



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



**NOVEMBER 2022, Edition 2022-11**

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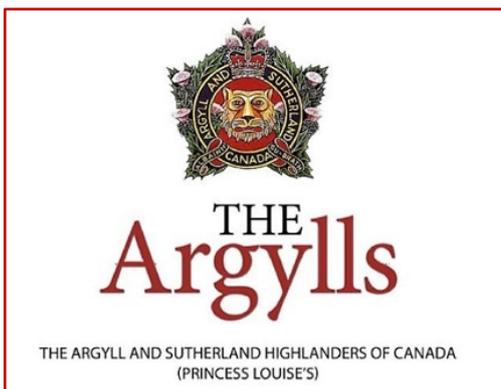
**THE STORY**

**Donald Douglas MacKeracher**

**September 23, 1922  
January 30, 1945**

**Canadian War Cemetery Groesbeek  
XVI.A.16**

The story of a young soldier from Saskatchewan and a young Dutch woman



Read more?  
Click start!





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**Afterburner No. 1.**

On June 14, 2022, the following message came in:

Enclosed is an invitation to the Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe) Change of Command Ceremony.

Lt-Col. Steel, OMM, CD transfers command to Lt-Col. A. Pleasance, CD.

The Ceremony will take place on Friday, July 15, 2022 in the Selfkant Barracks in Geilenkirchen-Niederheid (Germany).



After consultation in the board, it was decided that our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Gerrit Bruggink, would attend the ceremony. Below his report and some photos.

After a 3 hour drive I arrived at the barracks in Geilenkirchen.

Some soldiers took care of the reception of the guests and I was neatly escorted to the place allotted to me.



The start of the ceremony was announced with a word of welcome.

It all was quite special for me. In the first place because the transfer of command of the CFSU Europe took place between two women.

Secondly, that it was accompanied by ceremonial acts. The commands, the swords, the signing, and so on.





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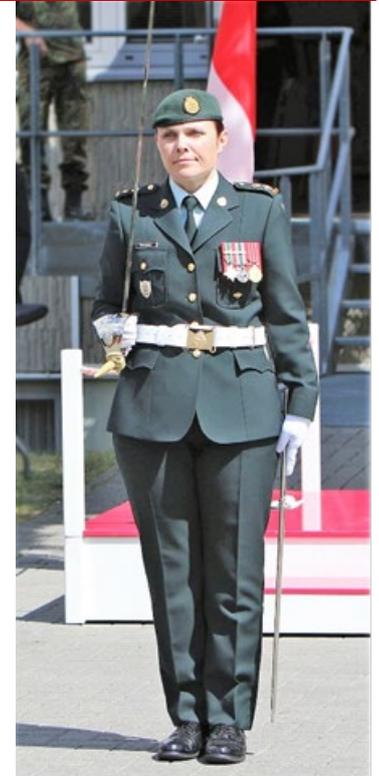


The ,Staal 'family

Both, Lt-Col. Staal and Lt-Col Pleasance briefly told about their family and their careers. I must say that these were emotional moments for many of those present.

After the official part, there was an opportunity to speak with various attendees.

The mayors of the surrounding municipalities, who were also present, said that they had never experienced this in this way.



Lt-Kol. Pleasance

The Supreme Commander, Brigadier General Gervais Carpentier, gave another word of thanks and referred to the task that both had taken on: a post with quite a lot of responsibility combined with a family.



After the ceremony I was able to wish both of them good luck in their new positions.

In addition I also had some conversations with a number of other people present.

Who knows what cooperation will be established in the future.

*Gerrit Bruggink*

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President RCL Branch 005



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**Afterburner No. 2**

Harbour Days Tholen – 75+2 Years of Freedom.

Invited by the organization ,Tholen Strong'.  
Our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Gerrit Bruggink attended the opening ceremony.  
Below, in brief, are summary and some pictures.



It was an honour to be present at the opening and together with the King's Commissioner in Zeeland, Drs. J.J.M. Polman and Mrs. Marleen Sijbers, Mayor of Tholen, to open the event.

Prior to the ceremony there was a short introduction about the landings in Normandy and the advance of the Allies towards Zeeland. Supplemented with a piece of specific history from that time for Tholen.

The steady advance of the Allied troops led to the fact that on February 15, 1944 the mayors of Tholen were ordered to evacuate all inhabitants, with the exception of Tholen (town).

The reason was that Tholen would be completely flooded, which literally happened.



The liberation of Tholen and St. Philipsland was part of Operation ,Suitcase', which began on October 20, 1944. The attack towards ,Hollands Diep' with the aim of isolating the German troops on the island Walcheren.

