

Cherry, Harry
Private
Essex Scottish Regiment of
Canada
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps
B 74138



Harry Cherry was born on March 4, 1915 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. His parents, Henry "Harry" Cherry (1883-1973) and Christina Annie (nee Chaplin) Cherry (1885-1967) met in Toronto after Henry arrived from England and Christina from Scotland. They were married in a simple ceremony in Toronto in 1913. Their only son, Harry, was born in 1915 and his sister, Hazel, was born two years later. Harry and Hazel were baptized in the Methodist Church and their family belonged to Westmoreland United Church, not far from the Cherry home at 186 Hallam Street in Toronto.



Harry was adventurous as a child and as a young man, exploring the green spaces and river valleys of the Toronto area. He loved bicycles when he was growing up, and later, he had a passion for motorcycles.

Hazel, Henry, Harry and Christina, Annie, Cherry



An avid reader, he had a gift for building and fixing things.

As a youngster, he was a student at Hughes School and went on to attend Western Technical School, where he is commemorated with all those former students who served in WWII, made the ultimate sacrifice, and never returned home.

Harry and his friends



During the Great Depression, when Harry left the Western Technical School, he picked up woodworking and handyman jobs to support his family during these difficult times.

On June 28, 1932, when he was seventeen years old, he enlisted in the active militia with the Irish Regiment of Canada, attaining the rank of Sergeant.

When he came to Camp Borden in October 20, 1939, in his medical report was noted: *'Height 5 feet and 8,5 inches, brown hair and brown eyes'*.

When war was declared, Harry wanted to help make a difference and, feeling an affinity with the Highland Regiments of Canada, he enlisted as a private with the 48th Highlanders of Canada on April 24, 1940. He was twenty-four.

He was shipped overseas July 14, 1940 and was transferred to the Lorne Scots Regiment in the United Kingdom. He aspired to be a dispatch rider for the army.

Harry trained in the UK for two and a half years and went back to Canada on November 11, 1942. Harry went in training at Woodstock, Ontario. In February 1943, he acquired his driver mechanic army qualifications. On July 11th, 1943, Harry completed a special course in motorcycles, qualified M/C class II, instructor's grade QI.

Harry's sister Hazel married Fred Savard in 1943.



Hazel and Fred Savard in 1943



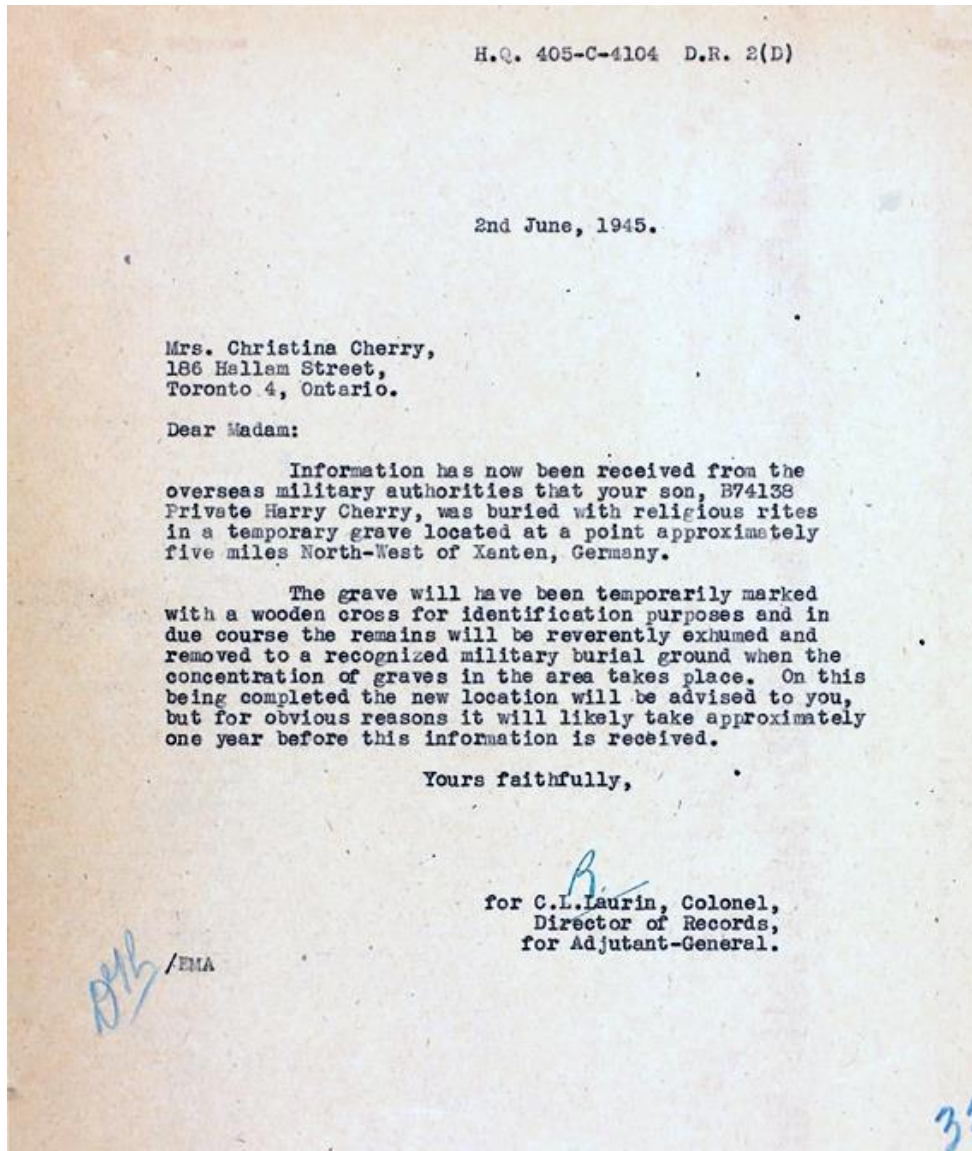
Harry went to the United Kingdom for the second time on August 27, 1943. Just before D-Day, he was taken-on-strength as a reinforcement with the North Nova Scotia Highlanders Regiment and later with the Essex Scottish Regiment of Canada. He landed on the coast of Normandy on June 10, 1944 and saw action in France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany.

