

Abraham, Maurice Clyde
Lance Corporal
**Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal
Canadians)**
2 Army Regiment
D 131222



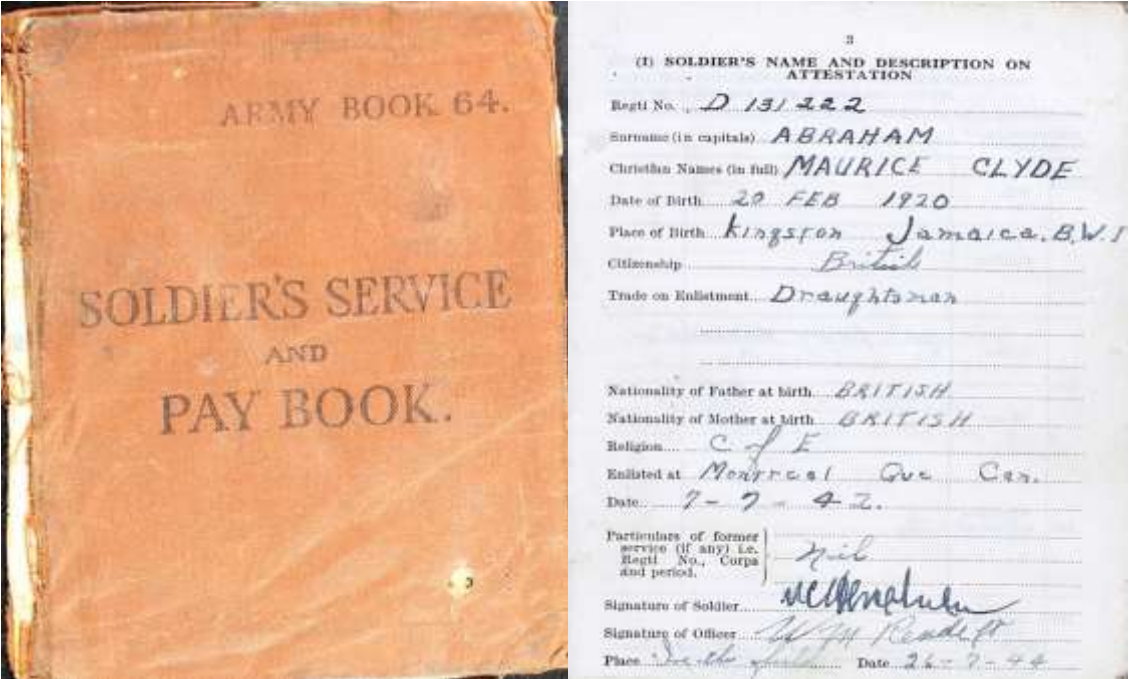
Maurice Abraham was born in Jamaica, British West Indies on February 20, 1920. His father, Percy Lyons, was born in 1878 and died in 1967. Father Percy was an important architect and structural engineer in Kingston, Jamaica. On February 9, 1904 in Kingston Percy married Julia Cynthia Harris, born in 1882. Both parents were of British origin and frequented the Church of England. Maurice was the youngest of three children: sister Winifred Esther was born in Jamaica in 1904, where she also died in April 1990. Winifred married Ronald Percival Bengry, born in England. Brother Percy Frederick was single and lived from 1914 until 1996.

Maurice went to Public and High School up to the age of eighteen. He then went to university and obtained the engineering degree of the Apprentice Architectural Engineering study in the years between 1937 and 1941. He then found a job as a Draughtsman with Frederick Snare Corp. in Kingston, Jamaica. In December 1941 Maurice started working for his father, who had his own architectural firm in Kingston. He only stayed here for a while, as, soon after the outbreak of World War II, Maurice wanted to sign up for the army and in order to do so he left for Canada.

In Westmount, Montreal, Canada, Maurice temporarily stayed with the Davidson family. Gordon Davidson was eight or nine years old at the time and he still remembered that Maurice gained experience in various places in order to be able to enlist and go overseas as well. Both their mothers met in the sixties or seventies, and Maurice's mother was grief-stricken after the loss of her youngest son, in particular because he had died towards the end of the war.

Maurice signed up for the army in Montreal South, Quebec, on July 7, 1942. He was twenty-two years old and had been medically examined. He was 5 ft 8" tall, weighed 162 lbs and had a medium-light skin tone, brown hair, brown eyes and he was in good health. Maurice indicated that in his childhood he had had bronchitis, that he was still studying and wanted to continue studying after the war and go and work with his father.

