



THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 005
THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS



NEWSLETTER RCL Branch 005 Nr. 2020-03

In this edition:

From the President
From a Board Member
In Memoriam
Statement from the UK
General Members Meeting
Unveiling monument Bergen
Column Marc van Aken
Etten, a sober ceremony
Column Don Pauwe

Upcoming events:

- April 9 ~~Vimy Ridge Zone Europe~~ **cancelled**
April 12 ~~Holten, ceremony 48th Highlanders~~ **cancelled**
April 13 ~~Posterenk, 75th anniversary Liberation~~ **cancelled**
April 13 ~~Holten, ceremony Dragoons (I)~~ **cancelled**
April 13 ~~Lettele, ceremony Dragoons (II)~~ **cancelled**
April 15 ~~75th anniversary Liberation Leeuwarden~~ **cancelled**
April 17 ~~Apeldoorn, commemoration 't Sluisje~~ **cancelled**
April 17 ~~Apeldoorn, commemoration Oranjepark~~ **cancelled**
April 25 ~~Diever, 75th anniversary Liberation~~ **postponed**
- May 2 ~~Start project Faces to Groesbeek~~ **cancelled**
May 3 ~~Groesbeek Ceremony VAC~~ **cancelled**
May 4 ~~Ceremonies Ten Boer, Holten, Apeldoorn,~~ **cancelled**
May 5 ~~Wageningen Liberation Parade~~ **cancelled**
May 6 ~~Canada Day Museum Soesterberg~~ **cancelled**
May 9 ~~Apeldoorn, Liberation Party~~ **cancelled**

UNTIL JUNE 1st 2020:

all upcoming RCL005 activities have been cancelled !!!!!

Have a look on the [agenda](#)

For the latest news: [Facebook](#).

There are far more pictures on our website. To have a look: click: [album](#)





Zij, die hun leven gaven voor stad en land op 10 April 1945, bij de Twentolbrug.



Joost Westland van Balen.



Cornelia Bos, echtgenote van Joost Westland van Balen.



Marinus Woertman.



D. J. Bruggeman.



Jaap Bennebroek Evers.



Harry Engels.



Jan H. L. v. Genneep Lührs.

They gave their lives for their city and country on April 10, 1945 at the Twentol bridge

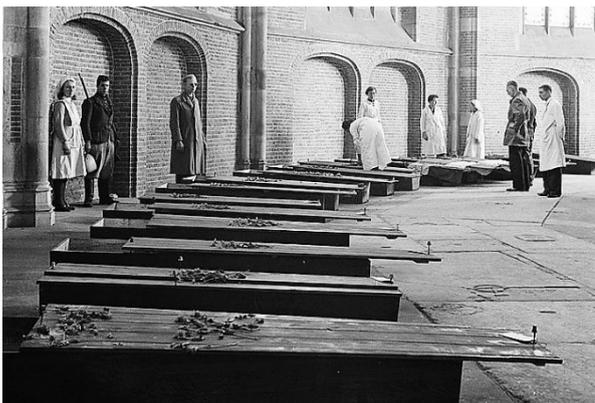
BACKGROUND STORY

Varied column with information on a specific topic. Can be viewed by clicking somewhere on this page.

SEVEN YOUNG LIVES ENDED ABRUPTLY

LESS THAN ONE HOUR BEFORE LIBERATION

CORRY AND JOOST HAD JUST BEEN MARRIED





The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



From the President.

Dear Comrades,

It's a challenging time. As the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to evolve, we've witnessed the declaration of a pandemic, government restrictions on travel and gatherings, and growing concern from our Comrades about their health and safety and pending remembrance and liberation celebrations. We the Royal Canadian Legion find that the well-being of our community is our priority, and we must take action to support these actions. That's why we've made the difficult decision to pause all our activities, remembrance and liberation celebration until further notice.



Most of the organising committees are informing us that they have either cancelled or postponed their events until further notice. You can check our Website on the agenda pages on what is already cancelled. As soon as we have new information on events, we update these ASAP.

