

Brunet, Paul Wilfred Michael

Lieutenant

**Lord Strathcona's Horse
(Royal Canadians)**

2nd Armoured Regiment

D 26681



Perseverance

Paul Wilfred Michael Brunet was born on May 13, 1917, in Sixteen Islands Lake, Quebec (PQ and since 1991 QC), Canada. He was called Paul. Sixteen Islands Lake is located northwest of Montreal, QC.

His father, Joseph Rudolphe Paul, also known as Paul, was born on July 1, 1889, in Montreal, QC, and died on April 25, 1951, aged 61, in Sixteen Islands Lake, QC. He married Marguerite Ruth McNamee on March 1, 1917, in Westmount, Montreal, QC. Mother Ruth was born on March 6, 1893, in Montreal, QC, and died at age 95 on March 9, 1988, in Montreal, QC.

Ruth and Paul had five children:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| - Paul Wilfred Michael | 1917-1945 |
| - Marguerite Louise | 1918-1991 |
| - Marcelle Marie Ferrande | 1920-2008 |
| - Marie Germaine Paulette Lucille | 1928-2018 |
| - Marlene Ruth | 1939-2014 |

The family were members of the Roman Catholic Church.

Paul attended College Mont-Saint-Louis, a private school in Montreal, QC. There, he took the Junior Matriculation course. He stood out for his academic performance and athletic skills. He was active in hockey, rowing, and tennis. In 1935, he even won the Westmount tennis singles championship. He left college at the age of 18.

After finishing school, Paul worked for Industrial Acceptance Corporation for eighteen months as an office clerk/typist in the Sales Division. He was unsure whether he wanted to return to marketing or become a professional soldier after the war.

On August 8, 1940, Paul joined the Canadian Grenadier Guards of Montreal, Canadian Active Service Force (CASF), as a Guardsman and remained with this unit until February 17, 1942.

His admission certificate, dated August 5, 1940, states that he had brown eyes and black hair, was 6 ft 2" tall, weighed 172 pounds and had a mark on the left side of his back.

As stated in his personal service document, Paul was not just a soldier but a natural leader. His work was new to him, but he excelled. He had an excellent attitude, dressed well, and was very popular with his classmates.

On October 24, 1942, Paul married Mary Olive Louisa Walker, named Olive, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (SK). Olive was born on December 23, 1916, in Montreal, QC. After Paul died in 1945, she remarried on November 23, 1946, in Montreal, QC, to Paul Hunter John LaVigne. Together, they had a daughter, Nancy, and a son, Bruce. Olive died in 1990 at the age of 73 in Montreal, QC.

Paul completed various training courses and quickly rose to the rank of Sergeant and, in August 1942, to Lieutenant. He was trained in multiple disciplines such as mortars, physical training, and reading morse code, ten words per minute. His superiors praised his qualities as a future leader.

On March 21, 1943, Paul embarked for the United Kingdom as a 1st Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit (CACRU) member. He arrived in the UK nine days later and stayed until October 24, 1943. Then, Paul embarked for North Africa. On the way to North Africa, the ship he was sailing on was torpedoed by the German navy and sunk. Paul survived this attack. After six months in North Africa, he embarked for Italy, arriving on May 16, 1944. He served 15 months with the British 8th Army.

On February 19, 1945, Paul left Italy as part of Operation Goldflake and arrived in Marseille, France, two days later.

Operation Goldflake was the code name for moving troops from Italy to Marseille and from there through the Rhône Valley by trucks and trains to northwestern Europe.

In the last days of February, the 5th Canadian tank division, of which Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) was a part, arrived in Izegem, Belgium, to fight in northwest Europe until the end of the war, including for the liberation of the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Paul Wilfred Michael Brunet had been transferred to Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians).



