

Fallen Servicemen Named in Melrose United Church Memorial Windows (Second World War)

James C. W. Chambers (details unknown)

***Lieutenant Robert Edmund Dorsey, Army**

Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, 3rd Infantry Division Support Battalion

Died: June 7, 1944 (age 24); buried Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery, Calvados, France

Son of Josiah Joshua (deceased) and Armie Laura Gray Dorsey; husband of Florence Kathleen Gale Dorsey (nee Riley), of Toronto, Ontario.

About a week before Dorsey's wife learned of his death, her sister, Ruth Riley Decker, learned that her husband, Lt. Samuel Groves Decker of the Royal Regiment of Canada, and from Hamilton, had died overseas of injuries suffered in a motorcycle accident.

[Robert Edmund Dorsey - The Canadian Virtual War Memorial - Veterans Affairs Canada
https://www.mcmaster.ca/ua/alumni/ww2honourroll/dorsey.html](https://www.mcmaster.ca/ua/alumni/ww2honourroll/dorsey.html)

***Warrant Officer Class II Roderick Charles Mutch, RCAF**

223 (RAF) Squadron

Service Number: R/75869

Died: November 5, 1942 (age 21); buried Al Alamein War Cemetery, Egypt

Son of the Revd. John M. G. Mutch and Marjory McCurdy Mutch, of Hamilton, Ontario.

Mutch was a wireless-operator/air gunner, reported missing in action in Middle East (later confirmed dead). Before his disappearance/death, he had been serving 8 months with the RAF in the Middle East. He had taken part in at least 25 raids on Rommel's columns in Egypt and Libya.

Mutch had been born in Truro, Nova Scotia, and received his early education in Halifax and Regina. His family moved to Hamilton, where he was on the junior and senior champion rugby teams at Westdale collegiate in Hamilton. He was the third son of Rev. Dr. John M.G. Mutch and Mrs. Marjory McCurdy Mutch of Melrose United Church, Hamilton. All their sons enlisted in active service. News report from November 1942 note that the eldest, John, would finish his internship at Hamilton General hospital in January, when he would receive his commission in the RCAMC. The second son, Sandy, had been with the RCAF for over 2 years and was serving with the RAF in England. The fourth son, David, was with the RCNVR in Halifax.

Source: <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2210748?Roderick%20Charles%20Mutch>

***Sergeant Jack Arthur Charles Smith, RCAF**

23 OTU (RAF)

Died: September 16, 1942; buried Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Germany

Son of Vernon Albert and Ethel Winnifred (nee Coffin) Smith, of Hamilton, Ontario.

[Jack Arthur Charles Smith - The Canadian Virtual War Memorial - Veterans Affairs Canada](#)

***Lieutenant Nairn Stewart Boyd, Army**

Sherbrooke Fusiliers Regiment, RCAC, 27th Armoured Regiment

Died: July 8, 1944 (age 26); buried Beny-sur-mer Canadian War Cemetery, Calvados, France

Son of Malcolm and Jean Boyd, of Winchester, Ontario. Husband of Mary Patricia Boyd, of Hamilton, Ontario. His brother, Trooper Kenneth Archibald Boyd, died while serving with the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars.

Born: December 14, 1917 in Winchester, Ontario

Enlistment: November 15, 1941 in Kingston, Ontario

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2058710>

<https://www.mcmaster.ca/ua/alumni/ww2honourroll/boyd.html>

F.A. Craven (details unknown)

Flight Sergeant Norman George Hickey, RCAF

214 (RAF) Squadron

Service Number: R/75890

Died: November 5, 1942 (age 22); buried Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, Germany

Son of Gordon Whitfield Hickey and Violet May Hickey, of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2032165>

Leading Stores Assistant David Anderson Hughes, Navy

Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve; HMCS *Esquimalt*

Service Number: V/8384

Died: April 16, 1945 (age 24); buried at sea (Halifax Memorial, Nova Scotia)

