

# Newsletter

No 16 – autumn 2023



From the President Alice van Bekkum

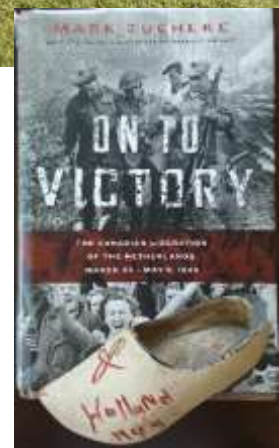
In this newsletter, we report on the activities of Faces to Graves during the second half of 2023.

In June, **Dave Bisanti** and his wife Maureen visited the grave of his uncle David England, his life story can be found in the Digital Monument:  
<https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/ENGLAND%20David%20Frederick-STS-bio-EN.pdf>

Alice van Bekkum accompanied Dave and Maureen at the cemetery, Dave handed her the book 'On to Victory by Mark Zuehlke, which contains information about David England's death on pages 169-172. Dave Bisanti also brought a small wooden shoe which David sent to his mother when he was in the Netherlands. You can read more about it in his life story. Dave thank you very much for your special donation!



Dave also visited the grave of Albert Jones. Albert and David England grew up together near Montreal, they are about the same age and are both buried in Groesbeek.



Albert's life story can be found on te website:

<https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/JONES%20Albert%20William-LHN-bio-EN.pdf>

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On 10 June during the Research Team meeting, two volunteers were awarded the **Faces to Graves coin** + certificate.

Else Schaberg, for her enormous efforts during the photo project The Faces of Groesbeek in 2021 and 2023. Now that she has withdrawn from this project group, it was a good moment to put her in the limelight.

Also Marcel van der Meer, our webmaster, who always works very hard behind the scenes to improve our website, received this special coin for his efforts.



*From left to right: Saskia Peters, Marcel van der Meer, Else Schaberg en Alice van Bekkum*

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**Marilyn Trentham** visited the grave of her uncle Walter Armstrong on 12 June, she participated in the Battlefield Liberation Tour. Alice van Bekkum welcomed her and handed her her nephew's life story in a beautiful folder.

Life story Walter Douglas Armstrong:

<https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/ARMSTRONG%20Walter%20Douglas-GKT-bio-EN.pdf>



Tour guide John Hetherington read the whole story to the group, giving additional information about the battles. Everyone was moved.

*John Hetherington reads the life story of Walter Douglas Armstrong, Marilyn holds a blue folder in her arms.*

On 22 June another special visit: **Peter McHugh** and his wife Sheryl from Australia visited the grave of his cousin Maurice MgHugh. Together with Jan Smolears from Vorstenbosch who was an eyewitness to the crash in which Maurice was killed.



*From left to right Peter, Sheryl Mchugh, Jan Smolenears andn Alice van Bekkum*





*Poppies at all graves of the crew*

More on this in Maurice's life story:

<https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/McHUGH%20Maurice-GKT-bio-EN.pdf>

Peter brought along a box of knitted and crocheted poppies from the '5000 Poppies' project, an Australian tribute to fallen soldiers.

His wish was to place these poppies at the graves of Australian and New Zealand soldiers here in The Netherlands. To realise his wish, Alice van Bekkum, Jan Vorstenbosch, Paul ten Broeke, Gijs Krist and Richard Hendriks have committed themselves and many poppies have already been placed at the cemeteries of Mook, Uden, Jonkerbosch in Nijmegen.



*Mook, grave Fl.Lt. P.H. Strong*

*photo Paul ten Broeke*



*Uden, Pilot Officer E.A. Dennis*

*photos Gijs Krist*

The Faces to Graves board received an invitation from the **Canadian Forces Support Unit** (Europe) to attend the Change of Appointment Ceremony in Geilenkirchen, Germany on July 13. Alice van Bekkum and Saskia Peters attended this ceremony.

It was a wonderful meeting with laughter and tears, we were happy to thank the outgoing Chief Warrant Officer Hugo Asselin, MMM, CD for the many years that he has supported our foundation.



*Hugo (left) was widely praised and spoiled with beautiful gifts.*

*His wife also received a farewell gift.*



We also thanked him for organizing the many ceremonies at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek on Remembrance Day, November 11.

It was nice that we were able to meet the new Chief Warrant Officer Samuel Pépin. We wish him the best of luck with his new job and were able to greet him later at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek this November 11. This beautiful ceremony and the hot chocolate afterwards were a great start to continue building our collaboration in the future.