BELGIUM - March 23, 1945

LtoR-Top: Cpl Waite, Steimer, Taylor, Mitchell, Burnett, Cpt Corbon, Harris, Rutunski, McIntosh, Tucker, Costello

LtoR-2nd Row: Limbo, M.M. Funk, Pringle, Brown, Smeil, Keeling, Mainer, Hines, Wright Glover

LtoR-3rd Row: Sgt McClean, L.C. Woodhouse, Snyder, Thomas, Ladoux, Adair, Peart, Kellestine, Cpl Ellerbeck

LtoR-Bottom: Sgt Armstrong, L.C. Abraham, Sgt Henderson, Lt Brunett, Capt Reid, Sgt Williams, Cpl Ward, Cpl Hudson, Cpl Kynski, Cpl Woodcock & Cpl Woodley

On Leave: Sgt Macey & L C Bartlett

The summary of the war diary for March 1945 states that it was quiet due to the lack of grenades and exciting because they stayed in the city of Izegem all month, which was quite a change considering their Italian experiences. Vehicles underwent extensive maintenance during March, and the soldiers had the opportunity to take leave.

The war diary states that on April 8, 1945, the regiment passed through part of Germany and returned to the Netherlands, passing the bombed-out Kleve and Emmerich.

The regiment encountered artillery fire the following days as they moved to an assembly point near Arnhem.

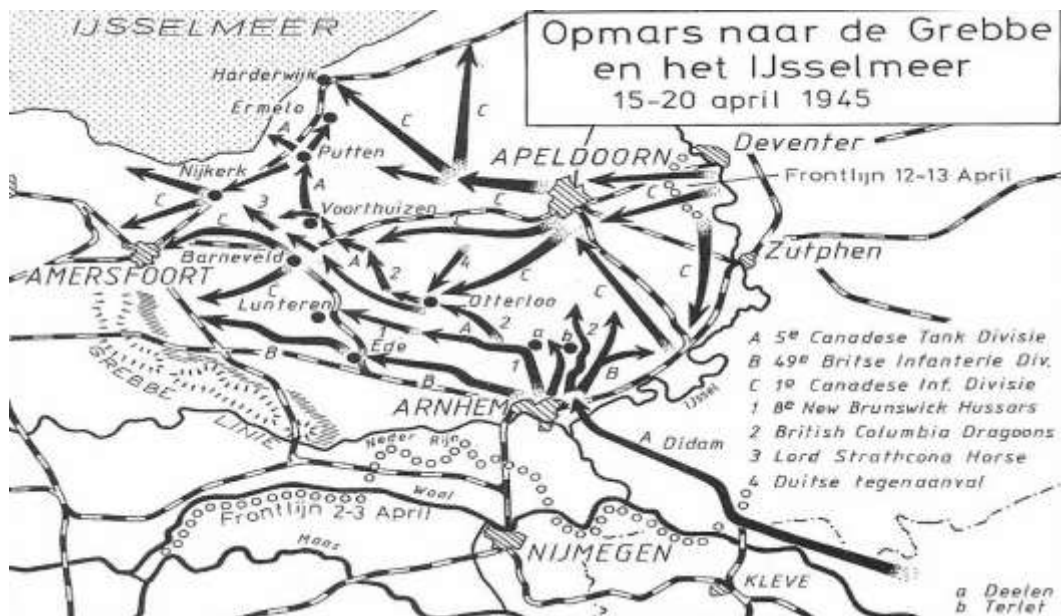


Photo from the book "Canadezen in actie" (Canadians in action) by Hen Bollen and Paul Vroemen.

On April 15, 1945, troops gathered north of Arnhem for Operation Cleanser. They were led through the densely wooded sand hills, sometimes having to cut down trees to pass.

That day, April 16, 1945, the weather was clear and sunny, and heavy fighting occurred again.



M4 Sherman tank.

They were going to Otterloo with their M4 Sherman Tanks, which could accommodate five men. Lieutenant Brunet was the Commander of the M4 Sherman Tank, Maurice Clyde Abraham was the Gunner, and a Loader, Driver, and Assistant Driver/Gunner were on board.

Shortly after 8 a.m., the Strathcona's were almost at full strength west of Otterlo. Tragically, the ammunition in their tank caught fire and exploded. Lieutenant Paul Brunet was injured and succumbed to his injuries later that day.

Lieutenant Paul Wilfred Michael Brunet was almost 28 years old.

