

**Barnett, Harry Henry Alfred**  
**Sergeant**  
**Canadian Army General List**  
**3 Public Relations Group**  
**Driver / Combat Cameraman**  
**D/46110**



Harry Henry Alfred Barnett was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on Wednesday December 8, 1920. His father and mother's names are unknown as well as the death and names of any brothers or sisters he may have had. He lived with his guardian George Hayward at 121 Prospect Street in Sherbrooke, Quebec. He belonged to the Church of England. As his next of kin Mrs Violet Baker (aunt), Glenfarg, No. 7, Lansdown Road, Sidcup, Kent, England was mentioned.

Until the age of 16, he attended school, the last three years of which were High School. In 1939 he started working as a lathe worker where he made jewelry for Canadian Sturdy Chain Company. Making jewelry was a precision job and required the use of optimum materials. He had grey/blue eyes and fair hair, weighed 136 pounds and was 5 ft 8.5 inches tall. Harry Henry Alfred loved to go swimming and skiing. In 1939 he suffered from appendicitis, which he was operated on and which left him with a scar.

On July 29, 1940 Harry Henry Alfred Barnett signed up in Sherbrooke, Quebec, with the Sherbrooke Fuseliers, Canadian Active Service Force. Here his military career started and where he had his Basic Training.

A handwritten signature of Harry Henry Alfred Barnett. The signature is written in cursive and is placed over a dotted line. Below the signature, the text "(Signature de l'officier, soldat, ou aviateur)" is printed.

.....  
(Signature de l'officier, soldat, ou aviateur)



After the war he wanted to return to his employer to make jewelry again. He also had the ambition to become a commercial pilot. He indicated that his preference was to join the Royal Canadian Airforce. The recruitment officer found him a clever young man who might be suitable to serve with this unit.

From September 21 until September 26, 1940 he stayed in the sick bay, returned to his regiment for further training, and on August 14, 1941 he went to Newfoundland for surveillance missions, where he stayed in Saint John's until February 11, 1942. At the outbreak of the war, there was no effective defence force in Newfoundland. They had hardly any troops, there were no cannons, no fortifications, and the government did not have the means to supply them. England was not able to provide a lot of help. After a period of uncertainty it became clear that the defence of Newfoundland was a North-American responsibility, whereby Canada took the lead. On his return from Newfoundland he was assigned to Headquarters 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Army Division in Camp Debert as a Private on March 4, a few days later followed by two weeks' leave from March 9 until March 22, 1942.

Harry Henry Alfred Barnett had a training as a Driver I.C. III(W), with the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Army Division Headquarters, which he passed successfully on July 28, 1942 in the rank of Trooper. The following month, on August 21, 1942 he went overseas to England, where he set foot ashore on August 27. In England he continued being a Driver with the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Army Division Headquarters. On March 14, 1943 he was assigned to Headquarters 2 Canadian Corps, after which he served almost a year in Italy with the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Public Relations Detachment from June 30, 1943 until April 10, 1944. Back in England he took a course as a cinema photographer between April 26, 1944 and May 31, 1944, thus reaching a skills level equal to the level that was required to pass the Army Trades Test Photographer (Cine) Group 'B'. He was then assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Film & Photo Section on April 28, 1944, in the rank of A/Corporal.

The Canadian Army Film and Photo Unit was part of the Canadian Army Public Relations Branch. The unit was developed in response to the Government's desire to document Canada's military involvement in the war, which could be used to promote Canada, both at home and abroad.



The production of these newsreels also served to train and inform the troops, the added benefit of which was that morale was increased and an insight was given into other Canadian soldiers' experiences. The newsreels were meant to be seen by soldiers and they were not made public. Particular footage, however, was adapted to publicly released newsreels, produced by the National Film Board.



On July 19, 1944 Harry Henry Alfred Barnett went from England to north-western Europe in order to document the Allied advance. He mainly used the 35mm Bell & Howell film camera and the Super Ikonta 530/16 or 532/16. Via France and Belgium he arrived in the Netherlands and was promoted to Sergeant on September 30, 1944. The Allied advance had in the meantime crossed the Rhine in Germany as a result of among other things Operation Veritable. On November 15, 1944 he was qualified as a Photographer (Cine) Group 'A'.



Harry Henry Alfred Barnett was given the permanent assignment of taking aerial photographs of combat zones, if necessary, and, if possible, of arranging flights in Taylorcraft Auster aircraft. In order to do so, he left press camp Materhorn on March 11, 1945 at approx. 13.30 hours to make a flight with the English Captain Clifford Leslie Curtis-Willson, Air Observation Pilot of 'C' Flight, 660 Air Observation Pilot Squadron, over the Rhine area.



*Taylorcraft Auster aircraft  
Source : Wikipedia*

At 22.30 hours a driver of a jeep, who had gone to the landing strip in order to wait for Sergeant Barnett on his return, reported to Captain Fraser that the agents on the landing strip said that the Taylorcraft Auster had been shot down. Captain Willson got wounded, but was still alive and was moved to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. He died of his wounds in the morning of March 12 at the age of 26. Sergeant Barnett was assumed to be dead.

Early in the morning of March 12 Captain Fraser set out to gather more information. Ultimately, he found the plane wreck at approx. 5,000 metres west of Xanten in Germany. Sergeant Barnett's body had been removed from the plane and put on the ground. His pockets were searched and the only thing that was found was a small knife.

A conversation with a shooter, who had witnessed the action, and examination of the plane revealed that it had been attacked from above and behind by a Messerschmitt BF 109. The plane got severely damaged and crashed in a field. Sergeant Barnett had been shot from above through his right shoulder and back and in both hands. He must have died instantly on March 11, 1945.

