



Reports for the 2023 General Members Meeting on April 7, 2024

**REPORT ON THE YEAR 2023 (2023/2024)
FROM THE SECRETARY.**

The year 2023 has been a year with highs and lows for our Branch, which applies to every year, but we lost our President, Martin Reelick on November 4, 2023, which was an unprecedented low for our organisation (please see the “In Memoriam” in our [Newsletter of November 2023.](#))



Partly due to the inability to fill the positions of 2nd Vice President and Treasurer during the previous AGM, our organisation was weakened; however, the requests, our “core business” went well and in 2023 the Colour Party and/or Delegation of our Branch attended **37** events. Board meetings also carried on, according to plan, however the Secretary was unfortunately less available in the first quarter of 2024 due to health problems.

The collaboration with the Canadian Embassy, commemoration organisers, and other relations continued to run smoothly.

We bid farewell to H.E. Lisa Helfand as Ambassador of Canada and thanked her for her cooperation over the years. The new Ambassador, H.E. Hugh Adsett has been welcomed to our Clubhouse in Lochem in January 2024 and our collaboration is proving fruitful.

As I indicated in the 2022 report, we will need to place focus on the composition of the Colour Party. It is often difficult to get the Colour Party to full strength. Therefore, I once again call upon our members to consider candidates in their area who may be interested in becoming a member of the Colour Party. Training will be provided, of course.

We will continue to work with a focus on the Indigenous Legacy Project regarding Canadian First Nations Soldiers, in which we want to honour the fallen Canadian soldiers with Indigenous roots. I refer you to the messages in our newsletters and especially the messages from the Project Group.

The formerly annual Red Maple Soirée, hosted by the Canadian Embassy, continues to be on hold; therefore, the fundraising which had previously been associated with this, of which our Branch received funding, is no longer available. Colonel Marc LaFortune, Military Attaché has promised support in the past year to revive the Red Maple Soirée.

The Board continues to be of the opinion that it is highly desirable that education by members of the Education Working Group take place in more locations throughout the Netherlands than is currently the case.



Maintaining the membership administration formally is the responsibility of the Secretary; however, much praise goes to our Membership Administrator, Anneke Poppenk. Anneke ensures that the databases of our members and other contacts is updated and developed throughout the year, and also maintains contacts with the Dominion Command in Canada in this regard.

In preparation for 2024, a very useful overview has been made of all requests and activities. This model is also a good basis for making a budget. Such a budget can form an important part of the “good governance” desired by the Board.

Finally, we are increasingly bothered by “Spam” emails via the addresses on our website. As a result, we are at risk of being caught by a “phishing” scam. We are working on a system to avert our risks in this regard and will inform the membership about this in the coming months.

March 2024,
Mr. Jan CK van Loo LL.M., Secretary

WORKING GROUP RETHINKING and REMEMBERING

Report for 2023

The aim of the Working Group is to provide advice to the Board on incoming requests for the participation of the Colour Party and/or Delegation in events. The Board then decides regarding participation based on this advice. Specifically, these reviews apply to requests for participation that do not occur in our ‘regular’ annual ceremonies.



On the website, the guidelines of the Colour Party participation are outlined. These are laid out in the Commemoration Instructions. You can find these on the website in the Member Portal – Management Information – Commemoration Instructions.

The Commemoration and Remembrance Working group is comprised of: Berry Swarthoff, Gerrit Bruggink, Toon van Bussel, Danny Murphy, Peter Mensink, and Wim Poppenk. Due to distance, time, and costs, the group did not meet in 2023.

The Group reported that 2023 was a ‘normal year,’ as we are no longer hindered by the COVID-19 virus. The Colour Party and Delegation were once again able to fully contribute to the various commemorations and festivities around the country. As noted, the Colour Party and/or Branch Delegation attended 37 events in 2023. It is nice to see that both local and national organisations are reaching out to us once again.

It is of note, however, that in many cases the Colour Party could not be deployed at full strength in 2023, and in two cases we had to decline invitations.



Members of our Branch have been present at commemorations and/or unveilings that were organised locally. For example, on Christmas Eve, Canadian and other cemeteries were visited by members of our Branch, who placed candles at the graves.

It was noticeable in 2022, continuing into 2023, that the content of some commemorations is changing in character. The Working Group will therefore adopt a critical attitude in the future to prevent our Colour Party from being used as 'decorum'.

