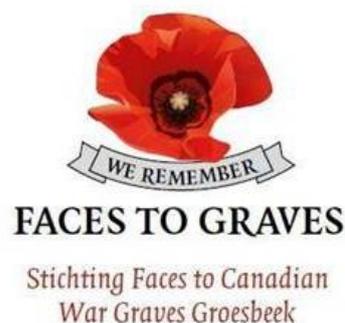


Newsletter

No 18 – autumn 2024



From President Alice van Bekkum

We are pleased to report on the activities of Faces to Graves since spring 2024.

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## Unveiling plaque Vierlingsbeek

*By Gijs Krist*



On Saturday, April 6, an information board was unveiled in memory of the Canadian crew of the Handley Page Halifax DT 808 LQ-V that crashed near farmstead De Lijnbraak in Vierlingsbeek on April 3, 1943. This was organized by working group air warwo2boxmeer. Prior to the unveiling, a ceremony was held which took place at Vivarapro in Vierlingsbeek.

Five crew members died in the crash and two crew members Airgunners Ernest Bradley and Wilfried Lawrence Murphy managed to parachute out of the plane. The families of three crew members were present at the unveiling.

A relative of William James McAlpine, two eyewitnesses to the crash and His Excellency the Ambassador of Canada Mr. Hugh Adsett gave a speech, before guests moved to unveil the monument.

The five crew members Pilot William James McAlpine, Flight Engineer Howard John McQueen, Navigator John Day White, Bomb Aimer Floyd Edward Luxford and Wireless Operator Joseph Walter Halikowski have their resting place at Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek.

### **Visiting a war cemetery is a humbling experience**

*By Mike McDonnell*

Most cemeteries contain the graves of people who have lived a long time. War cemeteries are the final resting place of young men and women who gave their lives for the liberation of people they never knew. Standing among the headstones, one cannot help but think, "What if they had lived?"

Each grave represents a branch of a family tree that never grew. Each grave represents the loss of someone who would have made a difference, who would have contributed to their community, who would have made family and friends laugh and cry, who would have made children smile and old people wish they were young again.

In 2024, I visited the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek for the third time. My first visit was in 2017 during a battlefield tour with a group from Norfolk County, Ontario, Canada, where I live.

The cemetery was on the itinerary, but coincidentally, a man named William James McAlpine was buried there. He was a cousin of my mother and died when

the Halifax bomber he was piloting was shot down on the evening of April 3, 1943. It crashed in flames just outside the village of Vierlingsbeek. He and four others died, while two crew members survived and were later captured and sent to POW camps. Bill McAlpine was 22 years old.

I returned to Groesbeek in April 2023, invited by the organization Faces to Graves. I had done some research on my cousin for that group. Surprisingly, none of the family archives contained a photograph of him. Eventually an image was found showing Bill during his pilot training at the No. 12 Elementary Flight Training School in Goderich, Ontario, part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Like most soldiers of the time, he looked like he should have gone to high school instead of fighting in a war.

I felt honored during that visit to attend a ceremony where photos of hundreds of soldiers and airmen buried in the cemetery were displayed next to their graves. I had the opportunity to meet Piet Kaanen and heard firsthand the horrific story of the crash. Piet had seen the crash at the age of seven from his parents' farm, just around the corner.

I also met Leo Janssen. He showed me around the area and told me about the plan to place an informative plaque at the crash site in 2024. In early 2024, Leo invited me to attend the unveiling of the plaque and speak at the ceremony on April 6, almost to the day 81 years after the crash.

At first I was reluctant. It's a long and expensive trip. However, that hesitation soon passed when I realized I was being invited to a once-in-a-lifetime event to remember a family member and the men who had served with him. Although Bill died long before I was born, I had come to know him through the extensive research I had done. He had been instrumental in freeing the Dutch people from the horrors of Nazi oppression.

I couldn't turn down the offer to meet and talk to people who lived through the war and its aftermath and the people who are working to make sure these men are not forgotten. I had no idea what to expect, but I knew I had to be there.

The ceremony was beautiful. Family members of some of the other men who died in the crash had also made the trip to attend this event. A swing band provided entertainment, poster boards showed details of those involved in the crash, an open parachute hung above the crowd. A highlight of the ceremony were the bagpipers who led the way in a march to the site on Carpenter's farm where the sign would be unveiled, wreaths would be laid and hundreds of tulips would be strewn at the crash site.

Speeches were given by local representatives, the Canadian ambassador to the Netherlands and people who had witnessed the crash. I cannot put into words what an honor it was for me to speak to this audience on behalf of my extended family and the families of the crew members who perished.

