

## American Overseas Memorial Day Association Belgium

Memorial Day Ceremony at the  
Heverlee Commonwealth War Graves  
Cemetery



Monday 25 May 2026

12.00

# **Letter from Jim Elliott to the West Family**

“Even on that terrible night, when we were under the maximum of strain with both gunners dead and Don at the controls of a burning plane, there was no panic because the skipper was calm. In his quiet tone he told two of the crew to go back with extinguishers and try to control the fire. Without hesitation or question they did so, and worked heroically amid the smoke and exploding ammunition, but all in vain, using all of the extinguishers without controlling it. Then came the order from Don to abandon the aircraft... Don had his parachute on, Mr. and Mrs. West, but knowing him as I did, I’m certain he would wait until everyone had left before moving. It grieves me to say it, but I’m afraid Don, your son, and my pal, made the supreme sacrifice, for our united cause that night. In a vain attempt to save the remainder of the crew (one other member was left) he hadn’t left himself enough time to get out before the crash came.”

# **Program**

**Welcoming Remarks**

**The Story of Lt. Donald West**

**Placing of the National Flags**

**Floral Tribute**

**Commemoration of the Americans who served in  
British and Commonwealth Armed Forces in World  
War II**

**Tribute from Ambassador Matthew G. Whitaker  
U.S. Ambassador to NATO**

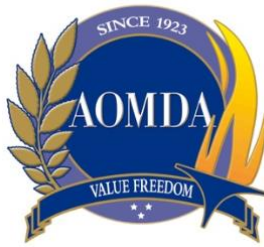
**High Flight**

**Ode of Remembrance**

**Taps**

**Moment of Reflection and Prayer**

**National Anthems of the Kingdom of Belgium,  
the United Kingdom, and the  
United States of America**



Since 1923, the mission of the American Overseas Memorial Day Association Belgium is to perpetuate the remembrance of the members of the American armed forces who died in the defense of freedom and who are buried in Belgium. We organize and conduct Memorial Day ceremonies at the three American cemeteries in Belgium. We commemorate and preserve the graves of the American servicemen buried in isolated graves outside of these cemeteries. We engage in youth outreach and other projects and activities to perpetuate remembrance. Please visit our website: [www.aomda.org](http://www.aomda.org).

Sinds 1923 is de missie van de “American Overseas Memorial Day Association Belgium” het bestendigen van de herinnering aan de leden van de Amerikaanse strijdkrachten, gestorven in de verdediging van de vrijheid en in België begraven. AOMDA organiseert en leidt Memorial Day ceremonies op de Amerikaanse begraafplaatsen in België. Wij herdenken en bewaren de rustplaatsen van de Amerikaanse militairen begraven in geïsoleerde graven buiten deze begraafplaatsen. Wij ijveren voor jeugdbetrokkenheid en het promoten van projecten en activiteiten om de herinnering te behouden.

Bezoek onze website: [www.aomda.org](http://www.aomda.org)