In 2023, our Branch continued to maintain contacts initiated in 2022 with the RBL and the US Legion with an aim to further expand this in 2024.

The death of our President, Martin Reelick, made a great impression on the members of our Branch. Our Branch Delegation and Colour Party attended in force, as expected, at Martin's funeral.

On behalf of the working group,

Wim Poppenk

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

Report for 2023

General Information

Database

The database contains all members, youth members, ex-members, volunteers, memorial relations, Board of Patrons, sponsors, and all other contacts for the Branch, and is updated and developed throughout the year. It is a good basis for providing insight into the number of members and for communicating with members and other contacts. The list is also used to send digital requests and newsletters, invitations, and invoices.



The attendance list for the AGM and the birthday list also come from the database, as do the address labels for birthday and Christmas cards.

The membership list naturally changes constantly due to changes of address, new registrations, and cancellations throughout the year.

We try to ensure the database remains as accurate as possible.

Membership Entrance

The Board meeting of March 17, 2021 established that new membership commences when he or she is registered with Branch 005 and with Dominion Command in Canada. Currently, a new member is often registered with Dominion Command within a week of registration, provided the required information is present.



If one registers partway through a quarter, membership will commence the following quarter. This information will be used to calculate number of years for membership (for membership pins). The contribution will be calculated pro rata.

Addressing Change

We kindly ask members to report any changes in address to the membership administrator:
Membership.administrator@RCL005.org

No Email Address?

We ask members who cannot be reached by email to ask another friend/family member to contact us by email. Without email contact, the member will miss out on a lot of information, which would be a shame.

In practice, it is virtually impossible to send all information by letter mail.

Number of Members

In 2023 we faced the loss of several members and past members of our Branch. Mr. B. Ruijs (January); Mr. A. de Man (May); Mr. P. Spierenburg (June), as well as our President, Martin Reelick (November) following a long illness.

We will not forget our members and their commitment to the RCL.

As of December 31, 2023 the Branch had 91 members.

In 2023, three comrades (and one ex-member) passed away. Two members cancelled their membership as of January 1, 2024.

Ten new members were welcomed in 2023. We are pleased to welcome two youth members to the newly established Youth Auxiliary.

Installations

Three members were installed at the General Members Meeting on April 16, 2023. Two Canadian members were installed on May 4, 2023 during a scheduled meeting.

Anniversaries

During the AGM on April 16, 2023, several members were eligible for anniversary pins.

2 members – 15 years of membership

4 members – 10 years of membership

5 members – 5 years of membership.

*NB Not everyone who was eligible for the pin was present during the AGM.

Four 20-year pins were awarded to members during the year.



Sadly, these pins cannot be awarded if the member in question is not present at the General Members Meeting.

Anneke Poppenk

Membership Administrator RCL Branch 005

POPPY CAMPAIGN 2023



The purpose of the Poppy Campaign is to raise money for the Canadian Veterans who served in many conflicts and also participated in the Liberation of the Netherlands during the Second World War. There were approximately 7,000 Canadian victims during the Liberation of the Netherlands.

€1,500 has been transferred to the bank account of RCL Zone Europe in Germany.

Of course, thanks go to all of the volunteers who helped with the campaign; both members and non-members of the Branch, without whom such a result would not be possible.

Our Branch needs more Poppy Volunteers to make this next year a success again!

If members know of a place where a poppy collection tin can be standing, particularly during the campaign in October/November, and would be able to arrange this, please contact the Poppy Chairman or someone from the Board.

We had poppy collections in Zandvoort, Hengelo, Wageningen, Ginkelse Heide, and Groesbeek during the 4-day march, as well as at Mondani in Lochem. The Promotion Tent was also very helpful with revenue.

There are currently about 9,000 poppies left in the Branch stock. With this coming year being a special year, 80 years of Liberation in the South of the Netherlands, we hope to raise a good amount for our charity.

I would like to thank everyone again, members and non-members, for their time and commitment to the Poppy Fund of our Branch.

DJ Murphy
RCL Branch 005
Poppy Chairman



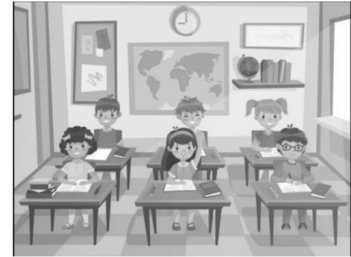


EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

Report for 2023

The Working Group is comprised of: Berry Swarthoff, Mark Veldhuis, and Gerrit Bruggink.

