

Gallery of Honour of the Fallen Canadians

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Water up to the escarpment, only the dykes are still passable.

Dead and wounded

The liberation action of February 8 and 9, 1945, involved many Canadian soldiers. We don't know them all, so we can't give a complete list of names. However, it was possible to retrieve the personal details of the soldiers of the North Shore Regiment who died on February 8, as well as the names of the wounded men of that day. Incidentally, soldier Russell Munroe, who distinguished himself on February 8, 1945, in the fighting along the Duffeltdijk, does not appear anywhere in the lists of fallen and wounded of the North Shore Regiment. We can therefore assume that he returned to Canada unscathed after the war.

Canadian casualties of the attack of the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment at Zandpol and Kekerdom on February 8 and 9, 1945 (per Bruce Morton 2021):

Killed:

James C. Brown, Robert G. Creighton, George W. Daigneault, Richard J. Everett, René J. Légère, Gordon W. Lindsay, Basil L. Marchbank, Edwin S. Smith, Louis J. Walsh.

Wounded:

Frank A. Britton, William F. Carleton, Norman H. Daniel, Lionel J. Doucet, Francis R. Fewer, Lloyd G. Goodwin, Lloyd B. Kitchen, Donald F. Knowles, Edward B. MacDonald, Stanley J. Muir, Jean B. Pelletier, Leonard M. Snowdon and two unknown soldiers.

Gallery of Honour of the Fallen

With a special gallery of honour of the nine men who gave their lives in the liberation of Keekerdom, we want to honor the heroism of all those involved of the North Shore Regiment. Not all sources are unanimous about the number of NSR soldiers killed on February 8, 1945. Chaplain R.M. Hickey, who accompanied the regiment during the Rhineland Offensive, speaks in his book *The Scarlet Dawn* of ten fallen on that date. However, the official death list of the North Shore Regiment in the book *North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment: A Complete History 1794-1958* by Will Bird, lists nine fallen and mentions all by name. Bruce Morton agrees that small inaccuracies have occasionally crept into Hickey's memoirs. In his 2021 book *One Hundred Years, a brief history of the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment*, Morton mentions the same nine men killed. All nine are buried in the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek.



The Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek

James Christie Brown (Service number G-50300)

James Christie Brown was born on September 30, 1920, in Kingston, New Brunswick, Canada, the son of the farming couple Thomas and Jean Brown. He had four brothers, Thomas (Tommy), Alexander (Sandy), Andrew and Joseph, the first three of whom also served in the army. His two sisters, Annie and Jean, contributed to the army in their own unique way. They knit sweaters and sent them to the soldiers overseas. James attended Lakeside School and was a member of the Anglican Church. When he was 14 years old, his mother died and a year later he left school. That was in the middle of the depression years when his help was desperately needed on the family farm. James was in top condition and was proud to be able to snap twine with his biceps.

On December 28, 1942, James volunteered for the Canadian Army. His records show that in the years before he had worked in the lumber industry and on the farm. After a short military training he was transferred to England in July 1943. James was assigned to the Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit (CIRU) and transferred to the North Shore Regiment in early October. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, he landed with his unit on Juno Beach. He survived that illustrious attack and

continued the battle with his regiment, right through Normandy. In September 1944, the Canadian military was ordered to take some French ports along the English Channel to shorten the supply lines of men and materiel. On September 18, during the bitter battle for La Trésorerie, James was hit by shrapnel. He had several injuries to his face and right hand and was admitted to the hospital for recovery. In October he was promoted to the rank of corporal and in December came to Nijmegen with his combat unit to prepare for Operation Veritable. The battle for Zandpol on February 8 was unfortunately fatal for James. He was only 24 years old and unmarried. When the sad news reached Canada, his father was 54 years old and his siblings between the ages of 19 and 32.

For his service to Canada, Corporal James Christie Brown received the following awards: the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



James Brown; the saying at the bottom of the tombstone is a remembrance provided by the family

Robert Graham Creighton (Service number G-23241)

Robert Creighton was born on June 2, 1908, in Ferry Road, New Brunswick, Canada. His father Isaac Creighton died of a heart attack in 1920 when Robert was only 11 years old. Four years later, his mother Susan remarried David Bass and moved to Douglastown with Robert and his two-year-old brother Gordon. There Robert went to work in the paper and lumber industry after elementary school. The family were members of the Presbyterian Church. In June 1941, Robert signed with the Canadian Army and left for England, where he received his military training. He was injured during training and was in hospital for a while. Starting July 3, 1944, he

took part in the Allied advance along the French coastline and in October he reached Belgium. There he fought in the famous battle for the Scheldt and became acquainted with amphibious warfare. All this time he was part of the North Shore Regiment. When the entrance to the port was captured in November, Antwerp became the important supply port for the Allies. This gave a powerful impetus to the recovery of Western Europe.