[Google agenda](#) or [Events 2020 List](#) ← click.

There is scuttlebutt in the hallways and it's **75+1** for next year, let's hope so. We will be ready.

The executive has postponed all meetings until we are advised that we can start hold public meetings. We do however hold regular contact via telephone or video conferences and keep each other UpToDate.

Let's stand united on this, so that we later proudly can say; we have done what was expected from us. After all togetherness is one of our main objectives.

For the coming period let's support each other with Love and Encouragement.

Stay healthy and follow guidelines from government and the Royal Canadian Legion from the top on down.

Check the Legion webpage on [COVID-19](#) ← Click.

Martin Reelick

President

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005

"The Liberation of the Netherlands"



From a Board Member.

This time, Wim Poppenk, 2nd Vice President of RCL Branch 005, tells from his own experience why he is so very involved with Canada and takes a seat on the boards of RCL005, Faces to Graves and provides assistance to the Freedom Museum in Nijverdal.



Looking back at 20 years of Highlights, 1990 – 2010.

1990. It was early 1990 in Nijverdal when we, as a young family, both working and with three school-aged children, were asked to consider housing a Canadian war veteran in May. Our first response was: "yes, of course we do." We thought that was something. But a bit later, we also had some doubts. A veteran for ten days, possibly with a partner at home, we at work, school, etc. On closer inspection, that was a bit much. We were then put on the reserve list. We could help out in case of an emergency.

The phone rang four days before the Canadians, with 4 busses full for Nijverdal alone, were due to arrive. The chairman of "Thank you Canada" on the phone. "Wim there is already a couple ahead tomorrow, they stay three nights in Nijverdal and then continue to Veendam. Would you like to house them? Yes, bring them on!" It was also partly in the weekend so should be possible. The next day Len and Pearl Fruno arrived from Kelowna, BC. Three very beautiful and intensive days; the children had new BC grandparents. What a pity that they had to leave for the next address so soon.

Len: Sicily, Monte Casino, France, Belgium, Nijverdal and Veendam, the finish for him. Len's brother died at Monte Casino and is buried there. In 2016 we visited Len and Pearl in Kelowna, BC. The dining room of the care home was adapted immediately to the visit from the Netherlands. And we are still in contact with Pearl after thirty years. Unfortunately, Len passed away last June.



Len and Pearl Fruno (1.and 3. from the r.)

Driving back from Veendam there was enough to discuss. At home we were cleaning the spare room when the phone rang; the same chairman: "Wim, the veterans have arrived and here is Marlowe Fox from Temperance Vale NB", and he has no address. You already understand And: "Pretend you're expecting him and I'll bring him in 20 minutes".



Marlowe Fox + Poppenk kids

Marlowe has been with us for the full 10 days. In a short time, Marlowe changed from a gruff and very tired veteran into a "another grandfather". He enjoyed. A silver bracelet containing silver dimes with the image of Queen Wilhelmina had to hang on our daughter's wrist. Marlowe had his experiences recorded by the New Brunswick newspaper. Unfortunately, Marlowe died a year after his visit.

Being on the reserve list makes sense.



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



1995 is coming. Fifty years ago, World War II came to an end. That is going to be celebrated big. We did get the taste and signed up again. The children a bit bigger; it's all a little easier.

Gordon and Louise Bridges from Ottawa Ont. It sounds a bit corny but "another grandpa and grandma" are there. It is the first time that Gordon and Louise visit the Netherlands.

Gordon didn't want to come. The misery he had experienced at the time; he didn't want to be reminded of that again. He didn't have an easy time after the war. After insistence by family and friends he got on the plane with the announcement that he would not join the group and would draw up his own plan in the Netherlands. That turned out different. The Netherlands had recovered and no longer resembled the Netherlands as he had left it. A relief.

How much Gordon and Louise enjoyed all 50 years of liberation events. The famous After Party hardly could not be finished at the end of the tour. And we haven't talked about the war at all.

