

**Dawson, Leslie James, Trooper (D123078)**

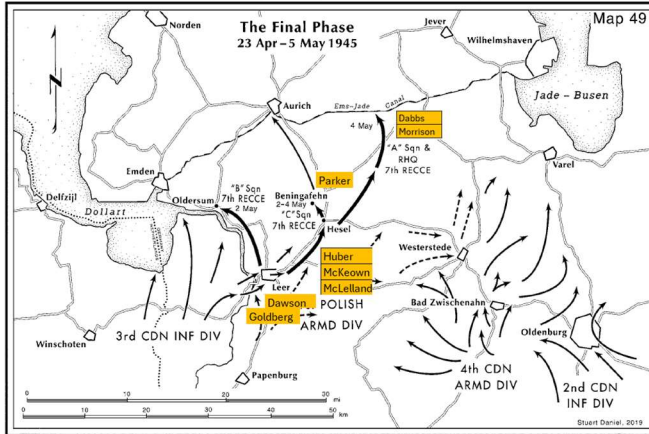


- Leslie James Dawson was born on 27 August 1921 in Montreal, Quebec. He was 24 years old when he was killed in action on 27 April 1945 in Germany.
- On 16 January 1942, he enlisted for active service at the No. 4 District Depot in Montreal South. He attended basic training in Huntingdon, Quebec and was then sent to Canadian Armoured Corps Training Centre in Borden, Ontario. He was then sent overseas in July 1942 and posted to the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment. He was temporarily hospitalized for swollen lymph nodes in 1943, then posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit before returning to the 7<sup>th</sup> Recce on the 28 January 1944. He and his squadron ("B" Squadron) were deployed to France on 11 June 1944. On 4 July he was hospitalized again and returned to the regiment on 16 December 1944.
- He had no military experience prior to enlistment.
- Prior to enlisting, he worked as a spray painter. He had also worked 6 months as a salesman for a brush company.
- He left school at age 12 after completing 5 years in public school.
- According to his medical examination, he was 5 foot 4.75 inches tall and weighed 117 pounds. He had brown eyes and brown hair. He was found fit for category A.
- He was the son of Alfred and Martha Dawson who resided at 7481 Querbes Avenue, Montreal, Quebec. They had married in Welney, England in 1909. Leslie had four siblings; Gordon Brian (33), Douglas Alfred (29), Victor Edward (27) and Irene Maud Tillingworth (31).
- He was single and had no children.
- The sole beneficiary of Leslie's will was his mother.
- His body is buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery, Overijssel, Netherlands (Ref: XII. E. 8.)(plot, row, grave)

Context

- After liberating the northern part of the Netherlands, the regiment and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division were ordered to cross into Germany and start clearing the Rheider peninsula. The first elements of the regiment entered Germany during the second half of April 1945. Unlike the Netherlands, where the enemy was withdrawing using delaying tactics, the German forces were

determined to fight. They had prepared their defences and laid thousands of mines and were much more aggressive. Further, the local population had no incentive to help the Allied Forces, and the ground was soft and boggy making it more difficult to manoeuvre. These factors combined to increase the number of casualties.



- As “B” Squadron probed north of Driever, Germany on 25 April 1945, it found a large number of anti-tank mines, which were lifted under enemy harassing fire. A foot patrol of three men, under Corporal Harry Goldberg, was sent from Driever to investigate a building. As they approached the building, the men came under small arms fire and grenades were thrown at them. They went to ground and returned the fire and then decided to withdraw. But an enemy patrol had worked around them; in the withdrawal, two men made it back to the squadron, but Goldberg had been wounded and was missing. That evening Lieutenant Jean-Paul Lefebvre took out a strong fighting patrol of 20 men to check the building and search for Goldberg. It was later found that Goldberg had died of his wounds and had been properly buried by the Germans.
- According to the war diary of 26 April: “In the early morning, the “B” Squadron patrol which was occupying KLOSTER MUHDE was threatened to be cut off by a German patrol, which had come in on their east flank under the cover of mist. Two sections of the Assault troop led by Lt. J.P. Lefebvre advanced to make a link up and whilst doing so, came under Machine-Gun fire that killed D123078 Tpr Dawson E. J. and wounded D.121 Tpr Black E.T. The German patrol was taken out. Later in the morning the Scottish took over these forward positions.”