During the first few months of his training with the army, Maurice was a Guardsman with the Canadian Grenadier Guard. At the end of December 1942, he was a Driver Operator and from July 16, 1942 he was transferred to #48 Canadian Army Basic Training Centre in St. John's, Quebec. At the beginning of the new year, 1943, Maurice was being prepared for departure overseas in the service of the Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit Overseas. In the meantime he had become a Trooper and left for the United Kingdom on March 9, 1943. He arrived there on March 17 with the Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit (CACRU). Immediately on arrival in the UK Maurice was taken to 17 General Hospital and after this to 8 General Hospital, where he stayed until May 6, 1943.



On April 15, 1943 an evaluation interview took place. Maurice was now 6 ft tall and weighed 180 lbs. He had a car driver's licence as well as a motorcycle licence and owned a car. Maurice was very sportive, he loved fishing, hunting, swimming, rugby, tennis, cricket, horse riding and riding motorcycles. His superior assessed him as a correct, polite, serious, smart, tall and good-looking soldier. Maurice loved army life and wanted to get on. He was suitable as a Non-Commissioned Officer. Yet, he did not want to be an instructor himself, but preferred action. He had an English

accent, and loved music and reading. His reason for serving in the army was mainly to do with his patriotism and he came especially from Jamaica to Canada to join the army. Maurice had guts and a lot of good contacts.

In the UK Maurice continued his training as a Trooper and was, among others, with CACRU and the Canadian Armoured Brigade. Then his regiment was shipped to Italy, where they arrived on November 8, 1943. Maurice was assigned to 5th Battalion of the Central Mediterranean Force. As part of this regiment he went to northern Africa during the first few days of the new year 1944. For his voluntary commitment Maurice received the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp on January 10, 1944. In February he took the Royal Armoured Corps 191 A course, which he passed and he became a Qualified Gunner Operator 'C' on April 27, 1944.

LdSH and Infantry tanks are preparing to attack the Hitler line and cross Melfa River: Liri Valley, Italy, May 24, 1944.



In Italy heavy fighting took place against the German enemy and from the Italian Boot the Allied forces advanced northwards, obstructed by severe terrain and weather conditions. On May 13, 1944 Maurice departed from northern Africa, where they had carried out their duties, to Italy by ship. In June 1944 he was promoted to Lance Corporal with the 2nd Canadian Armoured Regiment. After combating in Italy, he was deployed in the liberation of France, Belgium and the Netherlands. They arrived in the Low Countries by ship on February 21, 1945 and took part in brave and tough actions. In March Maurice was given nine days of well-deserved leave.



LdSH in Belgium, March 23, 1945. Part of the 5th Armoured Brigade. Maurice second from the left, bottom row. Lt. Paul Brunet, also from Westmount, who died on April 16, is in the top row. He was the Commander of the Sherman Tank that Maurice was in as well.

On April 15, 1945 his regiment gathered north of Arnhem for Operation Cleaner, which led the troops through densely forested sand hills and which necessitated them to cut down trees in order to be able to pass. On April 16, they were in the village of Otterlo, on the Veluwe, where the next day the enemy was beaten with difficulty. Subsequently, they advanced in the direction of Barneveld and Nijkerk.

Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), (also called Strats) were part of Canadian army 2nd Armoured Regiment. It was established in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1901, and is still active. The Strats were Canada's only armoured regiment. They were one of the last regiments that were active in the British Empire after the war. It was only in 1940 that horses were no longer deployed. As soon as the regiment was mobilised, the word 'Horse' was removed from its name. They were then part of 1st Canadian Motorcycle Regiment. On November 13, 1941 they departed to the UK and on November 8, 1943 to Italy. In England they trained with RAM-tanks, built in Canada, for two years. From February 16, 1945 they were active in north-western Europe and on March 1, 1946 the overseas regiment was disbanded. They have their own bagpipe band and a regimental museum with an archive in Calgary, Alberta.



Maurice in Belgium, March 23 1945 Photo: G. Davidson

April 17, 1945 was a clear, sunny day and again a day on which heavy fighting was taking place, which resulted in the death of ten soldiers. With their M4 Sherman Tanks, which could hold five men, they were on their way from Otterlo to Apeldoorn. Lieutenant Brunet was their Commander, Maurice was a Gunner, and on board there were also a Loader, a Driver and an Assistant Driver/Gunner.