Their daughter later wrote that she had recovered another father.

We visited them several times. And there was always that beer with the red star, nothing local beer. Gordon passed away a few years ago. Louise still lives in the same house and we have been able to visit her again in 2017 and 2019. And she still has a sharp eye on their visit to the Netherlands.

2000. Can it be more beautiful than in 1995? Not bigger but just as beautiful. Albert (Steve) and Muriel Stephen from Eganville Ont. are experienced in visiting the Netherlands.

They have previously attended commemorations and liberation celebrations in the Nijmegen region. This time Nijverdal was ready chosen. No jet lag, just keep going, 10 days in a row. Steve: Engineers, sapper, first wave Juno Beach. Injured as a result of which nerves in the right arm occasionally did not work and as a result sometimes the coffee "in the air". A great time here in the Netherlands.

We "should" come to Canada. Eganville is not far (for Canadian standards) from Ottawa. We have stayed several times in their cottage, beautiful on a lake with beavers, otters and the loon. In wintertime they went to Florida to avoid the cold Canadian winter. Coincidence or not: A ten minutes drive from Uncle Piet's house. My father-in-law's brother. Yes, that made visiting Florida a bit easier for us.

The "vest" that Steve wore when he landed on Juno Beach is in the Liberation Museum in Lochem. Muriel and Steve passed away a few years ago. But we still have very regular contacts with their daughter and their grandchildren. These festivities in 2000 are predicted to be the last.

2005. Oren Foster from Deep Brook, Nova Scotia reports. Oren (92) came alone; he has left his wife at home and wants to experience the commemorations alone. Oren is an infantryman, a sniper. Always alone, always hidden, no buddy looking after him. That's how he is with us, but that changed quickly.



Gordon and Louise Bridges



Albert Stephen



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



A solitary man with a lot of humour. Solely walk the parade in Apeldoorn in the pouring rain, did not take advantage of the offer to come along in a truck. No, everything by yourself. Also, at the end of the Farewell party on the dance floor with one of the "Three Degrees".

We visited Oren and his wife Sue three times. Oren showed us part of Nova Scotia including CAF Greenwood and the Fort at Port Royal he worked on during the recession before the war and last but not least CAF Cornwallis, his neighbour. Once Oren tripped while eating an ice cream. He saved his ice cream but hit the bumper of the car with his head. The first thing he said afterwards: "Did I damage the car"?

Our last visit was to Sue. Oren had died and together with her we visited his grave in Port Royal where he is buried under the Red Ensign.

2010. Yet again many Canadians are coming to the Netherlands and yet another nice program is offered. Jack and Valerie Brown from Oregon, USA. For a moment we thought (secretly) that Jack had brought his daughter but that turned out not to be the case.

Jack joined the RECCE, the reconnaissance troops, in 1944 in the Land van Maas en Waal. He remembered a number of things: Maasbommel, December 5, St. Nicholas. He told that he had to keep an eye on the surroundings in the church tower of the Roman Catholic church there on the night of 4-5 December. That night he saw a Messerschmitt passing by and he saw the crashing nearby in a meadow. Where is Maasbommel? That was quickly found on the map and on their "day off" we went to Maasbommel. He immediately recognized the premises of the local supermarket as the place where they were stationed, a school at that time.

We walked around the church and then on the dike. A little further on someone was mowing the lawn. Asked if there were opportunities to visit the church. The "lawn mower" turned out to be an old commander of the Royal Marines barracks in Rotterdam. So immediately full cooperation and within 10 minutes the sexton was there with the keys.

A special experience for Jack and Valerie, and also for us, to be there between the link holes 64 years later. Further along the dike was an old farm with residents who already lived there during the war. After some hesitation (strangers at the door....) an hour-long experience was exchanged; they too had seen the Messerschmitt crash.

Driving back home and drive passing a village with a war memorial in the local park. We got out to take a look. In no time, a resident arrives asking if Jack is a veteran. Yes, that is visible. Then come and have a look in my attic. A war museum in itself; great to see.