Robert Creighton's army unit was then transferred to the Nijmegen region to regain strength and prepare for the Rhineland Offensive. During that time, he became a valued family friend of the Bartels family in Nijmegen. On February 8, 1945, Robert was assigned to 'B' Company of the North Shore Regiment, which would carry out the attack on Zandpol. The Germans had turned this small collection of workers' houses into a reinforced machine gun nest. Robert, who had the rank of lance corporal, was in the same unit as Louis Walsh who died in the German minefield under the Duffeltdijk. Fate was against him that day. Robert was 36 years old and unmarried. A sad coincidence was that Robert was granted leave just a few days after the advance to Keekerdome for a family visit to Canada, where his mother Susan and brother Gordon were looking forward to his visit. His mother died three weeks after Robert. Perhaps she was already ill in February which might have been the reason for Robert's planned leave.

Robert Creighton was awarded the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939-1945, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



Robert Creighton

C O P Y

Nijmegen 22-12-46

Dear famili.

It is for me very difficult to write a letter. I hope that you can understand what I write, do not look for mistakes.

I never have lerned English allone from the soldiers they are in our home.

I try to find out your address it adress from Roberts sister Robert was a frind our famili every evening he comes in our home about 27 months and now a have find his burial place I am tending that .

I know that he was kild his frind came back and he told us that.

I tell you all from Robert when I get your adress. It is very difficult to find out it but I hope that you get this letter.

This letter goes first to England and they find out it adress. Send me please back a letter. Robert was our frind and we will are your frind to. I will tending as long as I can your brothers grave.

The best wishes for you of his familie from your affectionate frind.

Sgd. Lida

Miss L. Bartels,
Broerweg 61,
Nijmegen, Holland.

Lida Bartels' letter to Robert Creighton's family about adopting his grave

George William Daigneault (Service number D-143389)

George William Daigneault was born on April 26, 1925, into a Roman Catholic working-class family in Lennoxville, Quebec, Canada. His parents were George Dominic and Mary Ellen Daigneault, and the family had seven children: four boys (besides George they were Forest, Joseph Wesley and Joseph Glen) and three girls (Doreen, Dora and Laura). George was the third (middle) child. After completing school, he chose a profession in metal working and worked as a

millwright for a year and a half. He joined the Canadian army in October 1943 as an 18-year-old and was in training in Canada until mid-June 1944. He was then transferred to England for an additional month of training. On July 23, 1944, he joined the North Shore Regiment in Northwest France to help liberate Western Europe as a regular soldier. His unit ended up in Nijmegen at the end of 1944 to practice and lead in Operation Veritable. Their orders on February 8, 1945, were to take Zandpol and Kekerdom. Fate proved fatal for George William Daigneault, and he was killed in the fighting on that day. He was only 19 years old and unmarried. His parents were 50 and 44 years old respectively at the time of his death, and his siblings were aged 14 to 21. George Daigneault was awarded the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal 1939-1945, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



George Daigneault

Richard James Everett (Service number G-2556)

Richard James Everett was born on March 10, 1925, in Carlingford-Andover, New Brunswick, Canada. His parents, Lloyd Elmer and Elizabeth Maud Everett, owned a farm. The family had nine children, five boys (besides Richard they were William, Lloyd, John, and Donald) and four girls (Ruth, and three married sisters: Mrs. Edward Wetmore, Mrs. Cashman Patterson and Mrs. George Brown). Richard was the seventh child. The family were members of the Anglican Church. After his schooling, Richard went to work on the farm and as a forest worker; his father had passed in 1936 when Richard was eleven.

In December 1943, the 18-year-old unmarried Richard decided to enlist in the army and contribute to the liberation of Western Europe. After military training in Canada, he left for England in July 1944 for additional training. On August 17, 1944, he joined the liberation army in France as a regular soldier. His unit of the North Shore Regiment fought its way through

northwestern France and Flanders. After a rest and exercises in Nijmegen, his army unit arrived on 8 February 1945 to overrun the enemy at Zandpol and Kekerdom along the south bank of the Waal. Richard James Everett was killed this chilly winter day in the fierce fighting, only 19 years old. His mother Elizabeth was 56 years old at the time and his siblings between 15 and 32 years.