Members of Leo's organization, the Aircraft Crashes Boxmeer Working Group, spoke about their work to memorialize these sites. I was very happy to meet a young woman who is a member of that group. If young people do not join these

organizations, the memories of the war and the men and women who made these sacrifices to liberate the Netherlands will fade.

It is incredible to me that the Dutch people not only remember the events of World War II, but that they also put so much effort into expressing that memory 80 years later. The members of the organizations Faces to Graves and Aircraft Crashes have dedicated themselves to ensuring that these memories are never forgotten.

It was an incredible privilege to meet Alice van Bekkum, Leo Janssen and the dedicated people of their organizations and to be able to contribute to their work. I want to thank each of them for their efforts and for inviting me to be a small part of what they accomplished.



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Jane Grey visits her father's grave

By Marian Straatman



On June 24, 2024, Jane Grey visited the grave of her father Lieutenant Alfred Samuel Deakin, along with her daughter Catherine Johns. Jane brought flowers to lay at the grave of an unknown soldier because she sympathizes with the families who never knew where their loved one was buried.

Jane Grey: "The respect, care and attention given to the graves of the fallen at Groesbeek Cemetery is exemplary. Their deaths are given deep meaning and purpose. The kindness and compassion shown by people in Holland to visitors to the cemetery is deeply moving. The cemetery is a beautiful place, a peaceful place, a restful place, but it is not a place of death, it is a place of life. The plants, trees, wildlife and insects flourish. The birds didn't sing over Auschwitz, they do over the Groesbeek cemetery. My daughter, Catherine, went with me and she plans to return next year. Thank you dear people who take care of all of us. I am more grateful than words can express."

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## 100 life stories

Gijs Krist submitted his 100<sup>th</sup> biography on July 4, another interesting story, this time of Lieutenant Alexander Erskine Hope.

[To the life story of Lieutenant Alexander Erskine Hope >](#)

Gijs, great result of all your efforts! WILL REMEMBER THEM!

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Four Days Marches: commemorations



Two days before the commemoration, a car drove into the cemetery fence, fortunately the damage was limited to the fence and the bushes and it was hardly noticed by the visitors of the commemoration.

On Monday morning, July 15, prior to the start of the Four Days Marches, the military commemoration took place at the Groesbeek Canadian Field of Honour.

Regiments Warrant Officer J.C. Kapteyn of the Medical Troops Regiment was responsible for the organisation whereas Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 005 took care of the Colour Party.

After the Act of Remembrance had been spoken by Danny Murphy, RCL005, and the Last Post had been played, there was a moment's silence, during which the young men who gave their lives for our freedom were commemorated.

This was followed by the laying of the wreaths by Col. Marc LaFortune, Canadian Military Attaché, Mayor Slinkman of Berg en Dal, Mayor Bruls of Nijmegen, march leader Henny Sackers and other representatives, such as Superintendent Clare Smart of the Calgary Police Service., In collaboration with the Noord Holland Police, seven of them participated in the Four Days Marches.

On behalf of Faces to Graves, a wreath was laid by President Alice van Bekkum and Henk Mostert, who is a Research Team member as well as an RCL005 member.



On Thursday, the route of the four-day walkers passed the Canadian War Cemetery. There, various regiments stopped there and held a short commemoration under the guidance of the Colour Party of the Royal Canadian Legion – Branch 005.

The standard bearers of the various regiments and nationalities who gathered for a tribute were impressive.



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## Visit Norma Luks-Walsh from Toronto

Saturday, July 20, Norma Luks-Walsh of Toronto, with her daughter Krista Luks and granddaughter Lacey Pummell visited the grave of her father John Walsh. She never knew him...

[Read his story here >](#)

They were impressed by the cemetery, which, after the four-day march, was still full of wreaths, flags and flowers at various graves. It was very warm that afternoon.

Marian Straatman, who wrote the life story, was also there and Alice van Bekkum had picked up the family from the station in Nijmegen.

Also present were Prof. Dr. Frank Mehring of Radboud University and Guus Houben, one of his students. Frank wanted an interview with the family, which took place in the Freedom Museum. He wants to use that for the book about the cemetery, which we are working on together. He took photos that reflected the atmosphere that characterized this visit: full of emotions and warmth towards each other.



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Donation of 500 euros

By Gavin van Kuppeveld

I work for Nav Canada which is the national organization responsible for Air Traffic Control over Canadian Airspace. We have supported many charitable organizations as a group and continue to support our military personnel and the Royal Canadian Legion. We have been involved in Poppy Campaigns and Fundraising dinners within our city and we were very pleased to hear about your mission and wanted to support your efforts to place a face and a story with each grave. We are honoured to be a part of your mission and look forward to seeing the completed project as we know how important it is to preserve these memories for future generations.

