

Fort bij Vechten



A museum dedicated to an enemy turned into a friend: the water

- The water was used to defend the West of the Netherlands against invading enemies.
- Developed between 1672 and 1890
- Operational till the end of World War II
- Then abandoned and left to nature.
- Rediscovered in the 1990's as an important cultural object and an example of watermanagement

Water as an enemy



Turns into a friend defending the country



The Dutch Waterline Defense system

What is it and how does it work?

- A system of connected polders, lakes, canals and locks
- Used to inundate the low parts (below sea level) of the waterline
- The high grounds (above sea level) were defended by fortresses.
- The total length was appr. 80 km and 60 fortresses and defensive works

The West was defended and the East left to the enemy



The museum at the fortress

- Located in the centre of the Waterline near the city of Utrecht
- Public Private Partnership between:
The Province of Utrecht
Staatsbosbeheer (Ministry of Forestry)
Private company Nieuwland



Waterliniemuseum Fort bij Vechten the Netherlands

Exploitation model

- One company for the exploitation of the whole fortress including the museum
- Culture: the museum (appr 40.000 visitors)
- Nature: natural area and outdoor recreation (10.000 visitors)
- Leisure: private parties, company events, symposia (30.000 visitors)

The museum tells the story of the Waterline

- the museum consists of the entire fort (25 acres and 26 buildings)
- a reconstruction of the situation of 1880 shaped in a strip of 80 m wide across the entire fortress
- a new museum pavilion
- The rest of the fort is nature reserve with protection for flora and fauna (bats, natura 2000)

partly nature and partly reconstructed



Nature took over after the army left



central barracks with access to the new museum pavilion



The Museum Pavilion is build around a
maquette of the Waterline



The concept and the main elements of the exhibition “Strong Water”

- The exhibition “Strong Water” in the museum is set up according to the philosophy: *when, now* and *I do* and exists of a mix of education and entertainment.
- *When* provides information about the past, *now* provides information about the present, *I do* exists of interactive participation of the visitor.
- The interactive objects (*I do*) are located in the centre of the halls

The information of the past is situated along the walls



And also the present



The interactive object: a map table that allows visitors to draw the Waterline



A game in which the visitors themselves can defend a city by innudation



A group of felt life-sized figures which tells the visitor their personal history (the figures are: Prince of Orange, fleeing woman, soldier, the architect of the line and a construction worker)



The highlight of the exposition

- A parachute jump: the visitor gets oculus rift glasses,
- takes place in a moving chair, and then rises virtual through the museum window on to great heights and falls as if he were a paratrooper slowly back to earth.
- meanwhile, he receives an overview image of the entire Waterline with an explanation, hears the wind singing, meets birds and other paragliders and eventually lands back in the museum.

Virtual Reality: the jump



Research and Education

- The museum has a research program run by qualified volunteers.
- Topics:
 - construction of forts and defense systems in the area of the waterline
 - Inundation and water management (system of channels and locks) in the past and in the present
 - research into the development of the natural values of the forts (species richness: bats, birds, dragon flies and vegetations)
- Cooperation with other researchers: National Knowledge center of the Dutch Waterline

Education

Education is a key activity of the museum. Several educational programs have been developed.

Starting points are inclusiveness and diversity.

The museum must be open to society.

Concrete programs are present for the nature experience, Romans and the Waterline.

In development programs are focused on sustainable water use

But there's more.....

- The location of the fortress was already discovered 2000 years ago, by the Romans
- The Romans used the location for protecting their Northern Border, the Limes.
- A Castellum was founded at the same spot

The Castellum and the fortress at the same spot



The reconstruction of the Castellum



The meaning of the Waterline in the 21 st century

- The storm of urbanization in the west of the Netherlands has passed the waterline because it was protected by military legislation.
- It was not allowed to build in connection with free firing zone
- As a result, the area has retained its rural character

the urbanization storm and the landscape of the waterline



Sustainable Development Goals

- The objective of the Museum is to contribute to the sustainable development of the waterline: strengthening nature, recreation and modern water management
- To this end, we cooperate with other entrepreneurs in the area of the water line, nature organizations, the provinces involved and the water boards

The current functions of the waterline

water management: dry feet and clean drinking water
(retention basins and water quality)

nature development: securing and promoting nature
development

recreation: recreational area for the inhabitants of the
Randstad

agriculture: the landscape quality is preserved through
agricultural use

military objects in the landscape of the waterline



Status and future

- the entire water line is a national monument
- the entire waterline has been designated as a national landscape
- the waterline has been nominated for the Unesco World Heritage status
- the limes is also nominated for the Unesco World Heritage status

A unique place: two Unesco nominations at
the same place



Thank you

- Have a look.....



4_Trailerfilmpje Waterliniemuseum (versie mei 2014).avi