

**Bell, Lawrence Reginald**  
**Trooper**  
**Fort Garry Horse**  
**Royal Canadian Armoured Corps**  
**L/104948**



Lawrence Reginald Bell was born on September 1, 1915 in Asquith, Saskatchewan, Canada. He was the son of James Albert, of Scottish descent, and Elizabeth Margaret Bell, of English descent. Father was a farmer and a warehouse worker and mother was a housewife. Lawrence was the youngest of a family with five children: his brothers were John Shakespeare and Albert Edward, and his sisters were Margaret Carmichael and Patrina Emily, both already married. They grew up together on a farm in Battleford, Saskatchewan. The family visited the Church of England.

Lawrence attended a High School until the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. In total he went to school for eight years. He dropped out of school at the age of 16. Before his period of service, he worked as a warehouse employee for eight months, of which six months as a shipper, all at the firm Storey & Campbell Ltd. in Calgary. He also had four years of experience working on a ranch. After leaving the military service, he intended to work on a farm with both arable and livestock farming. He also wanted to learn the trade of blacksmith if he got the chance.

His hobbies were mainly sports. He played rugby, ice hockey, liked to ride horses and did a bit of boxing. He also liked to read magazines. He liked to dance, watch a movie or play cards with his friends.

Lawrence was a healthy, quiet, cooperative and single boy, 27 years old, with brown hair and blue eyes. He was 5 ft.6 tall and weighed 141 lbs. He had no problem with going overseas either. He had a normal education but his intelligence was above average. They saw in him a reliable soldier with the possibility of being trained as a non-commissioned officer. As in his civilian life, he worked as a warehouse man for Storey & Campbell Ltd. in Calgary, later as a shipper and general stock man.

One of his brothers, John Shakespeare Bell, was also in the military as a Lance Corporal. He was assigned to The Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps and was posted to Italy and had already been in service for 4.5 years.

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION

I, Lawrence Reginald Bell, do solemnly declare that the above particulars are true, and I hereby engage to serve in any Active Formation or Unit of The Canadian Army so long as an emergency, i.e., war, invasion, riot or insurrection, real or apprehended, exists, and for the period of demobilization after said emergency ceases to exist, and in any event for a period of not less than one year, provided His Majesty should so require my services.

Date..... Feb. 3 1943..... Lawrence R Bell  
(Signature of recruit)

On February 3, 1943, Lawrence volunteered for military service in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. The same day, he reported to the District Depot in Regina, Saskatchewan, where he received his rank of Private. He also followed his training there. In April he was transferred to the Canadian Armoured Training Center at Camp Borden where he received his rank of Trooper. He also regularly worked there in the camp warehouse. He also followed his Basic and Advanced Training there. He also learned there how to handle a rifle, a Thompson machine gun, a Bren gun, a pistol and how to throw hand grenades. Lawrence also got his Driver Class III certificate for driving large vehicles and tracked vehicles. He also obtained his Driver Mechanic Group C Track diploma. On February 2, 1944, when playing football he hit his face hard on the ground and bruised his nose, and had to go to hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, he was again admitted to the hospital at Camp Borden on April 27, this time for 15 days.

Lawrence embarked for England on July 20, 1944 and arrived there on July 28. He was posted there with the Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit. His regiment was to be located near the coast where they could load their tanks on landing craft. He was also trained there in dealing with a Piat, a Stengun and a mortar, and also received his further training there.

On September 11, 1944 he was embarked for Western Europe and arrived in France on September 13. There Lawrence took part in Operation Wellhit to liberate the fortified port of Boulogne sur Mer, an operation which lasted from September 17 to September 22. They worked together there with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade. The harbor was located in the mouth of the river Liane, which split the area in two. On September 22, they attacked the last stronghold of the Germans, the southern fortress on the Portel peninsula of Qutreau, between the river and the coast, where the German General Heim was located.

Next his regiment took part in Operation Switchback, the Battle of the Scheldt estuary, which began on October 6 and lasted until October 21. They had to clear this estuary to ensure that the port of Antwerp could be used to supply the Allied troops. It was to become the main supply port for the Allies. On October 24 they also took part in the liberation of South Beveland and the battle for Walcheren, so that the area around the Scheldt estuary would be free from Germans. With the attack on Walcheren they assisted The Calgary Highlanders there. This would take until the beginning of November. After this attack, the regiment left for Breda to get a rest there by means of a short break.