Richard Everett was decorated with the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. Richard's brother, the 21-year-old Lloyd, had also enlisted in the army and fortunately returned home safely from the war.



Richard Everett



Family grave of Lloyd and Elizabeth Everett in Perth-Andover with Richard's name also listed, incidentally with incorrect year of death.

René Joseph Légère (Service number G-2841)

René Joseph Légère was born on March 15, 1925, in a Roman Catholic mining family in Minto, New Brunswick, Canada. His father and mother, Patrick and Emily Légère, had a large family with eight boys and three girls. René was their second child. After finishing school, René went to work in the coal mine and in 1942 he earned a living as a truck driver

As an 18-year-old unmarried youth, he decided in February 1943 to join the army and take part in the liberation of Western Europe. After six months of military training, he was sent to England in October 1944. René then joined the *North Shore Regiment* in November 1944 as a regular soldier to fight in the battle for the Scheldt. He then moved with his unit to Nijmegen to take part in Operation Veritable. On February 8, 1945, René's army unit set out from Erlecom to clear Zandpol and Kekerdom. He belonged to the unit of Louis Walsh who unfortunately died in the minefield below the Duffeltdijk.

René Légère was only 19 years old when he died. His parents were 47 and 46 years old respectively, while his siblings then ranged in age from 7 to 22 years. Two brothers, Luke and Maxime, had also enlisted in the Canadian army and fortunately returned home safely from the battlefields in Europe.

René Légère was decorated with the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. In the Légère family, the war was never discussed again. Both brothers who returned were also silent about their war experiences, even if it was insisted on by the younger generation.



René Légère

Gordon William Lindsay (Service number G-51438)

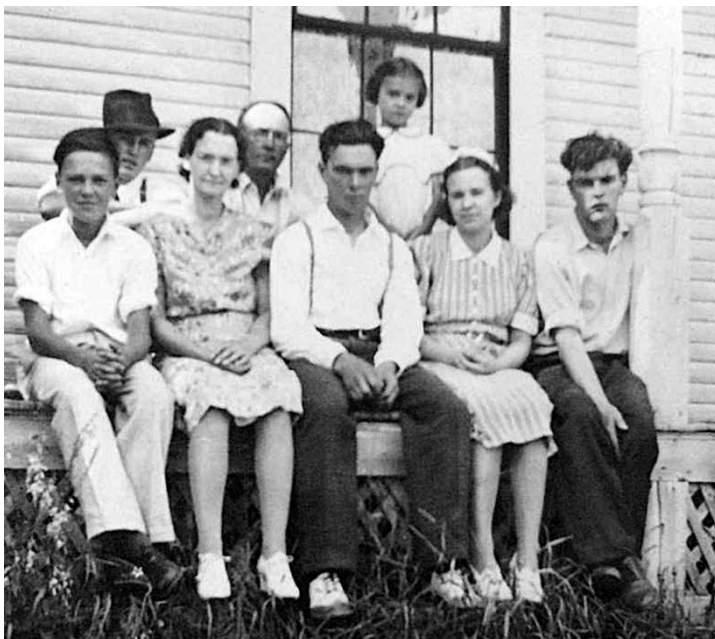
Gordon Lindsay was born on March 10, 1924, to a Protestant farming family in Old Ridge, New Brunswick, Canada. His parents were Arthur Lloyd Lindsay and Mina Pearle Lindsay. The family consisted of four boys (Elbridge, Vincent, Gordon and Hazen) and two girls (Pearle and Elizabeth). Gordon was the middle child of the family. After completing school, Gordon went to work on the farm and as a truck driver.

In January 1943, the unmarried Gordon joined the army, following in the footsteps of his brothers Elbridge and Vincent. After six months of training, Gordon left for England in July 1943 to further prepare for participation in the liberation of Western Europe. Brother Elbridge chose the same route, while Vincent joined the Navy. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Gordon and Elbridge stormed the Normandy beach at Saint Aubin-sur-Mer with their units of the North Shore Regiment and survived that perilous adventure. 34 comrades-in-arms were killed and 90 were wounded. A short time later, both Gordon and Elbridge were wounded in new fighting. Gordon had to go to England temporarily for recovery, while Elbridge's injuries were so severe that he had to return to Canada and suffered severely from his war wounds for the rest of his life.

