



THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 005
THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS



NEWSLETTER RCL Branch 005 Nr. 2020-08

In this edition:

Board column (2nd Vice-President).

Farewell meeting Canadian Defence Attaché Col.
Tim Young.

Column comrade Philip van Leeuwen

Editorial

Jubilee Mondani (30 years)

Upcoming activities: (subject to COVID-19 measures)

Sept. 05: RCL Zone meeting (Geilenkirchen-Germany)

Sept. 13: Adegem commemoration (Zone) **(limited scale)**

Sept. 19: Ede Airborne Landings **(limited scale)**

Sept. 19: Driel, Engineers monument **(cancelled)**

Sept. 20: Mook, monument Ant. Barbaro **(cancelled)**

Sept. 20: Oosterbeek, Airborne Cemetery **(limited scale)**

Sept. 20: General Meeting Lochem

Sept. 25: Driel/Heteren, Hampshire Monument **(limited scale)**

Sept. 27: Posterenk **(??)**

Oct. 05: Veenendaal (Harold Wakeman) **(cancelled)**

Oct. 24: Sloedam, Bergen op Zoom, Vlissingen

Oct. 25: Bergen op Zoom, Can. War Cem. (Zone) **(ltd. scale)**

For upcoming events: check our [agenda](#) and for the latest news: [Facebook](#).

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

In this edition a little history.

Incredible efforts on the home front in Canada.

Canadian women stood their ground during WW2.



Board Column by Wim Poppenk.

Retrospection.

The general meeting at the end of February 2019 was the time when the voting for a couple of positions, at board level of RCL Branch 005 was taking place. During this upcoming period, I seriously wondered whether a board position at this rather special association would be something that appealed to me. The balance turned to the 'yes' side. It also helped that various comrades, solicited and unsolicited, had advised me to stand for election. The choice was made quickly: the position of the 2nd vice president was vacant and I wanted to fill it.



Wim Poppenk
2nd Vice-President

After being chosen, there you are at the end of this general meeting day behind the table and from then a period of 'reading in' begins. The liberation period 2019-2020 is ahead of us and local, regional, national and international efforts are being made to celebrate the coming 75th liberation anniversary in a big way.

From my position there was a particular focus in maintaining and establishing contact with organizations that had invited RCL Branch 005 to participate in an event organized by them.

On the basis of these contacts, the request could then be made with all the relevant information required for the Colour Party, members laying a wreath and other delegation members.

In a number of cases because of the repetition of moves it was almost automatic when it came to dealing with those request. The organizations concerned and RCL Branch 005 had been doing "business " with each other for years. New organizations also came forward, whereby the manner and content of the commemoration was examined to determine a position of RCL Branch 005.

We often came to an agreement with each other, and sometimes we didn't. And that is definitely a shame and not always easy. These decisions were not taken lightly and were often difficult.

Gradually making the requests got better and easier. Incidentally, obtaining information (programs and the associated times) in time to execute a request was sometimes quite exciting because adjustments were often made up to the last moment.

The official commemoration year, opened by our king and queen, started in Terneuzen on September 1, 2019. Many of us have made great memories there on board of HMCS St. John's during the Sailpast.

Commemorations followed at the end of October in Bergen op Zoom and the surrounding area on the occasion of the 75th day of the liberation.

The new year started cold and wet. Preparations for the liberation events in the rest of the country were in full swing.

For RCL Branch 005 it would be very busy, especially in April and May.

And then Corona came. One after another commemoration was unimaginably quickly cancelled. Instead of 'living up to it' came the hangover. All the work of all, in whatever way, to make these commemorations a 'memorable' were all in one time 'put on hold'. And that took quite some time to get used to.

As of the current climate, commemorations are still cancelled however some are being held behind closed doors with a very limited capacity (without an audience).

It is therefore nice to see that, despite all the restrictions, after letting go of some of the 'Corona reins' somewhat, our Branch is again being asked to participate in commemorations with due observance of the applicable regulations at that time.

And what will it look like next year? 75 + 1, I don't know, time will tell.

