

Anderson, Ritchie

Trooper

14th Canadian Hussars

8th Reconnaissance Regiment

L 53779



Ritchie Anderson was born on September 21, 1921 in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. He was the only child of Edwin Anderson and Jessie Ann Anderson. Father Edwin had a farm and was originally from Sweden, he was born about 1891. His wife Jessie was Scottish by birth and she was from 1893. They got married in Corinne, Saskatchewan on June 1, 1921. The family was a member of the United Church. Later they moved to Lestock, Saskatchewan, where Ritchie also attended school. He was educated until he was sixteen, up to and including Grade 9, of which one year was at High School. Ritchie spoke and wrote only English.

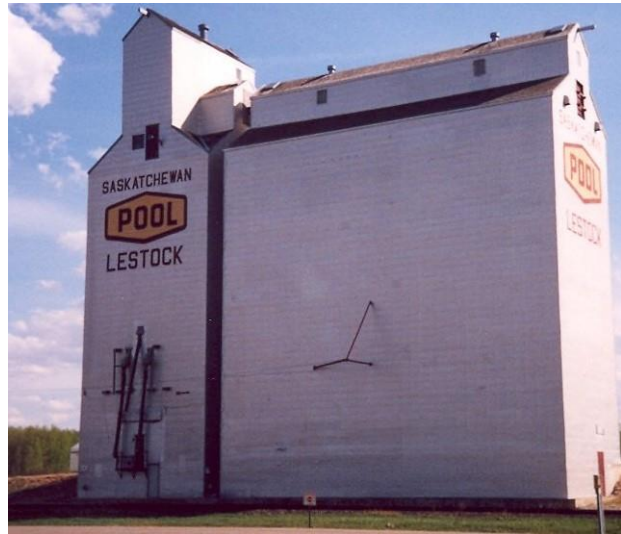
He visited the Touchwood Hills School in Lestock, this was a so-called residential school: children could live and learn there. Whether this was also the case with Ritchie is not clear. In 1924 the government bought the school from the Church, but it was still operated by the Church afterwards. In 1931 the building was destroyed by a fire, but the school was rebuilt.



Touchwood Hills School: photo Canadahistory.ca

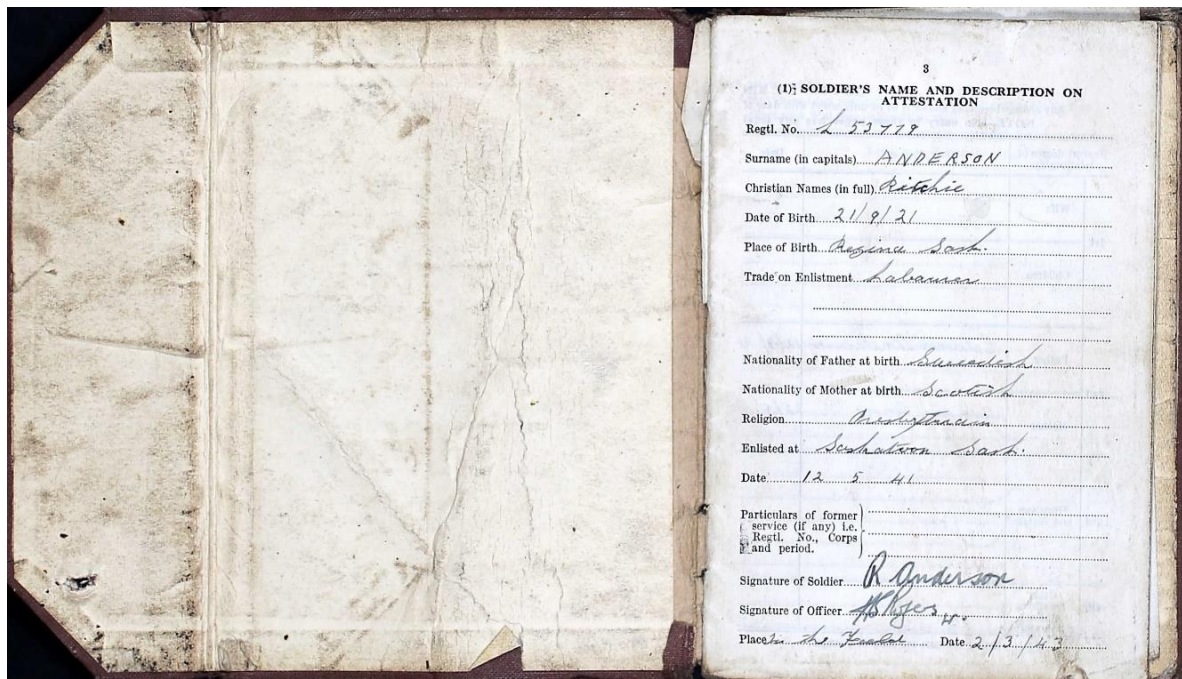
Lestock is a village in the province of Saskatchewan, in the middle of South Canada, almost on the border with the United States.

