

**Andrew, Ian Barnes**

**Rifleman**

**Royal Winnipeg Rifles Regiment**

**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**

**G/51304**



Ian Barnes Andrew was born 14 January 1924 in Saint John, New Brunswick. His father John Watson Andrew was of English/Scottish origin and his mother Dorothy Barnes could trace her lineage back to the United Empire Loyalists who landed at Saint John Harbour in 1784 to establish a colony in what was still British North America following the American Revolutionary War.

John Andrew was a salesman and Dorothy a stenographer when they were married in Saint John 16 October 1920. They had three children starting with Ian's older sister Norma and ending with his younger brother Murray.



The family worshipped at the Anglican Church where Ian was in the choir. The Andrews moved to Toronto, Ontario for a period of time during the 1930s Depression, later returning home. All three children attended Saint John High School, with Ian completing his junior matriculation in grade 12.

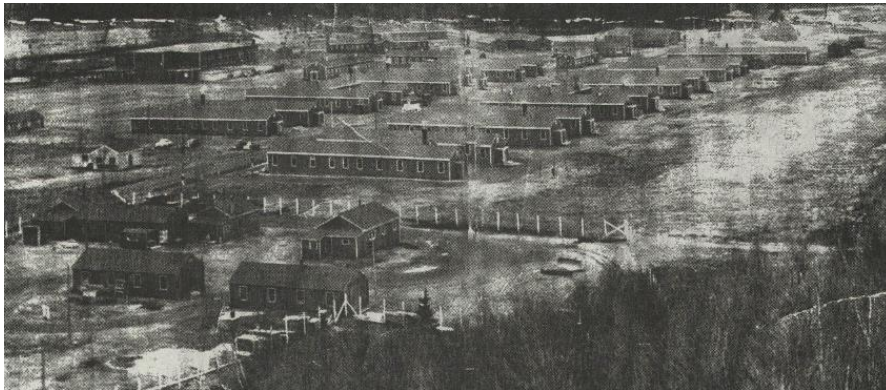
*Saint John High School*

Following High School Ian found employment as a clerk with the Dominion Bank of Canada in 1940 and worked there for almost two years. Ian joined the Militia in May 1942, training with the tank brigade. He then attested with the Canadian Army in Saint John, New Brunswick 2 November 1942 at 18 years old.



*The Dominion Bank of Canada*

Ian's medical examination recorded him at 5'8" tall and 133 lbs. Given his militia experience and above average education level, he was made acting corporal during basic training. His Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit examiner Captain E.H. Brewer wrote on his selection record: "Very smart looking soldier. Seems to have all the qualifications for N.C.O (Non Commissioned Officer) material."



*Camp Utopia, New Brunswick*

Ian was transferred to the newly built Camp Utopia in New Brunswick 27 January 1943 for advanced infantry training and had his Lance Corporal rank confirmed in April.

Ian's father John, who had been working as a city traveller for a wholesale drug company since 1931, died from a heart attack in October 1943. Ian helped support his mother Dorothy by directing a portion of his Army pay to her. After almost one year training at Utopia, Ian was posted to the Officer Training Centre (OTC) at Brockville Ontario around his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday January 1944. Major H.B. Spaulding wrote in his report on him: "He has an attractive personality and plenty of intelligence. Impresses as somewhat of an individualist... I find this man a very complicated personality. He seems to have ability in abundance and there is no doubt he can take the OTC training successfully. I feel he has definite officer potentialities but should like the Psychiatrist's opinion before making a recommendation."

Ian later told his sister Norma that he was offered a choice while there – either go into the officer training or be sent overseas within a short time. He decided to turn down the opportunity for promotion to Officer Cadet.



Ian subsequently reverted rank back to Private and returned to Camp Utopia, New Brunswick in February 1944. He was given special leave time before transferring to Camp Debert, Nova Scotia in March and then embarked overseas two months later, landing in the U.K. 8 May 1944. Ian's sister Norma had joined the Canadian Red Cross overseas branch and rose to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. The two siblings were able to get together for a brief time while Ian was in the U.K.

*Norma and Ian Andrew in U.K. 1944*

Ian was held in reserve during the Allied D-Day invasion of Normandy and shipped across the English Channel to France just over a month later, where he was taken on strength by the Royal Winnipeg Rifles (RWR) 9 July 1944.

The RWR, also known as the Little Black Devils, along with the other 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade battalions (Regina Rifles and Canadian Scottish) of 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division were among the first Commonwealth infantry units to land at Juno Beach (Courseulles-sur-Mer) and suffered heavy D-Day losses, estimated at about 130 men. The next two days were even worse for the Little Black Devils, experiencing another 300 casualties at the small village of Putot-en-Bessin, almost half of the battalion's combat strength. The RWR withdrew in the aftermath of Putot and gradually rebuilt their strength with additional reinforcements such as Ian Andrew, who was redesignated as a Rifleman. They were on the move again in early July, with their next mission to seize the airport near the village of Carpiquet. That bloody battle turned out to be another costly one with 132 casualties.



*Winnipeg Rifles – Normandy July 1944*

By August 1944 the Germans were in retreat, fighting delaying actions as the Allied forces pursued them. Falaise was captured later that month with many German prisoners taken. The RWR and 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade played a key role in securing the Channel port of Calais, France in September 1944. Before Calais could be assaulted, Boulogne had to be taken. By the time the Little Black Devils reached the fortified hills south of Boulogne on 5 September, the Germans had fled along the coastline into the harbour.

