

Moncrief, George Francis, Trooper (H195544)



- George Francis Moncrief was born on 24 January 1923 in Port Arthur, Ontario. He was 21 years old when he was killed in action on 18 December 1944 in the Netherlands.
- On 26 November 1942, he enlisted at the No. 10 District Depot in Port Arthur, Ontario. From there, he was sent to 100 Canadian Army (Basic) Training Centre in Portage La Prairie for basic training then to A-27 Canadian Reconnaissance Training Centre in Dundurn, Saskatchewan, where he qualified as a driver of wheeled vehicles class III. In September 1943, he was sent overseas and posted to the 1st Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit. On 12 November 1943, he was transferred to the 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment (17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars). On 15 July he went with this unit to France.
- He had no military experience prior to enlisting.
- He left school at the age of 15, having completed grade eight in public school.
- Prior to enlisting, he was employed as a labourer-fitter for two years by the Canadian Car Factory, which operated an airplane manufacturing factory, in Fort William.
- According to his medical examination, he was 5 foot 9 inches tall and weighed 140 pounds. He had brown hair and blue eyes. He was found fit for category A-1.
- George was the son of Joseph Albert (mechanic) and Emma Martha Haines Moncrief, originally of Reaboro, Ontario, who had married in Port Arthur on 4 August 1922. They were separated nine years before George enlisted. Emma Martha's health was not good. She lived on a farm in Dorian, Ontario with George's six siblings: Florence Margaret Stinlund (21), Irene Hana Moncrief (17), Albert Gordon Moncrief (16), Harold William Moncrief (15), Gladys Mina Moncrief (13), and Lawrence Wray Moncrief (10).
- George was a bachelor and had no children.
- The sole beneficiary of George's will was his mother.
- His body is buried in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, Groesbeek, Netherlands. (Ref I. H. 2.) (plot, row, grave)

Context

On 25 July, George Francis Moncrief and "C" Squadron was sent to France, where it took part in the battles of Caen, the River Laison and the Falaise Gap. After the decisive Battle of the Falaise Gap (17-21 August 1944), the Regiment then pursued the retreating German Forces through France, eventually helping to encircle and obtain the surrender of the large fortified German garrisons at Boulogne, Cap Gris Nez, and Calais along the English Channel. It then moved into Belgium to the Netherlands, where it participated in the battle of the Scheldt, and helped clear the enemy from the Breskens Pocket, the low-lying land south of the Scheldt Estuary. This important operation was necessary to shorten the overextended supply lines from Normandy, and it gave the Allied Forces unrestricted access to the Port of Antwerp.

After the Battle of the Scheldt, the advance of the Allied forces stalled for the winter of 1944-45 notably while they redirected their supply lines through the Port of Antwerp and built up their supplies of ammunition, fuel, and other essential elements, in anticipation of a thrust into northern Germany. While this was going on, the River Waal in Central Netherlands became the frontline. Starting in October 1944, different British, Canadian, Belgian, and Dutch regiments rotated through a line of fortified outposts along the Allied side of the river. From 17 December 1944 to 3 February 3, 1945, the 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment took over the positions near Dreumel, a small community about 35 kilometers west of Nijmegen.

The troops manned observation and listening posts along the dykes overlooking the river. Apart from the shelling, which was intermittent, things tended to be quiet during the day but would heat up at night, with enemy patrols, shelling, outbursts of small arms fire, flares, and signal lights. In his book entitled "An Historical Account," Lieutenant Walter Pavey, a troop officer at the time, described the "amazingly wide frontage and the responsibilities handled by the individuals of the Regiment. As the darkness increased, each section became a tiny seven- or eight-man isolated stronghold, with nothing between it and the next 'fortress' but some two hundred yards of eerie, windswept dike."

Honour Roll profiles from the Second World War
 Members of the 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment (17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars)



Watercolour by Captain Alex Colville, "The Watch on the Dyke," 17 November 1944. It depicts two soldiers of "B" Squadron, 7th Reconnaissance Regiment manning a position on a dyke in the Nijmegen area. (Susan Ross: Beaverbrook Collection of War Art: CWM. 19710261-2127)

On the night of 18 December 1944, a German patrol from the Fallschirmjaeger (Paratroopers), stationed in Tiel, raided the billets of a post manned by No. 9 Troop, "C" Squadron. There were two men on duty in a slit trench on the Waal winter dyke, while the other 11 men were sleeping in two empty houses to the rear. The enemy slipped into the house owned by the Bouman family, kicked the sleeping men awake, and shot three of them. Trooper George Arthur Sharpe was wounded and brought to the field dressing station, but he died at 09:05 the next morning. Victor Job Sigley and George Francis Moncrief died immediately.

Instructions regarding preparation of War Diaries (which will be kept from field or of maintenance, creation or editing) are contained in PS Regs Vol 1.

This page will be prepared
 SEPTEMBER 1944

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 Original, duplicate and 4 forwarded to CIG, Staff School
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WAR DIARY
 OR
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
 (Form heading not required)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Ref
WAGGON R 395644 sect. 5 SE		18	<p>"A" Squadron. V-1s continued to come over at the same rate. There were numerous flares and a little small-arms fire. In the early morning vehicle movement was heard in TIEL.</p> <p>"B" Squadron. Many V-1s were seen during the past 24 hours. At 2230 and 0220 hours heavy explosions were heard from the Observation Post at IR 400629. The bearing was 220°. Many flares and signal lights were seen.</p> <p>"C" Squadron. At 0115 hours Sgt McLeod, D L, who was in command of 9 Troop section post, reported that a German patrol had raided the posts' billets killing two men, seriously wounding a third and taking one prisoner. The layout of the post was as follows: A slit trench on the Dyke was manned by two men and the remainder of the section was in two houses immediately behind the slit trench.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p>The German patrol entered the western billet from the rear, went through the</p>	

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In this aerial photo the demolished house of Bouman on the Polstreet (Red Circle). The white dot indicates the location of the monument.
Source Tremele foundation Dreumel.