It was November 11, 1944 and Lawrence and The Fort Garries had the opportunity to relieve the 4<sup>th</sup> / 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Dragoon Guards near Nijmegen with their regiment. A period of three months of well-deserved rest followed to rebuild the regiment.

Impatient to finish the job, the Garries invaded Germany as the first armoured Canadian regiment on February 17, 1945. They pushed through towards the Siegfried Line. The attack took place on the road from Goch to Kalkar. The success of the attack depended for a large part on the ability of the tanks and the Kangaroos, which are armoured tracked transport vehicles, to move across open terrain parallel to the road. During the night of 18 to 19 February there was a lot of rain, which had worsened the conditions. They encountered little resistance in the beginning, but they suffered a lot from the muddy surface that caused the tanks and Kangaroos to get stuck, many tanks also jammed on landmines. And it soon became clear that the Germans had built an anti-tank screen including a pile of 88mm Flak near Brunshof-Göttern, a row of farms among the trees, along the Goch to Kalkar road. The anti-tank screen was formed by fresh troops from the 12<sup>th</sup> Parra Reconnaissance Regiment. And behind the anti-tank screen was the Panzer-Lehr-Division, an elite

armoured division of the Wehrmacht. This division was not known to be located in this area. On the left side of the infantry advance, three of the Kangaroos crew got killed and of the tank crew six got killed. In total there were eleven victims in this area among the tank crew in this two-day battle. Trooper Lawrence Reginald Bell was seriously injured here and died of his injuries.

*His mother receives the sad message on March 7, 1945:*

M.F.M. 268  
50M-9-44 (5635)  
H.Q. 1772-39-1990

**CANADIAN PACIFIC**  
**AS TELEGRAPHS**

FILE H.Q. 405-B-24,901

CASUALTY (REPORT DELIVERY) OTTAWA 7 MARCH 1945

TO:- MRS MARGARET E BELL  
GENERAL DELIVERY  
BATTLEFORD SASK

50325 REGRET DEEPLY L104948 TROOPER LAWRENCE REGINALD BELL  
HAS NOW BEEN OFFICIALLY REPORTED TO HAVE DIED OF WOUNDS NINETEENTH  
FEBRUARY 1945 STOP YOU SHOULD RECEIVED FURTHER DETAILS BY MAIL DIREC  
FROM THE UNIT IN THE THEATRE OF WAR

PREPAID *MA* DIRECTOR OF RECORDS

Lawrence Reginald Bell was first buried in the temporary cemetery in Kleve, Germany, and was later reburied in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **XXI. A. 6.**

The inscription on his headstone reads:

ABIDE WITH ME  
FAST FALLS THE EVENING  
IN LIFE IN DEATH O LORD  
WITH ME ABIDE



**TPR. L. G. BELL**

son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Bell of Battleford, and nephew of the late J. C. Bell of Saskatoon and Ernest Bell of Calgary, Alta., died February 19 of wounds received in action the same day in Holland.

Trooper Bell was born at Asquith 28 years ago. He took his public schooling at Eagle Valley, Battleford and Sandwith. He went overseas in 1944. His brother, L.-Cpl. Jack S. Bell of 3 Cda. Inf. Brigade, R.C. Elec. Mac. Engineers, who is serving in Italy, has been in the forces for 4½ years. Edward Bell of Sandwith is a brother, and two sisters reside in Saskatchewan, Mrs. Leslie Pollard of Sandwith and Mrs. Raymond Pollard of Rabbit Lake.

His awards:

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

Zijn naam is vermeld op het Canadian Virtual War Memorial en in het Second World War book of Remembrance Commemorated. Ook is Lawrence naam vermeld op The Roll of Honour of The Fort Garry Horse op het herinneringspaneel in het Mc Gregor Armoury Memorial House in The Regimenthouse in Winnipeg, Canada. Lawrence naam staat ook vermeld op het Saskatchewan Virtual War Memorial.



