

Andrew, Gordon Eugene
Lance Corporal
The Calgary Highlanders
Royal Canadian Infantry
K-1947



Gordon Eugene Andrew was born on May 27th, 1925, in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. He was the eldest son of John Samuel (Johnny) and Hattie Irene. Johnny and Hattie were married on March 10th, 1924 in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Following the birth of Gordon Eugene, there were four more children: Douglas, Ronald, Arlene and Betty. The family were members of the Church of England.

Gordon went to school in Mayerthorpe until the age of fifteen. He was educated there in the village school with just the one classroom. Having completed Grade 8 he went to work. He held a number of jobs; working on a farm for three years, as a lumberjack and working in a garage. He learnt to drive a car, truck and tractor and was able to carry out minor repairs himself. On January 20th, 1944, Gordon signed up for active duty in Vancouver, BC. He was eighteen years old at the time.

ITEMS 17, 18 AND 19 WILL NOT BE COMPLETED UNLESS A MAN ENLISTS FOR GENERAL SERVICE ANYWHERE.

17. **DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION**

I, Gordon Eugene ANDREW, 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 JAN 20 1944

Gordon E. Andrew
(Signature of Recruit)

Gordon underwent a medical test as part of the application process. He was found to be a healthy young man with grey eyes and brown hair, 5 feet and 10 inches tall and weighing 141 pounds. He was active in sports: fishing, swimming and hunting. He liked to go to shows and loved to dance and read.

He made a physically robust and powerful impression and his work as a car mechanic immediately made him a suitable infantry soldier. Asked what he wanted to do when he would come home after the war, he was not yet sure.

After a short stay in Vancouver, BC, Gordon was transferred to the training center in Camrose, Alberta in February, 1944. He made a fine impression on his superiors, showing both the temperament and the ability to turn into a competent soldier.



COMMON TRAINING			
Subject	Standard (a)	Remarks	Initials
Drill	Very Good	Smart	SG [initials]
Physical Training	V.G.	Energetic	SG [initials]
Marching	V.G.	Good	SG [initials]
Map Using	av.	Needs more practical	SG [initials]
Fundamental Training	V.G.	Clear	SG [initials]
Appl. of Fire	av.	More practical needed	SG [initials]
Bayonet	G.	Forceful	SG [initials]
P.I.A.T.	av.	More practical needed	SG [initials]
Sten M.C.	G.	Handles well	SG [initials]
Cooking in the Field	V.G.	knows how.	SG [initials]
Field Works	G.	More practical needed	SG [initials]
Field Training	G.	Cooperative	SG [initials]
Aircraft and AFV Recognition	av.	More practical needed	SG [initials]
Mines and Booby Traps	av.	" " "	SG [initials]
Night Training	G.	Cooperative	SG [initials]

SPECIALIST TRAINING (where applicable)

From Camrose he left for the Calgary training center, where he spent several days in the hospital in April, 1944. From June 30th to July 15th, he was on farewell leave to say goodbye to his family before heading for Europe. On August 4th, 1944, Gordon boarded a ship for England, where he set foot ashore on August 11th.

He was only in England for a few weeks, being shipped out to France on August 29th where he was assigned to the Calgary Highlanders Regiment in the Dieppe area on September 1st.

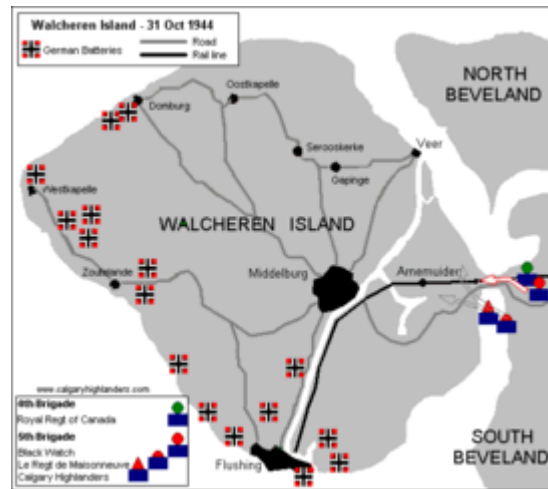
Dieppe. A black page in history for many Canadian soldiers. In August, 1942, more than 900 Canadian soldiers died here. The landing on the beach at Dieppe was a disaster. Ill prepared and insufficient air support. Those Calgary Highlanders who boarded landing craft but never made it to the beach because they were being held back as reserve troops would be haunted for many years to come by the terrible memories of that day. For some of them September 3rd, 1944, meant a return to Dieppe. They had been there in 1942. At the Canadian cemetery, which had been maintained by the inhabitants of Dieppe during the occupation, they held a memorial service.

