

PRIVATES EDMOND ARSENAULT AND HERMAS GALLANT, THE GOTHIC LINE AND REMEMBRANCE

Jean-François Born

***“I don’t know where it’s going to end because you and I,
after all, live each day fairly close to the brink of eternity...”¹***

—Colin McDougall, Italian Campaign veteran, in his novel, Execution



Edmond Arsenault, portrait, 1943.



Hermas Gallant, portrait, 1944.

Source: Adobe

INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the Second World War and the lives lost, Edmond Arsenault, a veteran of the West Nova Scotia Regiment, does not understand why he survived.² The simplest explanation is that he was “one of the lucky ones.”³ Arsenault and other veterans of the Italian Campaign had to be content with the label “D-Day dodgers.” Unfortunately, their contributions to the Allied victory in Italy were little known in Canada.⁴ In fact, the Italian Campaign was long regarded “as a petty side-show.”⁵ More recently, the Italian Campaign has been labelled as a “bitter struggle” against “some of the German Army’s best troops.”⁶ Approximately 93,000 Canadians served in Italy, with almost 6,000 buried there.⁷ This article explores the lives of Edmond Arsenault and A. Hermas Gallant, both Acadians from Prince Edward Island (PEI) who served as privates in the West Nova Scotia Regiment. It also examines remembrance and the long-lasting memories of the war that time cannot erase.

ACADIANS FROM PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Despite the proximity of their villages in Prince County (Évangéline region), PEI, Gallant and Arsenault did not know each other until they met in the Army.⁸ Both served with the West Nova Scotia Regiment. Antoine Hermas Gallant, who hailed from Cape Egmont, was born on 24 December 1923. Gallant loved practical jokes and had a wonderful sense of humour.⁹ He enlisted in February 1943 when he was 20 years old. At the time, he was a fisherman and worked on his parent’s farm,¹⁰ and his departure caused the family to struggle.¹¹ While in the Army, Gallant corresponded with his sweetheart, Loretta Maddix.

Edmond Arsenault was born on 21 July 1922 in Abram-Village, PEI. When he joined the Army in January 1943, Arsenault worked in a grist mill in Saint John, New Brunswick. He had been conscripted and opted for general service in the infantry.¹² Previously, he had tried to join the Royal Canadian Navy but was rejected for weighing only 120 pounds.¹³ In the Canadian Army, Arsenault was given a choice between a Francophone and an Anglophone regiment. He chose the latter because he considered it to be an excellent opportunity to learn English.¹⁴ Imelda Cormier, known as “Melda,” waited for Edmond’s return. During the war, she worked as a cook and a housekeeper.¹⁵ They corresponded through letters during Arsenault’s time overseas with the Army.¹⁶

WITH THE WEST NOVAS IN ITALY

Arsenault and Gallant joined the West Nova Scotia Regiment, commonly known as the “West Novas,” as replacements. The regiment had taken heavy casualties in the preceding months, particularly in the Battle of Ortona in December 1943. The reinforcement unit for the 1st Canadian Division was located in a cork oak forest overlooking the Mediterranean Sea in Tunisia. The camp included a reinforcement company for each battalion of the 1st Division, which had been fighting in Italy ever since the invasion of Sicily in July 1943.¹⁷



Private Edmond Arsenault of the West Nova Scotia Regiment aiming a projector, infantry, anti-tank (PIAT) weapon from a slit trench near Ortona, Italy, on 10 January 1944 at the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade training school.

Source: Lieutenant Alexander Mackenzie Stron, 18

Arsenault travelled from the United Kingdom to Algiers by ship and then took a two-day train journey packed in boxcars until arriving at the reinforcement unit. He joined the regiment in Italy on Christmas Eve in 1943.¹⁹

Shortly after arriving in Italy, Arsenault was marching with his platoon when a shell exploded in front of their column, injuring and killing several men. Thrown into a ditch, he remembered climbing out, his nose bleeding from the concussion and his ears ringing. He was deaf for days. Recalling this incident, he said, “You had to keep your ears and eyes open at all times.”²⁰ Gallant joined the West Novas later, arriving in April 1944. It was likely at this time that the two met. Recently, when asked what he remembered most about Gallant, Arsenault said, “Hermas was a good friend.”²¹ He paused and seemed to be in deep reflection but did not expand further.

