



**Royal Canadian Legion  
Liberation of the Netherlands  
Branch 005**



**MARCH 2023, Edition 2023-03**

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### **CONTINUED STORY OF SPITSBERGEN**

**How things went on there, anything but calm**

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Click start!**





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**The Board page.**

One of our objectives is to promote a good common bond and relationship among the members of RCL Branch 005.



The General Members Meeting on April 16, 2023 is one of the opportunities to meet and strengthen our mutual bond.

The celebration of Canada Day on July 2, 2023 is also a good option. On this day we will also celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of RCL Branch 005. There were many attendees on Canada Day 2022, so we hope, also due to the anniversary, we can welcome a large number of members again on July 2, 2023.

Another opportunity to meet is on June 21, 2023 in Holten. On that day an important ceremony will be held in the context of the Indigenous Legacy Project.

But of course you are always welcome at the commemorations in the Netherlands where we participate with the Colour Party and/or a delegation.

Also an important Branch goal is education. This is defined as, upon request, to provide information about the period 1940-45. From contacts with municipalities, government and other institutions (schools), it has become evident that more and more attention is being paid to education concerning freedom, the liberation by the Allied Forces, and the history of the Netherlands during WW2.

We have recently seen an increase in requests for information regarding Canadian soldiers buried in the Netherlands. We are also happy to welcome visitors from Canada in our Club House in Lochem, where Yvonne and Berry Swarthoff naturally play an important role.

Unfortunately, the number of registrations for our General Members Meeting is still limited. I hope this message will lead to more registrations. You are welcome on April 16 at 13:00 in Lochem.

**mr. Jan C.K. van Loo,**



Secretaris en Legal Officer  
[legal@rcl005.org](mailto:legal@rcl005.org)



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**FROM THE EDITOR.**

Dear readers,  
members of the Royal Canadian Legion or otherwise.

There is always a possibility to get posted your message, your opinion, your little displeasure (if worded a bit neatly) in our Newsletter

Do you have news in the context of the RCL or our Branch:  
please let us know!

Do you think there is an item that has been underexposed so far, but worth mentioning:  
please let us know!

Would you like to draw attention to inaccuracies:  
please let us know!

Do you want to discuss something:  
please let us know!

We will gladly include your article in our Newsletter.  
Please note: it must remain tidy and personal "attacks" will not be tolerated.

The editors have the right to make minor changes or to refuse publication.  
Of course you will receive a message about that.



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**MY OPINION.**

**(On personal title)**

**This (repeated) call will have little or no effect on the number of items submitted by the readers, inside or outside the Branch.**

**Want to prove me wrong:**

**mailto: [redactie@rcl005.org](mailto:redactie@rcl005.org)**

*Herman Sligman*

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**ETTEN, March 30, 2023.**

Commemoration of the liberation by the Canadian South Saskatchewan Regiment on March 31, 1945.

As usual in Etten, the interest was great.



Mayor van Dijk

Mayor Otwin van Dijk had an impressive speech.

He recalled how Canadian soldiers managed to chase the Germans out of the trenches 78 years ago. The price they paid was high. Many Canadian soldiers were killed and several residents also lost their lives.

Children's Mayor Quinn read a poignant poem about "freedom".

The Canadian Embassy was represented by Sgt. Nicole Mitchell.

Lieutenant-General Mart de Kruif (ret.) was also among those present.

RCL Branch 005 was present with the Colour Party and a delegation.



Lt-General de Kruif (ret.)







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**Photos by courtesy of Roel Kleinpenning.**





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**From the „pipeline“.**

**A ray of sunshine helped to connect a Dutch family  
and a family in New Brunswick-Canada.**

Dutch man buys WWII-era vehicle and tracks down family of Canadian soldier who drove it.

A ray of sunshine on the steering wheel of an old jeep has helped to connect two families - complete strangers, who live nearly 3,000 miles apart.

Nick Obdam, who lives in the Netherlands, probably never expected it, when he decided to buy a World War II jeep.



*"The previous owner was an old man who had parked it in a barn for 30 years and he hadn't driven it a lot," Obdam said in an interview.*

Obdam got the vehicle running again. During a test drive on a sunny day, he made a discovery.

*"I saw some scratches when the sun was shining on the steering wheel, and I saw that there was a name legible in the steering wheel.*

*I read: Buck Cyr, Campbellton, N.B. - New Brunswick."*



That discovery was the beginning of a story that spanned nearly 80 years.

Claude Joseph (Buck) Cyr was born August 9, 1923 in Campbellton, N.B. In the summer of 1943, just finished high school, he enlisted in the army. He was posted to the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals, (RCCS).



Buck Cyr, front row, second from left

In the spring of 1944, he had already disembarked in England, where he had to deal with, what he thought, an extended basic army training'.

But Buck Cyr was being prepared for a more crucial role during the Allied invasion of France, namely, "keeping the lines of communication open on the battlefield."

Already on D-Day + 1, June 7, 1944, he went ashore in Normandy.



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He would take part in many important battles, including the capture of Caen in France, the closure of the so-called **"Falaise Pocket"**.

Buck Cyr and his jeep took part in the entire advance to the Netherlands, up to and including, the capture of Arnhem in the spring of 1945.

His daughter, Phyliss Roy of Campbellton, has precious memories of her trip, with her father, to Arnhem in 2005 for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands.



Buck Cyr in „another' jeep. (By courtesy of Phyliss Roy)

During the trip, her father got a chance to sit in an old jeep. When Phylis Roy suggested that the jeep might be his, his response was a bit puzzling.

*"All he said was, 'No, mine had my name on it,'" Phyliss told me in an interview.*

*"But I didn't ask anymore because I thought the Canadian Army put his name on it."*

He made a similar comment about several other jeeps he saw on that 2005 trip.