Wim Poppenk

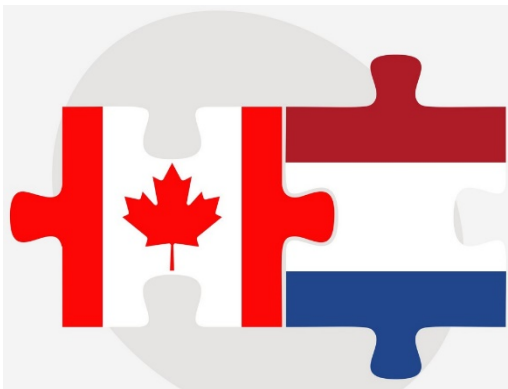
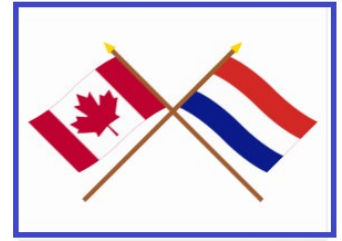
August 31, 2020.

FAREWELL TIM AND MICHELLE YOUNG

A Defense Attaché with a special antenna for RCL Branch 005.

On August 31, Canadian Defense Attaché Tim Young and his wife Michelle said goodbye in RCL Branch 005's clubhouse, Restaurant Mondani. Of course, with due observance of the COVID-19 rules, it was a pleasant evening where many beautiful words and advices were spoken and presents were handed over. All this combined with a nice drink and a delicious snack. Tim and Michelle will leave for Canada, where they will start a new episode in their lives after the necessary 14-day of COVID-quarantine. We wish them good luck and health.





In memory of Flying Officer: THOMAS ALFRED HERRON.

(Column by comrade Philip van Leeuwen)

Born: August 7, 1923 – KIA June 6, 1943.

Flying Officer J/20126, 272 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force.

Son of Thomas Edward and Edith Beatrice Herron of Calgary, Canada.

Noticing the portrait photo of a Canadian WW II pilot may well have been the spark that started my passion for 'Remembrance'. I learned that the young, good-looking man in the photo turned out to be the youngest brother of my Aunt Faye. His photo had been given an honorary spot on the mantelpiece of the family home in downtown Calgary. At the time, I was only five or six years old, but I could tell that Thomas Herron was spoken of with deep love, respect and sadness. With his death, the parents Thomas Edward senior, Edith Beatrice Herron and his three sisters, had paid a terribly high price during WW II.



From 1942 and on, Thomas Herron flew missions from RAF airbases Luqa and Ta'Qali in the defense of the extremely strategically important island of Malta.

On June 6th 1943, he was lost with his Bristol Beaufighter

(EL472) during an operational patrol off the island of Filfla. His body was never found. The body of his navigator Sgt. Reginald Hawksley was recovered and buried.

The fighting for Malta was crucial for the success of the German campaign in North Africa.

Malta was therefore for years continuously attacked by the Germans. As a token for the incredible courage and dedication of the people of Malta during the years 1940-1942, the entire population (by way of exception) was honoured and [decorated with The George Cross](#).



George-Cross ceremony



PO. T. A. (Sparky) HERRON
Missing, believed killed.

'Sparky' Herron Believed Killed

(By Herald Correspondent)

ROYALTIES, June 18 Mr. and Mrs. T. F. Herron of Hartell have received a wire saying that their son, PO. Thomas Alfred (Sparky) Herron, is missing and believed killed on June 6.

He left England April 8 and was last heard from by his family on May 20, when he wrote from Egypt.

PO. Herron was 19 years of age and was born in Castor. He received his secondary education at South Turner Valley high school.

He received his manning depot and I.T.S. training in Edmonton, guard duty in Claresholm, elementary flying in High River, service training at Macleod, and received his wings at Macleod on July 2, 1942.

Sparky's parents and sisters have always had a great desire to once visit the area where their family member passed away. They unfortunately were never able to make the trip. On behalf of the Herron family who I know so well, I was able to pay respect to Thomas Herron and show that he has never been forgotten.



My cousins and I often speak of him and, certainly during the Remembrance Day period, his name is brought forward and honoured. Thomas Herron's name is inscribed on the Malta Memorial Panel 10, Column 1.



Malta Memorial

His name is also inscribed on the Memorial in the centre of the city of his hometown Calgary.

A copy of the portrait photo of Thomas Herron has found an honorary place in my own home in the Netherlands.

My cousin Bob Van Wegen, who is a nephew of Thomas Herron, once wrote me the following:

"Thomas Alfred Herron was born in 1924 a long way away from the place where he would lose his life in the service of his country. The foothills of southern Alberta, in western Canada, are not much like Malta. Cold and snowy in the winter, and nowhere near the sea. But the foothills are high up next to the mountains, a place that might inspire someone like young Sparky Herron to be a pilot."