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## **Commendation Kurt Johnson**

On August 23rd, Kurt Johnson was honoured by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, with a commendation for his exceptional contributions to the Faces-to-Graves Foundation. This recognition highlights his significant role in preserving the memories of our nation's Veterans.

A key component of Kurt's work has involved mentoring students at All Saints High School in Kanata, Ontario. Through his guidance, these students have

authored over 160 Life Stories, with Kurt contributing an additional 15 of his own. This collaborative effort has resulted in a valuable historical record that honours the sacrifices of our Veterans.

Additionally, Kurt has remained a strong advocate for the Faces to Graves Foundation and is always seeking opportunities to promote its important work. Kurt volunteered for an interview with CBC and was also featured in an article for Legion magazine as these platforms have allowed him to highlight the importance of this project and encourage more families of soldiers to become aware of it.

Below is a photo of Kurt receiving his commendation from The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Veterans Affairs.



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Newspaper clippings WW2 by Elaine Archer

Earlier this year we received a message from Elaine Archer, she wrote: “We’re all caught up with the WW2 newspaper clipping we had on hand. I know that the 80th anniversary is next year and I thought you might need these well in advance of the celebration.”

Elaine is David Archer’s wife, who we know from many photos on The Virtual War Memorial under the name “Operation Picture Me”. Elaine will be sending high quality newspaper clippings in the coming period. Many of these also feature a photo of the soldier on this announcement of his death. We can certainly use them, Elaine, THANK YOU!



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## Commemoration of Operation Market Garden

The municipality of Berg en Dal and the Groesbeek Airborne Friends organised the commemoration of Operation Market Garden on 17 September. This took place at the 82nd Airborne Division monument 'Mission Accomplished' in Groesbeek.

Chloe Gavin-Beatty is the daughter of General James Gavin, the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, who landed on Klein Amerika with his parachute on 17 September 1944, and was one of the guest speakers.

The second guest speaker was Dominique Schreinemachers, a former combat helicopter pilot in the Dutch Air Force and she gave an impressive speech. Afterwards there was coffee and tea at the Klein Amerika campsite where there was an opportunity to chat with each other.



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Memorial concerts 80 years Market Garden

This year a special memorial concert was organised to commemorate 80 years Market Garden. This concert was performed by an international occasional choir, which consisted of more than thirty male and female singers from various countries. They were from Canada, America, England, Portugal, Germany and the Netherlands.

They performed three times: in the Cenakel Church in Heilig Landstichting on September 17, in the Reformed Church in Groesbeek on September 18 and in the Dominican Monastery in Huissen on September 19.

This special choir was conducted by choirmaster and composer Peter Leech (a veteran's son). There was one piece that he had composed especially for this occasion. Peter has got an impressive track record. Over the years he has conducted various choirs from all over the world. Currently, he works as a teacher at Cardiff University of Music in Wales.

In February of this year, Bert Rebergen contacted Faces to Graves. He had been asked by the organising committee of the memorial concerts to tell a story that fitted in with Operation Market Garden. Out of several soldiers' life stories that Faces to Graves sent him he chose a soldier whose name was Ivan Fowler Matheson.

[To the life story of Ivan Fowler Matheson >](#)

By means of Ivan Fowler Matheson's life, Bert established a link with the present. Through Faces to Graves he managed to get in touch with Ivan's family in Canada. He had also included these conversations into his story, which caused a lot of emotion among the audience.

The organising committee asked us if we, Faces to Graves, could give all the choir members a tour of the Canadian Field of Honour in Groesbeek. We did so in the afternoon of Wednesday September 18. The choir members were welcomed by Gonny, Ans, Henk and Saskia (all four Faces to Graves volunteers).

The male and female singers, the choirmaster and other members of the organising committee gave a greeting (which included a floral greeting) to Ivan Fowler Matheson and the many other soldiers who lie buried there and whose names are inscribed on the Groesbeek Memorial. That same evening, they performed in the Reformed Church in Groesbeek. It seemed that they gave the best of themselves to once more honour 'our men' and to reflect on their ultimate sacrifice.



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## **Jonkerbosch Commemoration**

During the weekend of September 19th to 22nd, Nijmegen commemorated the 80th anniversary of Market Garden, one of the largest Allied operations of World War II that led to the liberation of Nijmegen and eventually the Netherlands.

On 19 September, a commemoration took place at the Jonkerbos military cemetery, where Commonwealth soldiers who died during the fighting in and around Nijmegen from September 1944 commemorated.

At the same time, there were photos at the graves, this was organised by the Lichtjes Jonkerbos working group.



