



Executive summary

Canada's involvement in the liberation of the Netherlands at the end of the Second World War was of major importance. In total Canada committed 1.081.865 military personnel to World War II. More than 7000 Canadians died during the battles to end the German occupation of our country.

The largest Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands is situated on a hill near Groesbeek in the east of the country. In this cemetery, 2618 soldiers are buried consisting of 2331 Canadian, 255 British, 3 Belgian, 2 Australian, 2 Polish, 1 New Zealander, 1 Russian, 1 Yugoslavian and 1 Dutch. Additionally, there are 21 soldiers of unknown identity and nationality buried here.

On the Wall of Remembrance, 1015 names have been registered of soldiers who are still missing.

Most of the soldiers buried at the Groesbeek cemetery were killed during the Rhineland offensive between the 8th of Feb and the 10th of March 1945. Also many Air Force crew members are buried here.

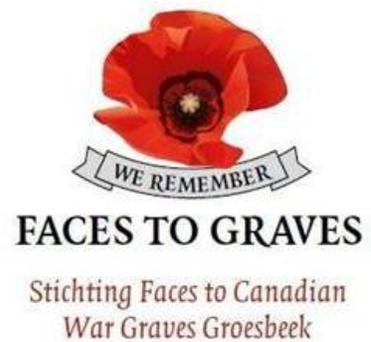
The non-profit organisation (Dutch Foundation) Stichting Faces to Canadian War Graves Groesbeek (Faces to Graves) was founded on the 19th of May 2015.

Purpose

The purpose of Faces to Graves is to research and compose the life stories of the soldiers buried and remembered at the cemetery, partly for their families and loved ones, but also for educational purposes and research.

These life stories with photos, military documents, copies of letters etc., will be available to everyone at no charge, through a publicly accessible data base on our web site.

Our ideal is to establish a visitor centre near the entrance of the cemetery but for the moment our main focus is the writing of the life stories. When we have enough financial and management capacity we will seriously consider the visitor center.



Board members

Faces to Graves was founded by Mrs. Alice van Bekkum as president and Mr. Jan C.K. van Loo as vice president/secretary and Mr. Adriaan van der Pol serving as treasurer. Mr Van Loo resigned from the Board in 2017 and continued as advisor until July 2020. In 2018 the Board was expanded with the addition of Mr. Dick Akerboom, Vice President. Mr Wim Poppenk is chairman of the Research Team.

Mr Jelle Reitsma has been an advisor since 2016 and Mr Bas van der Kieft joined as an advisor in 2019. Mrs. Julie Allen (Canadian) is Communication Officer Canada as of 2019.

The Board is further advised by the Committee of Recommendation.

Board members, advisors and Committee members are all volunteers and do not receive reimbursement for their time or costs, neither do the volunteers who work for the Research Team.

How

Standard information such as limited military information can usually be found quite readily but for life stories and photos, extensive and active research is necessary. We have established our own Research Team where currently about 35 volunteers are actively carrying out research and translations.

To provide a background and context to the life stories we also plan to provide information on the history of the liberation of the Netherlands and Europe.

Cooperation with other organizations

We have established excellent contacts with the organisation Information Centre Begraafplaats (ICB) of the Holten Canadian War Cemetery and with the organisation 'Brabantse Wal' from Bergen op Zoom who will do the research for the Canadian War Cemetery in Bergen op Zoom. For this cooperation, the organisation (Dutch Foundation) Canadian War Graves Nederland was established in 2018. Canadian War Graves Nederland will establish a website where the life stories of all Canadian soldiers



will be combined; not only for the three Canadian War Cemeteries, but also for the 196 mostly civilian cemeteries throughout the country where Canadian soldiers have been buried, as well as the soldiers still missing but remembered on the Wall of Remembrance.

To achieve our goals, we are cooperating with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, The Dutch War Graves Commission and the Ministry of Veteran Affairs of Canada.

We are also establishing cooperation's with universities, military history institutions and other educational organisations to assist us with the research activities.

We want to observe the utmost diligence and care, while respecting the privacy and wishes of family members.

Cost and sourcing of funds.

Presently we have limited funds, just enough to cover our minor expenses.

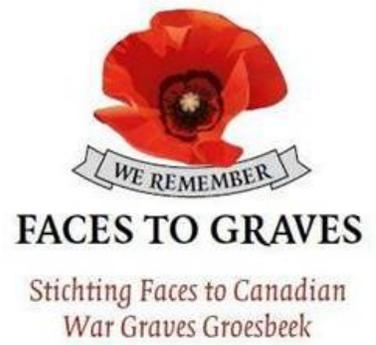
Our budget provides for the costs of our research and remembrance activities as well as administrative costs. Our annual budget is approximately € 5000.

For the celebration and remembrance of 75+1 years of Liberation, we are organizing in May 2020+1 'The Faces of Groesbeek' photo project with a budget of € 15.000. We will be actively sourcing these funds.

For our funding we rely on individual and corporate donations and subsidies.

We plan to further develop and expand our research activities to intensify and professionalize our research.

The national database will be the responsibility of and funded by Canadian War Graves Nederland. Access to this data base will be directly through its own website as well as via the web sites of the individual organisations of Bergen op Zoom, Groesbeek and Holten so that each Canadian War Cemetery has its own unique database and will also link to the national one.



Progress

As of July 2020, there are 230 completed stories on our website and 466 in progress.

There is still much work to be done.

Stichting (Foundation) Faces to Canadian War Graves Groesbeek

Alice van Bekkum

Dick Akerboom

Adriaan van der Pol

July 2020