In August Gordon returned to his NSR unit, which then fought its way north, along the Channel coast towards Belgium. In October 1944 he took part in the Scheldt offensive that, after a month of heavy fighting, drove the enemy out of the Scheldt estuary and promoted Antwerp to an important Allied supply port. Gordon's detachment was then transferred to Nijmegen for a well-deserved rest and to prepare for Operation Veritable. The winter months in Nijmegen were filled with exercises. Gordon Lindsay was assigned to the platoon of Lieutenant Blake Oulton of 'B' Company, who launched the attack along the southern Waaldijk on February 8, 1945.

Unfortunately, he died on the first day of that attack along the Duffeltdijk. Gordon was 20 years old and at the time of his death his parents were 46 and 47 years old and his siblings between the ages of 10 and 26. Fortunately, his brothers Elbridge and Vincent survived the war.

Corporal Gordon Lindsay was decorated with the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal 1939-1945 and with the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



A 1939 photo of the Lindsay family. Gordon is in the back row with hat, Vincent in front middle, Elbridge on the right.



Gordon Lindsay in army uniform



Basil Lewis Marchbank (Service number G-12225)

Basil Lewis Marchbank was born on January 31, 1918, near Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada. His parents were Hudson James Marchbank and Violet May Marchbank. He had two older sisters. The family was a member of the Salvation Army and lived on a small farm on the outskirts of Saint John. Basil went to school until he was 16 and then worked in the lumber industry. In 1940, at the age of 21, Basil decided to join the army and serve his country in World War II. His plan was to return to his parents' farm after the war and build a life as a house painter.

After lengthy military training, he arrived in England in April 1944. On July 13, 1944, he joined the North Shore Regiment in France and was wounded nine days later. For recovery he went back to England where he spent a month in hospital and then received two months of military training. In November 1944 he rejoined his North Shore Regiment and finally ended up with his unit at Nijmegen to take part in Operation Veritable. On February 8, 1945, his unit was ordered to capture Zandpol and Kekerdom. But the German resistance was fierce and 27-year-old Basil Marchbank did not survive this attack. Basil was unmarried. His parents were 66 and 52 years old at the time and his sisters 34 and 30.

Basil Lewis Marchbank has been awarded the France and Germany Star, the 1939-1945 Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



Basil Marchbank



C O P Y NIJMEGEN, the 6th February, 1947

Dear Family:

With the Dutch people has arisen the desire not only to maintain a whole cemetery but also to accept a grave, which it can keep in fine order. This is done to give our thanks to the people who made us free.

I accepted the grave of B.L. Marchbank who is buried amidst 3000 other Canadian heroes at the Canadian Cemetery at the Levenheuvekenweg (seven hills road) at Groesbeek, near Nijmegen, Holland.

The cemetery is lying on a hill with magnificent surroundings, near the German frontier.

I have the intention to visit the grave of B.L. Marchbank several times; on his deathday, his birthday, or a national day, etc., and then to put some flowers at the place.

Further to look after contact with the relations by correspondence, so that you may have some idea of the person who is keeping up the grave of B.L. Marchbank and is honouring the remembrance of this Can. hero in your place here.

It is my duty in particular to do this, because I myself had much to suffer from the German intruder. Last year and a half I was locked up in a concentration camp and it were the Can. soldiers who set me free. The whole Dutch people admire the courage of the Canadians. We will never forget that.

To-day the 6th of February 1947 it was the deathday of Pte. B.L. MARCHBANK and therefore I visited his grave and placed some tulips on it. I selected the tulip because this flower is a typical Dutch one and my intention was to express the honouring of the whole Dutch people too of a man, who gave the greatest offer, his life, to give us back our freedom.

Please will you be so kind not to thank me. If there is someone who has to be thanked it will be you and your courageous people. Will you be so kind to write me a letter, something about Pte. Marchbank with his birthday and some other important days in his or his families life. We will learn each other by writing regularly and if you have some special wishes, will you let me know please.

Awaiting your letter with greetings,

Yours faithfully,

Jos Drukker,
Dealscheweg 259
NIJMEGEN, Holland.

Letter from 1947 about the adoption of Basil's grave. Nijmegen resident Jos Drukker came from a Jewish family of renowned furniture makers and barely survived the war. He was liberated by Canadian soldiers from Camp Westerbork and felt a deep connection with the Canadian liberators.

