



**This crew gave their lives for our freedom,
their names will live forever.**

**On behalf of the Project team Monument Kijkuit
Chairman Peter van den Eijnden.**



JOHN CRISP • LESLEY PERRY • JOHN SMITH • CLIFFORD COOK
CYRIL BAYLISS • GEORGE SYMES • ALFRED HARRIS

THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR OUR FREEDOM

FO **GEORGE SYMES** RCAF AGE 27

FO **LESLEY PERRY** RAF AGE 22

FO **JOHN SMITH** RAF AGE 20

FSGT **CYRIL BAYLISS** RAF AGE 22

FSGT **CLIFFORD COOK** RCAF AGE 19

SGT **JOHN CRISP** RAF AGE 19

SGT **ALFRED HARRIS** RAF AGE 22

ALL LOST THEIR LIVES WHEN THEIR BOMBER CRASHED ON NOVEMBER 1ST 1944

Ceremony Program

From the unveiling of the monument at November 1st 2019

1. Word of welcome by the master of ceremony.
He share mainly this ceremony with the audience.
2. Music ensemble start to play "**Abide with me**" (1'40")
3. Speech
Mr. Rien Luijks tells about his memory from this crash
Speech by the Mayor of Bergen op Zoom Mr Frank Petter
4. Unveiling the monument by pupils of primary school "de Springplank"
5. Reading the poem "In Flandrens fields"
6. A trumpeter plays "**The Last Post**"

7. **One minute silence !**

8. The music ensemble will play successively
"**God save the Queen**" (1'00")- "**O Canada**" (1'20")
and the Dutch hymn "**Wilhelmus**" twice (2'00")
9. The master of ceremony invite for the laying of wreaths and flowers.
He calls each person or group separately.
Beginning with representative from the community of Bergen op Zoom
The representative of the British Embassy
The representative of the Canadian Embassy
Children from the school
Family from the crew members and after then all others
- 9a. The grand daughter from Pilot FO George Symes will say a word of thanks
10. Word to close this ceremony and to thank everybody and the master of ceremony ask the invited people to have some after talks in the tent.

Ladies and gentleman,

I am here to tell you a story, my story! My name is Rien Luijks, age 81 years. My story is about the crashing of the Lancaster Bomber PB 303. The bomber came down approximately 100 meters away from the place where my family and I were living. My parental house is still there, just across the street from the farmhouse of the late Hendrik Schot.

This location is very dear to me. The small community where I grew up. This location keeps for me sweet memories, but also bitter memories. The bitter memories very much connected to the crashing of the bomber where the crew of 7 lost their lives. I want to share with you these memories, memories full of emotions. And tell you how I remember things from the crash, now 75 years ago.

Being one of the few people still around, and a close witness of happenings, I would like to take you back 75 years; late October, early November 1944. A time of war, fights, fear, and shortages, the Kijkuit hamlet was not at all like it is now. No paved road, no electricity, nothing like that. It was a remote hamlet, a community of farmers, and people working at the farms where everybody knew each other.

By the end of October 1944 Kijkuit was liberated by the Canadian army, without much war damage.

The first day of November 1944 was there; a grey dark day. The lands looking grey; empty and deserted. That day, in the late afternoon, around 16h30 me and my father were feeding the cattle in the barn, daily job.

Around 16u I opened the barn door, I guess my job was done. Walking through the door there was a big, big bang. So big, the door slammed me back into the barn. A bit at loss I got up and ran outside, accompanied by my father. My granddad was still on the floor; the door was blown out of his hands. No injuries.

There was a weird moment of silence outdoors, like the world had stopped for a moment. Until we realized something strange had happened. From the back of the yard we could see the adjoining field; the potato leaves burning, a strange smell. The smell from kerosene, which we had never smelled before. The bomber fuel was scattered all around, even into the wall of our home.