The aim of the Working Group is to spread knowledge and information through the educational lessons at schools, usually relating to the history of WWI and WWII.



These lessons also highlight the objectives of our Branch. In fact, sharing the intended objectives is a task for us all.

In hindsight, in 2023, we can say that education in schools is very problematic for several reasons.

There is a level of unrest everywhere, further nourished by the media. Schools deal with children from countries where there is current unrest and even war. In our country we receive people from these areas and children are given a place in Dutch schools. This puts extra pressure on schools and teachers.

Organising guest lessons, as we advocate, is therefore seen as an extra burden.

Fortunately, we are working with a few schools that want to combine the lessons with the commemoration of 80 years of freedom in 2025.

In Veenendaal and Nijverdal, lessons were given about local history in combination with information about the military equipment and uniform worn in one of the two World Wars.

Mark Veldhuis is responsible for sharing in secondary education. This is an annual commitment, and the objectives of RCL Branch 005 are clearly stated and discussed in these lessons.

On a personal level, everyone contributes. This year, a contribution was made again through several battlefield tours in which information was shared.

Our Canadian visitors are also informed and educated about the history and the tasks we fulfil in this regard.

The meaning of the Poppy as a commemorative symbol was also further expanded in 2023, including with our neighbours in Germany. A poppy was presented to all attendees.

We will remember them!

Information was and is also collected and passed on by various members, often upon request. This is also a form of EDUCATION.

Thanks to those who are committed to this.



Objectives 2024

We will continue to approach schools to give shape to our objectives.

A number of conditions will have to be adjusted.

Firstly, it is necessary that the webpage of our Branch is adjusted to include a description of the teaching material and how the material will be delivered. This should be found under the heading EDUCATION.

We look forward to new challenges in 2024. Let us all hope for more peace in the world.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the frame of our Branch in 2023, in whatever form.

On behalf of the Education Working Group,

Gerrit Bruggink

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP ICT/SOCIAL MEDIA/PROMOTION

(ICT – Information and Communication Technology)

1. **Website** (Renier Groeneveld, Herman Sligman, and Ruud Janssen – webmaster ai)

The technical management of the RCL005 website has been in the hands of our late President, Martin Reelick, for many years. He ensured that the website was supplemented and adjusted if necessary at the request of members of the Website Working Group (i.e. text changes, new topics, posting photos, commemorations, keeping member portal up to date, and registering new members, as well as posting newsletters). Martin was supported by Herman and Ruud.

From the beginning of 2023, the website was hosted by a new company, Fly Webservices in Maartensdijk. The intention was to complete a substantive and technical update. Comrade Amanda Slotboom also volunteered to assist with this process. Unfortunately, this no longer took place due to Martin's illness, but has proven to be urgently necessary. We hope to welcome Amanda soon.

The website is currently being maintained to the best of our ability. Reinier has offered to lend a helping hand because he is well versed in the software program (Wordpress). Herman, Renier and Ruud are all authorized for this and have access to make adjustments.





For the time being, the primary point of contact is Ruud, as Webmaster; however, this is a temporary solution. A proposal has been sent to the Board to guarantee the continuity of the website because it is the calling card of our Branch where visitors and members can go to get general information about RCL 005.

2. RCL005 Photo Archive (Ruud Janssen/Herman Sligman)

The photos/videos taken by members or external parties of events where RCL 005 is present and delivered to Ruud or Herman are archived on the RCL005 One Drive so they can be used in the future. Martin also made albums from these files and placed them on the website.

From July 1, 2023 the photos/videos will be archived, but will no longer be visible on the website. A number of these photos will be posted on the RCL005 Facebook page shortly after events.

The photo archive is part of the proposed update of the website (see point 1).

3. Microsoft Office 365 (Webmaster, Ruud Janssen ai)

RCL005 uses Microsoft Office 365 for its communication, both internally and externally. Board members and Working Group members have accounts within it and can communicate with each other, as well as use Microsoft applications.

The account can be linked to an external email address (from RCL005 or private) so that external communication can also occur.



The Working Groups also have the option to form a distribution group.

