

Ormiston, William Delbert
Captain
Royal Winnipeg Rifles Regiment
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps



William Delbert Ormiston was born 19 April 1921 at Weyburn, Saskatchewan. He was the only child to William Robert Ormiston and Lexie Rowena Tate, of Scottish and Irish descents respectively. His mother Lexie's



first husband Lieutenant Herbert Cook was killed overseas in 1916 during World War One. She remarried William Robert at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1919, then moved to his farm at nearby Muscow. William Delbert was born when Lexie was visiting her sister Margaret in Weyburn two years later.

William's mother taught at his Muscow School, then he lived in Regina for four years while completing High School. He continued his education with the University of Saskatchewan for two years 1939-1941, attaining his Bachelor of Accounting degree. With the outbreak of World War Two, it

became compulsory for University students to join the Canadian Officers Training Corps (C.O.T.C.), which William did in January 1940.

*University of
Saskatchewan C.O.T.C
cadet W.D. Ormiston on
left - 1941*



Following college, William took employment with an insurance agent and then by a Chartered Accountant in Regina. He became an accountant with the Saskatchewan Provincial Tax Commission and had been working as a tax auditor with them for five months when he enlisted with the army.

William attested 3 December 1941 at Regina aged 20. He was a tall 6' and weighed 138 lbs. He was immediately posted to the Regina Rifles and given his prior C.O.T.C. training and education, was sent to the Officers Training Center at Gordon Head near Victoria, British Columbia as an officer cadet

later that month. William successfully completed the program and qualified as 2nd Lieutenant 5 July 1942.

ORMISTON—DOTY
A pretty wedding was solemnized on April 26 at St. Paul's church when Cynthia, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Doty, Carlyle, became the bride of Lieut. William Delbert Ormiston, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Ormiston, Fort Qu'Appelle. Rev. Canon E. H. Lee officiated. The bride was charming in a white sheer and lace dress with lace veil trimmed with orange blossoms. She carried a bouquet of lilies and roses. The matron of honor, Mrs. Glen Cardno, sister of the bride, wore a dress of robin's egg blue and carried a bouquet of carnations and roses. James Cardno, Shaunavon, gave the bride away. Scott Chestnut, Regina, was best man. A reception was held at the Hotel Saskatchewan. A tiered cake centred the bride's table. Mrs. E. Roberts, Regina, and Mrs. M. Little, Weyburn, poured tea with Miss M. Morris and Mrs. Oliver serving. The bride's going away outfit was a rose suit with white fur trimming.
Guests at the reception: Mrs. Doty, mother of the bride; Mr. and Mrs. W. Ormiston, Mrs. G. Winters, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Meyers, Mr. and Mrs. G. Sianey, William Tate, Mr. and Mrs. Angus M. Goldie, Marcia and Elaine Goldie, Mrs. John Carnochan, Muscow; Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, Mrs. M. L. Little, Weyburn; Cpl. Wilma McIntyre, C.W.A.C.; Mrs. Gordon Nixon, Carlyle; Miss I. McMorris, Mrs. M. Oliver, Miss Alice Davies and Ted Roberts.

William's next posting was to Camp Shilo, Manitoba where he was promoted to full Lieutenant 15 July 1942. He then transferred to the Canadian Army Training Center at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and undertook command instructional duties at Camp Dundurn near Saskatoon between October and December 1942. William was back in British Columbia in January/February 1943 for a course at the Canadian Small Arms School in Nanaimo before returning to his base in Prince Albert.

William was granted a leave of absence that spring and married Cynthia Leona Doty at Regina 26 April 1943. A short honeymoon followed before William was staged for overseas service, disembarking in

the U.K. 22 May 1943 where he was assigned to the Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit with duties as a Platoon Commander.

William spent four days in a U.K. military hospital in June 1943 and attended various officer training courses while there. He had put on some weight since enlisting as evidenced on his 1943 overseas identification card.

Surname	ORMISTON		Lieut	
Christian Names	William Delbert		Rank	
Corps or Dept.	Inf.	No.		
Born	1921	Ht.	6'1	Wt. 160
Hair	Lt. Brown	Eyes	Grey	
Marks, Scars, etc.	Nil			
Signature of Holder		<i>W. H. Ormiston</i>		
Signature of Issuer		<i>W. C. Goodfellow</i>		
Place	Overseas	Date	20-12-43	
Report Loss Return To If Found	CANADIAN ARMY		Identification Bureau Ottawa, Can.	




William was posted to the Royal Winnipeg Rifles (RWR) 7 July 1944 and sent across the English Channel, disembarking in France 13 July where he joined his new regiment.

The RWR, also known as the Little Black Devils, along with the other 7th Brigade battalions (Regina Rifles and Canadian Scottish) of 3rd Canadian Division were among the first Commonwealth infantry units to land at Juno Beach (Courseulles-sur-Mer) and suffered heavy D-Day losses. The next few days were even worse for them, experiencing another 300 casualties at the small village of Putot-en-Bessin, almost half of the battalion's combat strength. After a few weeks rebuilding with reinforcements, the RWR battled their way through Normandy and helped liberate Channel ports.



William was a welcome addition following the battle for Carpiquet and was promoted to acting Captain 29 August 1944. The RWR played a key role in the capture of Calais in September 1944, where many German prisoners were taken. 7th Brigade moved on to Belgium in October and the Battle for the Scheldt, before finally earning some rest time in November.

