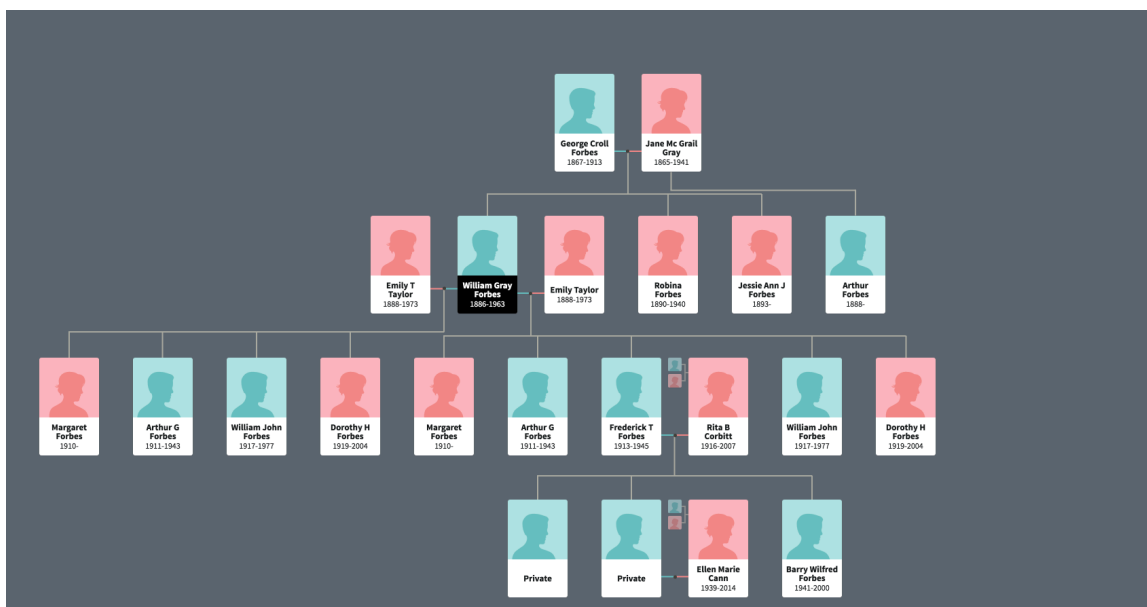


This resulted in an interesting journey as I discovered the fascinating story of **Frederick Taylor Forbes**.

Frederick Taylor Forbes was born at Toronto Ontario on the 27th day of July, 1913 and was the son of William Gray Forbes (1886-1963) and Emily Taylor Forbes (1888-1973) and was a member of the famed Black Watch (The Royal Highland Regiment of Canada). His military number was M/8915. He was killed on April 5<sup>th</sup> 1945 in Holland at the age of 31 years. He was survived by his wife Rita Blanche (nee Corbitt) Forbes (1916-2003) and three children: Kenneth Forbes and two twins Larry (1943-) and Barry Wilford Forbes (1943-2000).

William Gray Forbes and Emily Taylor Forbes had three other children: Margaret (1910), Arthur (1911) and Dorothy (1919). **Arthur Forbes** was also killed during WW II on the 13th day of August 1943 and is buried in Brookwood Cemetery just outside London England.



## A Strange Coincidence

I was born and raised in Medicine Hat and among other volunteer organizations, I became involved with the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Company as a Director. More recently, I was appointed Chairman of the History and Heritage Resource Management Committee. Over the years, I came to know a fellow named Ken Forbes, who was a longstanding volunteer with the organization. He had been a firefighter with the Medicine Hat Fire Department for over 30 years. Growing up, I had a vague recollection of him walking to work every day replete in his uniform. Although I knew who he was, we had never talked personally.

He was also knew him to be the father-in-law of a fellow Board member with Servus Credit Union, where I had served as Chairman for a number of years.

Upon undertaking to do this research, on a “whim”, I decided to give him a call to see if he had any knowledge about this fallen soldier, thinking he might somehow be related. I called and left a message and later that evening Ken returned my call. I briefly outlined the reason for my call explaining that I was doing some research in relation to **the Holten Canadian War Cemetery Project**.

We talked briefly and then I asked the penultimate question. There was a slight hesitation when I asked if he knew anything about a fellow named Frederick Taylor Forbes.

He said, *“Yes I do.....He was my Dad”!*

To say the least I was flabbergasted by this discovery and this revelation. We talked briefly regarding his father’s war effort and I promised that we would talk again as I continued on in my research.

