

Calbert, Herbert Cuthbertson
Rifleman
Queen's Own Rifle Regiment of
Canada
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps
B 116330



Herbert Cuthbertson Calbert was born 12 March, 1926 in Toronto, the son of William Cuthbertson, born around 1888, and Annie Rosina, both of whom were born in Scotland. William had fought in the first world war and spent five years in the army; he was wounded several times before returning to Canada, where he married in 1919. Herbert had six brothers, Alfred, William (Bill), Thomas, Robert (Bob), James and Donald; he had one sister, Catherine Margaret (Kay). The family belonged to the United Church.



*Parents with brother
Bob in front of their
house.*

Herbert was brought up in Locust Hill, York County, Ontario, where his father had a farm.

He attended the local school and completed grade 7. He then worked on Roy Carter `s farm for two years in Green River, also in the Toronto area. In his army record he said that he was a farmer but did not want to return to Green River, preferring to settle permanently in Locust Hill.

IN THE MILITARY.

At the age of 17, Herbert enlisted 9 September, 1943 in Toronto where he had preliminary interviews and a medical examination. He was 5ft.5ins. tall and weighed 123lbs. with blue eyes and brown hair. His health was good and he was rated A1. After a month he was moved to Brantford and then Borden for infantry training; in January, 1944 he was placed with the 1st Battalion of the Midland Regiment. In March he was transferred to Prince Rupert in British Columbia where a few weeks later he was given leave for 21 days. On return, more training followed and on 1 June he was given 16 days embarkation leave. He sailed to the UK arriving 8 July and only ten days later he was already in France.

While still in Canada, Herbert had been attached to the Queen `s Own Rifle Regiment which had taken part in the D-day landings with a heavy loss of life. It is probable that Herbert travelled with a group of reinforcements to join them. The 1st Battalion at this point was involved in the heavy fighting around Caen until at the end of July they were given a short rest period in Fontaine Henry where the `new boys` were given extra training. The QOR then continued through northern France to Abbeville and the important ports of Boulogne and Calais which they reached at the end of September. In October. the Battle of the Schelde river took place in Belgium and Zeeuwse Vlanders in the Netherlands in which the QOR was involved. On 3 November, they went back to Ghent for a week s well-earned rest, receiving a tremendous welcome from the people there. The battalion was then transported some 200 kilometers north-eastwards to the Nijmegen area, situated close to the Dutch - German-border.

The next three months was a kind of waiting period before the immense Operation Veritable began in February 1945. It was by no means free of enemy activity but Nijmegen had been liberated and there was

more opportunity for the troops to enjoy various activities and have a cleanup when not on duty. The QOR was stationed at different points near the border, moving every week or ten days. After their arrival in Berg and Dal, they were in Erlecom near the Waal river and Wylerberg, where there was frequent enemy activity with shells and mortar fire, sometimes resulting in casualties. Both sides infiltrated across the lines at times; an enemy prisoner could provide valuable information. Whenever possible, daily activities could include battle drill training and route marches. It was winter and flooding became a serious problem in low lying areas, leading to the use of amphibious vehicles and boats. In the first weeks of January, near Groesbeek, the QOR faced increased enemy activity necessitating more patrol duties. In Mook and then Ubbergen, conditions were more congenial and there was time for intensive training. With the massing of equipment and armour in the area, it was becoming obvious that a big operation was imminent.

Operation Veritable began 8 February, 1945 and the next day, the QOR moved to an assembly area in the shipyards near Millingen, remaining there for ten days. There was severe flooding to a depth of more than two feet because the dikes had been blown up.

