

## Bowers, William Henry. Private.

9-G-8



William Henry Bowers was born on November 11, 1923, in Bancroft, Ontario.  
The son of Simon Henry and Jessie Florence Bowers (McMillan).

William had two sisters and two brothers.  
English was spoken at home.  
When he registered on March 9, 1942, William stated that he had work experience.  
He did not specify where or for how long.  
His medical report states that he had gray eyes and brown hair.  
A notable feature: a scar on his right shin.

Under "church," he stated that the family was a member of the Gospel Brethren.  
Prior to his enlisting William had completed a 30-day training course with the Hastings & Prince Edward Regiment in the summer of 1941.

William's military career in 1942 began at No. 2 District Depot in Toronto.  
In mid-June 1942, he was transferred to Guelph, Ontario, for further basic training.

*(Note: Dutch soldiers recruited for deployment to the Royal Brigade Princess Irene in England were also trained in Guelph for a long time.)*



Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands in Guelph

In August, William left for Camp Borden, Ontario, for further training.

The following month, he was hospitalized with pneumonia.  
In early November 1942, back with his unit, he was granted a two-weeks leave.

Apparently, William struggled with the regulations and organization of the armed forces. Mid-December 1942, his records read:  
"a total of 33 days without pay due to "Absent Without Leave" (AWL) and shortages of the equipment provided."

He remained at Camp Borden and, in May 1943, faced another significant setback.  
He received no pay for seven days and was confined to the barracks for seven days.  
This was again due to equipment shortages.  
In September 1943, William was granted a few weeks' leave.

Apparently, William also granted himself leave around the turn of the year 1943/44.  
It was recorded that he had been "AWL" for more than 10 days.  
Consequences: 11 days of detention and his pay was withheld.

At the end of April 1944, William departed for the United Kingdom via Camp Debert.  
He landed there on May 8, 1944.

He was assigned to a reinforcement unit until June 1944, when he was taken on strength by the Lincoln & Welland Regiment. (L&W)

With the L&W Regiment, he landed in France on July 25, 1944.

During the fighting in Normandy, William was wounded on August 9, 1944, in the fighting near Grainville.

He was transferred to the United Kingdom for hospitalization.

No information about the nature of his injuries can be found in his files.

On October 28, 1944, William was back on the mainland and assigned to a reinforcement unit for the L&W Regiment. He was taken on strength again by L&W Regiment on November 4, 1944.

At that time, the regiment was in full action during the Battle of the Scheldt.

The last week of January 1945 was an extreme one for the L&W men, including William. During five days, known as the "Battle of Kapelsche Veer", the regiment lost 183 men, 50 of whom were killed. During the relative quiet time afterward, the L&W regiment suffered 13 casualties during various patrols.

The next action William and the regiment participated in was the Rhineland Offensive. Starting with Operation Veritable on February 8, 1945. Short but intense for the regiment, it suffered 164 casualties in "only" three days of fighting.

Early April 1945, the L&W Regiment marched through the eastern part of the Netherlands. Advancing north to the Twente Canal and the city of Lochem. However orders changed and the regiment turned east towards Delden.

The L&W was ordered to launch an attack to cross the Twente Canal south of Delden. They succeeded at the cost of many wounded and thirteen killed. William Henry Bowers was among the thirteen killed.

He was given a temporary grave near Delden. The CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten became his final resting place. Reference: plot 9, row G, grave 8.

*He was awarded:*

*The 1939-1945 Star; the France-Germany Star; the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.*