Thomas Alfred was so full of fun and life that he was called Sparky from an early age, and the nickname stuck with him. Sparky is what his family called him, when they spoke of him with smiles on their faces, to younger family members who would never meet him in real life. Sparky was one of four children, and he had three sisters. His father and mother worked in the Alberta oilfields.

ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

(ATTESTATION PAPER) **SPECIAL RESERVE**

(Pages one and two, only, are to be completed in Applicant's own Handwriting)

1. Surname Herron Full Christian Names Thomas Alfred
2. Present Address Hartell, Alta., Telephone None
3. Permanent Address Hartell, Alta.,
4. Place of Birth Castor, Alta., Citizenship Canadian
5. Date of Birth Aug. 7, 1923 Married, Single, Widower, Separated, Divorced Single
6. Particulars of Children

Name	Date of birth	Name	Date of birth
None			

7. Occupation Student
8. Religion United Church
State denomination
9. Languages English
State proficiency
10. Next of Kin (Full Name) Thomas Edward Herron Relationship Father
" Address Hartell, Alta.,
11. Father (Full Name) Thomas Edward Herron Birthplace Pincher Creek, Alta.,
" Address Hartell, Alta., Citizenship Canadian
" Occupation Oil Field Worker
12. Mother (Full Maiden Name) Edith Beatrice Webb Birthplace Grafton, Ont.,
" Address Hartell, Alta., Citizenship Canadian

His grandparents had been pioneers, among the very first white people to settle in western Canada.

Sparky's father, who was also named Thomas, joined the Canadian forces in the first World War, but thankfully did not see action before the war ended. It would have been merciful to the Herron family if war had not come again.

But when it did, young Sparky signed up as soon as he was old enough.

Alberta was the centre of the British Commonwealth Air Training Program. Sparky's home skies were filled with planes and the towns were filled with pilots in training from all over the world. So, of course Sparky joined the air force.

His parents, his sisters, and his friends were proud of him and his progress.

They read his letters with great interest as he progressed from airfields in Alberta to the east coast, and then to more exotic places like the Mediterranean, becoming a Flying Officer and combat pilot.

But then the letters from Sparky stopped, and other letters from his superiors began arriving.



Bristol Beaufighter, 272 Sqn. at Ta'Qali on Malta.

Thomas Alfred Herron was only nineteen when he was killed in action near Malta on June 6, 1943. But Sparky lives on through the passed down memories of family and friends who love him, are proud of him, and most of all wish they could have met him."

Philip Van Leeuwen



Editorial.

Reading Philip van Leeuwen's column about Sparky Herron, my curiosity was aroused by the comment about the sky in Alberta, filled with planes. Because of this I came across information about the British Commonwealth Air Training Program. So I wanted to know more about it because I have been interested in the military branch of flying all my life. I had already indicated that at the time during my tour of duty. So it was "logical" that I was assigned to the infantry. 😊



Because the activities of RCL Branch 005 are almost zero in the month of August, this edition seemed THE opportunity for some background information.

Throughout the year we pay a lot of attention to the Canadian soldiers who fought in Western Europe, especially in the Netherlands; to those who never returned and found their final resting place here and to those who are remembered as "missing in action".

However, it is understandable that gigantic performances were also achieved at home in Canada. The figures of the industrial performance during the war speak for themselves. In a short time everything was subordinated to the war industry.

A few brief facts: monthly 315 planes, 2.3 million shells, 16 thousand rifles and 98 million rounds were produced. A ship was launched every four days. The automotive industry had changed over and delivered on a weekly basis: 3,800 trucks and 250 armored vehicles.

Back to the British Commonwealth Air Training Program.

"One of the most important elements, perhaps THE decisive factor of the war". This is what Winston Churchill called the decision to train flight crews on a large scale in Canada.

The basic idea was to train 40,000 men for a position in the air force.

The estimated needs were: 58 aviation schools, 3,500 planes and 6,500 engines. Estimated cost \$ 600 million. It had to be operational at the end of April 1942.

At a certain moment there was a threat of a hitch when London reported that it would not be able to deliver the 1,500 [Ansons](#) promised.

In Canada it was decided to build them their selves.

On June 1, 1943, 1,850 Canadian built Ansons were airworthy.



Avro-Anson RCAF

In 1943 they reached the top of the training schedule with 97 flight schools, 184 secondary institutes and approximately 100,000 men and women as staff personnel.

Ultimately, the costs were \$ 2,231 million (of which Canada accounted for \$ 1,589 million), four times the amount initially budgeted.

