



**Royal Canadian Legion
Liberation of the Netherlands
Branch 005**



OCTOBER 2022, Edition 2022-10

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The background story



The British (Imperial) Victoria Cross.

A little history.

**Supplemented with a bit of information
about the 16 Canadians who were awarded the VC in WW2.
Click on the photos below to read it.**





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Visit Royal Montreal Regiment Association, Branch 14 (Quebec) RCL



On Saturday, October 1, 2022, the Clubhouse of the RCL Branch 005 was visited by a delegation from the Royal Montreal Regiment. They were in Europe for a Battlefield tour and didn't want to miss a visit to our RCL Branch 005, 'Liberation of The Netherlands'.

The program also included a tour of the Liberation museum and a visit to the Canadian Cemetery Holten. After they came back there was a nice chat and to our surprise they had some nice gifts for our Branch 005.



Willemijn de Visser, from the 'Erve Hooyerinck school' from Delden, came in too and told the Canadians about the 'Pass The Poppy' project.

Comrade Wayne Healey, who served with the Royal Montreal Regiment, also joined the visit.





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Veenendaal, October 5, 2022.

Today we remember the death of a young man who served in the Royal Canadian Air Force and gave his life to liberate a country far from his own. His name was Harold Frederick Wakeman, 22 years old and from Weston Ontario, Canada.



October 5, 1944 was a beautiful day, a blue sky with a pleasant temperature outside. It was still war, although part of the Netherlands had already been liberated. Allied aircraft formations flew back and forth. There was a train station near the small village of De Klomp, between Utrecht and Arnhem. On the corner of Dr. Hoolboomweg empty train cars were parked. At about 1 pm, a great tragedy occurred. An allied formation "Hawker Typhoons" dropped bombs.

The villagers saw one bomb hit the tail of another plane, which caught fire and exploded. A complete drama! Large parts of the aircraft were scattered over the road and in the field. The pilot, identified as 22-year-old Harold Wakeman, did not survive the crash.

A young girl of about 12, now Mrs. Leppers-Schot, was an eyewitness along with her brother. She lived with her family near the school, close to Trapjesweg. She remembered the crash well. When the children got home, they were immediately sent upstairs by their parents.

They were very scared. She said: "When I looked out the window, I saw German soldiers everywhere. I saw a body on the road, he was wearing khaki clothes and had a friendly look on his face."



Grave in 1948

Another ten-year-old girl, now Mrs. Rie Bos-van Ruiswijk, was also an eyewitness. She walked out with some of her friends and saw the body lying in the street. They wanted to pass, at a great distance from the body, but a soldier said: "Do not be afraid, because the man is already dead".

On October 6, 1944, Harold Wakeman was buried in this cemetery, "De Munnikenhof". Several residents and firefighters were present.





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Initially, Harold Frederick Wakeman was commemorated annually on May 4.

In 2018, the date was changed to October 5, the date of the crash.

Since 2007, the Johan Calvijn School has been participating every year in this special commemoration day with children from group 7 (11/12 years old). On the day of remembrance, a Royal Canadian Legion comrade comes to the school in the morning and tells the children about the war.

He also brings items that the children can put on.

Every year, several children write a poem that is read in the cemetery. The entire group 7 then sings the Canadian national anthem and then another spiritual song.

We hope that the next generation will never forget how many young men gave their lives for our FREEDOM!



Comrade Berry Swarthoff had an attentive audience

Elly van Wakeren





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Heteren/Driel. October 7, 2022.

This year, too, attention was paid to the efforts and sacrifices of the Allied troops.

The monument to the 7th battalion of the 'Royal Hampshire Regiment' in Driel (municipality of Overbetuwe) is a granite plaque, framed with bricks.

The battalion emblem is affixed to the memorial plaque.



The monument is designed by Hampshire veteran Charles Reeves (1924-2015)

The text on the memorial reads:
TO COMMEMORATE THOSE MEN OF THE
7TH BATTALION THE HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THE CAUSE OF
FREEDOM IN THIS AREA
FROM 23RD SEPT. 1944 TO 4TH OCT. 1944'.

Below the text is a 'ROLL OF HONOUR' with the names of 42 fallen.
In addition, 111 soldiers had suffered injuries.



Ruin of 'De Korevaar' in 1945. © Gelderland archives

These soldiers of the 7th battalion of the Royal Hampshire Regiment were killed in the Battle of Randwijk and in the fighting around the former brick factory 'De Korevaar'.

The 1st Vice President of the Royal Canadian Legion 'Liberation of the Netherlands', Comrade Gerrit Bruggink, attended the ceremony and laid a wreath.



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Column Alice van Bekkum.

Chairman of the Faces-to-Graves Groesbeek Foundation.

