

Barker, John Henry

Trooper

14th Canadian Hussars

8th Reconnaissance Regiment

K 98314



John Henry Barker (he was called Jack) was born on June 7, 1920 in Irma, Alberta, Canada. He was the eldest son of Albert John Barker and Violet Louise Barker, who got married in England in 1917 and were members of the Church of England. John had two brothers: Albert John and Robert Arthur. He also had an older half-sister, Lillian. John was born on a farm, but from 1925 he grew up in Burnaby, British Columbia. He was 18 years old when he completed the Mechanics course at Burnaby South High School after four years and started working. He was, among other things, a cook and when he joined the army, John had been working at Dales Repair Shop in Vancouver as a mechanic for a year. He did not yet know whether he would want to return after his service, because he would like to join the police.

Burnaby, the place where John mostly grew up, was located in Eastern Canada near the US border and east of the city of Vancouver. New Westminister, to which the family later moved, was a town east of Vancouver and south of Burnaby.

John entered service at the age of 20, he was then 6 ft.5 tall and weighed 156 lb. John had a dark appearance, brown eyes and black hair.

Trooper John Henry Barker began his military career in Vancouver on August 3, 1940. He went to RQDD's Military Training Center (Regimental Quartermaster District Depot) on September 4 and to the Canadian Active Service Force sub depot in October. He continued his training in Victoria as a Private with the 21st Provost Company CPC (Canadian Provost Corps).

His brothers also joined the military: Leading Seaman Albert John Barker with the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve and Leading Aircraft Man Robert Arthur Barker, overseas with the Royal Canadian Air Force.

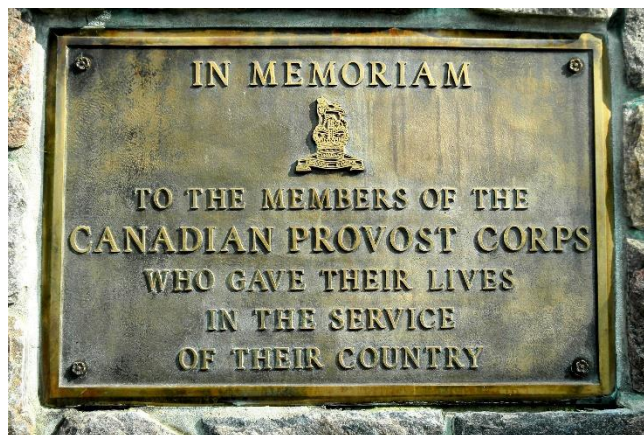


The Canadian Provost Corps

This corps of the Military Police of the Canadian Army was officially established on June 15, 1940, with the aim of providing support in, among other things, directing traffic, surveillance, guidance, advice and military police support. Each army unit would have its own Provost Company and initially 116 men volunteered. The Corps was created from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). No.1 Provost Company was the elite branch of the Canadian military. Ultimately, 215 members of the RCMP served at No.1 Provost Company.

Provost Company No.1 and No.2 became one unit of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division in early 1940. The men received their training at the Provost Training School in Camp Borden, Ontario. They were taught military law, traffic control, driving, unarmed contact, first aid and general police procedures. The training lasted eight to ten weeks and usually they were given the role of Lance-Corporal with Non-Commissioned Officer status with the possibility to arrest any soldier.

The first group of 116 volunteers was trained in just one week, including riding a Norton motorcycle. On December 17, 1939, the first people arrived in England as part of the 1st Canadian Infantry Division. This was where the actual training for the role of an Infantry Division Provost Company began. The sections consisted of 16 men: a Sergeant, a Corporal as the second commander and 14 Lance-Corporals.



*Photo:
Provost Corps*

No.1 Provost Corps took part in the war from Italy to the Netherlands, from July 1942 women were also admitted but they never took an active part in the war. On September 26, 1945, the last members went home and October 18 that year the Corps was disbanded.

From February 1941 they were at Camp Borden, Ontario, and were trained for all purposes. John got his Class III Motor Cycle driver's license here.

On January 12, 1942, John was given special leave to marry Dalyn in Vancouver, also from that city, who lived in New Westminster, Fredrick Avenue. He got eight days special leave for this and then he had to go to Halifax where they embarked for departure to Europe on February 28.