Royal Winnipeg Rifles commander Lt. Colonel Lockhart Fulton receiving Distinguished Service Order from Field Marshal Montgomery for his actions in Normandy.

The RWR were assigned to static operations in November 1944 near Nijmegen, Netherlands and remained there for the winter. William was made full Captain 4 December 1944.



The Little Black Devils were on the move with their 3rd Infantry Division in February 1945 as part of First Canadian Army to break out of their winter positions in the Nijmegen-Groesbeek area under Operation VERITABLE. This was a new role for them, changing from being liberators to invaders, pushing the Germans deeper into their homeland.

Infantrymen of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles in a Buffalo amphibious vehicle taking part in Operation VERITABLE en route from Niel to Keeken, Germany, 9 February 1945.

Initial progress was impeded due to severe flooding through a combination of a sudden thaw, heavy rains, failed dams and dykes blown by the retreating Germans. This required 7th Brigade and other Canadian formations to use tracked amphibious carriers called Buffaloes to advance. Cleve was the first major German city to be taken by the Canadian Army. By the time they got there, Allied aircraft had left it in ruins.

Winnipeg Rifles advance at Cleve 13 February 1945



New equipment and tactics were employed in 1945. For the first time in the war the Little Black Devils attacked mounted in Kangaroo armoured personnel carriers, supported by 1st Canadian Armoured Personnel Carrier Regiment. On 16 February at 0730 hours, the RWR were picked up in

approximately 240 prisoners were taken in what was a successful operation compared to the near disaster that befell the Regina Rifles at Moyland Wood.

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles suffered heavy losses that first day of battle. Intense shelling by the Germans, described in the RWR war diary as “the heaviest shelling the Battalion has ever been subjected to”, commenced at 0900 hours the next morning, continuing throughout that day and into the next. By the evening of the 18th, RWR patrols were reporting that increasing movement to the east indicated that a counter-attack was pending. Constant German shelling and machine-gun fire kept the Little Black Devils pinned down the following day. On 20 February the RWR were given the task of capturing Moyland Wood, after successive failures by the Regina Rifles and Canadian Scottish battalions. Their well planned and carefully coordinated attack the next day was ultimately successful but came at a heavy cost. William Ormiston was one of many RWR fallen 21 February 1945, killed in action aged 23 years old.

Captain W.D. Ormiston was temporarily buried at Bedburg, Germany and later relocated to Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery near Nijmegen, Netherlands, grave reference **XI. E. 1.**



Photo courtesy www.lestweforget1945.org



Groesbeek, the grave as it was in these first days. In 1954 the crosses were replaced by headstones and the family could add personal words

The inscription on his headstone reads:

A LOVING HUSBAND
AND FAITHFULL SON
EVER REMEMBERED
AND MOURNED

Captain William Delbert Ormiston's awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France-Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp

Ormiston service

FORT QU'APPELLE (Special) —Funeral services were held in St. John's Anglican church, Fort Qu'Appelle, Friday, for Mrs. Lexie R. Ormiston who died in Balcarres hospital Sept. 7, at the age of 61. Rev. J. Corkhill officiated and interment was made in the family plot at Fort Qu'Appelle cemetery.

Flowers and the attendance of friends and relatives indicated the high esteem in which Mrs. Ormiston was held. The Legion WA assisted in the service and threw poppies on her grave.

Born in Edgeley, Sask., the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Tate, she attended public and high school in Weyburn. She attended St. Margaret's Ladies' college in Toronto and returned to teach in Weyburn. She married Lieut. Herbert Cook in 1916. He was killed in the First World War.

Mrs. Ormiston then taught school near Muscow where she met and married Robert Ormiston. Their only son, Capt. Delbert Ormiston was killed in the second World War.

Mr. and Mrs. Ormiston resided on their farm near Muscow until Robert Ormiston passed away in 1951. Mrs. Ormiston then moved to Fort Qu'Appelle where she resided until her death.

She is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Ida E. Carter, Muscow, and Mrs. Margaret L. Little, Weyburn, and one brother, William E. Tate, Qu'Appelle.



KILLED: Capt. W. D. Ormiston, was killed in action Feb. 22, according to information received by his wife, the former Cynthia L. Doty of Carlyle, who lives in Regina. Capt. Ormiston was born April 19, 1921, the son of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Ormiston of Muscow, west of Fort Qu'Appelle, and was an only child. He attended Ormiston school, Central collegiate, Regina, and graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with the degree of bachelor of accountancy. He enlisted in 1941 in the Regina Rifles, attended Gordon Head in the winter of 1941 and 1942. He went overseas with the rank of lieutenant in the Regina Rifles in 1943. He went into action on D-Day with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, and was promoted to the rank of captain in August, 1944, before the battle of Calais. He married Miss Doty in St. Paul's church, Regina, April 26, 1943. His wife and his parents survive him.

Regina Leader-Post, March 1945



Biography by Jim
to Graves.

Little, Research Team Faces

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Newspapers.com

Ancestry public trees

Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan picture <http://www.prairie-towns.com/fortquappelle-images.html>

W.D. Ormiston 1941 University of Saskatchewan C.O.T.C. picture
http://digital.scaa.sk.ca/gallery/uofs_yearbook/browse.php?Year=1941&CurrentPage=45

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Moyland Wood map
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Legion Magazine November 2002
<https://legionmagazine.com/en/2002/11/clearing-moyland-wood/>

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact
<mailto:info@facestograves.nl>