



Alfred was born on November 9, 1924, in Toronto, Ontario. His parents were Alfred Alma and Ada Harriet Ablett. He had an older sister and a younger brother. The Ablett family were members of the Church of England.

When Alfred turned 18, he enlisted for active service two days later, on November 11, 1942. At the time, he was still studying at Northern Vocational High School in Toronto.

To assess whether a candidate was fit for military service, the so-called Pulhelm test was used, in which the soldier was assessed on seven factors and given a score. (P – physical capacity, U – upper extremity, L – locomotion, H – hearing, E – eyesight, M – mental capacity, S – stability of emotions). Alfred scored 1 (the highest possible score) on all factors. So Alfred was very welcome in the army.

He spent the first months of training in Toronto, followed by training centers at Camp Borden, Woodstock, and Hamilton. Alfred became a qualified mechanic and driver of wheeled vehicles. On March 22, 1944, he was given a few days' leave to prepare for his imminent transfer to Europe. On April 27, 1944, he left Nova Scotia by ship for the United Kingdom, where he arrived on May 4, 1944. After several more months of training in the UK, Alfred went to the front in France on September 1, 1944, as part of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment.

There, the Allies had just forced the Germans to surrender in the Falaise Gap, and the advance northward could begin. The "Linc's," with Alfred in their midst, were deployed in many liberation operations. They fought near Bergen op Zoom in November in the Battle of the Scheldt, and in January 1945, they were active in the Battle of Kapelsche Veer on the Meuse (Operation Elephant).

## Battle for Kapelsche Veer

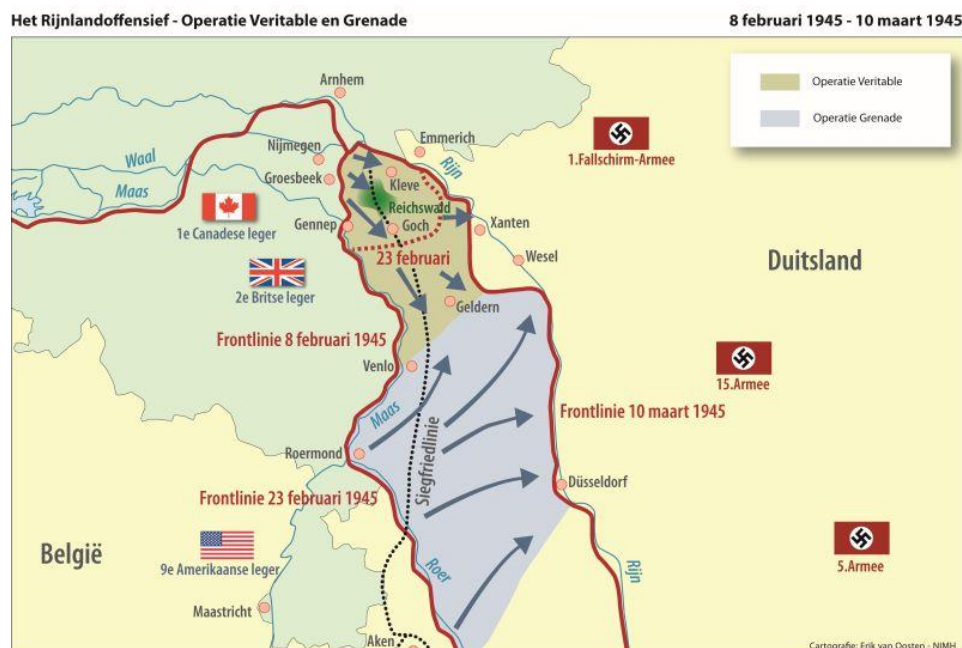
The Battle for Kapelsche Veer was a battle fought in the winter of 1944-1945 for Kapelsche Veer, a German bridgehead south of the Bergsche Maas, near the village of Capelle in North Brabant. After Polish and British units had unsuccessfully attempted to drive the Germans off the island, a massive attack on Kapelsche Veer by Canadian forces began in the early morning of January 26, 1945. The Allies mobilized a brigade of several thousand men. Among them were soldiers from the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, and the South Albertans, who attacked the "German" island from all sides. (Operation Elephant) The battle would continue for days and claim countless lives. In total, the battle cost around 1,200 military casualties: dead, wounded, missing, and prisoners of war.



