

## Explanation.

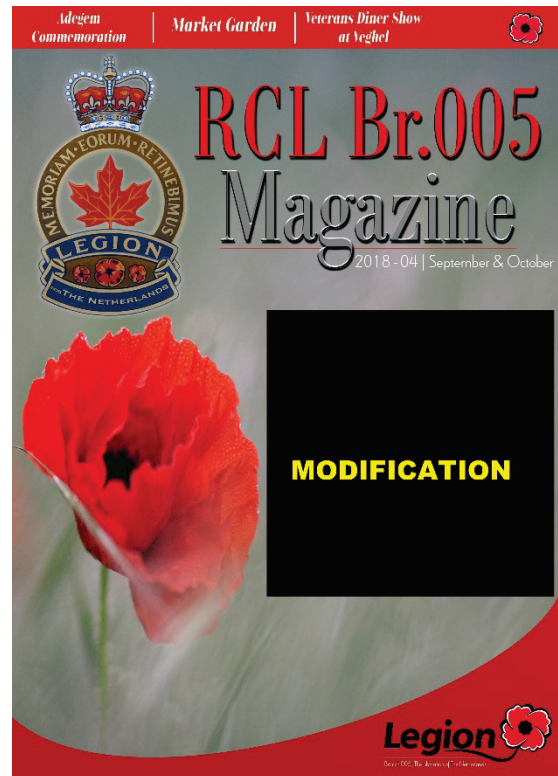
Unfortunately, the design of the Magazine new style seems to be taken too high.

The layout was in a format that not everyone has on his computer. The purchase of the software is quickly arranged, but working quickly and securely with it, is not a piece of cake.

For the time being we have to operate with a simple layout, with which several people can work.

In addition, it has been decided to publish this newsletter on a monthly basis. The advantages are:

- fewer pages, so you spend less time reading them,
- the announcements are substantially more up-to-date.



With that last point in mind, we are turning away from the themes of November and December 2018 in this newsletter. Publishing information from months ago is a bit strange we think. In itself a pity because it took a lot of time for the editors and also for the comrades who had taken the time to write a column

It is possible that in a month with little information we will briefly publish the events of November and December 2018. They are available in English, so when you take an interest in reading them send a message: <mailto:redactie@rcl005.nl> and which format you prefer: Word or PDF.

One more thing: if you have interesting information for us in the Netherlands: let us know. We are happy to publish it. Remember that not all comrades and other interested people poke around on Facebook.

At Your Service!

*Gerard Hendriks*

*Herman Sligman*

Attention: for the latest items: <https://www.facebook.com/rcl005.nl/>



## New Year's reception RCL Branch 005.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019, the usual New Year's reception was held at the Mondani clubhouse in Lochem. A reasonably visited event. Very suitable to catch up with comrades that we see less often and of course to convey the good wishes for the new year. The Canadian Ambassador, H.E. Mrs. Nólke was present and so was the military attaché Colonel Young.

Our Chairman, Gerard Hendriks welcomed the attendees. He wished everyone a healthy and prosperous new year. Next on his list: a short review of the past year and a preview of 2019. It might become a year with many activities because the southern part of the Netherlands commemorates 75 years of freedom. He expects that the number of applications for participation will be higher than average.



*A misunderstanding has arisen due to a misinterpretation of photographs by the editor. The correct text should be: Poppy Chairman Danny Murphy handed out Certificates of Appreciation to several comrades for their commitment during the poppy Campaign. The final yield was satisfactory, although it can always be a bit more.*

Welcome was also the information that the Ambassador shared with us: the proceeds of the fund-raising evening at the Canadian Embassy.

After the formal affairs there was a pleasant atmosphere in "our club room" for some time.

Needless to say that it was nice to stay with our comrades.

Column: *Herman Sligman*





## Training Colour Party RCL Branch 005.

In the southern part of the Netherlands, in 2019, 75 years of Freedom will be remembered in many places. In 2020, of course, followed by the major national commemorations.

Because a lot of invitations are expected this year, it seemed desirable to increase the number of comrades that want to participate in a Colour Party. On January 31<sup>st</sup> 2019, a training was organized under the guidance of Sgt-at-Arms Martin Reelick.

The interest in it was considerable. Both more experienced and newcomers had registered. The aim was to familiarize the new members for the CP with the commands and the exercises.

The Colour Party is pre-eminently representative for our Branch 005. Of course the participants are volunteers, but nonetheless they want to present themselves well, especially in ceremonies with a large audience.

In addition, the possibility was given to a number of interested people to practice for the function of Sgt-at-Arms. That function requires a few reserves. In summary an instructive day, which will have a follow-up in April.



it looks like something already



Some practising desired

A correct wreath-laying was also practiced by several people.