Boats had to be used to move around, On 20 February, the battalion moved back to Beek in the amphibious Buffalos vehicles and two days later was transported into Germany, through the Reichswald and Kleve to Bedburg Hau. On 23 February there was a relaxation period and chance for a cleanup in preparation for Operation Blockbuster. In the evening of the 25th, the Battalion travelled to an area north of Uedem, preparing for battle in the early morning of 26 February. It was a day of heavy fighting. The Canadians were savagely counter attacked by enemy paratroopers but the Germans were eventually unsuccessful and suffered hundreds of casualties,

There were around 100 casualties on 26 February in the Queen's Own Regiment and one of those killed was Herbert Calbert, two weeks before his 19th birthday. He was buried five days later in Bedburg Hau, near Kleve. On 9 July, 1946 he was reburied in the Canadian Military Cemetery, Groesbeek in the Netherlands. Plot **VIII. H. 1.**

Herbert 's oldest brother, Alfred served in the army in Europe and returned to Canada after the end of the war.

Brother Alfred.



Brother William (Bill).

His elder brother, William Cuthbertson Calbert (Bill), B 66122 also served in the Queen 's Own Rifle Regiment and was married to Mary Alice of Locust Hill, Ontario. He was killed as he landed on Juno Beach, Normandy on D-day, 6 June, 1944 and buried in the Bény-sur-Mer Canadian Military Cemetery near Reviere. William was 22 years old.

AWARDS Herbert Calbert:

- 1939-45 Star
- France and Germany Star
- War Medal
- CVSM and Clasp



FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story Gwyn de Jong, Research Team Faces to Graves.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Library and Archives, Canada

War Diaries: Queen `s Own Rifle Regiment

An Berben-Schreven, Groesbeek, she adopted the grave as a young girl.



Herbert



Herbert's mother Annie

An Berben-Schreven received this letter after she came into contact with the family of Herbert, whose grave she had adopted shortly after the war.

Locust Hill 26.4.48

Dear Annie

Anny. My wife and myself
and all at home are very
thankfull to you and your
Dad. for sending us such
wonderfull Photos of our boy's
resting place. also the flowers
that you have put on his
grave. Holland seems to be
a very nice country and we
sincerely hope here in Canada
it shall not suffer again.

we are sending on to you some
Photo's one of Herbert which
I have been careying around
in my wallet. you will be
getting another of him in the
near future. also some of
the other children hope you
like them. We are of Scottish
origin. We just go to any Kirk
that interests us. Kirk is
Scotch for Kerk in Holland
how is the weather my dear
girl over where you are
the sun is just starting to

get a little warmer out and
the birds are coming back
again from California to this
part of the country.

now I will say a little about
my self. I was in the Army for
5 years in the first war 1918
after being wounded a few times
I finally got home to Canada
again. never thinking for one
moment that later on I would
have to lose two of my boys
in another one. My son William
is on the beach somewhere in
France. "D. Day"

I will be send you a
 Pothe of him and all
 Particulars latter on
 I have been sending Bacon
 hogs to the market for some
 years now to be shipped
 at England. I have about 17
 ready to go any time now
 and this will be my last year
 in the business as I am clos
 to 60 years and about time I
 look thing easy.

your sincere
 Wm W & Calber
 & Family

Adoption form

**NEDERLANDSCH OORLOGSGRAVENCOMITÉ
AFDEELING GROESBEEK**

ADOPTIE

Het Nederlandsch Oorlogsgravencomité, Afdeling Groesbeek verklaart, dat
A.F. Schreven
wonende te Groesbeek, Kloosterstraat 18 1/4

op het Canadeesch Kerkhof aan den Zevenheuvelenweg te Groesbeek, overeenkomstig de gestelde voorwaarden, geadopteerd heeft het graf van held
Calbert H.C. R.F.N B 116330
Q.O.R. of Canada.

Gevallen: 26-2-45

Begraven:

Godsdienst: UC

Graf: Plot 8 Row H Grave 1

Home-Address: (Vader) Mr. W. Calbert, Locusthill
(Post Office) Ontario Canada.

als uiting van dankbaarheid voor de herwonnen vrijheid.

No. 893. De Voorzitter van het
Nederlandsch Oorlogsgraven-Comité
Afdeling Groesbeek,

Groesbeek, 30 Januari 1948. *[Handwritten Signature]*

Hb/



An Schreven and her younger sisters at the grave..