The organisation and administration was maintained by Martin as Webmaster, but was (temporarily) taken over by Ruud with the knowledge of the Board.

With the upcoming RCL 005 Board elections and the new options that Microsoft offers to ANBI organisations, it will be necessary to reorganize Office 365. The new Webmaster will need to take this on within their responsibility of the position.

4. SumUp/Mollie (Promo team/Webmaster/Treasurer)

In 2023, greater use was made of these financial tools (SumUp payment terminal and Mollie Pay). The first is mainly used at the promo tent and Kitshop for PIN payments. There appeared to be high demand for this payment option (resulting in less cash in circulation).



Mollie Pay is used for payments via QR code that can be used in various places for donations or pay contributions from our (particularly foreign) members. ICT organisation is also necessary for these tools, as is the management of financial transactions by the Treasurer of RCL005.

This was a positive development that will certainly continue in 2024 and beyond.

5. LaPosta (Ruud Janssen)

For some time now, the email program LaPosta has been used instead of standard email to send information (i.e. requests for commemorations, Board messages, invitations, newsletters, etc.) to our members and relations.

It is clearly visible to the reader that the mail comes from RCL005 and (usually) does not end up in SPAM folders. The program is user-friendly and can be used by several people. It also increases mutual replaceability which must be arranged in 2024. Moreover, LaPosta is free up to 2,000 contacts.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The amount of multimedia resources has increased rapidly in recent years. It is important for our Branch to use the right resources and deploy them correctly.

Currently, there are a limited number of members working in various Working Groups. In the future, it will need to be determined whether this is adequate or if it should be organised more efficiently by merging a number within the responsibility of a Communications Working Group.

The RCL005 Youth Auxiliary has its own website, Facebook, and Instagram. This will be reported on separately .

1. **Promotional Tent & Merchandise** in trailer (Elly van Wakeren, Connie Lempke, Reinier and Suzanne Groeneveld, Ruud Janssen)

In 2023, after Board approval, a plan drawn up for the Promotion Tent and trailer was revived.

The intention is to attend several events to promote and provide information about RCL. The permanent team hopes to be helped again by RCL 005 volunteers who were also present in 2023, for which the Working Group sends their thanks!

Below is a contribution from Elly who managed the Promotion Tent for most of 2023.

PROMOTION TENT



Assisted by varying volunteers for each event.

€3,750 sold

€1,450 purchased

In the past, we attended three major events: the 4-Day Marches, the Airborne March, and at Ginkelse Heide. Last year, we held those events for the first time with our permanent promotion team. We also attended Poppy Day in Zandvoort with the Promotional Tent and Youth Auxiliary.



The RCL005 Promotion team with a guest from Canada

After we stood and worked together for the first time at these events, the plan arose to expand this. Firstly, to gain more awareness, and secondly (and not unimportantly) to generate income to help keep RCL005 going and achieve its objectives.

Ruud and Reinier took the lead, and a plan was presented to the Board, which was approved. Ruud ensured that the trailer was maintained, cleaned, and all items were selected, sorted, and supplemented with new items.

Reinier and his daughter Suzanne ensure that the Youth Auxiliary becomes known and are working to further shape this.

The trailer with promotional materials is now stored in Amstelveen near Reinier's home, which has proven to be more convenient than at the Clubhouse in Lochem. Previously, someone had to pick up the trailer, usually Berry Swarthoff took it to the location of the event (many thanks!), while the trailer now comes immediately with Ruud or Reinier to the event in question.

Stock tracking is now also much more effective. Everything is manageable and Ruud (in consultation with the team, and Board if necessary) knows what needs to be reordered or when we introduce a new item.

While we incurred costs in 2023 to get everything set up and in order, we have already benefited greatly from this at the events in September.

On March 24, 2024, we were present in the Evenementenhal in Gorinchem at the KTR Fair. This was the first time at this fair and the result was not disappointing. The intention is to visit several locations this year to make the promotional tent fully profitable. When we need extra help, we hope to be able to reach out to our fellow comrades. The Airborne Walk in Renkum, for example, was an extremely busy event. 5 or 6 members will be busy for several hours.

It may also happen that we are not all available on a certain date and in that case, we naturally hope for help from the members of RCL005.

If there are any members of our Branch who have nice ideas for us, we would like to hear them. We have achieved everything necessary, but of course are open to more suggestions. We hope that we will experience several fun events this year and that we will continue to work together as pleasantly as we do now.