Column: *Herman Sligman*





## Commemoration of the Battle for the Kapelsche Veer.



February the 2<sup>nd</sup>. A sober commemoration in cold and wet conditions. It was remembered that 74 years ago the battle for the Kapelsche Veer ended. A German bridgehead on the Bergsche Maas. A completely unnecessary prestige duel between two generals, John Crocker and Kurt Student.

*Commander of the 1st British Corps was General John Crocker. He thought this German bridgehead should be overwhelmed at any price. The last part of this battle was Operation Elephant, the codename of an Allied operation against paratroopers holding a ferry crossing at Kapelsche Veer, Maas River, Netherlands. The Poles tried it in the last days of December and again on 7 January 1945, both times without success. The 47th Royal Marine Commando, under Polish command, attacked the place on 13 and 14 January (Operation HORSE) with no better result. Finally the 4th Canadian Armoured Division mounted a very considerable attack (Operation ELEPHANT) against the position with ample artillery support and tanks; but there were five icy days of thoroughly nasty fighting--the phrase of the 10th Brigade's historian is "sheer misery"--before it was reported on 31 January that all enemy south of the Maas had been liquidated. The brunt was borne by the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, assisted by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and South Alberta Regiment tanks. The Germans had lost 145 killed, 64 wounded and 34 prisoners. The tough young paratroopers had received in the end a rather more severe lesson in the art of war than Student had intended.*

*(Official Summary of the Canadian Army)*

Casualties on the Allied side: 300.

Column: Herman Sligman





## Groesbeek.

On Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the beginning of Operation Veritable was commemorated on the Canadian War Cemetery. It was a gloomy day and a strong wind made it less pleasant. It was as if nature wanted to make a small contribution to the commemoration.

At the start of the operation, 75 years ago, the weather conditions were downright unpleasant, as can be read from the notes

from that time. Of course RCL Branch 005 was present. This time special attention was paid to the killed members of the Royal Canadian Air Force. During the Second World War, approximately 250,000 men and women served at the RCAF. The RCAF had more than 17,000 casualties.



PER ARDUA AD ASTRA is the motto. Usually translated as: despite of adversity to the stars. In other words: to reach the top (goal) you have to overcome the setbacks. How appropriate and not only for the fighters in the air.

More than a hundred guests and interested parties were welcomed by Mrs. Jeanne Melchers, employee of the Liberation Museum.

After this, several people spoke. Amongst others: Mr. Bert Eikelenboom.

He specifically highlighted Flying Officer Robert Cecil Smalley. Killed as crew member of a bomber who crashed near Eindhoven.

On his headstone we read:



*GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS, THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR OTHERS.*



## ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 005 THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

In between there was appropriate music, among others March Past of the RCAF. Wreaths and flowers were laid. Among others, the deputy mayor, representatives of neighboring German municipalities, the Faces to Graves Foundation and, of course, by RCL Branch 005.

After the Last Post and a minute of silence Chaplain Franken gave a short speech. The Canadian and English national anthems were performed, then the European hymn.

The ceremony was decided by Mrs. Melchers with the reading of the ac

It was decided by Mrs. Melchers by reading the Act of Remembrance.

Column: *Herman Sligman*

Pictures: *Albert de Valk*



Groesbeek 1947



### A little history.

#### Operation Veritable.

Also, in February 2019, RCL Branch 005 took part in the commemoration at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek. The start of Operation Veritable was commemorated.

Veritable was one of the five operations of the Rhineland Offensive, the collective name of military operations between February 8<sup>th</sup> and the end of March 1945. The aim: the conquest of the Rhineland and the crossing of the Rhine. The other four operations were codenamed: Grenade, Blockbuster, Plunder and Varsity.

Main goal of Veritable: the expulsion of German troops between Meuse and Rhine, east of the Dutch-German border. Originally set up as Operation Valediction for the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Army supplemented with the XXX British Army Corps and planned for January 1<sup>st</sup> 1945. Due to the German offensive, known as the Battle of the Bulge, the Allies were forced to postpone the operation. Veritable is also known as the Battle for the Reichswald. A fairly large and sloping forest area between Kranenburg, Cleve, Goch and Bedburg-Hau in North Rhine-Westphalia. The Germans had heavily fortified this natural obstacle with anti-tank canals, trenches and barbed wire and minefields.