What connection does she have with the commemoration at the Engineers Monument and RCL Branch 005?

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Alice van Bekkum

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 and me.

In 2002 I discovered a single war grave at the general cemetery in Gorinchem, where my parents are buried also. It was the grave of Harold Magnusson, a Canadian Engineer, and I wanted to know more about that.

I found the website www.marketgarden.com with a 'Roll of Honour' listing all the victims of Operation Market Garden. I contacted webmaster Andries Hoekstra. We exchanged information and when I got a photo from Magnusson's family I asked permission to send it to the website.

In August 2004, after I had agreed, Andries tipped the AVRO journalists (who had made a broadcast about the Roll of Honour shortly before) that I had discovered something special.

And they thought too it was special. I had also found the men who had recovered Magnusson's body from the river Lek at the same time as that of the Polish paratrooper Czeslaw Gajewnik. In November 1944, as 11-year-old boys, they were pointed to "what looked like flour sacks" in the middle of the river. The day before, a horse and carriage had entered the river loaded with sacks of flour. They headed for it in the rowboat that belonged to the ferry. But it turned out to be the bodies of two soldiers who had been missing since the end of Operation Market Garden.

The reporters were willing to make a documentary, but then they wanted the Canadian family to come over. They regretted that I had not searched for the Polish soldier's family. They told this during the first conversation on August 11, 2004.

Then an avalanche of things came at me that needed to be arranged in a short time. The family in Canada even had to apply for passports. The final filming was completed on September 13, 2004, during the week of the 60th anniversary of Operation Market Garden, after which the documentary was shown on TV on September 16.

As soon as it was certain that the daughters of Harold's twin-sister would come over, I had an idea.



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A memorial should be held now that they came here for their mother's twin brother. I spoke about this with Andries Hoekstra. He suggested contacting Branch 005 of the Royal Canadian Legion in the Netherlands and ask them to organize a Colour Party.

Then I 'bombed' President Ben Zonnenberg with questions about how to arrange a memorial. I had attended many memorial services because we had been a host family for veterans for years, but I had no military background. But to organize something like that myself?



But I just jumped in at the deep end; because it was for Harold, not for myself.

Well I managed it, I found a pastor, Boy Scouts, a bagpiper, a trumpeter, the cemetery open longer, a sound system and a Colour Party.

Unbelievable what wonderful people I found willing to cooperate for free!

But I had forgotten one thing ... permission had to be granted by the Municipality of Gorinchem for a commemoration and also for the TV recordings at the cemetery.



We didn't get it until September 7th. I could breathe a sigh of relief again.

Then the day came. It was a worthy commemoration.

The weather was nice all day, but when we drove to the cemetery the first raindrops fell.

"Our mother's tears," said the daughters of Harold Magnusson's twin sister.



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She had always been very sad about the loss of her 'other half'.

It rained that much, that the piper got worried about his instrument. Even the sound system went out after the wreath-laying ceremony.



I then said: Just like in the night Harold died: the pouring rain caused problems to the spark plugs of the boats engine, the boat stopped and took a direct hit in the middle of the river.

After the ceremony, I had arranged coffee and snacks at a nearby school canteen to thank everyone. That worked out good, now everyone could dry up a bit.

That was my first acquaintance in 2004 with Royal Canadian Legion , Liberation of the Netherlands' Branch 005 and some special people, such as: Ben Zonnenberg, Reg Bonnar, Hendrik Kuiper, Danny Murphy, Hendrik van de Pol and Jan Sievers.

Since 2004 I have been involved in Branch 005 and the commemorations for fallen Allied and Canadian soldiers. So involved that I have joined the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005. Despite my non-military background, I can do my part and represent the Legion's thinking.

We will remember them... we have to remember them!

Alice van Bekkum

Editorial addition:

On the right: a photo of the flower arrangement in the shape of a boat with seven roses in it.

Symbol for the seven fallen Engineers.

The traditional gesture of Alice van Bekkum during the commemoration at the Engineers monument.





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Heteren.

Comrade Gerrit Bruggink also represented RCL Branch 005 at the memorial held at the monument to the 101 Airborne Division.

Just outside Heteren, on the Drielse Rijndijk under a bridge over the Lower-Rhine, you can find this monument.

Units of the 101 Airborne Division took over the positions of the men of the Royal Hampshire Regiment on the 3rd October, 1944.





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Groesbeek, October 12, 2022.

Source: Faces-to-Graves Facebook account.

Prior to the ceremony in Steenderen for Lieutenant Kavanagh on October 14, the Queens Own Rifles of Canada delegation visited the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek.

The group was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Scott Moody of the QOR and accompanied by Lieutenant Roy Berkers of the Limburgse Jagers.

