



It was a large family in which Robert Norman Currie was born on February 26, 1921.

His father (71 years old) and his mother (57 years old) had already had 9 children. Robert had four older brothers, three of whom had already been on duty and also five sisters.

His religious affiliation was recorded as: Church of Christ (Scientist). The family lived in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. He had completed school up to grade 6 and gave his profession as "labourer", where he had worked and what kind of work he had done is not clear. His medical report stated that he was over 1.70 m tall and had grey eyes.

Shortly after the German invasion of Poland, he voluntarily joined the Canadian army on July 3, 1940. His enlistment form records that he was born in 1921, but later forms read 1924 as his year of birth. One of his sisters later also stated that Robert was only 16 years old when he enlisted. His headstone reads that he was 21 years old when he died of wounds in 1945. It is likely that he pretended to be older than he actually was when he enlisted.

Robert's first experiences with the army were in Winnipeg. Apparently, he had to recover from the first efforts; in November 1940 he had given himself an extra "time off". Consequences: Confined to Barracks for 2 days and 4 days' no pay.

In the last week of December that year he was officially granted leave.

Upon his return, Robert was temporarily assigned to a District Depot. It soon became clear why: the note stated that he was preparing for a special mission. He left for Halifax to be transferred to the United Kingdom, where he arrived on February 18, 1941 and was stationed in Camp Witley, Surrey, England.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, three camps were rebuilt by the British for use by Canadian troops and to train the local Home Guard. Witley was involved with the disastrous Canadian Army landings at Dieppe and was used as a holding area in the lead up to D-Day. In Witley, Robert was assigned to the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada (QOCH of C).

The information after that is somewhat vague. He enjoyed a number of leaves in 1941 and 1942.



Robert in uniform with his mother, sister and her daughter

On 18 August 1942 he embarked for France and was back two days later. Robert had participated with the regiment in the dramatic attack on Dieppe in France.

To clarify:

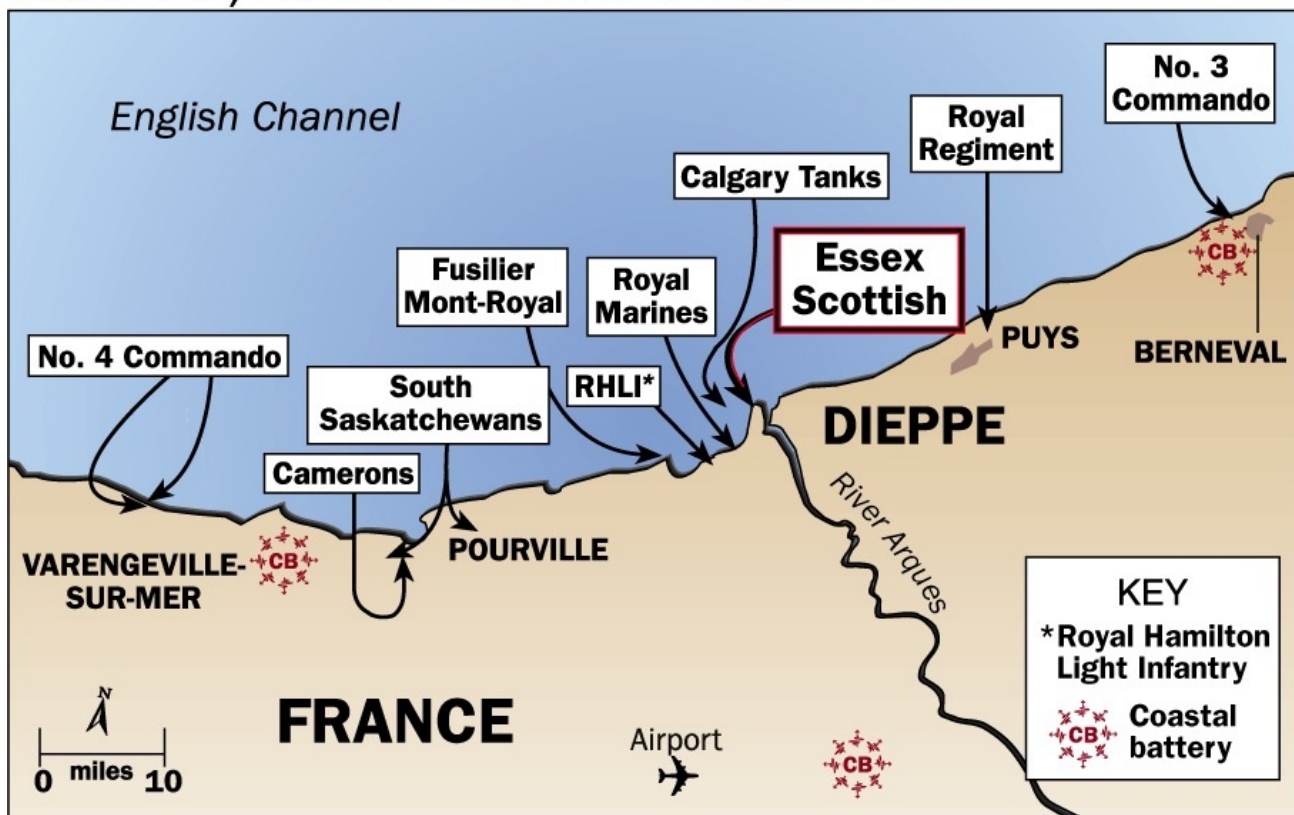
The Raid on Dieppe, Operation Jubilee, was an Allied attack on the German-occupied port of Dieppe, located on the French coast, that took place on 19 August 1942. The attack was carried out by over 6,000 infantry soldiers, mainly Canadians, supported by British naval and air contingents.

