

Corporal Isaac Stewart Eckford

Cpl. Isaac Stewart ECKFORD, son of **Isaac ECKFORD** and **Margaret Ann ROSS**, was born on 16 Mar 1919 on Zion Line, Renfrew, Ontario, Canada. Isaac was born in Westmeath Twp., and his wife Margaret was born in Ross Twp. She was the granddaughter of James Ross & Elizabeth Galley, pioneers in Ross Township from the early 1830's. Stewart was the 10th born of 12 children. One sister Eleanor died at 3 months old. The remaining 10 siblings lived into adulthood and included: Ross, Harold, Lindsay, Allan, Isabella (Mrs. Donald Robertson), Bertha (Mrs. Merrill Kohlsmith), John, Nelson, Leah – Stewart's twin (Mrs. Alden May), and Clarence. They grew up on a farm on the Zion Line. Stewart's brother Nelson was a gunner in WWII with the Canadian Field Regiment.¹

Stewart Eckford enlisted in Ottawa on June 24, 1941 with the Cameron Highlanders; a couple months shy of 22 years of age. His enlistment papers indicate that he had acquired 8 years of public school but no high school; had

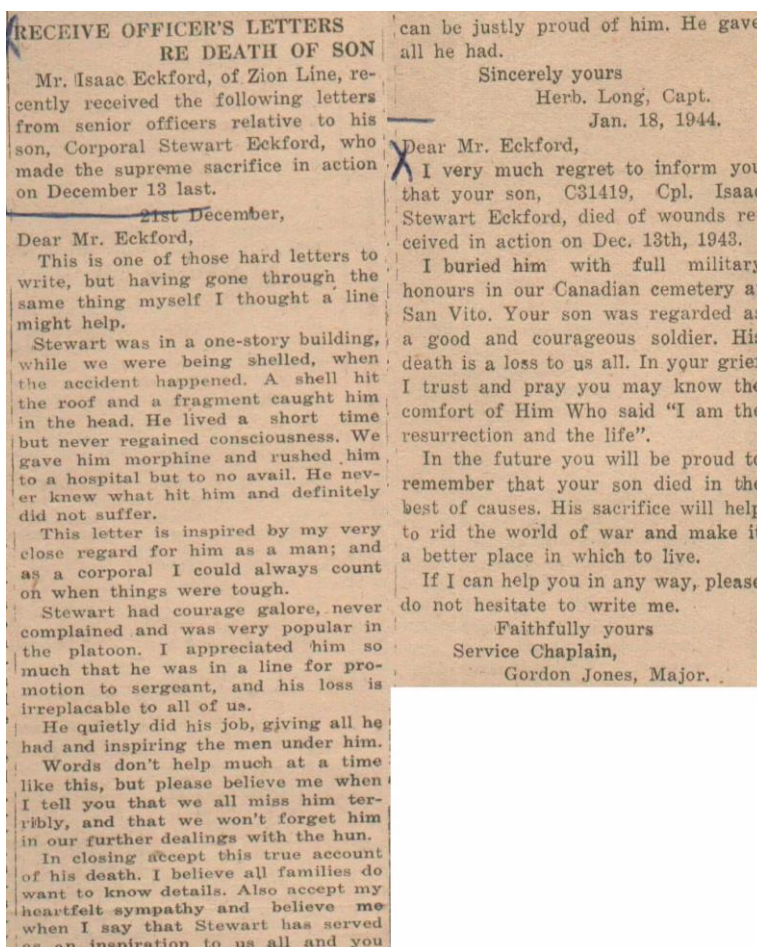
been working as a labourer on the farm as well as with Hydro Electric Commission in Calabogie. He was described as 5' 6 1/2", weighing 143 lbs. His complexion was medium with blue eyes and brown hair. He served at Cornwall, ON and Three Rivers, QC and was transferred to the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, R.C.I.C., Army Service on May 13, 1943. He embarked for England on Dec 13, 1941. Stewart reported for duty at Ewshot, Hampshire, England on Dec 27, 1941 and served in the Mediterranean Theatre of War in the Sicily campaign before going to Italy. He was appointed Acting Corporal in September 1943.²

Corporal Stewart Eckford was killed on Dec 13, 1943, age 24, when he was struck by fragments of a shell at the Battle of the Moro River. He was temporarily buried near St. Vito, Italy.

Image 2: Letters about Cpl. Eckford⁴



Image 1: Photo of Stewart Eckford, 1941³



WW II Enlisted Men & Women of Whitewater Region Project

His remains were moved at a later date to the Moro River Canadian War Cemetery at Ortona, Provincia di Chieti, Abruzzo, Italy.^{2,5,6} His name is also engraved on his parents' gravestone at Zion Line Cemetery, Ross Twp.⁷

Corporal Eckford's name is also commemorated on The WWII Honor Roll, St. Andrew's United Church, Beachburg⁸; The Beachburg War Memorial⁹; The Westmeath War Memorial¹⁰; and The Pembroke War Memorial¹¹. The Campaign Medals he earned were the 1939-45 Star, Italy Star, Defence Medal, War Medal, and C.V.S. M. & Clasp.²



Image 3: Cpl. Stewart Eckford³

Two Beachburg Boys Are Reported Killed In Italian Battle

Pembroke Soldier Wounded
and Westmeath Man Re-
ported Missing

NEWS RECEIVED HERE
DURING RECENT DAYS

Sidney Prescott Wounded a
Few Days Earlier and Re-
mained With Unit

Four Pembroke and district men who have been fighting in Italy have been reported as casualties in recent days. Two of them, Pte. Sidney Prescott and Pte. Stewart Eckford, both of Beachburg, have been killed; Pte. Neil Lafranier, Westmeath, is missing and Gnr. Damos J. Sylvestre, Pembroke, has been wounded.

Pte. Prescott was killed on December 12th and Pte. Eckford on December 13th and their families at Beachburg received notice of their deaths on December 24th.

Pte. Prescott had been wounded a short time previously, but his injury apparently was not serious, for he remained with his unit. He was born at Westmeath on February 24, 1921, and moved with his parents to Beachburg when a boy of seven years. He attended public and continuation school there and enlisted for active service in January, 1942, with the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry. He arrived overseas on January 1943, and was stationed for a time in England, later moving to North Africa, and took part in the battle for Sicily, then moved on to Italy. Surviving are his mother, five brothers, Pte. George Prescott, overseas; James Prescott, Ottawa; William Prescott, Pembroke, and Randolph and Basil Prescott, Beachburg, and seven sisters, Mrs. John Lacey, Beachburg; Mrs. James McKibbon, Mrs. Gordon Scott, Miss Susie Prescott and Miss Vivian Prescott, Sudbury, and Misses Mary and Eunice Prescott, Beachburg. A brother-in-law, Gordon F. Scott, is also serving overseas.

Stewart Eckford was a son of Isaac Eckford and the late Mrs. Eckford and was well known in the Beachburg district. A memorial service was held for him in St. Andrew's United church, Beachburg, Monday and it was attended by a large number of friends of the young man and his family.

Cpl. Eckford was born 24 years ago on Zion Line, a son of Mr. Isaac Eckford and the late Mrs. Eckford, who died in 1937. He received his education at Zion Line public school and enlisted for active service in June, 1940, in the Cameron Highlanders, later transferring to the Hastings

(Continued on Page 4)

BEACHBURG BOYS REPORTED KILLED

(Continued From Page 1)

and Prince Edward Regiment and spent two years overseas. Cpl. Eckford took part in the Sicily campaign before going to Italy. Surviving are his father, six brothers, Ross Eckford, Niagara Falls; Harold, Timmins; Lindsey, Allen and Clarence, Sudbury; Nelson, overseas, and John, Zion Line, and two sisters, Miss Bertha Eckford, Kingston, and Miss Leah Eckford, Zion Line. A sister, Mrs. Donald Robertson, died three years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Morille Sylvestre, 404 Trafalgar road, were notified Wednesday that their son, Gnr. Damos Sylvestre, had been wounded, but no particulars have yet been received concerning his injury. Gnr. Sylvestre served with the Lanark & Renfrew Scottish Regiment before the war and in the fall of 1939 was stationed at Petawawa Camp. He later transferred to the Governor General's Foot Guards and subsequently to the artillery. He has been overseas more than a year. Gnr. Sylvestre, who is 22, is one of four brothers in the armed forces. Hubert and Narcisse are overseas and John and Arthur are still in Canada.

Pte. Neil Lafranier, 21-year-old son of John Lafranier and the late Mrs. Lafranier of Westmeath, has been overseas three years and was in the Italian campaign from the beginning. Before going to Sicily last spring he was in Africa for a time. He has four sisters, Mrs. R. W. Weisenberg, Pembroke; Misses Ida and Patricia, at home, and Mrs. Gordon Halstead, Westmeath, whose husband is serving in Italy.

Image 4: Report of death¹²

WW II Enlisted Men & Women of Whitewater Region Project



Image 5: Gravestone at Ortono, Italy⁵

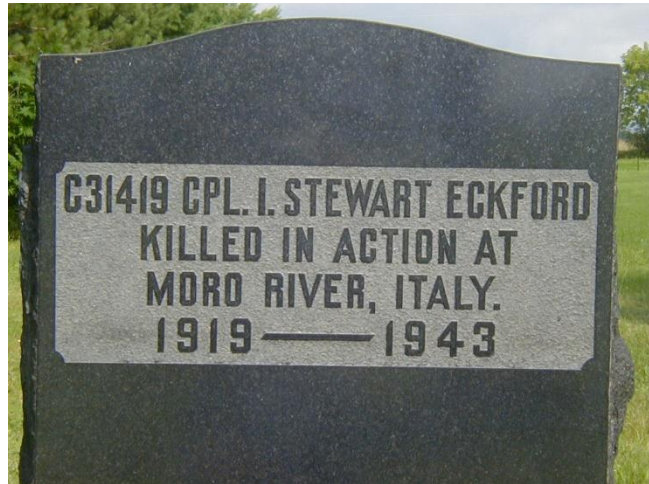


Image 6: Parents' Gravestone, Zion Line Cemetery⁷

November 19, 2003 Cobden, Ontario

Container of dirt brings comfort

by **CONNIE WHITE**
Editor

COBDEN - The dirt in a blue-colored pill bottle sitting beside a picture on a shelf in her livingroom is more special to Leah May than all the dirt in her garden.

It's dirt from her twin brother's gravesite in Italy.

And it's a gift she recently received from a dear friend.

Looking back through the years, Mrs. May recalls growing up on the Zion Line. She had eight brothers, one being her twin, and one sister, because another sister died shortly after birth.

"We were a happy family," she recalls, adding, "We didn't demonstrate our love for each other, but it was there."

On June 28, 1941, when he was 25 years old, Stewart Eckford joined the army and six months later was shipped to England.

"He went to England on the same boat as Harold Johnson," says Mrs. May. Mr. Johnson is a Cobden resident.

In July 1943, her brother was sent to Sicily and then on to Italy.

"He was killed while en route to Rome, close to Ortona," she says.

Mr. Eckford enlisted with the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa, but while in England was transferred to the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment.

"He was promoted to Corporal," she said.

Mrs. May still remembers the morning the minister came to the home bearing bad news.

"He came into the house and asked if I was alone. I said no, my dad was in the barn and my sister was upstairs. He said he had some bad news and I thought my aunt had died," she recalls.

See Page 3

Stewart and Leah Eckford (now May) just before he left for the train on his last leave, Nov. 22, 1941. Mr. Eckford died while fighting in Italy.

Image 7: Article from *The Cobden Sun*¹³

Sources:

1. Bennett, F. (2022). *Faysgenealogy.com*. www.faysgenealogy.com. family history database & images; 2001-present. Cobden, ON. (Original sources noted in database)
2. "Service Files of the Second World War - War Dead, 1939-1947." . Digital images. Library and Archives Canada, Government of Canada. *Library and Archives Canada*. <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=kia&IdNumber=10304>

WW II Enlisted Men & Women of Whitewater Region Project

3. *Photograph of Stewart Eckford*, provided by Laurel Anne Bates, 2023.
4. "Receive Officer's Letters re Death of Son", Newspaper article, *The Cobden Sun*, March 2, 1944 p. 5.
5. The Canadian Virtual War Memorial: Veterans Affairs Canada. "The Canadian Virtual War Memorial (CVWM)." Database. Veterans Affairs Canada. [www.veterans.gc.ca/eng. https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2204317?Isaac%20Stewart%20Eckford](https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2204317?Isaac%20Stewart%20Eckford)
6. CWGC. *Corporal Isaac Stewart Eckford | War Casualty Details 2204317 | CWGC.* <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/2204317/isaac-stewart-eckford/> Accessed Sept 2023.
7. Johnson, Clarke, *Photograph of Eckford family gravestone noting the death of Cpl. I. Stewart Eckford*, provided to Fay Bennett, 2002
8. Moratz, Rev. Kevin. *Photograph of The WWII Honor Roll*. St. Andrew's United Church, Beachburg, Ontario. November 2022.
9. Bennett, Fay. *Photograph of The Beachburg War Memorial*. Beachburg, Ontario. November 2022.
10. Bennett, Fay. *Photograph of The Westmeath War Memorial*. Westmeath, Ontario. November 2022.
11. Bennett, Fay. *Photograph of The Pembroke War Memorial*. Beachburg, Ontario. November 2022.
12. "Two Beachburg Boys Are Reported Killed in Italian Battle", Newspaper article, Scrapbook housed at Ross Museum.
13. "Container of Dirt Brings Comfort", Newspaper article, *The Cobden Sun*, Nov 19, 2003.
14. *Cpl Isaac Stewart Eckford (1919-1943) - Find a Grave (1919).* <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/56517421/isaac-stewart-eckford>
15. *I. Stewart Eckford (1919-1943) - Find a Grave (1919).* <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/228817842/i.-stewart-eckford>
16. Book of Remembrance, Veterans Affairs Canada <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/books/page?page=156&book=2&sort=pageAsc>
17. "Beachburg Soldier Fatally Wounded in Moro River Battle", Newspaper article, Scrapbook housed at Ross Museum.
18. "Killed in Action, Cpl. Isaac Stewart Eckford", Newspaper article from the collection of Benda Millar, 2018.