Son of Edwin and Isabel Hughes, of Dundas, Ontario. He was born in Galt and attended St. Andrew's school there, and the Westdale Collegiate in Hamilton. He was in high school when he enlisted in the navy in June 1940. His father was with the 11th Battalion in the First World War. The family was well-known in Galt. Hughes died when HMCS *Esquimalt*, a RCN minesweeper, was torpedoed and sunk by an enemy submarine while on duty off the east coast of Canada. He was predeceased by his older brother, Lt. Robert Alexander Hughes, who was

also lost at sea. He had one sister: Mrs. Harry Dunhan of Toronto, whose husband (a medical doctor) was overseas with the RCAF.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2558489>

***Lieutenant Robert Alexander Hughes, Navy**

Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve; HMCS *Spikenard*

Died: February 10, 1942 (age 28); buried at sea (Halifax Memorial, Nova Scotia)

Son of Edwin Arthur and Isabel Hughes, of Dundas, Ontario; husband of Esther Hughes, of Hamilton Hill, Dundas. Bob Hughes attended the Collegiate in Galt and Westdale Collegiate in Hamilton. He was the Toronto Star's staff newsman for Hamilton and district. Hughes died when the HMCS Spikenard was sunk by enemy action.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2558494>

***Leading Aircraftman John Henderson Martin, RCAF**

Service Number: R/52423

Died: March 9, 1941 (age 29); buried Hamilton (Woodland) Cemetery

Son of Frank Reginald and Pearl Alfreda Martin, of 350 Aberdeen Avenue, Hamilton; husband of Marion M. Martin, of Hamilton. Martin had three young children. Before joining the RCAF in 1940, he worked at J. Mahony Ltd. Ice and coal dealers. Martin and another aircraftman, Albert R. Stevens of Niagara Falls, were killed near Belleville in a collision with a freight train. The two had been returning to the Trenton air station when their car, driven by Martin, hit a CPR train. The front left side of the car was torn from the remainder of the vehicle, and wreckage was thrown 50 feet on the highway.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2686774>

***Captain Ruthven Colquhoun McNairn, Army**

Algonquin Regiment, R.C.I.C.

Died: September 5, 1946 (age 32); buried Dundas (Grove) Cemetery

Son of Dr. William H. McNairn and Hester A. McNairn, of Dundas. Brothers: Robert H. McNairn, Rev. Norman A. McNairn and Ian S. McNairn.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2686519>

<https://www.mcmaster.ca/ua/alumni/ww2honourroll/mcnairn.html>

***Captain Herbert Victor Poag, Army**

Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, R.C.I.C.

Died: August 22, 1942 (age 45); buried Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery (Hautot-sur-mer), Seine-Maritime, France

Born: June 10, 1897 in Hamilton, Ontario

Enlistment: September 2, 1939 in Hamilton, Ontario

Son of John and Margaret Poag of Hamilton, Ontario. Husband of Winifred Poag (nee Sherk) of Beulah Avenue, Hamilton, Ontario. Poag was educated at Lake Lodge school and Hamilton collegiate. He enlisted at age 18 and served with the 54th Battalion in the First World War, was wounded in France and invalided home. He then became a building contractor, working in Montreal, Florida and Hamilton, and was president of Poag and Kemp, Ltd. A few months before the Second World War broke out, Poag joined the RHLI as quartermaster; his unit was mobilized in September 1939. Shortly before the Dieppe action, he was appointed adjutant. Poag was wounded during the fighting on the beach, and later died of his wounds. He was a "close friend" of Captain Foote, the padre of the regiment. Poag was survived by his widow, who was "prominent in active canteen work in Hamilton," and by his sons, John Poag, who graduated in 1942 from RMC and was in the RCAF, and Robert Poag, who was still at school.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2317363>

***Lieutenant Ralph Crossley Ripley II, Navy**

Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve; HMS *Fanling*

Died: February 16, 1942 (age 26); buried at sea (Halifax Memorial, Nova Scotia)