Further down we could see big flames and thick smoke rising from the Heenweg, the road where Hendrik Schot his kitchen garden used to be. Exploding ammunition, loud bangs, fire and smoke. An army of sound en vision; unreal to this. We could only just understand what might have happened..

Everybody from the Kijkuit started running towards the crashed bomber. Including me. Getting closer to the plane there was an indescribable devastation, a big hole across the Heenweg; taking away the road. In the big a hole a chaos of clay, messed up parts of the plain, parts of the wings and engines. The crew was there.

As my mother explained to me later; the bomber came in flying from the direction of Lepelstraat, a nearby village, east of Kijkuit;. Just skimming Hendrik Schot his chicken barn, engines still running, to end the flight crashing into the Heenweg, just missing the kitchen garden.

The front of the bomber; cockpit and wings where driven into the ditch, through the clay. The body and tail of the bomber ended up on the Heenweg and where the field and kitchen garden where.

There was no way the crew could be rescued. All but one were trapped in the crashed bomber, and what was left of it. Powerless, not being able to help, the people of the Kijkuit could only look in shock and horror. The crashed bomber, halfway buried in clay, the back being on fire. Nothing could be done. The crew did not survive the crash.

If I remember well the Canadian army was there in less than an hour. The only thing they could do at that moment is cover the awful scenery. My mother more than once told me that one crewmember was found away from the plane; his chute not open.

Winter 1944/1945, a tough winter. Through the winter the hole remained as it was, filled with water. A road diversion was done; to make it possible for the community to use the road again. At the site the Canadian army put down a white cross, with text on it. In the spring of 1945 my father planted daisy flowers around the cross.

Late in the summer of 1945 the bomber, along with remains of the crew were recovered by the army.

That was then.

In 1950 my family moved away from the Kijkuit; and the connection with the Kijkuit faded. What did not fade away are the memories we had of this crashed bomber. We often wondered who had been in that plane, who they were. Were they young, old? Married; did they have children? Where did they come from? They gave their lives for our freedom.

Many years later, 1990, I moved back to West Brabant; the area where we are now. And coincidentally read an article in a regional magazine, written by Ben Goossen. The story of how he had gathered all the information on this bomber, crash, and the background off the crew. Ben had put together all the answers to the questions we still had! We had a talk, but nothing more happened back then.

Coincidence or not, May this year, again many years later. In a local magazine there was an announcement that Ben Goossen would give a lecture for the Heemkunde Kring Halchtert. A lecture on the history of the crashed Lancaster Bomber PB303. I was quick to register myself for the lecture with Ben. During his lecture he introduced me to the association and his members. They asked me to tell my story, the story I am telling you today.

Ben, thank you very much for your efforts to getting all the information and circumstances together.

At that time ending my story to them, with the suggestion to work together to have a memorial put up at the Heenweg, where we are now.

A very enthusiastic response came from somebody in the audience. Somebody I did not know then. Now I do. It was Peter van den Eynden, he actually lives in the farmhouse at the Kijkuit; what used to be Hendrik Schot his home.

Peter, even during that lecture offered to accommodate such a memorial on his grounds. That was just the kick off of a project under Peter his guidance to get to where we are today. A memorial for the bomber and crew, 75 years after the crash.

Peter, thank you for your efforts.

Now I know, we all know now, who these brave guys were. Where the bomber had been. That they took off from the UK to fly to Germany, Homberg, to drop their bombs. And then fly back home. Unfortunately they never made it back to the UK. I witnessed the plane crashing, ending their flight home. Something I still remember after all those 75 years.

They gave their lives for our freedom!

Speech unveiling monument Kijkuit, 1 November 2019 by Mayor Drs. Frank Petter

The number 7 has considerable symbolic meaning. In the worldly sense, 7 is associated with happiness. In the biblical sense, this number stands for perfection, divinity, and completion.

