

Pte Allan Harkwell Rathwell

3-D-10



Allan was born on May 25, 1923 in Desbarats, Ontario. He was the youngest son of William Ellswood and Mary Jane Mills Rathwell of Sault Ste Marie, Ontario. Allan's parents were married on March 14, 1906 in Sault Ste Marie. His brothers were William Ernest and Peter Alexander Rathwell and his sisters were Mrs. Ethel Yisher and Mrs. Lena Wilkins. His sister Laura and brother Albert Rathwell died young.

Allan went to school until he was 17. The last 2 years he went to a technical school and then started working as a cable splicer and lineman by the Bell Telephon Company of Canada. The documents state that he was a member of the Church of England although there is also a certificate from July 1923 that he is a Baptist.

Allan enlisted in Sault Ste Marie on 24 July 1942 and after training at various locations in Canada he went overseas to the United Kingdom on 29 October 1943. There his training continued and he was attached to the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Regiment. On January 31, 1945, Allan was sent to the front in Northwest Europe. His regiment was then located near Nijmegen and was deployed in the major Rhineland offensive. When the Nazis were driven back behind the Rhine at the end of March 1945, his regiment was ordered to advance to the Northern Netherlands through the Achterhoek.

Allan died on Monday April 9, 1945 at the age of 21 during the battle for Haarle. He was then temporarily buried in Haarle before being reburied in Holten on February 4, 1946. The other fallen members of his regiment are L/Sgt John S. McCombie, age 24, Pte Logan E. Leslie, age 19, Pte Seth E. Murray, age 22 and Pte Joseph D. Comeau, age 21. Ten Canadian soldiers were killed in the battle in and around Haarle on April 9, 1945.

He is mentioned on the monument in Haarle together with the other 9 fallen Canadian soldiers.

His medals were: 1939-45 Star; France Germany Star; Defense Medal; War Medal 1939-45; CVSM & Clasp.

His mother was awarded the Memorial Cross on May 21, 1945.

