

Corporal John Myles

02-D-09

From": "the Campaign of the Netherlands, Seaforths Highlanders, April 25, 1945.

Report of the death of Corporal John Myles, Seaforth Highlanders, as eye-witnessed by Rutger. D. Bleeker, a Dutch student and interpreter to the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada.

About 3 miles from the Grebbelinie, near Achterveld, a farm called Midden Romselaar, is on fire. The Seaforth Highlanders meet with heavy artillery fire. Captain Sir Alec Mackenzie asks Rutger Bleeker to join Corporal Myles on a reconnaissance patrol to a farm, where to his information, several farmers are in distress.

"We started at once, took a narrow road through the bushes first and had to cross a barrier of a fallen tree. The Dutch farmers had told me it was mined. I told Corporal Myles so, but he said:" just walk right into my footsteps and you'll be alright. "We got across safely and crouched to the edge of the wood, where we came in full view of the farm; there were undeeep ditches on both sides and pastures offering no cover at all.

We had only gone several yards when a murderous machine gun fire broke loose. We both fell into a ditch, my helmet fell on the road and was soon pierced. I also dropped my rifle.

Corporal Myles was killed at once, shot through the head. Blystone, who was also with us on patrol, couldn't do anything for him, but stayed with him for half an hour. We could not carry him back; he was later found and returned by a Red Cross barrier.

I managed to collect my rifle and crouched back through the ditch into the wood, past the tree barrier, trying to remember how I had crossed first. It didn't explode-yet, it went up a few minutes later when some cows frightened by the incessant mortar fire, ran into it and set the mines off; they were probably anti-vehicle or anti-tank mines and didn't react on my weight. I hurried back to Captain MacKenzie, whom I told the bad news."

The Seaforth War Diary also mentions that on the same day the Germans threw a lot of mortar shells into the wooded area, which killed Pte Votary and badly wounded Pte Mackenzie, whose stay with the Seaforths in that area had only been 24 hours.