#### Players on Allied side:

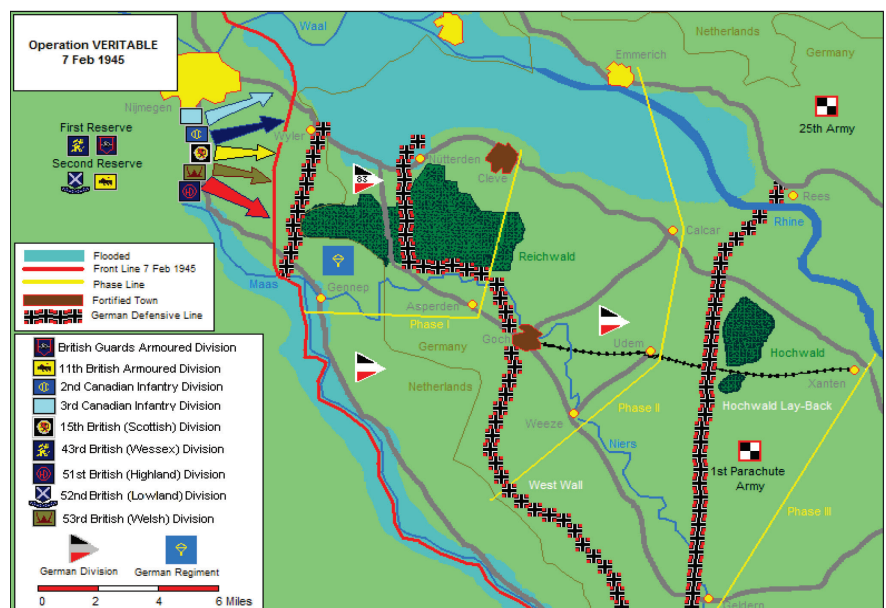
The 21<sup>st</sup> army group of General Montgomery; composed of the 2<sup>nd</sup> British Army under Lieutenant General Dempsey, the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Army under Lieutenant General Crerar and the 9<sup>th</sup> US Army under Lieutenant General Simpson.

In fact, we want to focus primarily on the Canadian share. It is striking that less is known about this in the historiography. The cause is probably because the Canadian troops, contrary to the original plans, were under the command of the 30<sup>th</sup> British Army Corps under Lieutenant-General Horrocks. The reports are predominantly British oriented. For those who are interested: at the NIMH (Dutch Institute for Military History) you can see war diaries of many allied army units.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Army had two Army Corps: the 1<sup>st</sup> under Lieutenant General Foulkes and the 2<sup>nd</sup> under Lieutenant General Simonds.

Based on three lines of defense from the Germans (see map) three phases were planned.

1. Conquest of the Reichswald and secure the Gennep-Asperden-Cleve line.
2. Breakthrough through the second German defense line east and southeast of the Reichswald and the conquest of the cities of Weeze, Uedem, Calcar and Emmerich.
3. Breaking through the Hochwald defense line and getting control of the Geldern-Xanten line.



the three lines of defense

## ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 005 THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

Although less known, Veritable was more extensive than Market-Garden. The offensive, launched on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1945, was preceded by a crushing artillery attack on the enemy positions. The day before, Cleve and Goch had already been heavily attacked by the RAF. However, due to a communication disorder with high-explosive bombs instead of fire bombs. The allied vanguard would later experience that, in particular, Cleve was changed into a well-defensible ruin.

After a fairly rapid advance across Dutch territory (east of Groesbeek) the problems came in the Reichswald. Here were only a few useful roads that were heavily under German fire. As an additional handicap: a cold penetrating rain that would fall with little break for the next five to six days. It turned the low, cratered ground into a quagmire, extremely difficult to access. In addition, the relatively narrow advance area, only 8 to 9 kilometers, the enormous amount of equipment that was used, quickly created long queues of military vehicles. Heavy fighting, heavy losses and moderate progress especially for the Canadian units.



waiting for the start

On February 9, the Germans had stowed dams and locks in the Ruhr and the next day in the Urft. Large areas were flooded, causing Operation Grenade to be seriously delayed. (Only on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 1945 the 9th US Army could cross the Ruhr.)

This gave Field Marshal von Rundstedt the opportunity to relocate reserve troops to the British-Canadian front sector. Among others: the last elite troops on the western front, some divisions Fallschirmjäger. (paratroopers)

There was no room for maneuvers or smart strategy in the narrow field of attack. Later General Horrocks wrote: " ... we simply had to ram through. " The deployment of the large force (about 200,000 men) in combination with approximately 35,000 vehicles testify to this. In the vanguard of the attack were deployed among others: Churchill tanks with flame throwers, Bren carriers with flame throwers (Wasps), Crabs, (also known as Flails) tanks for running a path through minefields, Churchill tanks with Petard mortars (11 inch), amphibious vehicles, bridge laying tanks, in short, every conceivable special material available.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division, operating on the north flank, had to take first the township Wyler. They had the space in their advance zone for a slight flanking movement for an attack from the southeast.

