

NIEUWS / NEWS

A milestone reached

With the allocation of the adoption of the remaining graves at the American Cemetery, the foundation has reached its first milestone. The job is practically finished, a time-consuming task especially for Mr. B. Kleijnen and Mrs. Duizings-Croonen. In fact this means, that almost all 8,301 graves of fallen American liberators have been adopted. By now, each adoptive father has received a certificate with details of the adopted, as mentioned on the gravestones. The adoptive fathers not only live in the Netherlands and Belgium, but certificates have even found their way to Germany, France and Switzerland. Providing that these adoptive fathers are able to meet the requirements.

The adoption register, a dynamic register

The news, that all graves have been adopted, does not mean that in future graves will no longer become 'vacant'. Nothing further from the truth. In practice, because of old age or death of an adoptive father and even emigration or alike, cause graves to become 'vacant'. The job never ends. Applying for adopting graves remains possible. In case of no graves being 'vacant', the name of the applicant will be put on a waiting list.

With this letter the foundation wishes to inform the adoptive fathers about the activities and developments within the organisation.

The search for information on the adopted one

Especially during the last few years, adoptive fathers have been searching for information on the fallen one, whose grave they have adopted. They want to now more about how this person died, his age and other personal records. The search, even with the help of internet, does not always lead directly to success. Patience and perseverance are a must. You can find information on how to proceed on our website: www.adoptie-graven-margraten.nl or www.fallennot-forgotten.nl.

The search for information on the adoptive father

Regularly the foundation receives emails of American next of kin, informing about the name and address of the adoptive father of their (grand-)father's or uncle's grave. Within 24 hours they will receive a reply. In practice most cases do not lead to direct contact, simply because most information is requested by veteran-organisations overseas.

The Walls of the Missing

The board of the American Cemetery has agreed, that also the names of the fallen liberators on the Walls of the Missing can be put up for adoption. In these walls the names of 1,722 fallen American liberators are carved, whose bodies have never been found or could not have been identified, the so-called Missing. 48 names are marked with a bronze rosette, meaning that they have been recovered at a later stage.

For the adoption of the names on the Walls of the Missing the normal rules apply. For this the adoptive father will also receive a certificate with details of the missing liberator. If you are interested in adopting a name, please turn to:
st.adoptie.graven@margraten.nl or write to Postbus 22, 6269 ZG Margraten FAO the Association Adoption Graves American Cemetery Margraten.



Limburg Award 2008

The members of the board of the foundation were particularly honoured with receiving the Limburg Award 2008 on Monday March 17th during a festive gathering at the Hoensbroek castle.

The decoration is an appreciation for the hard work done by the volunteers of the foundation during the last years. The Limburg Award is an initiative of Pro Team Limburg and is annually handed out to persons or organisations who, according to an independent jury, have outshone in the promotion of the Limburg province. The Award, an artwork by expressive artist Appie Drielsma, accompanied by a cheque of Euro 5,000.- was handed to the chairman Mrs. Opreij-Bendermacher in the presence of the mayor of Margraten, Mr. H. van Beers. The Pro Team Limburg was founded in 1992 by a number of enthusiastic cyclists. Back then it was a group of famous and known persons of Limburg, that supported social projects on bike.



Summary of the word of thanks at the Limburg Award

During her word of thanks Mrs. J. Opreij-Bendermacher goes back to the arrival of the first fallen Americans in Margraten, November 1944. On top of that she recalled to memory the strains of the predecessor of the foundation, the civil committee Margraten and especially the care of Mr. F. Prevoo, who managed the adoption register by himself during the last decade. To

As from left: J. Aussems (secretary), J. Opreij-Bendermacher (Chairman), A. Haenen, R. Croonen (treasurer), F. Lahaye, M. Duizings-Croonen, B. Kleijnen en J. Purnot. Not on the photograph W. Kamerman.

everyone's surprise the chairman announced that a great part of the money price will go to the AWON-organisation in America. This is an organisation of orphans of fallen American liberators. This to support an initial visit for the children of fallen liberators, who normally cannot afford to visit the grave of their father in Margraten by themselves. The remainder is used to develop communicational and educational material for youngsters. This to increase awareness and involvement in the work of the foundation. Furthermore the chairman quoted in her word of thanks: "we should not take the more than 60-year-old freedom in Western Europe for granted". That is why we should keep even the terrible memories of war alive. To these memories the American Cemetery, the planned Memorial Centre and our Foundation can contribute immensely.

If you are interested in the complete speech, you can turn to: www.adoptiegraven-margraten.nl



Memorial Day Sunday May 25th 2008

The ceremony of Memorial Day at the American Cemetery takes place on Sunday 25th May. It is wrong to imply that this memorial always takes place on the last Sunday in May. In order to set it straight: on the last Monday in May Memorial Day is celebrated in America and on the Sunday prior to that it takes place at the American Cemetery in Margraten.

The program of the memorial service, like other years, is as follows:

- 10 am The service at the Cemetery This service will be decorated with music. De organisation of this is led by the Foundation Cultural Music-Symposium Margraten
- 3 pm Memorial service with speeches and the placing of the coronet
The ceremony will end with a fly-over of jet-fighters of the American and Dutch air force, again decorated with music.

The memorial gathering receives many thousands of visitors yearly. In practice over 70 coronets are placed by representatives of several governments/organisations/clubs. It is definitely worth visiting the Cemetery –especially with good weather- shortly after Memorial Day, this to enjoy the colourful coronets and flowers placed by the graves and the walls.