*"We didn't know, and he didn't tell, he carved his name into the wheel," said Phyliss Roy.*

Nick Obdam said he took the trouble to track down the family because he wanted them to know that the jeep was still in the Netherlands and was driving.

He suspected that it would be rather emotional news.

He also was eager to get information about Cyr's wartime service.

That would make it possible to restore the vehicle as it looked in 1944.



Buck Cyr, Phyliss Roy and granddaughter Tina McCormack, 2005 in NL  
(By courtesy of Phyliss Roy)

Finding Cyr's relatives was not easy, as Obdam told. But by chance he saw a post on Facebook; it was an article about Cyr's time playing hockey with the Campbellton Tigers.





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*"Out of the blue, we posted a picture of the steering wheel with Buck's name, and wrote: we are really sorry to bother you, but we live in the Netherlands and we think we have your dad's army jeep".*

Phyliss Roy had responded to that message and identified herself as Cyr's daughter.

*She said: "it didn't even seem real at first".  
"I had quite a lot of emotions," she said. That was a week before Christmas.  
"I was shocked. I was happy. I was sad - sad my dad wasn't here to see it because he would have been so happy."*

Phyliss was amazed that someone had owned it for 30 years and *"didn't see it, and how the sunlight made it happen."*

Obdam continues: *"We are now completely transforming the jeep back into a Canadian jeep of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals.*



Nick Obdam and family (By courtesy of Nick Obdam)

*"The original radio back in, and all the Canadian options he had during the war."  
"The previous owner had made it into an American Airborne jeep and so the vehicle had completely wrong markings."*

Obdam wanted it to be a memento of Cyr's service.

*"It should be a little of a statement for all the soldiers who helped to liberate the Netherlands, many years ago," he said.*

*"I think it's good to keep history alive and especially in this time. The war is back again, almost, or completely, at the border of Europe."*

Phyliss Roy:

*"I know that when we were in the Netherlands in 2005, when my father was walking down the street, young children came up to shake his hand. They gave him flowers. He was hugged by the older generation. He was treated like a hero. "It was great to see. We didn't see that in Canada, but we did in the Netherlands". Appreciation that my father experienced firsthand before he died". Real appreciation for what the Canadians did."*

It is likely that the bond between Nick Obdam's family and Phyliss Roy's family will be strengthened, she said.

*"My dad's great-grandson is going on a school trip next year, following the same route he took. Nick has contacted me to let him know and they hope to meet him and have him drive the jeep.*

*"Myself and my daughter and my brother also hope to make the crossing with our family".*

She is just sad that her father is no longer alive to experience it.





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Cyr passed away in 2018 at the age of 95.

*"He would have been in the Netherlands in an instant," she said.*

*"He would have been so excited because in 2005, deep down, I think, he was looking for his jeep."*

Obdam said the jeep is getting a lot of attention in the Netherlands. Schools and senior homes ask he to come by with the vehicle.

He is very happy that he can now share also the history of the vehicle.

*"When you park a vehicle like that, and it doesn't matter where you put it, it attracts people," he said.*

*Herman Sligman*



**The jeep in all its glory**

Source: CBC News,  
Steven Webb,  
February 12, 2023.

Published with the  
permission of:  
Mrs. Phyliss Scott

Edited by:  
Herman Sligman

**From the beaches of Normandy to the Netherlands.  
This is why this jeep holds a special place for  
a family in Campbellton, N.B. – Canada.**





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**Miscellaneous.**

Submitted by comrade Gerrit Bruggink

A walk on Sunday afternoon yielded some surprising information.



 <p>English</p> <p><b>Canada's Three of Liberty</b></p> <p>This Canadian Tree of Liberty is a homage to the Canadian army units who liberated Hummelo, Hoog-Keppel, Laag-Keppel and its neighbouring area from the occupying army on 2 April 1945.</p>	<p>A field hospital was set up in the castle located in the grounds of the 'Enghuizen' country estate, the birthplace of the local Keppelse Golf Club.</p> <p>Army units of The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada, Le Régiment de Maisonneuve and the Calgary Highlanders were stationed here. Three Canadian soldiers lost their lives for our freedom,</p>	<p>viz. Corporal Frank Balsis, Lance-Sergeant Richard Gibbons and Sergeant Edward Pope.</p> <p>This Tree of Liberty, a Canadian red maple (Acer rubrum 'Red Sunset') was planted here on 28 April 2020 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Hummelo, Hoog-Keppel, Laag-Keppel and its neighbouring area.</p>
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**Still in the picture? The backstory of edition 2023-01?**

**'No. 1 Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (1 PRU)  
The forgotten heroes of WW II**

**"We were losing people at a worse rate than Bomber Command"**

On March 22, 1940, a special photo reconnaissance Spitfire of the Royal Air Force, with pilot Flying Officer Mervyn Wheatley, was shot down above Herwen, a village in north-east of Groesbeek, near the German border.

Mervyn Wheatley was the first British RAF pilot killed over Dutch territory, even before the Netherlands were involved in World War II.

Several aspects make his story special.

- Mervyn Wheatley was the first photo recon pilot to die in a dogfight.
- He was the first British victim above Dutch territory.
- His Spitfire, with only cameras, was the very first Spitfire to be lost.



**Claude Mervyn Wheatley**  
© Sander Woonings

The plane crashed near Herwen, but the body of F/O Wheatly ends up at Düffelward, Germany.

Claude Mervyn Wheatley was buried with full German military honours.





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**Upcoming.**

**The best way to stay informed:  
[see our agenda.](#)**



**To end with a smile:**