Both Arsenault and Gallant were present for the hard-fought battles of the Gustav, Hitler and Gothic Lines. On the front lines in the winter season, the soldiers were cold and uncomfortable. “The daily routine, both our own and the enemy’s, included manning all forward positions during the night, withdrawing to rest during the day in any building or caves that might be handy. [...] All personnel would rest with their boots on and weapons loaded, ready to move at short notice to their fire trenches.”²²

While the summer season in Italy was hot with beautiful blue skies, it was accompanied by clouds of flies and mosquitoes. Malaria was a looming concern. The soldiers traded their battledress for khaki denim. According to regimental history, this meant that there was a considerable “proportion of out-sizes and under-sizes and the usual comic

result until the process of exchanges between 'the short, the lean and the tall' [which] ... produced something like a fit."²³ In the context of the ongoing operations, another Italian Campaign veteran noted, "When you are part of a fighting battalion within a rifle company, your picture of the battle is somewhat limited, confined to the immediate area."²⁴ Arsenault and Gallant were concerned about their day-to-day survival and not worried about where they would be next. Gallant wrote to his family that he was able to visit St. Peter's Basilica in Rome while on leave in June 1944. However, as an infantryman, he faced an ever-present threat to his life. In a letter written to his sister three days before his death, he concluded with these words:

Source: Arsenault family collection



Hermas Gallant (left) and Edmond Arsenault (right), 1944.

[...] I hope that you are getting good news on the radio about the war. It's not going to last too long now, I hope so. Pray for me to get through it unharmed [sic] and healthy. [...] Best regards to father and mother, love Hermas.²⁵

THE "GATE CRASH" OF THE GOTHIC LINE

At the end of August 1944, the Allies were planning to breach the Gothic Line, a series of deep German defensive positions. The Canadians faced a sector of the line built between the Adriatic Sea and the Apennine Mountains.

The commander of the Eighth Army, General Leese, saw an opportunity to exploit. He called for a "gate crash" of the line by waging an immediate infantry attack.²⁶ For the West Novas, the opening of the battle on 30 and 31 August 1944 remains controversial. G.W.L. Nicholson described this as a "sad debacle."²⁷ The men of the battalion walked into a killing ground. There was little preparation and no support, possibly because of the assumption that the Gothic Line was unoccupied by the Germans.²⁸

After crossing the practically dry Foglia River, the battalion entered a vast minefield. Soon, the soldiers began to experience the "agony" of mines exploding under their feet while others exploded waist-high after the tripwires were disturbed.²⁹ This caused the Germans to come to life, making it clear that the line was manned and that its killing ground would be effective. The soldiers "staggered helplessly," under fire from the enemy's automatic weapons, mortars, and artillery.³⁰

Incredibly, despite the chaos of the battle on the morning of 31 August 1944, Arsenault remembers wondering where his friend was and suddenly coming face to face with Gallant. A bullet had almost struck him. He jokingly asked Arsenault how hunting was that morning. Gallant laughed as he moved away. Ten minutes later, he was killed by a landmine.³¹ Desperate attempts were made to find a way through the minefield.³² After failed attempts, the survivors withdrew across the Foglia under cover of smoke.