The resistance was unexpectedly violent. Wyler was taken at the expense of 15 fallen Calgary Highlanders and two victims of Le Régiment de Maisonneuve.



Sherman Crab Flail in action



## ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION BRANCH 005 THE LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

Hereafter, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division was taken back and replaced by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division and the 15<sup>th</sup> Scottish Division.

The latter unit was given the assignment: "break the Siegfried line and conquer Cleve". This meant being confronted with two German Infantry regiments, two defense lines heavily reinforced, shielded by barbed wire barriers, minefields covered by heavy machine guns and all that, behind a wide anti-tank ditch. Justly they got a large armor support. The 6<sup>th</sup> Guards Tank Brigade (178 tanks), two Regiments of the 79<sup>th</sup> Armored Division, two squadrons flamethrowers and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Household Cavalry Regiment.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division drew up through an inundated territory. The dike along the river Waal near Erlecom was blown up by the Germans and the entire area on the left flank was flooded. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade, veterans of D-Day, deployed Buffalo amphibious vehicles and they got air support from Hawker Typhoons.

The men of Régiment de la Chaudière waded through ice-cold water to their waist during their attack on Leuth. In the morning twilight of the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, they had taken their aim; two hours later, Zyllich was also free from German defenders. Around noon the Canadians had taken all the objects and the submerged areas were swept clean and ensured the complete British left flank. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division of Major General Dan Spry continued the advance. The Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders moved with their amphibious Buffalo's directly to Donsbruggen and made contact with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gordon Highlanders and advanced to Rindern.



Churchill tanks in Cleve, 12th of February 1945

The order to take Cleve was given to the 15<sup>th</sup> Scottish Division. Here the advance stalled. The ruins in Cleve and the resistance of the German 47<sup>th</sup> Panzer Corps caused major problems. It was only on 11<sup>th</sup> of February 1945 that Cleve was free from German troops and the front widened to approximately 20 km. A battle break and regrouping followed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Army Corps with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division launched the advance to the Hochwald on February 26 and advanced along the Rhine towards Calcar and Xanten.

Operation Blockbuster had started.

Column: *Herman Sligman*

Sources: Wikipedia, Warfare History, other internet information.

Onderdeel van Tweede Wereldoorlog	
<b>WEST - CENTRAL GERMANY AND BELGIUM, 1944</b> <b>THE RHINELAND CAMPAIGN,</b> Operations, 8 February - 5 March 1945	
<span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Operation Veritable <span style="background-color: green; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px;"></span> Operation Grenade	
<b>Operaties Veritable (geel) en Grenade (groen)</b> <b>Datum</b> 8 februari - 11 maart 1945 <b>Locatie</b> Reichswald, Duitsland en omgeving <b>Resultaat</b> Geallieerde overwinning	
<b>Strijdende partijen</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>  Verenigd Koninkrijk   Canada </div> <div>  Nazi-Duitsland </div> </div>	
<b>Leiders en commandanten</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>  Bernard Montgomery   Brian Horrocks   Harry Crerar </div> <div>  Alfred Schlemm </div> </div>	
<b>Troepensterkte</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>200.000 men</div> <div>90.000 manschappen</div> </div>	
<b>Verliezen</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> 15.634 casualties amongst them  5.304 Canadians </div> <div> 38.000 doden en gewonden  52.000 krijgsgevangenen </div> </div>	

## GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING 2019.

The Annual General Members' Meeting of RCL was held on 24 February. For start a number of new members have been installed. In addition to a number of important points of attention, the various board members and members of the working groups reported on the activities of the past year.

There were also board elections held under the inspiring leadership of comrade Peter Bongers. Gerard Hendriks had indicated that he wanted to resign from his position as President and thus automatically joined the board as Immediate Past President.



five new members

There were a number of candidates for the various positions, who were immediately appointed, because they were the only candidates. Only for the function of Treasurer were two candidates (Peter Mensink and Martin van de Poel). An election procedure had therefore to be carried out.

The new board currently consists of:

President - Martin Reelick  
 Past President - Gerard Hendriks  
 1st Vice President - Albert Hartkamp  
 2nd Vice President - Wim Poppenk  
 Secretary - Eelco de Zee  
 Treasurer - Peter Mensink  
 Liaison Officer - Yvonne Swarthoff

The functions Sgt-at-Arms and Poppy Chairman still have to be assigned by the new executive board.



L to R: Yvonne Swarthoff, Albert Hartkamp, Peter Mensink, Eelco de Zee, Wim Poppenk

The meeting thanks Gerard Hendriks and Martin van de Poel for their long service record for RCL005.

Text and pictures: Ruud Janssen.