

2nd Lt Cornelis Martinus Dekkers
AKA - Kees van Duin
Code Name - Cees and Poker
Kruis van Verdienste (KV)

Cornelis was born on 26 January 1919 in Brede, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands, the eldest son of Cornelis Dekkers and Theodora Trouw, one of ten children. Aged 8, Cornelis and his family moved to Roosendaal where he attended Handelsdagschool at Norbertuslyceum.

In May 1940, Cornelis was mobilised as a Conscript Sergeant Administrator, but when Holland capitulated he immediately left the country to travel to the UK to continue to fight for the freedom of his country.

Cornelis reached England via Switzerland, France, Spain - where he was briefly imprisoned - and Canada. On reaching England, Cornelis joined the 6th Infantry Regiment in the Dutch Army until he was recruited by SOE in 1943. Cornelis completed clandestine warfare training, including parachute training, and spent 3 months on an intensive wireless telegraphy course. He was also trained in sabotage.



Believing the Dutch Network was compromised, Cornelis's mission was to proceed to Holland as a W/T operator and liaison man for another agent in the field and to help set up a new group. Given his orders, he waited at Gaynes Hall, Huntingdon for his flight.

At 23:34 on 31 May 1944, Cornelis and one other Agent departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire in Hudson III V9155 (MA-Q) on "Operation Beziquez", aiming for a drop zone to the East of Eindhoven. Given the number of Dutch Agents that had been captured on landing, the two men were to be dropped blind.

Due to a Navigation error, the aircraft strayed over the heavily anti-aircraft defended Luftwaffe fighter base at Gilze-Rijen. Hit by flak, at 01:20 the aircraft crashed just outside the airfield near the water tower at Gilze, 10km East of Breda. All but the Air Gunner were killed instantly and, on the orders of the German authorities, were buried the following day in a communal grave in the Roman Catholic Cemetery at Gilze-Rijen. At the end of the war the remains of Cornelis were re-located to Roosendaal.

Also killed : FL Warren Macaulay Hale RCAF (Pilot); FO John Gall RNZAF DFC (Nav); FO Michael Henry Hughes (AG); FO Arthur George Maskall DFM (WOp/AG); 2nd Lt Gerritt Jan Kuenen (Agent)

Cornelis is buried in Roosendaal Roman Catholic Cemetery, Netherlands

Cornelis is commemorated on Wall Panel 154

Photo Source: oorlogsgravenstichting.nl