Gordon is part of a desperately awaited, large reinforcement unit. In the weeks leading up to the arrival at Dieppe, the Calgary Highlanders suffered significant losses, among others during combat engagements along the river Seine in France.

The peace and quiet in Dieppe was short-lived. In the cold and early morning of September 5th, raining cats and dogs, they were transported to Montreuil by truck, seventy kilometers south of Dunkirk. Dunkirk and its surrounding area were heavily defended by the Germans. And the Calgary Highlanders, with Dunkirk in sight, fought their way from one farm to the next under constant artillery fire. They were bleak and dire circumstances. Ultimately, it proved impossible to take Dunkirk. On September 18th, the troops left Loon Plage for Antwerp, liberated by the British on September 4th, across the fields of Ypres (Belgium) that still clearly bore traces of the First World War. Dunkirk would remain in German hands until the end of the war. Gordon and his regiment were by now on their way to the Battle of the Scheldt.

Gordon was given three days of rest. From Antwerp, the Calgary Highlanders fought their way across the Albert Canal, the start of the Battle of the Scheldt, to the Turnhout Canal in the direction of Eindhoven where they stayed until October 3rd, 1944. Once again, peace and quiet was scarce. The regiment was deployed near Hoogerheide at the Battle of Woensdrecht via Lochtenberg and Brasschaat. Seventy-two hours of fierce combat saw Gordon lose thirty of his comrades in arms. And this was just the beginning. The Battle of the Scheldt continued to rage via Ossendrecht, Kruijningen and Schore to the Battle of the Sloedam.

By then it was October 31st. The Black Watch regiment went in first to attack the dam. Their casualty rate was such that the Calgary Highlanders were deployed the next day. They, too, did not manage to advance any further than halfway across the dam. Combat was up so close that hand grenades could be thrown back before exploding. On the morning of November 1st, the Highlanders managed to secure the west side of the dam, but on November 2nd, they failed to get beyond the bridgehead at Walcheren.

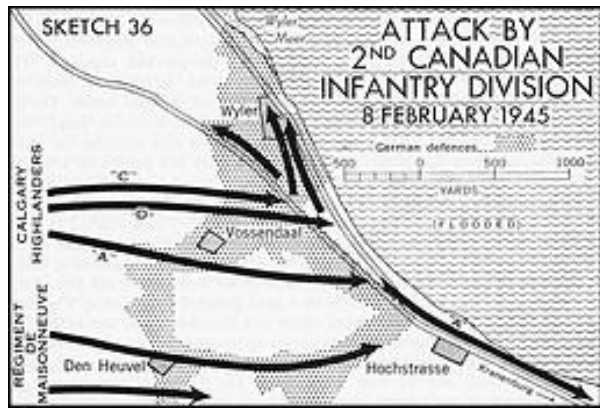


Finally, British commandos landed on Walcheren and forced out the Germans. This, in hindsight, rendered the Battle of the Sloedam effectively pointless. The operation cost the lives of 107 Calgary Highlanders.

Following this horrendous action, Gordon ended up near Nijmegen in the southeast of the Netherlands. Initially, the Calgary Highlanders were stationed in houses along the road between Nijmegen and Malden. They were guarding the bridges at Malden and Grave. There were some days of rest and the men were trained in the use of a new weapon, the WASP flamethrower. All throughout winter, the regiment was deployed to guard the Dutch-German border at Groesbeek. Two weeks on, one week off.

