MAMA, the Canadians are coming...

The few living persons who experienced the Second World War do recognise this cry out very well. This year there were many children in the Dutch cities shouting these words. And they came....again!

With regards to the Jubilee Year “70 years of liberation of the Netherlands”, in many places in the Netherlands our liberators were welcomed as from October 2014. Despite their in the meantime very respectable age of 90+ this year again liberators arrived in the Netherlands to honour their fallen comrades and celebrate our freedom with us.

They arrived on 2 May!
Like many veterans, who arrived in these days by regular flights from Canada at Schiphol, Brussels and several places in Germany.
In the afternoon of May 2nd about 60 veterans arrived at Eindhoven Airport with a special flight of the Canadian government, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). They were welcomed by members of the Canadian Embassy in the Netherlands, a delegation of VAC and members of the organizing veteran committees in the Netherlands, such as Stichting Bevrijding 45 from Apeldoorn and Welcome Again Veterans from Holten. They actually took care of the housing and escorting at host families. Next: all left for Apeldoorn and Holten.

RCL Branch 005 was closely involved to many of the events over the country. As from the start of the liberation year in 2014 the Colour Party of RCL005 has been deployed several times on locations and have been part in commemorations and liberation events, like for instance in Vlissingen and Bergen op Zoom. You can read reports and or view the many pictures of these items further on our website if you like.
Also the other events in the rest of 2015: you will find them there. RCL005 was/is pointed out to be the central place of advice and information for Canadian contacts.

In this report RCL005 would like to show an image of the activities it stands for and usually tries to realise over the entire year. In 2015 it means of course welcoming our returning liberators, but also commemorations, remembrance services and activities which take place though out the year in the Netherlands.

The most busy period was no doubt the first 10 days of May 2015, the period at the time of the capitulation in 1945. In those days the people of the Netherlands of course commemorates the victims of wars, but also the liberation.

It is a pleasure to describe a few of the events from the May Jubilee period to you. In addition, the versatility of the involvement of RCL005 immediately becomes apparent.

It has become a voluminous report, in three parts, but with great pleasure created for you. We therefor would like to invite you to read the other parts as well! Enjoy reading!
**4 May Apeldoorn (Gelderland)**

Next event was de Dodenherdenking (remembrance of the fallen) in Apeldoorn.

This remembrance is dedicated to the victims of WW2 and started with a service in the big church and was followed by a silent procession to the monument in the Oranjepark. Here wreaths were layed by the mayor of Apeldoorn, next of kin, RCL, representatives of various organisations and individuals. At the service in the church, stories have been told about victims from Apeldoorn, poems have been read by pupils of the KSG-school and there was music played by pupils of Markant.

**5 May Wageningen (Gelderland)**

The celebration of the liberation in Wageningen is also called the General Foulkes festival, after the Canadian general, who accepted the capitulation of the German occupying force in the Netherlands. This was signed in the hotel called ‘de Wereld’.

RCL005 is always part of the Canadian Base Camp, that’s constructed on location ‘De Dreijen’ in Wageningen. This area also holds the big tent for the veterans and is the starting point of the street parade. RCL005 forms up a Colour Party together with the comrades of RCL Zone Europe.

In this year of jubilee, the expectations of a high attendance were obvious.

In the morning the RCL team installed the promotion-tent. Not only to give information or to sell goodies, but also for protection against sun and rain. Many interested people visited the tent and many questions were asked about the activities of the Legion, some even became member.

The tent even was not set up yet, when people came to see and it became very busy already.

Flyers for providing RCL information were printed and spread around on the camp by RCL members. Fortunately the Letbridge Air Cadets helped out.
Unfortunately rain poured down many times, but the crew still maintained its good mood.

Many historic military vehicles were present, but also veterans from many countries to have a nice chat with.

Because of the jubilee, a lot of foreign broadcasting crews and journalists were making recordings of all what was going on.

For everyone there was enough to see and do and the RCMP pipes and drums gave an excellent performance.

**Contract signing**
And suddenly there was a big surprise: the Dutch Chief of Defence Staff Tom Middendorp and the vice-president of the National Committee Wageningen Capitulation 45 Marcel van den Broek, wanted to sign an agreement on the future of the General Foulkes festival.

The signing location was chosen in front of the RCL005-tent. In very short time a few tables were made ready for this event.

General Middendorp explained to the public what was going to take place with a big smile.

Just before the signing a heavy rainfall started, but fortunately disappeared with the same speed.

Other Dutch staff-members joined this session and the RCL Colour Party lined up to give this moment extra decorum.
Now it becomes serious:

Congratulations!!

The signing was followed by gun salute and the gentlemen could even have a shot with a historic gun, manned by hussars in historic uniforms.

