

Spr Harold Clifford Inkpen, 11th Fd Coy

Harold Clifford Inkpen was born to Cecil and Nesta Inkpen on 26 April 1920 in Cowbridge, South Wales. The family emigrated to Canada to Marchbank, Kings County, NB when Harold was seven years old and they started a farm. After having completed school up to Grade 6, Harold worked on the family farm for eleven years. He had a younger brother Dellwyn who fought in Europe with the Royal Canadian Artillery. There were also two younger adopted sisters in the family.

Harold enlisted in the Canadian Army in Fredericton, NB on 25 September 1941 as a 21-year old single man. He was soon sent on a six-month blacksmith's course in Woodstock, NB. Upon passing the trade test, he was qualified as a Blacksmith Group "C" and given the rank of Sapper in the Corps of the Royal Canadian Engineers. Harold then proceeded to A5 Canadian Engineer Training Center at Camp Petawawa, ON where he trained for about a month. Harold then returned to the Atlantic Provinces and embarked from Halifax, NS for the United Kingdom on 14 June 1942. Harold arrived in the UK on 25 June 1942 and was initially assigned to No 1 Canadian Engineer Reinforcement Unit. He was later transferred to the 10th Field Squadron, then to the 12th Field Company and, finally, to the 11th Field Company. In addition to training, the main work of the sappers in England at that time was preparing the United Kingdom defences for war if it were invaded. They constructed beach obstacles, pill-boxes, anti-tank ditches, and minefields. Other work included improving British roadways for military traffic as well as building military facilities, hospitals and air bases. The company was also training and preparing for the Invasion of Europe.

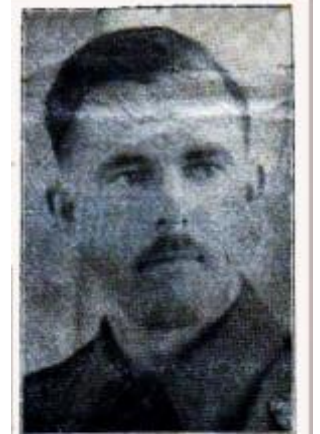
Harold arrived in France on 9 July 1944 after the D-Day Invasion with elements of the 11th Field Company. His company soon started obstacle clearance and bridge construction in the Caen area. After Caen, the company supported the Allied advance in France and then through Belgium, Holland, and eventually into Germany. Among its operations, the company participated in the Battle of Falaise, The Scheldt, The Rhineland, and The Rhine. By the end of February 1944, the unit had arrived in Germany as the Allied forces continued to push back the enemy.



On 16 March, the 11th Field Company began to check a stretch of ground near Cleve, Germany for mines to make the area safe for the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. By the next evening, the mine-clearing parties had found many German Riegelmine 43 anti-tank mines that they safely lifted and stored in two dumps. At 1300 hrs the next day, Lieutenant O. H. Taylor, along with Sergeant C. V. Richards, Sapper Inkpen and six other sappers, set out to destroy the mines in the two dumps. A half-hour later, something went terribly wrong. There was a terrific explosion and all were killed. No evidence was ever found to indicate why the tragedy had occurred.

Sapper Harold Clifford Inkpen was Killed in Action on 18 March 1945 at age 24. He was given a temporary grave in the Canadian in Bedberg, Germany. His final resting place is in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery.

With research assistance from Sapper Inkpen's "[Netherlands Faces to Graves](#)" story.



GIVES HIS LIFE—According to word received by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Inkpen, Pooleton, their son, Sapper Harold C. Inkpen, (above), has been killed in action in the Western war front. Spr. Inkpen, who would have been 25 years old during this month, was born near Cardiff, Wales, and came with his family to Canada in 1927. He joined the armed forces in August, 1941, went overseas the following June and entered Normandy shortly after D-Day. He was expected home at an early date. Spr. Inkpen is survived by his parents and one brother, Gnr. Dellwyn Inkpen, now serving in Germany. The two brothers had been together many times in England and also while in France and Germany.