



NORMAN ARMITAGE

D/24092

Corporal

Family affairs.

Norman Armitage was born in Montreal, Canada on February 17, 1916, of British nationality, to Walter Armitage and Mary Elaine Armitage, both British. Norman had an older brother Walter Charles who also served in the war and survived, and a married sister.

At the age of 13, after 7th Grade, Norman left primary school in 1929. Perhaps because of the depression at the time, he did not find a job until he started in 1934 as an apprentice plasterer with a contractor in Montreal. He was later hired as a plasterer/bricklayer and worked in construction for 4 years. In 1938, he changed professions and started working as an electrician.

During his school years he was a member of the Boy Scouts in Montreal for 2 years, and he was also interested in many other sports.

Military affairs.

During the growing unrest in Europe, in February 1938 Norman volunteered for the Non-Permanent Active Militia (the N.P.A.M., a forerunner of the Canadian Army) and was assigned to the 4th Divisional Signals because of his electrical background. As the threat of war developed he was formally appointed as a Signaller in the 1st Company, 2nd Division of the Canadian Active Service Force on 11 September 1939.

As a "Sgmn" he was trained first in Canada and later in England to lay, repair and maintain electrical and communication cables and equipment to ensure that the communication between the front and the command and other units was as smooth as possible.

Norman embarked in Halifax on 21 August 1940 and landed in Scotland on 5 September. During the following years he trained hard and developed into a Linesman 'B', his records state that the results were "very good". In England he was also promoted to Corporal via Lance/Corporal.

On 6 July 1944, the 2nd Division landed in Normandy to be deployed via the coast and Antwerp in the Battle of the Scheldt. On 24 October 1944, Operation Vitality was launched, with Vitality I's objective being to capture the canal there via the narrow part of Zuid-Beveland and to block-off Walcheren for the German occupiers.

On 25 October, Krabbendijke was liberated and by 27 October the attack had advanced across the canal. However, on 28 October, Norman Armitage and 4 other Signalmen drove a Bren carrier over a mine near the current Koedijk in Krabbendijke, killing all of them. Sgmn Joseph Henry Fraser (aged 28, 08D04), Sgmn Hugh Verdun Webber (aged 23, 07C08) and L/Cpl Robert Henry Goodyer (aged 25, 05C07) died immediately and Sgmn Donald B. Wallace (aged 26, 12A07) died the next day. They were first buried in Krabbendijke but were all reburied in July 1945 at the Canadian cemetery in Bergen op Zoom.

Remarks.

- His gravestone reads: "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith"
- He has been awarded the 1939-45 Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp, the France-Germany Star, the Defence Medal and the War Medal
- Total earnings in 1975 days of active service are \$1045.28(Canadian).
- The Ancestry file contains a letter from Walter Sr, Norman's father to his surviving son Walter in which he transfers the care of Norman's estate to Walter Jr.
- There is also a copy of a letter from the Director of War Service Records from 1947 which gives details of Norman's grave in Bergen op Zoom.
- And from the same agency as above from 1948 a response to questions from Norman's mother regarding his corporal stripes and the medals he was awarded. It is stated that the stripes have not been removed from his

uniform and are therefore no longer available, that the medals are not (yet) present but will certainly arrive later.

Written by D.Z.