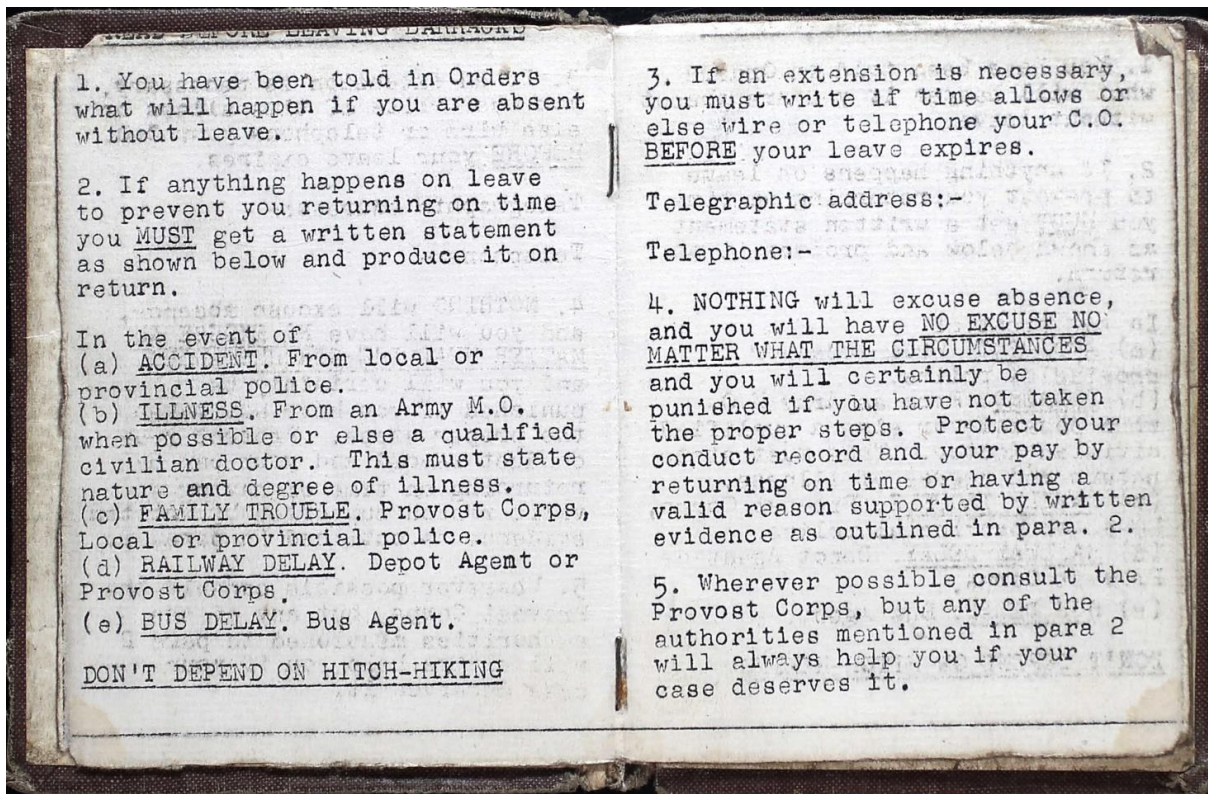
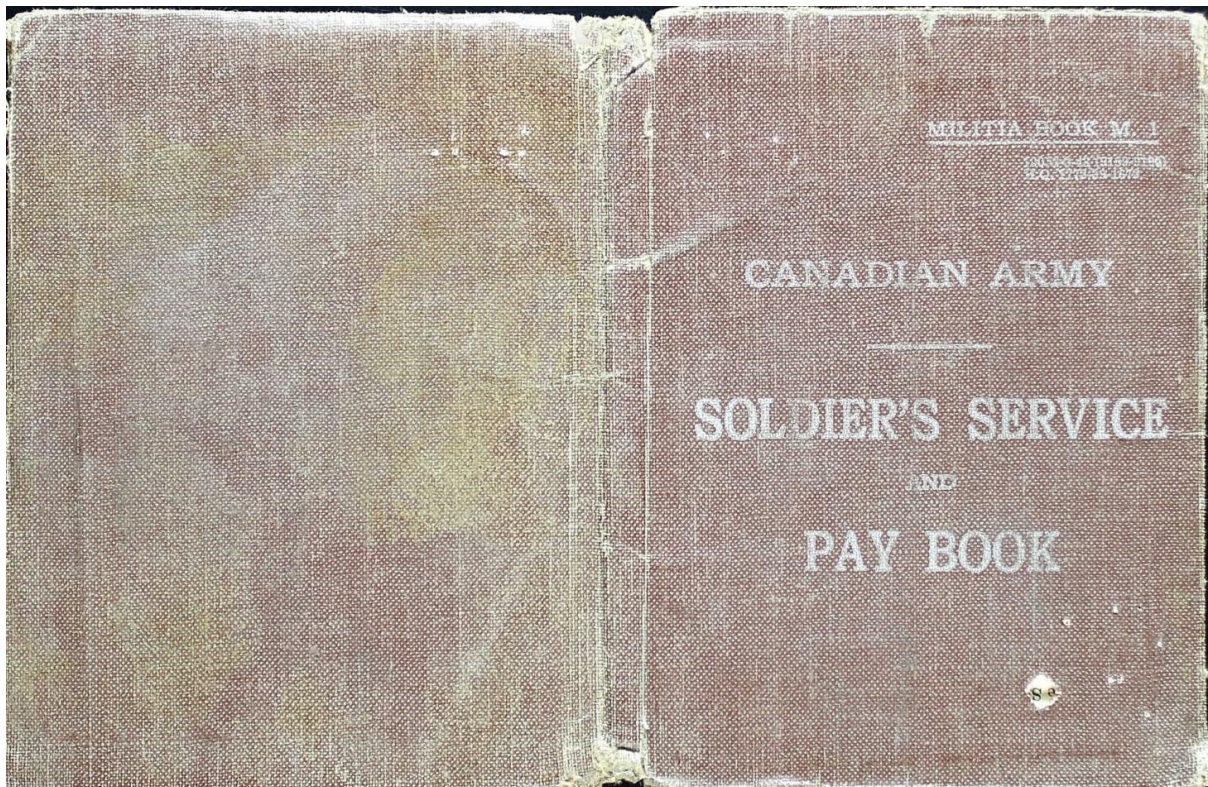
**FACES TO GRAVES**

