

**Chambers, James Alexander Jr.**  
**Corporal**  
**Perth Regiment (motor)**  
**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**  
**B 68647**



James Chambers was born in Toronto, Ontario on February 24, 1917. Toronto is the capital of the Province of Ontario, situated in the south-east of Canada. James was the only son of mother Carrie and father Sergeant James Chambers. Father James was born around 1894, he was of Irish origin and the family went to the Church of England, St. John's Anglican Church. Father James was a First World War veteran. During the Second World War he signed up with the Veterans Guard. These were World War I veterans who wanted to commit to their country without actively fighting. Through their experience they were valuable for their country with regard to defending, guarding and helping young soldiers. In 1947 he was released from active service.

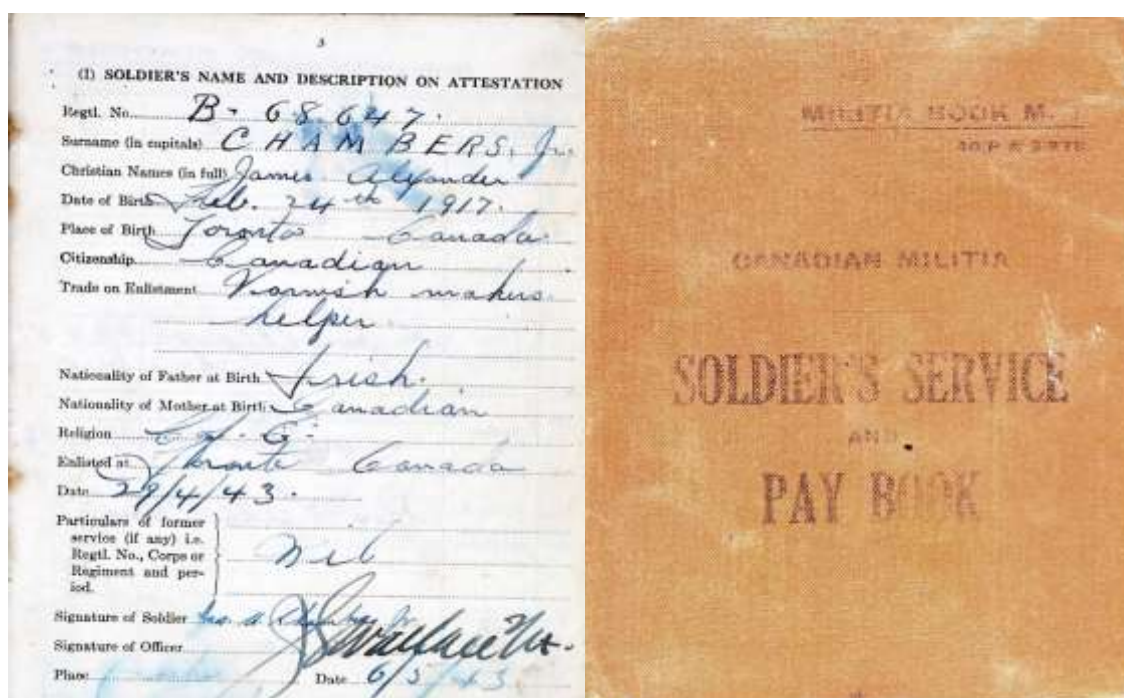
Apart from James Jr, the Chambers family also had one daughter, Leila. She was a few years older than James and married Mr Stanley James.

James spoke English and went to school until the age of twenty-one. Up to and including Grade 12 he went to Public School in Toronto, followed by education at Humberside Collegiate and High School of Commerce. Here he took a five-year public, intermediate training, followed by a one-year Commerce course at Western Technical School, during the period 1937-1938.



From 1938 until 1941 James worked in the office of Shell Oil and another ten months at Glidden Co., a varnishing factory. His last job, before entering military service, was with The Penfound Company, again an office job at a varnishing and painting factory. After his military service he intended to return to this factory.

James signed up for military service in Toronto on April 29, 1943. He was then twenty-six years old. The registration form stated that he was 5 ft 6 tall and weighed 136 lbs. He had blue eyes, brown hair and was well-developed. James was still single and lived with his parents in Toronto. Until the age of ten he suffered from bronchitis. In the follow-up report, dated May 3, 1943, he was described as a man with pleasant manners, small in size, but very intelligent and kind. He had a heart for the army and was healthy. He had normal habits, was stable and practised a lot of sport at school: rugby, ice hockey and baseball. He also loved dancing, bowling, walking and hiking. James wanted to join an infantry training and was eligible for promotion.



