Mierlo: Vandals deface British WW2 graves in Netherlands

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- **Vandals have spray-painted graffiti including a big swastika at a British and Commonwealth World War Two cemetery in the Netherlands.**

- Random letters were daubed on many headstones at the Mierlo cemetery, near Eindhoven in the southern Netherlands.

- The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) said it was "appalled", just days after previous damage to the site.

- Later this month Prince Charles will attend a Dutch commemoration of the 1944 Battle of Arnhem.

- It will be part of the 75th anniversary of the Allies' liberation of the Netherlands from Nazi occupation.

- The Mierlo cemetery is the final resting place of 664 British and Commonwealth soldiers and one Dutch soldier.

- The graffiti included "MH17 lie" - a provocative reference to the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine in July 2014, which killed 298 people, of whom 193 were Dutch.

- International investigators concluded that the jet was hit by a Russian-made Buk missile, fired from an area held by Russian-backed separatists.
- Condemning the vandals, **the CWGC said "it is distressing to see the damage on the headstones themselves**, behind every one of those war graves is a human story of someone who gave their life while in service".
- A regional Dutch news service, **Omroep Brabant, gave voice** to local Dutch shock and outrage at the vandalism.

- One of its reporters said "it's not just a bit of daubing here, no, they've daubed everywhere".

- "There's a letter daubed on nearly every headstone. Unbelievable."

- A woman was shocked and tearful, saying her parents had been helping to look after the Mierlo cemetery for years.

- "My heart is crying. Here are 17- and 18-year-old boys buried, who liberated us."

- **<u>Dutch police have tweeted an appeal</u>** to the public for any information that could lead to the perpetrators.