



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. On May 4th (Remembrance Day) the cemetery is open during the evening hours.

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 inappropriate.

Flowers at the Walls of the Missing

Those who have adopted names of liberators on the Walls of the Missing cannot use the pitch-vases. A solution is to put the flowers in a so-called oasis and label them with the name of the missing liberator. You can place this oasis at the foot of the wall. For the flowers not to wither rapidly, it is advised to wet the oasis beforehand and put it in a small plastic bag.



NIEUWS / NEWS

Association for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery in Margraten

The carillon

Since September 1994 the cemetery is equipped with a carillon. At the 50th anniversary of the liberation of South-Limburg this carillon was a gift from AMVETS -an American veterans organization- and the Robert R. McCormick Tribute Foundation in co-operation with the Netherlands America Institute Limburg to the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The carillon plays every hour between 9 am and 5 pm. Every even hour it plays a selection of patriotic hymns. At 3 pm it plays Do you remember and the anthems of the Netherlands and Limburg. By request the American anthem can also be played.

At 4.40 pm each day the Volleys and Taps signal is played and -if possible- the flag is lowered simultaneously.

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

Memorial Day Sunday May 30th 2010

This year's Memorial Day celebrations also mark the occasion of the Liberation of our country 65 years ago by the Allied Forces. Although South-Limburg had already been liberated in September 1944 it took several more months before our fellow countrymen to the north of the river had regained their freedom.

It's also 65 years to the day, since the very first Memorial Day ceremony at the American Cemetery in Margraten. From photos and moving pictures we know that the ceremony was attended amongst others by General Simpson, Commander of the US 9th Army (see picture overleaf).

Through our contacts with several American organizations we've learnt that many relatives of our liberators are planning to attend the commemorative service at this 65th anniversary.

The program of the ceremony will be as follows:

- 10 am : Eucharist ceremony organized by the Stichting Culturele Muziek Manifestaties Margraten (Foundation for Cultural Musical Manifestations Margraten). This ceremony will be supported musically.
- 3 pm : Memorial service with speeches and the placing of coronets. This ceremony ends with a flyover of American and Dutch jet-fighters.

Both ceremonies are freely accessible. At the Eucharist ceremony there are seats available. At the afternoon ceremony there are reserved seats and separate places for those invited. All other visitors can be seated on the grandstands and round the barriers of the cemetery. It is not permitted to sit on the lawn.

The Foundation's board hopes that as many adoptive fathers as possible will bring flowers and will temporarily turn the graveyard into a bed of flowers.

Try not to be late when you're bringing flowers.....

The days leading up to Memorial Day might be very busy at the cemetery. Not just the Saturday and Sunday, but the Friday afternoon as well. Adoptive fathers who want to bring flowers at these times might have a hard time finding a parking spot. We would therefore advise them to -especially when the weather is good- to come to the cemetery even earlier



Adoption Foundation's 65th Anniversary

This year the adoption foundation at the American Cemetery celebrates its 65th birthday. Founded at the beginning of 1945 under the banner of the Municipal Committee of Margraten. Its activities were continued by the 'Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery In Margraten'. Hail to all those who helped give birth to the unique idea of adoption. And to those who set up the system or contributed to it. And furthermore to those who have administered the whole operation. Adopting graves like in Margraten had never been done before. No American Cemetery anywhere in the world had anything like it. Something the citizens of Margraten can be proud of!

In the cause of time adoption has stimulated friendship between adoptive fathers and relatives of deceased servicemen. Adoption has brought people closer to one-another and is an ultimate way of thanking those who gave their lives for our freedom.

The adoption register in 2010

The adoption phenomenon is still very much alive in 2010. Since a few years all 8,301 graves have been adopted. Several aspiring adopting fathers have been put on a waiting list. Furthermore some 800 of the 1,722 names on the Walls of the Missing have been adopted by now. Which means that it is still possible to adopt one or more names from the Walls of the Missing.

65th Anniversary concert

The foundation has chosen to not let the 65th anniversary of the adoption-organization go unnoticed. Therefore we have invited our adoptive fathers and our American guests to a concert to be held on Memorial Day Monday, May 31st at the Vrijthof Theatre in Maastricht. The number of available seats however is limited, so the adoptive fathers who want to attend will have to order tickets beforehand. First come first serve.



General Simpson about to place a coronet



Mr. F. Prevoo at the grave of an adopted liberator



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Contribution to AWON

(organization for war-orphans)

As could be read in our 2008 Newsletter our Foundation was granted the Limburg Award that very same year. This award is an initiative of Pro Tea Limburg and is given to persons or organizations who -according to an independent jury- have distinguished themselves in an outstanding way. The award -a sculpture by artist Appie Drielsma- comes with a cheque of € 5,000. A large part of that prize (€ 3,500) has now been donated to AWON, the American WorldWar2 Orphans Network. Our aim was to make it possible for orphans -who do not normally have the financial means to do so- now have the possibility to visit the graves of their fallen fathers In Margraten for the very first time. They will do so as part of a group of 55 people visiting Margraten this year.

Contacts between adoptive fathers and relatives

The AWON-members attending the Memorial Day ceremonies in Margraten this year, will be able to meet the people who have adopted the graves that they've come to visit. The adoptive fathers have been approached on this matter. Our Foundation has played a part in setting up a program for the AWON-members during their visit to our region. Part of that program is a reception by the town council at Margraten's Town Hall for which 'their' adoptive fathers have also been invited. Furthermore the AWON-members will be our special guests at the 65th anniversary concert at the Vrijthof Theatre in Maastricht.



Scientific research on the phenomenon of adoption

The Foundation has received a letter from Prof. Dr. Peter Schrijvers from The University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. The content of this letter is hereby published unedited:

In 2007 I decided to make the unique history of the American military cemetery's adoption scheme in Margraten the subject of a new book on World War II.

The proud Dutch adopters proved more than willing to cooperate when called upon to contribute to the making of this book. With the kind help of the rejuvenated Adoption Foundation, a questionnaire went out to all of them in the annual newsletter of 2008. In the first week following its delivery in early spring my inbox was crammed with more than 140 responses. I have been inundated with reactions and follow-ups ever since and in a recent tally identified

more than 1,100 different respondents.

Among them are surgeons and truck drivers, lawyers and construction workers, teenagers and octogenarians. They have written, often very emotionally, about their motivation to adopt a grave and about what they, or their parents and grandparents, remembered of occupation and liberation.

Many of the Dutch adopters one way or another have managed to learn much about American soldiers who, before they were killed in the war as infantrymen or flyboys, were fruit growers in California, farmers in Nebraska, autoworkers in Detroit, shopkeepers in Atlanta, or office clerks in New York.

They have sent hard copies of thick US Army's files documenting the

cause and circumstances of a GI's death in painstaking detail. They have scanned and mailed rare German documents reporting on American plane crashes. They have shared often very touching letters and photos of GIs and their families in America.

Needless to say that this unique lode of stories and documentation forms the backbone of a story that is simultaneously harrowing and redeeming.

The book on Margraten's adoption program should be out at the end of next year or early in 2012. There will be an edition in English as well as in Dutch.

Letter from the superintendent of the Netherlands American Cemetery



To the members of Stichting Adoptie Graven Margraten

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the American Battle Monuments Commission and the Netherlands American Cemetery, allow me to extend my congratulations and best wishes to all of you on the upcoming occasion of the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Grave Adoption Society of Margraten.

At the very beginning of the society, many of the adopters had experienced a personal connection to those soldiers who gave their lives in the cause of freedom. This could have taken many forms: a soldier who spent one or more nights in a family's home on the way to or from the fighting; personal encounters with soldiers who liberated one's town or village; a soldier who lent a hand when possible to assist local people with a small repair at their homes; a soldier

giving out a chocolate bar to a little boy or girl. All of these are small examples of the human side of war.

After the war, when the graves of the soldiers were adopted, many of you were able to make contact with the soldier's family in the US and write letters to them and send pictures of the graves and yourselves. I am sure that this provided a great amount of comfort to these families, most of whom would never have the opportunity to visit the grave themselves. This practice continues on to today after 65 years, and I often encounter American families who request contact with their soldier's adopters. This is a remarkable testament to the dedication and love that the Dutch people routinely display for their liberators, and it makes me proud to see that and to be associated with all of you.

The Foundation received a letter from the superintendent of the American Cemetery Michael S. Yasenachak. For practical reasons this letter is hereby printed in two separate parts. Part 2 is printed on the next page.

A new book and DVD on the construction of the American Cemetery in Margraten

From Farmland to Soldiers Cemetery

In September last year the book *From farmland to soldiers cemetery* came out. The book -that was published in a Dutch and English version-gives a first hand account of the construction of the American cemetery. Farmers tell the story of how they lost their land. Villagers explain how they witnessed a constant stream of fallen servicemen day after day for one and a half years. But Americans too, talk about the terrible circumstances under which they had to do their jobs. In a sincere manner these stories sketch an impressive and sometimes bewildering picture of what the construction of the cemetery meant for those involved. Never before has there been such a complete reconstruction of

these events. A valuable document for anyone who is remotely interested in the cemetery. Several copies in English have already found their way towards relatives in the USA.

The book measures 22,5 x 22,5 centimeters, is 192 pages long and is richly illustrated
The price is € 19.95 (shipping not included).



DVD Fields of Margraten

In addition to the book *From Farmland to Soldiers Cemetery* there is a DVD out called *Fields of Margraten*. This documentary is 70 minutes long and is based on interviews with eye-witnesses. It features footage and pictures from American archives that have never been published before. In addition to this documentary the DVD features an additional one hour of extra material including complete interviews with eye-witnesses and footage from the Memorial Day ceremonies of 1945 and 1947 (in color). The DVD can be viewed with either Dutch or American subtitles. The DVD was produced in the (European) PAL tv-system so can only be viewed in the US on a PC.

The price of the DVD is € 14.95 (shipping not included)

Special offer (until June 1st 2010) for book+DVD: € 33 (shipping not included)

The bank account number of the Foundation Fields of Margraten is: 1087 71 946.

You can order the book and DVD at the Foundation Fields of Margraten as per address:

Julianastraat 10, 6267 CK Cadier en Keer, The Netherlands

On the website www.akkersvanmargraten.nl you will find an order form.

You can also call +31 43 4071385 (Jo Purnot) or +31 43 4582177 (Bert Kleijnen).

LSO performs on Sunday September 12th

On Sunday September 12th The Limburg Symphony Orchestra will once more perform a requiem at the cemetery. Attendance is free for everybody. More information can be found (in due course) on the website of the Town of Margraten (www.margaten.nl). The Foundation hopes that this musical performance will be a suitable occasion for adoptive fathers to place flowers at their adopted grave(s).

Part 2 of the letter from Michael S Yasenchak

I would like to take just a few moments to talk to you about some improvements we are seeking to make here at the cemetery. and to discuss one of your (and my) chief concerns about visiting the cemetery. As many of you are aware, there are a number of nasty falls that occur here each year. There are multiple levels of stairs and landings that must be negotiated to enter the plot area, but it's usually when descending back down into the Court of Honor when the majority of these accidental falls occur. I suspect that many people are often emotionally overwhelmed after a visit, and on a particularly beautiful Dutch day, with bright sunshine and blue skies, many people are reflecting on what they have seen and enjoying the day, simply don't see the final steps down. We are very aware of that and have several plans in the works to help with this problem. As many long-time visitors are aware, we recently added a significant amount of new metal railings on the left-side stairs approaching the burial area to provide significant visual cues that there were stairs there. We hope to add local stone flower boxes across the front of the widest landing just at the