On November 1st 1944 a Royal Air Force Lancaster bomber crashed just a few metres from here. This aircraft was on the way to Germany, where the order was to bomb a factory that produced synthetic oil. After the bombs were released, the aircraft returned to formation. Moments later, the Lancaster was attacked and left the formation. The plane crashed here in the polder. The entire crew lost their lives and were later buried in the Canadian war cemetery in Bergen op Zoom.

Earlier in my speech, I mentioned the worldly meaning of the number 7 :a lucky number. Compared to this crash, that qualification is out of place. The crew was by no means lucky. The crash led to the death of the entire crew: 7 young guys in the prime of their lives. The crash caused enormous grief in at least 7 families. Grief that to this day is still in the hearts of the families of the crew; families who are represented here today and who can experience our remembrance of the people who fought for a Europe free from tyranny and lawlessness.

We also pass that on to the younger generations. The school of the children present here today has adopted this monument and will take care of it together with the children.

This afternoon we are unveiling a monument here that reminds us of the crewmembers that I have mentioned by name:

Sergeant John Anthony Crisp, 19 years old, United Kingdom
Sergeant Cyril Ernest Bayliss, 22 years old, United Kingdom
Flying Officer Lesley W. Perry, 22 years old, United Kingdom
Flying Officer George Jeffrey Symes, 27 years old, Canada
Flying Officer John Arthur Smith, 20 years old, United Kingdom
Sergeant Alfred. F. Harris, 24 years old, United Kingdom
Sergeant Clifford Eugene Leroy Cook, 19 years old Canada

7 young people who still had to live life, but for whom it stopped much too early in this polder.

The number 7 here does not satisfy its meaning of happiness. I do think that the number meets the meaning of completion. Completion cannot be said of the crew's lives.

But today, exactly 75 years after the fatal crash, we are unveiling a monument that recalls brave men. Men who contributed far from home to the destruction of the Nazi madness and paid the highest price.

A lasting memory has been created with this monument. A visible and tangible marking for everyone on the aircraft crew who died here on November 1st 1944.

This completes the journey of John, Cyril, Lesley, George, John, Alfred and Clifford.

I thank you for your attention.

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



**We are very grateful for all the support and donations we got,
to realise this monument of remembrance.**

Mr and Mrs Brad and Dana Gibson from Belleville Canada. They inspired Mr Peter van den Eijnden to take this action for erecting this monument.

Peter van den Eijnden to get in touch with authorities and many potential donors to support this cause.

The City council from Bergen op Zoom for their efforts, donating historic road bricks for building the monument and all help were they were able to and their ideas.

The Water board from Western Brabant for their help for the right permission to build a dam and culvert on the spot where monument has to come.

The firm Verhalst who donated a black concrete plate for the foundation of the monument and did all the work making the dam and laying the foundation and a small brick path from the road to the monument.

The printing-office Hertogs for all printing work they did for this monument.

The Royal Dutch Air Force for their cooperation, like donating the copper plate with names of the crew engraved. Also to provide for a guard of honour.

The Royal Dutch Air Force Historic Flight for organising a flypast at the unveiling. Also the **Airbase Woensdrecht** for their support.

The Firm Huijgens for building a big tent nearby and let us use it at the unveiling.

The firm Aertssen Sound & Light for put a PA system to our disposal.

The executive committee and the technical staff from local historical society "**Heemkunde kring Halchterth**" for their support and work.

The building trade market "**Gamma Bergen op Zoom**" for donating the building materials.

The firm "**Metrical Metaalbewerking BV Halsteren**" for delivering the needed metal works on the frame of the monument.

Advertising firm **Jan van Eekeren** for providing information boards.

Dumphall Bergen op Zoom in donating materials for the poppie wreaths

The coach company "**De Kock**" from Halsteren for a bus with driver who is available for carrying all foreign guests and companions to the cemetery, to the restaurant, to the monument and back to the city.

The restaurant "**1633**" in Halsteren for donate a lunch for the families from the crew.

The foundation "**Keep them rolling**" who will bring the school children from school to the monument and back with two genuine war vehicles.

