

Baker, Herbert Thomas, Sergeant (D3080)



- Herbert Thomas Baker was born on 29 June 1915 in Barnet, British Columbia. He was 29 years old when he died of accidental injuries on 28 May 1945 in the Netherlands.
- He had a common law wife, Kathleen Elizabeth Russell, with whom he had lived since 1935. Their address upon his enlistment was 2050 Saint-Urbain Street, Montreal, Quebec.
- On 17 July 1940, he enlisted for active service in Montreal with the 3rd Canadian Motorcycle Regiment (17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars). On 26 February 1941, he was transferred with his unit (which was redesignated as the 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment) for additional training with the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division. On 23 August 1941, he and his unit were deployed by ship to England, via Glasgow, Scotland. The unit took up position in Southern England, first to be available in case of a potential German invasion, and then to help with an invasion of France. He was promoted to sergeant on 4 September 1943. He and his squadron ("A" Squadron) were deployed to France on 17 June 1944. On 28 May 1945, he died of multiple injuries incurred during a motorcycle accident.
- Prior to enlisting, he served for 8 years in the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars. Before that he served in the sea cadets for two years.
- Prior to enlisting, he worked for seven years as a shoe-cutter for Maxine Footwear Company in Montreal. Prior to that he had worked as a shipper for a dry-cleaning company.
- He left school at the age of fourteen, having completed 7 years of public school.
- According to his medical examination, he was 6-foot 1 inch tall and weighed 145 pounds. He had blue eyes and blond hair. He was found fit for category B.
- He is the son of Harry (an Engineer-Fireman) and Ada Baker (Deceased in 1926) of 6254 Chambord Street, Montreal. They had married in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1916. Herbert had a brother; Frank Baker (25), who had been discharged from the service. His father was a Great War veteran. His father had remarried in 1928.
- The sole beneficiary of Herbert's will was his common-law spouse.
- His body is buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery, Overijssel, Netherlands (Ref: IX. F. 9.)(plot, row, grave)

Context

- On 5 May 1945, the Regiment was on the outskirts of Aurich, Germany, when it was announced that there was a ceasefire, and the Germans were surrendering. The next day the Regiment drove into Aurich where the German Forces in the area handed over their weapons and became prisoners. After about two weeks, the Regiment was sent back to Utrecht, in the Netherlands to prepare for demobilization and repatriation. This was an enormous task that took until the end of 1945.
- According to a Board of Inquiry, on 28 May 1945, "while acting as a despatch rider on his way to Regimental Headquarters, Sergeant Baker was killed when his motorcycle collided with a jeep travelling in front of him on the road between Utrecht and Amsterdam. The jeep had slowed because of oncoming traffic. More specifically, trucks in a convoy were passing a horse and wagon coming the other direction. According to a civilian doctor who arrived at the scene shortly after the accident, Sergeant Baker was killed instantly due to damage to his spinal column and skull."