Son of Ralph Crossley Ripley and Janet Lamont Ripley (nee Wray), of 20 Cottage Avenue, Hamilton, Ontario. Ripley had two sisters: Joyce and Mary. His father was captain in 1900 and then coach in 1911 of the Argo football team.) Before the war he had lived in Toronto for several years, and at the University of Toronto starred as quarterback with the 1936 team. The same year, he toured Great Britain with the R.C. Matthews cricket eleven. He first went overseas as an ordinary seaman, then trained aboard the HMS *Repulse*. After he received his commission, he was transferred to HMS *King George V* (or *King Alfred*?). In June 1941, he became Assistant Air Defence Officer on HMCS *Prince of Wales*, just after she had taken a leading role in destroying German's Bismarck. In December 1941, he survived the sinking of the *Prince of Wales* off Malaya, although he was assumed dead at first. In February 1942, however, his luck ran out while on the patrol launch HMS *Fanling*. After the fall of Singapore (15 February 1942), HMS *Fanling* was carrying evacuees and a number of army staff officers when it was sunk by a Japanese cruiser in the Banka Strait, Sumatra.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2640648>

<https://www.legacy.com/ca/obituaries/theglobeandmail/name/mary-heintzman-obituary?id=41708999>

<https://hamiltonnaval.ca/h-m-c-s-star/the-people/we-will-remember-them/>

***Major Harold Rowlands, Army**

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

Died: August 5, 1944 (age 51); buried Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, United Kingdom

Son of Walter and Mary Rowlands; husband of Madeline Rowlands, of Hamilton, Ontario.

A newspaper article announcing Rowlands's death noted that he was a "well-known Bisley shot" (that is, target shooter). In 1939, he won first prize and the ORA silver medal at the Tait-Brassey match at Long Branch. At one time, he was second in command of the 1st (Active) Battalion, Royal Highland Light Infantry (Wentworth Regiment). In the early days of the war, he commanded a training centre at Camp Borden for replacements for the overseas battalion. In late 1941, he was posted to a reinforcement unit for an armoured division, which went overseas in 1942. He died from injuries suffered in a motorcycle accident overseas, likely in England. He was survived by his widow, Madeline Rowlands, and his daughter, Valerie, as well as his mother, Mary Rowlands, his sister Alice and two brothers: Professor Walter Rowlands of Madison, Wisconsin, and Allan K Rowlands of Hamilton.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2928792>

D.F. Towson (details unknown)

***Flying Officer George Albert Wallace, RCAF**

Died: September 28, 1943 (age 32); buried Chester Blacon Cemetery, Cheshire, United Kingdom

Son of George Wellington Wallace and Lucy Copping Wallace; husband of Doris Audrey Irwin Wallace, of 154 Dundurn Street North, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Wallace enlisted in the RCAF in February 1942 and graduated as a navigator from Malton [sp?]. He arrived overseas in March 1943. Before he enlisted, he had lived in Oshawa, where he worked at the Christie Brown Biscuit Company o Toronto. He had attended Central Collegiate and Westdale Secondary Schools in Hamilton. His brother, Donald Wallace, lived in Dundas; he also had two sisters: Mrs. John Whitelock of Burlington and Mrs. Alfred Taylor of Waterdown.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/1526503>

***Flight Lieutenant James Andrew Watson, RCAF**

622 (R.A.F.) Squadron (Lancaster)

Died: April 28, 1944 (age 21); buried Choloy War Cemetery, Meurthe-et-Moselle, France

Honours and Awards: Mentioned in Despatches

Watson was on a bombing mission over enemy territory on April 28, 1944, when he was killed. In a letter to his parents, the Wing Commander of his squadron wrote that "Your Son was one

of our most experienced pilots, and had successfully sixteen operational flights. He was admired by all who knew him, and will be very much missed by his many friends in the Squadron." Like Mutch, Watson was a student at Westdale Secondary School when he enlisted. According to a letter of recommendation from his principal, he had attended the Collegiate Section for 2 years and spent 3 years in the Technical Matriculation course. "Jim is a young man of good appearance and of good moral character, gentlemanly conduct, amiable disposition and pleasing personality. I am pleased to recommend him."

Watson was the son of [Major Robert Scott Watson, M.C.](#), and Mary Kathleen Watson, who lived on 66 Beulah Avenue, Hamilton, Ontario.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2320010>