Edwin Stanley Smith (Service number C-123093)

Edwin Smith was born on October 26, 1923, in Apsley, Ontario, Canada, as the fourth child in a family that would eventually have seven children. His father Charles Smith was a trapper and earned money as a guide for hunters and fishermen. His mother Alice Smith was a housewife and ran the family. Edwin had four sisters (Rosalie, Lillian, Virgiena and Iris) and two brothers (Wilbert and Lewis). Later they lived in Peterborough, Ontario, and were members of the Anglican Church.

At the age of 15, Edwin finished his schooling and started working as an electrician. In 1943 he married Dorothy McInroy, but his young marriage did not stop Edwin Smith from volunteering with the Canadian Army in December 1943 at the age of twenty and opting for the adventure in Europe. After basic training in Canada, Edwin went to England in June 1944 for further training. On October 16, 1944, he crossed over to Belgium, where he joined the North Shore Regiment as a regular soldier to help liberate Belgium and the Netherlands. On February 8, 1945, at the age of 21, his life came to an end during the battles for Zandpol and Kekerkdom. At the time of his death, his parents were 53 and 55 years old, while his sisters and brothers ranged in age from 13 to 26 years. Even more dramatic was that Edwin's 18-year-old wife Dorothy was left with their five-month-old son Stanley. During the fighting in Europe, Edwin had become a father, but he had never had the chance to see his own child.

Edwin Stanley Smith was awarded the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



Edwin Smith

Louis Joseph Walsh (Service number G-50662)

Louis Joseph Walsh was born on May 23, 1916, in Chatham, New Brunswick, Canada. The family was catholic, and his parents were William and Ellen Walsh. Louis had two older brothers, William and Joseph, and five sisters. He was a great sports fan and loved to read. Louis was trained as a teacher and taught in Bathurst from 1936 to 1942. In August 1942, at the age of 26, he signed up with the army, where he received officer training in view of his age, and experience gained during his military service. His father and mother had already passed at that time.

In December 1943 Louis was transferred to England as a lieutenant to take part in the liberation of Western Europe. He first received extensive artillery training from the Royal Canadian Artillery in England and left for the front in November 1944. He was assigned to the North Shore Regiment, with whom he had already spent all his military service. That is how he ended up in Nijmegen to take part in the 'Big Push', as the soldiers called Operation Veritable. He belonged to the detachment that had to liberate Zandpol and Keekerdon on February 8, 1945. On that ominous day, Louis was killed when he and his unit, hampered by the flood, became entangled in a minefield at the bottom of the Duffeltdijk. He and four of his men were killed in the explosion and several comrades were wounded. Louis, who was known as a reliable officer who led his men in battle with confidence and knowledge, was 28 years old and unmarried.

Chaplain R.M.Hickey, who had had Louis as a student in 1934 and who accompanied the North Shore Regiment during the war, comforted the family in Canada by telling them that Louis had died prepared. He had received communion with his men in the morning before the battle. Officer Louis Joseph Walsh was awarded the 1939-1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the 1939-1945 War Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



Louis Walsh in military uniform

In unraveling this liberation history and in the search for the personal details and portrait photos of the fallen soldiers, dozens of people in the Netherlands and Canada have contributed to complete the picture:

- Alice van Bekkum (Faces to Canadian War Graves Groesbeek Foundation) provided some biographies and portrait photos of fallen Canadians.
- Hans van der Wiel, connoisseur of the Allied liberation operations in the region and author of the book 'Water als Wapen in Ooijpolder en Duffelt', put us on the right track with a first list of victims.
- Foundation Groesbeek Airborne Friends appealed to its Canadian contacts and supplied numerous photos and documents.
- Gerard Janssen, the son of Kekerdom diarist Gert Janssen and living in Canada since 1974, researched many Canadian sources and found the military career descriptions of the fallen.
- Gary Silliker, Canadian Armed Forces veteran, activated his informants in New Brunswick,
- Bruce Morton, host of the Facebook page North Shore New Brunswick Regiment Research, and son of Capt. Douglas Morton who with his unit of flail tanks cleared the access roads to Kekerdom on February 9, 1945, provided some biographies and photos.
- In addition, several mayors and city officials from the province of New Brunswick helped with the search for relatives of the fallen soldiers, including Peggy Doyle, John Walsh, Bradley Dryer, Harold Wright, Dan Dionne.
- Nelleke van der Pol helped with translation work.

The photographs and documents accompanying this chapter are mainly from various Canadian archives.

(Translation by Gerard Janssen)