Harry's last battle was at the Hochwald near Xanten, Germany, on March 1, 1945. The Essex Scottish spearheaded the attack across open fields swept by enemy machine gun fire and artillery barrages. Trenches and barbed wire created further obstacles to their advance. Fierce hand-to-hand combat ensued.

Pte. Harry Cherry, 29, of the Essex Scottish, was killed in the Battle of the Hochwald Forest, Germany, on March 4, according to word received by his mother, Mrs. Christine Cherry, 186 Hallam St. Born in Toronto, Pte. Cherry was educated at Hughes School and Western Tech. He was a member of the Irish Regiment Reserve and went active in September, 1939. Pte. Cherry went overseas in July, 1940, with the 48th Highlanders and transferred overseas to the Lorne Scots. He transferred to the Essex Scottish after Dieppe.

Harry was killed in action that day and was buried on March 3, 1945 in a temporary cemetery at Marienburg, Xanten, Germany.

Harry was twenty-nine years old. Left to mourn were his parents and sister Hazel.



Colonel A.J. Hodges, MC CD, later Honourary Colonel of the Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment, remembering that brutal battle at the Hochwald, wrote in a personal letter to Harry's niece in 1997, saying, "*...any individual who participated in that battle—who walked across that 500 yards of open ground—raked by enemy fire—was a brave man & a hero. You can be proud of your uncle...*"

According to the Canada World War II Records and Service Files of the War Dead 1939-1947, Harry had served in the Canadian Army for 1,925 days.

His family said of him, "Harry was a good man, a good-natured friend to his chums, a devoted son and brother, deeply loved by his family, and terribly missed. His brief existence made the world a better place and his loss changed his family forever."

Harry was later reburied at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands, grave reference **XXI. E. 9.**

First grave marker



The metal crosses were replaced in 1954, when his family contributed the following inscription on his headstone:

DEARLY BELOVED



Tulips at Harry's grave in honour of 75 years of freedom on May 5, 2020.

Photo: Marian Straatman.

Awards:

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



Life story: Marian Straatman, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources:

Submitted and made available by Louise Savard Henderson, niece of Harry Cherry, from Family Photos, Personal Papers, and Reminiscences

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Essex Scottish Regimental History: "The 1st Battalion of the Essex Scottish 1939 - 1945" by Captain R.W. Meanwell. Aldershot, England: Gale & Polden/The Wellington Press, 1946.

Veterans Affairs Canada, The Canadian Virtual War Memorial

The Windsor Star. "Fighting for a toehold in a German forest". Col. A. J. Hodges, MC. February 28, 1995. Reprint from original Windsor Star article, 1950.



Photo of Harry Cherry – In memory of the students from Western Technical School, Toronto who served during World War II and did not return. Submitted for the project, Operation: Picture Me.