



Kirker, Lorne Russel

C58031

Lorne was born in Brinston, Ontario, on April 5, 1920. His father is Robert Kirker, his mother is Mary Kirker. Robert and Mary were married on May 26, 1915, in Iroquois. Lorne has 1 older brother: Arnold Francis and 1 younger sister: Dena Evelyn

On November 18, 1939, Lorne married Dorothy Marion Dunn in Cardinal, Ontario Together they had 3 children. Their names and ages in January 1945 are: Douglas Wayne (4), Duane Russel (3) and Lorna Marion (2).

Dorothy Marion remarried in 1955.

Lorne attends Public School and then another year of High School. He left school at the age of 15. From then on, he worked on his father's farm in Brinston and sometimes as a seasonal worker at a cheese factory. On the farm, he drives a car, a truck and a tractor. In his spare time, his hobbies include dancing, swimming, hunting, bowling, ice skating and ice hockey. He is interested in mechanical engineering.

On June 31, 1937, Lorne enlisted in the Non Permanent Active Militia of Canada, 4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards. He receives annual training there.

On 24 June 1940 he enlisted in the Canadian army in Ottawa. Its physical characteristics: height 1.83m, weight 69 kg. Lorne has blue eyes and light brown hair.

From 24 June 1940 to 9 February 1942 he received infantry training with the Governor General's Foot Guards (GGFG) with the 3rd mortar section, in Valcartier and Sussex in Canada. On 26 January 1942, GGFG was transformed into the 21st Canadian Armoured Regiment (21 CAR), a tank regiment. On February 9, 1942, he went to Hamilton, Canada for a driver-mechanic training. Between 13 March 1942 and 2 May 1942, he was trained as a driver-mechanic in London, Canada

On 7 October 1942, Lorne arrived in England as a tank driver-mechanic with the 21 Canadian Armoured Regiment (21 CAR).

Op 22 juni 1944 komt Lorne in Frankrijk aan.

Tijdens operatie Suitcase (oktober-november 1944) wordt 21 CAR ingezet bij de bevrijding van West-Brabant. Het regiment strijdt o.a. bij Putte, Wouwse Plantage, Heerle, Moerstraten en Steenberg.

On 22 June 1944, Lorne arrived in France.

During Operation Suitcase (October-November 1944), 21 CAR was deployed for the liberation of West Brabant. The regiment fights a.o. at Putte, Wouwse Plantage, Heerle, Moerstraten and Steenberg.

During the liberation of Moerstraten on 29 October 1944, Lorne was a crew member of Corporal Tremblay's tank. Approaching the village, apart from incessant artillery fire, they encountered no resistance until they reached Diefhoek, approx. 1.5 km. of Heerle, where several anti-tank guns opened fire. Because they can maneuver, the tankers react smartly. The Shermans, commanded by Sergeant H.S. Slater and Corporal Romeo Tremblay, attack a cannon, which is knocked out by the corporal. The rest of the squadron disperses and arrives through the flanks of the lead group to join the firefight. When a 2nd anti-tank gun was knocked out, the Germans withdrew. 1 Sherman is knocked out, the crew is unharmed.

Because it is known that Moerstraten is strongly defended, Baylay was instructed to move around the village and leave the sweeping to the Superiors, the motorized infantry. The commander of the leading troop, Lieutenant Middleton-Hope, realizes that the ground around Moerstraten is so muddy that a flanking movement is impossible.

The unit moves down the main street, firing from all barrels, in a confusing state of dust, grit and tracer ammunition as grenades explode and the enemy hurls hand grenades around from the buildings along the route.

The tanks break through on the west side and Middleton-Hope scatters them out on open ground to await the rest of the squadron. As they try to get into a good position, Slater and Tremblay's tanks get stuck in the mud. Lieutenant Middleton-Hope tries to position his tank so that he can provide covering fire to the 2 stranded Shermans, whose crew closes the hatches because of the shells exploding all around.

Behind the tank units, there is a lot of fighting to gain control of Moerstraten. Tanks are firing at anti-tank guns and the Superiors are fighting German paratroopers.

A grenade hits the "trunk" at the back of Lieutenant Liddel's tank, causing the contents of sacks of flour to fly through the air. Baylay gets into a fight with an anti-tank cannon, a battle that he wins. Scraper from the last German shell riddles the "trunk" of his tank and the squadron's rum stash to the ground. When the dust settled, the Germans temporarily withdrew.

During the disorder and darkness they move an anti-tank gun in such a way that they can reach the 2 stranded tanks. Both tanks are knocked out. Tremblay and Guardsmen J.D. Stronach, R.R. Burns and L.R. Kirker are killed. Slater and Guardsmen A. Draper and B.A. Maloney were seriously wounded.

Lorne Kirker was 24 years old at the time.

The 4 fallen soldiers will be given a temporary grave at Moerstraten, at the intersection of Moerstraatsebaan and Luienhoekweg. In August 1945, the first war memorial in the Netherlands was completed on this site.

A reburial will follow on 25 April in Bergen op Zoom. Lorne is buried in Plot 1, row B, grave 9.

Lorne Russel Kirker has been awarded the 1939-1945 Star, the French-German Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.



In 2015, his son Douglas, together with Lesley, a granddaughter of Lorne, visited the monument in Moerstraten.





2015:

MOERSTRATEN – "An impressive ceremony, especially with all those children," said Doug Kirker after the Remembrance Day in Moerstraten. He had come to Moerstraten with his daughter Lesley to attend the ceremony.

He was two years old when his father left Canada to fight in Europe and four years old when his father was killed in the vicinity of Moerstraten. "I still remember that my mother and grandmother were completely upset. We received the message on November 4, 1944," said the Canadian. At that time, the body of his father Lorne Russel Kirker had already been buried in a field grave on the Moerstraatsebaan. His body was later transferred to the Canadian cemetery in Bergen op Zoom. There he is buried in grave 1 B 9. "We went there to lay flowers," said Kirker, who laid a special wreath of poppies at the monument with his daughter. He also handed over coins with two poppies. Those poppies represent the two minutes of silence that are now also observed in Canada at a memorial ceremony. Thirty-five years ago, he was also in the region to commemorate his father. Now he resides near Deventer. Together with a large group of Canadians. G.W. Brilman is a member of the organization that brings these people to the Netherlands. "Doug Kirker had indicated that he would like to go to Moerstraten. I first had to look for where it was, because I didn't have the slightest idea about it. I found out the details via the internet and then passed on to the Orange Committee that we would like to be at the Remembrance Day."

Doug Kirker's mother married again in 1955 to a soldier who had fought in Korea. He himself was involved in a peacekeeping force in Canada for 26

years. His daughter is also active, given the uniform in which she was present at the ceremony in Moerstraten. On 4 May, the ParelMoer village hall briefly commemorated our freedom, but especially those who had fought for it and gave their lives for it. Young people who came to fight and died in a country that was foreign to them. Afterwards, the procession of interested people went to the war monument on the corner of Moerstraatsebaan and Luienhoekweg. Here, wreaths were laid, speeches were given, flags were hoisted at half-mast and poems were read. Alderman Saskia Schenk, on behalf of the municipality of Roosendaal, reflected on the war violence that still continues in the world. City poet Leo Lotterman recited a poem and the ceremony was concluded with the playing of the national anthem and the Canadian national anthem by harmony Juliana.

Sources:

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