



75th ANNIVERSARY 1944-2019

D-DAY

THE SIGNALS STORY





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The lead up to D-Day was one of intense planning, training and equipping in order to be fully prepared for the invasion on June 6th. The goal was to be able to duplicate every wireless link for both the Forward Group and Main Group. Of the prepared communications equipment, wireless was the most successful, while assault cable and regular line proved too fragile to be of any effect in the early days of the invasion due to vehicles and men breaking the line.

The Main Group of signallers were meant to land later on D-Day, after the Forward Group got a foothold, but due to congestion on the beaches, their landing was delayed by several days. This, in turn, forced the signallers who had come ashore with the Forward Group, to work non-stop for 72 hours straight. In the first ten days of the invasion, eight signallers were killed in line of duty.

There were two unusual events that occurred on D-Day that involved signallers. The first involved three men from a line detachment (LCpl MV Hughes, Signmn EW Martin and JD McFee) tasked with running line between two signal HQs. One of the three was tasked with covering their position with a Bren gun. While they were working, a German soldier appeared and indicated he and some other soldiers wanted to surrender. A German officer disputed this and fired his side arm at the linemen. The lineman with the Bren gun returned fire and killed him. After that altercation, a group of about 60 Germans surrendered with more added later on in the day.

The second unusual event involved Capt G V Eckenfelder who was captured by Germans after taking a wrong turn down a side road. He and another officer, Lt. Germain, were held at a German HQ in a large quarry. Canadian artillery opened up on the position. After several hours of bombardment, the Germans having fired off all their ammunition, expressed wishes of surrender. Eckenfelder and the other Canadians captured with him eventually accepted the surrender of 100 Germans.



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REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

Corporal Norman Archibald Hawk was born on March 19, 1921 to William and Lena Hawk of Virden, Manitoba. He enlisted on June 17, 1940 and headed off to England where he met and married a young British woman named Muriel. Cpl Hawk was a signaller attached to the 13th Field Regiment RCA right at H-Hour on June 6 1944, but his landing craft hit a mine and exploded. His body was initially recovered and laid on the beach alongside three others. It was later discovered to be missing, probably being washed out to sea. Cpl Hawk was 23 years old. Muriel Hawk gave birth to son in July of 1944.



C/o Canadian Virtual War Memorial on Veterans Affairs Canada



C/o Maple Leaf Legacy Project

Signalman Douglas Merle Little was born on October 7th 1922 to Robert Osborne and Jessie Pearl Little in Trail, British Columbia. He became a despatch rider during his service. On D-Day, Little was with the 3rd Canadian Division Signals when they came ashore on Juno Beach. On D-Day +3 (June 9, 1944), he was killed by shell fire while on duty. He was 21 years old.



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REMEMBERING THE FALLEN



C/o Canadian Virtual War Memorial on Veterans Affairs Canada

Lance Corporal Francis Maurice Trainor was born on January 11, 1921 to Stephen and Alice Trainor of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He enlisted in September 1939. On D-Day, Trainor was with J Section, 3rd Canadian Division Signals when he drowned off the coast of France. He was 23 years old.

Lance Corporal Elmer Grenville Swan was born on February 21, 1921 to John and Carrie May Swan of North Augusta, Ontario. At the time of his enlistment, he live in Prescott, Ontario with his wife Helen Eileen Swan and worked as a glove cutter. L/Cpl Swan enlisted on March 15, 1942 and was taken on strength with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals later that year. While he was away, Helen gave birth to a son, Gary Clifford Grenville Swan, who never got a chance to meet his father. On D-Day, L/Cpl Swan was operating a wireless set when a mortar bomb fell near him and killed him instantly. He was 23 years old.



C/o Canadian Virtual War Memorial on Veterans Affairs Canada



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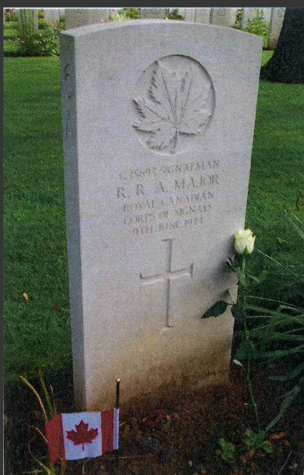
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REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

Lieutenant Robert Bruce Murchison was born on November 29, 1920 to Gordon and Edna Virginia Murchison. Prior to enlisting, he was a student and he was married to Mary Florence Murchison. The two lived in Ottawa, Ontario. On October 9, 1941, Murchison enlisted. On D-Day, he was with the 3rd Canadian Division Signals and working as the signals officer attached to the Regina Rifles when his landing craft hit a mine and he was killed. He was 23 years old.



C/o Military Communications and Electronics Museum



C/o Canadian Virtual War Memorial on Veterans Affairs Canada

Signalman Roland Roher Albert Major was born on June 30, 1922 in Montreal, Quebec. He came ashore on June 6th, 1944 with L Section, 3rd Canadian Division Signals. On D-Day +3 (June 9, 1944), he was hit with shrapnel while manning a wireless set at battalion HQ and killed instantly. He was 21 years old.

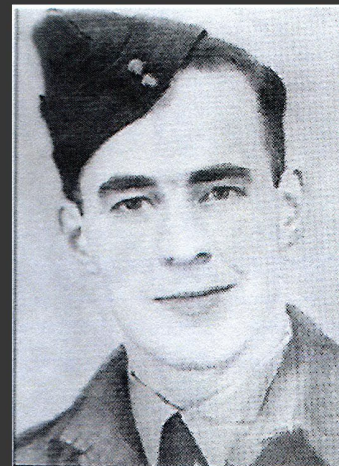


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Signalman William Harold Stanley was born on December 28, 1921 to William and Elizabeth Stanley of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He worked as a bank teller before enlisting on October 19, 1942. On D-Day, he was with the 3rd Canadian Division Signals. Signalman Stanley survived the initial landing but 10 days later, he was killed in action. He was 22 years old.



C/o Canadian Virtual War Memorial on Veterans Affairs Canada



C/o Canadian Virtual War Memorial on Veterans Affairs Canada

Signalman Harold George Eisener was born on September 25th, 1921 to Gordon and Bessie Eisener in Halifax, Nova Scotia. On D-Day he came ashore with L Section, 3rd Canadian Division Signals. Eisener died in a tragic accident on D-Day +5 (June 11, 1944). He was 22 years old.