

This is a level 3 Research Aid

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Museum Bronbeek

Abstract

Museum Bronbeek was founded in 1863 as part of the Colonial Military Home for Disabled. It is situated close to the city of Arnhem and contains a large collection of militaria, as well as ethnographic and other types of objects.

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Description

After [King Willem III](#) ceded the Bronbeek estate in Arnhem to the Dutch state in 1862, a home was established there in 1863 for invalided colonial soldiers who had served in the [Royal Dutch East Indies Army](#) (KNIL). Many of these former soldiers owned items that had been taken as booty from the battlefield or brought back as souvenirs after their time in the Dutch East Indies. The Ministry of Colonies, members of the royal family and private individuals also donated various militaria such as weapons, banners, medals and portraits, giving the home a museum function as well.

Until 1959 the home and its museum were placed under the Ministry of Colonies, after which they came under the then new Ministry of Defence, of which it is still part today. During the 1950s the objects in the museum were still displayed in the typical nineteenth-century manner, with the walls full of paintings and a large number of objects displayed on either side of a narrow path. All this changed with a major renovation in 1963, prompted partly by the changing social views on the Dutch colonial past. Several further major changes to the museum's layout were to be made in the remainder of the twentieth century. From 1970 Bronbeek was opened to all former professional soldiers, not just KNIL veterans.

Museum Bronbeek opened a new permanent display of the collection in 2024.

Provenance research

Museum Bronbeek's collection is searchable on the museum's [collection website](#). The library of more than 15,000 books is searchable through [Worldcat](#). Archives related to Bronbeek can be found at the museum itself, at the [National Archives of the Netherlands](#) in The Hague and at the [Netherlands Institute for Military History](#) (NIMH).

In 2024 Museum Bronbeek launched a [website](#) with 6,000 biographies of Knights in the Military Order of Willem. Various publications on the Military Willem Order have been collected, supplemented and made available online via this website. It is possible to search by name, year, rank or army unit. Individual pages contain personal information, information on postings and archival references.

Related Aids

see also: [Sources](#)

see also: [Army and navy personnel in colonised territories](#)

see also: [Hoofdcursus Kampen](#)

see also: [Volkenkundig Museum Justinus van Nassau](#)

Primary sources

Website:

Ridders Militaire Willems-Orde

<https://www.rmwo.nl/>

Website (in Dutch) with 6,000 biographies of Knights in the Military Order of William. Pages contain a large amount of information about individual soldiers (rank, posting, etc.).

Website:

Museum Bronbeek collection website

<http://museumbronbeek.nl/>

Collection website of Museum Bronbeek, on which the entire collection is searchable.

Secondary sources

Book:

Bevaart, Willem. Bronbeek. Tempo doeloe der liefdadigheid. Utrecht: Matrijs, 2009.

<https://search.worldcat.org/title/71717276?oclcNum=71717276>, [ISBN 9789053452875](#), [WorldCat 71717276](#)

1998 book on the history of Bronbeek with brief attention paid to the museum's collection on pages 76-81.

Book:

Drossaard, Willem. Bronbeek een levend verleden. Franeker: Wever, 1984.

<https://search.worldcat.org/title/33354863?oclcNum=33354863>, [ISBN 9789061353768](#), [WorldCat 33354863](#)

1984 booklet published by the Vrienden van Bronbeek foundation. It describes the history of the home and provides a comprehensive guide to the museum, supplemented by historical overviews of KNIL actions and biographies of residents.

Book:

Geerts, G.A. Gids voor het Museum van het Koninklijk Tehuis voor Oud-Militairen Bronbeek te Arnhem. Arnhem, 1991.

<https://search.worldcat.org/title/66285117?oclcNum=66285117>, [WorldCat 66285117](#)

1991 museum guide for visitors to Museum Bronbeek, written by the then commander of the home.

Book:

Smits, J. C. J. Gedenkboek van Het Koloniale Militaire Invalidenhuis Bronbeek. Arnhem: P. Gouda Quint, 1881.

<https://www.google.nl/books/edition//xhlCAQAAMAAJ?hl=nl&gbpv=1,WorldCat882982014>

Book from 1881 written by the first commander of the home. It gives a history of the early period and a detailed description of the interior of the house at that time. The book contains many illustrations clearly showing various objects.

Relevant Data

Identifiers:

<http://www.wikidata.org/entity/Q61930724> , Name variations:

, Tags: Activity:

[Military museum](#), [Collection](#) , Type of objects:

[Ethnographic objects](#) , Geographical:

[Indonesia](#) , Period of activity: Year of start: 1863, Year of end: Present, Collections: General remarks: content: "The dataset browser of the datahub contains Museum Bronbeek's collection of studbooks." , content-type: text/markdown, Within the Data Hub: