

My first meeting with a family member from Canada.

Robert (Bob) Buchanan and his wife Karen wanted to come and visit the grave of Bob's father, Borden Buchanan, in Groesbeek. Bob is 81 and for a long time he has had the desire to come to the Netherlands. Now it finally happened.

His father Borden was a handsome man, who married his great love May in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan on October 19, 1940. Their only son Bob was born on June 28, 1941. Borden signed up for military service as a volunteer with the NRMA in June 1942. He had been staying there for two years when he signed up for the army in June 1944. Already on August 5, 1944 Borden went overseas to the United Kingdom and mid-August he ended up in north-west Europe with The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada.

Their son Bob was about three years old when he saw his father for the last time.



November 1, 2022, Bob visits his father's grave for the 1st time

Borden participated in heavy battles that took him via Belgium to the Netherlands and was involved in the ultimate battle to conquer the enemy in The Hochwald Gap in Germany. This battle was fatal to Borden and he died on February 28, 1945. Borden was reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek.

His son Bob and his wife Karen arrived in Groesbeek from Amsterdam by taxi, especially to visit the grave. My husband Wim and I, Liesbeth of the Research

Team, gave them a warm welcome and straightaway there was a cordial bond. Bob practically ran over to the grave after my request to chat a bit first. He did not seem to have time for this. It was emotional, but at the same time good to see how much this meant to him. He wanted to hear from me whether his father's remains were actually here in this grave and fortunately I was able to reassure him that this was the case. He told us that his mother had never remarried and had always grieved for the loss of her husband.

After leaving him alone with his father for a while, I handed his father's preliminary life story over to him. Karen picked up some autumn leaves that lay scattered near the grave, and we chatted a bit more. Unfortunately, the visit could not last very long as the taxi was waiting for them, but on their departure they were satisfied, happy and felt good about their visit. The sun was shining brightly, which made the cemetery full of autumn leaves look very colourful.

Bob and Karin were immensely grateful, because they had seen that there are people who take care that the cemetery looks neat and tidy and that the soldiers' stories are being written, so that they will not be forgotten. Once back home, he thanked us again and asked our permission to consider us his Dutch brother and sister. I cannot think of a warmer token of appreciation. However, this token applies to all of us, to everyone who is working hard for this great project.

Liesbeth Huisman-Arts, Research Team Faces To Graves.



Liesbeth Huisman, Bob Buchanan and his wife Karen