On May 13, 1943 James was transferred from Toronto to Brantford, No 20 Field Dressing Station. From May 30 until June 5 he was laid up with influenza in Brantford Military Hospital. The next evaluation was on June 17 and his superior reported that James was well-informed about work in the army and had adapted well. He loved walking and reading and accepted discipline. He seemed to possess managerial skills and concluded his training well. His next training station was Borden, where, on July 2, he was assigned to A10 Canadian Infantry Training Centre. His training continued in A14 CITC in Aldershot, Nova Scotia. James was ready for

departure overseas and on September 14, 1943 he left his home country for the United Kingdom, where he arrived on September 19. Here he was assigned to 5 Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit. James continued his training in the UK and registered as a blood donor on November 15, 1943. From February 1, 1944 he went from the fifth to the third CIRU. Here he took part in the Hendley Exercise up to and including February 18, 1944.

On February 20, 1944 James sailed to Italy and arrived there on February 22. He was assigned to the Perth Regiment. With this regiment he became Acting Lance Corporal as from May 3. On June 12 James fell ill, he suffered from hepatitis, and stayed in 15 General Hospital until July 1. After being transferred to the Canadian Convalescent Depot until August 26 to further convalesce and strengthen, he rejoined his regiment. On September 6, 1944 James became Lance Corporal and one month later, Acting Corporal. For his efforts James was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp on October 29, 1944.

James continued committing and developing, for which he was awarded the title Corporal of the Active Force Head Quarters on January 22, 1945. From Italy they sailed to France on February 22, 1945, in order to support the troops in their efforts to liberate France, Belgium and The Netherlands.



General information on the Perth Regiment:

### ***Perth Regiment.***

*The Perths was an infantry regiment that had been active since 1866. During the Second World War it was part of the Canadian Army and had its home base in Stratford, Ontario. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was sent to the United Kingdom as early as October 1941. In November 1943 they were in Italy as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division. During the first few years of the war they stayed in England for training and they showed a lot of courage and initiative. From a Machine Gun Battalion they turned into a Motorized Corps, which provided them with a lot of transport facilities. From Halifax they departed and arrived in Liverpool on October 17, 1941. On October 16, 1943 they heard that they were going to be sent to Italy and by MS John Ericsson they arrived in Naples on November 5. En route there they were shot at by torpedo bombs. The SS Santa*

*Elena was hit and sank, but fortunately no lives were lost. In bad vehicles they started the long march through Italy. Their first action was on January 17, 1944, the Battle of the Arielli River. There was fierce resistance from the enemy and a cold winter followed. They plodded through muddy terrain, remaining battlefields from World War I. In the vicinity of Cassino, the Perths experienced their greatest tragedy: one single German mortar fell, hit a ledge outside a cave where the men were standing in line for their evening meal. It was pure coincidence, but there were 37 casualties, 14 dead and 23 wounded. They continued their journey through the Hitler Line and at the end of July they made plans to attack the Gothic Line. All badges and insignia had to be removed, also from the vehicles. The Perths were the first to conquer the Gothic Line. At the beginning of October 1944 they encountered a lot of autumn rains and plans had to be changed. During the following months there was heavy fighting, but they held out. Christmas dinner that year was delicious, but took place in grim surroundings. A week of rest and days filled with digging graves to make a winter line followed. Via Italy and France they were deployed to liberate Western Europe. All divisions battled together and the Battle of the Lower-Rhine started. The village of Driel was captured. Via Ede and Lunteren they advanced in the direction of Harderwijk, on the IJsselmeer, the Netherlands. The advance through Noord-Holland, in the direction of Delfzijl, took place after capturing a lot of towns and villages. Fighting around Delfzijl took place from April 23 until May 2, 1945 and many prisoners of war were made. However, they forced through the defences and the port was captured. Heavy fighting had come to an end and they realised that the enemy had been beaten. The Perths stayed in Europe until January 1946. Then, via New York, they sailed back to their home country on the Queen Elizabeth New York. Two hundred and sixty-one men gave their lives for this war.*

James too advanced with his regiment and on March 27, 1945 they departed from Belgium to the Nijmegen region. During the last few days of March they were in Elst and surroundings and it was relatively quiet. On April 2 they went to the village of Driel on the Lower Rhine and there were three casualties that day.

