

Carroll, Martin Seymour
Private
South Saskatchewan Regiment
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps
P/28154



Martin Seymour Carroll was born 29 May 1921 at Halifax, Nova Scotia. His mother Bridget Delia Reidy, who went by her middle name, emigrated from Ireland to Canada with her family as an infant. She married John Wilder, a soldier, and the couple had one child, also named John. Delia's first husband may have died in World War One, and she remarried in 1919 to Martin's father John Joseph Carroll, who was also originally from Ireland. The Roman Catholic couple's first child was Mary-Kay, followed by Martin and later Rosalie. Two other children Honor and Francis died in the 1920s.

John Carroll worked as a labourer to support his family. Martin played some sports as a boy including baseball, football, and basketball. He was very interested in joining the military from a young age, starting with his school cadet program. Martin's older half-brother John kept his father's surname Wilder. He moved away from the Carroll home and got married at Halifax in 1930.



Martin Seymour Carroll



John Wilder with fiancée Winnifred



Halifax Citadel from the air c. 1926, showing the Glacis Barracks and Pavilion Married Soldiers' Quarters on the northeast slope
(Library and Archives Canada)

Martin joined the 1st Battalion Halifax Rifles Militia in 1932, age 11. He completed his annual training with them for the next seven years and played cornet in the military band. Martin quit school after completing grade 10 to join the army as a clerk, and initially moved into the Glacis Barracks at Halifax.

Martin attested at Halifax 20 September 1939 shortly after Canada declared war on Germany, age 18. His

medical examination record stated he was 5'9" tall, 132 lbs with blue eyes. Martin had a problem with his left ear discharging since he was ten years old and suffered partial loss of function with it but was healthy otherwise. He was allocated to the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps in Aldershot, N.S.

Martin spent 19 days at a Halifax Hospital January/February 1940 for bronchitis treatment. After Aldershot he was attached to No. 6 Company Signals Atlantic Command, Shelburne Section November 1941. Martin remained with the Army Service Corps over the next two years, posted at Lewisporte, Gander and St. John's, Newfoundland. He was granted annual furlough during this period with the opportunity to return home to Halifax. He spent six days admitted to Lester's Field Military Hospital November 1943 and was sent to

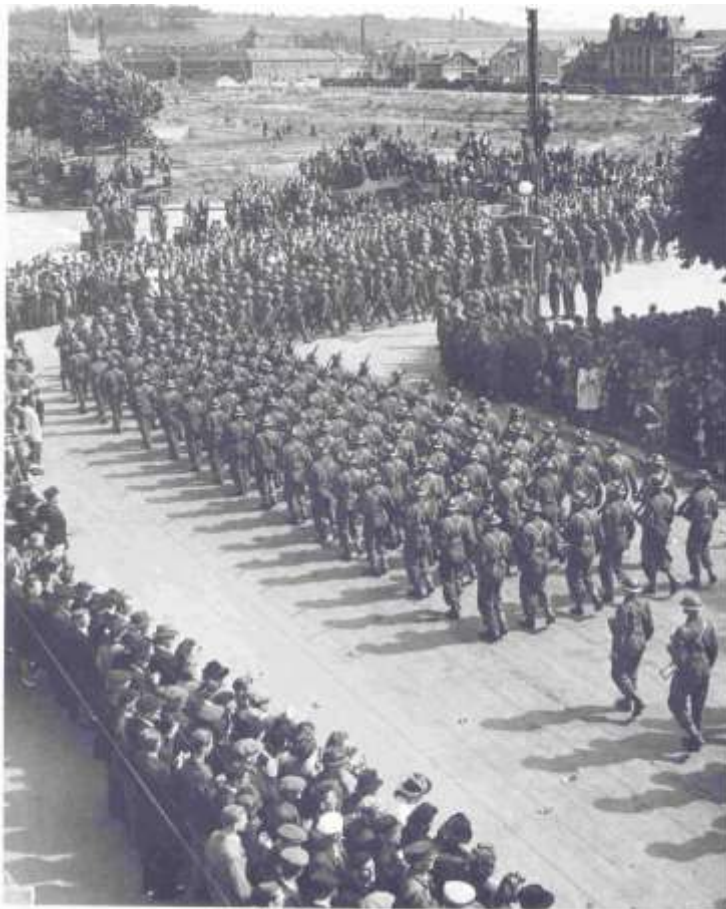
Camp Borden, Ontario in January 1944 where he was transferred to Infantry. Martin's training officer at Borden commented that he was a "good man on Rifle" and "keen on Light Machine Gun".



Lester's Field Military Hospital & Barracks, St. John's, Newfoundland WW2

On D-Day, 6 June 1944 Martin was on the move to the Canadian Infantry Training Centre at Camp Farnham, Quebec. He was interviewed 26 July with his Company Commander stating: "Good soldier, rather noisy type, but does the work; above average intelligence, possible N.C.O. (Non-Commissioned Officer) Material. He seems well adapted to army life and believed suitable for Operational duties with Infantry overseas".

