

**Andrew, Robert Murray**  
**Lieutenant**  
**The Calgary Highlanders**  
**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**



Robert Murray Andrew (Bob) was born in Battle Creek, Michigan, United States on October 15, 1913. Bob grew up in Port Arthur, now part of Thunder Bay, Ontario. His parents were Thomas Nicolas and Margaret Lawrie. Bob had two elder sisters, Helen and Margaret, and an elder brother, Crawford. The family frequented the United Church of Canada.



Bob studied Commerce and Administration at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario. He graduated at the top of his class in 1935. He then started working at Canada Packers Ltd. in Toronto, first in the Analysis Department and then in the Credit Department at head office, after which he was transferred to the office in Windsor, Ontario, where he started working as an accountant. In 1940 he became Credit Manager at the office in Edmonton, Alberta. His colleagues described him as a nice, energetic and consistent man with a clear mind and whose future prospect

within the company was rosy. As he did not only think with his head, but mainly with his heart, he had lots of friends in West as well as in East Canada.

During his work at Canada Packers in 1937 Bob signed up as a volunteer with the Lake Superior Regiment in Port Arthur, present-day Thunder Bay. During the summer months he trained the regiment in Camp Shilo in Manitoba. Because the soldiers from Ontario were seen as outsiders, they usually had to take the role of enemy upon them.

In 1940 in Canada the National Resources Mobilization Act was adopted. Men who were available were called up to register to join the military as a volunteer, initially to defend homeland Canada. Bob answered the call and on July 24, 1940 he signed up as a volunteer in Edmonton where he was working at that moment. He was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Edmonton Fusiliers and he went on a training camp annually and was promoted to the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

On October 12, 1940 Bob married his great love, Margaret Isabel Horner.



Margaret Isabel

During the summer of 1942 Bob decided to sign up for active service in the Canadian military. He did so in Edmonton on July 3.

I, Robert Murray ANDREW, do solemnly declare that the above particulars are true, that I hold His Majesty's Commission in the Canadian Militia and I am willing to serve in the Canadian Active Service Force if, when and so long as required.

Date 3-7-42 *Robert M. Andrew*  
(Signature and rank)

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**CERTIFICATE OF OFFICER COMMANDING**

The application of P/2nd. Lieut. R. M. ANDREW, for appointment to the  
(Rank and name)

3rd Bn Edmonton Fusiliers CA-A with the rank of P/2nd Lieut.  
(Unit)

and appointment P/ 2nd Lieut. (was) recommended, appointment  
(is)

to date from 6th. August. 1942. has been approved.

H.Q.332-153-105(Pers.lb.) d/1-8-42. is recommended for approval.

Authority A.2 Appendix "A" to District Order #456/42 d/12-8-42

*[Signature]* (Signature of O.C.) (Rank)  
3rd Bn Edmonton Fusiliers CA-A  
(Unit)

Date 6th. August 1942.

He was then 27 years old. His medical report showed that he was a healthy young man with blue eyes and brown hair. He was 5 feet, 5.5 inches tall and weighed 136 pounds. With his wife Margaret he lived in Apartment 207 at 10147-108<sup>th</sup> Street in Edmonton. His father had died.

After signing up, Bob was assigned to the 3rd Battalion of the Edmonton Fusiliers. He kept his rank as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. During the first year he was stationed at various training camps. He took a basic training in Camp Sarcee, Alberta, and in Vernon, British Columbia. He had combat training in Vancouver and Prince George, British Columbia. In February 1943 he was transferred to Calgary for further infantry training. A month later he found himself in Prince George again and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant.

In June 1943 Bob was transferred to another regiment, the Prince of Wales Rangers and had additional training in Wainwright, Alberta, and in Nanaimo, British Columbia, the regiment was deployed to defend the Vancouver Island coast line against possible attacks by the Japanese army.

From September 27, 1943 until October 23 Bob took a 'Forest Bush and Jungle Warfare' (FB&JW) course in Prince George, B.C., after which he became an instructor at this training. In October he was allowed to go on leave until November 14. On his return to headquarters, number 8 and later number 6 in Prince George, he was made responsible for the rations and rooms whilst also remaining an instructor at the FB&JW school. At Christmas he was again allowed to go on leave.

On April 1, 1944 Bob was temporarily promoted to the rank of A/Captain in the Canadian Fusiliers Regiment, but the same month still he voluntarily renounced this rank and became a Lieutenant again. In May he was given leave to say goodbye to his family. In the meantime his wife Margaret had moved to Calgary, Alberta. Bob was on the point of leaving for the United Kingdom.