The next day, 6 September 1944, Ian was wounded by enemy mortar fire with shrapnel penetrating his left arm. There are multiple entries in his hospitalization record over the next several weeks as he passed through eight different field ambulances and hospitals, finally getting discharged 23 October 1944. However, it wasn't until a month later in November that Ian made his way from his last convalescent centre via the reinforcement stream to his regiment, which was by then in static operations stationed near Nijmegen, Netherlands. He had actually been struck off strength by the RWR and presumed deserted when he showed up and was reinstated.



*Nijmegen, Netherlands with bridge in background - 1944*

Ian Shepherd, named after his uncle by his mother Norma, wrote about his demise: "Family lore about Uncle Ian's last day places him at his post on Christmas Day. He had that guard duty apparently as punishment for yet another one of his transgressions! As I understand he was shot to death by a sniper who fired despite a local de facto truce." Bill Adair, of the Royal Regiment of Canada, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade was on duty 25 December 1944 guarding the Nijmegen Bridge and was relieved by who he believes must have been Rifleman Ian Andrew of the RWR, taking over from his regiment that day.

Instructions regarding preparation of War Diaries (which will be kept from first day of mobilization, creation or embodiment) are contained in FS Regs Vol 1.

WAR DIARY

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3/19A MPM 11 20/Dec/07 (5028)

OR

~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY~~

Original, duplicate and triplicate to be forwarded to OIC 2nd Echelon for disposal.

Title pages will be prepared.

(Erase heading not required)

THE ROYAL WINNIPEG RIFLES DECEMBER 1944

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
	Sat	23	Weather clear and cold. During the day the Bn carried out trg according to the syllabus. In the afternoon A and D Coys visited Peter Bty of the 12 RGA. In the evening C Coy held a dance.	wfs
	Sun	24	Weather clear and cold. Bn carried out trg according to syllabus. At 1500 hrs an O Gp was held at Bn HQ in preparation to taking over from a Bn of the 2 Div, 4th Bde. At 1700 hrs Coy Comds went to recon the new area. A recon party from the Essex Scottish arrived at 1700 hrs. The change over was to take place at 1930 hrs tomorrow. At 1730 hrs enemy shells landed behind the Bn area. At 1900 hrs the Sgts held a dance in the Wintergardens, NIJMEGEN.	wfs
	Mon	25	Weather clear and cold. During the morning the Bn prepared for the move to our new area. All Coys had arranged mess halls for Christmas dinner which was served by offrs and senior NCOs between 1100 hrs and 1200 hrs. The CO visited all mess halls with Christmas greetings from friends of the Bn in England. At 1430 hrs the first coys started marching to the new area. Comd Post was set up at MR 755544 at 1900 hrs. The Coys had to make the change over after dark as most of the Bn area was under enemy observation. New Coy locations were as follows: A Coy HQ at MR 764535, B Coy HQ at MR 756526, C Coy HQ at MR 754538, D Coy HQ at MR 758531. All Coys were in posn by 2230 hrs. Contact patrols were arranged for the night.	wfs
	Tue	26	Weather clear and cold. The Coys reported spasmodic MG fire on their new posns during the night. B Coy had one man killed. At 1000 hrs the CO and IO went to a conference at Bde. A Coy reported that a house in their area was set on fire by the enemy at 1800 hrs. The CO held a conference with Coy Comds to discuss possible changes in coy dispositions and the laying of def minefds. There was intermittent mortaring and shelling during the day. Contact and standing patrols were laid on for the night.	wfs

Courtesy Royal Winnipeg Rifles Museum

The Winnipeg Rifles War Diary indicates that their position takeover from the Royal Regiment was completed by 22:30 hours on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The next day's entry stated: "The Coys (Companies) reported spasmodic MG (Machine Gun) fire on their new posns (positions) during the night. B Coy had one man killed". After reading the article about him in the Royal Canadian Legion British Columbia/Yukon Command 2006 War Service Recognition book, Ian Shepherd was able to track down veteran Bill Adair in Vernon, British Columbia and had a conversation with possibly the last person to see his uncle alive. He was later able to visit his uncle's final burial site.

Rifleman I.B. Andrew was temporarily buried at Nijmegen, Netherlands and later relocated to nearby Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **II. B. 14.**





Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Ancestry public trees

Ian Shepherd – nephew of Ian Barnes Andrew

Loyalists in Canada <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/loyalists>

Saint John High School <https://www.sjhigh.ca/about/history/>

Dominion Bank picture <https://www.td.com/about-tdbfg/corporate-information/tds-history/ourroots.jsp>

Camp Utopia picture [https://www.unb.ca/nbmhp-database/charlotte-county/poi\\_charlotte\\_county/army-training-centre-at-camp-utopia.php](https://www.unb.ca/nbmhp-database/charlotte-county/poi_charlotte_county/army-training-centre-at-camp-utopia.php)

Nijmegen Bridge photo

<https://www.canadiansoldiers.com/history/operations/operationberlin.htm>

Royal Winnipeg Rifles <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/official-military-history-lineages/lineages/infantry-regiments/royal-winnipeg-rifles.html>

Reid, Brian (2010). *Named by the Enemy – A History of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles*

Ian Stewart, curator Royal Winnipeg Rifles Museum and Archives

\* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl)



*Ian and sister Norma Andrew - 1943*



*Photo courtesy Ian Shepherd, taken in 2017 at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery*