

Gordon Henry KAVANAUGH

Rifleman

Royal Winnipeg Rifles



M-8420



Gordon Henry KAVANAUGH

Personel information:

Gordon Henry KAVANAUGH was born 22 December 1924 in Biggar, Saskatchewan, Canada.

From the 'Soldiers Service Book' it appears that on 22 November 1943 the family KAVANAUGH was made up of father and mother, John Henry and Odile Susan, and Gordon's two sisters, Verna May and Tresa.

Verna May was also in military service and as Lance Corporal, worked in the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) 103 Depot Company in Kingston, Ontario. Tresa was married to Joe Clarke.

Tresa was married to Joe Clarke. Together they had four children, Kenneth aged 16, Patricia 14, Loren 12 and Michial 18 months. Tresa lived with her family in Fairfax, Alberta where they ran a farm.

Gordon Henry attended the St Alphonus Separate School and was brought up as a Roman Catholic.

St. Alphonus Separate School 1915
corner Parkstreet en Pellisser street



He lived at different addresses; from his birth until he was four, in Biggar, Saskatchewan. Then the family moved to 506 Janette Avenue, Windsor, Ontario, only a short distance from the US border and Detroit. Gordon lived for a year here and after that for eight years in Toledo, Ohio, USA.

Until he entered army service in 1942, Gordon lived with his sister Tresa and worked on the farm in Fairfax, Alberta.

While there he also worked for about a month with the firm W.Evans as a truck driver.

Gordon Henry Kavanaugh was not married and it is not known if he had a girlfriend.

Military Service:

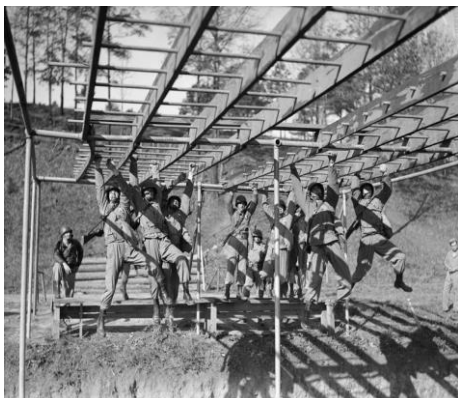
Gordon Henry Kavanaugh entered military service 22 November 1942; as soldier he joined a Recruit Company of the 13 District Depot General Reinforcement, Calgary.

He was transferred 7 December 1943 to 26 Canadian Basic Training Centre, Orilla, Ontario.

Camp in Orilla



Two months later, 15 February 1943 he went on to the Canadian Armoured Corps Training centre in Camp Borden. There amongst other duties, he obtained his motor driving licence class III and continued his army career as 'Trooper'.



From 5 June 1944 Trooper Gordon Henry was in training with the 1st Canadian Armoured Corps Training Soldiers Regiment (1CACTSR). Described as FAP (for all purpose), he could now be placed anywhere.

Boot camp basic training. Soldiers training the "monkey bars"

The same month, as member of the Canadian Army Overseas, he boarded ship 25 June 1944 and was brought to the war zone in Europe. He arrived in England 4 July, landing as a member of the Canadian Armoured Corps Reinforcement Unit (CACRU).



Soldiers being boarded for transport to Europe.

According to the 'Service and Casualty Form' he was in the Rocky Mountain Rangers during his three month stay in England.

On 17 September 1944 Gordon Henry was shipped to France. Once there, he appears by 1 October to have joined the 1st battalion of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. "The Little Black Devils".



Three battalions of this regiment served in the Second World War. The first battalion served in the 3rd Infantry Division and on D-day was one of the first to land in Normandy. The 2nd battalion was held in reserve in Winnipeg and the 3rd, after arrival in Europe in 1945 was part of the Army of Occupation force until 1946.

The Final Days:

After he was placed with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, Gordon Henry was involved in several battles as the regiment moved, fighting, towards the Netherlands. They took part in the fighting round the Schelde in October/November 1944. In February/March 1945 the RWR reached the Rhineland. After heavy fighting (Operations Veritable and Blockbuster) they moved in the direction of Deventer in order to free the rest of the Netherlands from Nazi occupation.

Their last feat of arms was preparation for a big attack on the north German town of Aurach in order to bring the war to an end, but luckily the German troops surrendered unconditionally on 5 May 1945.



Allied soldiers at the German border

Alas, Gordon Henry KAVANAUGH did not live to see the end of the war; he died 21 February 1945 during heavy fighting, somewhere between Bedburg Hau and Kalkar in Germany.



After his death, he was temporarily buried in the cemetery of the 3rd Division, Bedburg Hau. On 20 September 1945 his body was transferred to the Canadian Military.

Gordon Henry now lies buried in plot 11, row E, grave 12

Campaign Medals:



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. 1939 – 1946 Star
2. France & Germany Star
3. 1939 – 1945 War Medal
4. Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp

OFFICIAL CANADIAN ARMY OVERSEAS CASUALTY NOTIFICATION			
NUMBER	M-8420	RANK	Rifleman
NAME		SERVICE UNIT	
KAVANAUGH, Gordon Henry		The Royal Winnipeg Regiment (C.A.)	
DATE OF BIRTH	22nd	MONTH	December
DAY	YEAR		1924
Date Enlisted: 22-11-43			
MARITAL STATUS	Single		
Religion: Roman Catholic			
MOTHER		NAME	
506 Janette Avenue,		Mrs. Odile Kavanaugh,	
Windsor, Ontario.		D.A.S.	
ADDITIONAL PERSON TO BE NOTIFIED			
PARENTS NAME			
ADDRESS (if soldier awarded overseas)			
AUTHORITY CAS. SIG. NO.		H.Q. 405-K-10,433	
Canrecords - 6838A		DATE 21-2-45	
CASUALTY DETAILS			
Killed in action			
WESTERN EUROPEAN THEATRE OF WAR			
LAST WILL ATTACHED TO NOTIFICATION TO A. OF E.T.		M.F.M. ATTACHED TO NOTIFICATION TO A. OF E.T.	
YES/NO		YES/NO	
MM		DATE 19-3-45	
O/S with C.A.C.		OFFICER I/C RECORDS	
E/L4184		f	
6 COPY FOR DOCUMENT FILE			

Official Canadian army overseas casualty notification

RFFMN. KAVANAUGH

Rfmm. Kavanaugh has been reported killed in action in Holland, serving with a Western Canada infantry regiment.

He was born in Biggar, Sask., but received his education in Windsor, attending St. Alphonsus Separate School. After school he went out west to work on his sister's farm at Fairview, Alta., and enlisted in a tank regiment at Edmonton on November 23, 1943.



Gordon Henry KAVANAUGH

Lest We Forget

Military documents: Library and Archives Canada

Internet Sites:

<http://www.cwgc.org/>

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>

<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk>

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=39>

<http://www.royalwinnipeg Rifles.com>

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/Canada/CA/Victory/>

<http://www.ablecompagnie.nl>

<http://www.mapleleafup.ca>

<http://www.canadaatwar.ca>

<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca>

<http://www.100yearsoffreedom.ca/en/history.html>

<https://www.junobeach.org/canada-in-wwii/articles/liberation-of-the-netherlands-and-capitulation-of-germany>

<http://swoda.uwindsor.ca/swoda/>

(Southwestern Ontario Digital Archive)

Wikipedia

Printrest



FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Story is composed by: Hennie Koster, Research Team