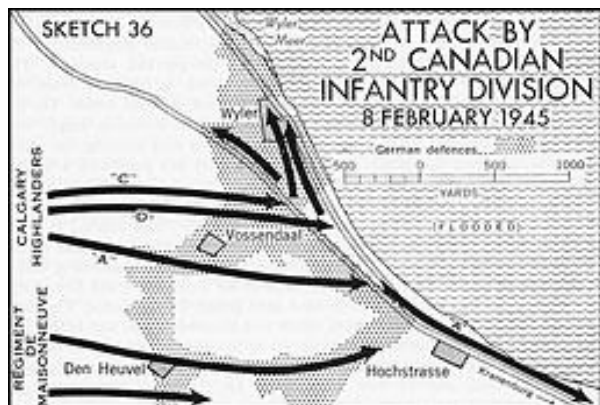
*Bob - date and place unknown*

In the month of May he still trained in Vernon, B.C., and from Camp Debert, Nova Scotia, he was shipped for the crossing to England on May 25, where on July 26 he received the happy news of the birth of his son, Robert Horner Andrew.

During the first four months Bob stayed and trained in England with his own regiment. From November he was assigned to the Canadian Infantry Training Regiment. On January 5, 1945 he made the crossing to mainland Europe. More than a week later he was assigned to the Calgary Highlanders regiment.

At that moment the Calgary Highlanders were billeted in Malden, The Netherlands. in houses along the Rijksweg. They were deployed in guarding bridges across the river Maas near Malden and Grave. There were days of rest and they were trained in using a new weapon, the WASP flamethrower. During the entire winter the regiment was also deployed in guarding the Groesbeek border. Two weeks on, one week off.

As from February 1 for Bob and his regiment preparation for Operation Veritable started. From Berg en Dal they departed into the direction of the border and stayed approx. five kilometres from Wyler, Germany, in the woods, waiting for what was to come. At 5 am on February 8 the attack on Wyler was launched.



The battle of Wyler turned out to be more difficult than envisaged and would take eight hours, fifteen Calgary Highlanders were killed. They remained in the Wyler ruins for another two days and then returned to Berg en Dal and Nijmegen.



Wyler

On February 18 the regiment left into the direction of Moyland woods. In the middle of the night they took up their positions and patrolled for the next forty-eight hours, some skirmishes with German soldiers took place and they bombarded Moyland Castle.



*Moyland Castle December 6, 2020*

Moyland was followed by Hochwald, a dense forest with occasionally only a few metres' sight, which increased the chance of being ambushed. This was the start of Operation Blockbuster with the aim of forcing a passage to Xanten and Wesel in order to be able to reach the River Rhine. The Calgary Highlanders aimed at capturing the west side of the northern edge of the forest.

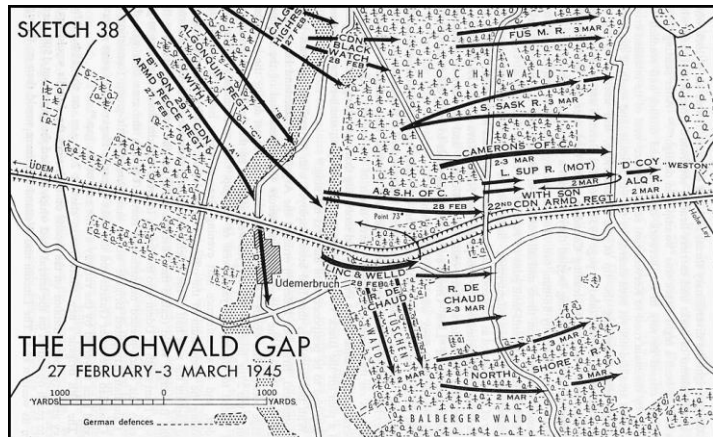
Just after midnight, on February 27, the regiment departed. The sky was overcast and there was no moonlight to shine on the men, the farms that they passed in the open fields looked deserted.

Not until dawn did they experience resistance from German soldiers, but they succeeded in reaching their destination, wrestling through mud and snow, and finally, at ten thirty in the evening they had the opportunity to have a warm meal. Two hundred German soldiers were captured, twelve Calgary Highlanders died in the Hochwald on that day.

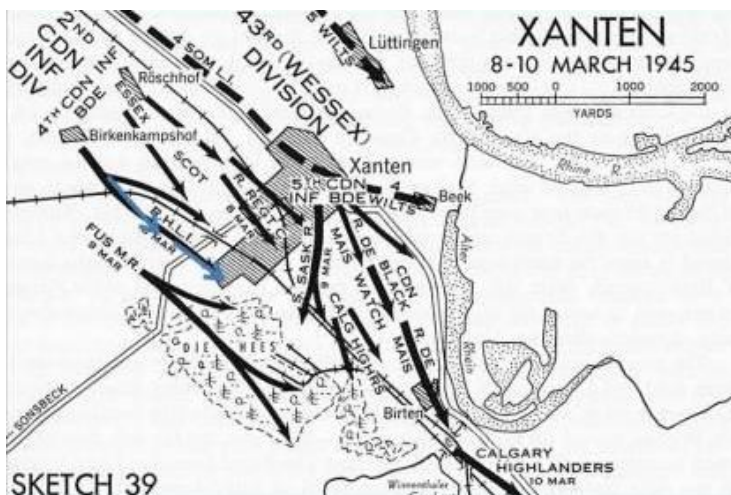
However, the regiment was not granted any rest. They defended their positions along the edge of the forest while grenades and mortars flew around their ears. On February 28 they were accidentally shot at by their own tanks. The men's morale reached an all-time low.

Other regiments and units, The Black Watch, Le Régiment de Maisonneuve and the 10<sup>th</sup> Brigade, were active in the Hochwald and they too experienced fierce resistance.

The aim was to cross the Hochwald Gap, an open area between the Hochwald, Tuschenwald and the Balbergerwald. As from March 2 German resistance diminished. And although on the east side of the Hochwald Gap heavy fighting was still going on, the men received a message that the Ninth US



Army was only sixteen kilometres south of their location. All in all, morale improved and on March 4 the Calgary Highlanders crossed the Hochwald Gap into the direction of Seelenhof and from there towards Birten, three kilometres south-east of Xanten.



The aim was to reach a point along a railway line, two kilometres south-east of Birten, on March 9. In the middle of the night the regiment went on their way, there was heavy fighting and en route there were a lot of landmines. Birten itself was unreachable and the regiment moved to a point

with four small bridges across the Winnenthaler Kanal. One railway bridge turned out to be still intact.

On their way to the canal the Calgary Highlanders were under heavy fire and a number of them died on the spot. There were also wounded men. One of them was Bob. He was admitted to the No. 10 Field Ambulance with shot wounds in his left hip and left leg at 02.00 hours. He had lost a lot of blood and doctors did everything they could to save his life. Bob fought for his life, but on March 13 at 04.00 hours he died of his injuries, thirty-one years old. Margaret Isabel, living at 502 Sunderland Avenue in Calgary, did not see her husband return home. He never had the chance to take his son into his arms.

Lieutenant Robert Murray Andrew was temporarily buried in Bedburg, Duitsland.

On August 29, 1945, he was reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave reference **V.F.16**.



*Son Bob at his father's grave in Groesbeek - October 2016*

**Reported to Have Died of Wounds**

Lt. Robert M. Andrew, 31, is reported to have died of wounds received in action with the Calgary Highlanders. His wife, Margaret, and a son, Robert, live at 502 Sunderland Ave.

Born in Port Arthur, he was an honor graduate in commerce from Queen's University. He joined the staff of Canada Packers Ltd. in Toronto in 1935 and was credit manager of the Edmonton plant from 1940 until his enlistment in 1942, with the 3rd Bn. Edmonton Fusiliers.



He transferred Lt. Andrew to the Highlanders in England. He also leaves his mother, Mrs. T. M. Andrew, a brother, Crawford, and a sister, Helen in Toronto, and a sister, Margaret, in Montreal.

Bob was awarded the following medals:

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

On his headstone the following words are inscribed:

GOD GIVE US THE PEACE  
FOR WHICH YOU FOUGHT  
PROUDLY WE BEAR  
OUR DEEP LOSS



Our thanks go to Bob Andrew for sharing photographs and information.

Life story by: Sigrid Norde, Research Team Faces To Graves

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

#### Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

National Library and Archives Canada

David. J. Bercuson, Battalion of Heroes–The Calgary Highlanders in World War II, The Calgary Highlanders Regimental Foundation, 1994

War Diaries – Calgary Highlanders – 1945

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<https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/Canada/CA/Victory/sk/Victory-38.jpg>

<https://bordencarletonresearchproject.wordpress.com/page/2/>

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