

# Paratrooper Clarence Lapierre

## 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion

### Family Life:

Clarence was born to David Booe and Rebecca Courtney in Owen Sound on November 9, 1923 and at birth became the adoptive son of Marcel and Lillian Lapierre. He attended Alexandra and Strathcona Public Schools before entering the Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute for a technical education program.

Clarence played rugby at the OSCVI and was given the nickname 'Dude' by his schoolmates. He left school at age 17, to take a job as a moulder working at Empire Stove Company in Owen Sound.

### Service History:

Clarence Lapierre was only 20 years old when he enlisted with the 48th Highlanders of Canada on January 21, 1943. Soon thereafter, he was transferred to the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada and embarked for England on June 2, 1943.



### Decorations:

- 1939 - 1945 Star
- France and Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939 - 1945
- Canadian Volunteer service Medal with Clasp

### Service History:

In August of 1943, Lapierre transferred to the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, becoming one of its only black members. Lapierre was attached to C Company on April 2, 1944 and continued training in England as they prepared for their role in the D-Day landings.

The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion deployed to France on June 6, 1944, D-Day, as part of the British 6th Airborne Division. Paratrooper Lapierre was with C Company under the command of Major H.M. MacLeod. C Company was dropped west of the River Dives.

The Company was tasked with securing the drop zone and then advancing on a fortified position at the Chateau in Varaville, where they were to destroy a radio tower. The Chateau at Varaville was heavily defended, including a concrete pillbox and multiple mortar emplacements.

### Service History:

As the remaining platoons of C Company arrived at Varaville, they came under heavy mortar and machine gun fire. They achieved their second objective when the German troops occupying the pillbox and Chateau surrendered. 42 German prisoners were taken by C Company. The Company, though successful in its objectives, suffered heavy casualties on June 6, including their Commanding Officer Major MacLeod. Paratrooper Lapierre was reported to have suffered wounds "while engaging the enemy" during these actions. Paratrooper Clarence David Lapierre died June 7, of these wounds. He was buried in Ranville British Cemetery. The inscription on his headstone reads: "MAY SOME KIND HAND LAY FLOWERS FOR ME. FONDLY REMEMBERED BY MOTHER AND DAD."

