

**Chappell, Harold**

**Private**

**48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders of Canada**

**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**

**K/69634**



Harold "Harry" Chappell was born on April 25, 1924, in Vancouver, British Columbia. His parents were Helen "Ellie" Doreen Hastings who immigrated from Scotland and George Norman Chappell who was born in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. The family which attended the United Church of Canada was composed of Harold, Margaret, Hugh, Allan and Helen.

His father, Norman Chappell, had served from 1915-1919 with the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the First World War. Mr. Chappell was a Private in the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Black Watch), a regiment which received many battle honours such the Somme and Vimy Ridge. He spent four and a half years in overseas service. When he died at age 51 in late 1948, he was a Private in the Veteran Guards of Canada. Helen Chappell had died in mid-1945 at age 43.

Harold's education ended with Grade IX at the North Burnaby High School. Occupations included jobs exercising horses at a riding school, working as a steam hammer operator and training as a blacksmith's helper. Appropriately, his favourite sport was horseback riding.

After serving for seven months in the militia with the Pacific Coast Rangers, Private Harold Chappell enlisted on November 4, 1942, as a Sapper with the Royal Canadian Engineers. He stood five feet five inches tall and weighed 160 pounds; he had brown eyes and brown hair.



His military personnel assessment report described him as "alert, fairly mature, conscientious and capable." He received extensive army training as a welder and a driver at Vernon, Suffield and Chilliwack, all in British Columbia.

He also qualified after taking a junior NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer) course and taking a chemical warfare course. He was initially given the rank of lance corporal on August 1, 1943, but he reverted to his grade as a sapper on November 1, 1943. Private Chappell was considered to be "a well-trained, capable soldier" who was "eager to go overseas" for general duty.

On April 11, 1944, he arrived in the United Kingdom. Private Chappell was sent on December 13, 1944, to Italy where he was transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders infantry regiment, fighting enemy forces until he got another transfer on March 3, 1945.

Canadian military units were putting a heavy push against the German forces in Northwest Europe, so troops were being sent to various battle fronts. Private Chappell arrived in France on March 12, 1945, and joined the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders.

*During his service in Italy with the Seaforth Regiment, he sent this photo to his parents, Norman and Helen Chappell*





*This family photo of Private Chappell was likely taken in the Netherlands*

This infantry regiment participated in the liberation of the Netherlands from April to May 1945. Fierce fighting was suffered by these Canadian soldiers in towns like Apeldoorn, where the 48<sup>th</sup> Highlanders Regiment distinguished itself and was given battle honours. On May 5, 1945, the German armed forces surrendered. The war was ended for these Canadian troops.

But it was the careless act of a fellow soldier that would take the life of Private Chappell. According to the Canadian military inquiry report, both men were in their army tent where his comrade-at-arms was cleaning a German pistol which he had taken as a souvenir from a prisoner of war. The gun discharged striking his own hand and hitting Private Chappell in the leg.

Despite emergency hospital attention, Private Chappell died on May 13, 1945, because of the wound. The other soldier was found to be negligent in causing the fatal injuries and disobeying orders not to “play around” with or possess enemy weapons, according to the Canadian military inquiry report.



*Vancouver Sun, May 22, 1945*

He was awarded six medals:

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

He was buried at the Canadian temporary military cemetery in Nijmegen.

After the war, Private Harold Chappell was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **I. A. 15**.

### Burnaby Soldier Killed in Holland

Pte. Harold Chappell, 21, was killed in an accident in Holland May 13, according to word received by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Chappell, 2825 Sprott, Burnaby.

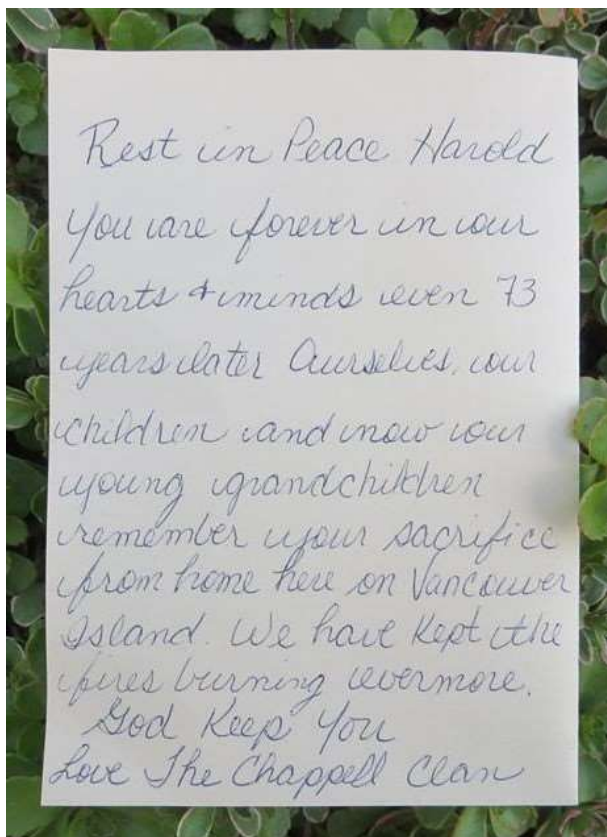
Pte. Chappell went overseas with the RCE to Italy in the spring of 1944, and was later transferred to the Seaforths, with whom he served in Holland. Before joining the Engineers in 1942 he attended Douglas Road School and worked for the Bakers Forge Company.

He is survived at home by two sisters and two brothers. His grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hastings, reside at 1042 Beach.



**Harold Chappell**





*In the past, Chappell family members visited his grave and left this tribute.*



**FACES TO GRAVES**

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Life Story written by Kurt Johnson for Faces to Graves.

**Sources:**

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial
- Library and Archives Canada
- Ancestry.ca
- Photos and information provided by nephew, Bradley Chappell and niece, Brenda Chappell

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