

COURTENAY Kenneth Wesley
Private
L/106938
South Saskatchewan Regiment
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps



Kenneth enlisted at the age of just 19. Upon enlistment he was a man of fair physique weighing 112 lbs and standing at 5'6" tall. He had brown hair with blue eyes. It was noted that Kenneth had an untidy appearance, but with the proof of his picture, we find this to be untrue.

L106938. Who knew there could be so much behind a number? A life and a story. This was the regimental number of the young man, Kenneth Wesley Courtenay. Long before he was enlisted in the South Saskatchewan Regiment, he was part of a large family and was much like any of us.



Kenneth was born in Kipling, Saskatchewan. This was the same place where Sarah Agnes and Frederick Samuel Bell Courtenay's marriage took place(the parents of Kenneth.) He was the oldest of six kids! After him came Eileen, Joyce, Murray, Joan, and Donna. Kenneth had a lot of younger siblings looking up to him.

Kenneth had a grade seven education, and left school at 16 due to lack of interest as noted in his enlistment papers. I'm sure that's a feeling we can all agree on from time to time. A teenager's life was much different in the 30s in terms of high school and home life. Back then a large portion of men and women didn't graduate. He repeated grade 5 because of sickness and also repeated grade 7.

After that he worked for two and a half years as a delivery boy for Reid's drug store in Regina. His father was also mainly overseas for the Royal Canadian Army Services Corps serving as a staff sergeant. Therefore I would imagine he played as the man of the household when his dad was away. After leaving school, he was thought to have acquired a fairly unambitious attitude unfortunately. However, in the enlistment papers, the army examiner explained that he believed that Kenneth could become quite the efficient soldier with some motivation. Despite Kenneth's lack of education, he believed he could improve himself with a new life in the infantry.

Enlistment and Military Service

Private Kenneth Wesley Courtenay was interviewed and taken on strength to the South Saskatchewan Regiment of the Canadian Infantry Corps. After some examination he was recommended to infantry support. Regardless of where his formal education stood, he scored quite well on his army intelligence test. On September 15th, 1943, this young man was accepted into the military.



Canada - September 15, 1943 - July 12, 1944.

At this point Kenneth served in Canada for training. The young man was first transferred to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. After training in Yarmouth, a follow up letter on Courtenay's progress explained he was quite an intelligent young man and could now be transferred to advanced training in Camp Borden, Ontario. A-19 was a training school he attended while there. On May 17, 1944, he completed his corps training. He also became a qualified motorcyclist on April 7th, 1944. Kenneth was ready to proceed overseas with the Royal Canadian Army Services Corps.



Staff of the Trainings School

U.K. - July 13, 1944 - September 22, 1944 ,

The time he spent in the U.K was mostly occupied by training and preparation.

Northwest Europe - September 23, 1944 - January 12, 1945. During that time in Europe, the Battle of the Scheldt took place in northern Belgium and the southwestern Netherlands. The first Canadian Army was given responsibility for clearing the area of German occupiers.

Following that battle, Canadians were then in charge of holding the line along the Nijmegen salient. Canada played a huge role in freeing the Dutch people who were suffering under German power. The South Saskatchewan Regiment war diaries show involvement in these battles and campaigns. Also, Kenneth's military files prove that he was in Northwest Europe during this time. The South Saskatchewan Regiment moved to Nijmegen for a few days before being transferred to Mook Hill on January 10th. When they arrived, they took cover in trenches and snow suits, but were provided a chance for short rests, a wash, and a movie. The next few days were active with enemy snipers and scouts. This enemy activity was what ultimately ended Kenneth's young life.

In the war diaries it documents that on the 11th a patrol was sent out into the trenches against the Germans, who they called "Jerries." These patrols lasted two days and had many men take action in them. Most records would show that Kenneth Wesley Courtenay passed away on the 12th of January, 1945, after sustaining a serious wound on the 11th. However, if you read the South Saskatchewan war diaries for that day, it was described as a wholly uneventful day, with nothing particularly important happening. According to those documents, no casualties occurred on the day of his supposed death.

On the 13th of January two casualties were reported, caused by enemy fire early in the morning. We are not positive if he did in fact die on the 12th and it was just not recorded, or if he died on



the 13th of January after all. No matter the day, the world lost a noble man...

He is remembered at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery grave reference **III. C. 8.**

He is not dead, but sleepeth

Life story by Victoria Colyn, Ponoka, Alberta.



Biography made available for Faces To Graves, with courtesy of Ron Labrie.

February 27th, 1924 - January 12, 1945 Rank: Private

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