

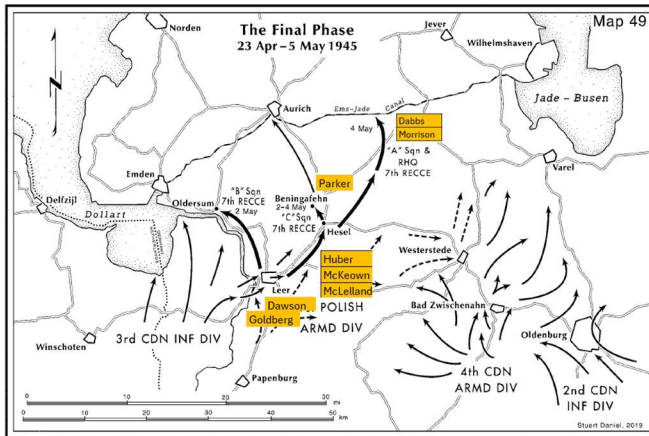
Parker, William Frederick, Trooper (F91578)



- William Frederick Parker was born on 26 February 1917 in Delhaven, Nova Scotia. He was 28 years old when he died of accidental injuries on 2 May 1945 in Germany.
- On 23 June 1941, he enlisted for active service at the District Depot in Truro, Nova Scotia. He attended basic training in Aldershot, Nova Scotia and was immediately posted to Camp Debert, Nova Scotia to join 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 and his squadron ("B" Squadron) were deployed to France on 11 June 1944.
- Prior to enlisting for active service overseas, he served for a year in an Engineering company in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- From 1933 to 1941, he worked during the summers on the family farm in Delhaven, Nova Scotia. In the winters, he worked for Canada Lumber in Stewiacke, Nova Scotia.
- He left school after completing 8 years in public school.
- According to his medical examination, he was 5 foot 9.5 inches tall and weighed 154 pounds. He had blue eyes and light brown hair. He was found fit for category A.
- He was the son of Francis Elizabeth and Ernest Elmer (a firefighter and farmer) Parker, residents of Delhaven, King's County, Nova Scotia. William had three siblings; Terrence Owen (26), Gordon Miller (18), and Shirley Ann Louise Parker (10).
- He was married to Florence Grace Mary Burgess, of St. Leonard's on the Sea, Sussex, England. He was given permission to marry on 13 March 1943. The couple had a daughter, Janice Louise, who was born in Hastings on 25 May 1944. His spouse later moved to Canada.
- The sole beneficiary of William's will was his younger sister, Shirley Parker. This will was cancelled by his subsequent marriage and not replaced so the estate was settled in accordance with the laws of Nova Scotia; one third to his spouse and two-thirds to his daughter.
- His body is buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery, Overijssel, Netherlands (Ref: VII. F. 14.)(plot, row, grave)

Context

- After liberating the northern part of the Netherlands, the Regiment and the 3rd 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.



- The following explanation as to the circumstances of William Parker's death was provided to his parents by Colonel Laurin, Director of Records for the Adjutant-General on 5 November 1945:
- "On the 2nd day of May 1945, No. 9 Troop "C" Squadron, 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment was ordered to reconnoiter a river crossing near Hesel, Germany. Your son was a carrier driver in the troop. After a day of fighting his troop was withdrawn to a farm house to harbour for the night. Trooper Parker began climbing out of the driver's seat and at the same time another member of the troop got out of the crew commander's seat and in doing so he either placed his hand on the Browning 30 which was mounted on the front of the vehicle or hit it causing it to go off and your son fell seriously wounded in the head. He was immediately taken to the Regimental Aid Post of the Regiment de la Chaudière where he died."
- According to the statement of Captain Pavey, who was second-in-command of the squadron: "As far as the Browning .30 is concerned, there is no safety catch on these weapons and the only way they can be disarmed is by taking out the cartridge belt. In work such as the regt was undertaking, which required such instant readiness, this was seldom done – only when the troops had been given a definite order to 'stand down' in a rear area."