Elly van Wakeren

2. **Kitshop** (Connie Lempke, Ruud Janssen, Peter Bongers)

The Kitshop is managed by Connie Lempke. The 'mounting' of the RCL005 medals and printing of wreath ribbons is carried out by Ruud with the help of Kitshop attributes.



The RCL 005 treasurer is responsible for handling costs and orders. Below you will find a report from Kitshop manager, Connie.

Kitshop

I have been managing the RCL005 Kitshop for a number of years now. It is positive that the new members have found their way to the Kitshop, especially in the past year, often because existing members or Board members point this out. Perhaps we should make the existence and email address of the Kitshop even more known, so that the line of communication becomes a little shorter.

It would be nice if the members would send me an email to kitshop@Rcl005.org with their question and/or order, so that I can respond immediately.

In addition to the items in the Promotion Tent, which everyone can purchase, the Kitshop contains items for members that are necessary for the correct RCL uniform.

If a Colour Party or the Promotion Tent is involved in an event and I am present, the Kitshop will also be included, so if there are members who need something, I can immediately provide the necessary material, if it is in stock. Payment can be made directly by bank transfer or PIN. If there are any questions about the uniform or other items that are not available in the Kitshop, I can provide the members with addresses where they can be obtained upon request.

It is sometimes difficult when it comes to supplying the Kitshop. All orders from Canada have been placed by the Treasurer in the past. These orders sometimes come to me months later.

This should be able to be arranged properly for RCL005, without incurring many additional costs. We as a Branch will have to work on this in the coming period.

During the last New Year's Reception, I sold quite a few items from the Kitshop to new members and therefore, my stock has shrunk considerably, and is sometimes sold out. This is a fantastic development and therefore necessary that I can replenish the stock in a reasonable period of time.

Connie Lempke



3. Facebook (Berry Swarthoff, Ruud Janssen)

The RCL005 Facebook page is used to quickly notify members and other interested parties (especially in Canada) about events in which RCL005 plays a role. It also mentioned other important matters, such as historical items related to contemporary events.

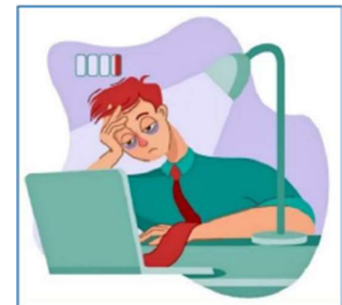
Currently, members often submit photos via WhatsApp for publication; however, this is a cumbersome way to processes them for the administrators of the Facebook page.

If you have more than 10 photos, please submit them via WeTransfer (wetransfer.com) to redactie@rcl005.nl. Photos may then also be used in the newsletter. It would also be very appreciated if a short report of the event is included with the photos. The management of the WhatsApp CP and RCL groups should be evaluated soon and the right people will be appointed as administrators.

4. Newsletter (Editors – Herman Sligman, Ruud Janssen)

The composition of the RCL005 Newsletter is in the hands of Herman, who is mainly responsible for content. Ruud acts as an extra pair of eyes for any additions or corrections.

In 2024, Comrade Dré van Roomen indicated that he wanted to help provide content and this has already occurred successfully a number of times, which really helps the editors.



Newsletter

We will try to continue on the path we have chosen, (i.e. to place the edition on the website asap after the end of a calendar month).

In the 2022 report, we indicated we wanted to give each edition a little more 'body.' This did not come to fruition.

The Dutch and English versions of the newsletter differ slightly more often in content. Some items are interesting to overseas members, but less so for Dutch readers, and vice versa.

In the 2022 report, we also stated that we wanted to provide a somewhat appropriate background story every month, which was and is particularly appreciated overseas. This intention has now been scrapped, as reported in the 2023-12 edition. No response was received to the column in that edition.

To close: the final lines of the 2022 report also apply to last year:

Is there anything left to wish for?

Apparently not, given the response from the reader group. From the editorial perspective: DEFINITELY!

The input from readers, whether RCL members or not, leaves something to be desired. (Understatement).



Herman Sligman

5. RCL005 Website (Reinier Groeneveld, Herman Sligman, Ruud Janssen webmaster)
The RCL005 website was already discussed earlier in this report under the ICT section.

The website will have to be as stable as possible in terms of content, providing facts, and information about the RCL and Branch 005 in particular.

