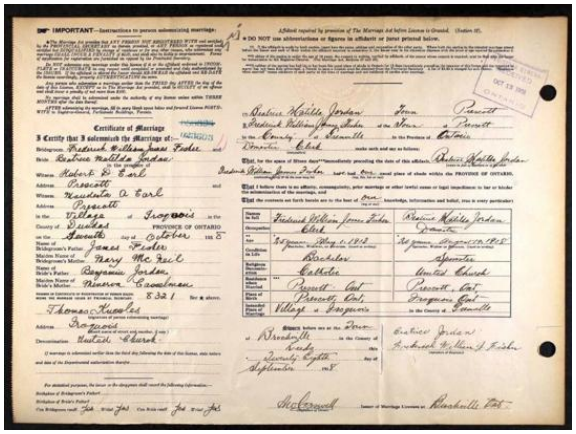
Fisher, Frederick William Private 10-D-5



Frederick William Fisher is born on May 1, 1913, in Prescott, Ontario. He likely went by the name "Fred," as he used this name when signing all official documents.



His marriage certificate in 1938 lists his given names as: Fredrick William James.
Fred is the son of James Francis Fisher and Mary Catharine Fisher (née McNeill).
He has one sister and two brothers.
The family is Roman Catholic, and English is their primary language.

After completing elementary school, Fred attends high school for one year.
On October 7, 1938, he marries Beatrice Matilda Jordan.
His occupation at that time is listed as "clerk."

Fred enlists for active service in the Canadian Army on June 30, 1944, in Kingston, Ontario.
By then, he is a father to a daughter named Helena. He states that he has previously worked for five years as a "weaver" at Superior Silk Mills in Prescott.
A note is added to his enlistment forms indicating that his civilian work experience is of minor relevance for military purposes.

During the 1940s, Superior Silk Mills Ltd. was a prominent textile factory located in Prescott, Ontario (situated at George Street / Centre Street). At the time, the factory played a crucial role in the local economy of Prescott—a town known as a true "needle-and-thread" hub, owing to its high concentration of clothing and textile manufacturers.

Fred must see the medical board before he is officially enlisted.
The report indicates that he is 5’5½” tall and weighed just over 134 lbs. He has green eyes and brown hair. It is also noted that he has a leaking heart valve, which has been detected during his childhood. For identification purposes, a vertical scar on his forehead is recorded as a distinguishing physical feature.
He is declared fit for military service.

Fred takes his first steps into military life at the district depot in Kingston. After a few weeks, he is transferred to St. Johns, Quebec, where he gets his basic infantry training. He remains there until mid-September 1944, by then he is transferred to Camp Farnham, Quebec. This facility was closed for a short period.
In early September 1944, it is reopened as a prisoner-of-war camp for German officers, and Fred is assigned to the guard detachment.

In early December 1944, he is granted embarkation leave. The crossing to the United Kingdom (UK) is imminent.

For Fred, Camp Debert is the next stop. Thousands of troops are assembled here in preparation for their departure to Europe.

On December 18, 1944, a large contingent of soldiers—Fred among them—board a troopship. On Christmas Day, December 25, he sets foot on land in the UK.
He is assigned to 3 C.I.T.R.

This stood for "No. 3 Canadian Infantry Training Regiment"—a key training and reinforcement unit within the Canadian Army.
In the autumn of 1944 (specifically around November), the Canadian Army was suffering heavy infantry losses in Northwest Europe, following the Normandy landings and the Battle of the Scheldt. Reinforcements were urgently needed.

In early February 1945, the harsh reality of the war draws closer for Fred.
He travels by ship to the theater of war on the mainland of Western Europe.
Thanks to the immense efforts of the Canadians in the southwestern part Netherlands, the port of Antwerp has been cleared; the reinforcement unit to which Fred belongs arrives there on February 12, 1945.

He is assigned to the Algonquin Regiment. Following this, Fred's file contains only a few more entries:
- April 17, 1945: wounded
- April 18, 1945: died of his wounds.

The war diary of the Algonquin Regiment provides some insight into what Fred endured during those few months in 1945.

