

William R. S. Hurrell and his family

William Robert Stephen Hurrell was born on May 1, 1923 in Beckton, a suburban district in East London. He was the son of Sydney C. Hurrell and Daisy Ellen Hurrell. Almost nothing is known about William's short life. We do know that he was a so-called voluntary reserve in the war and was called Bill by family and friends.

Monument

After the war, the names of his parents and his date and place of birth were revealed through a mention at the Air Forces Memorial - or Runnymede Memorial - in Englefield Green, near Egham, Surrey. This is a memorial in remembrance of 20,456 men and women of the Royal Air Force of the British Empire who died in air- and other operations during the Second World War.

Impact

Because the body of William Hurrell was never recovered, his descendants must momentarily make do it with the simple mention on the monument. The impact of the lack of a grave - even long after the war - is reflected in, among other things, the documentary 'Liever dood dan vermist' (e.g. 'Rather dead than missing'), which was broadcast in early 2018 by Omroep MAX. This documentary can still be viewed online (see link on list in this information set).

De Elf Marken

In Eefde and Gorssel, the memory of the crashed pilot was, and still is, kept alive by, among others, Historical Society De Elf Marken. Since Sunday, September 26, 1999, a memorial stone can be found on the Lindeboomsweg, about 60 meters from the exact crash location, which commemorates the events of the time and memorialises the pilot.

Search

When the search of De Elf Marken began in 1994, William Hurrell's parents had died and information about other family members remained inaccessible due to applicable privacy rules. This changed in 2015. On the occasion of 70 years of liberation, a ceremony was held at the Lindeboomsweg / Scheuterdijk.

Paul Kurn

British historian Paul Kurn was also present at this ceremony. He was the initiator of the Lancaster memorial stone, elsewhere in the municipality. During the crash of a Lancaster aircraft, all seven crew members died on the Harfsensesteeg. Kurn's father was the head of the Lancaster's maintenance group.

Australia

When Kurn heard from members of De Elf Marken that no family members of Hurrell could be traced, his response was: "There must be a way". Not much later Henk Bruil received a call from the historical association in Australia. Brydie Hurrell was on the phone. She is the granddaughter of Bill's brother.

Grateful

Then it turned out that the family had only been informed that their descendant was shot somewhere in Holland and that he was still considered to be missing. Bill's second cousin was very grateful to hear that a location had, in fact, been determined. From recent contacts with the family, Mayor Sebastiaan van 't Erve of the municipality of Lochem knows that there is great sympathy for the upcoming excavation in Eefde.

Family tree

From a simple family tree (see appendix) that Brydie signed, it can be deduced that her grandfather, Sydney, died in 1995.

What will happen to any mortal remains, if they are actually recovered, will be discussed with the family. The aircraft remains are formally owned by the British army. Agreements will in addition be made to determine what will happen to the plane's parts.

(This information is partly based on data from Historical Society De Elf Marken)