



STICHTING  
ADOPTIE GRAVEN  
AMERIKAANSE  
BEGRAAFPLAATS  
MARGRATEN



*Monuments Men and Women Foundation and the Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery in Margraten Announce Launch of the Forever Promise Project.*

## **New Initiative Honors and Remembers American WWII Soldiers by Connecting Their Family Members with Dutch Adopters.**

The Monuments Men and Women Foundation and the Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery in Margraten (Stichting Adoptie Graven Amerikaanse begraafplaats Margraten) proudly announce the launch of the Forever Promise Project ([www.foreverpromise.org](http://www.foreverpromise.org)), a groundbreaking initiative dedicated to preserving the memory of fallen American World War II soldiers and aircrews. For 81 continuous years, Dutch adopters, and also people from Belgium and Germany, have honored the memory of the 10.000 Americans who are buried at the Netherlands American Cemetery or recognized on the Walls of the Missing.



**FOREVER  
PROMISE  
PROJECT**

But the adopters have only ever had about 20 % of the names and contact information of their next of kin. The objective of the Forever Promise Project is to realize the original vision of the founders of the unique grave adoption program by connecting each of the adopters to a family member of the American men and women they watch over.

“The Forever Promise Project” is an extraordinary way to recognize and honor not only the American men and women whose sacrifice helped restore freedom to the Netherlands and other European nations, but also the Dutch grave adopters who eighty years ago promised to “watch over” their liberators “like their own” forever, said Anna Botticelli, president of the Monuments Men and Women Foundation. “By connecting their American next of kin with the Dutch families who have been watching over the graves of their loved ones, we personalize history – we put a name and a face on it – and ensure that these sacrifices are not just recorded in history books, but actively remembered and honored by future generations.”

This project is closely tied to the story of REMEMBER US : American sacrifice, Dutch Freedom, and a forever Promise Forged in World War II, the latest book by #1 New York Times best-selling author – and Founder and Chairman of the Monuments Men and Women Foundation – Robert M. Edsel, which highlights the deeply personal connections formed between Dutch families and the American soldiers who liberated their homeland.

“REMEMBER US”, like the Dutch grave adoption program, is a story of humanity, gratitude and freedom, said Robert Edsel. “For 81 years, Dutch families have honored their sacred promise to remember the Americans who gave their lives for freedom. The Forever Promise Project provides an opportunity for the American public to help finish that mission by searching the foreverpromise database ([www.foreverpromise.org](http://www.foreverpromise.org)) of names of those who are buried in Margraten, complete the short questionnaire and then be connected to their loved one’s adopter.

“The people of Margraten have for eight decades felt a deep responsibility to remember these brave American men and women,” said Frans Roebroeks, representative of the adoption Foundation. The Forever Promise Project provides us with the best chance to finish what the founders of the grave adoption program started: connect each of the nearly 10.000 Dutch adopters with the American family members of the soldier they watch over. It is inspiring to see our sacred mission expanded beyond our borders, courtesy of mr Edsel and the Monuments Men and Women Foundation.”

For more information about the Forever Promise Project and how to get involved, please visit [www.foreverpromise.org](http://www.foreverpromise.org)

#### **About the Monuments Men and Women Foundation**

[www.monumentsmenandwomenfnd.org](http://www.monumentsmenandwomenfnd.org)

#### **About the Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery in Margraten**

([www.adoptiegraven-margraten.nl](http://www.adoptiegraven-margraten.nl))

The Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery (Stichting Adoptie Graven Amerikaanse Begraafplaats Margraten) was created in February 1945 to encourage Dutch citizens to express their gratitude for their American liberators by adopting their graves. To qualify, volunteers agreed to regularly visit the adopted grave and remain in touch with soldiers’ next of kin in the United States where next of kin information was available. The campaign gained massive support. By the second Memorial Day in 1946, 100 % of the nearly 18,000 graves had been adopted, but the next of kin information was available for only twenty percent of those buried. To this day, few Americans know about the Dutch grave adoption program. Some are not even aware that a family member is buried at the Netherlands American Cemetery. The adoption program connects American and European citizens. They have one connection and that is the American soldier buried or remembered in Margraten. Together they commemorate from a shared past and a common future which might be an inspiration for their daily live. Freedom is not for free.