All in all, besides all other days, a very special day. Jack died a few years ago and Valerie has returned to her birthplace in California.

Wim Pappenk



Oren and Sue Foster



Jack and Valerie Brown (r)



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



In Memoriam.



The Royal Canadian Legion, in particular Branch 005 'the Liberation of the Netherlands', has heard with great dismay the passing on of comrade **Jan Sievers** on March 31, 2020.

Sometimes he was already not with us for a moment. **Jan Sievers** was one of the 'founding fathers' of our Branch and a very dedicated but also very amiable person.

We remember his commitment to our Branch with respect and appreciation. His involvement was an example for us.

We wish the family strength in the difficult times coming up.

Editorial. CANADIAN WALK – APELDOORN.

On April 17, Apeldoorn was liberated by the Canadian Army. The specially organized ceremonies have been canceled due to circumstances. What has been continued is the set-up of an audio tour. This tour tells the history of the Canadian Army through Europe up to and including the liberation of Apeldoorn. It is a specially developed app that combines a podcast with a walk.

The route starts at the crossing Loolaan / Jachtlaan at the statue of, the "Man with the Two Hats".

On the route there are 26 tiles with a QR code and 5 display cases. With the mobile phone one can listen to stories concerning the Canadian campaign in Europe.

The Canadian Walk ends in the center of Apeldoorn in the Paslaan with the new work of art: "The Tree of Freedom". The route is marked with special engraved tiles with a Maple Leaf symbol. The time required is an hour on average.



Statement from the UK. WHY WE MUST REMEMBER.

By (our Facebook friend) Neil Frith.



This year marks the 75th Anniversaries of the end of WWII in Europe and The Far East. The freedoms that we now enjoy is through the service and sacrifice of that generation of men and women who gave their all for us. Today there are very few surviving veterans who can tell us what it was like to go through that momentous time in history. We owe them so much in return.

All of my family served in WWII. I'm very proud of them all. My late grandfather was career military and served in The Royal Artillery. He saw active service in France (1940) and North Africa (1941-1942). It was in the desert that he was badly wounded by a shell. My grandmother received a telegram from the War Office stating that he was posted Missing, Presumed Killed. There was my grandmother, believing herself to be left a widow with two young sons (my dad and my uncle).

Two weeks later, she received another telegram stating that my grandfather was alive and well and recuperating in a military hospital in Cairo. Many years later, she told me that it was the worst two weeks of her life. Not knowing if he was alive or dead. My grandfather ended his war in charge of AA gun batteries guarding USAF airfields in East Anglia. He never fully recovered from his wounds and was demobbed at the end of the war. I never met him. He died before I was born. But I know him from both my gran and dad talking about him.

I was talking to one of my friends over in Canada the other day. We had both read that one in six people now believe that the Holocaust never happened. What the hell!!! We just couldn't believe it!! Something has gone seriously wrong with society.

Especially with all the evidence that clearly proves that it did take place. Have we really become so ignorant of our past? My brother visited Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. We both visited the Church in Prague where the Czech resistance, who assassinated Reinhard Heydrich, made their last stand against the Waffen SS. Visiting these places left us humbled. Believe me, The Holocaust did happen.

In October, twenty-five years ago, I joined up to serve my country. Do I regret it? Hell no! I would have regretted it more had I not joined up. Though I'm no longer serving, it's never left me. You always remain a soldier. It becomes part of your character. I have friends in the UK, Canada and The Netherlands who, like me, have served or are currently serving their country. All of us are the children and grandchildren of WWII veterans.

I fear that we are forgetting our history. We must never forget. We must never forget the lessons of history. Failure to do so. Then we are condemned to repeat it.

If you get the opportunity to meet WWII veterans this year, thank them for their service. Listen to what they have to say and remember. So, you can pass it on to the next generation. In a few years from now., they will be all be gone.