From the beginning of December 1944, the regiment held a position in the Netherlands—roughly between Drunen and Waalwijk—as part of what was known as the Meuse (Maas) line.
The weather conditions were brutal during this severe winter, characterized by heavy frost and snow.
In late January or early February 1945, they were relieved and granted a period of rest. By then, preparations for the Allied Rhineland Offensive were already in full swing.

The Rhineland Offensive consisted of three phases:
Phase 1: The northern pincer and advance (Operation Veritable) – Beginning on February 8, 1945, British and Canadian forces launched an assault from the area around Nijmegen into the heavily defended Reichswald forest and the vicinity of Kleve, with the objective of clearing the territory between the Meuse and the Rhine.

Phase 2: The southern pincer and link-up (Operations Grenade and Blockbuster) – Starting on February 23, 1945, American units joined the offensive from the south (Operation Grenade). This was followed by Operation Blockbuster, aimed at defeating the remaining German units west of the Rhine and reaching the river.

Phase 3: The Rhine Crossing (Operations Plunder and Varsity) – On the night of March 23–24, 1945, the Allies crossed the Rhine in great strength near Rees, Xanten, and Wesel, supported by large-scale airborne operations (Operation Varsity).

On February 26 and 27, 1945, the regiment takes part in the assault on the so-called 'Hochwald Gap'
(the area between the Hochwald and the Balberger Wald).
Here, they encounter fierce resistance and suffer heavy casualties, particularly around the towns of Uedem and Veen in Germany.



Algonquin Regiment moving forward near the Hochwald Forest, Udem, Germany, March 1st, 1945.

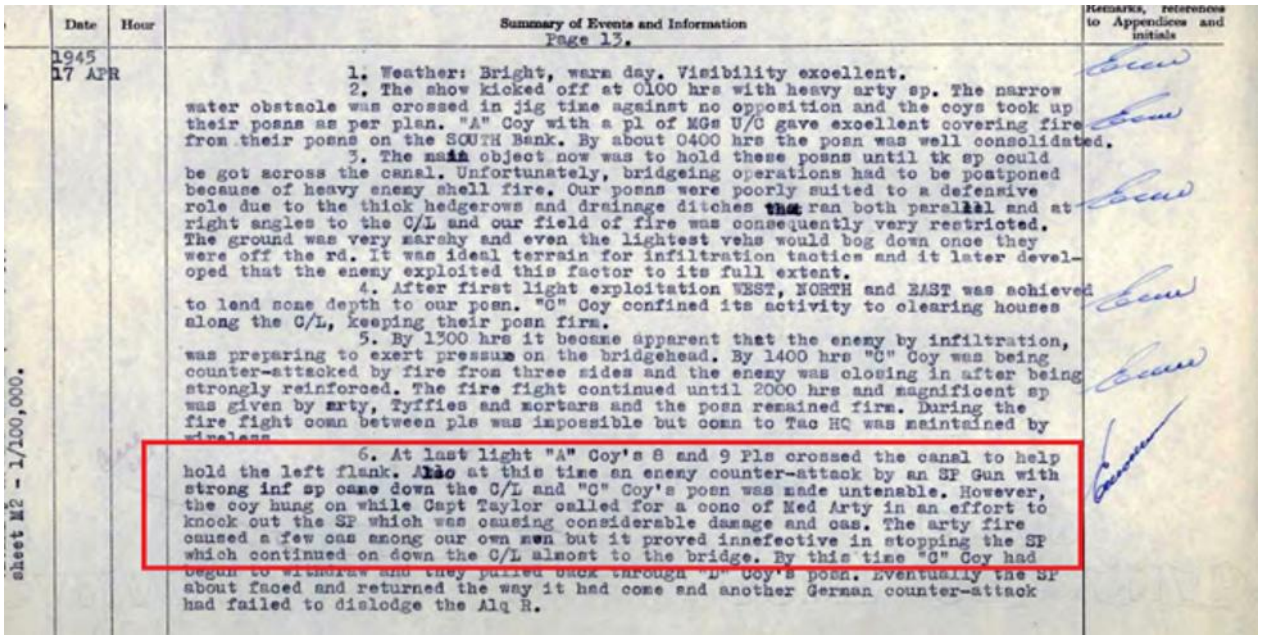
Photo by Jack H. Smith. Department of National Defence / National Archives of Canada, PA-192879.

