

Beck, Gerald Albert
Private
North Shore (New Brunswick)
Regiment
3rd Canadian Infantry Division
G64858



Personal Information:

Gerald Beck was born on 10 October, 1923 on a farm in Carsonville, Kings Co., N.B. He was the son of Baptist parents, Albert and Eugene Beck and had two brothers, Harold and Ronald and one sister, Viola. As a child he enjoyed activities such as skating, baseball, skiing, hunting and fishing. He also read newspapers, Western Stories and scout books in his free time. After attending grade 7 and part of 8 classes, Gerald decided to leave school.(1) During the period 1940-1943, he took up a position at the Sussex Creamery as a butter maker. Since his father had died in 1937, Gerald acted as the sole supporter of his mother, supplying her with \$50.00 a month.(2) During this time he also joined the 8th Princess Louise (N.B) Hussars as well as summer camps in both Woodstock and Utopia in preparation for his future.

Military Movements:

On 8 October, 1943, Gerald was enlisted in No.70 C.A, Fredericton, where he trained for two months. At the time of his enlistment, he was 5'7 and weighed 130 pounds. During this time he was admitted to the F.M hospital and was discharged on 23 October, 1943. Gerald complained of experiencing foot trouble during physical training, due to a 22 bullet

lodged in his ankle.(3) Lieut. B Douglas stated that despite his pain, Beck was always willing to work.

Transferring to and from New Brunswick units, Beck spent time in both Utopia and Woodstock, where he completed the Driver I/C course on 29 March, 1944, increasing his daily wage by 35 cents.

Dismissed on an embarkation leave from 4 May to 17 May, 1944, Gerald packed his bags for No.1 Transit Camp in Windsor, N.S for further training. Just a few weeks later, on 2 June, he was struck off strength (S.O.S) and added to the No. 4 Canadian Infantry Reinforcement (4 CIRU), travelling overseas. On 11 June, 1944, they disembarked in the United Kingdom.

Final Days:

It wasn't long before Gerald left the U.K and joined the North Shore Regiment in France on 30 July, 1944. The North Shore Regiment helped to close the Falaise Gap and made great contributions to operations at Quesnay Wood and Couliboef.

The North Shore was also given a new mission: to take over Calais. "This was an important objective because its cross-Channel guns could reach Dover and also the guns were used to stop unfriendly ships trying to travel on the Channel," states Will R. Bird, in his history of the regiment. With the help of the 79th Armoured Division, Gerald and his companions were able to drive the enemy "over the hill". Although the Germans had captured and held eighteen prisoners,(6) by 30 September 1944, North Shore was in complete possession of the objective.

After travelling through Belgium, Holland and Terneuzen, Gerald was able to find silence in the streets of Nijmegen. It wouldn't be long until another "D-Day" would break out, however for the time being, their task was mainly preparation.

Operation "Blockbuster" began on 26 February 1945 with the objective to clear the enemy near the Rhine River. Three battalions formed a three pronged attack. The North Shore Regiment was the center prong and was to advance at 0855 hours. The German town of Keppeln, situated between Calcar and Udem, was the communication center located in the middle of open farmland. Soldiers from the North Shore quickly made a 2000-yard advance over the open ground. There the troops were being told to "dig in" and little protection covered their heads, as mortar fire rained down. At 9:15 a.m. the North Shore moved south and the artillery began a barrage. Soon the troops were not far from a barn, the first building of the village. As German gunners were shooting from inside of the barn, one

North Shore platoon returned to their trenches, while others continued to attack.(7) It was during the Keppeln commotion where six out of fourteen tanks were blown away and Gerald Beck was killed.

Lest We Forget: Gerald was initially buried in Germany, but his remains were transferred to Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in Netherlands, grave **X. A. 15.**

(8) This cemetery contains 2610 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War. Gerald Beck was 21 years of age when he died, having received a France-Germany Star from 1939-45 and a War Medal CVSM and Clasp during his service time.

Video Gerald Beck: <http://youtu.be/OzeWc31FJ-k>

Biography by Geena Sipkema. (Courtesy of the Lest We Forget initiative of Belleisle Regional High School, Springfield, N.B.).

Gerald Albert Beck

Lest We Forget



Biography made available for Faces To Graves, with courtesy of Stephen Wilson, Belleisle Regional High School.

Bibliography:

Bird, Will R. *North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment*, Fredericton: Unipress, 1963

Internet Sites: The Normandy Campaign <http://www.junobeach.org/e/2/can-eve-rod-nor-cam-e.htm>

North Shore Regiment <http://www.gnb.ca/0007/Heritage/Regiment/frameset.htm>

Archival Reverence:

Military service files of Private Gerald A. Beck obtained from Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario

Personal Interview:

Ken Newell, a veteran of the Second World War, assisted with researching the military file of Gerald Beck

(1) Educational Background, Personal Selection Record, recorded before joining the North Shore Regiment 23 October, 1943

(2) Particulars of family of an officer or other rank of the Canadian Army (AF) or R.C.A.F (on active service) documents. 1943

(3) Personal History and Appraisal, Selection Record 23 October, 1943

(4) North Shore Regiment, Quesnay Wood, www.gnb.ca/0007/heritage/regiment/frameset.htm

(5) North Shore Regiment , Victory At Couliboeuf, www.gnb.ca/0007/heritage/regiment/frameset.htm

(6) North Shore Regiment , Finish of the Channel Ports, www.gnb.ca/0007/heritage/regiment/frameset.htm

(7) A complete History 1794-1958- North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment by Will R. Bird, 1968

(8) Second World War Service Files: Canadian Armed Forces War Dead, Books of Remembrance and Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Picture taken by Lorraine Pollock when she and a group from Kings County, N.B. visited his gravesite in 2010.



GIVES HIS LIFE—Word has been received by Mrs. Albert J. Beck, Main St. that her son, Pte. Gerald Albert Beck (above), has been killed in action while serving with the North Shore Regiment on the Western war front. Pte. Beck was born in Carsonville, Kings County, in 1923, and went to school there. Prior to his enlistment with the North Shore Regiment in September, 1943, he was employed with the Sussex Cheese and Butter Co., Ltd. Following his training at various centres in Canada he went overseas in June, 1944. Besides his mother, he is survived by one sister, Viola, at present in Ottawa, and one brother, Ronald, at home. Mrs. Beck and family have the sympathy of many friends in their sorrow.

Source: Kings County Record March 1945 (Clipping courtesy of Connie Cripps)