

Thompson, Archibald William

Private

The Calgary Highlanders, R.C.I.C.

L – 107032



Archibald William Thompson was born 25 July, 1924 in Herbert, Saskatchewan, the son of Robert and Mary, both of Scottish descent. His mother Mary died 18 December, 1931 and his father Robert only two months later, 15 February, 1932, making Archibald an orphan at the age of seven. Together with his sisters, Laura and Jessie, he was brought up by his grandmother. At the time he went into the army, his sister, Laura was married to Wesley Harry Janzen and was working as a teacher.; sister Jesse was still at school. The family attended the United Church of Canada.

From the age of six until he was eighteen Archibald went to school in Saskatchewan; he reached grade XI but did not finish the year. During his holidays he used to work on farms and learnt to drive a tractor. His last employer was Fred Lietz in Herbert. In his free time he liked to play softball and billiards. He was enthusiastic about curling. He could not swim and was not keen on reading. He really liked socialising with girls and going to dancing classes and shows.

In 1940 the National Resources Mobilization Act came into force in Canada; all available men were asked to register and enter the armed forces in order to defend the home land in the first place. Later these men were also drafted for service overseas. Although there are no registration forms to be found in Archibald's service files, he appears to have responded to the call.

After leaving school he served with the King' Own Rifles of Canada in Herbert from December 1942 until October 1943.

On 1 October that year, he enlisted in Regina, Saskatchewan for active service in the army; he was 19 years old and single.

ITEMS 17, 18 AND 19 WILL NOT BE COMPLETED UNLESS A MAN ENLISTS FOR GENERAL SERVICE ANYWHERE.

17. **DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION**

I, Archibald William THOMPSON, hereby engage to serve in any Active Formation or Unit of the Canadian Army so long as an emergency, i.e., war, invasion, riot or insurrection, real or apprehended, exists, and for the period of demobilization after said emergency ceases to exist, and in any event for a period of not less than one year, provided His Majesty should so require my services.

Date 1st October 1943

A. W. Thompson
(Signature of Recruit)

Archibald was described as a big guy with an excellent physical condition, 1.80 m tall, weighing 71 kilos with brown hair and blue eyes. His tonsils were removed in 1943 and he lisped a little; there was a small scar on his right hip. He was somewhat nonchalant about his appearance and behaved rather arrogantly at times. But he declared himself willing to being deployed anywhere. He was judged to be a little below average intelligence although very good in maths. In the cadets he had been a signalman.

He spent the first month training in Regina and was then transferred to a centre in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. While there he spent six days in the Yarmouth Military Hospital. He was also once late returning to barracks by one day, nineteen hours and thirty minutes for which he was reprimanded and forfeited two days pay.



Camp #60, Yarmouth

He was moved on 9 January, 1944 to the Aldershot training centre, Nova Scotia and was again interviewed. He was found to have no physically problems and the army service examiner recommended that Archibald would be best suited in the infantry in a general reinforcement unit with a training as a driver of army vehicles. He finished his basic training in Camp Borden, Ontario from 1 March onwards. In the same month he spent eighteen days in the military hospital; it was not clear what his problem was.

On 31 May, 1944 there was an unpleasant incident involving Archibald. After shooting practice, his section returned to the mess during a storm with heavy rain. Archibald stood by the light switch in the mess when lightning struck. He fell to the ground and was unconscious for a time. He was put on a stretcher and taken to the first aid station. He was examined and seemed unhurt but as he got up, he seemed to have suffered a light shock. After a night's rest he was able to continue training the next morning.

By 1 July, Archibald was deemed to have received enough training and be ready for service overseas in the infantry. He boarded ship 12 July and reached England seven days later, spending the next three months training there. He reached Belgium 16 October and was placed with the Calgary Highlanders ten days later. At that time the Highlanders had reached Zeeland in the Netherlands; having suffered an enormous loss of life in the Battle of the Schelde. In early November, the regiment reached the Nijmegen area and spent the winter there.

The Calgary Highlanders took part in Operation Veritable which began 8 February, 1945 on German territory in the Reichswald. After more than six weeks of heavy fighting it was possible for a huge Allied force to cross the Rhine towards the end of March and begin on the liberation of northern and eastern parts of the Netherlands. The Canadians passed through Ulft, Terborg and Gaanderen in the direction of Doetinchem.

They reached Doetinchem via the Terborgseweg on Easter Day, 1 April, 1945. Men from the Dutch resistance met them on the eastern side of the town. After a short discussion, troops surrounded the town and the Canadians continued to the centre. Fierce fighting broke out; the Germans had blocked the roads with trams filled with concrete. The Canadians used



Canadian troops at the Terborgseweg, April 1 1945
(Photo: Hans Hendriksen ©)

flame throwers which caused the destruction of many buildings. Dozens of German soldiers were killed. Nine Canadian soldiers lost their lives before the town was liberated the next day, 2 April.

One of the fallen was Archibald William Thompson who died in the streets of Doetinchem on Easter Day, 1 April. He was temporarily buried near the Oosseld school on the Dennenweg.



On 10 August, 1946 his sister Laura Janzen, who then lived in White Rock, British Columbia, received a letter saying that her brother had been reburied in the Canadian Military Cemetery, Groesbeek. Plot **XIX. D. 2.**

Archibald had bought two fifty dollar Victory Bonds issued to raise funds sponsoring the war effort. In his will he bequeathed one to his grandmother and the other to his sister, Jesse to help pay for her studies. There was also the farm with 480 hectares land in Herbert; this the notary Mc Clelland settled.

Archibald William Thompson served 549 days in the army and received the following awards:

- 1939 – 45 Star
- France & Germany Star
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp

(1) SOLDIER'S NAME AND DESCRIPTION ON ATTESTATION

Regtl. No. *L107032*

Surname (in capitals) *T HOMPSON*

Christian names (in full) *Archibald William*

Date of Birth *25 July 24*

Place of Birth *Herbert, Sask. Canada.*

Citizenship *Canadian*

Trade on Enlistment *Form Labourer.*

Nationality of Father at Birth *Scotch*

Nationality of Mother at Birth *Scotch*

Religion *United Church of Canada.*

Enlisted at *Regina, Sask.*

Date *1 Oct. 42.*

Particulars of former service (if any) in Regt. No., Company, Regiment and period. *K.O.R.C. (A) at Herbert, Sask. Dec. 1942 to date.*

Signature of Soldier *A. W. Thompson*

Signature of Officer *J. W. [illegible]*

Place of Issue *Sask.* Date *1st Oct. 42.*

Soldier's Service Book of Private Thompson



Monument in the Mark Tennantplantsoen in Doetinchem

YOURS HAS THE SUFFERING BEEN;
THE MEMORY SHALL BE OURS



Life story: Sigrid Norde, Research Team Faces To Graves

References:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

National Library and Archives Canada

<https://www.myheritage.nl/research/collection-1/myheritage-stambomen?s=141654041&itemId=183212812-1-33&action=showRecord&recordTitle=Archie+Thompson>

<http://www.calgaryhighlanders.com/history/highlanders/1939-45/dcompany.htm>

<http://www.wartimeheritage.com/storyarchive2/storycamp60.htm>

<https://mijngelderland.nl/inhoud/canons/doetinchem/doetinchem-in-de-tweede-wereldoorlog>

<https://www.hummelo.nl/geschiedenis-hummelo/tweede-wereldoorlog/547-de-bevrijding-van-hummelo-2-april-1945.html>

<http://www.hanshendriksen.net/>