



Winter 2025

RCL 'Liberation of the
Netherlands' Branch 005

2025-01

In this issue:

Join our comrades in several places around the Betuwe!

Members were seen in Kapelsche Veer, Groesbeek, Uden, Milsbeek and more!

We also have comrades busy in Brabant, with The Dutch Polar Bears bringing stories of war victims to life on the big screen, as well as a new book published (see the story in the New Year's Reception).

Do you have another event you've attended? Or something you would like to share?

Please reach out the Editor at liaisonofficer@rcl005.org

And so it begins...

The year of celebration and reflection has begun with many commemorations throughout the Betuwe.

Members of our branch are showing up en force to different cemeteries, monuments, and ceremonies around the country, and our Colour Party have a full dance card this spring.

Don't forget, our Annual General Meeting is coming up next weekend, March 16th at our clubhouse in Lochem. Please make sure you have RSVP'd so our gracious hosts can be adequately prepared.

We look forward to seeing many of you throughout the coming months.

Amanda Slotboom

The New Year's reception took place in our clubhouse, Restaurant Mondani, in Lochem on Sunday, 19 January. About 60 comrades and guests were present to wish each other a happy New Year and enjoy the comradery. Piper, Dick, of the 48th Highlanders of Holland played the national anthem of Canada, and our president Wim Poppenk welcomed the guests.

It was a nice big event!



Among many branch members and spouses were special guests; the Canadian Ambassador, Mr. Hugh Adsett and his wife Beth Alexander, along with Military Attaché Col. Yannick Lemieux and his wife Erica Frank.

Ruud Jansen and Connie Lempke brought the merchandise of the promotent and Kitshop for members. It was also a nice moment to present the 80th anniversary commemorative pin of our Branch 005 to the members.

Comrade Dré van Roomen presented his book "De Gerda Hoeve tijdens de tweede wereld oorlog". If anyone would like a copy, please contact Dré.

The afternoon was 'gezellig' and enjoyed by everyone. Thank you again to Berry and Yvonne and staff at Mondani for the wonderful drinks, snacks and service.



If you are interested in purchasing this book (only in Dutch), please use [this link](#) to contact Dré



Comrades Ben Zonneberg, Alice van Bekkum, Danny Murphy, Hendrik Kuiper and Gerrit Bruggink



Comrades Mark Veldhuis and Yvonne Swarthoff

Kapelsche Veer

On Friday, 31 January, a commemoration was held at the Kapelsche Veer monument, remembering that eighty years ago the Allies conquered a German bridgehead near Capelle. An estimated one thousand casualties in that five-week battle, 450 of whom died.

According to experts, this was the most pointless offensive in the province of Brabant. It had already been liberated for months. The Maas was the front line, except at Kapelsche Veer, where Fallschirmjäger occupied the island on the southern bank of the Bergsche Maas... it would be a bitter battle.

The Polish ambassador presented a Polish award to three attendees. It was the "Pro Patria" award. (The Pro Patria is a sign of special merit for strengthening and cherishing the memory of the struggle of the Polish people for the independence of the Polish Republic during and after the Second World War).

It was an impressive commemoration where also four comrades of our branch were present. A wreath was also laid on behalf of our Branch.



To learn more, click [HERE](#)

From right to left: Comrades
Ad van Uffelen,
Dré van Roomen,
Johan Pieters,
and Gerrit Bruggink



Operation Veritable



Saturday, 8 February 2025 marked the 80th anniversary of the beginning of Operation Veritable at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, hosted by Groesbeek Airborne Vrienden. A well-attended service was held on a cold, windy morning, with our Colour Party in attendance, as well as Comrades Wim Poppenk and Danny Murphy who laid a wreath on behalf of the branch, and Gerrit Bruggink who laid a wreath on behalf of the Queen's Own Rifles.



Also present were Canadian Ambassador Hugh Adsett and his wife, Beth Alexander and W/O Nicole Mitchell, who laid a wreath on behalf of Canada. Our RCL Branch 005 was represented by a large group.



Afterwards, a book presentation along with a chance to warm up with coffee, tea, and a slice of appeltaart, took place at Camping Nederrijkswald on the Zevenheuvelenweg.

The book "Gegen das Vergessen – Tegen het vergeten" was presented. The German-Dutch book is a unique collection of original diary fragments from German and Dutch citizens who experienced the war in this border region.

In the 23 stories, many of which have never been published before, you will read about fear, hope, but also the determination of people for whom every day was a new challenge. The German stories have been translated into Dutch, and vice versa, the Dutch stories have been translated into German.

