

In Memory of Sergeant James Bruce Andrew Grawbarger

1918 - 1944

(B/55540, Algonquin Regiment, Royal Canadian Infantry Corps)

Age: 26

Parents: Sam Grawbarger & Elizabeth Hamilton

Conflict: World War II

Country Enlisted In: Canada

Country of Death: Eeklo, East Flanders, Belgium

Relation: Stepson of Maternal Great Aunt



James Andrew Bruce Grawbarger was born in the Parry Sound District of Ontario in the summer of 1918, when the Great War was drawing to its close. He grew up among lakes and pines, in a Canada that was learning to breathe again after years of sacrifice. Life in northern Ontario demanded strength, endurance, and quiet resolve — qualities that would serve him well when, two decades later, another war engulfed the world.

On March 19, 1941, James enlisted at Port Arthur, Ontario. He was twenty-two years old, broad-shouldered, clear-eyed, and determined to do his part. The uniform of the Algonquin Regiment soon became a second skin, and the friendships forged in training would be among the deepest of his life. Together, these young Canadians would cross the Atlantic, fight through the wreckage of Europe and carry with them the hope of a free world.

By the autumn of 1944, Sergeant Grawbarger's regiment had already seen the worst of war — the shell-torn fields of France, the narrow lanes of the Netherlands, and the flooded flatlands that tested every ounce of endurance. Their orders took them into Belgium, part of the fierce campaign to clear the Scheldt Estuary. Every mile of ground was contested. The land was water-soaked and cold, the air heavy with smoke, and the enemy well-entrenched behind canals and dikes.

Those who served under James would have known him as Calm and steady, the kind of leader who inspired confidence by



*Sergeant, Algonquin Regiment
R.C.I.C.*

example rather than words. In those final days, as the guns thundered and the rain fell without mercy, perhaps his thoughts turned to home — to the wind in the tall birches, to the sound of paddles dipping in still northern waters, to the laughter of family he longed to see again. Like so many soldiers of his generation, he carried the quiet wish that the world would one day find the peace they were dying to win.

On 10 October 1944, near Eeklo, Belgium, Sergeant James Andrew Bruce Grawbarger fell in the line of duty. He was twenty-six years old. The battle moved on, as battles must, but his comrades would have felt the emptiness his absence left behind.

Today he rests in Adegem Canadian War Cemetery, surrounded by the white headstones of his fellow Canadians who shared the same road to freedom. The rows of markers stand in perfect order, each one a silent testament to courage and youth cut short. Visitors who walk there may pause at his stone and see not only the name of a soldier, but the reflection of a generation's sacrifice.

Sergeant Grawbarger's story is part of Canada's enduring legacy — an unspoken promise kept by those who followed. Though decades have passed since the guns fell silent, his name still echoes in the hearts of all who cherish the freedom he helped secure.



*Adegem Canadian War Cemetery
Eeklo, East Flanders, Belgium*