



Annis, Lawrence Herbert

Reg.nr: F9171

Lawrence was born on January 24, 1918, as the 6th child in a row of 9. His birthplace is Nictaux Falls in Nova Scotia.

His father is James Rolland and his mother is Sophie Gertrude. They roped on September 27, 1907, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Sophie died on 23 July 1942.

They had 9 children: James, Victor, Oakley, Lloyd, Aubrey, Merle, Philippe Dean, Kathleen and Lawrence.

3 Brothers, Victor, Oakley and Lloyd were overseas with the Canadian army in December 1944. Philippe Dean is then in a training camp in Yarmouth.

Father James was a labourer, but in 1942 he was no longer able to work. Lawrence supports his father financially.

When Lawrence leaves school, he is grade 7 and part of grade 8.

He works in the forests and sawmills. Lawrence has been a cooper for 3 years, he makes barrels for apples. At the inspection, he states that he has 5 years of experience on a mixed farm. He wants to go back to work there after returning home.

In November 1940, Lawrence received a month's training at training camp #60. He then signed up with the Non-Permanent Militia of Canada. His preference is the Air Force, it will be the 2nd Battalion North Nova Scotia Highlanders.

Lawrence is 1,70m. long and weighs 60 kg. He has gray eyes and auburn hair. His teeth are bad, during his military service he gets upper dentures. Under the National Resources Mobilization Act of 1940, he was conscripted into the Canadian Army in Yarmouth on May 15, 1942. He receives basic training at the #141 Training Centre in Aldershot.

He volunteers for the Active Force and hopes to join the West Nova Scotia Regiment. He is called up for the 1st S/L battery with the New Brunswick

Coast Brigade. Lawrence becomes a gunner. On 10 June 1942 he had already reported to St. John and on 6 July 1942 he entered active service. On 13 January 1943, Lawrence was posted to the 15th Battalion Coast Battery. There, on 3 June 1943, he was admonished for being involved in a brawl in the men's canteen.

On 8 March 1944 he was transferred to an artillery training camp in Petawawa (A1 CATC). On July 4, 1944, Lawrence arrived in England. He is posted to 1 CARU, a reserve unit of the artillery.

This lasted until 11 August 1944, when he was posted to the Canadian Fusiliers, infantry. On 23 September, Lawrence arrives in France. Then, on 28 September 1944, he was 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 citation) "the day of betrayal of the "civilian in uniform", the young volunteer of the Black Watch who had enthusiastically enlisted 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 Northwest Europe. Disasters seemed to follow the Regiment almost in 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, numbered only four survivors. There were another 40% casualties 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 recent months, was supplemented by inexperienced infantrymen and was still below its original strength.

The attack was ordered by Major General Foulkes, commander of the 2nd Canadian Army Corps, who knew the situation of the Black Watch.

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 had been given. The attack turned into a great drama. The intelligence was not good, the Germans in the area were well organized, were on the offensive, well dug in, and belonged to elite troops. The Black Watch was ill-prepared. The attack was during the day, in an area where the foliage of the beets provided the only cover. Support from tanks etc. was not possible because of the swampy ground.

In the morning hours, 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 a.m. Within a short time, the attack came to a halt due to heavy casualties. The men fell like pins on a bowling alley.

A smokescreen could not improve the situation.

A number of men of C Company managed to reach the railway embankment, they were taken prisoner.

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

The companies lost many executives.

At 17:00 the attack was resumed by A Company, supported from the flank by D Company and the remainder of B Company. In an hour's time, 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 losses of the Black Watch are the highest losses on 1 day of the battle of the Canadians in the Netherlands. The Black Watch of Canada suffered 145 casualties, 56 men killed, 62 men wounded and 27 men taken prisoner of war. Lawrence belonged to A Company on that day. He was killed in action on 13 October 1944, aged 26. Initially, he was reported missing.

Lawrence is temporarily buried in Ossendrecht at the temporary cemetery on the current Burgemeester Voetenweg, near the war memorial of Ossendrecht. A reburial followed on 16 May 1945. Lawrence is buried in the Canadian cemetery in Bergen op Zoom, plot 2, row F, grave 7.

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



Source:

https://www.ancestry.ca/imageviewer/collections/9145/images/42127_83024005507_0457-00586?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=HKb1&_phstart=successSource&pId=46764&backurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ancestry.ca%2Fsearch%2Fcategories%2F39%2F%3Fname%3DLawrence%2BHerbert_Annis%26death%3D1944-10-13%26location%3D3243%26priority%3Dcanada

<https://nl.findagrave.com/memorial/12723976/lawrence-herbert-annis>

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2641415/annis,-lawrence-herbert/>

https://web.archive.org/web/20010709165059/http://www3.ns.sympatico.ca/laird.niven/public_html/oct_44.htm#burial

<https://web.archive.org/web/20060518180502/http://www.legionmagazine.com/features/canadianmilitaryhistory/01-09.asp>

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<https://blackwatchwardiary.blog/casualty-database/>

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De Eerste Dam, De gevechten voor de toegang tot Zeeland van Merksem naar Woensdrecht, pagina 351. Auteur Robert Catsburg.

Slag om Woensdrecht: bevrijding van de Zuidwesthoek red: J. van Doorn, J.S. Bos. ISBN 90-802126-2-8

De strijd om de Schelde W. Denis Whitaker&Shelagh Whitaker ISBN 90 6045 390 5

Zuehlke, M - Terrible Victory ISBN 978-1-77162-030-7