

Alexander, Thomas Ward
Private
Essex Scottish Regiment
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps
A 107497



Thomas Ward Alexander was born on November 4, 1924 in South Ayrshire, Scotland. His parents, Samuel Gibson Alexander (1883-1974) and Sarah Harvey Mackenzie (1894-1976), were married in Scotland in 1915 and started their family with Sarah, James, Marjory and twins, John "Jack" and Thomas Ward.



The Alexanders immigrated to Canada arriving on April 3, 1927, in St. John, New Brunswick. They settled on a family farm near Hespeler in Waterloo County, Ontario, where they had three more children: Hugh, Roderick "Roddie" and Margaret Jane.

*Back row from From left to right - Madge (Marjory), Sarah holding baby Hugh, Jim
 Front row - twins John "Jack" and Ward.*

Being of Scottish descent, they raised their family in the Presbyterian faith. Ward left school at the age of 13. He worked at Hespeler Furniture Company as a machine operator for four years before enlisting into the army on July 27, 1943 in London, Ontario.



Ward is shown on the left with his father Samuel Alexander and his brother Jack who also joined the army.

Jack Alexander served in the Princess of Wales Regiment and later in the First Canadian Parachute Battalion.

Ward's medical records show that he stood five feet seven and ½ inches in height and weighed 141 pounds. His personnel assessment report described him as, "young, clean-cut, interested in army, keen and ambitious." The report stated that he was "a leader in platoon activities, above average intelligence, not afraid of work, well developed, sense of duty and discipline, rather quiet."

He completed his basic training in Chatham, Ontario in October of 1943 and then took advanced training at Camp Ipperwash, Ontario. He then travelled to British Columbia to camps at Prince Rupert, Victoria, and Courtney, B.C. where he completed courses at the Combined Operations Training School.

Thomas left Canada on a ship on December 19, 1944 and arrived in the United Kingdom on Christmas day, 1944. While in England, he completed three weeks of training during January of 1945.

Ward is shown on the left with his brother Jack.



Private Ward Alexander was sent into combat in Northwest Europe arriving on February 9th, 1945. He was a rifleman as part of reinforcements for the Essex Scottish Regiment. In the letter that he wrote to his brother Jim, on March 3rd, 1945, Ward explained, "I'm (somewhere in Germany now) and I'm writing this in an old barn, they sure are giving this country hell. And we're enjoying it too. HA HA HA." He then describes how he learned to use a Bren gun and that he was "number one, though I was lucky I think." He also remarked how "the officers and M.C.'s are different up here, their(sp) just like anybody else. Before I shaved every day and now I shave every third day. I don't mind a bit." He then goes on to say, "I had a pretty good time in Belgium, when I had money, I thought the beer was pretty good. It was a lot better than that Limey beer anyway." When finishing the letter, Ward wrote, "Well Jim, I hope this war will soon be over so we can all go home. I don't think it will be very long now though and I hope I'm thinking right."

Sadly five days after writing this letter, on March 8, 1945, Private Alexander was killed in Germany. The personal effects that were found on him was a wallet, a fountain pen, photos and a bible.

He was buried in a temporary cemetery on the battlefield near Xanten, Germany.

Thomas Ward Alexander was later reburied in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery. His grave references are **III. D. 14.**

The inscription on his headstone reads:

WE WILL CLASP YOUR HAND
IN A BETTER LAND, DEAR WAR
GOOD NIGHT
MOM AND DAD

After his death, the campaign medals he was given were the 1939-45 Star, France-Germany Star, the Defence Medal and the War Medal. He had already received the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. His total service consisted of 591 days with 80 of them being overseas and the rest being in Canada.



Biography: Nathaniel Amurao, student from All Saints H.S., Kanata, Canada for Faces to Graves, courtesy of Vanessa Kirtz, teacher at All Saints H.S., additional research and editing provided by Kurt Johnson.

Sources:

- * Library and Archives Canada, WWII Service Files of War Dead, 1939-1947
- * Veterans Affairs Canada, The Canadian Virtual War Memorial
- * Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Casualty file
- * pictures and letters provided by Dave Allen



Photo Faces to Graves.

Last letter written by Ward - killed 3 days later in action.
His first name was Thomas; always called Ward. (2)

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ON ACTIVE SERVICE

CANADIAN Y.M.C.A.
OVERSEAS
THE SALVATION ARMY
CANADIAN
WAR SERVICES

W/ser. March 5/45
A-107297
at 9th Battalion
C (Coy) 13 P.Lt.
Escort Battalion
Canadian Army

Dear Jim:-

Well Jim, I finally got
the time to write to you.
I tried to get in the Links
and I was in them for a
week and first at the last
night, I was taken out of
them and put in the Base,
and nothing would change
their minds either.

It's a good outfit though
and I don't mind it.

I'm (somewhere in Germany
now) and I'm writing this
in an old barn, they say
are giving the County hall.
and were enjoying it too.

4/71 CFA 170

PLEASE WRITE ON BOTH SIDES

I haven't been right up to
the fighting since yet, but
I'm in no particular hurry.
I saved the Bren gun and
I'm number one, I was lucky,
I think, but I'll know after
I have to use it.

The Officers and M.C.'s are
are different up here, they're
like anybody else.

Before, I showed every day, a
now I show every three or
I don't mind it a bit.

I got a letter from
Larry yesterday and he's
still wanting me to get
the Links, I don't know
what he's going to say
he finds out I'm in the
Escort Battalion, but I can't
much about it now.

Before I forget, I better

Last letter Ward wrote. He was killed in action 3 days
later

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(3)

You'd met Egan in Belgium.

He was with you in
the Links and I told him
I would tell you I met
him, I guess you'll know
what I mean.

I had a pretty good time
in Belgium, it's when I
had money, I thought the
beer was pretty good.

It was a bit better
than that Jimmy bar
was.

The night before I left
Belgium, a few of us went
out and got feeling pretty
good, we got some little
some-thing, I don't know what

4/71 CFA 170

PLEASE WRITE ON BOTH SIDES

it was, but it sure had
a kick ~~to~~ ^{to} it.

The first place we stopped
at in Germany, one night just
before dark we saw Mustangs,
going past in a gap, I put
near full over.

Well Jim, I hope this
will see you all home
so we can all go home.

~~It~~ I don't think
it will be very long
now though and I hope
I'm thinking right.

I think that all for
this time Jim, all be
waiting to hear from
you, so until then, I
remain your true brother

Write Ward.

Ward