



In memoriam: Theo van den Bergh

Dear readers,

It is with sadness that we share the news that our oldest member, Theo van den Bergh, passed away on 22 February at the age of 89. For many years, Theo was a familiar face within our foundation and a valued member of our community.

His commitment, warm personality and dedication will always remain with us. We cherish the many wonderful memories we were able to share with him and are grateful for all he meant to our foundation.

Besides his membership of our foundation, Theo devoted his whole life to numerous organisations, such as for Sinterklaas, the football club and playground De Klimbim in Waalre. He was very committed to young people. This was evidenced by the fact that he enthusiastically told schoolchildren about his own youth during the war years at various commemorations.

We wish his family and loved ones much strength during this difficult time.

With sincere condolences,

On behalf of all members of Stichting Erfgoed 40-45, municipalities of Valkenswaard and Waalre" ●



Searching for Faces and Stories

Our foundation continues its quest to find photos and background stories of the soldiers laid to rest in Valkenswaard. Despite our dedicated efforts, we still lack images and personal histories for several servicemen. Your assistance in this endeavor would mean the world to us. If you possess any photographs, letters, or personal stories about the following soldiers, we kindly ask for your help. We are trying a new approach by categorizing the soldiers based on their place of origin. If you happen to be from the same region as one of these soldiers and would like to assist us in uncovering more about their lives, please reach out. Your local knowledge and connections could be invaluable in giving these heroes a face and ensuring their legacies live on.

Birmingham Area:

In the Birmingham area we are looking for more information on the following soldiers, if you are able to help us out with information of any kind please contact us.

Arthur Meredith Cook

Rank: Private
Service No: 4919422
Date of death: 24/09/1944
Age: 27
Regiment/Service: Monmouthshire Regiment 2nd Bn.
Want to know more about this soldier? Click [this link!](#)



George Alfred Harris

Rank: Private
Service No: 14440689
Date of death: 26/09/1944
Age: 18
Regiment/Service: The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 2nd Bn.
Want to know more about this soldier? Click [this link!](#)



Frank George Johnson

Rank: Private
Service No: 14441901
Date of death: 09/10/1944
Age: 18
Regiment/Service: Queens own Cameron Highlanders 5th Bn.
Want to know more about this soldier? Click [this link!](#)



Herbert Eric Gunther Giles

Rank: Private
Service No: 14443547
Date of death: 01/10/1944
Age: 19
Regiment/Service: Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders 2nd Bn.
Want to know more about this soldier? Click [this link!](#)



George Edward Walker

Rank: Guardsman
Service No: 2718987
Date of death: 17/09/1944
Age: 20
Regiment/Service: Irish Guards 3rd Bn.
Want to know more about this soldier? Click [this link!](#)



Commemorative Coin – 80 Years of Liberation

To commemorate 80 years of liberation, our foundation designed a special coin that embodies the essence of this historic event. Our goal was to create a tangible memory, rich with symbolism and personal connections to the events of 1944. These coins were specially designed for the 80th liberation of Valkenswaard. They were handed out to relatives of the soldiers that are buried at the Valkenswaard War cemetery. This was done during the special remembrance evening that was organised by us on the 17th of September last year.

Frontside

On the front side, the coin displays the iconic image of Operation Market Garden, depicting paratroopers and ground forces who played a pivotal role in liberating Valkenswaard. Soldiers from the 30th Corps are shown crossing Joe's Bridge, a crucial strategic point near the Belgian border. Surrounding them are poppies, the universal symbol of remembrance for war victims.



Reverse side

The reverse side reveals a fragmented blend of the Union Jack and a map of Valkenswaard, illustrating the paths taken by the liberators. This design symbolizes the broken lives of those who fell during the conflict, along with the deep impact on their families and communities. Beneath the map and flag, a field of poppies serves as a poignant tribute to the lives lost in our region. Around the edge, 80 small blocks mark each year of freedom since liberation. Also inscribed are two powerful phrases: "Lest we forget" – a reminder of the importance of remembrance, and "For your tomorrow, we gave our today" – a tribute to the sacrifices made by so many young men.



Remembrance coin in Sydney and Leeds

This coin has already touched many hearts. We were deeply moved to learn that one of the coins now resides in Sydney, Australia, gifted by David Wilkinson to his grandson in memory of his uncle, private Richard (Dick) Lawler who gave his life for our freedom 80 years ago. It is displayed in a glass case, preserving the story of liberation for future generations. Another coin has found its way to Leeds, where it is cherished by the family's youngest member, Jack, who is Dick's great-great-nephew. Through these coins, the legacy of sacrifice and courage continues to inspire across generations and continents. ●



The Central Archive for Special Criminal Jurisdiction

The year 2025 marks a significant moment in Dutch history: the partial opening of the CABR archives. These documents contain crucial information about Dutch citizens accused of collaborating with the occupying forces during World War II. The release of these records has received significant media attention in the Netherlands. Members of our foundation attended an informational session at the Brabants Historisch Centrum to learn more about the archives' background and how to interpret the information within them.