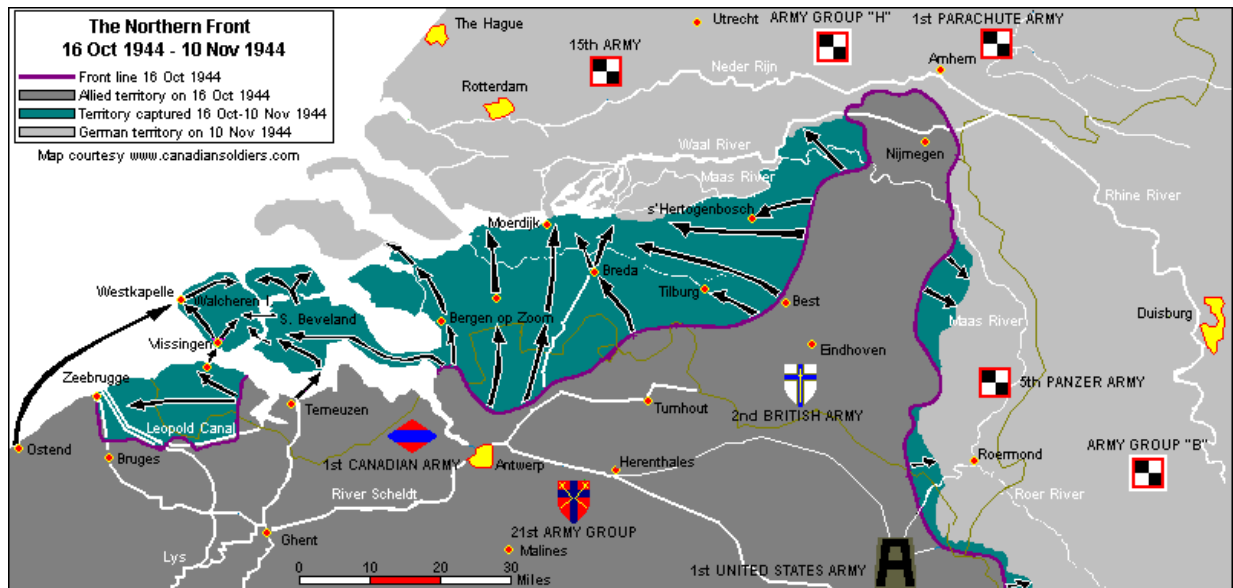
Martin shipped out the next month, disembarking in the U.K. 11 August 1944. He crossed the English Channel to France and was taken on strength by the South Saskatchewan Regiment (SSR) 1 September 1944.



3. Div. Marches Past—Dieppe, 3rd September, 1944

The SSR fell under 2nd Canadian Infantry Division and had participated in the disastrous Dieppe raid in 1942. They landed in France 8 July 1944 as part of 6th Brigade, which included the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada and Les Fusiliers Mont Royal battalions. After helping the Allies force the Germans to retreat from Normandy, the SSR as part of 2nd Infantry Division were given the honour of liberating Dieppe shortly after Martin joined them as a replacement soldier. The SSR and 6th Brigade worked to clear the Channel ports in September before moving on to Belgium.

The Allies had gained control of the port of Antwerp but could not ship vital supplies there until neutralizing German artillery fortifications on the Walcheren Peninsula that had been impervious to air attack. It fell largely to the Canadians to clear them out in the Battle for the Scheldt. The SSR played a key role securing the Zuid-Beveland Peninsula in the latter part of October, suffering 229 casualties that month.