What an amazing coincidence!

## **Fast Forward**

Another Medicine Hat resident was Cornelius (“Neil”) Ray Fast (1918- 2009) who also served in the Canadian army during World War II. He returned to Medicine Hat after the war and bring with him a war bride named Sarah Baird Kirkwood (1921-1953), who was originally from Glasgow, Scotland. They were married August 10, 1943 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Neil Fast returned to Medicine Hat as he had worked for the Murray Ranching Company before the war. Sarah soon became quite ill and the treatment in Canada was too costly and as a result, she and her husband, “Neil” and an adopted son moved to Glasgow, Scotland for medical treatment and where there was more family support available. Unfortunately, she passed away in Glasgow shortly thereafter. (July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1953)

Following her death in Glasgow, Neil reenlisted in the Canadian Army. He had been a member of the South Alberta Light Horse following the war and in addition had worked at the Medicine Hat Post Office. Prior to moving to Glasgow, he and Sarah were acquainted with and were friends of Rita Forbes. After the death of her husband, Frederick Taylor Forbes, Rita Forbes became a hairdresser working out of her own home situated at 143 7<sup>th</sup> St. SE. obviously in an effort to support herself and her three young children.

He was posted to Germany following his reenlistment and as he did not qualify for married quarters (not married at that time), his son went to live with an Aunt in Glasgow. Rita Forbes and Neil Fast apparently corresponded with one another while

he was in Germany.

After his posting to Germany, Neil was transferred back to London, Ontario (1957) and while on leave during the transfer, Neil and his son traveled to Vancouver to visit relatives. On their way to Vancouver by train, they stopped over in Medicine Hat and Neil had occasion to visit his “old” buddies with the SALH. In addition, he also visited and renewed his acquaintance with Rita Forbes.

The next year, Cornelius Ray Fast and Rita Forbes were married in London, Ontario.

They subsequently moved to British Columbia and Rita passed away in 2007 and Neil in 2009. Cornelius Ray Fast was returned home to Medicine Hat and was buried in Hillside Cemetery, a proper and fitting resting place.

Rita’s oldest son Ken Forbes purchased her house on 7<sup>th</sup> Street before she moved to London, Ontario and continues to reside there. He continues to be an active volunteer in his community.

This is another interesting twist to the life story of Frederick Taylor Forbes and reflects that despite the loss, life moves on in often unique and different ways.

NAME: Cornelius R. Fast

BIRTH DATE: 1918

DEATH DATE: 3 Jan 2009

CEMETERY: Hillside Cemetery

BURIAL OR CREMATION  
PLACE: Medicine Hat, Medicine Hat  
Census Division, Alberta,  
Canada

HAS BIO?: N

SPOUSE: Sarah B. Fast

## **But The Story Continues-The Holten Memorial Project**

The Holten Memorial Project is a volunteer project which is being spear-headed by a Dutch citizen, Jan Braakman, who is a journalist for a daily paper in the Netherlands and a volunteer researcher at the Canadian War Cemetery at Holten. He was born in Laren, Holland and like many people of Dutch descent, he has a very fond connection and a deep appreciation for their Canadian liberators.

As I mentioned, I sent an email to Mr. Braakman offering my services in locating the next of kin of the soldier buried in Holten. I received a very prompt reply, thanking me for my assistance.

In his response to my email, he offered the following,

*“I held a Remembrance Day reading in my town of birth (Laren) about 23 men, who gave up their lives during the liberation of Holland at Laren. One of the men, I mentioned was Fred Forbes, who was killed in action in Laren, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945. I also mentioned his brother, who was tragically lost his life in an*

*accident in England. I have written a piece about Fred Forbes and his brother on my website”*

Jan Braakman’s article concerning the Medicine Hat fallen soldiers, Arthur and Frederick Forbes, can be found by clicking on the link below. (For translation you can use the Google translation button located at the top right part of the page.) (<http://wp.janbraakman.nl/?p=101>)

This article demonstrates and is a clear reflection of the concerted effort on the part of many Dutch citizens to memorialize the tremendous sacrifice that so many Canadians gave selfishly to liberate Europe and in particular, Holland.

Appreciative citizens like Jan Braakman, volunteer their time in order to educate and inform the public about the many “fallen soldiers” of Holten, so that their sacrifice and the sacrifice of so many other Canadian will be always be remembered by future generations.

LEST WE FORGET!

William J. Anhorn Q.C. ICD.D