

**Let op: Alleen gesproken woord geldt!**

**Majesteit, Koninklijke Hoogheid,  
mijnheer Van Vollenhoven,  
Excellenties, veteranen, scholieren  
en studenten, dames en heren,**

**Allereerst een bijzonder welkom aan  
Hare Majesteit Koningin Beatrix als  
eregaste op deze herdenking van de  
gevallen in de Tweede  
Wereldoorlog op de Canadese  
Erebegraafplaats, hier in  
Groesbeek.**

**Het mag bekend zijn dat onze  
Majesteit en haar familie een  
bijzondere band hebben met  
Canada.**

**Toen in de meidagen van 1940 de intenties van de bezetter tegenover ons land en ons Koningshuis in volle omvang duidelijk werden, bood Canada Prinses Juliana en haar dochters een veilige haven. Een blijvende herinnering hieraan is het feit dat Prinses Margriet in Ottawa het levenslicht zag.**

**Daarom een even bijzonder welkom aan Prinses Margriet en Mr. Pieter van Vollenhoven, die zulke nauwe banden onderhouden met de Canadese veteranen die ons in geallieerd verband uit de greep van de bezetter wisten te bevrijden.**

**Ik hoop dat u mij wilt toestaan mij  
nu in het Engels tot onze  
buitenlandse gasten te richten.**

**I would like to extend a warm  
welcome to the Canadian minister  
of Veterans Affairs, the honourable  
Jean-Pierre Blackburn, who is co-  
hosting this ceremony. A warm  
welcome also to the deputy-minister  
of Veterans Affairs, Ms. Suzanne  
Tining, and the Canadian  
ambassador, Mr James Wall.**

**I have just spoken of the deep bond  
that connects our Royal Family with  
your country.**

**You provided a safe haven when the situation was dire and enabled our Royal Family to return to the Kingdom of the Netherlands unscathed.**

**As you will all understand, I would like to extend a special welcome to the Canadian War Veterans present here today. We are honoured by your presence.**

**Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Mr Van Vollenhoven, Your Excellencies, Veterans, ladies and gentlemen,**

**Today, we commemorate.**

**We commemorate a struggle  
against oppression and injustice.**

**We commemorate a struggle for  
freedom.**

**A struggle fought by thousands of  
soldiers. Young men from the other  
side of the Atlantic Ocean. Young  
men who left their homes, their  
families and their country. To come  
to the aid of a Europe under siege.**

**It is at that moment that true  
solidarity showed.**

**It is at that moment that we came to  
realise the meaning of the word  
'Allies'.**

**Allies who rose to the occasion.  
And helped us when we needed it  
most.**

**The price they paid was high.**

**In the Netherlands, Canadian  
soldiers fought gruesome battles.**

**They fought at the Battle of Arnhem,  
where General Montgomery tried to  
force his way up north over the  
major rivers. Canadian soldiers  
bravely evacuated the paratroopers  
back across the Rhine. With nothing  
more than brave hearts and small  
boats.**

**They fought at the Battle of the Rhineland which started just a few kilometres from here. A battle that saw thousands of your countrymen die in the struggle to cross the Rhine and advance into Germany, as well as liberate the starving people of the Netherlands, north of the rivers. One of your war heroes, Aubrey Cosens, a sergeant in the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada and recipient of the Victoria Cross, lies here in this war cemetery, a silent witness to those events.**

**They fought the Battle of the Scheldt to secure the essential supply route up from the conquered port of Antwerp.**

**This battle was especially grim. In flooded meadows, on slippery dikes, the Canadians had to fight a bitterly determined enemy. They literally inched forward, losing so many when the end was so near.**

**The Canadian soldiers who rest in honour here at Groesbeek and at Bergen op Zoom and Holten War Cemeteries gave their most precious possession.**

**They gave their lives.**

**For their friendship, bravery and sheer determination, the Netherlands is forever grateful.**

**We thank you, Canadian veterans.**

**We thank you, Canada.**

**The bonds that were forged in those days have only grown stronger over time.**

**Canada and the Netherlands are bound together.**

**In the hearts and minds of both our peoples.**

**One can see it in Canada where more than a million Canadians are of Dutch origin. Their emigration to Canada after the Second World War was inspired by your soldiers.**

**Soldiers from a country of hope.**

**To this day, the contacts across the Atlantic between our peoples are imbued with this feeling of great friendship and warmth. I see this illustrated also by the presence here today of so many Dutch and Canadian students.**

**One can see it in Holland where every year in May, the Dutch commemorate the sacrifices made by a generation of young Canadian men in the prime of their lives. At our schools, students are taught about the soldiers who fought so hard then, for their freedom today.**

**One can even see it in a continent far away.**

**In Afghanistan, where our countries  
work side by side, striving for the  
same causes these young Canadian  
men fought for 65 years ago.**

**Our country cherishes these bonds  
of true friendship.**

**We will always remember that  
freedom is not free.**

**We will always remember that 65  
years ago, these soldiers paid the  
highest price.**

**We will always remember.**

**Thank you.**

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