



THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 005
THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS



NEWSLETTER RCL Branch 005 Nr. 2020-05/06

In this edition:

A publication with information of various kinds.

A message from the President.

Because of the COVID-19 measures, there were a few ceremonies, in a small setting.

Nethertheless memorable moments that we want to capture and share with you.

Upcoming:

All events are postponed due to COVID-19 regulations

Check regularly the agenda on our website

and our Facebook account for further developments.

Check our [agenda](#) and for the latest news: [Facebook](#).

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

The background story this time, is a contribution of comrade Philip Van Leeuwen.

Read his intriguing story.

His interest was piqued by a certain incident.

Philip tells about his search for the background to this.

Read about:

Reginald Alastair Shepherd

KIA, April 05, 1945.

One of the many who did not return home.





The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



Message from the President.

With the relaxation of the COVID-19 Corona regulations that are now taking place, we can again look forward to activities such as commemorations, board meetings and social events.

We follow the advice and regulations of RIVM and the regulations of RCL Zone Europe and Dominion Command.

It will probably be adapted meetings. This means that we also adhere to the invitation and guidelines set by the organizers of the event. Ultimately it is about your and our health and safety.

I would also like to mention that Gerard Hendriks has resigned his position on the Board of our Branch 005 and on 3 June and has left RCL Branch 005.

We thank Gerard for all the work he has done for The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 and wish him all the best for the future.

Martin Reelick

President

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005

"the Liberation of the Netherlands"



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



Groesbeek, May 4, 2020.

Not a big ceremony due to the directive restrictions, but a beautiful initiative. Tulips were placed at all 2619 graves. The tulips were a gift from the Dutch Liberation Canada Society 2020 founded by (former) Dutch people in Canada.

Volunteers from the Faces-to-Graves Foundation, along with a team from the Canadian Embassy, were involved in this.



© Paul ten Broeke Fotografie



© Paul ten Broeke Fotografie



© Paul ten Broeke Fotografie

Steenderen, May 4, 2020.



© Paul ten Broeke Fotografie





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After 75 years it is finally clear:
the unnamed "soldier of the
1939-1945 war" is Uncle Jack.

John Gordon Kavanagh has been
identified 75 years after his
death at Rha. That is "exciting
news" for the relatives of the
Canadian soldier.

Here, too, the official naming of
the final resting place of
Lieutenant John Gordon
Kavanagh could not take place.



Steenderen waar de resten van John Gordon Kavanagh (in zelffotootje) begraven lagen. © Theo Kock



Mayor Besselink commemorates May 4th, at the cemetery in Steenderen

Click on picture for her speech. (Sorry, only in Dutch)



Local committees, which took care of the commemorations in the municipality of Bronckhorst, laid flowers and wreaths at the monuments. Naturally with due observance of the applicable regulations. Representatives of the city Council were present in Wichmond, Baak and Hengelo.

Our comrade Gerrit Bruggink, Representative of the Queens Own Rifles of Canada, laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment.



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Many intended events had to be canceled or postponed. Impossible to list them all here. We would like to make one exception because RCL Branch 005 is mentioned in a context that you would not expect:

**"the Elfstedenoldtimerrally".
(Eleven-cities old-timer rally)**

Unfortunately, we also have to let our event pass this year. It promised to be memorable. In the context of 75 years of Freedom, more army vehicles were registered. Jeeps and motorcycles that had served in the war and are still cherished by many enthusiasts. Among them a group of enthusiasts from the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005, "the Liberation of the Netherlands". They would drive the tour in memory of Donald Mayford FIFE, who was killed during the liberation of the Netherlands. In this way he would get a well-deserved tribute in this, special, year.



D.M. Fife

Don Fife was killed in the vicinity of Holten. During a visit by the army command, which he accompanied, he hit a land mine with his motorcycle.

He has been buried at the Canadian War Cemetery in Holten. (I.A.6.)



*"Lance-Corporal Don Fife of No.2 Provost Company, Canadian Provost Corps (C.P.C.), on a motorcycle en route to Falaise - 12 August 1944"
(Photo Army Press Corps)*

In memory of sergeant Donald Mayford FIFE, son of Percy and Laura Fife Nova Scotia, Canada, killed in action on April 7, 1945, at the age of 22, during the liberation of the Netherlands.

En souvenir du sergent Donald Mayford FIFE, fils de Percy et Laura FIFE Nova Scotia, Canada, tombé le 7 Avril 1945, à l'âge de 22 ans, pendant la libération des Pays-Bas.