His camera was slightly damaged, but repairable. A 30-metre exposed film was found and sent to C.M.H.Q. in order to be processed. It is known that he had taken more materials with him, but these were missing.

Captain Clifford Leslie Curtis-Willson was buried in Bedburg and reburied after the war on August 29, 1945 at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference VI. B. 5.

Harry Henry Alfred Barnett's body was buried at the Canadian Cemetery near Xanten in the afternoon of March 12. Captain Browne, the Chaplain of the Headquarters Administration Group 4 Canadian Division, conducted the funeral service.

After the war, on August 14, 1945, he was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **II. G. 14.**



Source : <http://lestweforget1945.org/>

Harry Henry Alfred Barnett's medals :

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



Life story: Gijs Krist - Research Team Faces To Graves

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves

Library and Archives Canada

<https://canadianfilmandphotounit.ca/>

Dale Gervais

\* If you have a photograph of this soldier or any additional information, please contact [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl)



57582. A camouflaged jeep-trailer helps conceal the movements of Canadian cameraman and his equipment close behind the front lines in France. Here Sgt. M. A. Barnett (Montreal) prepares his camera equipment for action.  
CANADIAN ARMY OVERSEAS PHOTO



Source : <https://canadianfilmandphotounit.ca/>


Het Nederlands Oorlogsgraven Comité  
Keizersgracht 442  
te  
Amsterdam . C.

12 Mei 1947.

Naar aanleiding van Uw schrijven d.d. 2 Mei j.l. deel ik U mede, dat het graf van Barnett H.H.A. reeds geadopteerd is door de heer Keeris, Josef Israelstraat 28 Nijmegen.

Ik ben gaarne bereid Juffrouw Verhagen dit graf toe te wijzen, doch zou het op prijs stellen, wanneer zij deze ruiling zelf bewerkstelligt. Teneinde haar daarin te helpen kan Mej. Verhagen aan de familie Keeris mededelen, dat het Nederlands Oorlogsgraven Comité afd. Groesbeek voor deze ruiling een graf met home-adress zal reserveren.

Het Bestuur N.O.C.  
Afd. Groesbeek,

  
Voorsitter.

Hb/

*Documenten over het adopteren van het graf van Harry Henry Alfred Barnett.*

xxx To Mr. G.W. Ross  
The Canadian Press  
86, Fleet Street  
London, EC 4, England.

20 December 1946.


Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 15th. inst. I have to inform you that the grave of H.H.A. Barnett D-40110 is adopted by the family Keeris, Jos. Israelstraat 28 at Nijmegen.

It is a pity that there are still so many graves of Canadian boys whose home-addresses are not known here. I've sent your letter to the family Keeris so that they will write to you and that it will be able to bring them in connection with the next of kin of Barnett.

Could't you publish our adoption-work in Canada so that every next of kin, whose son or husband is buried here, could come in connection with the Dutch family who has adopted that grave? Many of them would be brought nearer to this restplace and could find consolation in it.

Yrs. tr.

  
Burgomaster of Groesbeek.  
H.M.J.F.L. van Grotenhuis.

Hb/



# Nederlandsch Oorlogsgraven Comité

NETHERLANDS WAR GRAVES COMMITTEE

VERZOEK BIJ BEANTWOORDING  
DATUM EN NUMMER VAN DIT  
SCHRIJVEN TE VERMELDEN

No. 4045 Va.

AMSTERDAM (C). 2 Mei 1947  
KEIZERGRACHT 447  
TELEFOON 36770  
Postbus 41400  
Bankier: Hetschler & Groot

Geer Geschte Heer van Grotenhuis,  
volgende:

Beleefd verzoek ik Uw aandacht voor het

Het is mij bekend, dat op de Canadese begraafplaats te GROSBEK in Plot II, Row G, Grave 14 begraven ligt den Sergeant H.H.A. BARNETT, D-46110, Canadian Public Relations Group.

Maar ik zelf geruime tijd als Tolk bij dit legeronderdeel gediend heb, zijn mij de omstandigheden van de dood van Barnett ten volle bekend. Bovendien was ik op het tijdstip van zijn overlijden in hetzelfde huis te WIJCHEN ingekwartierd, waar hij geruime tijd verblijft hield in Februari-Maart '45.

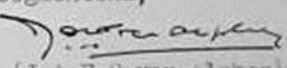
Nog steeds ben ik in contact met onze "hospita", Mevrouw A. Verhagen, Kasteellaan A 90 te WIJCHEN.

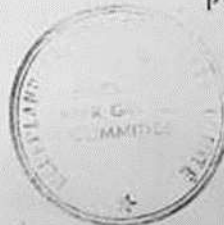
Deze dame bezoekt regelmatig Barnett's graf en teoid het steeds met bloemen. Zij zou gaarne in aanmerking komen voor adoptie vandit graf, doch zij vermoedt dat een andere familie zich hier reeds heeft belast.

U zou mij ten eerste verplichten indien U het zo zou kunnen regelen, dat Mevrouw Verhagen dit graf ter adoptie toegewaren kreeg. De omstandigheid, dat zij deze militair persoonlijk zeer goed gekend heeft billijkt mijns inziens dit verzoek volkomen, en ik veronderstel dat ook de familie, die thans het graf geadopteerd heeft zich hiermede zal kunnen verenigen.

U bij voorbaat dankzeggend voor Uw besiddeling in deze, teken ik innididels,

b. Hoogachtend,

  
(J.A.F.S. van Alphen)



Den Heer Burgemeester  
der Gemeente  
G r o s b e k .  
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