

Agent Gerrit Cornelius Kroon

AKA - Gerrit Kraai

Bronzen Kruis (BK), Kruis van Verdienste (KV)

Gerrit was born on 2 October 1909 in Apeldoorn, Gelderland, the son of Hendrik Jan and Everdine Geertruida Kroon.

Educated at De Koningschool, he achieved a Diploma in Architecture and was employed in his father's construction company.

Mobilised in 1939 as a Conscript Sergeant in the 44th Infantry in Ochten, Betuwe, he was involved in the fighting in the Betuwe until Holland capitulated in May 1940. Unwilling to accept German occupation, in 1942 Gerrit attempted to get to England via France and Spain. On reaching Spain, Gerrit was interned in the Miranda de Ebro prison, 300km N of Madrid, until his release was secured in May 1943. In July 1943 Gerrit reached England via Portugal.



Trained as a Radio Operator in the Dutch SOE, on 28 August 1944, Gerrit and 2 other agents were allocated a flight from RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire to proceed under the code "Operation Stalking", to mobilise the Dutch Resistance in Duerne, North Brabant.

At 21:56 Gerrit departed RAF Tempsford, Bedfordshire, in Halifax VI LL388 (MA-W). The crew did not make their destination. Whilst over De Steenhove, near Engelen, the aircraft was hit by German Anti Aircraft 20mm shells and the pilot was forced to make an emergency landing at Hedel, 4km N of s-Hertogenbosch, Noord-Brabant. The Air Bomber was killed, and Navigator was mortally wounded, dying of his wounds 2 days later. The rest of the crew evaded or were taken POW. Gerrit was seriously injured, breaking both legs, and was taken prisoner.

Gerrit was interrogated at Kamp Haaren, after which he was sent to Vught Concentration Camp. In 1944 he was transferred to Neuengamme Concentration Camp, 18km SE of Hamburg where he was used as forced labour in the Hamburg Shipyards. After a final transfer to Stalag XB at Sandbostel, Gerrit was liberated by American forces on 1 May 1945 but, completely exhausted, he died a day later of pneumonia.

Also killed : FO Arnold Keith Michael Dean (Air Bomber);WO Norman Francis Slade (Nav)

Originally buried in Sandbostel, in August 1960 Gerrit's remains were transferred and buried with full military honours in Loenen Military Cemetery.

Gerrit is commemorated on Wall Panel 195

Photo Source: oorlogsgravenstichting.nl