

Munro, Edward John

Private

North Nova Scotia Highlanders

E/20545



Edward John Munro was born on June 16, 1920 in Quebec City, Canada as the youngest son of a family of seven children, four sons and three daughters. Their father Charles Munro died of leukemia on January 7, 1923, when Eddy was 2 years old. Because their mother Johanna didn't have enough money to raise all her children by herself many of the children were accommodated in children's homes. Eddy went to school from age 5 until age 12. Because he went to several different schools his results remained below average. As a result of this minimal education, as a young man he decided to enlist in the army on September 16, 1941. Before that, he worked as an unschooled labourer with the Dominion Arsenal in Quebec for 4,5 years. In the army he started as a stockroom worker in Quebec. Eddy was described as being a silent, level-headed young man with an above average natural intelligence and with an interest in hockey, baseball and rugby.

Edward served in the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps until May 15, 1944, after which he joined the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He remained in Canada until November 21, 1944, when he boarded for the crossing to the United Kingdom. On January 26, 1945, he was sent to the mainland of Western Europe to fight with a battalion of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders as an infantryman.

It remains unclear to his family why he fought for the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, because Nova Scotia is far from Quebec City. In this phase of the war it was hard to replace losses in combat units. This led to transfers where the regional division was compromised. This could possibly be the cause of his placement with the North Nova Scotia Highlanders.

Edward John Munro was killed on March 25, 1945, near Bienen in Germany and got a field grave in Rees, Germany on April 5, 1945.

Attached to this is the last letter Eddy wrote to his sister Annie Munro. This letter is dated March 23, 1945... two days before he was killed. His sister received the letter after she received the news of his death. It is a strikingly sad letter, because he asked if she wanted to write him back please (after several of these requests remained unanswered) and if she would send him a picture of the family. In the letter he said he was in a trench in Germany.



23 Mar 1945

Dear Annie & John

Germany

Just writing you a few lines to let you know where I am, I'm in Germany now Annie its a long way from home. I'm well and still in the best of health. I had some mail from home and every body is well. I had a lot from Rita & Wilfred. Well Annie I guess you will never forgive me for not writing sooner. Well Annie I didnt have your address Rita just sent it to me. Well how are you Annie and how do you like your new home. I hope you are happy. How is John and how does he like his work. And how is the big girl is she getting big. I would sure like to see her again give her a big kiss for me. Well Annie I was in England for two months I didnt have much of a time because I couldnt get money for a pass. I was in London one and I had a very nice time, but I wouldnt like to live there give me Canada any day. I was in Belgium for one month and its a very nice place the people speak French & English but you need a lot of money to get around all the girls want in Belgium is your money, so now I'm in Germany its most of being a nice country once but it doesnt look so nice now, there not many houses left standing now. Well Annie I dont live in a house now, I'm living in a slit trench, there two of us to a trench. The weather here is very nice its just like summer back home. Annie I hope you dont take as

On December 14, 1946, Edward John Munro was reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave **XVII. E. 11.**

Awards:
1939-1945 Star
French Germany Star
War Medal 1939-1945
Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp



Life story Marian Straatman, Research Team Faces To Graves.

Source:
Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Library and Archives Canada
Corina O'Hearn



*Christmas Eve 24 december 2018.
Photo: Diana Venis-Kerkhoven.*

The Bienen Tablet

On 19 November 2000, the day which marks *Volkstrauertag* (the German equivalent of Remembrance Day), a bronze tablet was unveiled at Bienen, Germany, in a widely attended public ceremony. The plaque is mounted on a stone wall bordering the attractive courtyard of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Cosmas and Damien whose origins at the same location in the centre of town, date back some eleven centuries.

The inscription on the plaque is in German, translated from the original English draft which reads as follows:



THIS TABLET HAS BEEN PLACED BY A GROUP OF SURVIVING CANADIAN VETERANS OF THE NORTH NOVA SCOTIA HIGHLANDERS, 3 CANADIAN INFANTRY DIVISION, IN PROUD AND GRATEFUL MEMORY OF THOSE FORTY MEMBERS OF THEIR REGIMENT WHO FELL IN BATTLE AT BIENEN, GERMANY ON SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 1945 AND IN MEMORY OF THOSE FELLOW COMBATANTS OF 9 CANADIAN INFANTRY (HIGHLAND) BRIGADE AND 51 BRITISH HIGHLAND DIVISION WHO DIED IN THE SAME BATTLE AND IN THE SAME CAUSE AND, AS WELL, IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF THOSE ADVERSARIES IN THE GERMAN ARMY WHO DIED ON THAT SAME FATEFUL DAY.

AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN,
AND IN THE MORNING

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

ERECTED AT BIENEN ON THE 55TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVENT, IN THE
YEAR 2000.

The late Don Forbes, who landed as second-in-command of the North Novas in Normandy on D-Day and who commanded the battalion from July of 1944 to the end of the war, had in an article published in the summer of 1945 described Bienen as "probably the most important operation performed by the Battalion and as one whose effect on the operations of XXX Corps was far-reaching."

This project was launched by several North Nova Bienen veterans in November 1999. It was financed exclusively by small private subscriptions. A brief exchange of correspondence shortly gained the approval, confidence, assistance and support of a local heritage group at Bienen and of the Burgemeister and Municipal Council of the City of Rees - with which Bienen has amalgamated. Within six months the plaque, after preparation in record time at a foundry in Lunenburg, NS, had been taken to Europe by a detachment of sailors from HMCS *Montreal* and had been presented to the Burgemeister at Rees. Actual placement and unveiling of the tablet was postponed to November to allow for restoration of the courtyard which was then underway and to accommodate other associated activities.