On 30 October 1944 Allied vehicles appeared on the east side of Tholen.

Immediately a rowing boat departed from Tholen to meet them.

Three Canadian soldiers sailed back to the town, where hundreds of residents had gathered along the quay.



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After the three liberators had set foot on shore, they were taken on the shoulders to the town hall and Tholen was soon in a festive mood. The Canadian arrival was the reason to immediately open the sluices in various places to let the water run out of the flooded island.

Tholen seemed to be liberated, although the three Canadian liberators had already disappeared within 45 minutes and other Allied soldiers did not show up for the time being.



After this story, the chairman of 'Tholen Strong' William van Leeuwen spoke a word of thank. Then poems were read by children of primary schools. In short: impressive!



The whole was musically supported by the local music association.

The wreaths were laid by 'Tholen Strong', the mayor together with the King's Commissioner.

At the end of the official part I was allowed to raise the flag of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada.

The opening was completed and the festivities could begin. Finally, there was a drink for everyone, in Dutch 'Oranjebitter', no alcohol under 18 years of age, so Orange Lemonade for the youngsters.

*Gerrit Bruggink*

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of RCL Branch 005





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**Adegem (B) November 5, 2022.**

On Saturday, November 5, 2022, the fallen were commemorated at the Canadian Cemetery, who fell during the liberation of KNOCKE.

Adegem Canadian War Cemetery is a military cemetery with fallen soldiers from the Second World War, located in the Belgian village of Adegem, part of the municipality of Maldegem.

The cemetery is located in the east of the village centre, along the road from Adegem to Eeklo (N9) and is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

There are 1,155 graves, including 45 for the unidentified



**Photos: by courtesy of Mr. Willy Leopold Clauwaert. Thanks for that.**





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**Welberg. November 6, 2022.**

Source: Daily Newspaper: BN De Stem  
Mr. Harry Veenstra.

*"We owe it to them that we can live in freedom so many years later. We will never forget you."*

Words from the poem by Liam de Jong from primary school Pius X on Sunday afternoon during the commemoration at the war memorial, known as 'The Clock'.

Great interest despite the weather conditions at the monument on the Canadian Street.

Once created by an initiative of the citizens themselves. To also pay attention to the civilian casualties.

At Welberg and surroundings, more than thirty civilians and sixty Canadian soldiers were killed during the liberation of WW2.

Those present included the relatives of victims and residents of Steenberg.

The Canadian Embassy was also represented, the 'National Committee 4 and 5 May' and Jason Watt, representing the South Alberta Light Horse Regiment, attended the ceremony.

At the end of the commemoration, Mayor Ruud van den Belt and Mr. Wim van den Donk, among others, started the ringing of the bell. Many of those in attendance followed suit and at the same time a copy of the bell, the Liberty Bell, was rung in Edmonton, Canada.

Comrade Don Pauwe was there on behalf of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 005.



Pixx4Profs/Peter van Trijen





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**Groesbeek. Remembrance Day. November 11, 2022.**

Text: Herman Sligman. Foto's: Richard Hendriks.

The ceremony was organized by:  
Canadian Forces Support Unit Europe,  
Niederrhein.

RCL Branch 005 was present with a full  
line-up of the Colour Party (obeisance)  
and a delegation.

There were many attendees.  
The ceremony followed the standard  
procedure, not unfamiliar to most of  
us.

Something extra this time:  
a flypast.

The promised Spitfire unfortunately had technical problems, as an alternative a YAK-52 came over from the 'Dutch Warbird Foundation'.

Worth mentioning (and much appreciated after having stood in the cold wind for quite some time) was the presence of our Branch 005 "sutlers" Yvonne Swarthoff and Amanda Slotboom.

There were many eager consumers for the hot drinks. That the drinks were served with charm and a smile was an encore.



Colour Party together with the Guards of Honour



The photos speak for themselves.





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Act of Remembrance by the President of RCL Branch 005.



Many wreaths and catching up afterwards with a hot drink.



Video: Berg en Dal Broadcast: <https://youtu.be/N4jnDUywVO8>



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**Holten, November 11, 2022.**

Remembrance Day.

A special memorial service was held on Sunday, November 13 to mark Remembrance Day. This ceremony was freely accessible.

Favoured with beautiful autumn weather, so many visitors had taken the trouble to attend the commemoration.

Photos by courtesy of Nicole Mitchell of the Canadian Embassy. Thanks Nicole.



Photo: Archive Info centre Holten



The organization was in the hands of the Seaforth Highlanders of Holland Memorial Pipes and Drums.



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**Apeldoorn, November 13, 2022.**

Remembrance Sunday 2022.

Place of commemoration: The Man with the Two Hats.

