

**Bell, Albert Earnest**

**Private**

**Essex Scottish Regiment**

**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**

**B 270059**



Albert Earnest Bell was born in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England on 30 May 1909.

His father was Arnold Bell, his mother was not mentioned in military reports about Albert. The family lived in Lakeview, Ontario, Canada and attended the Church of England. Albert had one brother, Arnold Bell Jr, who lived in New Toronto.



Albert left High School at the age of fourteen and worked as a construction labourer at J. Yates Building Contractor in Niagara Falls for

eight years. Then he changed jobs and worked as a shoe repairer and was hoping for a permanent job as shoe repairer. He was a young man in good shape, weighted 129 pounds and was 5 feet 4 inch tall, he had blue eyes, brown hair. He liked sports, fishing, hunting, skiing, baseball and he played the harmonica.

Albert Bell enlisted in Toronto on 5 June 1940 as a Sapper and was posted to the 18<sup>th</sup> Field Company Royal Canadian Engineers.

**OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY FORM**

THIS FORM IS TO BE COMPLETED FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE INFORMATION SOUGHT IS FOR THE USE OF GENERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DEMOBILIZATION AND REHABILITATION, A COMMITTEE SET UP BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO STUDY PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING IN INDUSTRIAL LIFE THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, AFTER DISCHARGE. ACCURACY AND COMPLETENESS IN ANSWERING WILL BE OF MUCH HELP TO THE COMMITTEE.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN ON THE INSIDE OF COVER BEFORE COMPLETING FORM

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**Section A—GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. (a) Print name in full BELL ALBERT E. (b) Reg'l. No. B77059

2. (a) Arm of service ARMY (b) Unit 18<sup>th</sup> FIELD Coy (c) Rank SAPPER

3. (a) Date of birth MAY 3/1907 (b) Have you any dependents? NO (c) Place of residence at time of enlistment TORONTO ONT

4. (a) Place of enlistment TORONTO ONT (b) Date of enlistment JUNE 5/1940

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**Section B—EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

5. (a) State age on finally leaving school 14 YEARS (b) Were you attending school or college up to the time of enlistment? NO

6. State definitely highest standing reached at public, technical or high school (for instance—"4 years, Public School", "two years, High School", "Junior Matriculation", or "4 years technical course in printing", etc.) HIGH SCHOOL ENT.

7. If you attended a university, give name of university and standing or degree secured. N/A

8. (a) Did you ever enter upon a trade apprenticeship? NO (b) If so, for what occupation? N/A (c) Did you finish it, how long did you serve at it? N/A (d) If you did not finish it, how long did you serve at it? N/A

9. (a) What languages do you speak fluently? ENGLISH (b) What languages do you read well? ENGLISH

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**Section C—EMPLOYMENT CONDITION AT TIME OF ENLISTMENT**

10. (a) State whether you were WORKING or NOT WORKING at time of enlistment. (b) At time of enlistment of what

He followed training and courses and embarked in Halifax on the H.M.T. Britannic on 18 June 1941, twelve days later he arrived in Aldershot, England. Again he went on training and followed courses and in December 1942 he became a qualified Pioneer Group C. In June 1943 he was transferred to the Head Quarters of the Royal Canadian Engineers. Almost a year later he was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Engineer Reinforcement Unit. Albert started a training for Carpenter and in October 1944 he became qualified Carpenter and was posted to the Winnipeg Grenadiers. A month later he was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Training Regiment and on 15 December he was sent to France as a Private.

On 9 January 1945 Albert was posted to the Essex Scottish Regiment (ESR).

