

## **Deakin, Alfred Samuel**

**Lieutenant**

**General List**

**313899**



Alfred Samuel Deakin, sometimes known as Sam, was born 22 January 1908 at Aston, Birmingham, England. He was the second of the six children of Alfred and Alice Elizabeth Deakin. His youngest brother Ronald, born 1921, became an RAF pilot and like Alfred was also killed in WWII. By 1911 the family lived at 53 Ludlow Rd. Saltley, Birmingham. Alfred's early school days took place under the shadow of the first world war. His father had been sent abroad, serving in the military police, as he had done some fifteen years before in the Boer war in South Africa.

When the young Alfred reached the age of eighteen he joined the 2nd battalion of the Coldstream Guards as a machinist. With his regiment he served in China during the Civil War which began in 1927; army duties were concerned with the protection of European citizens living in Shanghai at that time. By the end of his service he had been promoted to Lance Sergeant.

On returning to England, Alfred Deakin joined the Guildford Borough Police in Surrey on 8 August 1931. He was described as being 6ft.1 in. tall, with fresh complexion, light brown hair and blue eyes. Around this time he met a Surrey girl, Lily Margaret Mullard, also born in 1908. They married 26 November 1932 and lived in Guildford. In 1940 their son Adrian was born and then twin daughters in 1944.



*Lilly Margaret.*



*Alfred and his son Adrian.*

Alfred was promoted to Police Sergeant in 1938; at the same time he was still attached to the army as a reservist. During these years he was a keen and successful cyclist and belonged to a racing club.

As WWII began to draw to a close there came a call for professional personnel to volunteer for the General List in the Civil Affairs Department. These soldiers were needed to help control territory already captured from the Germans.



*Lt Deakin and his comrades.*

Alfred Deakin was one of these volunteers; in 1944 he was sent to London for training and then to France as a commissioned officer. In October, after serving with American forces he was attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division which by February 1945 was taking part in Operation Veritable, fighting in Germany near the Dutch border. By 22 February the towns of Kleve and Goch were under allied control but fighting continued in the area and a group of soldiers including Lt. Deakin was struck by what was perhaps a stray shell.

In the letter Major Harrington, the commanding officer, wrote to Mrs. Deakin he describes what happened to Lt. Deakin on 1st March 1945: 'We

had just cleared a town in the west tip of Germany the day before and about 11a.m. we're carrying out official duties. The town had been under shell-fire by the enemy for a time. A shell landed quite close to us, and beside others, your husband suffered a bad wound in the left hip region – from fragments.'

I immediately rendered first aid, and with others took him to a place of safety. An ambulance arrived within minutes and he was at once rushed to hospital. He died a short while later.

Earlier in the same letter Major Harrington wrote how very well-liked Lt. Deakin had been by both officers and men, he was also a conscientious worker and his good humour and industry, besides his interest in all manner of hobbies, was of utmost importance to a unit whose jobs are so varied.'

Lt. Alfred Deakin was first buried in Bedburg-Hau before being transferred to the Canadian Military Cemetery, Groesbeek six months later. Grave Reference **VI. F. 2.**



Life story Gwyn de Jong, Research Team Faces To Graves.

Source:

Lt. Deakin's son Adrian Deakin, information and photos  
Commonwealth War Graves Committee

*Alfred in his Morris Bullnose car.*



*Adrian between the twins Jane Margaret and Susan Elizabeth.*

### **Visit from Jane Grey to her father's grave on June 24th, 2024**

"The respect, care and attention given to the graves of the fallen in Groesbeek cemetery is exemplary. Their deaths are given deep meaning and purpose.

The kindness and compassion shown towards the visitors to the cemetery by the people of the Netherlands such as Marian Straatman from Faces to Graves, is deeply moving.

The cemetery is a beautiful place, a peaceful place, a restful place but it is not a place of death, it is a place of life. The plants, trees, wildlife and insects flourish. The birds did not sing over Auschwitz, they do over Groesbeek cemetery.

My daughter, Catherine, came with me and she plans to return next year. Thank you kind people who look after us all. I am more grateful than words can express."



Jane Grey

*Photo's taken by Catherine Johns, granddaughter of Lieutenant Alfred Samuel Deakin.*

*Jane brought flowers to lay at a grave of an unknown soldier, because she feels for the families who never knew where their loved one lies buried.*

