

Airman honoured 'by family'

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She had to visit the place.

"When I first heard of the Keeping the Memory Alive tour, I spoke with Tom (Schenk) and he said... he'd personally take me to the place. After Martin (Boomsma) heard the story, he and Tom decided to divert the entire tour to that village."

Interestingly, the ceremony coincided with the national day of recognition of the war dead in the Netherlands.

"It was wonderful," said Lynda, "I was so pleased to see my uncle honoured in that way. There was a Canadian flag, and Legion wreaths from both Branch 120 (Georgetown) and Branch 197 (Acton) placed on his grave, as well as poppies. We had never had a funeral for Kenneth, so the ceremony took on a special meaning for me—I felt I was finally attending his funeral, 60 years later. For the past 60 years he'd been honoured by strangers in the town where he lay, now he was being honoured by his family."

Topping off the day, Lynda was introduced to Luit Klaver, the man who had pulled the broken body of her uncle from the wreckage of the Halifax. Now 85, Klaver and Lynda talked of the day her uncle died.

In addition to the graves of Buck and his colleague Sgt George Rose, there also stands a memorial to the other five members of the Halifax crew.

Lynda stayed the night in the town of Westergeest, the guest of Reinder Postma and his family.

"I couldn't pass on that opportunity," said Lynda, "The next morning, Reinder took me out to tour the area, as well as see the site of the crash."

Now only a depression in the ground, the two stood solemnly, thinking of what had taken place on that very same site, 60 years ago.

"As we looked at the crater, Reinder pointed to a row of five trees across the field," said Lynda, "He said 'Do you see those five trees? I think they're God's monument to the five missing airmen from the crash.' It was such an emotional moment—and one I'll never forget."

—By Ted Brown, staff writer

Allied parachute served a unique purpose

The story began one spring morning in 1945 in war-torn Holland.

A young Bert Lubberts was letting out the horses at his farm near Nooitgedacht, when he spied something white, fluttering in the wind down at the end of the field.

Upon closer investigation, he discovered it was a parachute, one of many that had been attached to supplies the Allies had dropped as they prepared to liberate the country.

Naturally, Bert was excited, and went back to share the excitement with the rest of his family.

To the Lubberts, the liberation of Holland was a significant milestone—they had been active in the Dutch resistance movement, and had also given refuge to many Jews fleeing from the horrors of being sent to Nazi concentration camps.

The family farm was located close to a transfer camp and marshalling yard where Jews were held and later put on trains to be sent to concentration camps, so the Lubberts saw many injustices to the Jewish people. They hid those who passed through whenever possible, as well as providing hiding places for fellow resistance fighters.

So the discovery of supply parachutes in the field was a good omen—it told Bert that the liberation of Holland was just around the corner. He decided to keep the one white parachute as a reminder of that morning.

Soon after the war ended, Bert married his sweetheart, Tiena Wolting, and before long, they were



Janie Visser of Georgetown displays her baptism dress that was created from Allied parachute material following the liberation of Holland during the Second World War. Photo by Ted Brown

expecting their first child.

On May 16, 1946, Tiena began to give birth to her baby, but surprisingly she delivered twin girls—little Jane and Janie Lubberts.

As the baby girls grew, it was soon time for them to be baptized—they were in need of baptism dresses.

In post-war Europe, cloth was hard to come by, so a good friend of Tiena's offered to make two dresses for the two little girls, using the white silk parachute material, and whatever coloured thread she had on hand.

Daughter Janie later became Mrs. Hank Visser, and the couple settled in Georgetown, raising their daughter and two sons.

And Janie still has the baptism dress that was lovingly created by her mother's friend from the white silk parachute material.

"At least 28 babies in the family have used those dresses," said Visser, "And I expect many more will use them as time goes by."

Janie's sister Jane is also married and now resides in Ingersoll with her family. And her baptism dress also gets lots of use.

Visser has had her dress framed, but it is still available, if she needs to take it out of the shadow box frame.

"When baby girls are baptized in the dresses, we add a pink ribbon, and the baby boys have a blue ribbon," says Visser.

Visser says the Lubberts endured some pretty tough times during the war, and as a result, had little when they came to Canada.

But Janie's father, Bert, maintains they got through it all as a result of God's help, and their strong faith.

"And we think of those two dresses as a symbol of remembrance and appreciation for the liberation of the Netherlands by Canadian soldiers," said Visser.

—By Ted Brown, staff writer



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