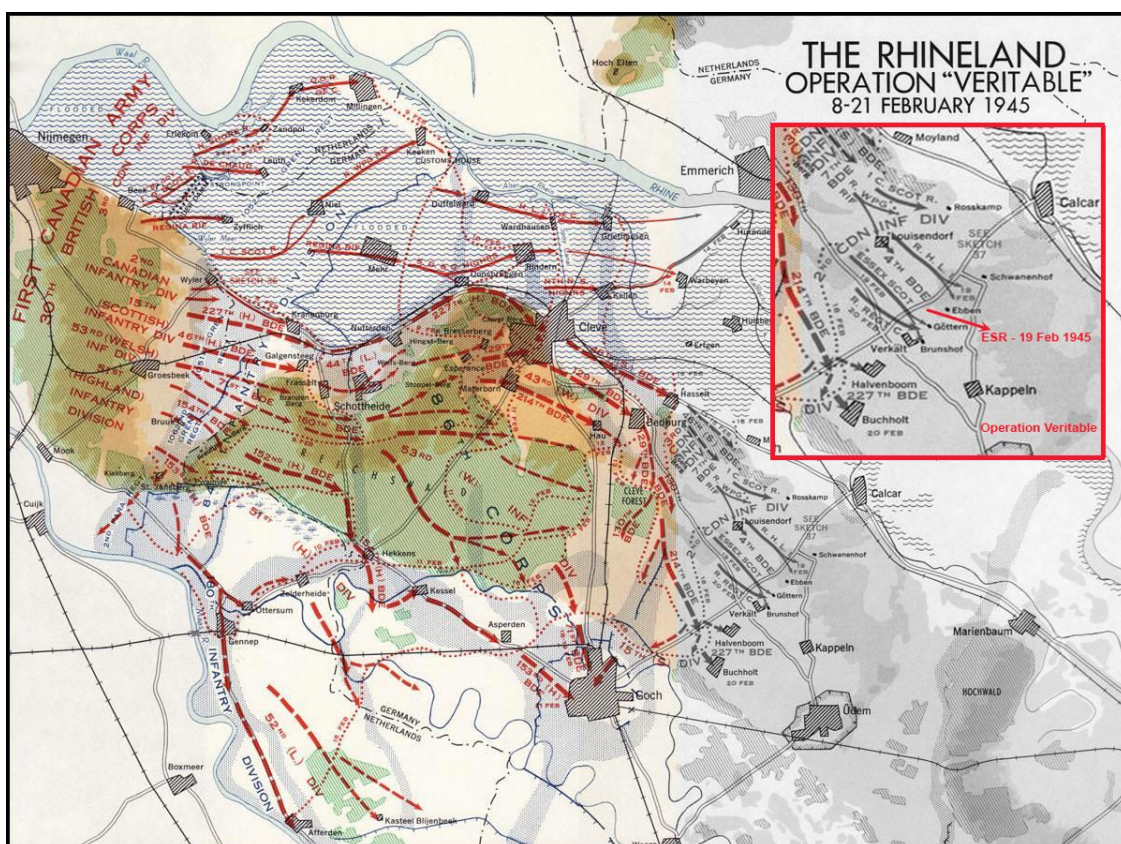
By the time Albert joined the ESR, the regiment had set up camp around Nijmegen and was waiting for new orders.



In January the Allied launched a new plan: the Rhineland Offensive.

The Rhineland Offensive consisted of several large-scale offensives designed to break through the German defence line in Western Europe. Operation Veritable was an important part of this because of the famous 'pincer movement' which aimed to drive the German forces out of the area between the Maas and the Rhine, a front only 12 kilometres wide.

After a force of over 500,000 soldiers had been assembled in the east, around Groesbeek and Nijmegen, including the First Canadian Army under General Crerar and the British 30th Army Corps under Lieutenant General Horrocks, Operation Veritable began on 8 February 1945. The British and Canadian forces were to advance from the north, while the American Allies were to close the gap from the south, closing in on the Germans.



When Operation Veritable started the Essex Scottish Regiment was stationed around Wyler and awaiting further orders. The soldiers were eager to go to Germany, finally beat the enemy in their own country!

On 14 February they were called up, they had to advance from Nijmegen via Mook-Gennep-Hekkens through the Reichswald to Cleve and Calcar and with the support of Kangaroos (tanks) they were steadily successful.

On 18 February they were around Calcar and were ordered to start the attack on Moyland. During the night of 18 to 19 February heavenly rain started, the Essex Scottish Regiment was ordered to capture buildings in

Gottern and Brunshof, the mud played tricks on the tanks and they progressed very slowly during the day.

On 19 February at 2.15 pm, the Germans launched a violent counterattack. The Essex Scottish Regiment were under heavy fire from the "Goch Kalkar" road.



A fierce battle ensued, at 4.30 pm they were within 200 yard of their goal when German reinforcements.

Their Pantzer Corps was doubled and at 8 p.m. the Germans launched the attack, just as the Essex Scottish Regiment was out of tanks as they were being withdrawn to be re-manned and refueled.

The Essex Scottish Regiment could not withstand this violent attack and they were overrun by the Germans beyond their Head Quarter.

Staff and survivors retreated to the basement of a farm.

During the night reinforcements arrived, the counterattack was launched and they succeeded in driving the Germans back. Eventually they got hold of the Calcar Road.

The battle on 19 February was the bloodiest of the entire Operation Veritable, the Essex Scottish Regiment left 51 dead (out of a total of 400 dead on 19th and 20th February), 99 wounded and 54 became prisoners of war.

Private Albert Earnest Bell received shrapnel in his head and from that injury he died on 19 February 1945. He was buried in Bedburg, Germany and later reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **XXI. A. 5.**

**Awards:**

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



**FACES TO GRAVES**  
*Stichting Faces to Canadian  
War Graves Groesbeek*

Life story: Else Schaberg, Research Team Faces To Graves.

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

**Sources:**

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Library and Archives Canada
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial
- The Essex Scottish Regiment, C. van Beek, Putte, 2004, speciale uitgave Tijding, periodiek Heemkundekring Het Zuidkwartier
- Horrall, Andrew "An "Eternal Memorial for Canadian Heroes": The Dutch Town of Putte Commemorates the Essex Scottish Regiment." Canadian Military History 20, 3 (2011)