

## **Abigail, Leonard Delburt**

**Lance Sergeant**

**Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders  
of Canada**

**H/70611**



### Personal Information:

Leonard Delburt Abigail was born on March 7th, 1915 in Benito, Manitoba, Canada. He was the son of Frederick Martin and Elizabeth Abigail. Father Frederick and Mother Elizabeth were married on November 19th, 1902 in Swan River, Manitoba. Father Abigail sadly passed away in November, 1940.

By the time Leonard started work, the Abigail family consisted of 9 members. Next to mother Elizabeth and Leonard, there were brothers Fredrick, Aubrey, Harold, Richard and sisters Beatrice, Myrthe and Pearl.



Young Leonard attended a rural school in Manitoba up to and including Grade 8. He left school at the age of 14 to help his parents on the family farm for the following 13 years. Next, he held a job as tractor- and truck driver for some 4 years.

*Benito School. Photo: Manitoba Historical Society*

Leonard was an avid reader, in particular the fiction genre. As an athletic young man, he nevertheless did not shy away from the odd party with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Leonard was a handsome, well-dressed young man with brown hair and blue eyes. He married his girlfriend Gladys Ivy on October 1st, 1941 in Kenville, Manitoba.

In January, 1943, they became the proud parents of daughter Delberta Darlene.

### In the military:

Leonard entered the Canadian Army as a soldier on December 4th, 1942, at the age of 27. He started his military career with No. 10 District Depot in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

On December 18th, 1942, Leonard was transferred to No. 100 Canadian Army Basic Training Center in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba.

*Camp Portage-La-Prairie*

Photo: *Manitoba Historical Society*



He left there on March 31st, 1943, being transferred to the A 15 Canadian Infantry Training Center Camp at Shilo, Manitoba.

His training stations at Winnipeg, Portage-La-Prairie and Shilo eventually took him to Halifax, Nova Scotia. There, he embarked at the Ocean Terminals on August 25th, 1943 for departure to England. By then, Leonard was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> CIRU Reinforcement Unit. After a long crossing, he arrived in England on September 2nd, 1943.

On December 10th, 1943, Leonard was reassigned to the 1st Battalion of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. He would stay in



England until July 5th, 1944, when they embarked for transfer to the battlefield in France. On mainland Europe, the regiment took part in the Battle of Caen, liberated on July 18th.

*Men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion QOCH get instruction how to use a Bren gun.*

Photo: *wartimemoriesproject.com*

The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders would make their way, fighting, towards the Netherlands. Along the route, through Belgium, taking part in a number of battles, e.g.:

- Battle of Falaise Pocket – August 1944
- Battle of Duinkerken 1944 – September 1944
- Battle of the Schelde – October/November 1944
- Battle of Woensdrecht – October 1944
- Battle of South-Beveland – October 1944
- Battle of the Rhineland – February/March 1945
- Battle of Groningen – April 1945

Leonard's career progressed rather well. On October 5th, 1944, he was made lance corporal, to be followed by a promotion to A / corporal on December 18th. After his 11-day special leave in England, Leonard returned to his unit on July 1st, 1945.

#### The final days:

Leonard managed to survive the operations the battalion took part in. The end of war came to the battalion on May 5th, 1945 upon the successful liberation of Groningen.

The victory was celebrated with parades on May 6th and a victory parade in Oldenburg on May 9th. The battalion was to remain in Germany and the Netherlands until the end of September, when they made their way back to England once again.



*The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada – Parade Oldenburg  
Photo: Queen's Own Rifles of Canada*

The battalion arrived in Dover on September 30th, 1945 and took the train for a camp in Farnborough. As the Camerons boarded the RMS Queen Elizabeth in Southampton on November 13th, 1945, they said their final goodbyes to England.

Upon arrival in Halifax, Canada, the unit proceeded to Montreal, from where they travelled by train to their home base in Winnipeg for the final leg of their journey. The Camerons returned there on November 22nd, in the midst of a winter blizzard. They were welcomed back by officials, a jubilant local population and an abundance of tearful family members.



*The Winnipeg Tribune reports the homecoming of The Queen's Own Camerons Highlanders on the frontpage, 23 November 1945*

*Source: newspaperarchive.com/Winnipeg-free-press*

Regretfully, Leonard Delburt Abigail did not live to see this day.


According to his military records, Leonard was in a serious traffic accident on September 12th, 1945. On the way back from Cologne to Amersfoort, his truck collided with a British vehicle. He was taken to hospital in a critical condition (i.a. a spinal cord injury) and passed away as a direct result of his injuries on September 18th, 1945.

Leonard was buried at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave reference **XI. A. 3.**

Leonard Delburt Abigail was awarded with:

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

Telegram to Mrs. Gladys I. Abigail, telling about the death of her husband Leonard Delbert Abigail.

OFFICIAL CANADIAN ARMY OVERSEAS CASUALTY NOTIFICATION (DEATH)			
NUMBER	H70611	RANK	Corporal
NAME	ABIGAIL, Leonard Delbert		SERVICE UNIT The Cusen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada (C.A.)
DATE OF BIRTH	7-3-15	DATE OF ENLISTMENT	4-12-42
MARITAL STATUS	Married	RELIGION	United Church
NEAREST OF KIN OR PERSONS TO BE NOTIFIED	Wife	NAME	Mrs. Gladys I. Abigail,
ADDRESS	Benito, Man.	ADDRESS	
ADDITIONAL PERSON TO BE NOTIFIED		ADDRESS	
PARENTS NAME			
ADDRESS (WHOLE ADDRESS)			
AUTHORITY CAN. FOR. NO.	CANSORDS - 238B 269B H.C.405-A-12,427		DATE 18-9-45
CASUALTY DETAILS	Died - as result of accidental injuries described as Fracture and Dislocation Cervical vertebrae. (Ordinary Casualty)		
WESTERN EUROPE			
LAST WILL ATTACHED TO NOTIFICATION NO. A OF B	YES/NO	SEMI-ATTACHED TO NOTIFICATION NO. A OF B	YES/NO
DATE	24-9-45		
6	COPY FOR DOCUMENT FILE		



## FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian  
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story: Ellen van Haaren-Koster, 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
- Ancestry

Memorial for Leonard Delbert Abigail in the Riverside Cemetery in Swann River.

His mother Eliza (deceased 10-11-1959) and his half-brother Ira J. Staples are also mentioned. Ira was "Killed in Action" in 1918.

Photo: Find a Grave



Memorial for Leonard's father, Frederick (Frank) M. Abigail in Pine Grove Cemetery in Rocky Mountain House, Alberta.

Photo: Find a Grave

Gladys Ivy (formerly Abigail), born June 5, 1924 in Benito, Manitoba and wife of Leonard Delbert Abigail. Together they had daughter Delberta Darlene Abigail. After the death of Leonard Delbert Abigail (in 1945), Gladys married James Alexander Lyons on April 2, 1966. Gladys had another son Thomas James with James. Gladys died at the age of 95 on June 19, 2019 in Benito, Manitoba and buried at Riverside Cemetery in Swan River West, Manitoba.

Gladys Ivy

Photo: [www.geni.com](http://www.geni.com)



Daughter Delberta Darlene Abigail (Gazdewich) died on September 9, 2010 at the age of 67 and is buried in the Riverside Cemetery in Swan River West, Manitoba.

Photo: Find a Grave