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Visit Dalene and Adrienne Mitchell

Dalene Mitchell and her daughter Adrienne visited her uncle's grave on September 23 and had emailed Faces to Graves about it. We had been in touch with her cousin Valerie Shears from Nova Scotia before.

Alice van Bekkum promised that she would be at the cemetery in time to meet them, but they had had such a smooth journey from Amsterdam that they arrived even earlier.



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## Indigenous Legacy Project

On October 2nd, there was a special ceremony at the cemetery, organized by the 'Indigenous Legacy Project Team' in collaboration with Mathilde Roza and the NANAI foundation.



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Donation Norma Luks-Walsh

After Alice met Norma Luks-Walsh in July, she told her that she still had a donation for Faces to Graves in her bag, which she had forgotten to give.

Alice called in comrade Toon van Bussel from RCL Branch 005, he would be flying to Toronto soon, maybe he could meet up with her?

He wrote to Norma: "On Friday, October 4, there was a commemoration with the First Nations, which we both attended. After the ceremony, we chose a moment with a part of the Colours Party to hand over your donation over your father's grave.

It was a special meeting with you in Canada, a pity that our time was so limited, but handing over your contribution to Faces to Graves was also special.

Too often it is forgotten that the allied forces fought hard for our freedom and that soldiers were wounded and died in the process. They have made the greatest sacrifice that a person can make for his fellow man. However, as a result, a family had to give up their son and, a wife her husband. As in your case, you grew up without ever actually knowing your father.

With profound respect for your father's sacrifice and the sacrifice you made, I can no longer simply ignore the grave of Lance Sergeant Walsh, John Wilbert."

Norma, thank you so much for your generous donation for Faces to Graves!



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## Visit Memory Museum

*By Sigrid Norde en Else Schaberg*

Friday 19 October 2024, a group of volunteers from the Memory Freedom Museum from Nijverdal visited the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek.

They were welcomed by Sigrid Norde and Else Schaberg, volunteer for Faces to Graves.

It had rained in the morning, but we were lucky: when the group arrived in the afternoon, it was dry, and the sun came shining through.

It was a large group of 40 people who wanted to know a bit more about the cemetery after visiting the Freedom Museum in Groesbeek. The group was split into two groups, one led by Sigrid and the other led by Else.

We first gave them a general introduction about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that created and still manages the cemetery. This was followed by a short story about the Rhineland Offensive and the Canadians who died in that battle.

Finally, we told them some life stories of the soldiers, both those who are buried there and those who are named on the walls of the Memorial.

It was nice to host this group of volunteers, they were very interested and asked many questions. Thus, it was an entertaining 1.5 hours for them and for us.



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Faces of Uden

By Gijs Krist

On October 27, 2024, it will be 80 years since 's-Hertogenbosch was liberated. At Uden War Cemetery on Burgemeester Buskensstraat, a ceremony was held by the municipality of 's-Hertogenbosch and various veterans' organizations from Wales were also present. This was to commemorate the Welshmen who died in 's-Hertogenbosch during the liberation at the end of October 1944. It was an

impressive commemoration and when the song 'Danny Boy' was sung, the cemetery became completely silent.

*Oh, Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling,
From glen to glen, and down the mountain side.
The summer's gone, and all the roses falling,
It's you, it's you must go, and I must bide.
But come ye back when summers in the meadow,
Or when the valley's hushed and white with snow,
It's I'll be there in sunshine or in shadow, —
Oh, Danny boy, Oh Danny boy, I love you so!*

*But when ye come, and all the flowers are dying,
If I am dead, as dead I well may be,
Ye'll come and find the place where I am lying,
And kneel and say an Avé there for me.
And I shall hear, though soft you tread above me,
And all my grave will warmer, sweeter be,
For you will bend and tell me that you love me,
And I shall sleep in peace until you come to me!*

403 (of 701) photos were placed at the graves as part of the Faces of Uden. This was organised for the first time by World War Explore. British Army Cadets placed wooden Poppies of Remembrance. The photos were there for only one day and on 4 and 5 May more photos will be placed. The intention is to leave the photos there for five days.



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## **Murray WOOD in The Ayr News**

*By Liesbeth Huisman-Arts*

When, as a researcher, I started writing Murray Wood's life story, I was pleased to find out that a lot of information and photographs were available. This was because on November 11, 2020, Irene Schmidt-Adeney of [The Ayr News](#) had written an article on soldiers from Ayr who had served in World War II. As, back then, a photograph of Corporal Wood was still missing, she launched a call for the family to share a photo. A nephew, Charlie Wood, and a niece, Darlene Savage, responded to this request and sent information on Murray. I gathered up my courage to contact Irene to tell her that I was about to start writing Murray Wood's life story. Straight away, I received an enthusiastic email from her, in which she asked me to send her the story in October 2024, so that it could be

published around the date of November 11. She also wanted to have a photo of me next to Murray's grave at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, together with some information about myself and about Faces to Graves. I did so and sent it to Irene in time, asking her if she wanted to email me the article that was going to be published.