On March 9, 1942 they were in the UK and became part of the GRU (General Reinforcement Unit). In that year there were again several weeks of leave and on May 15th John was promoted to Lance-Corporal at 2nd Provo of the Provost Corps. A unit consisted of about 200 men. John also received medical training and was certified as Qualified 1st Aid St. John's Ambulance on September 24, 1942. He gained experience in the 18th Field Ambulance and joined the administration of the 15th General Hospital in February 1943. When he caused damage to a Harley Davidson motorcycle in August of that year, the cost of £ 1.1.10 was deducted from his pay. On October 21, 1943, the next transfer was to the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade First Aid Post. In January 1944 John received an official reprimand and from January 24 to 28 that year he received a special Football Training. From July 5, 1944, John was Corporal when he left for his job in France, but at his own request that rank was reverted to Private on January 15, 1945.

The 8th Reconnaissance Regiment.

This Regiment was the reconnaissance unit of the Canadian Army during the advance from Italy to the Netherlands. The 8th Reconnaissance Regiment (14th Canadian Hussars) received its training and coastal defense duties in the south of England in the first three years of the war. Only on July 6, 1944 (1 month after D-Day) did the troops arrive in Normandy, France, and then began their duties as infantrymen. The first three deaths were on July 13.

The German troops were pushed back from Northern France towards Belgium and the Netherlands and the Regiment was then deployed for their proper task: as a reconnaissance unit during the advance of the 1st Canadian Army. They were involved in the liberation of important port cities such as Dieppe and Antwerp, in the Battle of the Scheldt, in the liberation of towns and villages in the Netherlands and the invasion of Germany. In the meantime, fierce fighting had been fought and many people were killed and wounded on both sides.

Extract from a diary of the 8th Reconnaissance Regiment:

- *July 1, 1944: we start clearing and cleaning the barracks in Goodnestone (UK).*

- July 2: departure of the crew in their vehicles to the shunting yard of the ship's cargo and the vehicles are waterproofed for the crossing
- July 4: from London Docks to the ship
- 5 July: in the evening with a tugboat out of the harbor
- 6 July: via the Thames with calm waters across the Channel
- 7 July: just before midnight the ship arrives in Caen in France
- 8 July: with LST (Landing Ship Tank) on land around 6:00 pm, where the vehicles were made ready for use again and driven to the port
- 13 July: the first encounters with the enemy, several bombs are being dropped and the first fatalities occur
- 15 July: under shell fire and no communication is possible, only via the wireless communication of the Scoutcars
- 9 August: preparations for the classic Recce task
- 31 August: already gone far towards Dieppe



KILLED—Tpr. John H. "Jack" Barker, R.E.C.A., whose wife lives at 1625 West Tenth, was killed in action on the western front on February 26, a month after he transferred from the Provost to Armored Corps. Son of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Barker, 2619 Randolph avenue, Burnaby, he worked at the Vancouver General Hospital before joining the army in July, 1940. He went overseas in February, 1942. Tpr. Barker, 24, was educated at Windsor Street and Burnaby South high schools. Besides his wife and parents, he leaves a sister Lillian at home and two brothers, LS. A. J. Barker, R.C.N.V.R., at sea, and LAC. R. A. Barker, overseas with the R.C.A.F

Private John Henry Barker was killed on February 26, 1945 in Bedburg, Germany, where he was temporarily buried in the Canadian Military Cemetery.

According to a letter to his wife dated July 13, 1946, John was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery on September 5, 1945, grave reference **VIII. C. 16.**



Photo: Liesbeth Huisman

The Province, Wednesday March 28, 1945

John's mother received a letter from the army command, in response to her husband's letter on March 24, 1945, that all information regarding John would be sent to his widow.

John received the following awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France & Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp

After the war Dalyn remarried and moved to Oregon, USA.



Life story: Liesbeth Huisman-Arts, Research Team Faces to Graves.

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Library and Archives Canada
- War Diaries Canada WW II Project 44.ca
- Provost Corps Canada
- mp.museum.org
- Burnaby South High School History



Photo: Burnaby South High School History