This monument has been adopted by the Royal Schools Community.

Every year, on the Sunday closest to November 11, the commemoration of Remembrance Day takes place here. The ceremony was, as usual organized by the Liberation Foundation '45.



The Canadian Embassy was represented by Military Attaché Colonel Marc LaFortune.

RCL Branch was present with the Colour Party and a delegation. A wreath was laid by comrade G.J. (Fred) de Graaf.





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Traditionally, the youth was actively involved in the ceremony.

Many wreaths and flowers were laid on behalf of various delegations.

Images are stills from the recording of RTV Apeldoorn - hs





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**Oosterbeek, November 13, 2022.**

The Royal British Legion held a short memorial ceremony at the CWGC Arnhem-Oosterbeek cemetery on Remembrance Sunday.

RCL Branch 005 was represented by comrades Gerrit Bruggink and Danny Murphy.





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Photos by courtesy of FuncksterrShoots Photography.



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**Miscellaneous.**

**POPPIES IN ZANDVOORT, November 5, 2022.**

To commemorate the military war victims starting at the First World War, Poppies are offered to the public in the Anglo-Saxon countries every year two weeks before November 11th, 'Remembrance Day'. Many people donate for this because they know that this money is used to help wounded veterans and relatives of deceased soldiers.

In the Netherlands we honour the victims of the Second World War on May 4th, but because many fallen allied liberators are buried in the Netherlands, they are also commemorated here with Poppies on November 11th. This has also been common for years by the Royal Canadian Legion, Liberation of the Netherlands, Branch 005, for instance in Zandvoort.



The mayor of the village at the North Sea is always grateful and ready to receive the first Poppy. After that, a place was set up at the Albert Heijn branch in the center on the Saturday prior to November 11 where people can get a Poppy pinned on and make a donation.



Comrade Reinier Groeneveld with his Willys jeep was also present in front of the shop. Every year, also this year, many conversations take place with people who have experienced a war themselves, lost loved ones or see with fear at what is happening in the world at the moment.



Young people are also (usually) interested in what RCL does and why.

This year, on November 5, the day started out busy, as there were still many tourists in the village.

During the day mayor Moolenburgh also came to have a look and get to know the RCL comrades. Many people went outside again with a Poppy pinned up.



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Together with Peter Bongers, Reinier Groeneveld and Connie Lempke we were allowed to pin a Poppy on many.

We were told many stories, but were also able to propagate the ideas of the Royal Canadian Legion.

In this way, the memory of our deceased liberators becomes a little more recognizable in the Netherlands.



A nice and appreciated support was the arrival of our President, Martin Reelick.

He was there to taste the atmosphere, but also had various conversations, including with the mayor of Zandvoort.

When passersby started a discussion, his knowledge was very useful.

For the ,Zandvoort team':

*Ruud Janssen*





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**Poppies in the Eastern part of the Netherlands and elsewhere.**

Column: Gerrit Bruggink.

In the municipality of Bronckhorst, the first Poppy this year was awarded to Jorik de Greef, who had just been elected as youth mayor. He was not familiar with the symbol for commemoration, but after a detailed explanation he found it: *'very interesting'*.



Jorik also received a Pass the Poppy certificate as the start of the campaign. This was of course no coincidence, in the project "Pass The Poppy 2022" many young people participated and passed on the Poppy.

The project consists of 11 episodes and can be found on You Tube. RCL 005's contribution can be found in episode 10.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZbalgZhLGA>

During the Poppy Campaign this video was shown on local TV in the municipality of Bronckhorst:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRApqsfsgXw>





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Hengelo. Gld.



Zelhem



Schiedam

As the photos show, a promotion for the Poppy Campaign was held at various places in and outside the municipality.

My heartfelt thanks for the support!

Snack bar Hoogstraat-  
Hengelo.Gld;

Harry Hersbach Tools B.V.  
Schiedam,

Blokker Department Store –  
Zelhem;

Wila Tooling - Lochem.



Lochem

*Gerrit Bruggink*



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**CBC Nova Scotia. November 9, 2022.**

After weeks of frustration and uncertainty, a 100-year-old veteran of the Second World War has been assured she has a place at Halifax's veterans hospital.

Joan Robertson is a Canadian citizen who was born in England and served with Britain's Auxiliary Territorial Service. She's been living in Canada since 1957.

Her family says they got a call on Nov. 2 stating Robertson wasn't eligible for one of the available beds at Camp Hill Veterans Memorial Hospital because she'd served with the British Army, not the Canadian Army.

They were told her only option was to join a wait-list.

"So at 100, what does one do?" Robertson said in an interview with CBC News on Thursday.