There was a welcome speech by Alice van Bekkum, president of F-t-G.



Afterwards, the graves of the 72 soldiers of this regiment were visited. They found their final resting place here.

One of these: Sergeant Aubrey Cosens who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his heroic performance during the Rhineland Offensive. A group photo was taken at his grave.



Sgt. A. Cosens



The members of the research team received a coin with the image of Lt Kavanagh.



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Steenderen, October 14, 2022.

Rededication headstone. The day a grave was officially named after 77 years.

John Gordon Kavanagh was killed in action in April 1945 in the hamlet of Rha. Due to the lack of his name tag, he could not be identified at the time. But after years of research, it was officially confirmed that he was buried in Steenderen.

The ceremony was attended by Kavanagh's cousin Jack Young accompanied by his partner Debby Howes.

Also present is a delegation from The Queen Own Rifles of Canada, led by Lieutenant Colonel Scott Moody. John Kavanagh was part of the QOR at the time.



Sgt Nicole Mitchell was present on behalf of the Canadian Embassy. Master of ceremony was Mrs. Christa Oppers-Beumer, former Defense Attaché of the Netherlands in Canada.

Mayor Besselink also attended the ceremony.

It was good to see the presence of the children of group 8 of school 'De Pannevogel'. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission was also represented.

Branch 005 of the Royal Canadian Legion, Liberation of the Netherlands, was represented with the Colour Party and a delegation.





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Jack Young and Debby Howes



Lt-Col Moody and aide-de-camp (QOR)



Mayor
Besselink

Sgt. Nicole
Mitchell



Gerrit Bruggink
Representative QOR in NL



Martin Reelick President
RCL Branch 005





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After the ceremony at the cemetery, the greater part of the attendees moved to the memorial to the fallen of the Queen's Own Rifles in Rha.

Also here a wreath was laid by the regimental delegation.





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Essen/Kalmthout, Belgium. October 22, 2022.

As usual: the public interest was great, both in Essen and in Kalmthout.

On October 22, 1944, the first Canadian soldiers arrived in Essen to liberate it from the German occupiers. That was commemorated, both in Essen and Kalmthout.

The ceremony was attended by, among others, Essen's mayor Gaston Van Tichelt (CD&V) and mayor Kreissman of the German partner municipality of Oldenburg.

Also present: Canadian military attaché Lt-Col. Marc LaFortune and a delegation from Canadian Forces Support Unit Europe.

There was also a ceremony at the graves of the British pilots in Horendonk.

Highlight: the ceremony in Hemelrijk at the new monument.



© RV/Helmut Jaspers



© Koen Fasseur

It has been there since 2019 and was created at the initiative of Pieter De Meester and Steve Suykerbuyk from Essen.

"A military wreck, surrounded by steel plates with symbols of the liberators and a poem. This is how we keep the history alive", explains Pieter De Meester.

Afterwards, the group departed with army vehicles from the vehicle club for Kalmthout.



© Koen Fasseur



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The commemoration of the liberation of Kalmthout took place at the monument in Heide.
Photo's: © Toon Verheyen





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Bergen op Zoom, October 28, 2022.

This morning the British soldiers who fought for the freedom of Bergen op Zoom were commemorated.

Various wreaths and flowers were laid on the British War Cemetery, in the Arnoldus Asselbergs Park and at the Thaliaplace.

Mayor Petter laid a wreath on each memorial site on behalf of the municipal council.





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Walcheren Causeway/Flushing. October 29, 2022.

Walcheren Causeway.

Here the fierce fighting during the 'Battle of the Scheldt' was commemorated.

In 1944 the narrow connection between Zuid-Beveland and Walcheren, militarily a well defended position. The sacrifices made here were considerable.

Also read our background story in the 2021-01 edition of our Newsletter.

You activate it by clicking on the photo. 



German soldiers on the dike



© Zeeland Newspaper

Many had taken the trouble to attend the memorial, both civilians and former soldiers. The British, French and Canadian Embassies were also represented.

RCL 'Liberation of the Netherlands' Branch 005 was present with a Colour Party and a delegation.

Comrades Don Paauwe and Gerrit Bruggink laid a wreath.



© Zeeland Broadcasting



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Flushing, Uncle Beach.

Saturday, October 29, 2022, the annual commemoration of the liberation of Vlissingen and the Battle of the Scheldt was held on Uncle Beach. There was a great number of invitees and many interested parties.

There were speeches by Mayor Van den Tillaar and Deputy Mr. De Bat.



After the speeches, a minute of silence was held in memory of the fallen, followed by the national anthems of the Netherlands, Canada, France and the United Kingdom.

Wreaths were laid by, among others, the municipality of Vlissingen, the province of Zeeland, the French ambassador, the Military Attaché of Canada and the Commando Corps.