400541 ✓ B-653

NO. _____ Rank Lieutenant Name BRUNET, Paul Wilfred Michael ✓
Unit R.C.A.C. ✓ Date of death 16th April, 1945. ✓
Died at Holland ✓
Cause Died of wounds received in action. ✓
Death occurred on strength of Forces H.Q. 332-1-229 ✓
N/K Mrs. Olive M. Brunet, ✓ Relationship Widow ✓
Address 4224 Northcliffe Avenue, Montreal 28, Quebec. ✓
Remains buried in Mil Cem No 13 Arnhem MR 749788 Cemetery
R I G 7
G Association ✓

CHK ✓ OVER.



He was temporarily buried at the Military Cemetery No 13 in Arnhem, row 1, grave 7.

This was a tiny cemetery at the Van Löben Sels School (now De Wijzer Primary School), Dalweg 40 in Arnhem.

Lieutenant Paul Wilfred Michael Brunet was reburied on September 4, 1945, at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek. Here, he rests in grave reference **VIII. A.1.**



Foto Ans Mostert.

The text on his gravestone reads:

EVER PROUDLY
AND LOVINGLY REMEMBERED
BY OLIVE, MOTHER, DAD
AND SISTERS

Paul received the following awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France and Germany Star
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp
- Italy Star

In his will dated November 23, 1942, Paul Wilfred Michael Brunet named his wife, Olive Mary Brunet, beneficiary, and his father, Paul Brunet, his executor.



Life story: Ans Mostert, Research Team Faces To Graves.

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)
- Library and Archives Canada
- TracesOfWar.nl
- MyHeritage
- Slagomotterlo.nl
- Find A Grave
- War Diary of Lord Strathcona's Horse Regiment
- Book "Canadezen in actie" by Hen Bollen and Paul Vroemen

*If you have a photo of this soldier or additional information, please contact info@facestograves.nl

DIES OF WOUNDS



LT. PAUL MICHAEL BRUNET, 28, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brunet, of 5417 Brodeur avenue, who has died of wounds received on the western front recently, according to information received here. Lt. Brunet was educated at Mount St. Louis College and was well known in local athletic circles. He took an active part in hockey and padding and won the Westmount Singles Tennis Championship in 1935. He enlisted in the Canadian Grenadier Guards of Montreal in August, 1940, rose to the rank of sergeant and in June, 1942, won his commission at Brockville, Ont. Lt. Brunet proceeded overseas in March, 1943, and while en route to North Africa the ship on which he was travelling was sunk by enemy action. He served with the British 8th Army in Italy for 15 months prior to being posted to the western front.

Besides his parents he is survived by four sisters and his wife, the former Olive L. Walker, who resides with her parents at 4224 Northcliffe avenue.

A Solemn Memorial Mass will take place at the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury on Tuesday, May 1, at 8 o'clock in the morning.

*The Gazette, Montreal,
April 21, 1945.*



WOUNDS FATAL: Lieut. Paul Michael Brunet, 28, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brunet, of 5417 Brodeur avenue, who is reported to have died of wounds received on the Western Front. He joined the Canadian Grenadier Guards in August, 1940, and rose to the rank of sergeant. In June, 1942 he was commissioned on qualification at Brockville, and went overseas in March, 1943. While on a ship bound to North Africa he was torpedoed, but was saved, and served with the British Eight Army in Italy for 15 months. Lieutenant Brunet received his education at Mount St. Louis College, and was well known in athletic circles. He won the Westmount singles tennis championship in 1935. His wife, the former Olive L. Walker, lives with her parents at 4224 Northcliffe avenue. Lieutenant Brunet is also survived by four sisters. A memorial mass will be held at the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury, at 8 a.m., Tuesday, May 1.

Montreal Star.

The monument "Slag in Otterlo" in Otterlo (municipality of Ede) is a memorial stone with a carved maple leaf. The stone is placed on a masonry base, on which a stainless steel memorial plaque is placed in a triangle shape.

Next to the memorial stone is a metal plaque and an information board with a photo of Canadian Major-General Bertram M. Hoffmeister.