The board hopes that also this year the adoptive fathers will arrange for a sea of flowers on May 25th. By the way, for those adoptive fathers where distance is not a issue, they can bring their flowers a day prior to that.

Do You Remember and Monument Between the Hills for sale

Next of kin of the fallen soldiers will receive while visiting the cemetery the DVD containing the films Do You Remember and the Monument between the Hills by the Foundation Cultural Music-Symposium Margraten. Do You Remember is based on a song by the same name. Monument between the Hills is a documentary on the cemetery coming into existence, interviews and the memorial ceremony on Memorial Day. The DVD contains suitable music and is available in a Dutch and American version. The price is Euro 17.50 (ex shipping) en can be ordered at the following address: Julianalaan 7, 6269 CL Margraten. Ordering by phone is also possible: 0031-434581783.

Did you know, that:

- on May 4th (national commemoration of the dead) the cemetery is open during the evening hours as well
- it is not allowed to bring pets to the cemetery
- 4 women are buried in the cemetery of Margraten
- 40 pairs of brothers are buried alongside each other
- during the ceremony on Memorial Day as well as during the Requiem the cemetery is open to all public over 100 names on the Walls of the Missing already have been adopted by friends of the Jack Million Band; a Limburgian band containing of professional musicians form Maastricht and surroundings. They regularly perform Glenn Miller music in America.
- the foundation has purchased over 1,000 vases
- all work of the foundation is done by volunteers
- the text of this newsletter available is in Dutch as well as English
- on our website (www.adoptiegraven-margraten.nl), you can listen to the song Do You Remember. One more reason to visit our website.
- from September 12th 2008 and the week following, there is a photo exposition on WWII from the author Armand Blau from Harlingen in the town hall of Margraten. For more information please visit the website www.margraten.nl during that period.

LSO performance on Sunday September 14th

On Sunday September 14th 2008 the Limburgian Symphonic Orchestra will perform once again a requiem. This is organised by Margraten and the province Limburg. More information can be found on their website www.margraten.nl around that time. If the weather allows it, thousands of visitors can enjoy this splendid performance at the American Cemetery. The foundation hopes that this manifestation will trigger the adoptive fathers to bring along some extra flowers to place on the graves.

Opening hours

The cemetery is open 7 days a week from 9 am – 5 pm.
On Christmas' day and New year's day the cemetery is closed

Change of address

Please note that any changes, e.g. address, that may be important for the adoption register should be reported to the foundation in time.

Exchanging graves

Our foundation does not condone the exchange of adopted graves.
We consider it improper.

Request for address details

Regularly we receive requests from adoptive fathers about address details of other adoptive fathers. We cannot apply, because of privacy reasons. The only exception, as mentioned before, is when this request comes from American next of kin. If you do not wish for your address to be forwarded, please inform us by email or otherwise by mail.

Hürtgenwald

One of the bloodiest battles of WWII took place at Hürtgenwald, situated southeast of Aachen, in the North-Eifel. The battles in Hürtgenwald are less known than the Arden-offensive and Market Garden. Yet many American and German soldiers died during these battles. Many of them were buried in Margraten. Wood was used from these wooded surroundings to support a road through the mudded death-acres from the Rijksweg to the cemetery. It is definitely worth visiting the town Schmidt –strategically of great importance because it overlooked the Schwammeneveld in the Roer- and from there on to explore the history of war in this area under skilled supervision.

You can contact the foundation by mail:

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PO Box 22, 6269 ZG Margraten
e-mail: st.adoptie.graven@margraten.nl
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Historiography adoption system

The foundation has been contacted by Prof. Dr. P. Schrijvers. Mr. Schrijvers teaches American History at the University of New South Wales in Sydney (Australia). He is the author of 'The hell called Europe' (ISBN 90-712-0604-1), a book that should be read by anyone interested in the history of WWII. Soon Mr. Schrijvers will come to Europe for one year of sabbatical. During that period he has planned to write a book on the phenomena of adopting graves at the American Cemetery in Margraten. The foundation supports this project dearly and wishes to ask for your special attention for the questions of Mr. Schrijvers, enclosed with this Newsletter.

History of the cemetery

The cemetery of Margraten was meant for the fallen soldiers of the 9th American army. The commanders of this army did not want their fallen soldiers to be buried on hostile grounds (read: Germany). That is why a logistical plan was made up to gather the perished ones immediately, regardless distance and circumstances. Many residents of the villages around Rijksweg (national highway) Vaals-Margraten still have the horrible memories of seeing dead bodies being transported on a daily bases for month at a time.

The 1st American army had the same strategy, however their cemetery in Henri Chappelle had already reached its maximum in the spring of 1945, while expansion was no longer an option. That is why fallen soldiers of the 1st and partially the 3rd army were buried in Margraten as well. By the end of March 1946 Margraten had 17,742 fallen Americans, 1,026 soldiers of other allied forces and 3,075 Germans buried.

A part from the adoption register

Adoptive fathers of the adoption register represent all age groups. The foundation is proud of this, especially for young people to find their way to the cemetery and adopting a grave. The original register –a card system- set up in 1944/1945 is still in our possession. When updating our register we discovered that a lot of initial members are still part of our family. Talking about involvement. Our appreciation and thanks for that.



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