Students of the Scheldemond College read a poem they wrote themselves.



Then all the names of the allied soldiers who fell during the liberation of Vlissingen were spoken out loud.

RCL Branch 005 was present with the Colour Party.



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Bergen op Zoom, October 30, 2022.

Canadian War Cemetery.

Source: broadcaster Brabant.
© Willem-Jan Joachems.

At least two hundred people attended the annual commemoration on the Canadian War Cemetery.

They listened to speeches by, among others, Julka Borghouts (18), graduating student at 't Rijks in Bergen op Zoom.

Mayor Frank Petter spoke about the courage of the nearly 1,100 soldiers who found their last resting place here. *"Heroism is more than just fighting against evil"*, he said.



© Dick Vermaas



H E Ms Helfand © Dick Vermaas

The Ambassador of Canada H.E. Ms Lisa Helfand pointed to the grave of Corporal Alexander Bondoluk. Bondoluk had Ukrainian parents. He was killed in action on November 19, 1944 near Tilburg. On his headstone it reads, translated: *'Sleep dear son. You gave your young life for freedom of the world and Ukraine.'*

"The Canadians lying here fought for our future. We owe them a lot," Ambassador Helfand said.

She also reflected on the similarities she sees between the Second World War and the present.

"Ukrainians are fighting the same tyranny as then".

That was the reason, she said, why colleagues from the Ukrainian embassy were invited and attended for the first time the ceremony.



Representatives Ukraine © Willem-Jan Joachems



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© Dick Vermaas



© Dick Vermaas

RCL Branch 005 was there with the Colour Party and a delegation. They also laid a wreath.

The following photos are a selection out of the many invitees who laid a wreath.

© Dick Vermaas



Canada



Mayors of Brabant Wal



Great Britain



USA



Germany



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Dutch Forces



Veterans 1



Veterans 2



Youth



March off the Colours



We will remember them



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MISCELLANEOUS.

Canada helps buy Juno Beach land in France. Source CTV News.



Veteran of the Second World War Roy Hare stands and looks out from Juno Beach following the D-Day 75th Anniversary Canadian National Commemorative Ceremony at Juno Beach in Courseulles-Sur-Mer, France on Thursday, June 6, 2019. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick

The battle to save a part of Juno Beach in France from development is over after the Canadian government announced it would pitch in to buy the land and prevent the construction of a condo on the historic battlefield.

In response, Dominion President Bruce Julian has issued the following remarks:

"I cannot express how grateful we are to learn that our country will help preserve these sacred grounds. Our soldiers fought and died there during the Second World War, and this is a place to quietly remember their sacrifices. We thank the Government of Canada and the municipality of Courseulles-sur-Mer for recognizing the sanctity of this territory and taking concrete action to preserve it. May we always Remember our Fallen soldiers."



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Enschede, October 21, 2022.

Excavation Typhoon MN875 RAF completed.

As predicted by local sources, no human remains were found.



© Department of Defense



Will the headstone on the Easter Cemetery in Enschede ever be given a name for AN AIRMAN OF THE 1939-1945 WAR?

It is very likely, sources close to the crash site are certain, that pilot F/Sgt. D.D.J. (Derek) Carter's final resting place is here.

Once a body was found dressed only in his underwear, near the crash site.

Why and who had 'undressed' him and left him like this, is impossible to say.

The fact is, that a wallet and papers have been handed over to the British authorities. However, these were never found again after the war.

Out of piety, the victim had been put on blue overalls.

That is probably why he was buried as an "unknown air force man".

| | | | | |
|--|---------|-----|-----|--------------------|
| Pilot F/Sgt. D.D.J. Carter | 1603086 | RAF | MIA | Runnymede Memorial |
| Could be buried as unknown Airman Enschede | | | | |

Source: © SGLO Loss Register



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Saturday, October 22, 2022.

Canadian Cemetery Information Center Holten.

Attended a very interesting meeting.

It was the kick off for an exhibition designed to highlight the efforts and sacrifices made by First Nations members of Canada, particularly in WWII.

Sixteen of them have been given a final resting place in Holten. (incl. 4 Métis)

The small exhibition shows items from the collection of Berry and Yvonne Swarthoff.

Special guest: [Jerry Thundercloud McDonald.](#)

Jerry is a Mohawk of the [Onondaga Indian Nation.](#)

Description according to Jerry's own website:

Self employed and committed to sharing traditional knowledge through cross cultural studies programs and working hard to educate the public on higher standards for the preservation of the environment, {Mother Earth} water resources, air, trees, animals and land use.

His lecture was, for me at least, very interesting.

Herman Sligman





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Upcoming.

The best way to stay informed: [see our agenda.](#)

To end with a smile:

