

WW II Enlisted Men & Women of Whitewater Region Project

Gunner Graydon Mills Sparling

Gunner Graydon Mills SPARLING, son of Ralph Nelson **SPARLING** and Lillian Elizabeth **MILLS**, was born on 10 Jul 1920 in Cobden, Renfrew, Ontario, Canada. He was the youngest of three children however the oldest girl died when a baby. His sister Marion married Thomas Daniel **O'BRIEN**.¹ Graydon attended school in Cobden and later in Pembroke where his parents had moved. He received his Jr. Matriculation at Pembroke Collegiate Institute and took 1 year Commercial at Pembroke Business College.²

Graydon Sparling enlisted into the army on June 18, 1940 at Kingston, Ontario where he was living at the time. He was 20 years old and described as 120 lbs.; 5'9"; medium complexion, hazel eyes; and dark brown hair. He stated his church affiliation was Church of England. His beneficiary on his Will was his mother, Lillias Sparling.²

Graydon was attached to the Royal Canadian Artillery initially in Kingston but was moved to Petawawa within a month. Gunner Sparling embarked at Halifax on Dec 13, 1940 and arrived in England on Dec 27, 1940. He was in the field by Feb 23, 1941 and qualified as a Driver I.C. wheeled in March. Gunner Sparling received a Good Conduct Badge in June 1942 and later that year was promoted to Lance Bombardier which is equivalent to a Corporal. However, 4 months later he reverted back to a Gunner (equivalent to a Private), at his own request.²

Gunner Graydon Mills Sparling was killed on 2 Jul 1944 in England just 8 days short of his 24th birthday. He was part of a regimental convoy that had pulled over awaiting the remainder of the convoy. On orders to reload the transport, Gunner Sparling was hit accidentally by another military vehicle while he was crossing the street. The investigation into the accident indicated that it was early morning, raining and there was poor light. The offending vehicle was having battery problems which resulted in dimming of the lights. A simple accident. The injuries sustained included a fractured skull and fractured femur.²

Gunner Graydon Sparling was buried in Brookwood, Surrey, England (Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England).^{2,3,5} Gunner Sparling's name is engraved on his parents' gravestone at St. John's Anglican Cemetery, Eganville, Ontario⁴; Pembroke Collegiate Institute WWII Honor Roll⁷; and the Pembroke War Memorial⁸.

Posthumously Gunner Sparling's mother was provided the Defence Medal, War Medal, and C.V.S.M & Clasp.²

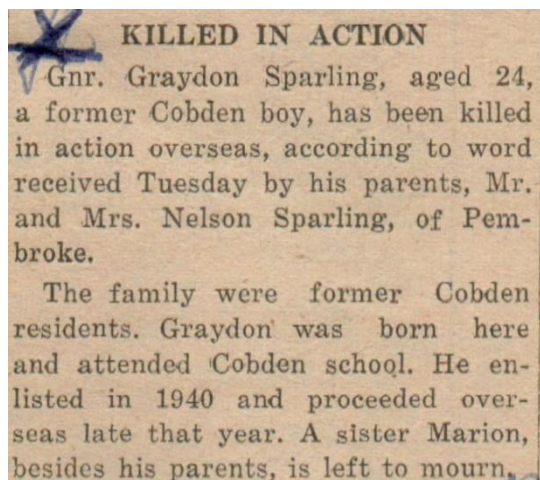


Image 1: Notification of death in Cobden Sun⁷

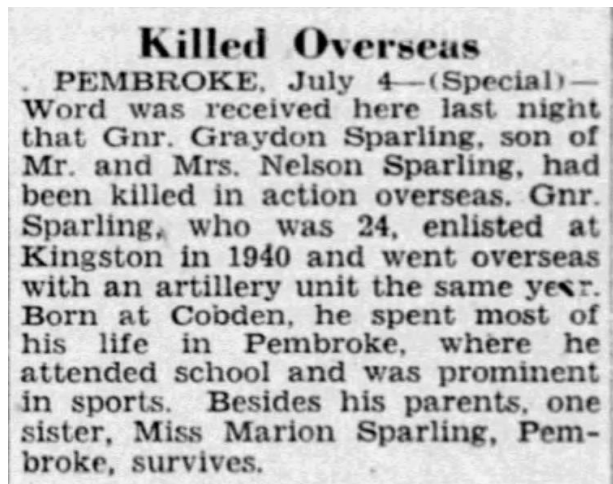


Image 2: Notification of death in Ottawa Citizen⁸

Sources:

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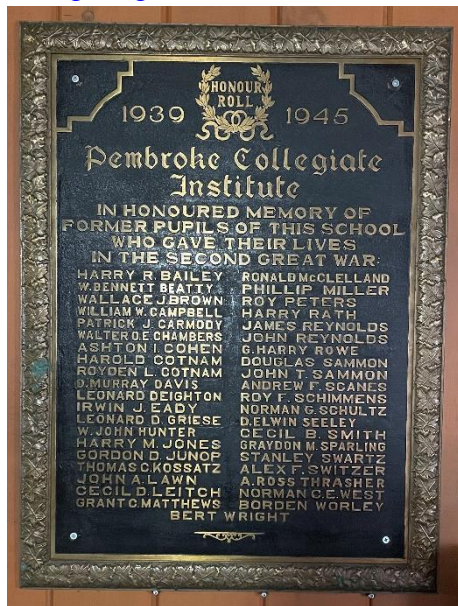


Image 3: WWII Honour Roll, Pembroke Collegiate Institute⁹



Image 4: Pembroke War Memorial – WWII Army section¹⁰