During the first week of November, I already received it by email and I was happy with the result. Irene had written a beautiful article on the soldier and on Faces to Graves. She also thanked me heartily for my co-operation. In this way, our organisation is put in the spotlight once more and, who knows, this article may provide us with more information and photos.

**World War II soldier from Ayr included in the Faces to Canadian War Graves project**

**INTRODUCTION BY IRISSE SCHMIDT-ARNSKY**  
This summer, the Ayr News was contacted by Lisa-both Huismans-Arts, as part of the Faces to Canadian War Graves project. Huismans-Arts was looking for information on Corporal Murray Emery Wood, who is buried at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands.

Sponsored by the Faces to Canadian War Graves Foundation, the mission of the Faces to Graves project is to "write the life stories of the soldiers of the allied forces buried at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery."

"We have to pay tribute to those young soldiers who lost their lives so far away from home, fighting for our freedom," according to the website. "Especially now most of their comrades are not able to do this any longer. We would like to recognize every single one of them by a photo and the story of his life, so they will never be forgotten."

Huismans-Arts is one of about 30 volunteer-researchers on the Faces to Graves project since May 2020. "Together, we try to give all 2,619 men buried at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek a FACE by telling

their stories," said Huismans-Arts. "About 1300 photos of all those soldiers have already been found, but we are still missing many."

"I am 70 years old and live in Arnhem with my husband Wim," said Huismans-Arts. "My favourite hobby is writing life stories about the soldiers buried in Groesbeek and I put a lot of my spare time into writing those stories."

The following is an excerpt of the article by Huismans-Arts about Corporal Murray Wood.



**Wood, Murray Emery**  
Corporal  
Highland Light Infantry of Canada  
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps  
A 5793  
in Lisman-Huismans-Arts  
Murray Wood was born on November 17, 1920, as one-half

of twins. His twin brother was Stanley, who also enlisted but was honourably discharged. The Wood family first lived in Blenheim, Ontario, where Murray was born. They later moved to Ayr, Ontario. Ayr had a flour mill and a foundry on the Nith River, when the Wood family arrived.

Murray's father, George, was a farmer (1893-1975). His mother was Elizabeth (Eliza) Baer of Ayr (1888-1966). He was one of eight children, including a twin brother Stanley. The family attended the United Church.

Murray attended the Public School in Ayr for almost eight years until he was 14. He then went to work for Murray Moore, who owned a farm in Ayr. Murray worked there for four years and did not want to return to farming after joining the army. He wanted to become a mold maker after military service.

Murray enlisted in the Highland Light Infantry (army) and reported in London, Ontario, on June 23, 1941. He was single and English-speaking. He was 5 ft. 11 tall and weighed 156 lbs. According to the report, he had long, wavy hair, was dark in appearance, had brown eyes, and had dark brown hair.



Ayr Public School. Photo: engajawr.ca

Debert, Nova Scotia, and was assigned to the Highland Light Infantry of Canada. He did not stay in Canada much longer and was given embarkation leave from July 5 to 10, 1941.

**Private Murray Wood departs Canada in 1941**  
Private Murray Wood also left Halifax, Nova Scotia, for Georcock, Scotland, on July 21, 1941, where they were housed at Talavers Barracks. In January 1942, he completed the Regimental First Aid Course. On March 31, 1942, Murray had another evaluation interview and now weighed 193 lbs. He was described as a neat-looking young guy who grew

up in a typical family with four brothers and three sisters. In his pre-service years, he hung out at the local billiard room. He seemed indifferent and had no ambitions, but perhaps he wanted to join the army because his brother had done so.

For his efforts, Murray was rewarded with the 1 Good Conduct Badge for two years of service on June 23, 1943, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp on January 15, 1944. In November 1943, he was at Headquarters as Assistant Director of Ordnance Services.

Murray left for France on ...continued on next page

**Corporal Murray Wood - Faces to Canadian War Graves project**

**THE BIBLE**  
NOVEMBER 8, 2024, 10AM - 12:30PM  
EVERYONE WELCOME!  
To read the complete story, visit the website: [faces-to-graves.ca](http://faces-to-graves.ca)



**'The Dutch are grateful to our soldiers'**

By Daniel Laprès

November 11 is Remembrance Day, reminding us of the sacrifice, if not the heroism of our fallen in the field of honour. I have recently had the pleasure of connecting with many Dutch people who are actively involved in keeping the memory alive of our soldiers resting on their soil, who liberated their country from the Nazi occupation, which was particularly brutal and inhumane, during World War II.