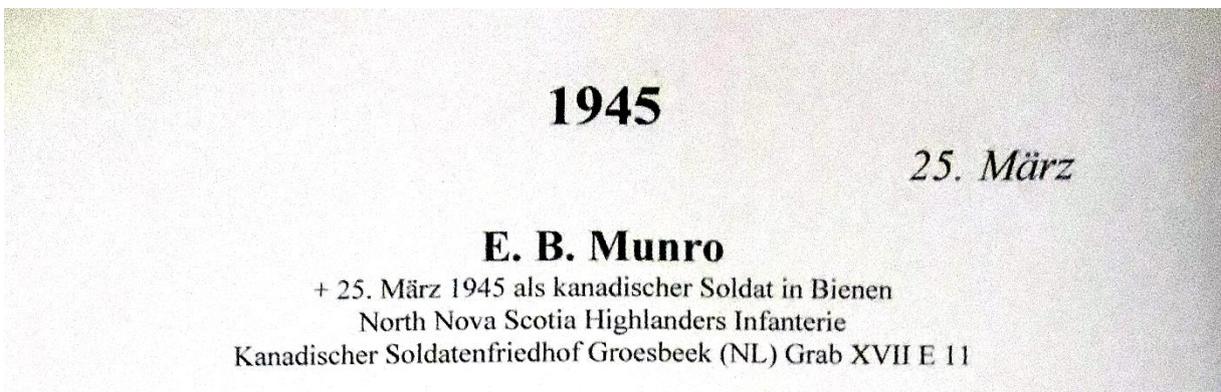
The tablet is unique in a number of ways. Firstly, it was at the time of unveiling one of only a few - and possibly the only - memorial located within Germany marking the location of an engagement in that country by Allied land forces in the Second World War. Secondly, there are probably few, if any, memorials anywhere which, like this plaque, recognize the war-dead of a wartime adversary. We are now, almost 60 years later, the ally and friend of Germany and our soldiers now frequently find themselves serving beside those in her forces in peacekeeping and other missions. And of course there is the circumstance that located only a few hundred metres from the plaque-site lies a well-tended, and sizable, German military cemetery - whose graves also date from that Palm Sunday of 1945. Thirdly - and perhaps most importantly - the plaque serves as a reminder that even now, many years after the event, those words "We will remember them" still carry meaning.



Photos by Robb Furlong



In the church in Bienen is a "Gedächtnisbuch" (Roll of Honour) in memory of all German and Allied soldiers who fell in the heavy battle for Bienen.



1945

25. März

E. B. Munro

+ 25. März 1945 als kanadischer Soldat in Bienen
North Nova Scotia Highlanders Infanterie
Kanadischer Soldatenfriedhof Groesbeek (NL) Grab XVII E 11

Wolfgang Müller

aus Landsberg a. d. Warthe
+ 25. März 1945 als Soldat in Bienen 23 Jahre alt
Soldatenfriedhof Bienen, Grab 68

Paul Oelze

aus Braunschweig
+ 25. März 1945 als Soldat in Bienen 23 Jahre alt
Soldatenfriedhof Bienen, Grab 56

Heinz Ost

aus Hannover
+ 25. März 1945 als Soldat in Bienen 24 Jahre alt
Soldatenfriedhof Bienen, Grab 58

Heinz Otto

aus Dreihäusen bei Marburg
+ 25. März 1945 als Soldat in Bienen 28 Jahre alt
Umgebettet nach Dreihäusen

L. D. Page

aus Hants Rawdon Provinz Newfoundland Kanada
+ 25. März 1945 als kanadischer Soldat in Bienen 21 Jahre alt
North Nova Scotia Highlanders Infanterie
Kanadischer Soldatenfriedhof Groesbeek (NL) Grab XIX A 16

Helmut Pohlmann

aus Bochum
+ 25. März 1945 als Soldat in Praest 18 Jahre alt
Soldatenfriedhof Bienen, Grab 21

1945

25. März

W. J. Power

aus New Westminster Provinz British Columbia Kanada
+ 25. März 1945 als kanadischer Soldat in Bienen 1 Jahre alt
North Nova Scotia Highlanders Infanterie
Kanadischer Soldatenfriedhof Groesbeek (NL) Grab XVII H 2

W. L. Robinson

aus South Naitland Provinz Nova Scotia Kanada
+ 25. März 1945 als kanadischer Soldat in Bienen 22 Jahre alt
North Nova Scotia Highlanders Infanterie
Kanadischer Soldatenfriedhof Groesbeek (NL) Grab XIX C 4

Erich Sader

+ 25. März 1945 als Soldat in Bienen
Soldatenfriedhof Bienen, Grab 66

Hermann Schmidt

aus Hartshofen b. Rotenburg o.d.T.
+ 25. März 1945 als Soldat in Bienen 29 Jahre alt
Soldatenfriedhof Bienen, Grab 65

N. A. Shaw

aus Richmond Lochside Provinz British Columbia Kanada
+ 25. März 1945 als kanadischer Soldat in Bienen 21 Jahre alt
North Nova Scotia Highlanders Infanterie
Kanadischer Soldatenfriedhof Groesbeek (NL) Grab V H 14

E. A. Smith

aus West Point Provinz Prince Edward Island Kanada
+ 25. März 1945 als kanadischer Soldat in Bienen 32 Jahre alt
North Nova Scotia Highlanders Infanterie
Kanadischer Soldatenfriedhof Groesbeek (NL) Grab V H 13