

**Guest, Wilbert Allan**

**Guardsman**

**C/58248**

**Governor General's Foot  
Guards**

**Royal Canadian Army Corps**



Guardsman Allan Guest, 23, was killed in the early hours of March 27, 1945 when he was caught outside his Sherman tank during an enemy artillery counterattack along the Dutch-German border.

As reported in the war diary of the Governor General's Foot Guards Regiment, the German nighttime barrage had made "direct hits on a slit trench" behind their tank, "instantly killing" troop commander Lieut. R.A. Finlayson, Guardsmen G.M. McOuat and W.A. (Allan) Guest.

Guardsman Allan Guest was a gun operator participating in the Canadian armoured division's bombardments. The tanks were lined up south of Cleve, facing Emmerich across the Rhine River, for three days of massive bombardments of the German front lines. The "Operation Pepperpot" used these tanks with 77-millimetre guns as artillery pieces to create concentrated firepower on defences while infantry units advanced into the Rhineland.

Both Allan Guest and his younger brother, Lawrence "Lorne" Guest, were serving in Canadian tank regiments and they managed to keep touch during the Allied advance from Normandy across Northwest Europe.



*Map from the History of the Governor General's Foot Guards*

On the previous day during their deployment in the Reichswald Forest, Lawrence Guest, who was a tank driver-mechanic with the Canadian Grenadier Guards Regiment, met up with Allan Guest. They had "sat shooting the breeze" about their family back home in the Ottawa Valley, according to Lawrence Guest. In the morning, another Valley soldier, Guardsman Bernie McQuatt "came over to our tanks to give me the bad news" that Allan was dead. After properly identifying the body, he covered his brother with a blanket.

Mr. Guest today still talks about how his big brother would have been safe if the six-foot-six man, nicknamed "Moose" for his size, had only climbed into the safety of his tank for a rest. "In less than two months, Allan would have been home free," Lawrence said.

Allan Guest had survived eight months in battles through France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany with the Canadian 21<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment (Governor General's Foot Guards).



*Canadian soldiers stack tank shells on March 28, 1945.*

As a normal practice in wartime, Guardsman Guest was buried in a temporary grave at the nearby Bedburg Canadian military cemetery outside of Cleve, Germany and his remains were moved to the Netherlands at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery near Nijmegen. His burial reference is **Plot XI. Row B, Grave 4.**

After the war, the Canadian military authorities sent his family in Renfrew the following medals: the 1939-1945 Star, France & Germany Star, the Defence Medal, War Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal (C.V.S.M.) with Clasp.

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Wilbert Allan Guest was born March 17, 1921 to John Henry Guest (1874-1929) and Catherine Etta Lynch (1888-1959) of Renfrew. His siblings were Clifford Gerald (1916-?), Leonard Carson (1919-1999), Lawrence "Lorne" Grandville (1925-present), Lillian Winifred (1922-2006).



*Gerald, their mother Etta Guest, and Allan in Canada*

Their Irish father, John Henry Guest, who worked as a section man for the Canadian Pacific Railway, had died in 1929 of cerebral haemorrhage, leaving his widow to raise the family of young children. After Allan finished his Grade 8 education, he quit to help support the family. When he enlisted in the militia with the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment in June 1940, Allan worked as a farmhand working for Clarence Dean in Galetta, Ontario. He was dating the farmer's daughter, Dorothy Dean, and planned to get married after the war.

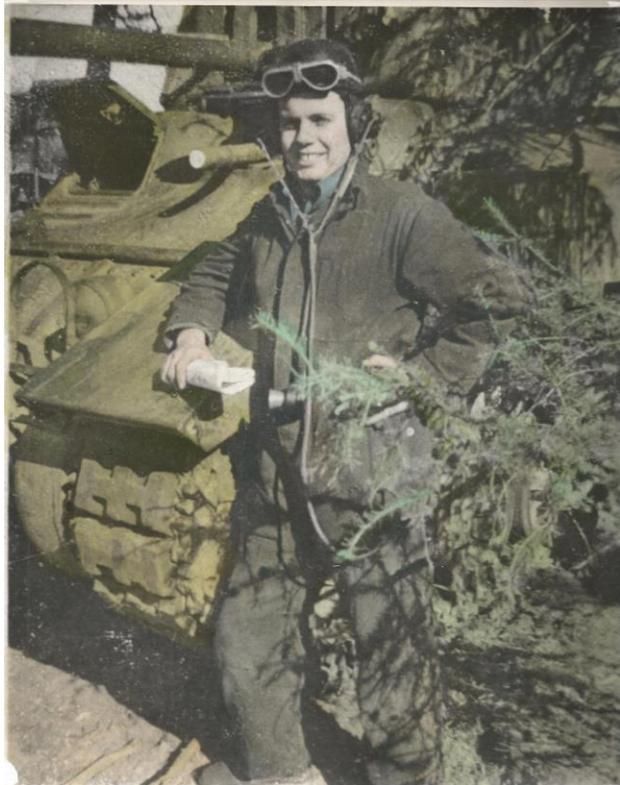
When he signed up for the regular army in 1941, Allan got various military training posts around different provinces such as Camp Borden in Ontario, Sussex Camp and Saint John in New Brunswick and Debert, Nova Scotia. Shipped overseas, he arrived Oct. 7, 1942 in Britain where he was stationed until disembarking in France in July, 1944.

The oldest brother, Gerald, also had joined the militia with the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment but he remained in Canada. Lawrence, who was four years younger than Allan, had been shipped overseas as a driver-mechanic with another tank regiment, the Canadian Grenadier Guards, in the summer of 1943. Throughout the war, they would meet in England, the Netherlands and finally in Germany.

Landing at the Normandy beachhead on July 22, 1944, a month after the D-Day invasion, Allan Guest was a gun operator in a Sherman tank with 21<sup>st</sup> Armoured Regiment (Governor General's Foot Guards). The regiment fought through, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. In late March, they were preparing to head across the Rhine River for Germany as part of the Rhineland Campaign.



*Lawrence Guest shown overseas*



*Allan Guest with his tank in Europe*

Biography by Kurt Johnson.



## FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian  
War Graves Groesbeek

Biography made available for Faces To Graves, with courtesy of Kurt Johnson.



*A 1945 clipping from hometown newspaper Renfrew Mercury*

Over the decades, Lawrence "Lorne" Guest has made three pilgrimages to the Netherlands, placing flowers on his brother's grave. He has been a past president and officer of the Renfrew Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.



*Lawrence Guest in Renfrew Mercury*

In 2018, the Trinity St. Andrew's United Church in Renfrew invited Lawrence Guest and 24 family members to attend its Nov. 11 Remembrance Day service when the congregation celebrated the recovery of its long-lost honour roll. The church's commemoration list gives the names of six war dead and of the 206 men and women who served in the Second World War. It had been lost in the 1986 church fire. But church researchers reproduced the entire list from a 1949 copy of the *Ottawa Journal*. Allan Guest is listed among the war dead while Lawrence Guest and Gerald Guest are among those who served.