I was indeed contacted a few weeks ago by a lady here, Carmen Rochon, who works with exemplary dedication with the Dutch who have launched a website, among several other initiatives, to make sure that the stories and faces of our soldiers resting in the cemetery in Groesbeek will never be forgotten. This is all done voluntarily, without any public funding. Refusing to acknowledge that the graves of our heroes were just tombstones whose names would mean nothing to anyone anymore, these Dutch volunteers have put a tremendous effort into researching and networking to tell the lives of our soldiers resting in Groesbeek. This project, which is already in progress, has a name [Faces to Graves](http://Faces to Graves) -

[Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery](#) (Faces on the Graves: The Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery).

On the [home page of the site](#), you can read: *'We must honour these young soldiers who, so far from their homes, have lost their lives fighting for our freedom, especially now when most of their comrades are no longer able to do so.' We want each of them to be recognized by a picture and a story of their life, so that they are never forgotten'.*

An example of the colossal work done by the Dutch volunteers and their collaborator here, Mrs. Rochon, is this page taken from the site that tells the story of a heroic chaplain born in Maskinongé, [Abbey Rémi Dalcourt](#).

I have been contacted by the Faces to Graves team following various posts I made about my great uncle Real Lamirande, a native of Louiseville, who rests in Groesbeek. Thanks to research by the Faces to Graves team, which has access to the logistics of military divisions whose members are resting at Groesbeek, I was the first in the family since the war to learn about the exact circumstances and location of Real's death in Germany, near the Dutch border, on February 24, 1945. I was able to provide more information about Réal's life prior to his enlistment as a volunteer, and his biography along with various photos will be featured on the Faces to Graves website over the next few weeks.

Another significant Faces to Graves initiative is the installation of signs showing the faces of our soldiers next to the tombstones. [This video](#), entitled: 'The Faces of Groesbeek: A Serene Tribute to Our Liberators,' shows the result of this immense work of commemorating as well as reflects the deep appreciation and respect that these kind and generous Dutch volunteers give to our heroes for their sacrifice, which allowed their country to straighten itself out after four years of terror and misery.

So, let's salute the people of [Faces to Graves - Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery](#) who deserve all our recognition and friendship.

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Remembrance Day Groesbeek

Faces to Graves received an invitation from the Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe) for Remembrance Day:

"The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Alma Pleasance, and Unit Sergeant Major, Chief Warrant Officer Samuel Pépin, invite you to attend the Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe) Remembrance Day commemoration ceremony to be held at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek (NL) on Monday, Nov. 11, 2024."

On this beautiful day, Faces to Graves president Alice van Bekkum laid the wreath along with Fred Hulsman, Research Team member.



After the commemoration, two 'Liberation Children' met each other, it was an emotional meeting.



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## **Remembrance Day Ottawa, Canada**

*By Olivia Sweetland*

On November 14th, 2024, with my History class at All Saints High School, I attended the Netherlands Future of Commemoration Conference as a student in Mrs. Kirtz's Canadian History class. I really enjoyed learning about the Netherlands and Canada's relationship. I did not realize how close they were, and still are. I also find it amazing how Dutch children pay so much tribute to Canada and have done for many years. I hope that lasts forever. I am glad I learned more specifically about that, because it is important to always commemorate our historic heroes and relationships.

It was very interesting to hear about experiences and facts from guest speakers specifically from the Netherlands. Overall, it was such an interesting conference and I loved that the game gave scenarios of circumstances in which soldiers find themselves in times of war. I was pleased that I got to participate by answering questions. I have never been a part of something like that, and it was an educational experience to remember.

For Remembrance Day this year, I assisted with Jeslyn Yap and Jaden Garcia in the preparation of a Remembrance Day Display for All Saint students and staff to view. The display case holds biographies of soldiers from the Algonquin Regiment that served in the Second World War that are buried at Groesbeek Canadian War cemetery. The biographies gave an overview of who the soldiers were and their role during the war. We presented artifacts that were lent to us from The Algonquin Regiment, which included a helmet, an Algonquin Regiment flag and a pair of combat boots.

Participating in putting together the display case was important to me as it helps people remember the importance of Remembrance Day by seeing the faces and stories of soldiers who died during World War Two.

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Field trip *Find the Cost of Freedom*

Under the theme "Find the Cost of Freedom," students from the American Studies programs at Radboud University and the University of Duisburg-Essen embarked on a cross-border field trip to the Freedom Museum and the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery.