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On the Monday preceding the start of the Nijmegen 'Vierdaagse' (Four Days Marches), a **commemoration** was held at the Canadian War Cemetery on 17 July. This was organised by Regimental Adjutant of the of the Royal Dutch Army, (Jason) Kapteyn.

*Photo Kim Huvenaars*



*Photo Kim Huvenaars*



*Gonny van Hal and Alice van Bekkum lay the wreath of Faces to Graves*

*Photo Henk Baron*

*A special meeting with Superintendent Clare Smart and the delegation from the Calgary Police Service*



*Photo Kim Huvenaars*

On the third day of the Four Days Marches, Thursday 21 July, the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** (CWGC) had a stand along the Zevenheuvelenweg. We were also allowed to display our goodies in it. For CWGC, it was their first time standing here during these days, quite an experience to see such a large number of people walking and an incredible amount of public to cheer them on.



Afterwards it turned out that there were more than 40 euros in our pot, courtesy of Nathalie Dumon, employee of Commonwealth War Graves.

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### **In Memoriam Hanny Schoonwater**

On 29 June, Hanny Schoonwater-Schell passed away. She approached Faces to Graves in 2016 and told us she was looking after Rodrigue Audet's grave. Alice then visited her and she told a hundred stories about 'her soldier'. She also had a lot of photos neatly in an album. We used those for the life story, which Tefke van Dijk compiled.



*On May 4 Hanny paid a last visit to 'her' soldier.*



His life story is available on our website:  
<https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/AUDET%20Rodrigue-TDK-bio-EN.pdf>

Hanny dedicated herself to the last to make the stories of the war visible, she recently participated in an interview for RN7 in Nijmegen.

Just before she passed away, she made another donation to Faces to Graves with the message: "Gift to continue your good work. I have cared for Rodrique Audet's grave for the past 75 years, but my time has also come now..."

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### **In Memoriam Gwyn de Jong**

On Friday 21 July, Gwyn de Jong passed away at the age of 99; a private farewell was held for her.

With Gwyn we lost our oldest member of the Research Team, she translated many life stories and also the first newsletters for us.

Gwyn also wrote beautiful life stories herself and, and being born English, she also did her best to give the British soldiers a nice story, despite the fact that we do not have access to the British military documents like in Canada.

Gwyn's motto was, "We may well be amateurs, but must guard against being amateurish!"

May she rest in peace.



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Sadly **Sigrid Norde** said goodbye to Faces to Graves this summer, she has put tremendous effort into writing life stories for all the soldiers of the Calgary Highlanders, for the school project and as administrator of our Facebook site; we will miss her dearly! We thank her for her great contribution to the work of Faces to Graves. We respect her desire to find new inspiration elsewhere.



Sigrid many THANKS!

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## Heritage Day – Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery – 9 September 2023

9 September 2023 was the Heritage Day at the Groesbeek War Cemetery in Groesbeek. On that day a lot of visitors came to the cemetery. This year's theme was "The Little Stories Behind the War".

For these stories CWGC asked Faces to Graves to help; Faces to Graves has already written a lot of life stories of soldiers buried in Groesbeek. These stories can be read in the digital monument on the website of Faces to Graves.



A team of CWGC coordinators, stonemasons, gardeners and volunteers of Faces to Graves welcomed the locals and visitors and invited them to learn about the restoration and maintenance work of the Commission and to listen to the life stories of the soldiers.

Dutch horticulturalist Alex Kalma took visitors around the cemetery and talked about the cemetery's construction, layout and sustainable maintenance policy. Nature guide Michel Rouw, who has worked for the CWGC for 20 years, told about sustainable maintenance policies without pesticides.

Volunteers from Faces to Graves gave information about the cemetery during a guided tour and told visitors personal stories about the fallen soldiers.



Visitors were allowed to engrave one of their own initials under the guidance of a CWGC master stonemason, they learned how to work on Portland stone. This stone is used to make the headstones at the cemetery.

Visitors could also take a look behind the horticultural scenes. The CWGC maintains more than 23,000 cemeteries worldwide. The Hort department of the CWGC therefore bears a great responsibility in looking after all the cemeteries. Patrick Thijssen gave visitors a look behind the scenes, explaining all about

maintenance, giving information about tools and machines and telling stories about the cemetery.



It was a beautiful, sunny day attended by many and the collaboration between the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Faces to Graves made it a successful day.

