



Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL
JOURNAL OF
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

w w w . c m h s . c a

March 2019

Normandy Sniper

By Roy Akins

Frank Norman Deluca was working at Tip Top Tailors in Toronto, Ontario when he joined the Canadian Militia on 25 March 1942 at the age of 17. He spent the next 10 months attached to the 15th Field Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery.

Deluca volunteered for active duty on 14 January, 1943 when he reached the age of 18 and was assigned to 56th Field Artillery Regiment. On 26 January 1944, he transferred to 1 Canadian Parachute Battalion and proceeded to A-35 Canadian Parachute Training Centre at Camp Shilo, Manitoba. Deluca became parachute qualified on 4 March 1944 and one month later embarked for the UK, arriving on 19 April 1944. Once overseas, he was attached to the Canadian Parachute Training Company. One month after D-Day, Deluca rejoined the Battalion and was sent to Normandy (Seaborne Reinforcement) to be deployed as a sniper. He arrived on 8 August along with Frederick George Topham, who went on to win the Victoria Cross during the Rhine Drop (Operation Varsity)

Thirteen days later, on 21 August, Deluca was wounded in the thigh by an 88mm shell during the attack on La Vallée Tantôt (just north of Annebault) where the Battalion was fired upon by self-propelled guns and mortars



“Now 1 Cdn Para Bn resumed the advance, passing thru the two special service brigades at Dozulé and pushing on towards Annebault (4201). Their role as infantry must have been unpleasantly driven home to the paratroops as they marched under heavy shellfire and pouring rain. No contact was made with the retreating enemy until the evening (of Aug 21). At 1800 hours 8 Para Bn passed through to capture Annebault, and the Canadian unit swung north to engage a resistance point on the high ground at La Vallée Tantôt (4101). Here the enemy’s 81-millimetre mortars and S.P. guns prevented further progress, and the battalion dug in for the night”.

The
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is a non-profit registered society
which fosters the study of the
military and the police, and the heritage of
Canada, the British Empire, and the world
as well as the preservation of military
artifacts and records.

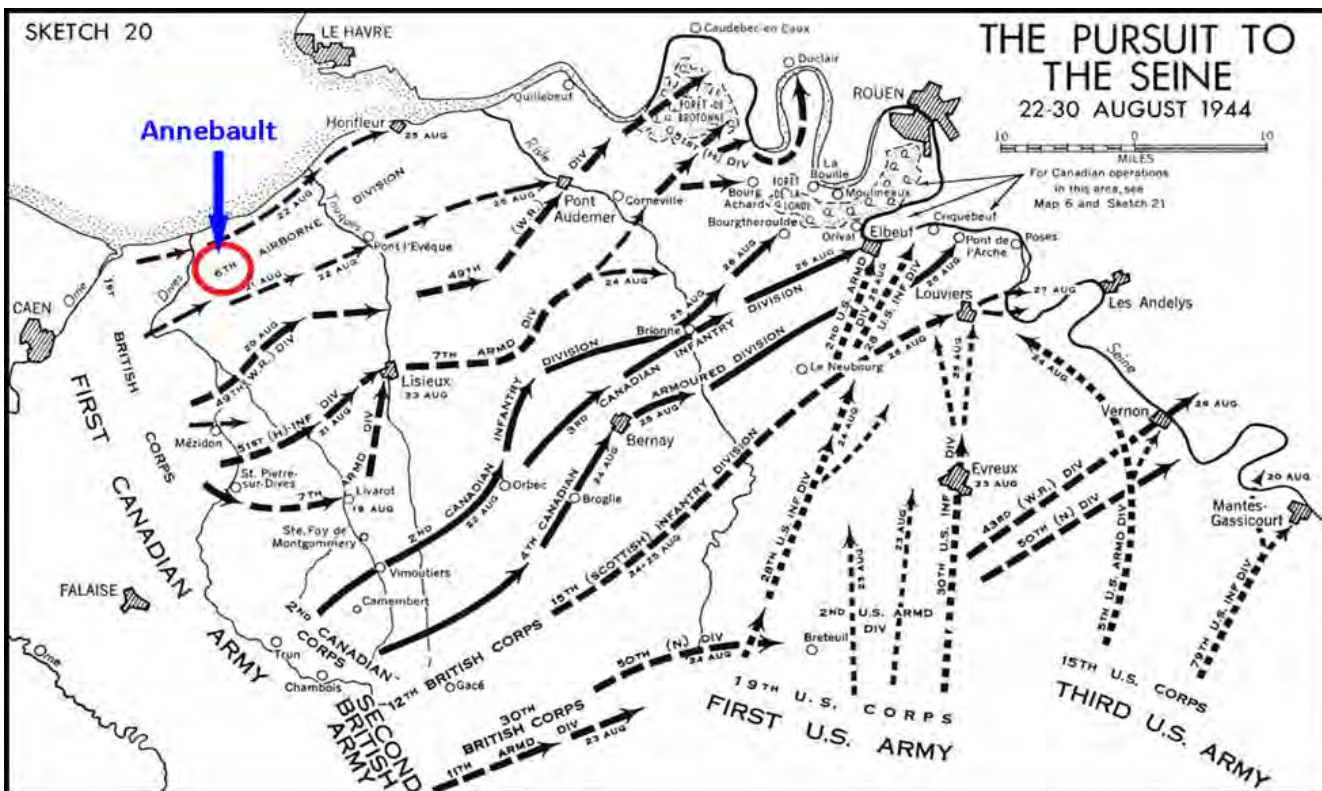
The CMHS meets once every calendar month
at: Petty Officers' Mess HMCS Tecumseh
1820 - 24th Street SW Calgary AB T2T 0G6

Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on
Tuesday, March 19th, 19:00 (7:00 pm)
At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.

The unofficial agenda of this meeting will be:
Introduction of guests, Minutes of last meeting Correspondence, Membership report
Treasurer's report, Old business / New business Break, Show & Tell
The President, **Allan Ross** would like to invite everyone to remain after the meet-
ing for an informal time of fellowship.

"21st August 1944. It rained hard all morning. At 1015 hours this Battalion started to move forward. During the advance the enemy shelled the road heavily. The enemy also used rockets. No enemy resistance met until the evening. A strong force of enemy was met at LA VALLE TANTOT 4101. At that point the enemy used 81mm mortars and S.P. guns. Battalion stayed at this position until 0800 hours 22nd August, 1944."



Department of National Defense

This was the last day of the Battalion's fighting in Normandy. Deluca was evacuated back to the UK and spent the next few months recovering from his wounds. Just after the cessation of hostilities in Europe, he suffered serious injuries in a street accident. He made the headlines in the UK and Canada by getting married while on a stretcher with both his legs in casts. His bride was Pte. Joan Gertrude Hayward W-293270 of the ATS.

*Original example of an Airborne
Marksman Badge.*

Minutes of General Meeting held on February 19, 2019
 Petty Officers Mess: HMCS Tecumseh

Meeting called to order by President Alan R. at 7:02 pm.
 14 members present and 0 guests.

Minutes of last meeting acceptance moved by Bob M. Second by Martin U. Approved.
 Newsletter – Thanks to Roy A. for great article.
 Treasurers Report provided by Floyd. (included Xmas dinner costs) Moved acceptance by
 Floyd Second by Martin U. Accepted.
 Membership - Currently 37 members. 3 Life members 2 Honorary. Approval moved by
 Floyd
 Seconded by Dave L. Approved.

Correspondence: none

OLD BUSINESS:

35 members attended Christmas party on Jan. 18, 2019 and all had a good time and great food.

NEW BUSINESS:

-AACCA Easter (March 30 & 31) Gun Show reminder with setup Friday March 29th at BMO Center
 -Have to vacate Tecumseh early (8:15) this meeting.

BREAK: No Raffle conducted due to time constraints.

SHOW & TELL:

Floyd S. – 1957 WW2 German gold award for sports for disabled veteran.
 Al R – Cap badges with Queen's crown
 Marjorie N.- Advice re WW1 nurse who had autograph album of soldiers poems and pictures.
 Martin U. – Cartridge bandolier c. 1916 for cavalry. Last vintage made by Mills.
 Alan M. – doing Rhodesia display for AACCA Show. Shoed Tshirts from Americans injured in Rhodesia.
 Bob M. – Collection of medals; French, Vietnamese and Bulgarian
 John E. – Donate to relatives vs museums
 David G. – Postcard to Vic; a British Army soldier; Canadianized by hand
 Dave L. – WW1 manuals –

Moved to adjourn at 7:55 pm by David G Seconded by John E.