Chaplain Laurence Wilmot, MC, led the valiant efforts to rescue wounded men with the stretcher-bearers in the minefield. He recalled the devastating effects of the Gothic Line minefield and killing ground:

Some forty men had lost feet from Schu mines, while others had received wounds from machine-gun, shell, mortar fire, or shrapnel from S mines. Some were entangled in barbed wire and surrounded by mines. One young man, whom I shall never forget, lay tangled in wire and wounded by both mines and shrapnel. He called out to me as I approached, "Padre, for God's sake, don't come near me, the place is loaded with mines. Someone has to stay alive to return and tell the people at home what hell they sent us into." I replied that I hoped, by God's grace, to live through this, but that now we needed to get him out of there and carry him back to safety. It was a sticky situation to cut the wire and bind up his wounds, all the while stepping around Schu mines. We did manage to get him out and carry him back, but I doubt he survived.³³

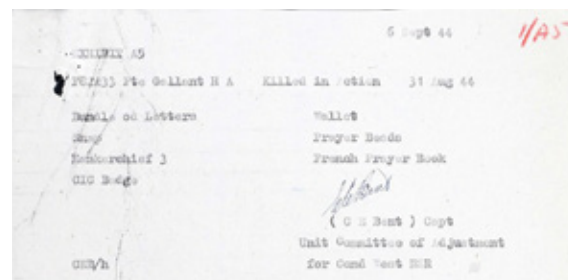
Later, when the line had been breached, Wilmot led the recovery of the deceased. He may have recovered Gallant.³⁴ He wrote a letter of condolence to the Gallant family,

stating: "I am so sorry; such news is so much harder when by all appearances the war is so near to ending, yet it is only by continuing the struggle to the end that a victory worthy of the sacrifices made can be won."³⁵ Without mentioning the desperate situation in the minefield, Wilmot tried to show Gallant's death in a favourable light by writing: "Your son was a splendid soldier and gave his life along with others in a heroic attack upon a heavily defended machine gun post."³⁶ This embellishment may have helped Gallant's family. Finally, to offer one last comfort, the chaplain added that there had been a religious service shortly before going into action and that "your son had his prayer book in his pocket."³⁷ The family still has this prayer book and other possessions, which were returned to them weeks after his death. While Arsenault returned to his family, Gallant's family received his blood-stained possessions.

The "sharp repulse" at the Foglia River left the West Novas with 19 killed and 59 wounded.³⁸ There would be more hard fighting and casualties later in the push north to Rimini and beyond the Po Valley. In early December 1944, B Company witnessed the death of its well-respected leader, "one of the finest infantry fighters in the Canadian Army,"³⁹ Major Harvey Jones, MC.⁴⁰ During the three weeks of fighting on the Gothic Line, 330 members of the West Novas died or were wounded, including 21 officers. Not a single platoon commander survived unscathed.⁴¹

In March 1945, the 1st Canadian Division completed its move to the European theatre of operations. Upon the departure of the regiment from Italy, Wilmot recalled, "[...] we were leaving behind us in Italy the bodies of some of the finest men we had ever known, men whom we had come to know better than our own kith and kin because we had shared with them the common torment and distress of war and had been with them under all kinds of adversity and danger."⁴² It is for these reasons that veterans always remember their lost friends.

The West Novas joined 1st Canadian Army operations in Belgium and the Netherlands to end the war from March to May 1945. On the morning of 7 May 1945, a convoy comprising the West Novas and three other battalions was travelling to Delft. They mistakenly entered The Hague, where they "were hailed as the liberators of Holland." The Dutch were "wild with excitement" and mobbed all the trucks in the convoy.⁴³ This made it apparent to all ranks in the regiment that the last years of struggle were worthwhile.⁴⁴ Arsenault remembers the oddity felt at the end of the war. He emerged from a slit trench and saw that "everybody was out of their hole, walking around and even waving at the Germans. They would wave back at us. It was a funny feeling."⁴⁵



Itemized list of Gallant's belongings, 6 September 1944.



Hermas Gallant's rosary and prayer book.



Hermas Gallant's wallet.