The book is a co-production of the Groesbeek Airborne Friends and the Heimat- und Verkehrsverein Donsbrüggen.

A special thank you to Paul ten Broeke for his photos of the day.



On to Uden...

Following the service and reception in Groesbeek, Comrades Gerrit Bruggink, Amanda and Maikel Slotboom moved further down the highway to Uden, where an information plaque was unveiled outside what became the headquarters of Canadian 4-star General Henry Crerar, who led Operation Veritable and commanded 380,000 soldiers.

Initially, the attendees were welcomed in what is now the Stichting Laverhof (Het Retraitehuis), for refreshments while stories were shared with the group. Ambassador Adsett impressed those in attendance with his Dutch greeting.

Outside, several WWII era vehicles ringed the circular drive.

As the group moved outside, towards the unveiling, the sun had come out and the wind abated, the City of Apeldoorn Pipes and Drums accompanied the delegation, walking towards the front of the Retraitehuis.

Ambassador Adsett unveiled the sign alongside the mayor of Maashorst, Hans van der Pas, and IOFF's Peter van der Meij.



Check out the
highlights of the day
[HERE](#)



WARRIORS' DAY PARADE est. 1921

In Commemoration of the **80th Anniversary of the end of WWII**
and the **Liberation of the Netherlands**



Saturday, August 16, 2025 ▶ 10:30 am

Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Photo: World War II. Liberation of Holland. Dutch people waving at allied planes. The Netherlands, 1945
Photo: Infantry of the Le Régiment de Maisonneuve moving through Holten in the Netherlands
Illustration: Netherland & Canadian Flag on top orange tulips

thewarriorsdayparade.ca



Courtesy of the British Normandy Memorial

The Return of the Giants

The hugely popular 'Standing with Giants' installation returns to the British Normandy Memorial ahead of VE Day 80.

The giant silhouettes are returning to the meadow fields of the British Normandy Memorial, following last year's overwhelming response to the ambitious and captivating project by the Standing with Giants charity.

The installation will be available to visit from 12 April until mid-September, and the Winston Churchill Centre (including café and shop) will also reopen on 12 April.

In 2024, nearly a quarter of a million people visited the Memorial, many of whom experienced the power and poignancy of the 1,475 servicemen placed with heads bowed on the hillside overlooking Gold Beach, each representing a life lost on D-Day, 6 June 1944. In this VE Day 80 anniversary year, the figures will serve as a symbol of the bittersweet emotions faced by so many at the end of the Second World War in Europe – joy that the war had ended alongside the reality of absent loved ones who never came home.



Find more information [HERE](#)

The search for photos of fallen soldiers in Gennep

In recent decades we have collected many photos of the soldiers buried in the municipality of Gennep. When I started writing about the war graves in the municipality, first for Facebook and later for the book "Tread Softly", the search became more concrete.

In 2023, Roel Dekkers and I decided to commit to a photo project to get as many photos as possible on the war graves. Our goal was to present this for the first time during the commemoration of 80 years of liberation of the municipality of Gennep. The idea was of course not new, Faces To Graves Groesbeek was the biggest inspiration for us.

The search started and some families came to us with photos, but mostly deeper research was needed. Many photos came to light through cultural-historical circles and with the support of Ms Marples and Tracy van Oeffelen.

Our count now stands at 98 photos of the 218 graves: 92 of the 210 in Milsbeek and 6 of the 8 in Ottersum. We have collected all the photos of the 4 Dutch soldiers who died in the Second World War and are buried in the municipality. With the help of the Vfonds, we were also able to print the photos and place them at the graves.

On February 15, 2025, we presented the photos for the first time during a small ceremony at the cemetery in Milsbeek. The symbolic first photo was handed over to the relatives of the family of Robert McGurn, who died on February 9 during fighting in Milsbeek.

From now on we will post the photos every year on May 4 and around the Veritable commemorations in February. In this way, during commemorations, the faces become visible and we take the men out of their anonymity.

Lest we forget.
Paul ten Broeke



Comrades Bruggink
and Slotboom



Family of Robert McGurn



A Sign of Friendship

The mayor of Rees received a special gift from the RCL Branch 005

First Vice President, Gerrit Bruggink, visited Rees and presented Mayor Sebastian Hense a commemorative coin for the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Mayor Hense explained, *“This is a sign of friendship that goes far beyond our local borders. It shows how much we have grown together globally despite the terrible events that happened over 80 years ago. I am very grateful for this moment.”*

You can read the full story [here](#).



