



Naam: Richter, Eric

Reg.nr: D82694

Eric was born on October 19, 1919 in London, UK. His parents are Frank (61) and Dorothy (59). They married in London on December 19, 1909. In 1945 they had 3 other children: Frank Robert (35), Lawrence (29) and Sybil (27). 2 children died earlier: Dorothy was 3 months old and Pearl died at birth.

The parents live in Montreal, father is a clerk in a warehouse.

Eric marries Mary Olive Dixon (25) in England on April 8, 1944. This happens in Sunderland, Durham, UK. They have known each other for 1 year.

On February 8, 1945, the Immigration Service announces that Mary can settle with her mother-in-law. Mary only wants to go to Canada temporarily and she has to know that she can only return to England when the war is over.

From a letter dated February 6, 1947, written by father, it can be concluded that Mary has come to Canada, lives with a friend in Toronto and that she does not respond to letters from father.

In brackets are the ages as on January 4, 1945.

Eric attended Montreal High School for 1 year. He left school in grade 9. From 1935 to 1940 he worked as an (apprentice) printer at Sterling Press in Montreal.

On July 19, 1940 Eric reported for active service in the Canadian army in Montreal. He reported to the Regimental Depot of the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada.

Eric is 1.70m tall and weighs 63.5 kg. He has brown eyes and light brown hair. He is color blind.

His hobby is his stamp collection and he plays ice hockey, baseball and rugby.

On August 3, 1940, Eric is posted to A14 Canadian Infantry Training Centre in Camp Aldershot, Nova Scotia.

He passes the Driver I/C, Class III course there on January 9, 1941. On February 16, 1941, he embarks in Halifax.

On March 3, 1941, he arrives in Gourock, Scotland, after which he reports to the 2 Infantry Holding Unit, a reserve unit of the infantry, in Witley, Surrey, UK. From there, he is again assigned to the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada on May 30, 1941. On September 23, 1941, he passes the Driver-Mechanic Class I, Group C course. He drives a Bren Carrier.

From September 4 to 24, 1942, he is in a hospital, the reason has not been found. He is then assigned to 2 CIRU, a reserve unit of the infantry. After discharge from the hospital he reports to this unit in Cornwall. On 13 November 1942 he returns to the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada.

On 5 March 1944 Eric is promoted to Acting Corporal (tasks, but not the rank of corporal) and on 4 May 1945 to Lance Corporal, comparable to private 1st class.

On 7 July 1944 Eric arrives in France.

On 4 August, at 0.30 am, Eric is admitted to a field hospital. He has been injured in his left hip by shrapnel from an aircraft bomb. It is expected that he will be able to return to his unit after a few days. This also happens on 8 August.

On August 8, father receives a telegram: Eric has been wounded. He responds with a letter: what happened? Does his wife know about it, because she has not let him know. On September 14, father receives a message that it was a wound to the left hip.

October 13, 1944 is known as "Black Friday". Lieutenant Colonel Withaker calls it in his book (see source) "the day of betrayal of the "civilian in uniform", the young volunteer of the Black Watch who had enthusiastically signed up for the Canadian army".

The Black Watch had already suffered heavy losses. The 1st Battalion suffered more casualties than any other Canadian infantry battalion in Northwestern Europe. Disasters seemed to follow the Regiment almost every time it fought.

During the Battle of Verrières Ridge on July 25, 1944, there were 97% casualties. Of the 325 men who left the starting line, only 15 returned to their own lines. The others were killed, wounded or taken prisoner, a company of 90 men had only four survivors.

Another 40% casualties occurred 10 days later in Operation Totalize.

A month before Operation Angus, they lost 60 men in 36 hours from 12-14 September. In October, the Regiment expected to be fully manned and supplied, but this was not to be. The Regiment, which had lost many trained men in the previous months, was supplemented by inexperienced infantry and was still below its original strength.

The order for the attack was given by Major General Foulkes, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Canadian Army Corps, who knew the situation of the Black Watch. Lieutenant Colonel Ritchie, Commanding Officer of the Black Watch of Canada and Brigadier McGill, Commanding Officer of the 5th Canadian infantry brigade, had their doubts about the success of Angus, but the order had been given.

The attack became a great drama. The intelligence was not good, the Germans in the area were well organised, were offensively minded, well dug in and belonged to elite troops. The Black Watch was poorly prepared. The attack was during the day, in an area where the foliage of the beets offered the only cover. Support from tanks etc. was not possible because of the marshy ground.

In the morning hours, the B and C companies attacked the Germans. The starting point was the Grindweg in Woensdrecht, the target was the railway embankment on the Kreekrakdam. The attack started at 6.15 am. Within a short time, the attack came to a standstill due to heavy losses. The men fell like pins on a bowling alley. A smoke screen could not improve the situation. A number of men from the C company managed to reach the railway embankment, they were taken prisoner. From C-company 25 men returned, from B-company 41. Normally a company consists of 130 men.

The companies lost many leaders.

At 17:00 the attack was resumed by A-company, supported from the flank by D-company and the remainder of B-company. In one hour A-company lost almost 70 men, 9 men returned unharmed. D-company also lost a few dozen soldiers. The Black Watch no longer had any company commanders. The losses of the Black Watch are the highest losses in 1 day of the battle of the Canadians in the Netherlands. The Black Watch of Canada counted 145 losses, 56 men killed, 62 men wounded and 27 men taken prisoner of war.

Eric served in the Carrier Platoon. He died after entering a field hospital, probably in Putte, where his temporary grave is.

When he entered he was ashen, breathing was panting, no heartbeat was felt on the pulse. The heart was beating very weakly, the blood pressure could not be measured. The right thigh was splintered. 1 cc of adrenaline was injected, breathing became slow and the heartbeat could no longer be heard. Breathing stopped at 11, 12 o'clock.

Eric died 6 days before his 25th birthday, DOW (died of wounds), injuries received in action.

Eric was temporarily buried west of Putte, northeast of Ravenhof Castle. A reburial followed on June 1, 1945 at the Canadian cemetery in Bergen op Zoom. Eric rests in plot 4, row E, grave 10.

In the previously mentioned letter of February 6, 1947, father wrote that he wanted to ask the Dutch War Grave Commission if there was a friendly Dutch family who would take care of the grave.

The Carrier he was driving was dug up many years later during the construction of the highway. According to tradition, the armored vehicle had driven along the east side of the Hinkelenoordijk until the now much-mentioned bend in the dike. There the vehicle climbed to the top of the dike until an anti-tank shell pierced the armor. The Carrier was knocked out and left behind in ruins.

Eric was awarded the 1939-1945 Star, the French-German Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.





Source:

[Ancestry.com - Canada, World War II Records and Service Files of War Dead, 1939-1947](#)

[Sergeant Eric Richter \(Onbekend-1944\) - Find a Grave-gedenkplek](#)

[Casualty Details | CWGC](#)

[Eric Richter - The Canadian Virtual War Memorial - Veterans Affairs Canada](#)

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