end of the Court of Honor closest to the chapel, which will not only provide and additional visual cue, but also an actual physical obstacle that will also serve to point out that there is a step there. Finally, the AMBC will conduct a complete survey of all of its cemeteries in 2010 to determine the adequacy of handicapped access accommodations, making changes where necessary. I anticipate that our handicapped ramps may undergo some changes and improvements as a result of that survey. Of course, all of these changes will take some time, so I ask you all to be patient as we seek to improve our facility for all visitors, and of course, to continue to be extra careful when using our stairs. Naturally, I want all visitors to experience an emotionally meaningful and rewarding visit each and every time they come here. A memory tainted by an accidental fall on our hard stone steps is not what I wish anyone to take away from his or her visit here!

In closing let me say again how much I appreciate the efforts of the Grave Adoption Society to honor and commemorate the brave service and sacrifice of the fallen heroes who find their eternal rest here. It's ABMC's sacred

duty to watch over and care for these permanent memorials and to preserve the memory and tell the story of these young Americans who gave their lives in the defense of freedom and restoration of Liberty in Europe. Your efforts in this endeavor are an important part of assisting us in this mission and you have my sincere gratitude for all that you do.

Very respectfully yours,
Michael S. Yasenchak
Superintendent
Netherlands American Cemetery





Successful questionnaire Margraten Memorial Center Foundation

In last year's Newsletter we enclosed a questionnaire from the Margraten Memorial Center (MMC) foundation. The foundation has since informed us that many people have reacted. No less than 1,515 questionnaires have been received with information about 1,869 fallen liberators. On top of that some 550 adoptive fathers have confirmed to be familiar with the background of the adopted liberator and to possess material such as photographs, letters or archive-material. The foundation plans to add to its website www.margratenmemorialcenter.org information on WorldWar2 and the role played by those liberators buried in Margraten. The idea is to give each liberator his own memorial page so that the current website becomes a complete 'virtual' Margraten Memorial. Additionally the website will contain tips on how you can gather information yourself. Info can still be sent to: Stichting MMC, p/a Westbroek 48, 6243 CJ Geulle, The Netherlands. The foundation wishes to express its gratitude for all the input they received from the respondents.

Did you know that:

- the flags at the cemetery have to be burned after a certain period of time according to protocol. For this the US Army has a detailed procedure. The flags are not normally burnt at the cemetery, but at the US Army garrison in Schinnen.
- the ribbons on the coronets of Her Majesty the Queen and of the US Ambassador that are placed during the Memorial Day ceremony will -in accordance with protocol- be treated as flags and are to be removed just before dusk.
- there are still several people on the waiting-list to adopt a grave. Others who -for whatever reason- are no longer capable of visiting the cemetery are kindly asked to inform our administration. They can then allocate the grave to someone on the waiting-list.
- there are 8,301 headstones on the cemetery of which 179 are Stars of David and that there is one headstone where two unknown soldiers were interred. One of these graves is empty now as the remains of this fallen liberator were relocated to his native country. The person who had adopted this grave has -of course- been informed.
- The book *Crosses in the Wind*, that among others describes the construction of the cemetery is still for sale. The book contains more than 200 pages and features several unique photographs. For 15 Euros the book can be obtained from the local branch of the Rabobank in Margraten. It can also be ordered at our bureau by post or by e-mail. Then the price is Euros 18.50 per copy including shipping.
- at the Operation Market Garden in September 1944 some 50 Allied gliders (planes) by accident landed behind enemy lines at Groesbeek. Many of the soldiers from these planes are -to this day- missing. One of our adoptive fathers R. van Slooten has started an investigation to find out what happened there. Others who might be investigating that same matter are kindly asked to get in touch by e-mail: vslooten@hetnet.nl.



You can contact the foundation by mail:

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Colophon

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