

**PTE. LESTER DEWEY**

Lester James Dewey was born on Grand Bend Ontario, on 21 March 1921 and moved to St Marys, with his parents as a young boy. He graduated from St Marys collegiate in 1939 and for a brief period was employed at the A.E. Ravelle General Store at Grand Bend. Prior to 1936, he had been an underage militiaman with 3 (St Marys) Company of the 2nd Battalion Canadian Machine Gun Corps.

Lester enlisted in the Perth Regiment at Stratford on 18 September 1939 and served continually with the Regiment until his death in 1945. He was with the Regimental Depot in Stratford from 19 December 1939 to 30 March 1940, probably for basic training.

On 5 October 1941, the Perths were sent overseas. For the next two years, they were trained in England and Scotland before embarking for the Mediterranean Theatre in October 1943. An "original", Lester was with the Perths in almost every major action during the war. He fought at the Liri Valley 25 May to 1 June 1944, Ceprano 27 May 1944 and the Melfa Crossing 25 May 1944. On 27 July 1944 while the battalion was at a rest camp, Lester was admitted to 24 Field Ambulance with hepatitis, and was evacuated through 5 Casualty Clearing Centre, to 15 Canadian General Hospital at Caserta. Recovery was quick, and by 11 August 1944, he was back in the reinforcement stream, eventually returning to the Perths on 11 September just after the fight for the Gothic Line. Lester fought with the Perths that winter in the bloody conflict at the Lamone River in December 1944 and at Conventello 2-6 January 1945. In February 1945 the Perth Regiment was sent to North West Europe, where they were committed to action in Holland.

On 27 April 1945, the Perth Regiment was slowly advancing against fanatical German rearguards just outside of Delfzijl. Progress was slow. The Regimental History comments that "The slowly advance, with frequent casualties, went on for another three days of hard fighting with the naval guns on the dikes taking a persistent toll". Part of this toll, a few days before the end of the war, was Lester who was killed 27 April 1945.

Private Dewey was buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery. He was survived by his parents Simeon and Maurine Dewey of Elgin Street East, St Marys and later 113 Nelson Street Stratford. He was also survived by his brother Sherwood and his sister Doris. His younger brother Kenneth was killed in 1944 while serving with the Royal Air Force.

Lester Dewey is commemorated on the World War II plaque on the south wall of the St Marys Town Hall.



This photograph of Lester Dewey is a detail from a panoramic photograph of D company , Perth Regiment taken in Stratford December 20, 1939. The original is held at the Stratford-Perth Archives.