We Will Remember Them All.
Lest We Forget.

Written by a grandson of WWII veteran who chooses never to forget, but to remember.

Signed: *Neil Frith*



General Members Meeting.

Sunday, March 1, 2020 RCL Branch 005 held its annual GMM in the clubroom in Lochem. In my view, the turnout was moderate. It was striking that no reports of foreclosure were reported.

The meeting went according to the known pattern. The auditing committee proposed to grant discharge to the treasurer. The minutes of the previous GMM were approved without many notes.

Unfortunately, the board had to report two vacancies: the position of 1st Vice President and the position of the secretary are vacant. No proposals or decisions were made during the meeting.



A 5-year pin was issued to some comrades and it was also gratifying that two new comrades were installed.



Branch 005 had coins made on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Liberation. After the official part, the coins were handed out to the members present.



Column: *Herman Sligman*



Unveiling monument Bergen.L.

On Wednesday March 4, 2020, a monument was unveiled in the municipality Bergen in the province of Limburg. A monument in memory of the crew of the crashed Lancaster MK III ED449 VN-T.

From No. 50 Squadron RAF included ten machines in a fleet of 450 bombers. Taken off from Skellingthorpe (UK) airport for a nighttime raid the target was the Krupp Works in Essen.

In total, 23 planes did not return from this action. Nine No. 50 Squadron bombers returned to base safely, one aircraft failed to return.

Lancaster B. Mk III ED449 VN-T and crew were never heard from again after leaving Skellingthorpe.

Believed to have been shot down by a German night fighter en-route to the target, thus fully laden. The plane crashed around 9:25 p.m. on March 12, 1943. The crew all perished and were initially buried in Venlo. Post war they were moved to the 1945 Jonkerbos Cemetery, Nijmegen.

Two crew members belonged to the Royal Canadian Air Force, the other five to the Royal Air Force. The oldest was 24 years old, the others younger.

A stylish, well-organized ceremony attended by many. Many relatives of the crew had come from Canada and England. Also represented were the embassies of Canada, Great Britain and Germany. NATO was also represented. The Commissioner of the King of the province Limburg and dignitaries of various surrounding municipalities of Bergen, both Dutch and German.



Murray Kissick, next to the monument



In the foreground relatives of the crew members



RCL Branch 005 was present with a five-headed delegation. Comrade Marc van Aken was there with a special mission. You can read his column below.

Column: *Herman Sligman*



Column Marc van Aken.

Early 2009, through the Canadian Maloney family, I got in touch with a family member of Victor Kissick, a gunner in the crashed plane. The family member, Murray Kissick, turns out to be a son of Victor's younger brother. Murray told me the story of his uncle, one of the perished crew members. Murray sent me a number of postal items that he owned and which were sent from the Netherlands. The sender of the letters was a certain Verkoijen family from Venlo. My research could begin.

In September 2009, the story took a completely different turn during a conversation with a son of a former resistance fighter from this region. At the time operating under the pseudonym Wolbertus (the maiden name of his wife), his official name was: Verkoijen (the sender of the letter in 1947).

The son told me, that he had heard from his father that one crew member should have survived; since someone had jumped out of the plane at the back of the machine (probably the tail gunner). Because the plane was already flying very low, the parachute did not open and the airman ended up in the sand. Before his father could reach the plane, a German patrol was already on its way to the crash site.

When the Germans left, his father hurried to the place of disaster. Outside the plane he found one of the crew members. The man had clearly broken both legs, his father had noticed. To his dismay, his father immediately noticed that the airman had a wound of a shot in his head. He was shot on the spot by the German patrol. Although seriously injured, the man had initially survived the crash. His father had found a pocket knife in the clothes of the man. Later information and some research had made it clear that it had to be Victor Kissick from Manitoba. The knife was sent by mail to Victor's family in Canada in 1947.

A few months after this conversation I visited the Verkoijen family. The complete story was told again and after that I already had a fairly complete picture of the crash and death of Victor Kissick. The crash site was the only piece of the puzzle piece I missed. I was curious if there were any traces of it.

