After all the highlights that I told you about in the last newsletter, a lot has happened in the meantime. The most important point is the expansion of the board. Last time I forgot to mention that Laurens van Aggelen in the summer of 2017 joined our, then very small group. As a fellow RCL comrade, I had told him of the need for additions to our board and he immediately promised to help us despite the heavy workload. Unfortunately it soon became too much for him because of new interesting assignments such as the writing of WWII-related books and he had to say goodbye to us again. At that time the board consisted of the treasurer and me. Fortunately, there was light on the horizon when Wim Poppenk, former member of the operational management of the Memory Museum in Nijverdal, was prepared to strengthen our board as a member / Coordinator members Research Team. Later this year, Dick Akerboom from Nijmegen joined as vice-president. This is great, with two such involved advisers, we now have a strong board that presents itself in person on our website.

I would like to express my thanks for all the efforts of all our board members, I think of the many kilometers they have to travel for meetings and other obligations.

As you can understand, we can only work on this project with the help of donations; we want to thank everyone who has contributed! We also thank Richard Meeussen from inn-restaurant ‘t Zwaantje in Mook for his hospitality regarding the meetings of the Research Team. He provides us with a free meeting room where also good coffee and tea are waiting for us, and not to forget, delicious cookies!

In November we placed requests for help in local newspapers and a new volunteer approached us. The radio station Radio Station ‘De Streek’ for Nijmegen area invited Faces To Graves for a life interview on 17 December and we were able to tell about our project. Hennie Koster, member of our Research Team joined me. When asked what it is like t research the story of a fallen soldier, he touched my heart with his answer: "At first it is only a name, but when I have, finished composing his life story he is in my heart!"
TV Berg en Dal gave us the opportunity to appeal for volunteers.

The newspaper De Gelderlander published a good article on 22 November after an interview with the reporter Mitch Suijkerbuijk at the cemetery. Fred Hulsman, a Research Team member also told about his research experience. and this brought many reactions and new volunteers who signed up to do research.

But first I will take you back to Christmas Eve 2017, for the second time the 'Lichtjescomité' organised candles on Christmas Eve. Many volunteers commit themselves to seeing that everything runs smoothly; I was one of the volunteers, together with a number of members of our Research Team.

-Alice was there in time-

School children were called on to place the candles to the graves.

Fred Hulsman had placed photos at the graves he already wrote a life story from.
The news channel Hart van Nederland paid a great deal of attention to the graves where a photo was added.

As with the grave of Lt. William John Kotchapow of the Royal Canadian Infantry Corps. On September 10, 1944, he was killed at the age of 20.

..and Pte. W.L. Merpaw from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, Princess Louise's. He died at the age of 20 on January 30, 1945.

It became a beautiful spectacle and all the candles stayed alight throughout Christmas.
On 8 February 2018 the Foundation ‘Groesbeek Airborne Vrienden’ organised a lovely commemoration for Operation Veritable, here too schoolchildren took an active part.

Members of the RCL - Branch 005 participated in the color party and there was a short reflexion by Pastor Henk Janssen.

Ellen van Haaren, member of the Research Team and Alice laid the flowers.

This time attention was paid to Regiment Black Watch of Canada, some soldiers were highlighted and their story was told.

A few delegates from the platform CanadianWarGraves.NL had an appointment with the Canadian Ambassador Mrs. Sabine Nölke on March 29. We have told her in detail what we are doing and she has given us good advice.

A photo of the group was taken at the end of the conversation and even before we arrived home the ambassador had posted a tweet on the web.
We are also actively participating in WO2GLD, that makes all WWII organisations in the Gelderland province known and connects them up. You can read more about this on the website [www.wo2gld.nl](http://www.wo2gld.nl) We heard at the last meeting that an information centre would be opened in Nijmegen, facilitated by the National Liberation Museum. In the Information Centre, measuring 200 square metres, all organisations will be represented including Faces To Graves. It will be opened in February 2019.

The Research Team - a day out. On 21 April, a beautiful day, the committee treated the volunteers of the team to an outing. We are well aware that without volunteers we can never realise this huge project and wanted to show our appreciation. The day was organised by Wim Poppenk and we were warmly welcomed by our colleagues from the Information Centre at the cemetery in Holten.

Henk Vincent welcomed us..

..and Edwin van der Wolf took a part of our group to the cemetery.

From left to right: Ab WaakopReijers ICB, Jelle Reitsma FTG, Alice van Bekkum FTG, Jan Braakman ICB, Edwin van der Wolf ICB, Henk Vincent ICB, Wim Poppenk FTG and Adriaan van der Pol FTG.
Everyone was impressed by the beautiful building and its decor and by the guided tour of the cemetery afterwards. We all thought how nice it would be to have such a building in Groesbeek...

Finally, a group photo of the Research Team and board members of FTG before departure.

We then drove through the lovely countryside to the Memory Museum in Nijverdal, where Wim had worked. There we had lunch and then Wim gave us a guided tour through the museum. We concluded with coffee and goodies, happily returning home after a successful day.

Wim Poppenk
The next day, April 22, the RCL - Branch 005 had their Annual Meeting in their clubhouse in Lochem: restaurant Mondani. Before the meeting began the new members were installed, including Adriaan van der Pol who was often in Canada, on dates that the previous installations had been recorded. Now it finally happened and he really became a comrade. At the same time Mark Veldhuis was installed as a new member; Mark is responsible for the school project 'A story for every stone' for the ICB Holten.

