

# 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Scheldt

HICKMAN BRIDGE 2021: To commemorate the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the Scheldt Estuary, a contingent from the Canadian Delegation Brunssum participated in several memorial events from 5-7 November 2021. This is an annual weekend event hosted by the citizens of Knokke-Heist, Belgium



As part of this observance, on 7 November 2021, the Canadian contingent completed a 33 km march from Hoofdplaat, Netherlands, to Knokke-Heist, Belgium, to mark the path of Canadian Forces during Operation SWITCHBACK in World War II. During the march, the contingent made a commemorative halt at Hickman Bridge in

Retranchement, Netherlands, to honour Sergeant John Lockhart Hickman, of the Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE)

On 31 October 1944, bridge commander, Sgt J.L. Hickman, was killed by mortar fire while leading the construction of a Bailey bridge over this crucial canal during the Battle of the Scheldt. In tribute to him and his comrades, a permanent bridge was dedicated in his honour on 30 October 1986. A monument stands beside the bridge, composed of a dressed stone plaque mounted on a low brick wall bearing the name "J.L. Hickman Brug"



Beside it stands a section of Bailey bridge on a brick plinth, together with a bronze plaque with an inscription in English, French, and Dutch

In commemoration of the sacrifice made at this location, the Canadian Military Engineers present (left to right): MCpl Alain Bossé, LCol John Timmermans, WO Sandra Gulin, Maj Stéphane Laplante, LCol Chris Middleton, and LCol Allan Taylor took part in a wreath-laying ceremony at the bridge monument.

See Also: [Sapper Bravery and Sacrifice in the Battle of the Scheldt](https://cmea-agmc.ca/node/8262) (<https://cmea-agmc.ca/node/8262>)