

Dear Willard,

Let me start by introducing myself;

My name is John Verschuere, I'm 39 years old and married to my lovely wife Joyce. Together we have two wonderful children, a 9 year old daughter called Lynn and a 6 year old, son called Kyan.

We live in a small village in Alphen, the Netherlands, approximately 5km from Belgium.

The reason that I write this letter is that I want to express my gratitude to everyone who did participate in WW2.

Whether they were infantry, paratrooper, navy, pilot, mailman, nurse, maintenance, etc., or taking care of things back in the States, it's thanks to all of U (men and woman) that we are able to live in freedom.

I often try to, but I just can't imagine what it's been like for all of U to leave your loved ones, family, friends to go overseas (whether it's been the Pacific, Europe or anywhere else) and go to the unknown.

What kind of thoughts would have crossed your mind?

It's also very difficult to imagine in what kind of uncertainty your parents and loved ones were left behind.

And then meeting the brutal reality.

It's beyond comprehension what U have gone through.

The unknown,  
missing home and loved ones,  
the hardships,  
the sufferings,  
the pain,  
the losses,...

I've met a few Veterans at Bastogne and in Holland and they all said the same thing; They've struggled with the fact that they made it home and a lot of their friends didn't.

They paid the ultimate price.

That's the reason why a lot of people in Holland and Belgium adopted a grave.

I've recently adopted the grave of;

PFC James F McMurtrey

Arkansas

Service#38355871

2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division

82<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Battalion

at the American Cemetery Henry-Chapelle, Belgium.

That's all I know so far.

My goal is to have a picture of James to place at the grave and, if they will, get in contact with family. I want to give the grave the face it deserves.

In 2013 at Bastonge, I had the opportunity to spend the two day tour with Jim Martin (G-Comp, 506 P.I.R. 101 Airborne) during his Tour of Remembrance.  
This was his first time back in Europe after the war.  
What an enriching time that was.  
To hear his stories, it just makes you very humble.

A month ago, my daughter's teacher was talking at school about IS and she can't believe that there are people who want to take your freedom away and dictate you what to do.  
She thinks, and she's wright, that it's so dishonest if that happens.  
She just can't understand it.  
We're preparing for our vacation to the Carribbean and I do realize that we weren't able do to that, if it weren't for all of U.  
U did give us the greatest good that there is; FREEDOM.  
And the fact that we don't have to speak German now, just kidding.  
Thanks to U we are able to live the live that we are living now.  
To see our kids grow up in freedom and the fact that they are able to be who they want to be and that they can say what they want to say.

Jim told me in Bastonge that; if they take your freedom away, it costs a lot of pain, blood and lives to gain it back. I'll think that everyone agree's with that.  
So we will keep all the sufferings rememberd by telling the/your stories , if you're not able anymore.

I do hope that U did get the recognition, and still are getting, when U returned to the States.  
And that U have a beautifull and happy live because that is what U all deserve.  
I also want to tell, that here in Europe, U and your actions are not forgotten and they will not be forgotten.

A VERY BIG THANK U!!!

I've been searching everywhere for contact information for Veterans, just to write a thank you letter like this, but due to privacy I couldn't find any.  
So I'm very happy with each chance I get to express my gratitude.

If you're willing, I would love to hear or read your story's.  
Again: THANK YOU for everything U did.

With deepest respect,

John Verschueren

Ps.: Sorry for the bad writing in English  
John Verschueren  
Raadhuisstraat 16  
5131AM  
Alphen  
The Netherlands

famverschueren@ziggo.nl