*Adriaan second from the left and Mark 3rd.*

We would like to interest the secondary schools of the Nijmegen and Groesbeek region in Faces To Graves. Lisa van Kessel, an enthusiastic staff member of the Liberation Museum who works on the education programme there, wants to help us and will discuss it with Mark.

Sunday April 29, I met Ian Walters and his family at the cemetery; he had previously contacted us via Doug Chisholm. Ian is a teacher in Winnipeg and his mother is the daughter of Walter Douglas Armstrong’s surviving sister. He is going to interview the family and then compile a life story for Walter.

*Ian and his wife, Alice and his parents.*
We get a lot of positive reactions from Canada, sometimes even complete life stories that are shared with us, saving us a lot of work.

Take for example Shirley Stone from Picton, Ontario with whom I came in contact through John Brehaut (Canadian Virtual War Memorial). We approach John when we find a picture of a soldier on their website who is buried in Groesbeek. We then ask him if it is possible to get in touch with the person who submitted the photo, often a family member. John asks permission and sometimes succeeds, as in the case of Shirley. She is not a relative of Rifleman W.M. Gordon Lennox of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles but had read of the horrendous accident in which seven RWRs drowned when they got stuck under their capsized truck at the bottom of a dike. They were buried in a temporary Canadian war cemetery near Nijmegen.

Shirley has ensured that our Research Team now has access to a complete war diary of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles! In her home town (as well as many other places in Canada), there is a cenotaph, a monument on which all the names of the men who fell in the two world wars are inscribed. She sent me a photo, and I could look for the names of those who were buried in Groesbeek. One of those names she immediately recognised, that of Gerald Hineman; she knew the family and called Gerald’s sister. Now we have another soldier about whom we can tell a story.

One of our researchers contacted Doug Chisholm from Melfort, Saskatchewan. He is the aerial photographer who took photos of all the Saskatchewan lakes named after the soldiers killed in WWII. He has contact with many soldiers’ families including those of soldiers buried in Groesbeek. Doug will tell them of our project and ask them to share information with us.

He has made beautiful ´geomemorials´like the one in this picture.

www.woodlandaerialphoto.com
Through Mark Veldhuis I came into contact with Bruce Morton; he helps with research and writes short biographies of the North Shore New Brunswick Regiment. His father was a Captain and Adjutant in the NSR in WWII. For the biographies Bruce uses the history of the North Shore Regiment (NSR) plus data from military archives, NB Provincial archives, Ancestry.ca and family discussions. He is willing to share his bio’s with us; we also share photos or information that we already have in our archive. That is how we help each other. There is a Facebook page of the NSR: https://www.facebook.com/North-Shore-New-Brunswick-Regiment-Research-361554280928615/

One of my other contacts is Bill McVean; he visits libraries in small places in his area. That provides us with beautiful photos and stories. Thank you Bill and employees of the libraries.

Meanwhile there has also been contact with Des Kappel of the 'Manitoba Geographical Names Program'. We have a DVD of the book "A Place of Honor" in which Manitoba's war dead are commemorated in the countryside of the province; for example, lakes are named after a fallen soldier, similar to the project in Saskatchewan. The book contains biographies and photographs that we would like to use for Groesbeek. Des will need some time to select the names of soldiers buried here. Des wrote: "I would like to help you. Our goal was to make sure that the men and women who lost their lives were remembered, not only as soldiers but also as individuals with goals and family, so I would like to help preserve the memories of these soldiers for future generations."

And that is exactly the goal of our project Faces To Graves for a Dutch tribute!

May 2 we were invited by Sebastiaan Vonk, chairman of the foundation that set up a database for the American soldiers. Available at: www.fieldsofhonor-database.com. It was the official opening of 'The Faces of Margraten'; for seven days, 6000 of the 10000 graves there will have photographs placed by them. A wonderful event!
Pte Charles Kalas, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, gesneuveld op 4 April 1945 bij Hameln in Duitsland.

We would also like to realize 'The Faces of Groesbeek' during the 75th commemoration in May 2020, but first have to find one or more sponsors ... who will help us on the way?

Dutch Remembrance Day May 4 was, prior to the commemoration at the Canadian cemetery, the traditional silent march from the town hall in Groesbeek. Organized by the municipality of Berg en Dal.

At half past eight the commemoration would begin; but there were so many followers that it became a little later. No problem, the organization interrupted the wreath laying for the national two minutes of silence.
Finally, some pleasing news: we feel honored with the spontaneous commitment of three gentlemen to act as 'Committee of Recommendation' for Faces To Graves: Mark Slinkman, mayor of Berg en Dal, Gerd Prick, former mayor of Groesbeek, and Paul Wilbers, former mayor of Ubbergen, chairman of the National Liberation Museum 1944-1945. We look forward to the first meeting with them and our complete board!

Just before the completion of this newsletter there was more good news: on May 23, the Canadian War Graves Netherlands Foundation was founded. Here, the foundations for the three Canadian war cemeteries in the Netherlands work together to create a digital monument for all Canadian war graves in our country.

More news and new life stories on our website: http://fcestograves.nl/

Like us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/FacesToGraves

Participant in WO2Gld