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Stephen Muhren of Val-Dieu

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hebis.

Stephen Muhren of Val-Dieu (* 14 Sep 1908 – † 9 Oct 1943)

1. Name variants: Petrus M., Piet M., Pierre M., Peter M., monastic name: père Étienne, pater Stephanus, father Stephen

2. Places: Val-Dieu, Aubel, Bergen op Zoom, Hertogenbosch, Abbey Mariënkroon, Nieuwkuijk, Utrecht, Haaren, Oisterwijk, Rhijnauwen, Bunnik

3. Biography: The day of the German invasion, Father S. M. left the abbey of Val-Dieu to find safer places. However, hiding near Aalter, he found himself in the midst of a German attack. Back in the abbey, he started helping F. Hughes Jacobs – a distant relative – in his resistance work. He became his courier, collecting messages from local agents, helping to publish a clandestine journal and representing F. Hughes at meetings of the resistance. This led, from 15 Oct 1942 on, to massive arrests in Belgium and the Netherlands. Those not arrested suspended their activities, including both fathers. However, after Christmas 1942, S. regrouped isolated members from Groupe Hollande and Clarence and initiated a new group. In the meantime, the arrested people were detained, interrogated and tortured in Camp Haaren. This led to the encirclement and search of the abbey of Val-Dieu by the GFP on 18 Mar 1943, when S. M. was arrested. Soon, both fathers were brought together with the other detainees to Camp Haaren. F. Hughes tried to take full responsibility for S. On 29 Jul 1943, the lawsuit started in Utrecht, which led to the death sentence of 12 Belgians and Dutchmen, including both fathers.

4. Cultus:

a. Relics: His urn containing his ashes is interred in a stele in the abbey church of Val-Dieu.

b. Liturgical commemoration: Each Sunday closest to 9 Oct at the end of the mass at Val-Dieu abbey.

c. Patronage: –

d. Attributes: –

5. Fontes: Archives of Val-Dieu (Liège, B), CegeSoma (State Archives, Brussels, B), Nationaal Archief-CABR (The Hague, NL).

6. Literature: P. DE JONGH, *Grenzeloos Verzet, Over spionerende monniken, ontsnappingslijnen en het Hannibalspiel, 1940–1943*, Turnhout 2018, 344; P. DE JONGH, *Résistance sans frontières, Enquête sur les groupes d'espionnage et les lignes d'évasion (1940–1943)*, Turnhout / Waterloo 2019, 366; J. VAN LIESHOUT, *Het Hannibalspiel*, Bussum 1980, 336; B. M. KEMPNER, *Priester vor Hitlers Tribunalen*, München 1966, 313; B. MERGELSBERG, *Pater Andreas (Godsdal) aan het woord*, in: *Verzet in Voeren* (1999), 17–18; B. MERGELSBERG, *Père André (Val-Dieu) raconte*, in: *Résistance dans les Fourons* (1999), 17–18.

7. Illustrations: A portrait is on display near the stele in the abbey church; several pictures are published in *Grenzeloos Verzet / Résistance sans frontières*.

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