, they decided to bomb the railroad complex at Dombás, in order to stop all traffic.~~

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Sunday April 21, the day the German air attacks started, a Captain in the U.S. Army Air Corps and military attache at the American Legation was on his way south in the valley. His car was loaded on a railway car, and the train was ready for departure when the air raid commenced. Captain Robert Losey, which was the attache's name, took shelter in the tunnel together with a number of other persons. As a military expert and especially as a pilot he probably wanted to find out what was happening during the attack, and was probably too close to the tunnel opening. A bomb detonated just outside, and Captain Losey was hit and killed instantly. He therefore became the first American in military service to be killed in World War II. ✓

In the days that followed the air raids continued with limited damage to the railway and the road system, but with more killed and wounded Norwegian soldiers.

~~In addition to Captain Losey, in 1940 Norwegian soldiers, commissioned and non-commissioned officers, were killed during the fighting. The fighting was at the worst at Dovre.~~

The effort that was carried out at Dovre was of invaluable importance to the campaign in Norway, and for Norway's reputation in the rest of the world.

Those who fought in other parts of the country received daily reports of the Norwegian progress, and it was a great inspiration for them when the victory at Dombås was a fact, even if they also shuddered at what the victory had cost in killed and wounded.

In 1982 the then ambassador to Norway, Mark Evans Austad, took the initiative to establish a Memorial Park at Dombås, partly to remember those who gave their lives here, and partly so that the population in the community and others who visited could have a place where they could remember the tragic times that I have described, and partly so that everybody could have a place to meditate and let their thoughts run free; and here close to the memorial and close to the church seek an inner peace that could help meet the problems of tomorrow.

It was Mark Austad's wish that everybody that visited this place of memory, regardless of nationality, race or religion, should be filled by a sense of goodness towards his fellow being, and be lifted up to being a more conscientious human being.

The Memorial Park is therefore not only a military memorial, but also a memorial to the sufferings, hardships and sorrows that the ordinary man and woman, their children and the old suffer in times of war.

As you see there are raised 3 memorial stones, and I shall read the text that is carved on each of these.

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- I IN MEMORY OF THOSE NORWEGIANS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES DURING THE FIGHTING AT DOMBÁS 14.4 - 27.4 - 1940. HERE ARE LISTED THE NAMES OF THE 29 NORWEGIANS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES.
  
- II IN MEMORY OF CAPTAIN ROBERT LOSEY U.S. ARMY AIR CORPS KILLED IN ACTION AT DOMBÁS 21. APRIL 1940. THE FIRST AMERICAN SERVICEMAN TO GIVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY IN WORLD WAR II.
  
- III IN MEMORY OF THE TOIL, THE SORROW, THE SUFFERINGS AND THE HARDSHIPS THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY OF DOVRE LIVED THROUGH DURING THE LONG WAR YEARS 1940 - 1945.

MAY IT NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.

Dombås Memorial Park

April 21, 1990

We have assembled here today to honor the 29 brave Norwegians who lost their lives in the defense of Dovre in April 1940, to remember the suffering of the entire population of this area during the five years of German occupation, and to commemorate the death of Captain Robert Moffat Losey, the first American serviceman in the uniform of his country to die in the Second World War. Captain Losey's sacrifice was followed by the battle deaths of 292,131 Americans later in the war.

The United States has always honored the courage and sacrifices of the Norwegian people from the beginning of the war. The words of President Roosevelt as he presented a destroyer to Norway in 1942 eloquently express this: "If there are still some people who don't know why we are fighting this war, look to Norway. If there are still some people thinking that the war could have been avoided, look to Norway. And if there are still some people who have any doubts about democracy's will to win, I say again, look to Norway."

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On April 21, 1940, Captain Losey was standing inside a railway tunnel at Dombås, his car loaded on the train, as the enemy planes dropped their bombs. Captain Losey was an Army Air Attache and special aide to the American Ambassador (actually Minister in 1940) to Norway, Florence Harriman, who was leading the evacuation by land of the American diplomatic staff into Sweden. On April 19, Captain Losey had said to Ambassador Harriman: "I certainly don't want to be killed." But that did not stop him from volunteering to try to locate the Norwegian General Staff and help support the spouses and children of the American Consulate staff, who had fled Oslo for a mountain area north of Lillehammer.

Captain Losey did not have to expose himself to the danger of the bombs, but he chose to move away from the protection of the wall of the tunnel in order to observe better the enemy's tactics and weapons of war. In one instant, he was dead; a piece of shrapnel had pierced his heart.

A human heart can be pierced by shrapnel, or bullets or bombs, but the heart beat of a people can never be destroyed. The heart and the spirit of the Norwegian people and the American people survived and prevailed, and we feel that heart and spirit as we stand here today.

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Just as Captain Losey is now forever linked with Dombås, the United States and Norway are forever linked in friendship and remembrance. And this simple but beautiful Memorial Park will forever link most fittingly its primary founders, American Ambassador Mark Austad and Norwegian Commanding General Sverre Hamre.

On behalf of President Bush and the American people, I join with all of you here today in honoring the heroes of April 1940.

And I close with the most fitting words of King Olav's father - uttered in this very valley 50 years ago:

King Haakon VII

"I thank all those who are today with me and the Government, and who are fighting at their posts of duty for the independence and preservation of Norway.

"I pray you all to treasure the memory of those who have already given their lives for this country.

"God protect Norway." (And, may I add, the United States of America.)