All went well, until a very heavy thunderstorm broke loose, it started to rain cats and dogs and the organisation had to decide to postpone the start of the parade for 30 minutes.

It was a bit of a disappointment for everyone: A “little” rain, what is the problem? Well, the problem was the thunderstorm and heavy winds. That held us on De Dreijen.

Do you like to see more of the events on De Dreijen?

Please click here for the photo albums

Or watch this video.

Fortunately the weather cleared up, and the parade was ready to go!

The Parade
For many spectators this is every year a beautiful and emotional moment. Can you imagine how it feels for the men and women who are marching in the parade? As mentioned earlier, the crowd was huge this year. Estimations were between 150-200,000 people along the route.
Behind the location De Dreijen, all veterans, Colour Parties and bands are lined up. The military vehicles with non-marching veterans were stamping with impatience to make the historic round.

After the start the parade was stopped a few times, because on the main stage a number of speeches were given by General Middendorp, the Canadian Prime Minister Harper and Minister Dijsselbloem. Also some impressive flypasts were performed in the sky.

Afterwards the parade could eventually start.

The first vehicle

The Pipes and Drums

The RCL Colour Party

RCL always opens this parade. With the mass band of pipes and drums in front. They were still wearing raincoats, but in hindsight this wasn’t needed.

Veterans, that’s what it’s all about....
Deepest respect!

To get a better view, there’s a lot of video’s and pic’s on the internet.

Click here for the photo album

Video Wageningen 1: (NOS: Omroep GLD)
Video Wageningen 2: Private film

The parade ended at 18.30h (because of the late start), but nobody seemed to care and everyone stayed till the last man and vehicle did leave the parade.
After that moment every veteran went to the big tent to talk about the day and enjoy a few drinks before they go home.

Till next year!

6 May Bergen op Zoom (Noord-Brabant)
Invited by the Canadian Embassy, a few members of RCL005 were present at the military funeral of the remains of Private Albert Laubenstein at the Canadian War cemetery in Bergen op Zoom.

Albert Laubenstein was member of the B-company, Lincoln & Welland Regiment, RCIC. He was killed on January 26th 1945, during the battle of Kapelsche Veer. His remains were found on June 20th 2014 by amateur archeologists near Sprang-Capelle. The Dutch Recognition and Identification Unit was able to recover his true identity.

7 May Battlefield Tour Flanders Fields
Like any Canadian, the members of the RCMP-band wanted to visit the battlefield sites of WW1, Flanders Fields, where so many of their ancestors gave their life in Europe.

The burial service was sober and honouring.

After the service, a reception was held by the Canadian Embassy in the centre of Bergen op Zoom. The members of the Dutch Recognition and Identification Unit got complimented for their special task.
Cees Pot and Maarten Dekkers were asked to organise a small battlefield tour around the village of Ypres. The highlight of this day should be the ceremony in the Menen-gate, where every night at 08.00PM the Last Post is played by buglers of the local fire brigade. The RCL Colour Party and the Lethbridge Air Cadets escorted the band on this tour, which started at the Harskamp barracks. On the road, the guides told a lot about the history.

The first stop was at the British War Cemetery Tyne Cot, in the village of Passchendaele. 11,957 victims of WW1 are buried here, 1,011 of them Canadians. There’s also a wall, with the names of 33,783 soldiers who were missing in action.

The cemetery is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The vast numbers of headstones shows the drama of what happened in those days. It made a deep impression on everyone.

The next stop was at the village of Ypres, to pay a visit to the ‘In Flanders Field’ museum.

There was plenty of time to see the vast collection of special objects found in the area. The collection is very interactively displayed, so very interesting to visit by young and old.

Because of the splendid weather, it was a feast to walk through the village and to have a refreshment on a local terrace. In the meantime everybody was getting anxious to do the service in the Menen-gate, but first there was a fine dinner in the Pacific Island restaurant.
A great restaurant, where the guides Maarten and Cees were thanked for organising this special day.

Time to get serious: practice and tuning.

Also Sergeant-at-Arms Martin Reelick gave the final instructions to the RCL Colour Party and the Air Cadets, so everything looked sharp.

Menen Gate
In the centre of Ypres is the Menen-gate situated. It was built by the British in 1927 at the eastside of the village, in remembrance of the fallen and missing soldiers of the Commonwealth during the Great War. Every day since 1929, buglers of the local fire-brigade play the Last Post at 08.00PM sharp. Lest we forget.......
The Last Post was played and wreaths were laid. The Act of Remembrance was read by one of the drummers of the RCMP-band. A very impressive event for everyone present.

The ride back to the barracks was long…..but still pumped by the excellent performance the members of the band started to sing the most appropriate song: ‘On the road to Passchendaele’…….

Click here for the photo album