Report of Else Schaberg

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## **Collaboration between Faces to Graves and the Radboud University Nijmegen**

Gerrie Driessen wrote a book about the history of the Canadian War Cemetery, Gerrie was a good friend of Faces to Graves and always willing to help us. Gerry died in 2022 so there isn't coming a renewed edition of the book which is sold out.

Visitors often ask us if there is a book about the cemetery in English, Faces to Graves always had the intention to write such a book but unfortunately we don't have the resources to finance such a project.

So now we have good news, prof. dr. Frank Mehring, dept. American Studies of the Radboud University and prof. dr Jaap Verheul, dept. Transatlantic Relations are working on an ambitious plan in collaboration with Faces to Graves!

The plan is to write a book called 'The Faces of Freedom' about the Canadian Wargrave Cemetery in Groesbeek in a Dutch and English edition.

The book will focus on the role of the Canadians during Operation Veritable, many of the soldiers buried in Groesbeek were killed during this battle. Besides a lot of interesting historic information, also many life stories written by Faces to Graves will be included in the book.

Thursday 14 September we had visitors from Canada at the cemetery, as part of the **Indigenous Legacy Project**. Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada, Paul Ledwell and the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor came with Indigenous representatives around to the cemetery.



*Photo credit Veteran Affairs Canada*

Earlier, Paulette Ryan, International Commemorative Events, Veterans Affairs Canada had approached Faces to Graves and asked if Faces to Graves could accompany this visit and if we could perhaps place the photos of the Indigenous soldiers in Groesbeek at their graves. Thanks to the efforts of Fred Hulsman and 'our' printing office, we succeeded, even when at the last moment another 17 names were added to the list! In total, there were photos and images at 56 graves and a photo at the Groesbeek Memorial, for an indigenous soldier who is still missing.



*Photo Henk Mostert*



*Saskia Peters tells the life sotry of Real Serinack - photo William Peters*



*Alice van Bekkum tells Deputy Minister Paul Ledwell, about Alfred Massicotte*

*photo Jennifer McLeod*

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Good news, some new volunteers have registered and they introduce themselves:

My name is **Lilian Eshuis**, 67 years and recently retired. I can handle a computer pretty well and since I got to know Photoshop I became interested in photo editing, especially restoring old photos. During my working period I gained experience in different fields from which I might benefit now.

In May this year I read in a newspaper about Faces to Graves, an article was written about the photographs displayed at some of the graves at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek. I was very impressed, also after my conversation with the Faces to Graves (FTG) volunteers present at the time, they could give me a lot of information. It made me feel good and I was immediately convinced that I wanted to become a volunteer for FTG.

I have attended several ceremonies, including the Nijmegen Four-Day Marches where I was surprised by the Swiss soldiers who held a short, emotional ceremony.

The ceremony during the Indigenous Legacy Group's visit was also very impressive. After speeches by delegates from the Canadian Embassy, a smoking ceremony was held in which everyone was given a tuft of tobacco with which you could pay your respect to the fallen.

After this tribute, some volunteers of FTG stood next to a grave to tell interested people the life story of the soldier buried there.

I was very nervous about this but all went well and I had a long talk with a lady belonging to the "Curve Lake First Nation", she was very grateful for the work the volunteers do and that left me with a good and nice feeling.

This lady took photos of me wearing the foundation's jacket and holding up the leaflet, when she reports back home. After a hug, we said goodbye.



*Lilian tells the story of Ross Bernard Bressette*

*photo William Peters*

In short, I didn't contributed much until now, but I'm already proud to be a volunteer of Faces to Graves!

Introduction to two more volunteers:

We are Henk en Ans Mostert and since a couple of months we became volunteers for FTG after we visited the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek in May 2023 during the photo exhibition.



To see all those photos at so many graves made a big impression on us and as I (Henk) have Canadian roots, we thought it would be nice to volunteer and participate in the work of Faces to Graves.

Therefore some information about ourselves:

**Henk** is 77 years old, born in Amsterdam, raised in Ede and living in Apeldoorn since 1978.

All my life I have known that I have a Canadian father and I am a so-called Canadian liberation child.

However, due to circumstances, I decided only in 1985 to look for my biological father and after searching for about 16 months I got hold of his address.

To be clear: my biological father I call "my bio", while I consider my stepfather (what a horrible word) my real father.