Stichting Faces to Canadian  
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story: Maurice Nagelhout, Research Team Faces To Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
Library and Archives Canada  
Veterans Affairs Canada  
Ancestry.com  
Fortgarryhorse.ca  
www.canadiansoldier.com  
Find A Grave  
Traces of War  
WW2 Talk.com



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(I) SOLDIER'S NAME AND DESCRIPTION ON ATTESTATION

Regtl. No. L104948  
Surname (in capitals) BELL  
Christian Names (in full) Lawrence Reginald  
Date of Birth 1 Sep. 15  
Place of Birth Saskatoon, Sask  
Citizenship Canadian  
Trade on Enlistment Workshopman

Nationality of Father at Birth Scotch  
Nationality of Mother at Birth English  
Religion Cof. E.  
Enlisted at Regina, Sask  
Date 3 Feb 43

Particulars of former service (if any) i.e. Regtl. No., Corps or Regiment and period. N.S.

Signature of Soldier Lawrence Reginald Bell  
Signature of Officer W. H. Howie Lieut.  
Place Gorden Date 10 NOV 43

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(V) RANK AND APPOINTMENT

Date	Rank and Appointment	Substantive, Temporary, or Local (with or without pay)	Authority of Part II Orders	Signature of Officer
3 Feb 43	Pte		#37	<u>W. H. Howie Lieut.</u>
13 Apr 43	Tpr		#41	
3 Jul 43	Tpr	#100 day	21	
3-8-43	Tpr	#100 day	25	
24-9-44	Pte	limited	CR33-44	

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(VI) Certificate Applicable to all Arms, to be completed and signed by the C.O. Bn., etc., before a Soldier proceeds Overseas

TRAINED (passed Basic Training, and Advanced Training as laid down for his arm-of-the Service) *except that he requires further training in* Sw.

Completed basic training at 120 B.T.C. per standard syllabus 13-4-43  
W. H. Howie Lieut.

Completed Part II Adv. Trng (A.C. per standard syllabus 4/3/44)  
W. H. Howie Lieut.

Qualified in addition as under:-  
Qualification in military school  
Enlisted prior to the effective date of C.A. No. 3543  
26 Jan 44  
John G. Walker D.C.E.

Date.....  
Commanding.....

\*If no further training required, strike out words in italics and initial