Fred appears to have come through these battles relatively unscathed; there are no notations in his file to suggest otherwise.
On March 31, 1945, the regiment cross the Rhine. Subsequently, the Algonquins move into Dutch territory. Passing through places such as Millingen and Lochem, they head toward Bornerbroek (April 4, 1945).
A confrontation with the enemy near Wierden is imminent. The liberation of Wierden involves heavy fighting. Once again, luck seems to be on Fred's side.

The advance continues onto German soil. Esterwegen is reached on April 11, 1945. The Küstenkanal (Coastal Canal) is reconnoitered, and the regiment's next objective—following the crossing of the canal—is to secure the road toward Edewecht and Friesoythe.

In the early hours of April 17, 1945, the north bank of the canal is reached and a bridgehead established. By the afternoon, the unit faced counterattacks.
The Germans deployed heavy equipment, including a self-propelled armored howitzer. The resulting shelling causes several casualties.
Support is requested from their own artillery, but it proves largely ineffective.

The entries in the Algonquin Regiment's war diary state:



Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information Page 13.	Remarks, references to Appendices and initials
1945 17 APR		1. Weather: Bright, warm day. Visibility excellent. 2. The show kicked off at 0100 hrs with heavy arty sp. The narrow water obstacle was crossed in jig time against no opposition and the coys took up their posns as per plan. "A" Coy with a pl of MGs U/C gave excellent covering fire from their posns on the SOUTH Bank. By about 0400 hrs the posn was well consolidated. 3. The main object now was to hold these posns until tk sp could be got across the canal. Unfortunately, bridgeing operations had to be postponed because of heavy enemy shell fire. Our posns were poorly suited to a defensive role due to the thick hedgerows and drainage ditches that ran both parallel and at right angles to the C/L and our field of fire was consequently very restricted. The ground was very marshy and even the lightest vehs would bog down once they were off the rd. It was ideal terrain for infiltration tactics and it later developed that the enemy exploited this factor to its full extent. 4. After first light exploitation WEST, NORTH and EAST was achieved to land some depth to our posn. "C" Coy confined its activity to clearing houses along the C/L, keeping their posn firm. 5. By 1300 hrs it became apparent that the enemy by infiltration, was preparing to exert pressure on the bridgehead. By 1400 hrs "C" Coy was being counter-attacked by fire from three sides and the enemy was closing in after being strongly reinforced. The fire fight continued until 2000 hrs and magnificent sp was given by arty, Tyffies and mortars and the posn remained firm. During the fire fight comn between pls was impossible but comn to Tac HQ was maintained by wireless. 6. At last light "A" Coy's 8 and 9 Pls crossed the canal to help hold the left flank. Also at this time an enemy counter-attack by an SP Gun with strong inf sp came down the C/L and "C" Coy's posn was made untenable. However, the coy hung on while Capt Taylor called for a conc of Med Arty in an effort to knock out the SP which was causing considerable damage and cas. The arty fire caused a few cas among our own men but it proved innefective in stopping the SP which continued on down the C/L almost to the bridge. By this time "C" Coy had begun to withdraw and they pulled back through "D" Coy's posn. Eventually the SP about faced and returned the way it had come and another German counter-attack had failed to dislodge the Alq R.	

sheet N2 - 1/100,000.

However, a few casualties are reported among their own troops.

Shortly after noon, Fred is wounded; at the first-aid post, it is determined that he has sustained machine-gun wounds to his torso, right thigh, and right forearm.
He is transferred to the 15th Canadian Field Ambulance for further treatment.
Unfortunately, there is little that can be done for Fred.
At just before 7:30 a.m. on April 18, 1945, he succumbs to his injuries.

Private Frederick William Fisher is laid to rest in a temporary grave near Meppen, Germany.
His final resting place is at the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten: Plot 10, Row D, Grave 5.

He was awarded:
The 1939–1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal 1939–1945, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.

His headstone reads:
Our Hero
For ever remembered
Wife and Daughter
Mother and Father



Sources:
www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com;
www.canada.ca/library-archives; wikipedia, wartimesproject.com; War Diary Algonquin Regiment.