As Christmas approached, it started to snow. The men did not have any winter gear and since their dark uniforms stood out against the white landscape, they wore their underwear over their uniforms and white towels to cover their helmets during patrols. On Christmas Eve, when the Calgary Highlanders were patrolling the frontline near Groesbeek, German soldiers serenaded them from across the other side. The Canadians answered by firing their rifles, grenades and mortars. The next day, the Canadians brought in two bagpipers to play for the Germans. At midnight on New Year's Eve the Germans started to fire. According to eyewitnesses, you could have read a newspaper in the light of all that artillery. Five minutes on the Germans shouted "Happy New Year, Canada". On January 10th, the Calgary Highlanders left the frontline for a week's rest in Nijmegen.

From February 1st onwards, Gordon and the regiment were starting their preparations for Operation Veritable. Setting out from Berg en Dal they left for the border and stayed in the forest, about five kilometers from Wyler, Germany, waiting for what was to come. On February 8th, at 5 a.m., the attack on Wyler was launched. The battle for Wyler turned out to be more difficult than expected and would last eight hours, with thirteen fatal casualties among the Calgary Highlanders. They stayed behind in the Wyler Ruins for a further two more days and then made their way back to Berg en Dal and Nijmegen.



Wyler

On February 18th, the regiment left for the Moyland forest. They took up their positions in the middle of the night and patrolled the area for the next 48 hours, with intense clashes taking place with German forces. Moyland Castle was severely damaged and would remain a ruin for decades to come.

The Hochwald forest followed Moyland. A dense forest, with visibility in places down to just a few meters, increasing the risk of an ambush. This was the start of Operation Blockbuster. The goal of the Calgary Highlanders was to occupy the west side of the forest's northern edge. The regiment starts out a little past midnight, on February 27th. The sky was overcast, offering no moonlight to help guide them. The farms they passed along the route, all seemed deserted.

Not until dawn did they encounter German resistance; still, they managed to reach their goal, struggling through mud and snow. Finally, at half past ten in the evening they were given a much-welcomed hot meal. That day in the Hochwald saw 200 German soldiers captured and twelve Calgary Highlanders killed in combat. One of them was Gordon Eugene Andrew, just nineteen years old.

Lance Corporal Gordon Eugene Andrew was temporarily buried in Bedburg, Germany, from where he was later reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **VII. D. 11.**



Groesbeek - September 17th 2019

Gordon has was awarded the following medals:

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




Life story: Sigrid Norde, Research Team Faces to Graves .

The grave in Groesbeek would be cared for by the Rikken family for years to come. From the Gordon Service Files, there seems to have been correspondence between the two families. Unfortunately, this cannot be retraced. The daughter of Theo Rikken (Groesbeek) holds fond memories of her regular visits to the grave.

9-20-7 (AQ)

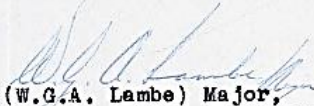
CANADIAN ARMY LIAISON ESTABLISHMENT
11 HILL STREET
LONDON, W.1
TELEPHONE: REGENT 5701

20 May 1949.

 Army Headquarters,
Department of National Defence,
Ottawa,
Canada. (Attn: JAG, Estates Section)

K-1947 Andrew, G.E.

1. Enclosed herewith is a letter addressed to the relatives of the m/n soldier, received from Mr. Theo. Rikken, 2e, Colonjes 8, Groesbeek, Holland.
2. It would be appreciated if this letter could be forwarded to their last-known Canadian address, please.


(W.G.A. Lambe) Major,
for Senior Canadian Army Liaison Officer, London.

Letter forwarded to
father 9-6-49.
R. 4 (B)

1035-8-47 (152)
H.Q. 1-529-10

Sources:

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Library and Archives Canada
David. J. Bercuson, Battalion of Heroes-The Calgary Highlanders in World War II,
The Calgary Highlanders Regimental Foundation, 1994
<https://www.zeeuwseankers.nl/verhaal/zeeland-herdenkt-de-slag-om-de-schelde-in-1944>
https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slag_om_de_Sloedam
<https://www.parkmemorial.com/book-of-memories/136158/andrew-hattie/obituary.php>
http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_stories/pm_v2.php?id=search_record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=0000650&rd=151703&sy=cat&st=&ci=4#