Ter herinnering aan sergeant Donald Mayford FIFE, zoon van Percy en Laura FIFE, Nova Scotia, Canada. Hij sneuvelde op 7 april 1945, 22 jaar oud, tijdens de bevrijding van Nederland.



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



Holten, May 4, 2020.

After months of preparation it should have been a great tribute: the commemoration of the fallen liberators at the Canadian War Cemetery in Holten. Due to the COVID-19 rules, there was only room for eight visitors. However, it did have something special, Minister of Defence Bijleveld said: "It was small, but therefore also very beautiful".

Yes, it was very different from what the organization had in mind when they started preparing in August 2019. There was room for four to five thousand visitors. With a prominent place for about fifty Canadian veterans who liberated our country at the time.



Photo: RTV Oost/Esther Rikken

There were no veterans. Neither relatives or Canadian dignitaries. "That is a great pity," said Minister Bijleveld. "It is important what the Canadians have done for us. We must dwell on that and pass on their stories."

Veterans.

Arco Hofland, Mayor of the municipality Rijssen-Holten, also misses the Canadian visitors. "I would have loved to meet those old guys who have freed us at that time", he said. "We are now investigating together with the Canadian Embassy whether we can still organize a special commemoration in 2021. A kind of '75 plus one year of Liberation. But commemoration is more than just laying wreaths, Mr. Hofland thinks. " Children have laid two white roses at all 1394 graves, as a sign of connection. In this way they also reflected on what happened".

(text and images RTV Oost)



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



Bergen op Zoom, May 4, 2020.

Silence at the cemeteries.

Here too, the expected visitors, including a thousand students from Canada, were absent.

By means of a municipal appeal, a request was made to commemorate at home and not to visit the local monuments.

Photos: Yoka van Broekhoven.



In the morning Yoka van Broekhoven took some pictures that expressed a serene calm.

No Poppies, but the natural plants brightened up the places of remembrance and reflection with their flowers. As if nature wanted to show respect and gratitude to those who sacrificed their future for ours.





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Schoonebeek, May 4, 2020.

Remembrance Day 2020.

A completely different ceremony than usual in Schoonebeek.

A very small group, with a musician for the signals. Followed by two minutes of silence.

Then the Dutch and English national anthem. Finish with the laying of flowers at each war grave.

Also, here: Lest we forget.



Credits photos and text: Rob Wethly.



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Mook, May 4, 2020.

Here too a small-scale commemoration at the Military Cemetery in Mook.

Due to regulations, this commemoration had to take place without an audience. She therefore had a sober character.



The program was as follows:

- 1) The „Last Post,, by Mr. Piet Beuming.
- 2) 2 minutes of silence.
- 3) Signal after the 2-minute silence.
- 4) Laying of wreaths by mayor Drs. Willem Gradisen on behalf of the inhabitants.
- 5) Short speech and poem by Mayor.

← [click on photo for video.](#)

Special was, that stones were placed on a number of graves. A respectful gesture, originating from the Jewish religion.



Credits for photos and video: Sjaak Jakobs.



Undoubtedly, in spite of the restrictive measures, in several places in the Netherlands small-scale commemorations have been held for all victims since the outbreak of the Second World War.

We know that with this, minimal, selection from a number of ceremonies, we have unwittingly ignored many others. Not because we think the aforementioned are more important, but because we simply have to limit ourselves in this summary.

Branch 005 of the Royal Canadian Legion "The Liberation of the Netherlands" had to change its agenda considerably. Unfortunately, we were unable to fulfill our objectives as we would have liked.

However, the "Act of Remembrance" has not disappeared from our minds.

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*





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It was not just commemorations in May 2020. The cancelling of the Nijmegen 4-day Marches was a disappointment for many. Nice to see how people handled it in Canada. Respect for you, participants.

Click the link below and enjoy the enthusiasm of the walkers.

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1263484700229865477>



Joan-Cook. The RCL representative.

The 2020 Marches Nijmegen in the Netherlands, scheduled for July 21-24, may be cancelled, but that isn't stopping Canadian Armed Forces Veteran and [Legion representative Joan Cook](#) from continuing to train for next year from home where physical distancing is the new norm.

We asked Joan how she is maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle during the pandemic. Although many will not practice the same exercise regime as Joan, her mind-set and hard work during these challenging times could inspire us to maintain or improve our own physical and mental health.

Training for the Nijmegen Marches.

When it comes to training for next year's Marches Nijmegen, Joan says, "I have increased my daily fitness regime of circuit training and walking several times a week to training hard six days a week. I follow the military's training schedule and we march 3 times a week with a 20-pound backpack! I also follow online personal fitness training on other days."