Of course, I wanted to make personal contact but it did take some time to get the first sentence down on paper. Fortunately I got an answer within a couple of weeks and since then Ans and I, but also both our daughters, have visited him and his wife in Canada several times. I met my two half-brothers and many relatives, with whom we still have a lot of contact. I think, by now we have crossed the big pond as many as 16 times.

One of our hobbies is genealogical research, which is partly the reason that we enjoy the work for FtG so much.



*Henk tells about Daniel McArthur*

*photo William Peters*

**Ans** is 71 years old and was born in Beekbergen, where I grew up until the age of 13. Then I moved to Achterberg near Rhenen. In 1973, Henk and I got married and recently celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with our children and grandchildren.

In addition to recently volunteering for Faces to Graves, I volunteer one afternoon a week at CODA where I do archive work and I am part of a working group in Oud Beekbergen en Lieren (WOBL).

After years of collecting information and photos, Henk and I handed over our family books to our daughters last year. We have covered four generations in the family books.

So searching/researching is in our blood. We have now written about four life stories and hope that many more will follow.

*Ans tells about Maxwell Warren King*



*photo William Peters*

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In September, we received an email from **Arathana Bowes**, she wrote: "My family and I visited the cemetery earlier this summer. We brought along a leaflet which included information about donating to the project. Now my grandmother is wondering to make a donation from a Canadian bank account. We would be happy to hear from you".

After explanation by our treasurer Iwe received , a short time later a donation of €200 from Margaret Bowes - CFO of Capistrano Holdings. Thank you so much!



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This time Liberation Tours came to the cemetery with a small group, where we were able to tell more about Faces to Graves. We received a donation of €200 for Faces to Graves from John Canon.

*Phil tells about Operation Veritable*

A long-cherished wish fulfilled: Carl Cudmore visits his father's grave.

*Carl at his fathers grave*

*– photo Jimmy Hilgen*

Brian Cudmore first visited his father's grave in 1975. He was born just before his father was killed, unaware that he had had a second son.

In late September 2023, Brian visited the grave again, this time with his brother Carl (see life story page 2 photo sitting on his father's lap) who visited his father's grave for the first time. Along with his son Blake and grandson Zachary. The trip was long postponed due to the pandemic.



Read more in Lester Cudmore's life story:

<https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/CUDMORE%20Lester%20Harvey-OTS-bio-EN.pdf>



On the day before leaving, Brian had invited Alice van Bekkum for lunch in Nijmegen, close to the hotel where they were staying. It was a special meeting, with Alice being handed a box full of surprises for all Faces to Graves volunteers. Special commemorative coins and other goodies, which would surely be appreciated by the volunteers.

*From left to right: Brian, Carl, Zachary and Blake*

*photo Jimmy Hilgen*



Alice had brought the Faces to Graves booklet and apologised that we don't yet have an English-language edition. Suddenly Blake exclaimed, "Dad that's you on the front page!" And also inside the booklet is a short piece written about Private Lester Cudmore.



*Carl points to the photo of him sitting on his father's lap.*

*photo Blake Cudmore*

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### **In Memoriam An Berben-Schreven**

On 5 October, An Berben died at the age of 93. An adopted two graves as a youngster, those of Herbert Cuthbertson Calbert and Alan John Gee. Later she got in touch with the family. Alan's picture was always on her piano.

She lived all her life in Groesbeek and was very involved and present at many commemorations in her beautiful Jeep.

An, you were a great person and we will miss your familiar appearance! We wish the family strength with this loss.



*An at Alan Gee's grave with Defense Attache of Canada, Col Michael Hogan*



*An and her Jeep*

### **In Memoriam Cees Pot**

On 6 October, Cees Pot died, aged 76. Cees was a supporting member of Faces to Graves for many years. He was also a passionate guide for the Freedom Museum, so he was the right person to be our guide during our 2nd volunteer outing on Saturday 6 April 2019. He took us to locations where many Canadian soldiers died, who were reburied in Groesbeek. With pictures at the site where it all took place, he painted a telling picture of those days for us. We are grateful for his support in various areas!



*Dick Akerboom listens to Cees Pot's explanation – location Uedemerbruch, Germany*



Liberation Tours came to the cemetery with a large party on 9 October. Some volunteers, who had had contact with one of the participants of the tour, were already waiting at the cemetery. Among the participants was Mark Zuehlke, author of the book 'On to Victory', which Alice had received from Dave Bisanti (see at the beginning of this newsletter). Alice van Bekkum welcomed the visitors, after which she told about Faces to Graves. And again we were surprised afterwards by a nice donation for the work of Faces to Graves.