During the big commemoration in 2010, Murray Kissick came to the Netherlands with his wife and I met him on May 5, in Wageningen.

In the meantime, I had managed to locate the crash site with the help of Mrs. Mia Ummenthum. She had lived in the Bergen / Well region since her childhood and had also experienced the war there. On May 5, 2010, together with Murray and his wife Monique I visited the cemetery Jonkerbos in Nijmegen. Here the crew got her final resting place.

We also visited the crash site in Bergen. Accompanied by Mrs. Ummenthum, who pointed us the place where the plane crashed.



Jonkerbos

The place is located in a protected nature reserve, managed by the Limburg Landscape. We had received prior permission to visit the site there. Most importantly, under certain conditions, an agreement was also given to do some, not too large, excavations. Because no further excavation work had taken place at the crash site, apart from the normal clearance work, we soon came across some parts of the aircraft.

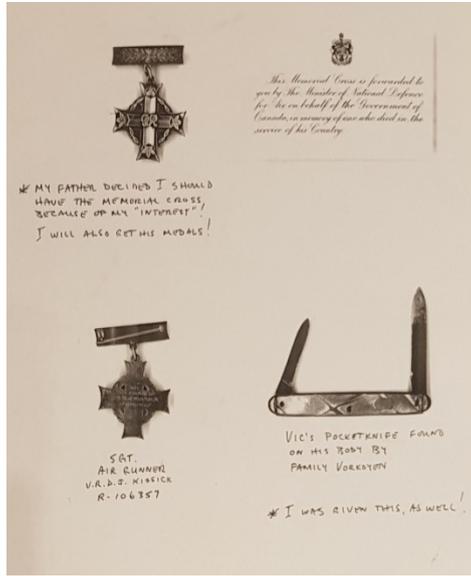
It was a very special and emotional moment for Murray to find things on the spot where his 'Uncle Vic' had died.



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



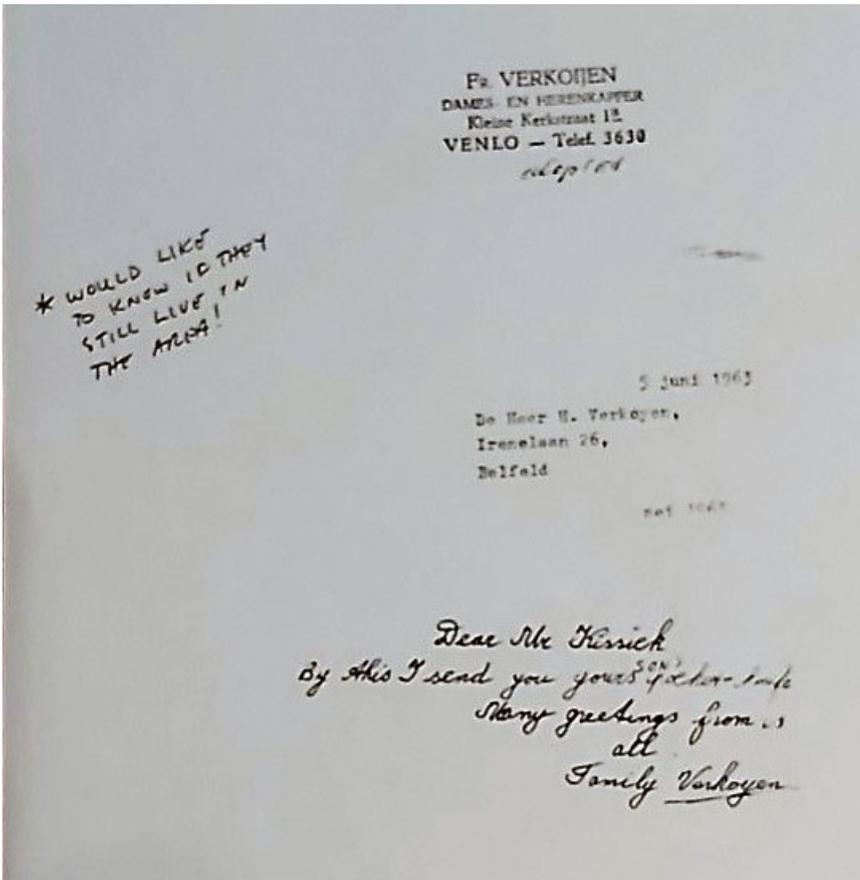
The first tangible evidence of the Lancaster



