



Name: Copeland, Ross

Reg.nr: K 786

Ross was born on November 19, 1911 in Woodville, Ontario.

His parents are John (63) and Florence (57). They married in 1908 in Lindsay, Ontario.

Ross has 4 married sisters: Stella (30), Mila (26), Dorothy (23) and Pearl (20). 2 Other children died young: Mary, in July 1910, and Gordon, in October 1913.

Between brackets are the ages as on January 18, 1945.

The parents then live in Lindsay. Ross's last address is Kildonan Post Office, Victoria Island. Father John has quit his farm and works in a munitions factory.

Ross drops out of school when he's 15. He wants to go to work. Ross passed grade 8.

Ross has been with the Swift Can Co for 1½ years. in the sausage kitchen, 1 year with CPR Lines, railways (cleaner, firefighter). 1 year with Baked Beans (in the kitchen) and 12 years on the Deep Sea, mainly in the engine room, on ships sailing in the Atlantic Ocean. The employer is Standard Oil Co, New Jersey, USA.

Ross has witnessed the ship being hit by a torpedo and a ship sinking after hitting a mine.

Ross tried to enlist in the US Navy, but was unsuccessful: - He was not born in the US - He is not eligible to be entered on the Navy Register - He was once injured in the back, something he has not suffered for 5 years of had. Back in Canada, the earnings of Canadian merchant shipping turned out to be disappointing.

For the last 6 months Ross has been working at McLean on Victoria Island. He unloaded ships at a fish factory, where salmon was canned.

Ross was enlisted in the Canadian Army on January 29, 1943, under the National Resources Mobilization Act of 1940. On November 4, 1943 he signs in Victoria for active duty overseas.

Ross is 1.75m. tall and weighs 77 kg. He has blue eyes and light brown hair. At the inspection he has a tattoo of the American flag on his left upper arm, later an eagle is added on the left forearm. He has average abilities. He is described as calm, stable, reliable and with a good appearance. Ross has a preference for the liaison troops.

Ross likes football, baseball and tennis. He has not had much opportunity to practice these sports. He reads adventure novels and fiction. In the little spare time he has, he visits shows, dance halls and boxing matches.

Ross first arrives in Vancouver at #XI District Depot. On April 1, 1943 he goes to Seaforth. That could be a place in Ontario, the Seaforth Highlanders from Victoria are meant. He joins the liaison troops. On 20 October 1943 he passed Driver-Motor Class III in Esquimalt, Victoria Island.

On November 4, 1943 he signs in Victoria for active duty overseas. He works in Victoria in the garage on motorcycles.

Ross is considered suitable for overseas, as a motorcycle orderly. He passed this on January 7, 1944 at A6 CETC in Chiliwack, British Columbia.

On January 19, Ross is in Barriefield, Ontario with the Royal Canadian Signalers, A7 Signal training camp. On May 15, 1944, he falls with his motorcycle and injures his left hip, (graze and bruised) and his left ankle, (sprained).

He passes motorcycle order group C on June 17, 1944. An assessment was made on June 19: Ros is cooperative, but nervous. He doesn't pick things up quickly. He is not a leader type.

He then arrives in England on July 15, 1944, where he is assigned to the infantry, Winnipeg Rifles, on August 11, 1944.

On August 29, Ross picks up his torque belt, where 9mm. grenades were attached. He dropped the belt on the floor and one of the grenades exploded. Ross didn't know they were real grenades. There was blood on his arm, Ross can't tell if it was from shrapnel or from hitting something with his arm. He has a wound on the top of the forearm, there is no shard in it. No further treatment is necessary.

In September 7, 1944, Ross arrives in France and on September 16, 1944 he is assigned to the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada.

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

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 with every battle.

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 came back into their own lines. The others were killed or wounded, and a company of 90 men had only four survivors.

Another 40% were killed 10 days later in Operation Totalize.

A month before Operation Angus, they lost 60 men in 36 hours from September 12-14. In October, the Regiment expected to be fully staffed and resupplied, but that was not to be. The regiment that had lost many trained men in recent months was replenished with inexperienced infantrymen and was still below original strength.