Initially, the plan was to launch a fully searchable website, which would provide a wealth of information not only about those who collaborated or resisted but also about daily life during the war, based on eyewitness testimonies. This would have been an invaluable resource for researchers like us.

However, due to privacy regulations, the Dutch government decided to limit access. Now, the archives are only accessible by appointment, and photographing documents is prohibited. This limitation presents challenges for researchers, including our foundation, as important historical context remains unavailable. For example, we still do not have a complete picture of the role played by the NSB (Dutch Nazi Party) mayor of Waalre.

Another concern is that while names are now publicly listed online, the absence of context makes it difficult to determine whether a person was found guilty or acquitted. This can easily lead to misunderstandings or wrongful assumptions.

The heightened media attention surrounding the archives has resulted in a surge of visitors to the National Archives. During our research, we were surprised to discover the names of several family members in the records. However, to learn more about their stories, we will have to wait for an available appointment in The Hague, where the full archives can be accessed.

Our foundation is proud to have contributed to this important documentary, which sheds light on the complexities of war history and helps preserve the stories of those affected. We remain dedicated to uncovering and sharing these historical narratives, ensuring that they are remembered and understood by future generations.

Foundation Contributes to Dutch Documentary on War Archives

On January 3, 2025, the long-awaited release of the "Centrale Archieven Bijzondere Rechtspleging" (CABR), also known as "The Archive of Wrongdoers" in the Netherlands, was scheduled to take place. These archives contain information about Dutch citizens who were accused of collaborating with the enemy during World War II. However, due to privacy concerns raised by the Dutch Data Protection Authority, the full digital release was halted. Currently, only basic details—names, birth dates, and places—are accessible online, while the full files can only be viewed in person at the National Archives in The Hague.

Our foundation was approached by Miel Andriessse, whose Jewish family lived in Waalre during the war. Just thirteen months after Miel was born, his parents made the heartbreaking decision to hide him with the Verhees family in Helmond to keep him safe. Meanwhile, they went into hiding at the local tennis club in Waalre. Tragically, they were betrayed by two locals for just 15 guilders and were arrested and deported to Auschwitz, where they were killed.

We were honored to assist Miel Andriessse by visiting significant locations in Waalre related to his family's story and providing him with additional historical insights. On January 2, 2025, the first episode of the documentary aired, featuring Miel and the house where he was hidden during the war.

Together, We Keep Their Memory Alive

On January 9th, 2025, our foundation was invited to attend the New Year's Reception hosted by the Commissioner of the King, under the theme "Together, We Shape Brabant". This gathering provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen our network and collaborate with other heritage organizations. ●

Raimondo Bogaars Honored with Volunteer Medal

We are proud to announce that our secretary, Raimondo Bogaars, was awarded the Volunteer Medal of Waalre in November 2024. This honor was given in recognition of his dedication to our foundation and his valuable contributions to preserving the local heritage of Waalre. This follows his earlier recognition by the Municipality of Valkenswaard for his historical work in the region. Congratulations, Raimondo!

Thank You for Your Support!

As we move forward into 2025, we are grateful for the continued support and commitment from all of you. Your involvement ensures that the memories of those who fought for our freedom are preserved and honored.

If you have any questions, contributions, or would like to become more involved with our foundation, please feel free to contact us.

Together, we remember. Together, we honor. ●



Support the foundation!



In addition to our special posters, which were designed for the festivities, there are many more unique items available to support our foundation. The posters are available in A3 (€10) and A4 (€5) sizes, serving as a beautiful reminder of this festive period. We also offer a wide range of merchandise, including stickers, magnetic stickers, keychains, and flags. Soon, you will be able to find these products on our website.

Additionally, the books "Het donderde in de lucht" and "The Road To Valkenswaard" are still available. "Het donderde in de lucht" explores the local wartime history of the air war and its impact on our community, while "The Road To Valkenswaard" focuses on the liberation and the personal stories behind these historic events. Both books are highly recommended for those who feel connected to our history.

Interested?

Feel free to contact the foundation or order soon through our website. With each purchase, you contribute to the preservation of our heritage and the work of the foundation. ●

Your help

The Erfgoed 40-45 Foundation, along with the municipalities of Waalre and Valkenswaard, is a nonprofit organization. This means that all income is used to support the goals the foundation strives for. These include the costs associated with running the foundation (bank fees, website, postage, etc.), research into the graves, education for the local youth, providing a cup of coffee for family members who come from all over the world to visit the graves, and many other related activities.

To cover these costs, we are always looking for sponsors or donations. If you would like to sponsor the foundation, please contact us. We can also discuss any potential benefits, such as an advertisement in our newsletter or on our website, a banner at an event, etc. Furthermore, we are always looking for stories, photos, artifacts, etc., related to World War II. If you have something, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

We thank you in advance for your support! ●



VWCAP is a part of the Erfgoed 40-45 Foundation, in collaboration with the municipalities of Valkenswaard and Waalre.

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In the name of Stichting Erfgoed 40-45

The foundation has ANBI status.