Lance Corporal Maurice Clyde Abraham was one of the men who lost his life that day. He died on the spot and was twenty-five years old. Two days later, Maurice was buried at a temporary cemetery in Arnhem, row 3, grave 3.

On September 4, 1945 Maurice was reburied at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, near Nijmegen, grave reference **VII. A. 2.**

The following words are inscribed on his headstone:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MAURICE
'HE LIVES
IN THE COMFORT OF THY LOVE'



Lance Corporal Maurice Abraham was awarded the following medals:

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

These medals, together with the Memorial Cross, were sent to his mother Julia in Kingston, Jamaica.

In October 1946 father Percy visited his son's grave in Groesbeek.



FACES TO GRAVES

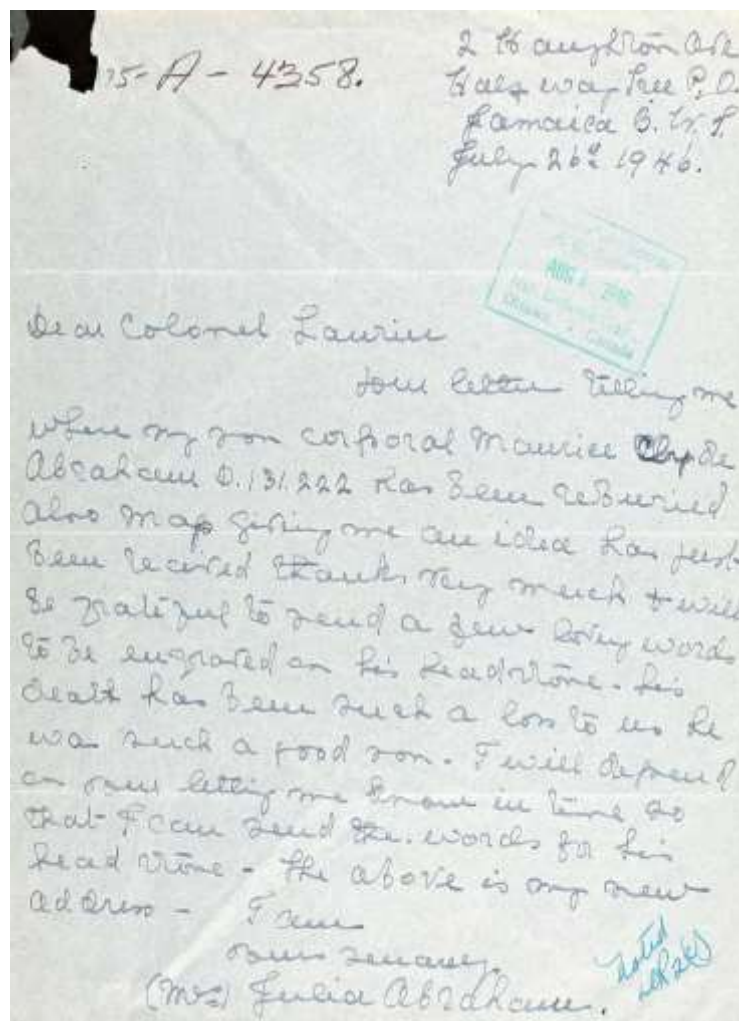
Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story: Liesbeth Huisman Research Team Faces To Graves.

*If you have a photograph of this soldier or any additional information,
please contact info@facestograves.nl

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves
Commission
Library and Archives
Canada
Gordon Davidson, Legion
Comox BC
nl.findagrave
War Diaries Lord
Strathcona's Horse (Royal
Canadians)
slagomotterlo.nl



2 Haughton Ave.
Half Way Tree, Jca.

16th February 1948

\$ 131.222

Dear Sir

Thanks for your letter reference
H. Q. 405-A-4358 of 26th November
1947 forwarding photographs of my
son's grave at Nijmegen Cemetery,
and we deeply appreciate your kind
and thankful act. In October 1946
I visited the Cemetery & found the
spot quite easily.

Previously his mother had
asked that, when the permanent
headstone was to be placed, the
following words be put on same:-
"He lives in his love." There has
however been no acknowledgment
& I trust it is not too late to have this
done.

Again thanking you

Yours truly

J. D. Allan

Letter of father Percy to the
Head Quarters, February 16
1948