

**Heer, Robert Roy, Trooper (M104509)**



- Robert Roy Heer was born on 18 July 1922 in Waterloo, Ontario. He was 23 years old when he was killed in action on 4 March 1945 in Germany.
- On 21 October 1942, he enlisted at the District 13 Depot in Calgary, Alberta. After enlisting, he was sent to Camrose for basic training and then to the Canadian Armoured Corps training centre in Borden, Ontario, where he qualified as a despatch rider. He was sent overseas in May 1943 and posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit. On 18 June 1943, he was transferred to the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment (17<sup>th</sup> Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars). On 10 June 1944, he was sent to France with the other members of "B" Squadron. He was wounded with shrapnel in the head and leg on 29 August 1944 and evacuated to England. Upon his release from hospital on 16 October 1944, he was sent to Belgium and posted again to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit, until the 8 November 1944, when he was transferred back to the 7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment.
- He had no military experience prior to enlisting.
- He left school at the age of 16, having attended Kitchener Collegiate Institute up to grade 11 achieving a Junior Matriculation. He also served as an apprentice to a carpenter.
- Prior to enlisting, he was employed for six months as a cowboy on Cartwright and Thorpe's ranch in High River, Alberta.
- According to his medical examination, he was 5 foot 8.5 inches tall and weighed 164 pounds. He had auburn hair and grey eyes. He was found fit for category A-1.
- He was the son of Albert R. (a building contractor and mayor of Waterloo in 1944-45) and Louisa Heer, who lived at 160 Albert Street, Waterloo, Ontario. They had married in Elmira, Ontario on 18 March 1920. They also had two daughters: Doris Anna (20) and Lola Mary Heer (16).
- Robert was a bachelor and had no children.
- Robert had no will, so his estate was settled in accordance with the laws of Ontario.
- His body is buried in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, Groesbeek, Netherlands (Ref XXI. D. 3.) (plot, row, grave)

Context

- On 3 February, the Regiment moved to Nijmegen in preparation for Operation Veritable, whose mission was to clear the west bank of the Rhine, cross the river and advance into Germany. The operation was divided into three phases, corresponding to the three main fortified zones established by the Germans. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division was given the task of clearing the area between the Nijmegen-Kleve road and the River Waal.
- On 3 March 1945, the Regiment was ordered to move to the area south of Uedem, Germany, a town approximately 20 kilometres south-east of Kleve. The fighting vehicles started bogging down in the soft ground, so the patrolling was performed on foot.
- On the afternoon of 4 March 1945, Lieutenant Ayer was tasked to "probe to Sonsbeck" from Uedem, Germany. The patrol got to a point just south of the Hochwald Forest when it came under fire from a 20-mm gun and multiple machine guns. After Corporal E. R. Johnson was wounded by a round from a 20-mm gun, Ayer started over to help him. Before he got there he was hit and killed by another round.
- In the early hours of 5 March 1945, No. 8 Troop sent Sergeant Holcombe and nine Other Ranks forward to find out if the Germans, who had fired and killed Lieutenant Ayer, were still in the area. Holcombe's patrol came under machine gun fire from a house, went to ground, returned fire, and withdrew. One member of the patrol, Trooper R. R. Heer, was killed.
- In Sergeant George Dunlop's memoirs, he recalls being on a night patrol near Sonsbeck when the patrol was attacked by some enemy soldiers. His friend the late Robert (Tex) Heer, a German Canadian, was one of the first members of the Regiment to be killed on German soil. Robert was an expert in shortening the recoil spring in the Schmeisser MP40 sub-machine gun so they would not fire too many rounds when the trigger was pulled. George said that during night encounters they could listen to the number of rounds being fired and know whether it was a German firing.

**TROOPER ROBERT HEER**

Trooper Robert Heer, only son of Mayor and Mrs. Albert Heer of Waterloo, was killed in action on enemy territory during a "night patrol" with a reconnaissance unit, his parents were informed today.

The 22-year-old soldier, who went overseas in May, 1943, was previously wounded while serving with an assault group last summer.

Enlisting in May, 1942, he trained at High River and Camp Borden. He had been working on a ranch at High River for several months prior to signing up for active service. Prior to that he had worked with his father. *March 15, 1945*

A member of the Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Waterloo, Trooper Heer was born in Waterloo and attended the K-W Collegiate.

Surviving, in addition to his parents, are two sisters, Doris and Lola.

*March 4, 1945*  
**TROOPER ROBERT HEER**

Trooper Heer had been working on a ranch at High River a few months when he enlisted in May, 1942. He has been overseas more than a year, and was serving with an assault group when he was wounded. Particulars of the injury are not yet known.

Trooper Heer's parents learned last night that he had been wounded. Before leaving for the war, he worked with his father in the general contracting business.

He was born at Waterloo, and attended the K-W Collegiate.