

Sharpe George Arthur, Trooper (L104570)



- George Arthur Sharpe was born on 20 January 1915 in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. He was 29 years old when he died of wounds on 19 December 1944 in the Netherlands.
- He enlisted on 19 January 1943 in Regina. He was then sent for basic training at 121 Canadian Army (Basic) Training Centre, Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, then to the A-8 Canadian Armoured Corps Training Centre in Camp Borden, Ontario, where he qualified as a driver, Class III (wheeled). He was sent overseas on 23 October 1943 and posted to the 1st Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit and given further training. On 18 August 1944, he was sent to France as reinforcement to the 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment (17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars.)
- He had no military experience prior to enlisting.
- He had completed grade 10 when he left school at the age of 18.
- Prior to enlisting, he was employed for 12 years as a labourer on his father's farm in Rokeby, Saskatchewan.
- According to his medical examination, he was 5 foot 5 and a half inches tall and weighed 130 pounds. He had brown hair and green-blue eyes. He was found fit for category A-1.
- He was the son of John Roy Sharpe and Sarah Margaret Howes Sharpe who lived on a family farm in Rokeby, Saskatchewan and later move to South Burnaby, British Columbia. Both were originally from Scotland. They married in Mellen, Wisconsin, USA on 7 December 1904. George had four brothers: James Barton (38), Garnet Roy (36), Franklin Beatty (34), and Douglas, who died on 3 February 1918, when he was only a few days old. George also had three sisters: Mary Ellen Pierce (39), Edna Margaret Pierce (32), and Janet Marjorie Holloway (23).
- He was a bachelor and had no children.
- George did not have a will, so his assets were distributed according to the law of Saskatchewan.
- His body is buried in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, Groesbeek, Netherlands (Ref I. H. 9.) (plot, row, grave)

Context

On 18 August 1944, he was sent to France as a reinforcement to the 7th Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment (17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars) where the unit had just participated in the battle of the River Laison. 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 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."



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