Our friends, The Dutch Polar Bears, have been hard at work in Roosendaal, where the once well-known diary of Paula Geerts, aged 18, is being filmed.

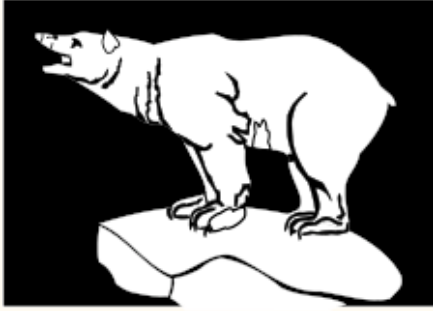
Omroep Brabant (writers Evie Hendriks & Eva de Schipper) was on location in Roosendaal, reporting on the film being made by The Dutch Polar Bears foundation in February. Comrade Daan Breugelmans is the Chairman of The Dutch Polar Bears and shared that he hoped Paula's story would become better known through this film and their interpretation.

The film will premiere on Saturday, 3 May in the city cinema in Roosendaal. Afterwards, it will be shared in schools as a teaching aid.

Please follow this [link](#) to view the entire article on Omroep Brabant's website.



Operation Anger



The Second Battle of Arnhem and the Forgotten Liberation



In April 1945, the British 49th West Riding Division (the Polar Bears), supported by the 5th Canadian Armoured Division began their offensive into the city of Arnhem from Westervoort. The battle took four days and cost 62 British and 4 Canadian lives, but Arnhem came fully under Allied control.

Arnhem, itself, had been emptied of citizens and completely looted, so the British and Canadians had no problems bombing it to kingdom come. For a whole day, artillery and aircraft rained death on the city. Hawker Typhoon fighter-bombers launched early British rockets to blow up buildings and tanks.

On the 12th of April, General Foulkes ordered the Polar Bears to commence their attack that evening, following more than 100 Spitfire and Typhoon rocket-firing sorties throughout the day. The attack was also preceded by one of the heaviest artillery barrages ever fired by the I Canadian Corps (one field gun battery averaged eight rounds per minute!). The Pioneer Corps also fired 30,000 smoke shells over the course of the battle.

A diversionary barrage from south of the Nederrijn provoked a strong German response, suggesting they were prepared for the attack to come from the south, rather than the east.

At 10:40 PM of April 12th, under artificial smoke cover and using amphibious tracked Buffaloes to cross the IJssel, three infantry brigades of the 49th West Riding Division (The Polar Bears) leapfrogged each other through the city and within four days Arnhem was under Allied control.



Four companies of the 2nd Battalion of The Gloucestershire Regiment made their crossing under the cover of heavy machine gun fire and reached the west bank of the IJssel at 11:15 pm. By 12:40 am, the Royal Canadian Engineers had already begun floating the Bailey bridge components into place. The South Wales Borders then crossed, drifting downstream, and then advanced rapidly into the city. When their advance stalled, the 1/7th Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment was sent across to support them. By 7:00 am the 2nd Battalion of the Essex Regiment were also across the river and the RCE had set up a pontoon ferry to begin moving in the tanks of the Ontario Regiment.

Resistance in the morning of the 13th was light, however, as the Allies reached the Enka BV factory complex in the eastern part of the city, they came upon a heavily defended strong point, with a battalion of 346th Infantry and troops of the 46th Festungs Machine Gun Battalion. The 4th Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment were tasked to clear the complex, against a relatively strong defence.



With support of the tanks of the Ontario Regiment and the 79th British Armoured Division, the Germans were overwhelmed, and most of the resistance in the city had broken down. By Friday, April 14th the 147th Brigade had crossed the Nederrijn and joined the 56th Brigade. German defence was crumbling, but the battalions of the 147th encountered significant numbers of mines and demolitions as they advanced. D Company of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment ambushed what they believed to be a German counterattack led by three French Renault tanks, although it was later learned that the Germans had no idea that the British were there.

Later that day, the Dutch soldiers of the 34th SS Volunteer Grenadier Division Landstorm Nederland, supported by armour, counter attacked the Duke of Wellington's position, but were eventually beaten back when their tanks were knocked out.

By the end of the 14th, the Allied units had reached all of their objectives and Arnhem was secure. The 5th Armoured Division then began to move onto the high ground north of the city, meeting up elements of the SAS units who had been operating behind enemy lines since early April. On April 15th and 16th, the Germans were cleared out of Velp and the surrounding areas, bringing Operation Anger to a successful end.