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### **For Our Today They Gave Their Tomorrow**

At 23:15 on Wednesday evening 21 June 1944, the four-engine AVRO Lancaster MK III bomber with serial registration LM 570 and squadron mark ZN-Z took off from British Royal Air Force base Metheringham for a mission over Germany. The aircraft was sent out with 20 other bombers from the 106<sup>th</sup> squadron and led by No 5<sup>th</sup> Group Bomber Command to bomb a synthetic oil plant in Gelsenkirchen. This operation was called "Scholven- Buer". En route over the Netherlands, German anti-aircraft fired and night fighters, which had taken off from Volkel, carried out attacks. The AVRO Lancaster LM 570 was hit by a night fighter, caught fire and crashed in Heerwaarden near the so-called Doornepol at 01:15 on Thursday 22 June 1944. All eight crew members lost their lives in the crash.

Gijs Krist, member of the Research Team Faces to Graves took the initiative to realise a commemorative plaque for this perished crew, in cooperation with the working group "Luchtoorlog WO2 Bommelerwaard".

In the context of 75 years of liberation, this working group had the intention to place commemorative plaques for the fallen allied airmen in the Bommelerwaard. To remember those who fought for our freedom.

The Commemorative Plaque in Heerewaarden was unveiled on 10 October by Wim van Utrecht, an eyewitness to the crash and a family member Geoff Loughborough from London. Among those present were Col J.M.A. (Marc) LaFortune, the Canadian Military Attaché for the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg and Jesse Deya Ryan Laroche, the Australian Military Attaché for the Netherlands and Belgium. The plaque was co-funded by Faces to Graves.



*Gijs speaking, before the unveiling of*

*the commemorative plaque*



*Waiting to lay the wreath*

The crew consisted of:

- Flying Officer Kenneth George Bellingham 23 years old, UK
- Squadron leader Majoor Arthur James Loughborough 28 years old, UK
- Flight Engineer Sergeant James William Blanchard, UK
- Flight Sergeant Howard Gavin 22 years old, Australia
- Flight Sergeant Leo Toomey 28 years old, Australia
- Sergeant Arthur Goodacre 20 years old, UK
- Sergeant Sidney Joseph Malaband 22 years old, UK
- Sergeant Clarence Elgy Scott 20 years old, from Burnaby, BC, Canada

Seven crew members were buried in the Uden cemetery. It was only on 1 July that the remains of Clarence Elgy Scott were found in a fish tank. He was buried in the general cemetery in Heerewaarden.

On 17 October 1945, he was reburied in the Groesbeek Canadian Cemetery, grave **XV. E. 8.**



*photo Gijs Krist*

Life story Elgy Scott:

<https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/SCOTT%20Clarence%20Elgy-GKT-bio-EN.pdf>

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**Peter ten Dijke** started the project Lest We Forget, the aim this project is to photographically record all the Canadian War Graves in the Netherlands. Peter sent us a CD containing all grave photos of Groesbeek. With his permission we can use all the wonderful photos, Peter thank you!

Photos also available on the site:

<http://lestweforget1945.org>

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New from our webmaster:

Besides having sorted things out a bit behind the scenes, the primary goal was to make the website more accessible for all kinds of devices (PC, laptop, tablet or phone). This is necessary nowadays, because people no longer just access the internet from behind a computer (with a large screen) - as in the early days of the internet.

As a result, the website is now 'responsive' (jargon) and can be displayed on any device.

Also, the menu is now a 'drop-down' menu. If you click on the three short dashes at the top left, you can make a choice. Once you have done that, the menu will disappear again.

A moving photo carousel above the page and some more on the page 'Events' make page are making the website more dynamic.

Finally, in the Digital Monument, all soldiers' names are directly displayed and – if available - shown with a picture. After all - in line with the name of our foundation - we want to give a face to the soldiers who fell for our freedom and honour them all. If a biography is available, you can read it by clicking on the soldier's name. Using a filter, it is possible to display names by regiment.

If you have questions, please mail us via the contact form.

We also welcome suggestions for improving the website!

**Marcel van der Meer**, webmaster [www.facestograves.nl](http://www.facestograves.nl)

PS We received the first email via the contact form on November 8 and since then we have received five new photos of soldiers.

