

Adrian van der Brugge was born in 1904 in Amsterdam, Holland the son of Artinus and Anna van der Brugge. In 1918, Artinus and Anna decided to leave Holland with their three children and arrived in New York City on October 22, 1918 on their way to Peterborough, Ontario. The family eventually ended up in St. Catharines and lived at 27 Beech Street.

Adrian went to Chicago and obtained his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, with honours, at the Chicago Technical Institute and was an architect and engineer. Adrian, known as Andy by his fellow crew members, rowed for the St. Catharines Rowing Club in 1929, 1930 and 1931. In 1929 he was a member of the St. Catharines Junior Eight, the first club crew to win an eight oared event at the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta. The crew consisted of Don Thom – coxie, Ted Bramah – stroke, Dick Robinson, Andy van der Brugge, Russ Welch, George Robinson, Charlie Warren, Bert Coppen and Frank Courtney. Bob Fitzpatrick was the coach. They rowed a brand new boat called the “Dick Schram”. They defeated Wyandotte and Detroit in the Henley final. A crew photo and race story can be found on page 50 of the St. Catharines Rowing Club’s Centennial book “100 Years in a Row”. Adrian was a member of the Communist Party of Canada and an organizer for the Niagara Peninsula. He was secretary of the St. Catharines district of the Communist Party of Canada. In 1935 the Communist

Party of Canada selected Adrian to attend the International Lenin's School at Moscow.

Adrian was opposed to Fascism and at the outbreak of hostilities in Spain, went there and joined the Abraham Lincoln Battalion of the International Brigade. At the age of 33 years, Adrian was killed in action on February 23, 1937 while fighting the Fascist invasion on the Madrid front at Jarama, Spain. He was the first known Canadian to have died in the Spanish Civil War. His death was reported in the May 11, 1937 edition of The Standard. Adrian's name is among 1,547 persons listed on the Spanish Civil War Memorial in Ottawa. It includes the names of all known Canadians who died while fighting the fascists in the Spanish Civil War, a cause that was not popular in Canada at the time. The national monument was unveiled by Governor General of Canada Adrienne Clarkson on October 20, 2001. It is located on Green Island, a small island at the mouth of the Rideau River and is accessed from Rideau Drive.