

Andersen, Erik Frederik Rask
Sapper
Royal Canadian Engineers
11th (Lambton) Field Company
D-130010



Erik Frederik Rask Andersen was born in Nasby, Denmark to Harold and Nellie Andersen on 7 April 1924. His family emigrated to Canada later that year and initially settled in Toronto, Ontario before moving to Montréal, Quebec. His father was a night watchman. Erik had two sisters: Erna and Elna. The family was Lutheran. Erik had left school at age 17 after two years of high school and had been working as office clerk for two years with the Dominion Glass Company before he enlisted.

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION

I, ERIK FREDERIK RASK ANDERSEN, do solemnly declare that the above particulars are true, and I hereby engage to serve in any Active Formation or Unit of The Canadian Army so long as an emergency, i.e., war, invasion, riot or insurrection, real or apprehended, exists, and for the period of demobilization after said emergency ceases to exist, and in any event for a period of not less than one year, provided His Majesty should so require my services.

Date.....26 FEBRUARY 1943..... Erik Frederik Rask Andersen
(Signature of recruit)

Erik enlisted on 26 February 1943 at No 4 District Depot in Montreal and was assigned to No 4 Engineer Services and Works Company in Montréal. He was 19 years old and single at the time. Erik made a point during the enlistment process of stating that he was not keen to be a clerk in the Army. In December of that year he was posted to A5 Canadian Engineer Training Center at Camp Petawawa, Ontario for his sapper training. During this training, he also qualified as a Driver Internal Combustion Class III on 27 May 1944.

After completing his sapper training, Erik embarked for the United Kingdom on 19 July 1944. He was initially assigned to No 1 Canadian Engineer Reinforcement Unit but he was transferred to 11th Field Company

on 5 October 1944. He qualified as a Driver Mechanic on 18 December 1944 while the unit was preparing for its tasks during the planned Normandy invasion.

Erik embarked for the Continent on 22 September 1944 and joined his unit as it was involved in Antwerp-Turnhout Canal operation and supported the Allied advance through Holland, and eventually into Germany. Among its operations, the company participated in the Battle of Falaise, The Scheldt, The Rhineland, and The Rhine. By the end of February 1944, the unit had arrived in Germany as the Allied forces continued to push back the enemy.



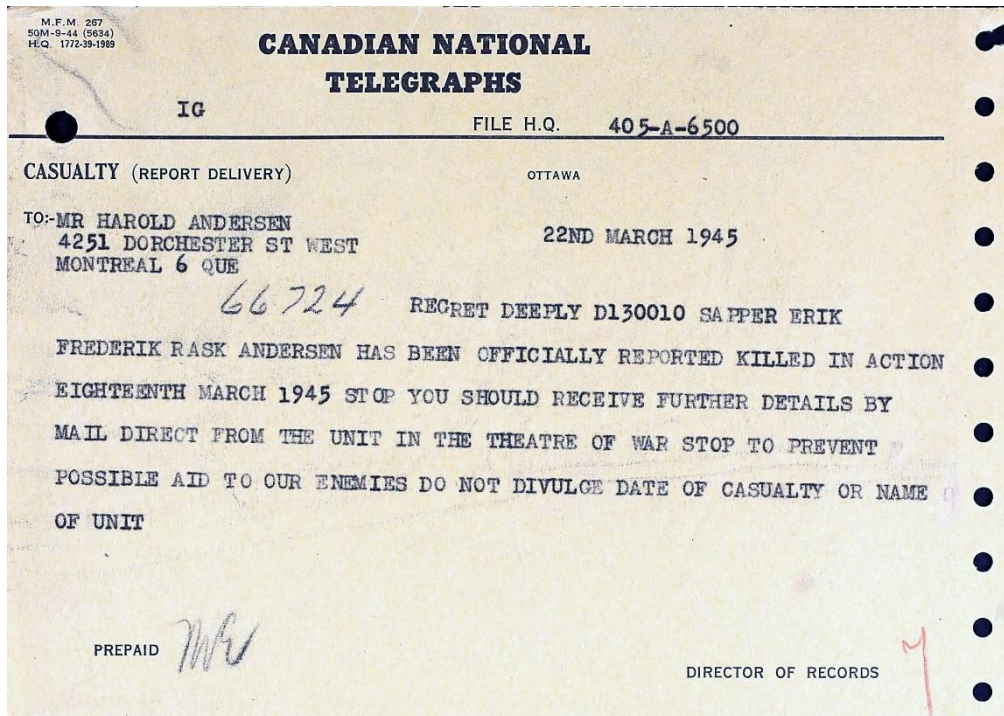
On 16 March, 11th Field Company began to check a stretch of ground near Cleve, Germany for mines in order to make the area safe for the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. By the next evening, the mine-clearing parties had found a number of German Riegelmine 43 anti-tank mines that they safely lifted and stored in two dumps. At 1300 hrs the next day, Sapper Andersen was part of a nine-man party led by Lieutenant O. H. Taylor that set out to destroy the mines in the dumps. A half-hour later, something went terribly wrong. There was a terrific explosion and all were killed. No evidence was ever found to indicate why the tragedy had occurred.

There were no survivors in that group of Sappers. They are all buried in graves found in plot V Row D of the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery.

The members of 11th Field Company, RCE, who perished in that explosion were :

Sapper Albert Brown
Sapper Howard Clifford Inkpen
Sapper Urban Mayo
Sapper Donald Angus McLellan
Sergeant Charles Valentine Richards
Sapper Neil Truman Sponagle
Sapper Alphonse Anthony John Steffler
Lieutenant Owen Howard Taylor.

Sapper Erik Frederik Rask Andersen was Killed in Action at age 20 on 18 March 1945.



His father received a telegram with the sad news

He was given a temporary burial in the Canadian Military Cemetery at Bedberg, Germany.



He was moved to his permanent grave at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, near Nijmegen, grave reference **V. D. 5.**

For his service to Canada, Sapper Andersen was awarded the:

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



FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Biography by LCol Ken Holmes (Ret'd) for Faces to Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

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



Near the end of WWII, the Chief Engineer of the First Canadian Army tasked all the Royal Canadian Engineer units to produce a shield or plaque that would represent their unit's activities during the war. This is the crest that 11 Field Company designed and produced.