With the informed support of museum volunteer guide Maarten Dekkers, the students analyzed the multi-perspectival narratives of liberation, with a special focus on the significant contributions and the ultimate sacrifices of Canadian soldiers during World War II. This immersive experience went beyond academic history lessons, challenging participants to reflect on the complexities of liberation, transatlantic memory cultures, and the emotional impact of human stories that are often overshadowed by grand historical narratives.

The field trip also ties into the collaborative project with the book initiative *Faces of Liberation*, which seeks to highlight the personal stories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. As part of this collaboration, the students will develop six posters dedicated to Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in the fight for liberation in the German-Dutch border region.

These remarkable life stories will be showcased at the Canadian Embassy in Berlin from February 27 to March 2, 2025 during the annual conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries (GKS). The posters not only honor the bravery of these soldiers but also invite viewers to consider the personal cost of freedom and the enduring impact of their sacrifices in times of war in Europe today.

From Berlin to Groesbeek: The journey doesn't end there. On May 2, the posters will accompany the official launch of the book *Faces of Liberation*. This event will provide another opportunity to engage with the stories of these soldiers, fostering a deeper appreciation of their role in shaping the freedoms we cherish today. This initiative is a powerful reminder of how personal stories can breathe life into history, bridging past and present while inspiring reflection on the cost of freedom.



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## **Announcement Exhibition Indigenous Liberators**

The exhibition *Indigenous Liberators: North-American soldiers and the Liberation of The Netherlands* is from May until November 2025 in the Freedom Museum Groesbeek. The exhibition *Indigenous Liberators* was made by Mathilde Roza of the Radboud University Nijmegen. This beautiful new exhibition will tell the

history and the stories of Canadian and American soldiers of Indigenous descent. During World War II many of them enlisted voluntarily to participate in the war and were involved in every part of the liberation of the Netherlands. Yet their stories have hardly been told. Through stories, objects and unique interviews this history will be brought to life. Several soldiers that are central to the exhibition lie buried in Groesbeek.



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Book Faces of Liberation

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Liberation commemoration, we are working on a publication about the soldiers buried at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek or listed on the Memorial.

In this book, we have collected about 100 life stories of fallen soldiers, chosen to represent a diverse range of ages, regiments, beliefs, ethnic backgrounds and the dates of their sacrifices. Each story is accompanied by a portrait and, in some cases, by additional photographs that offer a richer picture of their lives. Where possible, we have selected stories of fallen soldiers whose descendants have contacted the Faces to Graves Foundation, offering a deeper insight into the significance of this commemoration.

The introductory chapters describe the historical and cultural significance of the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek. Frank Mehring and Jaap Verheul of Radboud University discuss the importance of the cemetery as a transnational heritage site. They emphasise its place in the collective memory of the war, both in the border region of the Netherlands and Germany and in transatlantic relations. Canadian war historians John Goheen and Mark Zuehlke describe the crucial involvement of the Canadian Forces in the liberation of the Netherlands and the Rhineland Offensive, and the experiences for participating soldiers. Rense Havinga, curator at the Freedom Museum, offers a history of the cemetery itself, inaugurated by Queen Wilhelmina on 4 May 1947 and managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. He also discusses how the graves of liberators were adopted by local people. The book also highlights the invaluable work of the volunteers of the Faces to Graves Foundation, who compiled the life stories of the fallen soldiers and maintained links with their families in Canada. Mathilde Roza of Radboud University shares stories of soldiers coming from the indigenous peoples of Canada, adding another layer to the historical role of the cemetery. Finally, two chapters describe the place of the Canadian liberation in

the Netherlands and Canada. Frank Mehring and Jaap Verheul narrate the living memory of Canadian soldiers in the Netherlands and composer and professor Dean Burry of Queen's University, Canada, explores how the liberation of the Netherlands is commemorated in Canada's society and popular culture. Together, these introductory chapters provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the soldiers' stories within the broader context of their historical and cultural significance.

Faces of Liberation: The Canadian War Cemetery Groesbeek

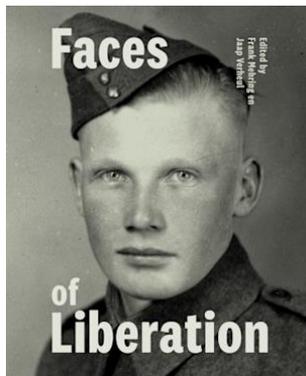
Edited by Frank Mehring en Jaap Verheul

Authors: Alice van Bekkum, Dean Burry, John Goheen, Rense Havinga, Frank Mehring, Saskia Peters, Mathilde Roza, Jaap Verheul, Mark Zuehlke

At the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek rest 2,618 servicemen from Canada and the British Commonwealth. Most of these men fell during the liberation of the Netherlands and the decisive Rhineland Offensive at the end of the Second World War. This book brings their individual stories to life and offers a poignant tribute to the young men who fought for freedom, democracy, and peace. With the names of all the fallen and the 1,012 missing on the Memorial Wall, this is a valuable unique reference work that perpetually honors their sacrifices.