Since Joan kept up with her training, she was also able to participate in a Canadian Forces Virtual Commemorative March this May in honour of the 75th anniversary of VE Day and the Liberation of the Netherlands. Participants marched 40 kilometres over two days on a route of their choice. Signing up to participate in a virtual fitness challenge or program could be a great motivator to keep up with an active lifestyle for you and your family.



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The Hague, May 25, 2020.

A small-scale ceremony of a completely different order took place at the Westduin cemetery in The Hague, the Netherlands.

A small group from the Canadian Embassy in the Netherlands, including the ambassador, H.E. Lisa Helfand paid tribute to Captain Jennifer Casey. Who died in the recent crash of a fighter plane belonging to the Snowbirds, the demonstration team of the Royal Canadian Air Force.



Jennifer Casey. R.I.P.

They also commemorated the deaths of six members of the Canadian Armed Forces who died in the helicopter crash off the coast of Greece. The helicopter, stationed on the frigate „HMCS Fredericton”, was on a retreat flight. The frigate participated in a NATO exercise, code-named “Operation Reassurance”.

Participants in the commemoration: Members of the Canadian Embassy in the Netherlands, Royal Canadian Forces, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Border Services Agency and Global Affairs Canada. President Martin Reelick was present on behalf of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 "the Liberation of the Netherlands".



From top left to bottom right:

Abbigail Cowbrough, Matthew Pyke, Matthew Cousins,
Maxime Miron-Morin, Kevin Hagen, Brenden Ian MacDonald.

(photo: Canadian Armed Forces)

They all, also served for Freedom and Peace. R.I.P.

Lest we forget.



Westduin, 25-05-2020.



The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005 the Liberation of the Netherlands



Normandy, June 6, 2020.

The Dutch Defence Attaché in France, Colonel Sander Luijten has laid a wreath in Arromanches on behalf of the Garde Regiment Fusiliers Princess Irene and the Association of Former Combatants of the Royal Dutch Brigade Princess Irene (VOSKNBPI).

The Dutch public broadcasters unfortunately did not pay many attention to D-Day 75+1. Freedom is apparently so "normal" that the price paid for it in human life at that time, is forgotten.



(personal statement Herman Sligman).





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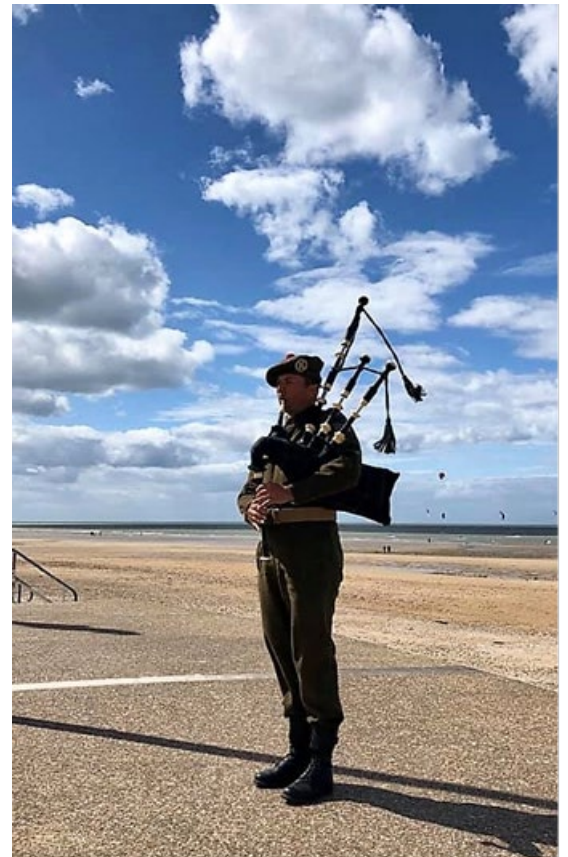


As a result of the corona pandemic, the ceremonies for the 76th anniversary of the Allied landing in Normandy, on June 6, 1944, took place on Saturday in a formal atmosphere, without veterans. The memorial service was in sharp contrast to last year's, when a large crowd turned up.

In Vierville-sur-Mer, Omaha Beach, on one of the main landing sites, only a hundred or so attended the ceremony. Among them the ambassadors of the eight Allied countries (Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, Poland, Belgium, Norway, the Netherlands and the United States) and Germany, for the US National Guard



©AFP. Omaha Beach



Juno Beach 1



Juno Beach 2



Juno Beach 3

Photo credits Juno Beach:
Gauthier Hebbelynck