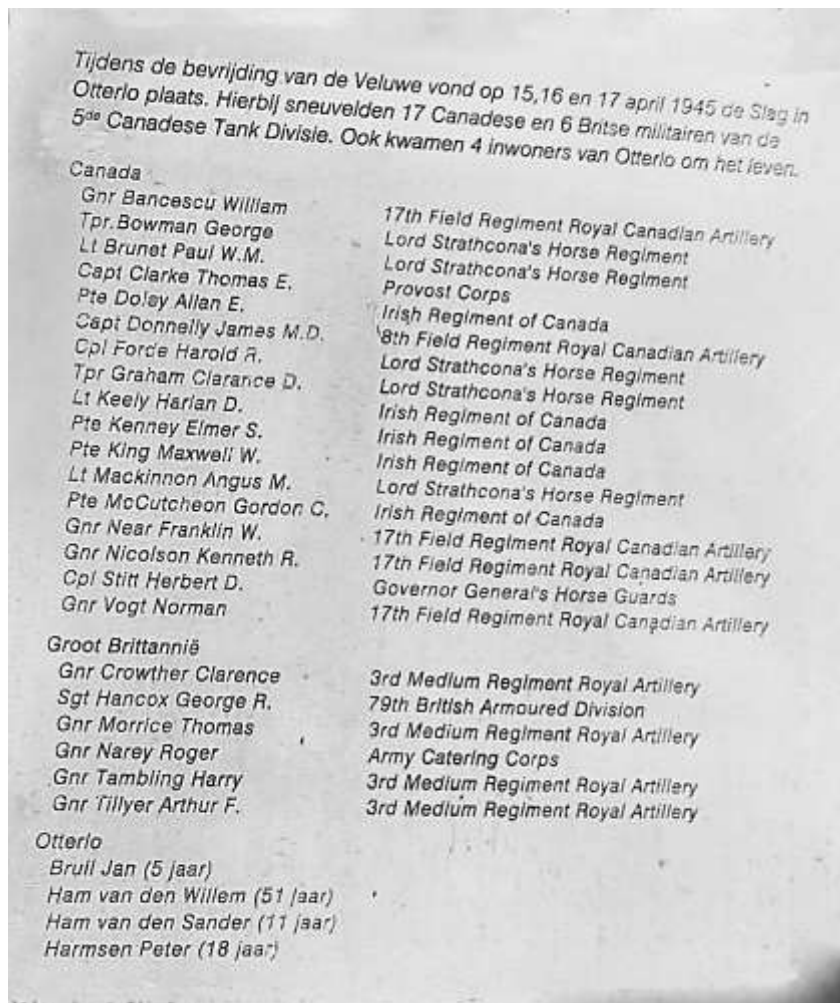


Photo Ans Mostert.



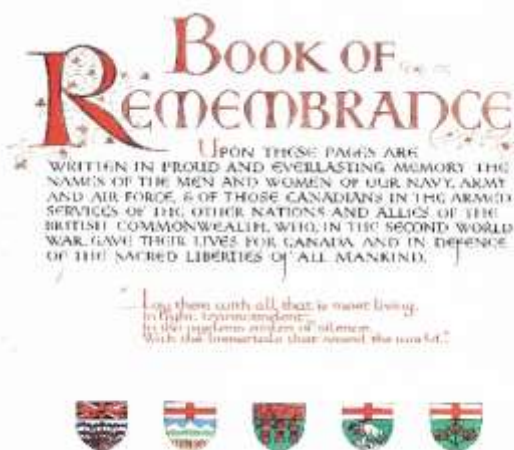
Text on the monument:
 AT THE GOING DOWN OF
 THE SUN AND IN THE
 MORNING WE WILL
 REMEMBER
 THEM!





During the Battle of Otterlo on April 15, 16, and 17, 1945, sixteen Canadian and six British soldiers from the 5th Canadian tank division died, as well as four residents of Otterlo.

Paul Wilfred Michael Brunet is commemorated in the Second World War Book of Remembrance, page 499.



In the Memorial Chamber of the Canadian Parliament Building in Ottawa, ON, one page of the eight memorial books is turned daily at 11 a.m.

These contain more than 120,000 names of Canadians who gave their lives in the service of their country.



Second World War Book of Remembrance.