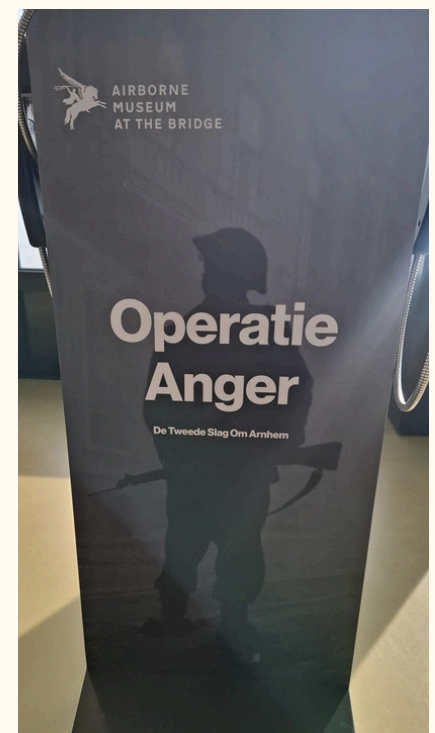
The Allies liberated a ruined city. After the looting the previous year, houses were little more than empty wrecks – devoid of furniture, household goods and even doors. CBC news correspondent Matthew Halton described the city as "a deserted, burning shell" and the 49th Division war diary noted that "a town had never been more wantonly destroyed." Evidence of the first battle of Arnhem lay everywhere and the liberation was likened to "entering an ancient tomb."

Perhaps this why the liberation has been forgotten?

Airborne Museum Hartenstein has opened a new temporary exhibit this spring on Operation Anger, thanks in large part to curator Jory Brentjens.

In his opinion, the battle and liberation have been forgotten for three reasons.

- The strategic significance of the operations. If Market Garden had succeeded, it would have had a very large impact on the further course of the war and also the post-war situation. All of the Allied leaders were looking at the Rhine and at Arnhem in September 1944. The same cannot be said for Anger. The capture of Arnhem in April 1945 did not have any impact on the course of the war, which by this time had already been won.
- The absence of people. Because of the evacuation of the civilian population in September 1944 there were hardly any citizens left in Arnhem. They could not celebrate the liberation of their town and did not make any connections with their liberators. They did not share basements and hide-outs with the Allied soldiers like the inhabitants of Oosterbeek and Arnhem had done during Market Garden and no lasting connection was made.
- The fascination with a heroic defeat. The story of Market Garden and particularly the battle of Arnhem is one of a heroic defeat. For a long time, the outcome of the operation hung in the balance and there was a chance that the Allies could have succeeded. Stories like these are incredibly compelling and historians have been arguing about the operation ever since it happened. Again, the same cannot be said for Anger, the outcome of Anger was evident from the very start and there was no doubt in anyone's mind who was going to win the battle. This has contributed to the lack of attention for the operation.





Operation Anger is no longer forgotten, though.

This year, for the first time, Comrade Maikel Slotboom, along with Comrades Daan Breugelmans, Amanda Slotboom, as well as others, have come together to initiate the very first commemoration of the Forgotten Liberation on Sunday, April 13th at 1300 hours in Stadhuis Arnhem.

With the support of the Dutch Polar Bears, Museum Niemandland, and the Airborne Museum, the men of Operation Anger will be remembered and show the respect and gratitude they've deserved for 80 years.

The Committee is grateful for the support of the Canadian, British, and German Embassies, as well as proud to host three families of these brave men.

We Will Remember Them



Coming Up

Sunday, March 16 @ 1:00 pm

Annual General Meeting @ Clubhouse Mondani

Graaf Ottoweg 6, Lochem



Sunday, March 30	Commemoration in Netterden
Monday, March 31	Commemoration in Etten
Tuesday, April 1	Liberation Parade in Haaksbergen
Friday, April 4	Commemoration in De Leesten (Zutphen)
Wednesday, April 9	Commemoration at Vimy Ridge, France
Thursday, April 10	Remembrance Concert Hellendoorn
Sunday April 13	The Forgotten Liberation, Arnhem
	Commemoration, 48th Highlanders, Holten
	Commemoration in Posterenk

Find us online:



Please support our Branch

All donations are appreciated and always welcome. We have ANBI status. All donations qualify for a tax deduction. Please visit the link to our website above.