Source: Gallant family collection

**CANADIAN ARMY (ACTIVE)
DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE**

This is to Certify that No. 731516 (Rank) PRIVATE
Name (in full) EDMOND A. ARSENAULT entitled OFFICER
Enlisted in the 2ND CANADIAN INFANTRY
day of 1942 at WINDSOR, ONT.
He served in Canada UNITED KINGDOM WESTERN FRONT
and is now discharged from the service under Order 1002 (3011) by reason of
TO RETURN TO CIVIL LIFE - "No Demobilisation"
Medals, Decorations, Mentions 1939-45 STAR, FRANCE-GERMANY-ITALY
awarded in respect of service CANADIAN VOLUNTEER SERVICE MEDAL AND CLASP
during this war
Age 24 YEARS Height 5 Feet 10 Inches Weight 150 lbs
Complexion Fair Eyes Grey Hair Dark Brown
Marks or Scars Scar in Testicle
Other Active Army Service (This War)
Date 18th March 1946

N.B.—As no duplicate of this Certificate is issued, any person finding same is requested to forward it in an unopened envelope to the Director of

Edmond Arsenault, Canadian Army Discharge Certificate, 18 March 1946.

POST-WAR

Chaplain Wilmot exemplified the attitude of many veterans after the Second World War, remembering: "My war was over at last, and I happily turned my thoughts to the challenges of civilian life."⁴⁶ Arsenault was demobilized in March 1946 and remembers his return to PEI fondly. His brother met him at the train station in Wellington, PEI, on horseback.⁴⁷ Proud of his service in the Army, Arsenault carried his Canadian Army discharge certificate in his wallet for decades—only recently did his family suggest removing it for safekeeping.⁴⁸

After the war, Arsenault worked at the airport in Summerside, PEI, for two years. He and Melda Cormier were married on 14 July 1948. Melda's brothers had settled in Toronto, Ontario. They suggested the couple join them because that city had more employment opportunities. After arriving in Toronto, the Arsenaults worked as majordomo and housekeeper in a household.⁴⁹ Six weeks later, Arsenault found employment at the Ford manufacturing plant in Oakville, Ontario. He began work as a welder and retired 28 years later as a line inspector.⁵⁰ The couple had three children and celebrated their 74th wedding anniversary in July 2022.

What course would Gallant's life have taken if he had come home? It is impossible to say. He had written in an Army form that his interest was to become a truck driver.

Gallant's niece, Jeanne, thinks he would have become a fisherman since this was always an important profession in the family. He would likely have remained in touch with Arsenault and their friend Ned DesRoches, another West Nova veteran. An odd coincidence resulting from Gallant's death was that Loretta Maddix, Gallant's sweetheart, and Ned DesRoches married decades after the war, after both were widowed.⁵¹

Veterans often feel that only their comrades understand what they witnessed and did during the war and how they endured it. Tim Cook has written that veterans found "...the war never left them, lingering until it crept forward from the depths, biting and scratching."⁵² According to the Regimental Association, West Nova Scotia Regiment, as of summer 2021, nine regimental Second World War veterans are left.⁵³ In 2019, Arsenault stated that he had kept in touch with two or three veterans who fought with him during the war but that they were all gone. He remarked, "I have no one left to speak to about the war."⁵⁴

REMEMBRANCE

Antoinette Richard, Gallant's sister, remembered the dreadful news of her brother's death being delivered to the family home. It was a shock to the family. Years passed before they accepted that he would never return. Jeanne Gallant became intrigued by her uncle's memory from a young age. Her mother often spoke about her brother Hermas. She remembers that the pain the family felt was real and tangible. Later, Jeanne became a school principal and incorporated her uncle's memory into Remembrance Day activities, always including his photo.⁵⁵ Jeanne Gallant remembers meeting Arsenault for the first time at the Legion in Wellington, PEI. Arsenault began to cry when the Gallant family was introduced as the relatives of his friend Hermas.



Edmond Arsenault

Source: Veterans Affairs Canada



Edmond Arsenault, Apeldoorn National March Past and Liberation Festival, the Netherlands, 9 May 2015.

