

Pte Leon Dalbert Alward

9-C-3



Leon Dalbert Alward was born 27th December, 1921 in Hicksville, New Brunswick to Weldon and Wavie Alward. Leon eventually moved to Havelock, New Brunswick with his five brothers, three sisters and parents before enlisting. He worked on the family farm for five years prior to enlistment and did lumber work in the winter from 1938-1940 earning a wage of ten dollars a week. Leon completed nine years of public schooling.

Leon was involved with different sports and physical activities. He played defense in hockey and was the catcher for his baseball team. Leon also enjoyed swimming and skating. He came from a Baptist family. In his enlistment papers he stated that he'd like to

become a motor mechanic in place of a farmer. Leon was described as an all-around good guy in his military file and was a pleasure to be around.

At the young age of 19, Leon enlisted on 5 July, 1940 in Saint John, New Brunswick. He was in good physical shape at 5'11", 175 pounds. Leon was single at the time of enlistment and indicated that his mother was his next of kin. He also shared a joint bank account with his mother. He joined the army for patriotic reasons. Upon enlisting, he became part of the Saint John Fusiliers.

Military Movements: During training in Saint John, Leon passed an anti-gas course and received his class three motorcycle license. In September, 1942 he went to Halifax in preparation for serving in Europe. On 29th September, 1942 he left for England to continue training. He arrived in England on the 7th of October, 1942. While in England, Leon served with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry.⁴ In January 1944, he was taken on strength by the New Brunswick Rangers (12 Independent Machine Gun Company). He left the United Kingdom on July 20th, 1944. This was what he had been training for; the opportunity to make a difference and represent our Canadian troops. Leon arrived in France on July 22, 1944. Sadly, Leon Alward would not make the trip home to Canada.

The Final Days: April, 1945 is remembered as the month of the liberation of Holland, "the sweetest of springs." Even with the liberation of Holland, life was still bittersweet for the soldiers implicated, Leon's included. During the first two weeks of April, the Canadians moved swiftly into Holland and Germany. The 3rd Canadian Division saw action on the 1st of April. The 7th Brigade ran into resistance in the village of Wehl. The battle for Wehl was textbook procedure for the approach of contact and elimination of an isolated point of resistance. Intelligence assumed that Zutphen and the end of the Twente Canal would be the next German defensive position, so the 3rd Division left Wehl and advanced to Zutphen. Elements from three Canadian divisions were headed for Zutphen. The Second Division made it there on 2nd April after a thirty-two kilometer run. The Royal Regiment of Canada delivered a practiced attack with help from the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry.

The operations taking place by the 2nd Canadian Corps during the first week of April were closely related to the plans of the 1st Canadian Corps. They wanted to capture Arnhem, rebridge the Rhine and open a major maintenance route for the Canadian and British armies.

On the date of Leon Dalbert's death, there was a battle in which the Canadians were implicated. It was the Battle of Friesoythe Germany. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada were involved in this battle along with the Lake Superior Regiment and the Lincoln and Welland Regiment. The liberation of Holland was on-going.

Lest We Forget: Leon Dalbert Alward was killed in action in Germany on 14th April, 1945. One of his older brothers, Wallace, was serving in Holland at the time of his death. He received the 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, War Medal, Defense Medal and the C.V.S.M Clasp for his unwavering service. He left his belongings and two-hundred and fifty dollars in Victory Bonds to his mother, Wavie Alward. Leon is buried at the Holten Canadian Military Cemetery in Holland in grave 3, row C, plot 9 along with 1,392 other Commonwealth soldiers. He was only twenty-three years old when he gave his life for our freedom, fulfilling his patriotic desire to do what was right, in the name of our country.