Memories of Victor



Murray finds some parts himself. Emotional moment



Letter with the sent pocketknife



Victor Robert David Joseph Kissick

19.04.1920 – 12.03.1943



Dutch Airwar Studygroup 1939-1945

Loss Chart on: T2112

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Day or Night of operation 12/13 Mar 43 | | | | Operation - | | | | Target Essen | | |
| Factory AVRO | Aircraft Lancaster | Mk III | Serial/Wnr. ED449 | Call Sign VN-T | Unit 50 Sqdn | Air Force RAF | TO/t 1940 | Airfield Skellingthorpe | | |
| Time 2125 | Cause of the Crash Shot down by NF Oblt. M. Meurer of 3./NJG 1 | | | Crash Location Crashed eastbank of the river Maas near Well. | | | | Damage | Province Limburg | |
| Source Chorley W.R. 'Bomber Command Losses 1943' | | | | Mag / Page 74 | | Additional sources | | | | |

| Function | Mil Rank | Ini | Name | Hon | Mil reg | Air Force | Cemetery | Grave | Remark |
|-------------------|----------|--------|----------|-----|----------|-----------|-----------|--------|------------------------|
| Pilot | Sgt. | F. | Ward | | R/105321 | RCAF | Jonkerbos | 24 C 2 | Initially buried Venlo |
| Flight Engineer | Sgt. | R. | Wilson | | 1104498 | RAF | Jonkerbos | 24 C 6 | Initially buried Venlo |
| Navigator | Sgt. | F. | Stephens | | 1318904 | RAF | Jonkerbos | 24 C 1 | Initially buried Venlo |
| Bomb Aimer | Sgt. | R. | Heslop | | 1501112 | RAF | Jonkerbos | 24 C 4 | Initially buried Venlo |
| Wireless Operator | F/Sgt. | A. | Allen | | 523635 | RAF | Jonkerbos | 24 C 7 | Initially buried Venlo |
| Air Gunner | F/Sgt. | V.R.D. | Kissick | | R/106357 | RCAF | Jonkerbos | 24 C 3 | Initially buried Venlo |
| Air Gunner | Sgt. | R.J. | Jenkins | | 1314184 | RAF | Jonkerbos | 24 C 5 | Initially buried Venlo |

Data on those who were killed from: www.CWGC.org www.Volksbund.de www.abmc.gov Design SGLO(V.1000104)
 © Dutch Airwar Studygroup 1939-1945 / Studiegroep Luchtoorlog 1939-1945 Last update February 2020

Post war reburied Jonkerbos Nijmegen

Since 2010 I have been in regular contact with the relatives of Victor Kissick. A younger brother is still alive. Now 91 years old and, unfortunately, his physical condition makes it impossible to fly to the Netherlands.

I have been in warm contact with Murray Kissick, his brother's son, for over 10 years. He was present as a family member at the unveiling of the monument for his 'Uncle Vic'.

It was a great honour to be present to accompany Murray Kissick and the relatives of the other crew members. That is what I have always been committed to: giving relatives something tangible about their dear family member and showing them the place where they lost their lives. To be able to do this for more than 25 years, they never take away. The memories of all these encounters with veterans and their relatives will stay with me forever.

Marc van Aken





Etten, March 31, 2020.

It should have been a very special commemoration in Etten, the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation.

Due to the circumstances, a short and sober ceremony was held in the morning.