In September 2015, Jeanne Gallant and her family visited the Montecchio War Cemetery in Italy, where her uncle is buried. They were the first members of the family to return since 1975. She remembers the visit as a moving and emotional experience. Even after the visit, it was difficult for her to describe how it made her feel. They left an Acadian flag on his grave.⁵⁶

Arsenault participated in events to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, including the 9 May 2015 Apeldoorn National March Past and Liberation Festival. While there, he met a current member of the West Novas. Corporal J.L.J. Draper later wrote that he was “very honoured” to be in the presence of the veterans. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces marched behind the veterans during the parade, and for Draper this was “my proudest day in the military.”⁵⁷ There was a definite feeling of “passing the torch” of remembrance as the event was described as “the last” liberation parade because of the declining ranks of Second World War veterans.⁵⁸

Arsenault returned to Italy in December 2019 as part of the official Canadian delegation marking the 75th anniversary of the Italian Campaign. The 93,000 Canadian participants of the Italian Campaign were represented by 15 veterans.⁵⁹ Before leaving for Italy, he thought he would experience “a lot of memories” once there.⁶⁰ Arsenault visited the Montecchio War Cemetery on 5 December 2019 and paid his respects to his friend Hermas. The experience was emotional.

CONCLUSION

The contrast between Edmond Arsenault’s long life and Hermas Gallant’s, which ended so early, epitomizes the cruel reality of the Second World War. Some were “lucky,” others not. During the war, Arsenault thought he would be the first member of his immediate family to die.

Source: Veterans Affairs Canada



Edmond Arsenault at the Ravenna Commonwealth War Cemetery, Italy, 4 December 2019.

However, he will be the last, outliving his brothers and sisters.⁶¹ Arsenault considers it incredible that so many of his peers did not have the chance to have a long, fulfilling life like his own.⁶² Even after 76 years, Arsenault remembers those killed and wounded in Italy and Northwest Europe. He often repeats that the West Novas lost hundreds of men and alludes to a sense of devastation.⁶³

Not long before his death, Chaplain Wilmot remarked: “I would want future generations to know that their fathers and grand-fathers went to a war that [...] had to be fought.”⁶⁴ Despite their courage, Second World War veterans remained humble. Harry Eisenhower, a former Second World War commander of the West Novas, reflected on his long life and wrote: “I look back upon a life which I hope was not entirely misspent. Perhaps I am the epitome of the adage, ‘old soldiers never die, they simply fade away.’”⁶⁵ Soon, this generation will be gone, but their memories must remain as a reminder of their sacrifices and the terrible cost of war. The loving and proud families of Edmond Arsenault and Hermas Gallant have never forgotten their sacrifices. They will always remember. Canadians should remember them too. 🍁

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jean-François Born, M.A., is passionate about Canadian and military history. He earned a master’s degree in history from the University of Ottawa in 2008. His articles have appeared in *Canadian Military History* and *Le Chaînon*. He is a board member of the *Mouvement d’implication francophone d’Orléans* and the *Association du patrimoine familial francophone de l’Ontario*. A public servant, he was a Department of National Defence analyst (Chief of Force Development) and a defence scientist with Defence Research and Development Canada (Strategic Joint Staff), and he is currently employed as an analyst at Transport Canada.

