

Kobylas , Stanley Joseph

Lance Corporal

**Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment)
of Canada**

15th peloton - C compagnie

1st Battalion

B/144714



Stanley Joseph KOBYLAS. was born on Wednesday, 1 February, 1922 in Hamilton, Ontario as the son of Polish parents, Thomas and Mary Kobylas; they married 2 February, 1905 in Mokry Lipe, Lublin, Poland; later they emigrated to Canada. Stanley had three sisters, Mary Daca, Anne Galazka and Ethel. Thomas and Mary had four more children but they all died in infancy. The Roman Catholic family Kobylas lived at 42 Whitfield Avenue in Hamilton, in the south of the province of Ontario, in an industrial area close to the harbour. They struggled financially.



*The house in the middle is
Whitfield Avenue nr. 42 in
Hamilton.
Photo-Willy van Aalst.*

Stanley spoke Polish as well as English. After his primary education, he went to technical school for three years and left at the age of nineteen. He worked first as a technical draftsman and later as an office clerk at the Steel Company of Canada.

On 22 March, 1943, Stanley volunteered at the 2nd District Depot of the Royal Canadian Field Artillery in Toronto and was assigned to the 1st company in the rank of Gunner. When registering he indicated that his stomach acted up when he ate too fast, but that otherwise it did not bother him. He also mentioned that he broke his nose at the age of twelve. He was 5 ft. 11,5 in. tall and weighed 143 lb and had dark brown hair and eyes. In his spare time he played the violin and made models of airplanes; he was a member of various ice hockey, rugby and softball teams. He owned a 1937 Chevrolet, model 1211.

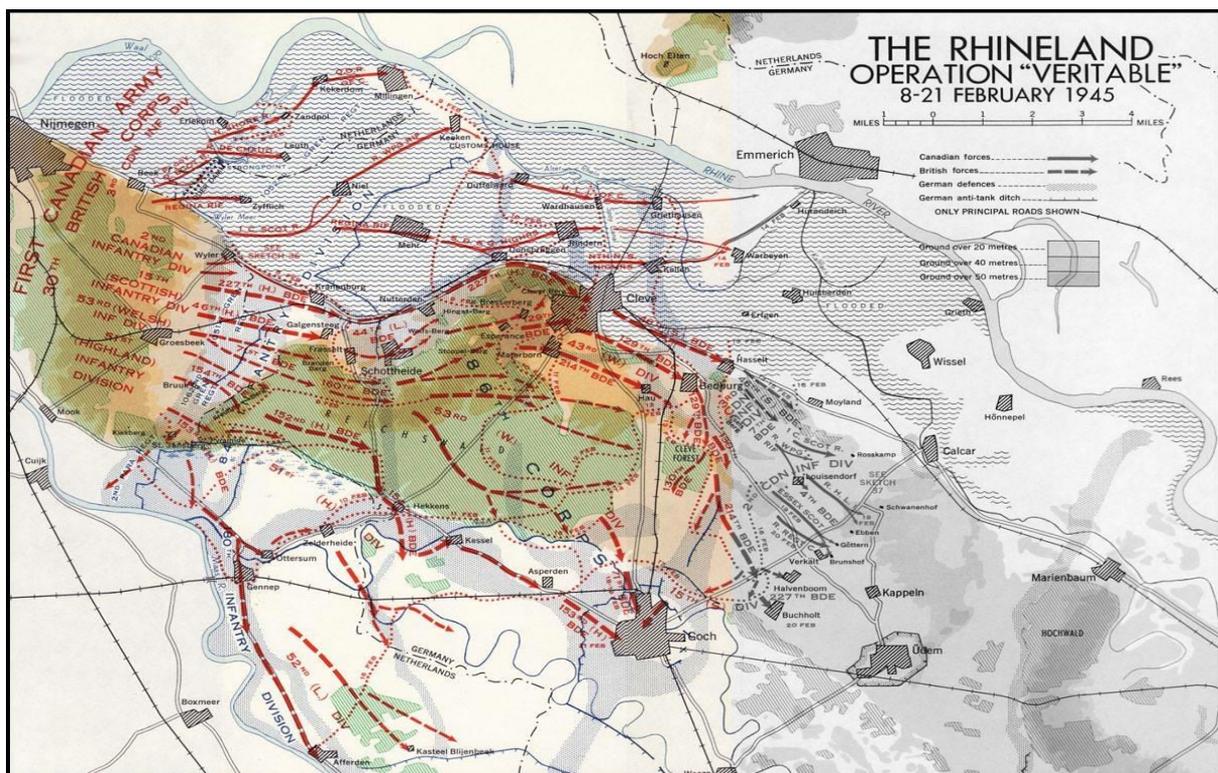
Stanley left for the 25th department Basic Training Centre in Simcoe on 16 April, followed by the Canadian Armoured Centre in Petawawa, Ontario. He got his truck and halftrack driving licence on 10 August and then served at the Canadian Army Training School in Hamilton. After his Christmas leave he went to the 21st Canadian Ordnance Corps Training Centre in Barriefield, Ontario on 4 January, 1944 and on 15 February he qualified as a gun repairman (Fitter, Gun Group C). He continued his training and on 18 February joined the A1 Canadian Armoured Training Centre in Petawawa.

He was given leave on 15 March, 1944 to marry Lillian Jean Jankowski, who was born 28 August, 1923 in Zyrardow, Poland. She lived at 183, Ferrie Street in Hamilton. Stanley was then assigned to the 1st Training Brigade in Delbert, Nova Scotia on 14 May and ten days later, transferred to the Canadian Army Active Force Overseas. He left for England, 25 May. After he arrived, 4 July, he was assigned to the 1st Canadian Armoured Reinforcement Unit as a gun repairman.

