



Lewis Gallant was born on December 7, 1917. His birthplace is listed in the official records as: Russell, Manitoba. He is the son of Michel (Mike) and Katherine Gallant. They live in Angusville, Manitoba.

His father owned a garage with a gas station and an oil agency there. They supplied agricultural businesses in the region and also, they provided transport by trucking.

Lewis was an only child; it is also mentioned that his parents also had a "Forster child", a girl.

Lewis attended school through Grade 10. By the standards of the time: elementary school plus two years of high school.

At 18, he started working in his father's business.

The language spoken at home was English, they attended the Roman Catholic Church, though not regularly.

Lewis enjoyed hunting and fishing and he read the newspapers.

In 1940, Lewis was subject to N.R.M.A. regulations.

To clarify:

In 1940, Prime Minister King introduced the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA). This act required a national registration of all eligible men for homeland defense and authorized the government to "conscript every man in Canada for military training in the defense of Canada." The NRMA also granted the federal government conscription and exemption powers, but only for homeland defense duties, such as guarding civilian internees and German prisoners of war, protecting airports and ports, and watching for submarines. Ultimately, only 2,400 conscripted men actually fought in Northwest Europe.

As a result of these laws, Lewis was called up on November 22, 1940, and assigned to the 2nd Battalion Winnipeg Grenadiers (Machine Gun Section).

Lewis' medical report states that he is 1.78 m tall and weighs approximately 70 kg. A separate mention is made of an appendectomy, which, three years later, still bothers him. If he has done relatively heavy work or has walked a greater distance the scar becomes painful.

He has extensive experience as a driver, gained in his father's company. Therefore, his preference is to be classified as a 'driver'.

During Lewis's initial reservist assignment (1940-1943), he had only 30 days of training.

His report reads: "His motivation wasn't too bad, but he didn't have enough time to be present more often."

After a six-month deferment due to "personal indispensability," Lewis was finally taken on strength by District Depot 10 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on July 3, 1943.

After his initial basic training, Lewis was transferred to No. 100, the Army Basic Training Centre in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

Lewis's file provides little information.

A note from November 23, 1943, indicates that Lewis had an additional six weeks of harvest leave and returned to training on October 18, 1943. To accommodate him administratively, he was temporarily assigned to the Canadian Infantry Corps.

In late 1943, Lewis was transferred to the SITC, a Special Infantry Training Centre in Vernon, British Columbia. There, he was assigned to the PW Rangers (Pacific Coast Militia Rangers).

To clarify:

The Pacific Coast Militia Rangers were formed after war with Japan began in December 1941. Discussions of a "Home Guard" for British Columbia began as early as January 1942. The Home Guard were soldiers in Great Britain who could not serve in the regular forces because they were too old, physically unfit, or needed in valuable war work. These part time soldiers would have played an important role in the defence of the UK had the Germans invaded.

Lewis got his desired job; he was appointed as a truckdriver with the 22nd Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment.

In March 1944, Lewis requested another six-month leave.

The reason: the seasonal pressure on his father's business and his mother's illness.

He had asked several people to support his request: the clerk of the municipality of Silver Creek, Manitoba; the director of the Angusville post office and the treating doctor of his mother.

The two first-mentioned individuals supported his request and the reasons given.

The doctor reported that Lewis's mother had Addison's disease for as long as he had known her.

To clarify:

Addison's disease is a rare chronic condition in which your adrenal glands don't produce enough of the hormone's cortisol and aldosterone. It's most often caused by an autoimmune attack. In some cases, medication can help.

The GP reports that she had been hospitalized in early 1944, but that, as expected, it was of no use. Her condition had been stable for years.

Lewis's request was denied. The letter from the Army Leadership was clear.

The letter concludes:

'Furthermore, it is also taken into account that the family and the community are not supporting the war effort as they should.'

In the summer of 1943, he was still single; a year later, on June 18, 1944, Lewis married Pauline Mazurkiewicz.

Whether this was a last-ditch effort to avoid further military obligations is unclear.

MARRIAGE DETAILS	
Place of Marriage: RM ROSSBURN	
Date of Marriage: 18/06/1944	
PERSONAL DETAILS	
GROOM	BRIDE
Last Name: GALLANT	Last Name: MAZURKIEWICZ
Given Names: LEWIS	Given Names: PAULINE
Marital Status:	Marital Status:
Religion:	Religion:
Date of Birth:	Date of Birth:
Age:	Age:
Place of Birth:	Place of Birth:

The next clear note in Lewis's file is that he arrived in the United Kingdom on January 3, 1945.

His training, assignment, and location in England can not be found in his file.

The record of his "overseas days" indicates that he arrived on the Western European mainland on April 1, 1945.

He was likely immediately taken on strength by the Lake Superior Regiment (Motors) at that time. However, no clear note of this can be found.

The regiment's War Diaries also fail to mention the names of any men who were taken on strength or struck of strength.

The Lake Superior Regiment (M) was still in the south of the Netherlands (near Rijsbergen) on January 21, 1945.

The unit's route is fairly easy to follow. Lewis, in all likelihood, would have taken the same route.

On April 1, 1945, they were in Terborg near the German border, in the eastern part of the Netherlands. Their advance to the city Lochem and the Twente Canal.

On April 2, they were in Ruurlo, a little south of Lochem and their mission was changed; they were sent towards Delden. Via the city of Diepenheim, they continued along the south side of the Twente Canal until their advance stalled at Delden. After a difficult crossing by the infantry, the regiment crossed the newly completed bridge towards Almelo on the afternoon of April 4, 1945.

Then they crossed the border, first into Germany, then into the Netherlands.

Passed by the villages Wilsum, Emlichheim, Eschebrügge in Germany and Coevorden in the Netherlands.

After Coevorden, a longer route northeast followed, with the provisional final destination of Meppen. Resistance there was considerable.

By the evening of April 8, 1945, a bridgehead had been established over the Ems River, and the Royal Canadian Engineers had prepared a bridge across the river. Meppen was in Allied hands.

The Canadian advance, including the Lake Superior Regiment, continued. During the night of April 8 to 9, 1945 they headed towards Lathen.

The regiment's War Diary records read:

"The advance was difficult because it was a dark night. Around 4:30 a.m., the first vehicles reached the town. A group of German soldiers opened fire on the leading carriers.

B- and C-Companies pushed through to the town centre with tank support.

Approximately 100 prisoners were captured. A-Company took charge towards the train station.

There, a short but fierce battle was fought. By 1:00 p.m., the road was cleared, and A-Company was able to continue towards the airfield."

Private Lewis Gallant was killed on April 9, 1945 during the fighting in and around Lathen.

He had a temporary grave at the castle chapel of Clemenswerth Castle near Sögel. (A Canadian hospital was established on the castle grounds until 1946.)

Lewis Gallant was finally laid to rest at the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten, reference: Plot 11; Row C; Grave 1.

He was awarded:

the 1939-1945 Star; the France-Germany Star; and the 1939-1945 War Medal.

In Manitoba, a lake is named after him:
Gallant Lake.

To clarify:

In 1945 the Geographical Names Board of Canada began a program to name previously unofficially named features after casualties from all three branches of the Canadian armed forces.

With around 100,000 lakes, most without names, Manitoba has been an enthusiastic adopter of the program.

In 1995 the project to commemorate the 4,000 Manitoba casualties from the Second World War by naming lakes, islands and bays after them was completed.



Gallant Lake



Sources:

www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com; www.canada.ca/library-archives, www.myheritage.nl