ENDNOTES

1. Colin McDougall, *Execution*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd), 1958 (2010), p. 125.
2. Nick Arsenault, "Un vétéran de la guerre et la fille d'un tondeur de bœufs," *La Voix Acadienne*, 24 July 2013, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_LfZ8m2_MzLdIBFZm5iakxRcjQ/view?resourcekey=0-L00nBeZwgkrhbRlz0VG4Vg], consulted 30 July 2021, p. 11.
3. Taylor Simmons, "Canadian WWII vets to visit Italy to commemorate the Italian Campaign," *CBC*, 23 November 2019, [https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/75-years-italian-campaign-1.5367956], consulted 3 August 2021.
4. Tim Cook, *The Fight For History: 75 years of Forgetting, Remembering, and Remaking Canada's Second World War*, Allen Lane, 2020, p. 183.
5. Thomas H. Raddall, *West Novas: A History of the West Nova Scotia Regiment*, 1986 (1947), privately printed, p. 236.
6. Veterans Affairs Canada, "Canadian Veterans return to Italy to commemorate 75th anniversary of the Italian Campaign," News Release, 14 November 2019, [https://www.canada.ca/en/veterans-affairs-canada/news/2019/11/canadian-veterans-return-to-italy-to-commemorate-75thanniversary-of-the-italian-campaign.html], consulted 30 July 2021.
7. Ibid.
8. Interview, Edmond Arsenault, 22 July 2021.
9. Nick Arsenault, "Hommage au soldat acadien Hermas Gallant," *La Voix Acadienne*, 11 November 2015, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_LfZ8m2_MzLZFFGbXBfeml1Zm8/view?resourcekey=0-p-1_f6xSk8aeHtTvYmuh4g], consulted 3 August 2021 11, p. 9.
10. Ibid.
11. Gallant's service records show that his father twice asked that he be granted agricultural leave in summer 1943 to help with the family farm, particularly the harvest. He was granted 30 days leave beginning 2 June 1943. However, when his father applied for an extension to 1 October 1943, this was denied because in his request, he admitted that he and the "sixteen year old brother of the soldier will be busy with 'lobster fishing' July to October and as 'lobstering' is not considered to be an essential industry at this time, it is recommended that no further leave be granted this soldier." Letter to the Secretary, Department of National Defence, 21 June 1943, Reference number H.G.-1567 (rep) 6CD/G-111, Library and Archives Canada; Ottawa, Canada; Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939–1947; Series: RG 24; Volume: 25925, F82233.
12. Interview, Edmond Arsenault, 22 July 2021.
13. Nick Arsenault, 24 July 2013.
14. Pénélope Leblanc, "Rencontre d'un ancien combattant de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale," *La Voix Acadienne*, 21 July 2021, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1chL1FevuAMlJGoQu_g1JybfP-y4pvC3_/view], p. 5, consulted 3 August 2021.
15. Nick Arsenault, 24 July 2013.
16. Pénélope Leblanc, 21 July 2021.
17. R.G. "Bill" Thexton, *Times to remember: Some recollection of four and a half years service with the West Nova Scotia Regiment during 1940–1944*, (Kentville, Nova Scotia: Gaspereau Press), (1995) 2016, p. 94.
18. Library and Archives Canada, "Private Edmond Arsenault of The West Nova Scotia Regiment aiming a PIAT anti-tank weapon from a slit trench near Ortona, Italy, 10 January 1944," Alexander Mackenzie Stirton, MIKAN number: 3222597, item number: 705, [https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/fra/decouvrez/patrimoine-militaire/deuxieme-guerre-mondiale/visages-deuxieme-guerre/Pages/item.aspx?IdNumber=705&], consulted 9 August 2021.
19. See the testimonial by Edmond Arsenault, recorded in [https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/mpsb-edmond-arsenault-primary-source].
20. Taylor Simmons, 23 November 2019.
21. Interview, Edmond Arsenault, 22 July 2021.
22. R.G. "Bill" Thexton, pp. 117–118.
23. Thomas H. Raddall, p. 185.
24. Robert W. Metcalfe, *No Time For Dreams: A Soldier's Six-Year Journey Through WW II*, (Burnstown, Ontario: General Store Publishing House), 1997, p. 116.
25. Letter, Hermas Gallant to Antoinette Gallant, 28 August 1944, Gallant family collection.
26. G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Canadians in Italy, 1943–1945*, 1957, (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer and Controller of Stationery), 1960, p. 513. "[I]t seemed to General Leese [Commander Eighth Army] that the Germans had either been completely taken by surprise and were not ready to man the Line, or that they had decided to withdraw their forces from Italy altogether. 'I therefore ordered both Corps' he wrote later, 'to patrol very actively at daylight, and to try to gate crash the Gothic Line in accordance with our original plan.'"
27. Ibid, p. 515.
28. This line of thinking is also described in Bill McAndrew, *Canadians and the Italian Campaign: 1943–1945*, Art Global, Montreal, 1996, p. 120.