"But ... it's not just for me, it's for people coming behind me who have no one to stand up for them."

To read the complete column: active the link by clicking on photo below.



Joan Robertson served in Britain's Auxiliary Territorial Service during the Second World War. (Submitted by Jennifer Kennedy)



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**CBC News, November 11, 2022.**

©Nicole Williams

Justin Quesnel, who died unexpectedly last year, was proud of Cree side of Métis heritage, family says.

Tina Quesnel's son Justin was just 35 years old when he died unexpectedly last year, but she remembers him — a Canadian soldier — as full of joy and love for others.

*"He just wanted to be able to serve in a way that made a difference,"* Quesnel said of her son, who was a combat engineer.

Justin was proud of the Cree side of his Métis heritage, having reconnected with his culture in the last few years. He had intended to have a sweat lodge ceremony and receive his spirit name, but died before that happened.

His spirit name, which was given posthumously, is now on his gravestone. It reads *Kâ Pêtat Maskihkîy Nâpêw*, which means He Who Brings Medicine.

This is the first gravestone of a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) member to feature an Indigenous language, and the first to bear the symbol of the medicine wheel.

Tina Quesnel, who lives in Winnipeg, was able to see her son's gravestone when it was first unveiled this summer.



Editorial addition.

Already earlier we paid attention to the fact that two symbols were approved:

the medicine wheel, representing the four sacred directions and the infinity symbol if it is Métis.

A symbol to represent Inuit veterans is under development.



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**Juno Beach. 11 november 2022.**

Source: Juno Beach Centre.

The Canadian Remembrance Day Ceremony was marked by the presence of the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Ambassador to Canada in France and Special Envoy to the European Union and Europe. He recalled the role of Canadians in Normandy in 1944 and the symbolism of the Juno Beach created in partnership between France and Canada.



He also underlined the importance of the protection of Juno Beach and its surroundings as a memorial site and thanked local partners engaged in supporting the Juno Beach Centre, including, Mr. Thierry Mosimann, Prefect of Calvados, Mrs. Anne-Marie Philippeaux, Mayor of Courseulles-sur-Mer, Mrs. Nathalie Worthington, Director of the Juno Beach Centre, and the representatives of these various associations.

Madam Nathalie Worthington, Director of the Juno Beach Centre:

*'Thanks to the combined contributions of Canada, France, the town of Courseulles-sur-Mer, the Normandy Region, the Calvados Department and the Coeur de Nacre Intercommunal Authority, the acquisition of the land surrounding the museum was possible.*

*From this point forward, the Juno Beach Centre is protected and can continue its important and central mission of education and remembrance for the benefit of all visitors, now and for generations to come".*





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**Lower Nicola (BC) Nov 11, 2022.**

Source: Facebook account Rocky Mountain Rangers

The Rocky Mountain Rangers had the honour of attending the last Remembrance Day service in Lower Nicola before the Nicola Valley First Nation Veterans Association builds a new memorial.

The cold weather did not stop the community from attending to honour and remember those members of their community who served in the armed forces of Canada and the United States of America and those who continue to do so.



On November 8, 2022, the Rocky Mountain Rangers were also represented at a Tk'eml úps memorial at Secwépemc (BC) to remember First Nations veterans.





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**Haelen, November 17, 2022.**

Every year on Thursday, closest to November 16, (Leudal liberation day), the Monument of Tolerance in Haelen. (northwest of Roermond-NL) is the center of the International Commemoration.

More than 800 soldiers of 11 nationalities are commemorated here, who gave their lives in the Leudal fighting for our Freedom.

The sculpture cast in bronze was made by sculptor Thea Houben.



It consists of a semi-arch on an equilateral triangle symbolizing the Divine. The seagulls represent freedom. The sword with the laurel wreath and the joined hands indicate the battle that has been fought and the fraternization beyond death. The foot of the monument is covered with Maas boulders, one for each fallen soldier. The red rays in the pavement symbolize the nationalities of the fallen.

**The words read: history is life's tutor**





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As a sign of genuine tolerance, Allied, German and Austrian victims are commemorated together.

There were speeches by mayor Désirée Schmalschläger of the municipality of Leudal and by H.E. Mrs. Susannah Gordon, New Zealand Ambassador. Among those in attendance: Sergeant Nicole Mitchell, Canadian Embassy.

The highlight of the commemoration is the joint wreath laying every year by a German, an Englishman and a Dutchman



Can it be even more symbolic?  
These are the hands of two former enemies: a 100-year-old British veteran and a 96-year-old German veteran.

Photos:  
FuncksterrShoots Photography.





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Upcoming.

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

To end with a smile:

