

NAME: JOHN E. LE CRAW - B6354 - NORLAND,

BRANCH OF SERVICE: 22nd ARMoured REGIMENT
CANADIAN GRANADIER GUARDS

SERVED FROM: 1942 TO: 1946

THEATRE OF WAR: EUROPEAN



BRANCH 519

COBAC = NK

Trained in Camp Borden, 1942, as a driver, wheel and track. Posted to the 22nd Canadian Armoured Regiment, Canadian Grenadier Guards, 4th Armoured Division, in Brighton, England, 1943. Regiment landed on Juno Beach, Normandy, 1944, from LCT boats (landing craft tank). All our vehicles assembled in an orchard about five miles west of Juno Beach. By the end of July all of the 4th Armoured Division had disembarked on the beaches of Normandy bridgehead. We had our first casualties on July 29th. The 4th Armoured Brigade consisted of four regiments—The Governor Generals Foot Guards, Canadian Grenadier Guards, British Columbia Regiment, and the Lake Superior Regiment. (Branch member, Com. Norm Harris, was a member of the last regiment).

In the push by the allied forces up the Caen-Falaise highway blocked by corpses of hundreds of men, horses, cattle and burnt vehicles, the road had to be cleared by bulldozers, the air being rank with odour of putrefaction. Thus the horror of war was introduced early in the campaign. For months after, when the burlap camouflage nets became wet the stench all came back. During this push to hastily close the gap on the enemy, the Polish Armoured Regiment was ambushed, isolated and under siege for several days, near Trun. They had many German prisoners, and food, ammunition and petrol was becoming a major problem, so surrender was imminent, but however they were relieved when the tanks of #1 Squadron of the Grenadiers broke through enemy lines and the courageous Poles were reunited with the Canadians. (Branch member, Com. Ziggy Kwasnik was there).

Perhaps another point of interest would be that our regiment created an innovation of a Canadian armoured regiment in the forming of an infantry group formed by a Sgt, Al Hubert, called "Hubert's Commandoes". Consisting of volunteers from all available personnel, our job was to clean up pockets of Germans by-passed by the tanks in villages and farms, when the infantry units were not available. We were an amateur force but did the job with few casualties.

When the war ended we had reached an area near Oldenburg, Germany, after liberating many cities, villages and farm country, especially appreciated in Holland.

Sailed to England on the Queen Elizabeth from New York and came home on the Ile-de-France, to Halifax, 1946.

John



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to (name)