This story and all captions and pictures were supplied by Member Roy Akins of St. Albert, Alberta "Thank You"

The next
 CMHS
 meeting will
 be held on
**Tuesday,
 March
 19th. 2019
 7:00 pm**
 At the Petty
 Officers'
 Mess HCMS
 Tecumseh

TORONTO DAILY STAR:
24 Thurs., Sept. 6, 1945

Toronto Paratrooper in England Goes to Wedding in Ambulance

Combe Down, England, Sept. 6—(CP)—An ambulance took Paratrooper Frank N. Deluca, of Toronto, to church in this Somersetshire village for his marriage to Joan Haywood, of Portsmouth. Wounded in France while serving with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, Deluca has both his legs in casts, but he did not let this interfere with his wedding. His bride is in the Auxillary Territorial Service.

"I met Joan down here just before

D-Day," said Deluca when he returned to hospital. "I proposed to her about six months ago and had the two rings sent from Canada. She came to see me in hospital every chance she had. Fortunately, she works in a lab not far from here. I expect to get back home soon by hospital ship and I think Joan will be able to get priority. We plan to live in Toronto."

Deluca, aged 20, enlisted in 1943 and came overseas last year. He was wounded by shrapnel from an 88 mm. gun shell.

No 40
20 NOV 44

1ST CANADIAN PARACHUTE BN CA
Page - 2 -

2. EMBARKATION & DISEMBARKATION (cont'd)

(b) The u/m personnel EMBARKED IN UK wef 7 AUG 44 and DISEMBARKED
in FRANCE wef 3 AUG 44

B118225	Pte	PHILIPOVICH	W	B103126	Pte	PIGEON	R E
A104886	Pte	ROBINSON	B C	L154225	Pte	ROUSSEL	A V
A59324	Pte	SAUVE	F W	K92255	Pte	SCOTT	C I E
B68716	L cpl	SHERIDAN	J G	B45091	Pte	SLOAN	J G
K50201	L cpl	SULLIVAN	R B	K66692	Pte	SYMONS	R M
H14398	Pte	TAYLOR	R R	B39039	Pte	TOPHAM	F G
B108646	Pte	VARDEN	W R	M38311	Pte	WEBB	A H
L2781	Pte	ADAMSON	J M	U1982	Pte	BENOIT	J L
A37411	Pte	BINDER	A E	A102059	Pte	BROWN	C H
B108658	Pte	CAHUTE	N	F77984	L cpl	COTE	C A L
L3014	Pte	GURRIE	D A	D163140	Pte	DAVIAULT	J A L
<u>B138644</u>	<u>Pte</u>	<u>DELUCA</u>	<u>F N</u>	B115703	Pte	EDMONDSON	E P
M5245	Pte	HACKMAN	W M	B134845	Pte	HALLBORG	L E
B137503	Pte	HAVELAND	G L	L11162	Pte	KEMP	M W
K48819	Pte	MARC	J J	G7333	Pte	MAXWELL	G
D91816	Pte	McCALLUM	J D R	B117812	Pte	McPHADEN	G H
B86774	Sjt	STARRERS	A	B44188	A/Cpl	WOODALL	T W



The 88mm self-propelled gun that wounded Deluca was most likely a Jagdpanther, which Allied troops frequently encountered in Normandy. *Wikimedia Commons Photo*

CLASS ~~1-H~~, 2-H, ~~3~~ (OUT-PATIENT)

Reg. No. B138644 Name Deluca. J.

Report to OUT-PATIENTS' CLINIC, CHRISTIE STREET

HOSPITAL on 21-6-46
1:30 P.M.

Should you consider your progress not satisfactory, report immediately as above.

*7th floor
55 York.*

[Signature]
Chief Medical Officer

#182

Deluca was awarded the 1939-45 Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, and the War Medal. He returned to Canada in late 1945 where he continued months of physical rehabilitation.

Christie Street Veteran's Hospital, Toronto c.1940. Sunnybrook Archives.



Beret and 1943-dated Battle Dress worn by Pte. Deluca. Below the Pegasus patches there remains the outline of Airborne Designation Strips which, in June 1944, were ordered to be removed.





The Battle Dress retains its original gold-coloured Battalion Identification Strips.



Wound Stripe. Thread remains from where he had affixed his Airborne Marksman Badge. Continued wear of the Marksman Badge required annual requalification. Since Deluca had been badly wounded, he likely was unable to requalify and forced to remove the badge.



Deluca's 1944-dated Kangol Beret. Note that he had swapped his Canadian Badge for a British Para Badge. All parachute-trained Canadians can be found in period photos wearing the British badge,



Attention All Members

The Alberta Arms and Cartridge Collectors Association
Aka

The Calgary Gunshow, Canada's Finest Arms and
Military Collectors Show

**Will be held March 30th and 31st at the
BMO Centre, in Calgary**

Buying, Selling, Displays on over 1000 Tables