He embarked for France on 3 November and a week later he joined the Royal Highlanders of Canada (Black Watch) as a Private. At this point the Battalion had taken part in the Battle of the Schelde in the Netherlands and was leaving Walcheren and travelling to Cuijk near Nijmegen, via Tilburg, Den Bosch and Grave; here the troops could rest and recover after the heavy losses suffered. More specialised training was given for the new soldiers who had been added to the Regiment.

In December they were stationed in a former German camp in Groesbeek, close to the Dutch-German border. On 7 December there was a fierce gun battle which resulted in the loss of two Canadian lives with 14 men wounded and three missing. The next day the Black Watch was relieved by the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada and brought back to their old location in Cuijk.

On 28th December, the Battalion was ordered to leave its current location and move to the Nijmegen area. Morale was high despite the bad weather, wet and muddy ground, combined with extremely rough living conditions. On 3 January 1945 the Battalion was relieved by the Regiment de Maisonneuve and went back to Cuijk and came under the command of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division. Finally, there was time to take a bath and check the equipment. On 9 January they were ordered to relieve the Calgary Highlanders in Malden and moved there the next afternoon. They moved to Dekkerswald on the 29th and took over the positions of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders. Most of the men lived in trenches but some managed to find space in an empty house; oil heaters were used to help them keep warm.



By the beginning of February, new artillery, armoured vehicles and fresh troops began arriving in the area. A day order from General Montgomery and General Crerar of the 1st Canadian Army said that Operation Veritable would start on 8 February. In the night of 7/8 February, Allied bomber aircraft targeted Kleve, Emmerich and Goch, largely destroying them. The Black Watch regiment entered Germany ten days later, moving through the Reichswald forest to Bedburg Hau near Kleve. On 27 February they arrived at the Hochwald forest and took part in three days of fierce fighting, where they lost 8 officers and 108 other ranks. They continued fighting in the vicinity of Xanten early in March, On the 10th the Battalion was given a rest in the Netherlands in Berg and Dal / Groesbeek to recover and re-organize. There was practice but also time for recreation: movies, shows for the men and a night out in Nijmegen. Stanley Joseph Kobylas was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal.



*Stanley plays in the softball team of C company, 23 March 1945 in Berg and Dal.
Kneeling 3rd right is Stanley Kobylas. Photo Norman French.*

On 28 March, the Black Watch was back in Germany and crossed the Rhine near Rees, coming to a troop gathering area. Conditions were bad and the men had to sleep in holes in the ground behind the dike of the Oude Rijn. Three days later it became clear what the mission entailed. The Black Watch was to move into the Netherlands, first to the Milt area near Gendringen, then, due to a change of plans, a gathering area in Ulft. They had to cross the Oude IJssel river by the Bailey bridge which stood next to the old bridge that had been destroyed. Their orders were to free the city of Terborg and on 1 April, the city of Doetinchem.



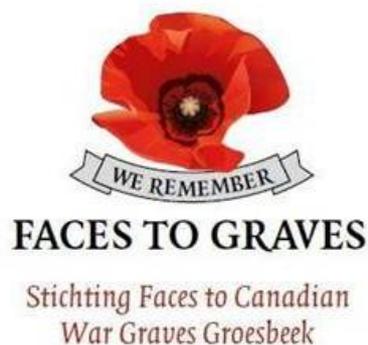
Temporary grave of Stanley Joseph Kobylas in Gaanderen. Photo Willy van Aalst.

Stanley was injured while clearing a house, probably in Doetinchem and was presumably taken to the Battalion aid station in Terborg where he died of his injuries on Monday, 2 April, 1945, at the age of 22. He was temporarily buried southeast of the Vulcan Iron Foundry in Gaanderen, bordering Terborg. The local residents put fresh flowers on his grave every week.

On 11 March 1946, Stanley was reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek. Plot **XXII. B.15**

'Fell for Freedom, Democracy and Fatherland, Poland'

Awards: Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp, France and Germany Star, 1939-1945 Star and War Medal.



Life story Gijs Krist, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves

Library and Archives Canada

Thanks to Mr. Willy van Aalst – Gaanderen

Oudheidkundige vereniging Gander te Gaanderen

Streekarchivaat Doetinchem

Regimental Museum and Archives of the Royal Highlanders of Canada (Black Watch) te Montreal

Regimental Websites

A memorial to Stanley Joseph Kobylas is in Gaanderen. It was unveiled on 4 May 2016 and is located at the existing Resistance Monument on the corner of the Hoofdstraat / Lange Huitinkstraat in Gaanderen (Doetinchem municipality). The monument is the initiative of a resident of Gaanderen, Willy van Aalst.



L.-Cpl. Kobylas

Lance-Cpl. Kobylas Killed

Lance-Cpl. Stanley J. Kobylas, son of Thomas and the late Mrs. Mary Kobylas, of 42 Whitfield avenue, Hamilton, has been killed in action.

L.-Cpl. Kobylas was born in Hamilton 23 years ago. He attended the F. R. Close Technical Institute and was employed at the Steel Company of Canada, Limited, prior to enlisting. He joined up about two years ago, and went overseas in June, 1944.

L.-Cpl. Kobylas, who was serving with the 1st Canadian Army in Germany, has three sisters, Mrs. Walter Daca, 116 Province street; Miss Ethel Kobylas and Mrs. Ruby Galuska, 42 Whitfield avenue.