*The Linc's after the battle for the Kapelsche Veer*

The battle was characterized by bloody combat in harsh winter conditions and was a battle for prestige between generals on both sides. The fighting ceased when, after a change of command, the German side issued an order to evacuate the bridgehead.

The Lincoln and Welland Regiment also saw action in the Reichswald (Germany) during the Rhineland Offensive. After the Nazis were pushed back beyond the Rhine, the regiment was able to cross the river and head for the Achterhoek region.



## Rhine Offensive

After the largely unsuccessful Operation Market Garden, a huge Canadian/British force of approximately 400,000 men and 35,000 vehicles was assembled in the Nijmegen area in the winter of 1944/1945. A similar American force gathered near Roermond. The goal was to push the German units back across the Rhine. On February 8, the Canadians and British launched their attack on the Rhineland with Operation Veritable. They encountered fierce resistance in the Reichswald. It became the bloodiest battle ever fought on German soil. By March 10, the western bank of the Rhine had been almost completely cleared of German troops. Almost all the bridges over the Rhine had been blown up, with only the railway bridge at Remagen falling into American hands.

During the night of March 23-24, the Allies crossed the Rhine at Wesel and Rees with amphibious vehicles. On March 24, another 16,000 paratroopers landed on the other side of the Rhine. It was the largest single-day airborne operation ever. On March 29, the crossing of the Rhine is complete and the Rhineland is in Allied hands.

The Rhineland offensive claims 25,000 Allied and more than 60,000 German casualties.

The Allies advanced north via the Achterhoek region. In early April, Alfred and his unit stood at the Twente Canal near Delden (Ov). After a day and a night of heavy bombardment, a bridgehead was established over the canal, and the advance could continue.

After the liberation of Almelo and Coevorden, among other cities, the regiment advanced into Germany, towards Bremen, to deliver the final blow to the Nazis. During this advance, the Lincs faced another heavy setback, with dozens of casualties. Alfred survived all these confrontations until they reached the Küstenkanaal near Friesoythe (Niedersachsen, D.) on April 19, 1945. The canal crossing and the advance to Bad Zwischenahn became a hellish task due to the last desperate German resistance. In one of these battles Alfred was seriously wounded. He was taken to an emergency hospital but died of his wounds on May 5, 1945, the day German units finally surrendered.

## Küsten kanaal

The Küstenkanaal is a 69.5-kilometer-long canal connecting the Hunte River near Oldenburg with the Ems River near Dörpen, which has been expanded into the Dortmund-Ems Canal.

After the difficult crossing of the Ems on April 8, 1945, the approximately 100-meter-wide canal formed a considerable obstacle for the Allied troops advancing into Germany from the southwest.

Troops from the 4th Canadian (Armored) Division attacked the canal on April 19, 1945, and captured a bridgehead at the Edewechterdamm, after Polish formations from the 1st Armored Division had taken the earlier Canadian position at Dörpen, 50 km to the west.



Destroyed bridge in Edewechterdamm, behind the bridge build by the Allied forces.

The Polish troops established a bridgehead towards Papenburg after two days of fierce fighting.

The "Küstenkanal" was awarded as a "Battle Honour" to the following Canadian and Polish units that participated in actions near this canal:

British Columbia Regiment, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (Princess Louise's), Algonquin Regiment, Lake Superior Scottish Regiment, Lincoln and Welland Regiment, and the Royal New Brunswick Regiment, as well as the Polish 9th Light Infantry Battalion, 1



Alfred Ablett was initially buried at the temporary military cemetery in Friesoythe, Germany, where 117 Canadian soldiers were temporarily laid to rest.

On March 9, 1946, Alfred Alyma Frederick Ablett was reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Holten.

His grave is located in:

**plot 9, row A, grave 11**

*part of the temporary cemetery in Friesoythe*

He was posthumously awarded the following decorations: *1939-45 Star, France Germany Star, Defence Medal, War Medal, CVSM & Clasp.*



His parents chose the following inscription for his gravestone:

**The echo of his voice, his eyes, his smile, just as they were, are with us all the while.**



Bronnen: [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org); [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com); [www.canada.ca/library-archives](http://www.canada.ca/library-archives); project '44; Canadian virtual war memorial; wardiary Lincoln & Welland Reg.; archief ICB en omroep Brabant.