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When the Faces to Graves foundation was established in 2015, all three initiators were members of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 005 - Liberation of The Netherlands - (RCL 005). Currently, only chairman Alice van Bekkum is still active on the FTG board and still a member of RCL 005.

Faces to Graves has still remained strongly associated with RCL that is why we also mourn the loss of their President **Martin Reelick** on 4 November.





Born in Amsterdam, Martin emigrated to Canada at a young age and among other things, spent many years in the IT sector there. His son Armand Reelick was born in Canada and now serves in the Canadian Navy. Later, Martin returned to the Netherlands. He had been a member of RCL since 2008, serving as Sergeant at Arms and as vice-president until he was elected president. The members of RCL 005 had an active role at his funeral, ensuring a dignified farewell. We wish the family and all members of RCL 005 strength with this loss.

Source Reference: RCL005-Newsletter No 2023-11

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### **Remembrance Day 11 November**

Shortly before the commemoration on 11 November, we were approached by some relatives of soldiers buried in Groesbeek. We put them in contact with the organisation, the Canadian Forces Support Unit (Europe) and they sent them a personal invitation.



During the ceremony several speeches were held and in one speech the names of the fallen relatives were mentioned which caused a lot of emotion.





*Alain & Mavis McCrea*



*Brian Thompson and his wife*



*Allan and MaryLea Jamieson*



*Andy Swainson and his wife*

*Photos Peter ten Dijke*

Alain & Mavis McCrea, family of Private Maurice Phillippe McCrea, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, killed on 25 Feb 1945, grave reference XVI. H. 7. Life story: <https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/JAMIESON%20Harold-FHN-bio-EN.pdf>



Brian Thompson, who wrote together with his cousin the life story about Rifleman, Rolla Louis Thompson, the Regina Rifle Regiment, see the life story on <https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/THOMPSON%20Rolla%20Louis-OTS-bio-EN.pdf>

Allan Jamieson and his wife MaryLea, family of Corporal Harold Jamieson, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, they were the first relatives to visit his grave. This indigenous family was accompanied by a member of the Nanai Foundation. Life story on <https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/JAMIESON%20Harold-FHN-bio-EN.pdf>

Andy Swainson, cousin of John Swainson who is buried in Groesbeek. On the last day of his stay in The Netherlands, Andy could attend the commemoration. Life story of John Swainson: <https://www.facestograves.nl/LifeStories/SWAINSON%20John-STS-bio-EN.pdf>



The poem, recited by two children of the Canadian soldiers, was moving. It was a beautiful ending.

*Photos Gijs Krist*





Also shortly before 11 November we got a new photo of **Tom Hector Sutherland**. Pieter and Daria Valkenburg of the project 'On The War Memorial Trail' sent it to us. Pieter and Daria have already found many photos of 'our boys'. We would like to thank them for all the work they do for us!

The life story of Private Tom Sutherland, North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment has not yet been written and therefore we cannot include his photo yet, but the photo is now ready to be printed for the photo exhibition in May 2025.

This photo meant that a long-held wish came true. Tom was billeted with his comrades in Nijmegen and made friends there at that time, so a photo of him means a lot to keep that memory alive.

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Contribution by **Jim Little**

It's been just over two years since I became a member of the Faces to Graves Research Team. I've mostly focused on regiments based in Western Canada, gotten to know their broader narrative and then related it back to the fallen soldiers within those regiments. In every case I was fortunate to be able find a primary 'go to' reference book or regimental website which were of great importance in the eventual story telling for all the outstanding soldiers from their respective regiments. I'd like to give them some recognition in this article.



*Jim Little working on a biography*

### **South Alberta Regiment, 29<sup>th</sup> Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment**

*Graves, Donald E. (1998). South Albertas: A Regiment at War*

This was my first regiment and the only one from the Canadian Armoured Corps. Author Graves did a masterful job in relating their story, complete with plenty of photographs and maps. All nine of the fallen soldiers I wrote about from this regiment were given individual coverage in the book, a rarity indeed.

### **Royal Winnipeg Rifles, 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division**

*Reid, Brian A. (2010). Named By The Enemy – A History of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles*

Only a few of the 68 soldiers I wrote about from this regiment who are buried or memorialized at Groesbeek were given specific coverage in the book, but it still helped tell their greater story plus that of their sister battalions in 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade.