The order for the attack was given by Major General Foulkes, commander of the 2nd Canadian Army Corps, who was aware of the Black Watch's situation. Lieutenant Colonel Ritchie, commander of the Black Watch of Canada, and Brigade Commander Megill, commander of the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade, had their doubts about Angus' success, but the order was given.

The attack turned into a major drama. The intelligence was not good, the Germans in the area were well organised, were offensively minded, well entrenched and belonged to elite troops. The Black Watch was ill-prepared. The attack was during the day, in an area where the beet foliage provided the only cover. Support from tanks etc. was not possible because of the swampy ground.

In the morning hours, the B and C companies attacked the Germans. The starting point was the Grindweg in Woensdrecht, the goal was the railway

embankment on the Kreekrakdam. The attack started at 6.15 am. Within a short time the attack was halted by heavy casualties. The men fell like pins on a bowling alley. A smoke screen could not improve the situation. A number of C Company men managed to reach the railway embankment, they were captured.

25 men from C company returned, from B company 41. Normally a company consists of 130 men.

The companies lost many executives.

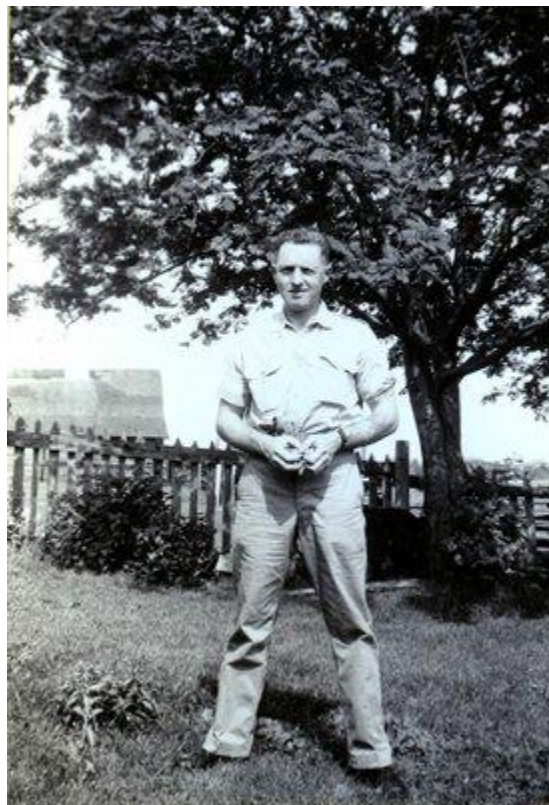
At 5 pm the attack was resumed by A Company, supported from the flank by D Company and the remainder of B Company. In one hour the A company lost almost 70 men, 9 men returned unharmed. D Company also lost a few dozen soldiers.

The Black Watch had no more company commanders. The Black Watch of Canada counted 145 casualties, 56 killed, 62 wounded and 27 POWs. In the Second World War these are the largest losses for a Canadian regiment on Dutch soil in 1 day.

Ross belonged to A Company that day. He was killed in action on October 13, 1944, killed in action, aged 32. Initially, he was reported missing.

Ross was temporarily buried on October 27, 1944 in Ossendrecht at the temporary cemetery on the current Burgemeester Voetenweg, near the war memorial of Ossendrecht, plot 2, row 1, grave 25. A reburial follows on May 16, 1945. Ross was buried at the Canadian War cemetery in Bergen op Zoom, plot 2, row G, grave 1.

Ross has been awarded the 1939-1945 Star, the French-German Star, the Defense Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service





Bronvermelding:

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2641602/ROSS%20COPELAND/>

[https://www.ancestry.ca/imageviewer/collections/9145/images/42127\\_83024005508\\_0424-00262?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&\\_phsrc=EQi1&\\_phstart=successSource&pld=59021](https://www.ancestry.ca/imageviewer/collections/9145/images/42127_83024005508_0424-00262?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=EQi1&_phstart=successSource&pld=59021)

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