



CLAPPERTON, RUSSELL HAIGH

K/42470

About the family.

Russell was born on May 9, 1920, in western Canada, in Kamloops, British Columbia, nestled against the Rocky Mountains. His parents, John Alexander Clapperton and Isabella Duncan Clapperton-Smith, owned a farm in this rugged region and had a total of 10 children: three daughters and seven sons.

Russell was the eighth child; one of the sons died at a very young age, and he never knew him. Three of Russell's brothers served in the army during the war.

After primary school, Russell attended only two years of high school in Victoria, BC, because the family home burned down, leaving him with no money to pay for further education.

Before volunteering for the army in July 1940, he taught school for six months and then worked for about 18 months at Douglas Lake Cattle Co. in Douglas Lake, Merritt, B.C. This company—which still exists—is one of the largest ranches in Canada and now also a tourist resort. Russell first worked there as a warehouse clerk and later as an assistant store manager. Between 1939 and 1940, he also took several administrative courses, which explains his later preference for the army.

Military Affairs.

His career in the army was a turbulent one. He aspired to a position as a clerk in the CSMC (Corps of Military Staff Clerks), but a few years later, he ended up in Signals. He began in the infantry of the Rocky Mountain Rangers, and after various training courses in British Columbia, was promoted to L/Cpl (Lance Corporal) on September 15, 1942, and shipped to England in February 1943. He ended up in the 1 CIRU, the Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit.

On April 30, 1943, he was downgraded to Private for unknown reasons and at his own request. On June 14, 1943, he was temporarily promoted to A/Cpl (Artificer Corporal, a designation for certain specialists). On September 18, 1943, he was again promoted to Private and transferred to the Signal Corps, to the 1 CSRU in Cairn, Southwood/Blandford Camp, UK. He had already completed Signals training in Canada in 1941.

On October 24, 1943, he was assigned as a "Sigm" (Signalman) to the 1st Canadian Army Signals, where he began working as a Cypher Clerk "C" on December 1, 1943. On December 15, 1943, he was subsequently appointed to the rank of A/L/Cpl. In the meantime, he received a Good Conduct Badge on July 2, 1942, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp on January 15, 1944.

He was finally commissioned as a Corporal on July 12, 1944, five days before arriving in France to take part in the invasion. He died on December 16, 1944, when a 60cwt truck full of people returning from Brussels was shot at near Brasschaat. He was initially buried at the Holland Vredenhof Cemetery in Tilburg, but shortly thereafter reburied at the Canadian Cemetery in Bergen op Zoom.

Russell Haigh Clapperton died as a Sergeant, but no records remain in the archives after August 10, 1944, so it is unclear when his final promotion took place or where he was during that period.

Remarks.

- The shooting incident near Brasschaat involving the truck carrying people returning from Brussels, in which Russell was killed, is noteworthy. Thirteen people were killed and nine wounded. Almost all were RCCS Signalmen, and the victims were eventually buried in Bergen op Zoom.

- After serving for 1,629 days, 671 of which were in Europe, Isabella Clapperton-Smith received a war pension of \$688.99.

Sources.

Photo of Russell Haigh Clapperton (standing):

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2641574>

Photo of Russell's father: John Alexander Clapperton (1880-1966):

<https://www.familysearch.org/nl/tree/pedigree/portrait/KJWB-LK3>

Photo of Russell's mother: Isabella Duncan Clapperton-Smit (1888-1986):

<https://www.familysearch.org/nl/tree/pedigree/portrait/KJWB-LK3>

The same applies to family composition.

Photo 1 CSRU camp in Cairn, Southwood/Blandford Camp, UK:

http://www.rcsig.s.ca/index.php/RCCS_WW2_Cairn_-_United_Kingdom

Russell Haigh Clapperton in Books of Remembrance:

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/memorials/books/page?page=273&book=2&sort=pageAsc>

Three other photos from:

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2641574>

Text: War Memorial_– Kamloops Cenotaph, Memorial Park, Battle Street and 2nd Avenue, Kamloops, British Columbia. Includes honour roll tablets listing 189 names for World War I and 92 names for World War II. Unveiled on May 24th, 1925. Inscribed: C.E.F. - NOR TIME NOR TIDE CAN EVER EFFACE THE MEMORY OF OUR GLORIOUS DEAD.