Special recognition for Ian Stewart who wrote *Voices of War – Royal Winnipeg Rifles Canada 1944-45 (2020)* and is the Curator for the RWR Museum. Ian sent me photographs of selected War Diary pages that are archived in Winnipeg. <https://www.rwrmuseum.com/>

### **South Saskatchewan Regiment, 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division**

*Saskatchewan Military Museum*

<http://www.saskatchewanmilitarymuseum.ca/SSR/>

Webmaster Greg Salmers and his team have done great work building this regimental website which includes the War Diaries and a digitized version of the regimental book *The March of the Prairie Men*. In addition, I learned about the Saskatchewan Virtual War Memorial and the Saskatchewan Legion Military Service Recognition Book database which are valuable research resources. Forty-seven biographies for fallen South Saskatchewanans buried or memorialized at Groesbeek (some done collaboratively) were completed for this regiment.

### **Regina Rifle Regiment, 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division**

*The Regina Rifles in WWII* <http://www.reginarifles.ca/>

This is my current regiment, working with webmaster Kevin Lambie of Calgary, Alberta who had a relative serve with the Reginas. Kevin has spent time at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa doing deep research on many of the fallen Reginas and has access to information not digitized in fallen soldier service files, which are easily accessed through Ancestry. Kevin has included the regimental War Diaries plus some fine Company photographs among other resources on his website. While the Reginas share the same overall narrative as their sister battalion the Winnipeg Rifles, they are also quite unique.

We spent our last two Remembrance Days at the Field of Crosses in Calgary, an annual event during which around 3,500 crosses are placed along Memorial Drive near the Bow River between November 1-11, to commemorate fallen soldiers from Southern Alberta. <https://www.fieldofcrosses.com/roll-call-of-the-fallen/>



This year we observed four crosses there for soldiers I've written about who are buried at Groesbeek: Capt. Kenneth Perrin and Lt. Kenneth Little, South Alberta Regiment, Lt. Robert Gammon, Royal Winnipeg Rifles and Lt. Edmund O'Meara, Regina Rifle Regiment. Many thanks to the authors of regimental books, webmasters for regimental websites, military museum curators and organizations like Field of Crosses who all do a tremendous job in helping us remember our fallen.

*Photo by Jim Little, 11 November 2022*

**All Saints** students including Amelia Gagnon, Abby Floysvik, and myself Bridget Green worked on a physical exhibit of remembrance in the school's display case. With objects lent by the Algonquin Regiment, the case had an arrangement of war artifacts including a combat helmet and patch. Moreover, the case showed many stories of Canadian soldiers who belonged to the Algonquin Regiment whose sacrifice is the reason for Remembrance Day. Their stories are subsequently the reason I donated my time to the display case, so students at our school would have a visual display to reflect the sacrifice soldiers took for the safety and liberty of our country.

By Bridget Green



**Vanessa Kirtz**, docent All Saints High School in Kanata, Ontario:

Through my work with Faces to Graves, I have been in contact with some other Canadian organizations such as Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation. The foundation's goal is to humanize the fallen, provide a glimpse into our soldiers' lives, and preserve their memory through memorials. This chance encounter with the foundation led to an invitation to attend an evening the organization had planned to learn about the Canadian Fallen Heroes Foundation and to watch a one person performance, Jake's Gift. Fellow teachers from All Saints High School, Wendy Sewell (the Assistant Defence Attaché for the Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy in Canada) and myself were invited as guests to attend the event. The connection that was made with the Canadian Fallen Heroes during this event has the possibility of being of great benefit to our work on researching



Canadian soldiers as their goal is similar to that of Faces to Graves. Hopefully, these two organizations will be able to work together to further their work into ensuring that Canadian soldiers and their sacrifice will be remembered.

If you ever have the opportunity to see Jake's Gift, please do so as you will not be disappointed. Jake's Gift is an award winning Canadian play about a WW2 veteran's reluctant return to Normandy for the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings. While in

France, Jake meets Isabelle, a 10-year-old from the local village. Isabelle’s inquisitive nature and charm challenge the old soldier to confront some long-ignored ghosts. The play was incredibly well done as it made you feel a spectrum of emotions and was a wonderful example of Remembrance. It was so well done, that the teachers who attended are looking for a way for it to be performed for their grade 10 students. Fingers crossed we can make that possible!

Here is a short video clip from and about the play:

<https://youtu.be/dVysCqeovE>

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**Research Project Indigenous Canadian Soldiers at Groesbeek**

During World War II an unknown number of Indigenous Canadian soldiers fought against the German oppressor. According to existing estimates, some 3,000 Canadian soldiers of First Nation and Métis descent joined the Allied Forces. The real number is probably much higher.

