

Coomber, Ernest Wilson

Private

The Loyal Edmonton Regiment

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

D/166919



Ernest Wilson Coomber was born 20 June 1923 at West Hamilton, Ontario (ON). His parents Ernest ("Ernie") Edward Coomber and Mary Isabel Ferguson, both of English descent, were married at Dundas, ON in 1921.



Mary Ferguson Coomber

Ernie farmed in West Flamborough Township near Dundas and worked as a delivery man for Valley City Dairy. The Baptist Coomers had three sons: Ernest, Norman and William.

Ernie Coomber

Ernest attended Dundas Baptist Sunday School as a boy. His sports were hockey and rugby. His hobby was collecting old arrowheads, flints and skinning knives. After finishing six years education at a country school plus another two years in a city school, Ernest quit to work full time helping his father.





Hamilton Bridge Company, Hamilton, ON

Ernest joined the Royal Canadian Artillery 102nd Field Battery Militia April 1940 and had three summer camps at Niagara, ON with them, advancing in rank to Lance Bombardier. He gained employment as a shaper hand in the machine shop with Hamilton Bridge Company, which produced armoured vehicle hulls and nesting barges during WW2.

Ernest attested for active service 28 October 1942 at Montreal, Quebec (QC) age 19. He was then 5'6" tall, 129 lbs with blue eyes. The Army Examiner remarked about Ernest: "Has great learning ability. Is ambitious. Drives – 6 years experience, does minor repairs. Very much interested in learning more about mechanics... Good NCO (Non Commissioned Officer) material. Above average intelligence".

Ernest was allocated to the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps (R.C.O.C.), which was tasked with procurement, maintenance and repairs for the Canadian Army. He was sent to St. Johns, QC for basic training 21 November 1942 and received New Years leave time. Ernest returned to the R.C.O.C. Depot at Montreal 27 January 1943 and spent 10 days admitted to St. Anne's Military Hospital that March for an appendectomy. He qualified as Driver Class III 14 May 1943 and was promoted to Lance Corporal 16 September 1943. Ernest was advanced again to acting Corporal 16 March 1944 and injured his right hand the next month while prying a jeep from the mud. Ernest was cleared for overseas service and granted special leave to return home May 1944. When back in Montreal he was reallocated to Infantry and

M.F.D. 571
REV. 1-1-44
R.C. 1728-244

REPORT ON INJURIES

Other than Wounds Received in Action
TO BE COMPLETED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE WITHIN 48 HOURS OF OCCURRENCE

1. Statement to be signed by injured officer or soldier:
 I, D-166919 G.P.L. COCHIBER Ernest
(or number) (or rank) (or description) (or name or full)
R.C.O.C. hereby declare that the injury sustained by me
(or rank) on the 11-4-44 date
(or date of receipt) time occur while I was in the performance of military duty.
E. Coomber
(Signature of officer or soldier)

I, P.O.D. 11-4-44
(date)
(Print and applicable to be traced out and initialed by Officer or Soldier signing)

2. (a) Description of injuries... Probable green wood fracture of lat. metatarsal and luxation of thumb. Swelling and pain of right hand.
 (b) Are the injuries serious or of such a nature that they may be the exciting cause of disability here?
 Yes
 No
 (c) Whether admitted in hospital or set in quarters?
 No. X-Ray taken.
 (d) How long before initial treatment was given?
 Immediately. (L. Ostiguy) Major, ROAMC

Taken 12-4-44 Signature of medical officer: (L. Ostiguy) Major, ROAMC
(date) (signature) (rank) (name) (signature)

3. Short statement by injured person of the circumstances of the injury (see instruction 6). Signed statements of witnesses, or of persons to whom the injured person may have rendered his injury, or be attached (see instructions 3 and 4):
 While prying a jeep from the mud my hand was crushed between a/m pry and a 4X4 scantling.
 It was reported to the M.O. immediately and received immediate first aid treatment.
 This accident happened April 11th, 1944 about 1630 hours in the Duquesne area.
E. Coomber
(Signature of officer or soldier)
Sgt. D. Sinclair
(Printed name of person to whom the injury was rendered)

reverted rank to Private 13 July 1944. Ernest joined the Training Brigade at Camp Debert, Nova Scotia later that month and volunteered to become a Paratrooper. Although he was considered to be suitable, he was not accepted due to a lack of training facilities. Ernest trained with the Victoria Rifles at Debert that fall and disembarked in the UK 28 November 1944 where he reported to the Canadian Infantry Training Regiment.

He was selected for duty as a replacement soldier with 1st Canadian Infantry Division which was engaged in the Italian campaign. Ernest disembarked in Italy 24 January 1945 and was taken on strength by the Loyal Edmonton Regiment (LER) 14 February 1945.

The LER, also known as the 'Loyal Eddies' formed part of 2nd Brigade with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada. 2nd Brigade and 1st Canadian Infantry Division (1CID) had served in the Italian campaign since summer 1943. When Ernest joined them they were in the process of being redeployed to Northwest Europe under Operation GOLDFLAKES.