The attack was generally regarded as a tactical disaster, as none of the main objectives were achieved. Of the 6,086 men who reached the shore, 4,384 were killed, wounded or captured. The Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) lost 119 aircraft, while the Royal Navy suffered 555 casualties.

The QOCH of C went in with 503 men, in total 268 men returned after the mission.

Balance: killed in action: 60 men, died of wounds: 8 and died while Prisoner of War: 8 men.

AUG. 19, 1942 - OPERATION JUBILEE



Robert remained in the United Kingdom after surviving the Dieppe raid. Still very young, he was replaced in March 1943 to the "Sniper School" of the 2nd Division. Notes on Robert's achievements: Shooting: 90%; map reading 80%; fieldcraft 60%, average: 80%. Although recommended for Lance/Corporal, he remained a Private at his own request.

Robert landed in France on July 8, 1944. He was again on the list of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. As of September 1, 1944 Robert was again appointed to be a Corporal. On September 13, it was reported that he had been wounded. The nature of this is unclear.

Robert undoubtedly experienced the entire advance of the regiment.

Including the actions at Falaise, Dunkirk and Woensdrecht.

With the enemy south of the Maas River defeated, the Canadians moved northeast into the Nijmegen Salient, along the German-Dutch frontier, where they dug in for the winter. The Camerons took up positions along the edge of the Reichswald, the northern hinge of the Siegfried Line, near Mook on November 8, 1944.

Movement by day was impossible as the enemy held positions only 50 to 200 yards.

On December 27, 1944, the records stated that Robert had been admitted to hospital. This time to No. 88 British General Hospital, which was, at the time, located in Boechout, Belgium. He was transferred once more to No. 77 British hospital near Ghent, Belgium. On 14 January 1945, he was again assigned to the Camerons' reinforcement unit.

Then, the Rhine offensive came for the regiment and for Robert too.

The Camerons joined in the second phase, Operation Blockbuster on February 26.

The Battalion objective was Calcar Ridge.

To clarify:

The Rhineland offensive was set up in three phases. After the partial failure of Operation Market-Garden, the German units were to be pushed back to behind the Rhine.

The first phase was "Operation Veritable", launched on February 8, 1945 with the attack on the Reichswald. After the capture of Kleve and Goch, the restart was made with "Operation Blockbuster" and "Operation Grenade".

In "Operation Blockbuster", the last line of defence west of the Rhine had to be broken through, in order to advance southwards along the Rhine to Xanten, and to make contact with the Americans advancing from the south.

For this, the Canadian army deployed no fewer than three British and Canadian armoured and five infantry divisions. Their main obstacle was the German defence line Schlieffen-Stellung, better known to the Canadians as the "Hochwald Layback".

The fighting continued until the Rhine was crossed with amphibious vehicles at Wezel and Rees during the night of 23rd to 24th March. In support, 16,000 paratroopers had landed on the eastern bank of the Rhine.

The largest Airborne action in one day. The crossing of the Rhine was completed on March 29, 1945. The toll: approximately 25,000 Allied casualties and approximately 60,000 German.

Next came the task of clearing east and northern Holland.

The Camerons, including Robert, having crossed the Rhine, advanced north -reaching Netterden, Holland on March 29, 1945. Netterden was surrounded and liberated the following day. Steenderen was captured on April 4. Next, a bridgehead was established on the northern bank of the Schipbeek canal.

A quick advance followed, north to Groningen. On the 16th of April 1945 Groningen was cleared. The Camerons swung east into Germany. Reaching Wildeshausen on April 21. He next advance to Oldenburg must have been fatal for Robert.

The only note that can be found in the records indicates that Robert died on April 28, 1945 from his injuries, hit in the head by shrapnel of an artillery shell.

He was given a temporary grave at Kirchhatten in Germany, his final resting place was CWGC Canadian War Cemetery Holten, grave reference X B 16.

Officially only 21 years old and already 4 tough years of war experience behind him.

He was awarded:

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