131,553 air force personnel were supplied for this. 42,110 went to the RAF, including Dutchmen. About 16,600 trained people were from Australia and New Zealand, 72,835 were Canadian.

In almost all columns we write: "man / men". Nowadays we are regularly being reminded that this is too specific "male oriented". In many cases it could be, and in modern times it is, more often a woman. In the future I will take this into account when writing. Promised. (The fanatics among us even prefer to use the general term "human being").

Canadian women in WW2.

Without discounting the women, in all segments of the industry, at the peak of wartime employment in 1943-44, 439,000 women worked in the service sector, 373,000 in manufacturing and 4,000 in construction, I would like to focus here on the Canadian women in the armed forces. The Comrades in Arms.

Almost from the beginning of the war, Canada began recruiting women for enlistment. This had already been put into practice in Great Britain. Many felt that there was no need for women in uniform because there were plenty of male volunteers. However, this was completely different for injured care and nursing.

As early as World War I, more than 3,700 Canadian nurses had served in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (RCAMC). About 2,500 of them served in England, France and the eastern Mediterranean. At the end of the war, forty-five nurses had lost their lives. On the one hand by enemy attacks (bombing of a hospital and the sinking of a hospital ship) on the other hand by diseases. The Nursing Sisters' Memorial in the Ottawa Parliament Buildings pays tribute to their service, sacrifice and heroism.



Nursing Sisters' Memorial



In June 1940 the first contingent, 129 women, left for England. Unofficially, clubs were formed in Canada. Women were trained in first aid, driving, minor car repairs, etc. One group stood out, partly because of the abbreviation used: CATS, the Canadian Auxiliary Territorial Service. In a short time about three thousand women registered.

On August 31, 1941, the Canadian Womens' Army Corps (CWAC) was officially formed. Women were now able, for the first time in history, to serve Canada in uniform. More than 50,000 women served in the armed forces during the Second World War.

The Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWACS) had 21,600 members.

The Women's Division, Royal Canadian Air Force (WDs) had 17,400 members.

The Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (Wrens) had 7,100 members.

Women in the services filled many positions, including mechanics, parachute riggers, wireless operators, clerks, and photographers.

The Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps.

A special group of women.

4,480 [Nursing Sisters](#) (as Canadian military nurses were known) served in the war - 3,656 in the Canadian Women's Army Corps, 481 in the Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force and 343 in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service. Many of these women found themselves within range of enemy guns and some lost their lives.

Nursing Sister Margaret Brooke was awarded the Order of the British Empire for her heroic efforts to save her fellow Nursing Sister Agnes Wilkie after the [S.S. Caribou](#), the ferry they were taking to Newfoundland, was torpedoed in the Cabot Strait in 1942.

The „nursing sisters,, worked in field hospitals, [Casualty Clearing Stations](#), (CCS) in short: wherever help and care was needed for wounded soldiers. Many of the members of the RCAMC came on land with the troops in Normandy.



Nursing sisters of No. 10 Canadian General Hospital, Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (R.C.A.M.C.), having a cup of tea upon arriving at Arromanches, France, 23 July 1944. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA / PA-032851



Nursing sisters of No. 10 Canadian General Hospital RCAMC disembark in Arromanches 23.07.1944

← First action: having a nice cup of tea

Summarizing:

- The home front in Canada delivered during World War II incredible efforts.
- The Canadian women stood their ground.

Herman Sligman

Sources:

Library and Archives Canada

Book: Canadezen in actie (Bollen & Vroemen) NL

Wikipedia

Veterans Affairs Canada



Members of the first contingent of C.W.A.C. personnel to enter Germany. 12 June 1945 / Hamm, Germany. Photo: Library and Archives Canada/PA 128229



JUBILEE MONDANI

AUGUST 27, 2020

RESTAURANT MONDANI

30 YEARS

AND COUNTING



August 27, 1990, Berry and Yvonne Swarthoff started their adventure with the Canadian Restaurant MONDANI in Lochem.

Already 30 years ago! For a large part of that period, after 2004, the restaurant is also the host/clubhouse of Branch 005 "The Liberation of the Netherlands", of the Royal Canadian Legion.

We congratulate Berry and Yvonne and their crew and thank them for the hospitality we have received over the years.

A nice video about the history of Mondani has been recorded on Mondani's Facebook, which we do not want to keep from you.

<https://www.facebook.com/mondanilochem/videos/396280774692244/>