The Rotary club Bergen op Zoom donated € 1.000,00 as a gift for the work that must be done and for materials who are needed for this monument.

Also there came a donation of € 500,00 from "**De Stichting Brabantse Wal**" (foundation to save landscape on border between Brabant /Zeeland)

Mrs Tracey Keoughs speech

All of these men had their life cut short by the tragedy of war, as the Netherlands celebrates the 75th liberation that brought all of us here today, we the families of the crew would like to say we're so honoured to be a part of this monumental event honouring.

Flying Officer George Jeffery Symes Pilot,
Sargent Alfred Harris Flight Engineer,
Flight Sargent Cyril Ernest Bayliss Navigator
Flying Officer John Arthur Smith Bomb Aimer (air bomber),
Flying Officer Leslie W Perry Wireless Operator and Air Gunner,
Sergent John Anthony Crisp Mid Air Gunner,
Flying Sargent Clifford Eugene Leroy Cook Rear Air Gunner.

It's important that we keep their memories alive, I'd like to quote the pastor in the letter we all received upon our loved ones passing it said the debt we owe to those who so generously and unreservedly offered themselves becomes increasingly obvious.

It is impossible to estimate the value of the sacrifices made in overwhelming the forces of aggression and injustice. It is a debt that must ever be remembered by this generation and by those not yet born.

All of the crew had lives which they bravely left behind to proudly serve their countries in this horrific war, I look forward to learning their stories here today. My family as with yours are so proud of them.

In preparing for today, I've re-read some of the love letters my grandfather had sent to my grandmother (Sheena) his high school sweetheart and I know they were fortunate to have had a great and passionate love that transcended the tragedy of war. In a few excerpts Geordie is so excited to meet his daughter Geraldine and hear her say daddy. but in the same breath wishes her the best and highest hopes in life knowing deep down there may be a chance he never sees her.

My mom ended up meeting her love Mart. She had 2 kids my brother Chris & I. Geordie also has 6 great grandchildren Alexa, Zachary, Kyra, Lauren, Joshua and Ayla.

I'm absolutely sure loved ones we've lost over the years have been reunited in the heavens.

I'd like to thank a lot of people who made this happen, the mayor, and Brad who came over to honour his great uncle Flying Sargent Cook and planted a Canadian flag at the crash site which sparked the idea that brought us

all here today to celebrate and remember and to Peter who so wholeheartedly got on board in this 75th year of liberation to honour the Lancaster PB 303 crew who crashed landed in this very field fighting to end the war.

I've been to the Netherlands once before and had the pleasure of meeting Ben and Coby and am so amazed and thrilled at the history that Ben has been able to discover about each of our loved ones and the journey they played on the path to liberation.

This love and appreciation is not only evident here but across the world! recently I was out with a client recounting my grandparents love story and my moms own flight on the Lancaster, when all of a sudden a woman next to me got up and said I didn't mean to overhear you but I did and I had to come over, I'm from the Netherlands and wanted to say thanks for your families sacrifice we appreciate it. It's also evident here in the city of Halsteren and with the enthusiasm seen in the school kids here today.

This demonstrates that the love and appreciation of your country spans the world.

This also reiterates the continued importance of always remembering to keep the stories of the brave servicemen who have fought and continue to fight by telling their stories to the generations that follow us.

There's a poem I'd like to read written by Flying Officer John Gillespie Magee Jr, called High Flight, that my grandmother and mom had framed with the medal each of the crew received,

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;

Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling north of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred things you have not dreamed of high in the sunlit silence.

Hov'ring there, I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air...

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace.

Where never lark, or even eagle flew, and while with silent, lifting mind I've trod,

The high untrespassed sanctity of space, put out my hand, and touched the face of God –

Thank you!

1st November 2019



Relatives from the crew at the Canadian War Cemetery



Relatives and school children in front of wartime vehicles



Display in the school class, as prove of the adoption



Project team
Monument Kijkuit