On April 10 the weather was nice, but in the early morning there were skirmishes and two men died as a result of an explosion: Private J. Shinnick and Corporal James Chambers. James was twenty-eight years old.

They were both temporarily buried at the Canadian military cemetery in Nijmegen, by their chaplain and Captain D. Crawford. James was buried in grave 14, row 7, plot 2.





Photo: Faces to Graves

Corporal James Alexander Chambers was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, near Nijmegen, on July 27, 1945, grave reference **III. A. 8.**

Private Shinnick was buried next to him in Groesbeek, grave 7.



It is unknown when exactly, but James did receive the Military Medal for his bravery. This medal was awarded to other ranks (Non-officers).

He also received the following medals:

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

## KILLED IN HOLLAND IS AWARDED MM

**Cpl. J. A. Chambers Fell On  
April 10 In Skirmish Near  
Arnhem, Parents Hear**

Word has been received by Mrs. Carrie Chambers, 308 Indian Rd. Cres., that her only son, Cpl. James



**Cpl. J. A. Chambers**

A. Chambers, "D" Co., Perth Regiment, was killed in a skirmish with an enemy patrol near Arnhem, Holland, on April 10th.

Capt. D. Crawford Smith, padre, who buried Cpl. Chambers in Elst, said in a letter that Jim had been awarded the

Military Medal.

Cpl. Chambers was an active member of St. John's Anglican Church and attended Humberstone Collegiate and High School of Commerce. Before he enlisted he was employed by the Penfound Company. He received his training at Brantford, then was stationed in England a short time before being sent to Italy. He saw action there with the Eighth Army, and later in Belgium and Holland. He is survived by his mother, Mrs. Carrie Chambers, his father, Sgt. J. Chambers, Veteran Guard of Canada, and a sister, Mrs. Stanley James, Kingsway.



## FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian  
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story: Liesbeth Huisman-Arts, Research Team Faces To Graves

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

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
Library and Archives Canada  
Veterans.gc.ca  
Bruce County Archives, Mr. Gail Pool  
War Diary The Perth Regiment

(Erase heading not required)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
Holland Sheet 5 S.Herto_enbosch 1/100,000	10/4/45		<p>The morning was very quiet and we missed the usual dose of shelling. The Colonel went to Dde. H.Q. and learned of a probable move tomorrow to a concentration area between Emmerich and Zutphen, east of the Wesser River. Major Snelgrove came back from leave and resumed his duties as Second in Command. The Afternoon was quiet but at 2030 hours the enemy mortars opened up again. "B" Company took most of the pesting, due to the fact that they still had smoke generators in their area. Our artillery then took up the fight and, after pounding one enemy mortar position at 691744, the enemy fire ceased. At 2130 hours enemy tracked vehicles were heard moving along a lateral road at 723755. Our artillery opened up but the results could not be observed. "A" Company then came under small arms fire from across the River but, on being engaged by our own weapons, it ceased.</p> <p>Weather: fine and warm. Strength: 38 Officers, 826 Other Ranks.</p>
Holland Sheet 5 S.Herto_enbosch 1/100,000	10/4/45		<p>At 0610 hours an enemy patrol of 8 men was sighted approaching "D" Company area at 714763. When they came closer our men engaged them, but since the enemy was armed with bazookas he fared better. In the ensuing battle two of our men were killed by blast. The 17th Field Regiment put on a shoot at 0645 hours, trying to stir the enemy into some counter-battery work, but to no avail. The enemy kept very quiet. At 1400 hours our tanks went up on the Dund and blasted a suspected enemy O.P. at 708780. Later in the day recon parties were warned to stand by for a recon in daylight tomorrow. Casualties: 2 killed, 1 wounded.</p> <p>Weather: fine. Strength: 38 Officers, 826 Other Ranks.</p>



*Cenotaph in Toronto and Memorial Western Technical School  
Photo's: veterans.gc.ca Tim Laye*