A few years ago I started a research project at Radboud University Nijmegen to identify the Indigenous soldiers who fought in the Netherlands during World War II or who lie buried here. In Canada too, several initiatives have been launched to recognize and honor the great military service that this group has performed. In 2001, for instance, a National Monument was erected in Ottawa to honor the

Indigenous soldiers who have served in wars fought by Canada since the 19th century (see image).



In 2022, it was decided that the graves of Indigenous soldiers who lie buried at Beechwood National Military Cemetery in Ottawa will receive a marker to identify their Indigenous background. It is possible that this will occur in the Netherlands as well. For that reason, it is especially important to identify these soldiers at the

various cemeteries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. At the cemetery in Groesbeek, an estimated 50 to 65 Indigenous Canadian soldiers lie buried.

The volunteers of Faces to Graves have amassed much valuable knowledge. On their website, they have already published the biographies of 14 Indigenous soldiers. For some of these biographies, contact was established with Indigenous family members who have provided personal stories and photographs. These are of great value.

I am greatly looking forward to cooperate with Faces to Graves on two initiatives that will emerge from my project. First, an exhibition, in May 2025, on the largely unrecognized contribution of Indigenous Canadian soldiers to the liberation of the Netherlands. Here, a limited number of biographical portraits can be shown. For that reason I am eager to realize a book publication on the various Canadian war cemeteries in the Netherlands which will provide a fuller picture of the roughly 120 Indigenous soldiers who lie buried in the Netherlands. The exhibition and the book will provide a fascinating view of the diversity of this group of soldiers and the cultures they hailed from. They will also contribute to our awareness of the great impact that World War II also had on these groups and their societies.

Mathilde Roza, Radboud University Nijmegen

mathilde.roza@ru.nl

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On November 19, we received the sad news that Frank van Duin had passed away, he was only 39 years old.



Alice van Bekkum: In May 2015 I met Frank during a meeting of the Groesbeek Airborne Friends Foundation where I was invited to talk about our initiative to establish a kind of 'Virtual Monument' for the Canadian War Cemetery.

Because we both lived in Milsbeek, we met each other afterwards at various commemorations. And when the Faces to Graves foundation was founded and we were looking for someone to build a website, Frank was immediately willing to help. He used our brochure as a starting point and made a great start for us, so that we could also be found. Frank was our webmaster during those first years until he became too busy with work and family.

Frank later became friends with our son Leon, both shared the same hobby: WWII, so we saw each other even more often.

Frank, how sad that we will never see your blond curly head and cheerful smile again...

Thank you for who you were, you have now found your peace, rest in peace.



Frank always actively participated in the commemorations of Operation Veritable, organized by the Groesbeek Airborne Friends, of which he was a member.

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As you understand, our non-profit organization can only work on this project through your donations. We would like to warmly thank all those who have contributed. You can find the logos of our sponsors on the website.

Sometimes we receive donations which we would like to acknowledge personally. Alas, this is not possible if there is no contact address.

We thank **everyone** here for their donation!

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We thank Richard Meeussen of restaurant-hotel 't Zwaantje in Mook for his hospitality in giving us a nice room for the meetings of the Research Team. The coffee is already waiting for us when we arrive!

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Julie Allen has been sending this newsletter since 2019, thank you Julie!

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Else Schaberg did most of the translations for this newsletter, for which many thanks are given!

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Last but not least, important news:

The project group of **'The Faces of Groesbeek'**, the photo exhibition, has already started preparations for the next edition, which will take place in the first two weeks of May 2025 at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek. Due to the school holidays in the Netherlands, the photos will be posted a week earlier; so from April 26 until May 18, 2025.



Since the photos were placed at the graves and with the names of the missing on the Memorial in May 2021 and 2023, many new photos have already been received, thanks to the help of various people.



These must all be printed on durable Alupanel panels, which can be used several times and we must have sufficient resources at our disposal for this. Would you also help us by making a contribution or sending a photo? If you state "May 2025" with your donation, it will be used exclusively for that purpose. You will find a donation button on our website.



Would you like to help us or do you know someone who is interested in our work? We are still looking for a board member from the Nijmegen region, to strengthen our board.

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We wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Donations are very welcome.



Scan the QR code or visit our website.



info@facestograves.nl



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