Photo: grain elevator Lestock
Images ourontario.ca



After school, Ritchie worked as a farmhand on Fred Hall's farm in Wishart, Saskatchewan until September 30, 1940. Then he helped his father on his farm. Ritchie did not want to return to the farm after his military service, he wanted to become a car mechanic.

Ritchie liked skating and softball, he had brown hair and hazel eyes. When he enlisted, he was a well-developed person of 19, he was 5 ft.11 tall and weighed 159 lb. Later his weight increased to about 194 lb.



Ritchie enlisted voluntarily because he felt it was his duty. He reported in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on May 12, 1941, he was 19 years old then. He received his training as a Trooper in the Basic Training Center. From July 7 to October 4 of that year, he resided at the trade school at the 12th Basic Training Center Active Force in Hamilton. In the month of March 1942 he had fourteen days of leave and on April 24 he was transferred to the A8 Canadian Armoured Corps Training Center in Borden. He was meanwhile becoming Helper Qualified Motor Mechanics Class II "C". Ritchie was embarked from Borden on July 19, 1942 and they left for Europe, for Gourock in Scotland. They arrived there on July 29. There he was given leave to acclimatize and was assigned to the 1st Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit. He was there until November 27, when he joined the 8th Reconnaissance Regiment of the 14th Canadian Hussars 'in the field'.

The 8th Reconnaissance Regiment (14th Canadian Hussars).



This regiment was the reconnaissance unit of the Canadian army during the advance from Italy to the Netherlands. The 8th Reconnaissance Regiment (14th Canadian Hussars)

received its training and coastal defense duties in the south of England in the first three years of the war. It was not until July 6, 1944 (1 month after D-Day) that the troops landed at Gold Beach in Normandy, France, and then began their task as infantrymen for the first time. The first three deaths were mourned on 13 July.

They pushed back the German troops from Northern France towards Belgium and the Netherlands and they were then used for their actual task: as a reconnaissance unit during the advance of the 1st Canadian Army. They were often far ahead of their troops and were involved in the liberation of important ports such as Dieppe, on 1 September 1944, and Antwerp, the Battle of the Scheldt, the liberation of towns and villages in the Netherlands and the invasion of Germany. In the meantime, fierce fighting had taken place and many people had been killed and injured on both sides.

Extract from the diary of the 8th Reconnaissance Regiment:

*-1 Feb. 1944 in Angmering on Sea, southern England, on the English Channel, there was a lot of training and sport, including boxing matches
-1 March 1944 American troops arrive as neighbours in Rustington*

- 11 March 1944 third anniversary of regiment with festivities
- 2 April 1944 large exercise "STEP"
- 14 April 1944 accident during an exercise, four dead and one wounded, one soldier breaks his leg while trying to report this to HQ by bicycle
- 21 April 1944 Camp Angmering cleared and abandoned with some regret
- 22 April 1944 in Camp Goodnestone in barracks and tents, entertainment through outings, movies and many sports
- 27 May 1944 General Montgomery says on a visit that the war will be over on January 31, many men have been training for four years and want action
- 29 May 29 1944 General Eisenhower inspects the troops and talks to many of the men and was interested in how they are doing
- 1 July 1944 they start in Goodnestone (UK) with the clearing and cleaning of the barracks, waved goodbye by canteen staff
- 2 July 1944 departure of the crew in their vehicles to the shunting yard of the ship's cargo and the vehicles are made watertight for the crossing
- 4 July 1944 from London Docks to Landing Ship Tanks
- 5 July 1944 in the evening leaving the harbour with a tugboat
- 6 July 1944 via the Thames with calm waters across The Channel
- 7 July 1944 just before midnight the ship arrives in Caen in France
- 8 July 1944 with LST (Landing Ship Tank) around 6 pm ashore in Tracey Sur Mer, where the vehicles are again well prepared and driven to the port
- 11 July 1944 the first two soldiers wounded by a shell, three miles from the fighting in Caen
- 13 July 1944 attacked by enemy tanks, the first reported dead
- 1 September 1944 Dieppe liberated and the population was overjoyed
- 9 September 1944 via Bulscamp in Belgium towards Ostend, at the end of October in Antwerp and to Noord-Beveland in the Netherlands
- 9 November 1944 in Appeltern, later in Horssen, with a lot of high water
- 17 December 1944 relieved by the 7th Canadian Recon. Regiment
- 19 February 1945 in Germany, Headquarters in Reichswald at the end of March
- 28 March 1945 back across the Rhine and stationed near Speldrop

Ritchie was rewarded for his efforts and he received the Good Conduct Badge on May 13, 1943.



This was a badge for at least two years of loyal service and it was worn on the left sleeve of the uniform.

As of November 18, 1943, Ritchie was a Qualified Driver Mechanics Motor Vehicle "C". The next award came on January 15, 1944, he was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. He was moved one more time, including to the 12th Battalion 2nd Canadian Base Reinforcement Group.

Then the day came when Ritchie made the crossing to the war in northwestern Europe on August 11, 1944, arriving in France the next day on August 12. With the 8th Reconnaissance Regiment, Ritchie was back in the field as a Driver Motor Vehicles.

