

Wuustwezel

75 jaar

Bevrijding

1944 – 2019



Herdenking

19 oktober 2019

In the presence off :

Mr. Dieter Wouters

Burgomaster and Bench of Aldermen Wuustwezel

Musical intermezzo

Klaroenen

Red Hackle Pipe and Drums

Ms Frieda Rock & Mr Tony Decora



Het monument is geschonken door het Gemeentebestuur van Wuustwezel en opgebouwd door de Gemeentelijke Technische Dienst. Wij danken hen voor deze betekenisvolle bijdrage.

The monument was donated by the Town Council of Wuustwezel and constructed by their Technical Services. Our gratitude fort heir meaningful contribution.

Klaroenen
"Warning fort he Parade"

Gevolgd door aantreden vaandels met
Red Hackle Pipe & Drums

Welcome by
Eric Van Goethem
Chairman The Polar Bear Association

Music
Red Hackle Pipe & Drums

Speech by
Mr. Dieter Wouters

Music by
Ms. Frieda Rock & Mr. Tony Decora

Speech by
Mr. Neel Vermeiren

Music by
Ms. Frieda Rock & Mr. Tony Decora

Prayers by
Rev' Brian Milson

Music by
Red Hackle Pipe & Drums : "Amazing Grace"

We will remember them
The Exhortation, 1 min stilte, Kohima

Klaroenen
"The Last Post" en "Reveille"

Music by
Red Hackle Pipe & Drums

Flower tribute

Music by
Ms. Frieda Rock & Mr. Tony Decora

Closing the ceremony
The national anthems

Music by
Klaroenen : "Le Boudin" en "Sunset"

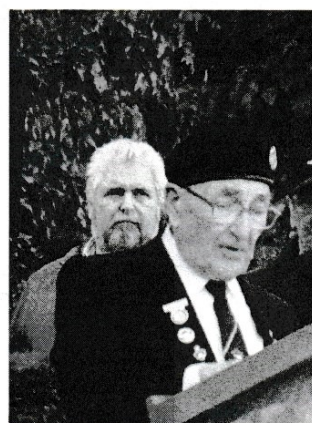
Groeten en aftreden vaandels



Dank U voor het in herinnering en ere houden.



Thank you for remembering and honouring.



Enkele van de veteranen, spijtig overleden.

Some of the veterans, sadly passed away.

Speech Mr Neel Vermeiren October 19th 2019

Esteemed Guests,

Today we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of our town. We are grateful for those 75 years of peace and for the efforts of so many soldiers. But men from Wuustwezel too gave their lives for our freedom.

Today is not only a day of festivities and gratitude, it's also a day of mourning and commemoration. October days remember us that our town was liberated from the occupier. In May many families of Wuustwezel were saddened and heartbroken because several young men were arrested and transported to the concentration camps.

The route of the allied bombers in 1944, now 75 years ago, passed above our region. When the Germans shot a bomber down the airmen with their parachute ended up in this area. People of the resistance helped those airmen to stay out of the hands of the Germans. Men from Wuustwezel were involved in the escape route. Who were the guys of the resistance, to risk their lives to help the pilots and aircrew? Sometimes they got in to it without realising it. Jan Jochems hid an American pilot out of humane reasons. The pilot needed to get away ASAP. A call was made to resistance people and before the family Jochems realised it, they were a place of contact for airmen to stay a while to be transported further down the lifeline. Some people had a big sense of justice, like Jan Herrygers, who couldn't see that freedom was limited and the population was exploited. Some were idealists. The youth club of Wuustwezel was a pool of committed youngsters. A priest, Father Van Loenhout inspired them to work for the emancipation of the worker. They learned all sorts of techniques like repairing bicycles, electricity, acting and evenings with song and acts on stage. They build with Louis and Fons Vermeiren, furniture makers, their on banjo's and formed a banjo orchestra. With them were Gustaaf Van Geenhoven, Jaak Pockelé en Jaak Vermeiren. Their commitment showed their political interest, as members of the civil guard, which during the war took care of the town so empty houses would not be plundered and as members of the fire brigade. From this commitment the joined the resistance. By treason the lifeline was round up. Between May 27th and May 31st 1944 the members from Wuustwezel, Gooreind en Loenhout were arrested. As an example I give my uncle Jaak Vermeiren. He knew he was in danger. My father tried to persuade him to flee but Jaak feared that another family member would be taken. On May 30th there was pounding on the door. My grandmother opened and a few Flemish collaborators ran upstairs and grabbed my father from his bed. But Jaak came and said : It's me you are looking for. The family never saw him again. The same day Jan Cools was arrested. Jan and doctor Leysen were the only ones who could return.

The group from Wuustwezel and Hoogstraten were transported to Buchenwald and from there to Dora, called the production site of death. The resistance men were humiliated and subjected to inhuman treatment. At Dora the group got separated and some went to Harzungen and Ellrich where they died from exhaustion. Their bodies were burned in the ovens of Dora. When Wuustwezel was liberated, or some time before or after, our boys died. My uncle Jaak died exactly on the day Wuustwezel was liberated, October 21st 1944. Now 75 years ago.

In April 1995, with the 50th commemoration of the liberation of the camps, a delegation from Wuustwezel visited the places where our boys stayed during captivity, Buchenwald, Dora, Harzungen en Ellrich. At Ellrich there's only a little memorial. My cousin, Louis Boden and I went to the site where once prisoners worked in stone and chalk quarries. Now it's a nature area. But by the surrounding rocks, still there is a feeling of being locked up. When we stood there we saw a buzzard fly. Our boys would have seen the bird flying above and longed to be free as a bird. There is the poem written.

This poem is written by Jaak Vermeiren while in captivity in the camp. It's about the bird and their thirst for freedom and home.