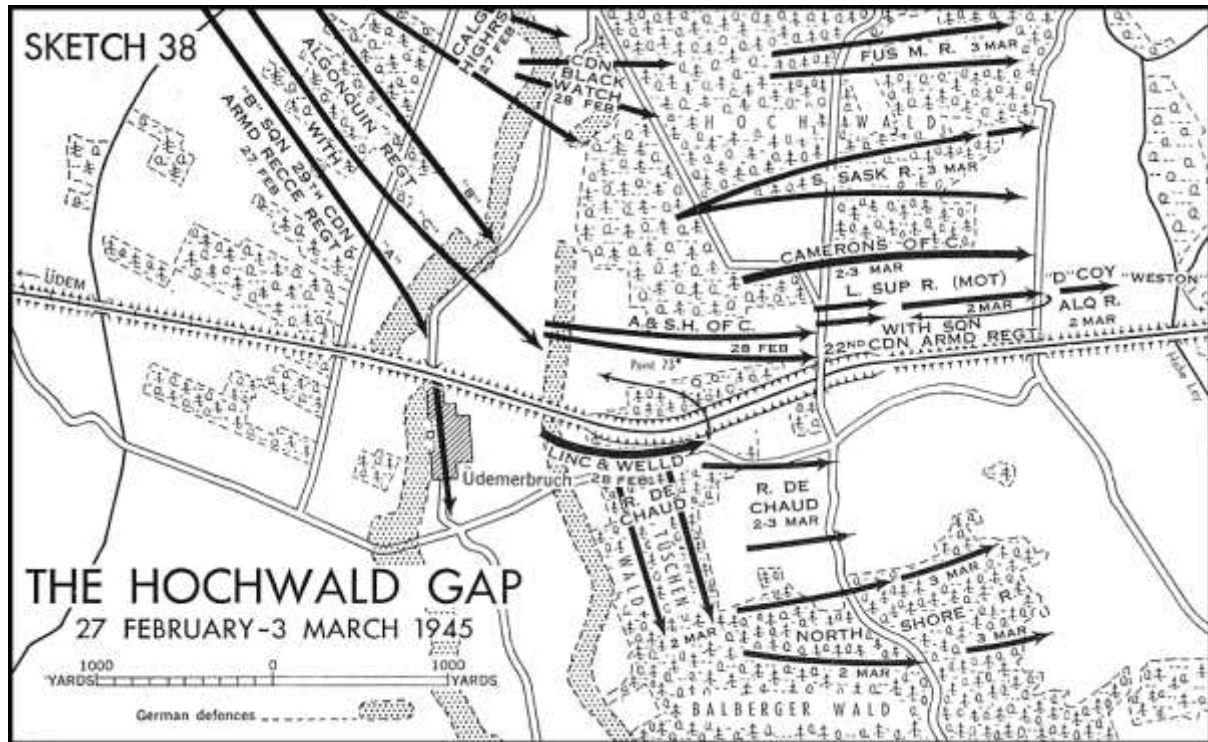


2nd Canadian Division was moved into static operations around Nijmegen, Netherlands 8 November 1944. Most of the activity in the area consisted of patrolling and sniping, with the SSR stationed at Mook. They settled into a routine of daily patrols, to be back at their base each night by 23:30 hours before the enemy started their artillery bombardment at midnight. The enemy had been there for months and had constructed a complete defensive position, interlined with communication trenches.

SSR soldier on patrol duty

The Allies finally broke out from their winter positions 8 February 1945 with the Operation VERITABLE offensive, which involved the use of Kangaroos (RAM tanks) to transport infantry troops. The SSR travelled through battered Cleve, Germany which had been heavily shelled and bombed. Once the Reichswald had been taken they were staged around Bedburg, Germany for the next phase, Operation BLOCKBUSTER. 6th Brigade was ordered to take the high ground just south of Calcar and crossed the starting line at 04:00 hours 26 February 1945. Ground conditions were very muddy with intense rain while the enemy provided heavy mortar and small arms fire. Some of the Kangaroos bogged down in the mud and the troops had to

transfer to other vehicles. All of 6th Brigade's objectives were quickly taken with 68 prisoners and approximately 100 enemy dead.



The SSR and 6th Brigade's next major attack as part of BLOCKBUSTER was at the Hochwald Gap 3 March 1945. 6th Brigade were to clear the woods to the east side, with the Camerons first attempt to get into the Forest met with heavy fire and opposition, forcing them back. The SSR began the second attack on the stronghold supported by a squadron of Sherbrooke Fusiliers tanks and were able to secure their objectives while sustaining a number of casualties. A total of 24 prisoners of war and 18 enemy dead were counted. The Fusiliers Mont Royal passed through to secure the eastern edges of the Forest, later supported by the Camerons in a mop up operation. The SSR advanced until forced to settle down in a group of farm buildings near the outskirts of Xanten.

According to the SSR War Diary for 4 March 1945, contact patrols and heavy shelling continued through the early morning hours. Martin Carroll died of wounds received in action that day, age 23.

Sherbrooke Fusiliers Sherman Tank "Bomb"



Private M.S. Carroll was temporarily buried at Bedburg, Germany and later relocated to nearby Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **VII. E. 14.**

The inscription on his headstone:

WHEN DUTY WHISPERS LOW,
THOU MUST,
THE YOUTH REPLIES, I CAN
R.I.P.



Photo credit letweforget1945.org



Martin Carroll's campaign medals:

- 1939-45 Star
- France-Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal/Clasp

Martin had been sending \$20 from his monthly pay home to his mother Delia. She was listed as his next of kin and sole beneficiary in his army will. Delia Carroll died later that year in October, age 59. Her son John and daughter Mary-Kay administered her estate, including Martin's final army pay settlement.



Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Ancestry public trees

Pieter and Daria Valkenburg – photos from the Carroll-Roker Family

Glacis Barracks, Halifax, Nova Scotia picture <https://hmhps.ca/sites/red-north-glacis-barracks-and-area>

Lester's Field Military Hospital & Barracks, St. John's, Newfoundland WW2 picture <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1058721614233171&set=a-patient-at-the-lesters-field-military-hospital-st-johns-newfoundland-ca-1942fr>

South Saskatchewan Regiment cap badge, war diary, images and information <http://www.saskatchewanmilitarymuseum.ca/SSR/>

Buchanan, G.B. (1957). The March of the Prairie Men. Digital version: <http://www.saskatchewanmilitarymuseum.ca/SSR/history/mpm.html>

Northern Front Map October/November 1944 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_Canadian_Division_during_World_War_II

The Rhineland Operation Blockbuster map and information <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/Canada/CA/Victory/Victory-19.html>

"Bomb" Sherman Tank, Sherbrooke Fusiliers picture <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/canadia-herman-tank.html>

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