Unfortunately, on April 3, 1945, Ritchie was seriously injured and was transferred to the Canadian General Hospital. He had a head wound because of which he died the next day, on April 4, 1945. He was 23 years old.

On April 5 Ritchie Anderson was buried at the temporary military cemetery in Nijmegen, plot 1, row 7, grave 5.

On August 2, 1945 Ritchie Anderson was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **V. E. 3.**

The text on his tombstone:

GREATER LOVE
HATH NO MAN THAN THIS



Photo: Liesbeth Huisman

Ritchie received the following awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France & Germany Star
- Defense Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp

The Memorial Cross was sent to his mother in Lestock after the war.

In northern Saskatchewan, a bay in Burchnall Lake was named after Ritchie: Anderson Bay.



Life story: Renske Cremer and Sil Jansen, students Canisius College in Nijmegen, and Liesbeth Huisman-Arts, Research Team Faces to Graves.

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

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

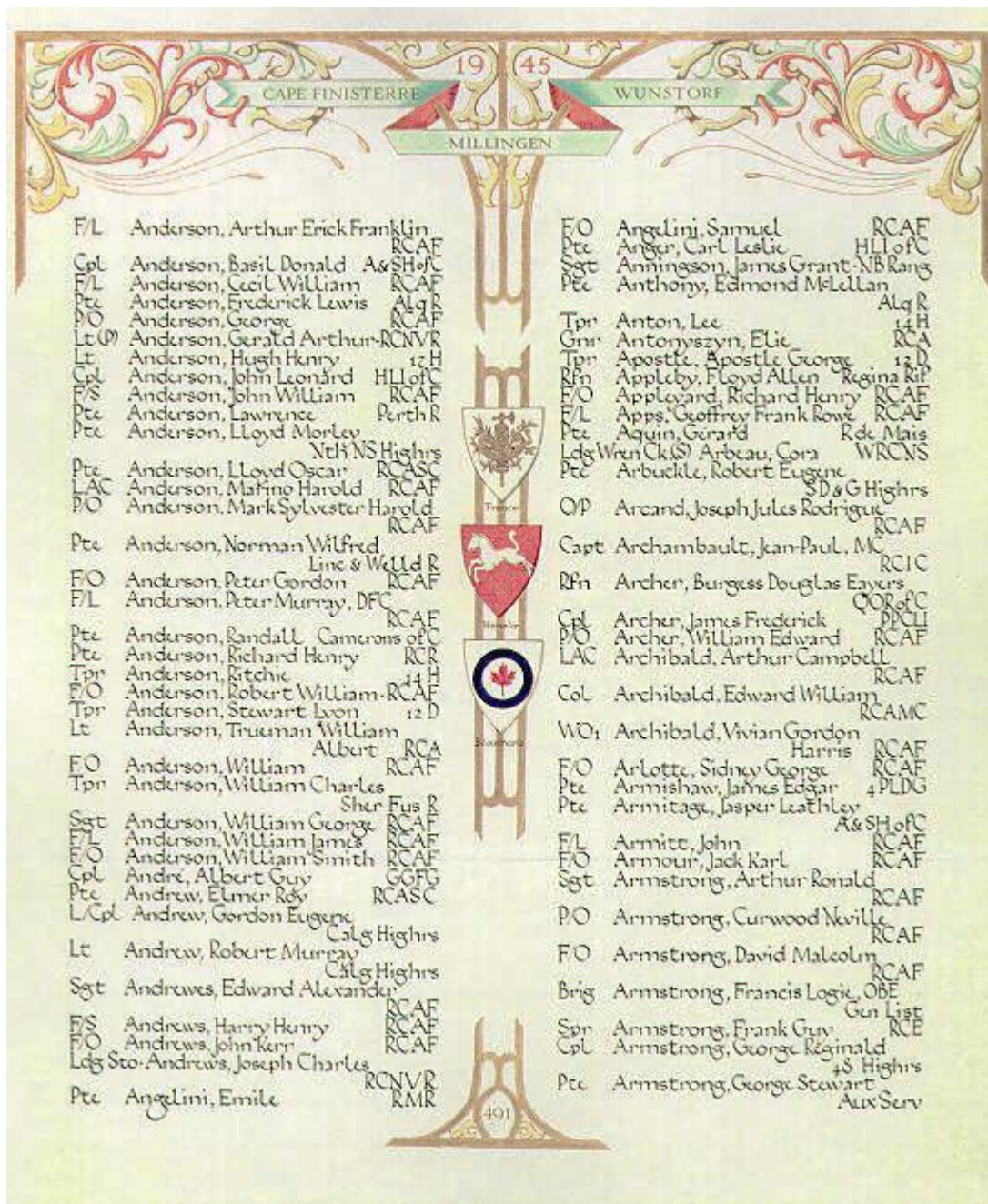
Library and Archives Canada

War Diaries WW2 project 44

War Diaries Jan Braakman

Veterans.gc.ca

Saskatchewan Virtual War Memorial



Remembrance Book: Veterans.gc.ca