29. Thomas H. Raddall, p. 219.
30. G. W. L. Nicholson, p. 515
31. Interview, Edmond Arsenault, 22 July 2021, and Nick Arsenault, 11 November 2015.
32. Thomas H. Raddall, p. 219.
33. Laurence R. Wilmot, *Through the Hitler Line: Memoirs of an Infantry Chaplain*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003, pp. 82–83.
34. The Regimental history mentions that he “had managed to collect twelve bodies of the dead.” Thomas H. Raddall, p. 220. Gallant’s burial records were submitted by the chaplain. See Field Service, Army Form B. 2090A, 9 September 1944, Library and Archives Canada; Ottawa, Canada; Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939–1947; Series: RG 24; Volume: 25925, service number F82233. For a testimonial about the horrors of the minefield, see Testaments of Honour, *Laurie Wilmot, MC: Tragedy on the Gothic Line*, [https://vimeopro.com/user2154501/testaments/video/68325207], consulted 11 August 2021.
35. Letter, Laurence R. Wilmot to Sylvain and Matilda Gallant, 2 September 1944, p. 1, Gallant family collection.
36. Ibid, p. 2.
37. Ibid, p. 3.
38. Thomas H. Raddall, p. 220.
39. Ibid, p. 251.
40. R.G. “Bill” Thexton, p. 194. Chaplain Wilmot remarked that, although he was killed by a shrapnel wound to his heart, “it was generally agreed that exhaustion played a role, as he had been on the go for days without rest and didn’t exercise his usual caution against stray shells.” Laurence R. Wilmot, *Through the Hitler Line*, p. 112.
41. Laurence R. Wilmot, *Through the Hitler Line*, p. 98.
42. Ibid, p. 126.
43. Ibid, p. 135.
44. Ibid, p. 138.
45. Testimonial by Edmond Arsenault, [https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/mpsb-edmond-arsenault-primary-source].
46. Laurence R. Wilmot, *Through the Hitler Line*, p. 142.
47. Pénélope Leblanc, 21 July 2021.
48. Canadian Army (Active) Discharge Certificate, 18 March 1946, Arsenault family collection.
49. Nick Arsenault, 24 July 2013.
50. Interview, Edmond Arsenault, 22 July 2021.
51. Interview, Jeanne Gallant, 20 September 2021.
52. Tim Cook, p. 432.
53. Thank you to Ron Stonier, Regimental Association, West Nova Scotia Regiment.
54. Pénélope Leblanc, 21 July 2021; Nazaire (Ned) DesRoches was the last of Arsenault’s friends to pass away in 2018 at the age of 94. See: Legion, Prince Edward Island Command, War Time Service Recognition Booklet Vol 10, p. 43, [https://peilegion.com/sites/peilegion.com/files/Volume_10_0.pdf] and *John Nazaire (Ned) Desroches*, [http://www.inmemoriam.ca/view-announcement-2359805-john-nazaire-ned-desroches.html], both consulted 3 August 2021.
55. Nick Arsenault, 11 November 2015.
56. Ibid.
57. J.L.J. Draper, “Two Generations of West Novas meet in Holland,” *Regimental Association Newsletter*, West Nova Scotia Regiment, Summer 2015, Vol 2, No. 2, [https://www.wnsr.ca/docs/WNSRRA%20Newsletter%20V2,N2.pdf], pp. 1 & 3, consulted 13 August 2021.
58. Jeff Maguire, “Final liberation parade in Apeldoorn Saturday,” *Carleton Place Almonte Canadian Gazette*, 6 May 2015, [https://www.toronto.com/opinion-story/5605083-final-liberation-parade-in-apeldoorn-saturday/], consulted 13 August 2021.
59. Veterans Affairs Canada, 14 November 2019.
60. Taylor Simmons, 23 November 2019.
61. Nick Arsenault, 24 July 2013.
62. Ibid.
63. Interview, Edmond Arsenault, 22 July 2021. During the interview, Arsenault spoke of these high casualties three times, illustrating their impact on him and his memories of that time.
64. Blake Heathcote, *Testaments of Honour*, (Toronto: Doubleday), 2002, p. 327.
65. Harry M. Eisenhower, autobiography, 2016, Regimental Association collection, West Nova Scotia Regiment, p. 6.