This will be included in the renovation of the website. It is and remains the calling card of our Branch that is visited and read with interest by outsiders (especially Canadians). Therefore, a link to RCL Facebook and Newsletters is included. The Google Agenda can also be found on the website, in which as many events as possible are listed. Members, but also other interested parties, can find their way to these events. We hope that support will be provided in 2024 by, for example, Amanda Slotboom.

6. YouTube (Ruud Janssen)

Videos can be uploaded to the RCL005 YouTube channel, which can then be used in other multimedia resources. This is currently only used sparingly and, in our opinion, should be incorporated into a communication plan for 2024.

7. LinkedIn (Ruud Janssen)

At the request of Martin Reelick, a LinkedIn page was created in early 2023 to make RCL005 more well known among companies that might want to or could sponsor our activities.

The LinkedIn page is visited, but there are no concrete results to report yet because the management has not yet been delegated to the RCL005 Branch organisation. This is a point of attention for 2024.

As you can see, there are more than enough (fun) things to do within RCL005. Good mutual coverage must also be arranged so that matters continue even if a member of a Working Group is absent or unable to do their tasks.

If you are interested and/or have specific knowledge that can help the Branch, please contact one of the people listed in brackets behind the topics described in this report or the undersigned. I will then ensure your question is brought to the attention of the right person.

On behalf of those involved in these Working Groups,

Ruud Jyssy

r.janssen@rcl005.org



Youth Auxiliary Annual Report (March 1, 2024)



During the Canada Day celebration on July 2, 2023, the Youth Auxiliary of the RCL Branch 005 was founded with the mission to involve youth in our activities and to carry the Canadian Remembrance Torch during commemorations. On the same day, we had two members who immediately enthusiastically started working on the assignment and a new uniform was put together quickly.

The establishment of a Youth Auxiliary is supported by Dominion Command; however, it falls outside their scope of activities. It is seen as a Branch activity. It is up to the Branch to shape the Youth Auxiliary. This also means that there are no existing rules or guidelines. Our inquiries revealed that there was no other Branch with a Youth

Auxiliary at that time, leaving us without outside inspiration. Creating rules and preliminary plans were therefore the priority for the Working Group.

On October 7, 2023, the proposed rules/guidelines were approved during a discussion with the Secretary and Sgt. At Arms. The Chairman of a Branch in Saskatchewan has now reached out because he would also like to establish a Youth Auxiliary. It looks like they will follow our example in their implementation.

The first commemoration in which the Youth Auxiliary participated was the commemoration in Groesbeek on July 17, 2023.

The Youth Auxiliary marched together with the Colour Party, the Torch was ignited and the Commitment to Remember was recited:

***They were young, as we are young.
They served, giving freely of themselves.
To them, we pledge, amid the winds of time.
To carry their torch and never forget.
We will remember them.***

The Youth Auxiliary also participated in the commemorations in Bergen-op-Zoom (October 29, 2023) and Groesbeek (February 8, 2024). During the Groesbeek commemoration, the Youth Auxiliary not only participated by carrying the Torch and reciting the commitment to remember, but also by participating in the wreath laying ceremony on behalf of RCL Branch 005.

The Youth Auxiliary was further active during the Airborne event on Ginkelse Heide (September 16, 2023) and the Poppy Campaign (November 4, 2023).





There are also plans to participate in the KTR (Keep Them Rolling) Fair, together with the Promotional Tent team on March 24, 2024.

A separate website has been created for information about and promotion of the Youth Auxiliary (www.youth-auxiliary-rcl005.nl), and there are social media accounts active on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

A brochure has also been printed. These are not only taken to events but are also located and 13 places around the Netherlands, most of which are war museums. They are also located at the Juno Beach Centre in Normandy.



The Youth Auxiliary is currently working on Project Carry Their Torch. The project consists of two parts.

Part one consists of a (social) media campaign that will generate attention for the locations in the Netherlands that remind us of the price that Canadians have paid for our freedom. There are 188 places in the Netherlands where Canadian soldiers are buried and more than 370 locations in the Netherlands where a monument, plaque, or information board is located.

Part two is to create a website where schools can find the information they need to learn and recognise Canada's role with their students during our liberation.

All costs incurred for the various promotional materials were financed through a donation.

On behalf of the Youth Auxiliary,

Reinier Groeneveld