



## **Clarence Joffrey Carson Phoenix**

**D/141979**

Private

### **Family affairs**

Clarence Joffrey Carson Phoenix was born on October 17, 1915 in the city of Montreal in the province of Quebec in Canada. His parents Irvine and Sarah were from Northern Ireland and later emigrated to Canada with their four children. Clarence was the last born in Montreal. Clarence has never left his hometown. He worked at a shop in Montreal and in Montreal he even found his great love Ethel Mary Hope.

Ethel was one of five children born to John Patrick Hope and Mary Ann Hanley. Clarence went to live with Ethel at 2031 Sint Antoine Street in Montreal. They also had a son together, Carson Phoenix.

Clarence unfortunately did not get to experience the first birthday of his son Carson. When Carson was seven months old, Clarence entered the army as a soldier with number D/141979.

### **Military affairs**

At the age of 28, Clarence Joffrey Carson Phoenix was killed in action. Together with countless others, Clarence gave his life for the freedom of Woensdrecht and the Netherlands. He left everything he had built up for the freedom of people he didn't know. He left behind his wife Ethel and his seven-month-old son Carson. He left his father, mother, brothers and sisters all in Canada because he wanted to serve his country, his family and the world.



On his death-certificate states that he was buried in Ossendrecht, but now he is buried at the Canadian War Cemetery in Bergen op Zoom. That was because Ossendrecht was only a temporary grave, later on he was reburied at Bergen op Zoom.

## Remarks

World War II is the most deadly war that has ever taken place. This war has cost a total of 60 to 72 million lives. At that time, that was 2.5% of the entire world population. Adolf Hitler wanted a great German empire and what the Fuehrer wanted had to happen.

"Das Deutsche Reich" became a fact. Germany began invading surrounding countries. Austria was taken without any violence, but then it was Poland's turn. Poland resisted fiercely, but without success. Germany occupied most of Poland.

In Poland, most people were killed. 16% of the Polish population had died. Britain and France found this the last straw. On September 3, 1939, Great Britain and France declared war to Germany.

Canada did not want to participate immediately. A conference was held in which it was decided whether they would participate or not. A week later, Canada followed his motherland Great Britain and Canada joined the Allies to stop Germany. In the beginning, there was not yet a rush on the registrations. The people who did sign up were often English-speaking people who wanted to fight for Britain and Canada. Conscription was introduced in Canada in 1942. Then you were automatically enrolled in the army if you were a man of 18 years or older. Then the soldiers who were needed at that time were drawn. The Canadians delivered an impressive army in a short time. They were put in charge of Juno Beach during D-Day and they were a decisive force during the liberation of Belgium and the Netherlands.



## **The Black Watch History**

The history of the Black Watch goes back to 1862. The fifth battalion called The Volunteer Militia Rifles was formed to protect Canada from the possible influences of the American Civil War. They probably owe the name to their black kilts. Officially this battalion is called The Black Watch, part of the Royal Highlanders Regiment. The Black Watch also had a regimental fanfare, just like you still see soldiers with musical instruments during the remembrance day, for example. This fanfare is the oldest fanfare in North America. The Black Watch has served in many wars. They have fought during the Boer War, the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and in various UN and NATO missions.

The Black Watch still exists today. It is still a part of the Canadian army and highly valued by Canadian citizens. Soldiers from the Black Watch also came to the Netherlands during the 75<sup>th</sup> Memorial-day in Bergen op Zoom in 2019.

## **D-Day**

June 6, 1944, was Decision Day. The Canadian battalions arrived at Juno Beach. The Mission of The Black Watch was to break through the German line as quickly as possible. The Black Watch was attacked by the German howitzers and snipers, but the soldiers managed to break through and march through the north of France together with the English, Americans, Canadians and the other Allies. Clarence Phoenix was not present at D-Day. He was only used in 1944 as a "replacement". He was sent to the Netherlands in 1944 to replace deceased or wounded soldiers and continue fighting towards Germany. 11 Black Friday Black Friday is the deadliest day in the history of the Black Watch, in which many soldiers are killed or injured. The Allied paratroopers failed to break through the two German defense lines at Woensdrecht and Hoogerheide. Woensdrecht was an important city to have for the Allies.



The Allies already had the port of Antwerp in their hands, but the entrance was still guarded by the Germans. The conquest of Woensdrecht would change that. On 13 October 1944, The Canadian John Dubetz was ordered to storm the first German line with his soldiers. The mission begins at 6:15 a.m. The goal of Operation Angus is to conquer the railway embankment. The dike is divided into several pieces, each with the name Angus and a number. The Canadians start with heavy artillery and bombard the railway embankment with bombs. The Germans dig in behind the railway embankment. After a long bombardment, the Canadian soldiers go up the dike at 12:00. That was a deadly event. The Germans could easily shoot down from the railway embankment.

There is a photo (see photos) of the war diary of John Dubetz, who described the course of the mission for the army top of the Allies who planned the missions further. Canadian controls the bombs before the attack. 12 The mission fails. The Germans discover the tigering Canadians and start shooting down. A massacre takes place, 145 men were killed, 62 were injured and 27 men were missing. One of the deceased was Clarence Phoenix. Clarence Phoenix was killed in action, but he wasn't the only one.

### **Carson Phoenix (son of Clarence Phoenix)**

After gathering all this information, I wanted to achieve one more thing. I wanted to find someone who knew Clarence Phoenix, maybe even family. Then I ended up at several "family websites". The websites contain family trees of many people. Think of such websites, for example, ancestry or FamilySearch. On this website I found a man who had added a lot of information about Clarence Phoenix. This man had to know Clarence well. I emailed this man and asked if he could help me. After a long wait I finally got an answer: *Hello Daan Bal, You are right that this is my father who is buried in the Netherlands at the Canadian War Cemetery in Bergen op Zoom. I greatly appreciate the continuous care that the people in the Netherlands pay to the fallen during the last world war..... I hope this helps you in your search. I would love to keep in touch and thank you again for your interest and concern. Carson Phoenix.*



This was the highlight of my research. Finally I had found someone who knew him. This was even his son! And then I couldn't resist asking for the most important thing. The whole time the image of Clarence Phoenix, his tombstone, was his face throughout my research. After two years of research, Clarence got a voice for me and a face for his son. I got a picture of Clarence Phoenix in his Army uniform with little Carson.

**Websites:**

<https://www.blackwatchcanada.com>

<https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/black-watch-royal-highlanders>

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca>

<https://www.ancestry.ca>

<https://earth.google.com>

<https://www.junobeach.org>

<https://liberationroute.nl>

<https://www.familysearch.org>

<https://www.niod.nl/nl>

Books: De Slag om de Schelde van Tobias van Gent en Hans Sakkers and Historyclass vwo 3 van Noordhoff Publishers

Locations: Canadian War Cemetery

Persons: Mrs. L. Boschman, Mrs. M. Kusters, Mr. M. Glowacz, Mrs. S. Wirken, Mrs. Y. de Vos, Mr. Y. Bal, Mr. A. Ligthart, Mr. R. Catsburg, Mr. C. Phoenix, Mr. M. Cher, coördinator of the Black Watch Museum

Event: 75 years of liberation, Grote Markt Bergen op Zoom 26 october 2019 and Commemoration on the Canadian War Cemetery.

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