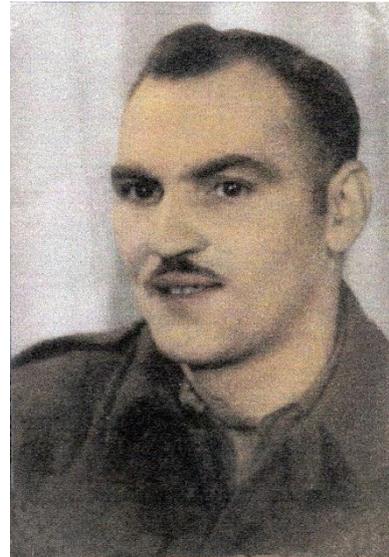


GALLANT Arthur Joseph

Corporal

North Nova Scotia Highlanders

F78054



Arthur Gallant was born 16th April 1915, the fourth of seven children, in Shediac, New Brunswick, Canada. This is a small town by the coast known for its lobster fishing festival. He was the son of Teddy Gallant and Donelda Saurier. His father Teddy only was only 33 years old when he died and mother Donelda died in 1939.

When Art, as he was known by family and friends, finished High School in the 1930's he began work as an auto mechanic. In his spare time a particular hobby of his was wood and plane glass carving; according to his daughter Shirley he ventured into frog taxidermy. He would then place them on a plank with mock rocks and water, playing the tiny instruments he had carved, as if in a tiny orchestra.



A week before Art's 25th birthday, he married Josephine Mary le Blanc on 8th April 1940.

Later in the same year Art served in the Canadian Militia summer camp. In due course two daughters were born, Maria Shirley Gertrude

and Mary Myrtle Dorothy. His daughter Shirley remembers him as an affectionate father who made her feel very secure.

In April 1941 Art enlisted in the Canadian Active Service Force and was assigned to the North Nova Scotia Highlanders. He spent the next three years at Kentville, Nova Scotia in the Aldershot camp. Towards the end of this period he sadly lost his second 9 month old daughter and was given 14 days compassionate leave. He was then moved in 1944 to a transit camp at Windsor NS in preparation for the six day Atlantic crossing to England. Two weeks later, 17th August, he arrived in France.

Eventually Art with his regiment, the 'Novas' as they were known, was involved in Operation Veritable, the Battle of the Reichswald led by Field Marshall General Montgomery. Its object was to clear the German forces from the area between the rivers Maas and Rhine. This assault had been planned for January 1945 when the ground was frozen hard; it eventually started 8th February after a thaw had set in. This together with heavy rain turned the forest floor into a quagmire and flooded the lower land down to the Rhine, creating almost impossible conditions for the soldiers and their vehicles.

The flooding was made much worse by the Germans deliberately releasing more water from the dams further upriver. The Canadians joked that they had had to become sailors!

The Novas used an amphibious vehicle called a Buffalo designed to meet these difficult conditions but unfortunately it prove less than efficient: it was constantly breaking down and having to be repaired. Nowhere had fighting been more intense than in Operation Veritable, so close to the end of the war. One of the biggest problems was the minefields. Engineers did their best to collect the mines and pile them up at the side of the road but as the waters rose they were difficult to spot.

Arthur Gallant was in one of two Buffalos transporting soldiers one night. They were being guided by an engineer trying to avoid the heaped up mines in the darkness. At one point, the drivers swerved too soon, the subsequent explosion caused the vehicles to capsize and the men were thrown into the water.

Art was one of several men killed on 19th February, 1945. It happened near Emmerich on the West Bank of the Rhine, not far from the village of Wardhausen, where he was buried temporarily in the churchyard there. His body was later transferred to the Canadian War Cemetery near Groesbeek, The Netherlands. Grave reference **XXIV. D. 15.**



FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story Gwyn de Jong Research Team Faces To Graves

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Shirley Welton