Allied ship loaded with vehicles and supplies entering Marseilles, France Harbour 1945 during Operation GOLDFLAKES

Ernest disembarked with his regiment at Marseilles, France 15 March 1945 and travelled in convoy with 1CID to Belgium.

The Loyal Eddies and 2nd Brigade crossed the Ijssel River between Zutphen and Deventer in the Netherlands 11 April 1945 to support 3rd Canadian Infantry Division. They deployed into position as a bridgehead on the left flank of the Seaforths on the west side of the Ijssel by 0145 hours 12 April. "C" Company then relieved a company of Seaforths. A pontoon bridge was rapidly constructed and all necessary battalion vehicles were able to cross by 0315 hours. The LER "A" Company advanced south at 1430 hours 12 April 1945, supported by artillery fire and a troop of tanks to attack the enemy positioned at a dyke wall west of the river. They captured 13 prisoners. "D" Company made a similar advance, using mortars and flame throwers. "B" Company then made their advance and by 1715 hours were firm on their objectives. Ernest Coomber was one of several LER casualties that day, killed in action age 21.

Private E.W. Coomber was temporarily buried at Gorssel, Netherlands and later relocated to Holten Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **II. D. 13**.

Photo Credit lestweforget1945.com

The inscription on his headstone:

TO THEE
WE LEAVE HIM, LORD, IN TRUST.
"GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN
THAN THIS"

Ernest Coomber's campaign medals:

- 1939-1945 Star
- Italy Star
- France-Germany Star
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal/Clasp



Ernest Coomber's name is listed with their local WW2 fallen on the Dundas War Memorial in Hamilton, ON.

Dundas War Memorial, Hamilton, ON



Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Newspapers.com

Ancestry.com

Hamilton Bridge Company information and photo <https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/industrial/bridgeworks.htm>

The Loyal Edmonton Regiment cap badge picture
<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/official-military-history-lineages/lineages/infantry-regiments/loyal-edmonton.html>

The Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum
<https://www.lermuseum.org/news/72-world-war-2-remembered-loyal-edmonton-regiment-1945-q2>

Operation GOLDFLAKE information and photo
<https://www.silverhawkauthor.com/post/operation-goldflake-i-canadian-corps-move-from-italy-to-northwest-europe-1945>

Dundas War Memorial photo <https://ontariowarmemorials.blogspot.com/2017/04/>

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl

Dundas Soldier Killed

A Dundas soldier, Pte. Ernest Coomber, is reported to-day to have given his life in the fighting on the western front. Major W. G. Whiteside, this city, is now known to have been severely wounded during the action in which Lieut.-Col. Frederick Wigle, O.B.E., O.C. the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (P.L.) was killed. A Hamilton soldier is listed as wounded for the third time and another local man is reported seriously ill as the result of wounds.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Coomber, York road, Dundas, have received word that their son, Pte. Ernest Coomber, has been killed on the western front. He was born in Dundas 21 years ago and attended the Dundas Public School and was a member of the Dundas Baptist Sunday School. Pte. Coomber was a member of the 102nd Reserve Battalion until his enlistment September, 1941, received his training at Montreal and went overseas November, 1944. At the time of his

Courtesy Canadian Virtual War Memorial

COOMBER, Mary Isobel — At St. Joseph's Hospital on Wednesday August 11, 1976, Mary Isobel Ferguson. Beloved wife of Ernest Coomber, of 34 Central Park, Dundas, in her 76th year. Dear mother of Norman of Oakville, and Bill of Waterdown and sister of Mrs. George Turnbull of Dundas and Mrs. Hebe Tinning of Burlington. Also surviving are seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Friends may call at the Cattel and Eaton Funeral Home, 53 Main Street, Dundas. Service Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Interment Grove Cemetery. Memorial donations to the Heart Fund would be appreciated.

Hamilton Spectator 1976

COOMBER, Ernest Edward — Suddenly at the St. Joseph's Hospital on Sunday, March 22, 1987, beloved husband of May L. Robinson (nee Millward) and the late Mary I. Ferguson (1976) of Hamilton (formerly of Dundas), in his 89th year. Dear father of Norman of Oakville, William of Waterdown, Ernest, predeceased, and Wesley Robinson of Hamilton. Loved grandfather of nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Brother of Allan of Windsor, Dora (Mrs. Wilson MacFarlane Sr.), Dundas. Member of Valley Lodge #100 A.F. & A.M., Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix, Hamilton Scottish Rite. Honourary Life Member of Royal Canadian Legion Br. #36, Dundas and employee of Valley City Dairy and Mountainview Dairy, retiring after many years of service. Friends will be received by the family Monday evening from 7 till 9 and Tuesday from 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. at the Cattel, Eaton & Chambers Funeral Home, 53 Main Street, Dundas, where Service will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Interment Grove Cemetery. Expressions of sympathy to the Heart and Stroke Foundation would be appreciated.

Hamilton Spectator 1987