The book tells the history of the cemetery through a transatlantic lens, with special focus on the commemorative practices of Dutch volunteers and local heritage institutions to keep the collective memory alive. Through rich illustrations, this book shows how the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek has become a living tribute to the bonds between the Netherlands and Canada.

[Order the book at Amsterdam University Press >](#)



Published by Amsterdam University Press

Release date: April 2025

Retail price € 49.99

Pre-subscription price € 39,99

Hardback 24 x 30 cm

Approx 320 pages full colour

ISBN 9789048565849

Design Frederik de Wal

The book will also be published in Dutch, *Gezichten van Bevrijding, De Canadese Oorlogsbegraafplaats Groesbeek*

The presentation of the book will take place on May 2, 2025 at 1:00 PM in the Freedom Museum in Groesbeek

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## **The Faces of Groesbeek 2025**

Next year will be dedicated to 80 years of Freedom. To mark the occasion, Faces to Graves is organizing the photo exhibition **The Faces of Groesbeek** at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek.

We are already busy with the preparations and in the meantime we have also received many new photos from Canada. Thanks to all those who help us in our search for soldiers' photos!

If you have a photo for us, please submit it before March 1st!

This time all available photos even remain at the graves for three weeks, the first week because this is a holiday week for Dutch schools. Previously, we have seen that many families and grandparents with grandchildren visited the cemetery.

### **The Faces of Groesbeek: Saturday 26 April - Sunday 18 May 2025**

An opening ceremony for invited guests will take place on Friday afternoon, May 2 at 3:00 p.m. This date was chosen to give our Canadian guests the opportunity to attend this ceremony.

Since the photos were placed at the graves and names of the missing on the Memorial in May 2023, many new photos have already arrived. These photos all have to be printed on durable Alupanel panels, which can be used multiple times and we must have sufficient resources at our disposal for this.

At the time of writing, we have almost 1900 photos of the 2618 graves and around 200 photos of the missing at the Memorial. Will you help us by making a donation, or sending a photo?



Please mention "**May 2025**" with your donation, so that it will be used exclusively for this purpose. You will also find a donation button on our website.



Finally, we would like to ask all family members who are planning to come to Groesbeek to register at [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl) and you will receive an invitation for the opening ceremony on Friday afternoon, May 2 at 3:00 PM.

[Watch our promotional film >](#)

(made by Jacqueline and Chris Bouwhuisen)

More information on the flyer that is sent with this newsletter.

Please note: submit photos before March 1, 2025, so they can still be printed for this photo project.

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If you want to know what else there is to do in our region, take a look at:

<https://infocentreww2.com/>

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**Thank you so much for your donation!**

As a non-profit organization, we can only work on this project through your donation. You can find our sponsors' logos on our website. Sometimes we feel like thanking a donor personally. Unfortunately, we can only do so when we have a contact address. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to thank EVERYONE for their contribution!

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Special thanks to...

We thank Richard Meeussen of restaurant-hotel 't Zwaantje in Mook for his hospitality for the Research Team meetings. He has been providing us with a beautiful meeting room free of charge for many years where the coffee is already invitingly waiting for us.

For the various reports in this newsletter we thank: Alice van Bekkum, Else Schaberg, Gijs Krist, Kim Huvenaars, Mike McDonnell, Liesbeth Huisman en Saskia Peters.

Sources of photos used: Alice van Bekkum, Anneke Poppenk, Erik de Gans, Frank Mehring, Gratje, Gijs Krist, Henk Baron en Kim Huvenaars.

Gonny van Hal took care of the translation of the items in this newsletter and Tefke van Dijk, former ResearchTeam member, took care of the layout. Many thanks for that! Julie Allen has been handling the mailing of this newsletter since 2019 and it runs like clockwork, Julie thank you!

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### **Wanted: board members**

Would you like to help us, or do you know someone who is interested, we are still looking for:

- board member from the Nijmegen region, to strengthen our board

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Finally, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2025.



With courtesy of the Nijmegen Archives

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Questions or comments? Please contact us: [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl)

Or visit our social media:



**VRIJHEID  
GELDERLAND  
80 jaar**