

Carter, Willis Victor
Gunner
4th Light Anti Aircraft Regiment
Royal Canadian Artillery
A 56527



Willis Carter was born in Innerkip, near Woodstock, Ontario on February 17, 1917. His father, William Valentine, had a farm and was born on May 29, 1881. He died on March 27, 1962. William married Eva Elisabeth Miller in Innerkip on February 28, 1906. Eva was a housewife and was born on August 3, 1885. She died on June 12, 1977. The family attended the Baptist Church.

Innerkip is a village near Woodstock, Ontario. Woodstock, situated in the south-west of Ontario, at the head of the Thames River, has been a city since 1901. It is known as the Dairy Capital of Canada and lies 128 kilometres from Toronto.

The Carter family had seven children: Viola Catharina (1905-2001), married to John Sutton. She was followed by son Irwin Hamilton (1907-1987), who married Louise Awad. Sister Charlotte Leone (1912-2015) came next. She married Ossie Whyley. Edna Elisabeth (1914-2006) married Norman Richardson. Their fifth child was Willis, followed by sister Edythe (born around 1919), who married Farrelly. Russell Allen (born around 1925), was the youngest of the family.

Willis spoke English and went to Public School in Woodstock for seven years, until the year 1934. He was born on his parents' mixed farm and worked there for nine years. Next he worked for thirteen months with Standard Tube in Woodstock, where he worked as an assistant at an electric welding machine. The company produced metal pipes and, after his military service, Willis would like to return to this job. The company still exists under the name of Standard Tube Park.



Photo Courtesy: cityofwoodstock.ca1940

Willis was still single when he signed up for military service with NPAM, the Non-Permanent Active Militia on November 22, 1940. In NPAM, founded in 1885, men served part-time as volunteers. In those days Canada did not yet have a professional army, but, if needs be, they were able to defend themselves and call their volunteers. In 1940 NPAM merged into Canada's professional army. Willis was with the Oxford Rifles' 1st Battalion, Service Number A 511211.

His medical report indicated that Willis was 5 ft 8' tall and weighed 150 lbs. He had blue eyes, brown hair and was a healthy, twenty-three-year-old young man. He wore glasses and in 1938 he had to recover from a broken leg for six weeks. When Willis was four years old, he burned his left shoulder, which never properly recovered. He had a thick scar on his shoulder and was somewhat limited in moving it.

After finishing his education, Willis enlisted with the Royal Canadian Navy, as an electric welder. On January 20, 1941 Willis was with the Oxford Rifles in London, Ontario, when he was called for active service. He stayed with NPAM until March 22, 1941 and, in Sarnia, Ontario, he went to the Army Trade School. On April 25 this training ended and he went to Windsor, No 1 District Depot as a Tradesman Wing. In May Willis was transferred, as a Gunner, to 69 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery in Woodstock.

It was August 1941 when Willis embarked and departed overseas from Halifax to Glasgow, Scotland. As part of 4 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment(LAA) he arrived there on September 2. In Colchester he was given five days of leave and



on October 13 he became a Qualified Driver 1/C Class III. His additional training in 1942 also took place in the United Kingdom. Every now and then he had a well-deserved leave. On October 3, 1942, when he was with the 3rd Canadian Army Reinforcement Unit, he had to be admitted to 1 Canadian General Hospital with a chronic tear duct blockage. It was not until December 2, 1942 that he was ready to join 4 LAA Regiment again. In January and April 1943 Willis had leave again and for two years of loyal service he received the One Good Conduct Badge (Stripe) on March 22, 1943. This badge was worn on the left sleeve of the uniform. Willis went on developing himself during his training and became a Driver Mechanics Group 'C' on May 26, 1943.

For his voluntary commitment he was rewarded with the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp, on January 15, 1944. In February he was absent without permission twice, which resulted in two days' pay being withheld and having to stay in the barracks for a few days.



Then the time had come to cross to mainland Europe. On June 11, 1944 Willis sailed to France, where he arrived a day later. From France they advanced northwards, via Belgium, to the Netherlands in order to help liberating villages and towns that had been occupied by the Germans over there.

The 4th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment of the Royal Artillery was set up in 1938 for Canada's field and coastal defence, including anti-tank control. Later various regiments were merged. In April 1943, 4 LAA was part of the 21 Army Group, which was being trained for Operation Overlord (the Battle of Normandy).



Plaquette in Courseulles-sur-Mer, Normandië, in honour of 4 LAA Regt. dd June 6 2001. Photo: Barry Swackhamer.

On November 26, 1944 they were in the Nijmegen area in the Netherlands, when Gunner Willis Victor Carter died. He was Killed In Action. It remains unclear how he died, in service with 69 Battery 4 LAA Regiment. Willis was twenty-seven years old.

On November 26, 1944 Willis Carter was buried at Jonkerbos Cemetery, a temporary cemetery in Nijmegen, row 1, grave 14. On August 8, 1945 he was reburied at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, near Nijmegen, grave reference **II. H. 1.**

The following words are inscribed on his headstone:

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.
HE GAVE HIS ALL
FOR KING AND COUNTRY

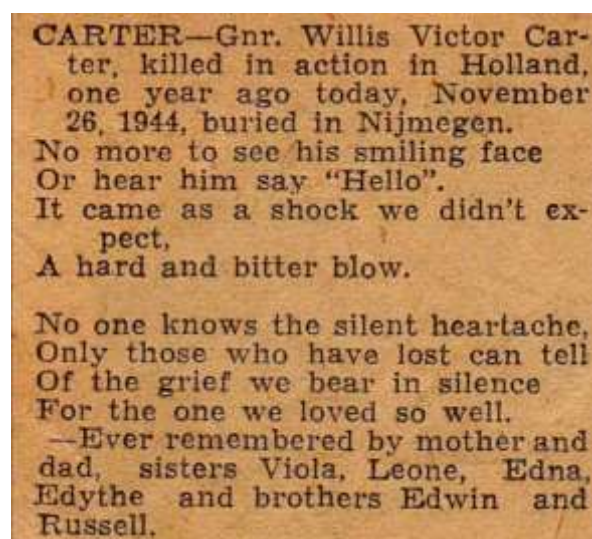


Photo: Liesbeth Huisman

Gunner Willis Victor Carter was awarded the following medals:

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

These medals, together with the Memorial Cross, were sent to his mother Eva in Woodstock.





FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story by Lin Timmerman and Fleur van Gelder, students of Canisius College in Nijmegen and Liesbeth Huisman, Research Team Faces To Graves.

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

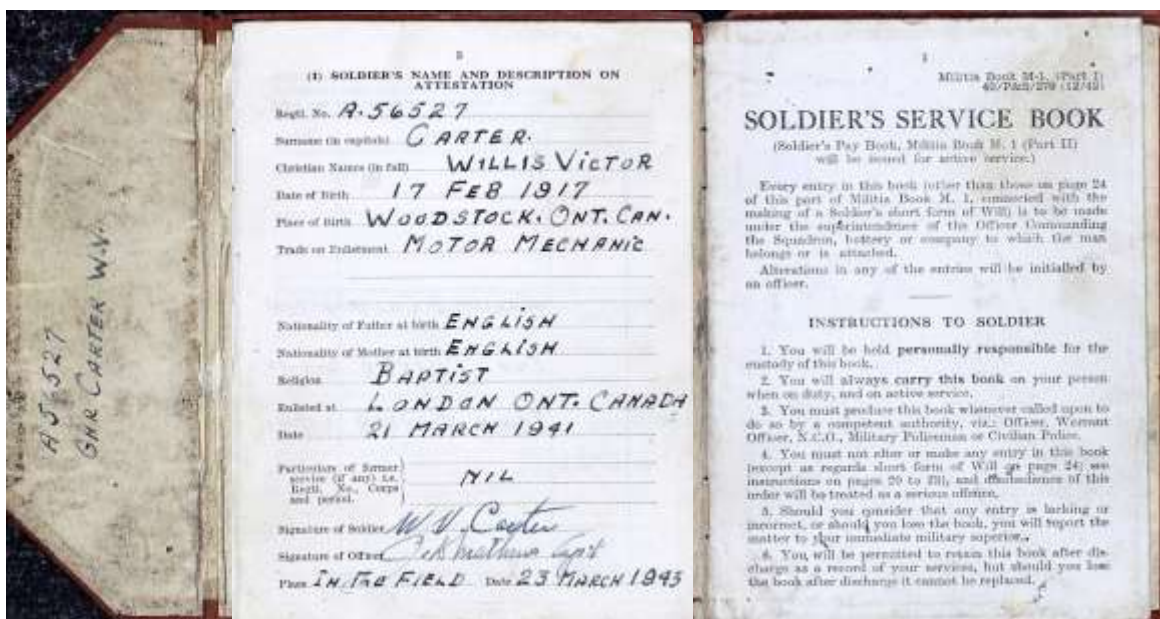
Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Library and Archives Canada
ancestors.familysearch.com
www.veterans.gc.ca

The Canadian War Memorial
Wikipedia, info LAA Regiment



Willis' parents



Mother Eva and Willis' three sisters (Edna, Edith and Viola) visited his grave in Groesbeek (see photo).



C O P Y NIJMEGEN, 9th Nov 1946.
Waterstraat 227

Ans Roelofs

Dear Family:

As you perhaps know in there some section in Holland to adopt the graves of killed soldiers.

So we took the grave of Carter W.N. A.56527 and we want to look after it as long as possible.

But we are not satisfied by only looking after the grave; we should like to know his family or other relatives to correspondence with and to tell them something about it or perhaps send photographs.

So we ask you to send us your address(es) and tell us, what you should like to know and that sort of things.

We'll wait with big expectation for your answer and remain

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) Ans Roelofs.

Mrs Ans Roelofs, living at Waterstraat 227 in Nijmegen, wrote a letter to Willis' family on November 9, 1946. She very much wanted to stay in touch with the family and she looked after Willis' grave. Whether this contact has actually been established is unknown (see Ans' letter).



Cenotaph in Woodstock: marklivesinwoodstock.blockspot.com

3	Father of the Deceased.....		W. V. Carter	63	R. R. 7 Woodstock Vt.
4	Mother of the Deceased.....		Mrs. Eva Carter	59	R. R. no 7 Woodstock Vt.
5	Brothers of the Deceased	Full Blood	Irwin Hamilton	37	935 Pellusser St Windsor Vt.
		Half Blood	Russell Allen	19	R. R. no 7 Woodstock Vt.
6	Sisters of the Deceased	Full Blood	Mrs. Viola Sutton	38	576 Grant St Woodstock Vt.
		Half Blood	Mrs. Leone Wryly	32	21 Eighth Ave Brantford Vt.
			Mrs. Edna Richardson	30	570 - Ingersoll St Woodstock Vt.
			Miss Edythe Carter	25	85 Borden Ave Rutcheners Vt.
7	Names of brothers or sisters (whether of the full or the half blood) of the Deceased, who are dead, and date of death of each.		Names and ages of their children (if any)		Address of their children