Yet to show respect for the liberators in general and in particular for the five young men who gave their lives here.

Three wreaths were laid by the organizers, the time of which was not announced to prevent crowds.

How understandable and well-intentioned an influx of public would have been.

However, an appeal had been made by the organization to flag en masse, despite the situation or especially for that reason. A call that was met en masse by the residents of Etten.

The Canadian Maple Leaf was widely seen. Etten celebrated liberation and honored the liberators.



[Click on photo for video impression](#)

Lest We Forget.





First RCL005 75 years commemorative coins brought to Canadian soil.

Earlier this year, a call was launched on Facebook to have Fred Arsenault, a 100-year-old veteran from Canada to receive 100 birthday cards on March 6. Fred participated in the Italy campaign during the Second World War and was involved in the liberation of the Netherlands.



By coincidence, this message also appeared on my timeline because one of my Canadian relations had shared this message. During this period, I just would stay in Ontario also for work. For this reason, as a regular visitor to Canada and as a member of The Netherlands-Canada Chamber of Commerce (NCCC), I decided to offer Fred a birthday card on this happy day during my visit.



A few weeks prior to my visit, we as Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005, had the introduction of our commemoration - "coin". After the introduction of this coin, the idea grew to hand it over to Fred in combination with a birthday card.

After thinking deeply about this idea for several weeks I finally "put on the bad shoes" and asked permission to hand over the first coin to Fred. After all, he is a person who certainly deserved it.

After explaining my plan, I was sent on a special mission to Canada by our RCL005-President for the above reason.

In the weeks leading up to my trip, I had sent several personal messages to Fred's son and also the author of the message on Facebook. However, responses were not forthcoming. After some research, it later turned out that the address stated in the Facebook post was not Fred's real address, but that of his son Fred. Another challenge, because you can't just walk into the Nursing Home with a birthday card, I thought.

And then the time has come: my arrival in Canada. I can no longer count on 2 hands how many times I set foot on Canadian soil. But this time is different than usual and actually very special. But how do you continue? For the time being, the plan to hand over the coin and the birthday card to Fred did not go according to plan.





The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



I therefore asked my business contacts for help on arrival in Canada. After my contact with the Consul-General in Toronto: Anne Le Guellec showed that she already had an appointment with him to thank him and congratulate him the day before his birthday. If not by chance! Not only did she send me his address but she even invited me to offer the coin with me, and that; together with the Dutch defense attaché Luitenant-Colonel Ton Linssen. In response, the embassy staff cordially reported me to the family, after which everything went according to plan.

And then it is Thursday March 5. I went to the consulate with polished shoes and ironed shirt. After coffee we got in the car to the "Sunnybrook Veterans Center".

With the coin in my pocket and the huge birthday card, we were welcomed in the recreation room. I have greeted our Comrades from the Legion in Ontario and many military representatives with them.

We were led in a separate room per group to congratulate the birthday man. After the Consul General, and the Defense Attaché, it's my turn. First I gave him congratulations on behalf of the Legion after which I handed over our card. Then of course: the commemoration coin.

This did something to him, he was very surprised. I had to take him out of the box because he wanted to hold it in his hand and I can tell you that this was a very special and emotional moment for me. Fred thanked me several times; I think this was a special, valuable and proud moment for him and therefore for us as Royal Canadian Legion (especially for Branch 005).



From the left: Don Paauwe, Anne Le Guellec, Ton Linssen



After the various photo moments I was taken apart by his son Ron. He told me that he and his wife would like to visit the Netherlands. I have indicated that we, as Legion, are ready to help him wherever we can. He also told me that after everything that happened, his father never returned to the Netherlands. He wants to take on that task. Attendees were then informed how many cards had been received. There were more than 90 thousand in total!



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



It was also indicated that these were very many from the Netherlands. This made me very proud. It is days like these that make membership of our association so special.

I was deeply honoured to have been sent on this mission and would like to inform you that the mission has been successfully accomplished!

Dan Pauwe

