

Tanaka, Minoru ("Morgan")
Trooper
"A" Squadron, 10th Armoured
Regiment
Fort Gary Horse
Royal Canadian Armoured Corps
L/36951



Trooper Minoru "Morgan" Tanaka was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan on 10 June 1919 to Taisuke and Toku (Nishimura) Tanaka.

Minoru's parents were born in Japan. His father, Taisuke, was born in Kagoshima Prefecture and grew up in Lethbridge, Alberta. Minoru's father was a veteran of World War I having served in the 10th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was a veteran of Vimy Ridge and the battle to take Hill 70 near Lens, France. In August 1917, he suffered an injury which led to the loss of an eye.

From around the time of Minoru's birth, Mr. Tanaka farmed at SW4-14-14-W3, near Wymark, Saskatchewan, having acquired his land through the Soldier Settlement Board.

Minoru was the oldest of five children – four boys and one girl. He attended school through age 15 completing grade 8 in 1934 before leaving school to work on the family farm. At time of enlistment, Trooper Tanaka listed himself as a farmer and truck driver, with Japanese and Presbyterian religious affiliation who had an ambition to study motor mechanics and continue mixed farming after the completion of his military service.

On 22 November 1940 Trooper Tanaka joined the militia and was taken on strength to the Kings Own Rifles of Canada. He completed his basic reserves training in December 1940 at No.120 Canadian Army Basic Training Centre in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Trooper Tanaka enlisted in the Canadian Army Active Force in Regina on 17 April 1941 where he was taken on strength as an armoured soldier in the 16/22 Saskatchewan Horse. He trained through October 1941 at Niagara, Ontario, and Sherbrooke Quebec through September 1942 before earning his qualification as a wheeled and tracked vehicle driver by the end of 1942. His training continued at Camp Borden until embarking for the UK on the 14th of June 1943, arriving 10 days later. In England he qualified as a gunner operator on the Sherman Tank. Once qualified, he was posted to 28th Canadian Army Tank Regiment (British Columbia Regiment) as a tank gunner and later as a driver. He deployed to France on 26 July 1944 and was held in reserve as a member of the Canadian Armoured Corps.

On October 9, 1944, Trooper Tanaka was taken on service by the 10th Canadian Army Tank Regiment (Fort Garry Horse) in the field during the fierce Battle of the Scheldt. This battle cleared the Scheldt estuary of the enemy making it possible for the Allies to use the port of Antwerp to relieve its critically stretched supply lines. The Fort Garry Horse earned battle honors at the Antwerp-Turnhout canal, the Scheldt and Woensdrecht. At the end of October 1944, he had a brief assignment with "C" squadron of the 25th Canadian Armoured Delivery Regiment (The Elgin Regiment), which like the Fort Garry Horse, was part of the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade.

After victory in the Scheldt, in early November 1944, 'A' Squadron was assigned to an area near Nijmegen to prepare for the push into Germany that was expected to come in the spring of 1945.

In the second week of February 1945, the Fort Garry Horse moved to the staging area south east of Nijmegen in preparation for Operation Veritable, the Canadian push to cross the Rhine south east of Nijmegen in a pincer movement to meet the US 9th Army on the eastern side of the river at Wesel.

The Battle of the Rhineland was an intense battle fought in very close quarters in which the challenges faced by soldiers from flooding due to destroyed dykes, rain, cold and mud was matched by the resistance from a determined enemy. During the later stage of Operation Veritable, in the Battle for the Hochwald Forest, just over the German border south east of Nijmegen, the Fort Garry Horse was tasked with supporting an attack across an open field by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry and the Essex Scottish to capture a road running from Goch to Kalkar, approximately 2 kms southeast of Louisendorf. This mission resulted in trooper Tanaka and his fellow Fort Garry Horse being the first Canadian tanks to drive into Germany.

During the assault, "A" Squadron, supporting the left side of the infantry advance, was confronted with devastating effect by enemy 88mm anti-tank guns sheltered by trees further to the left of the Canadian advance. In this fight over a 2-day period, the Fort Garry Horse lost 11 tanks.

Trooper Tanaka was killed in this action on the 20th of February 1945.

In addition to his parents, Trooper Tanaka was survived by siblings Harry (who also served in the Canadian Army), Alice, of Gull Lake Saskatchewan and Sanfred & Russell, both of Wymark Saskatchewan.

Trooper Tanaka was one of only 20 Canadians of Japanese heritage who were able to fight for the Canadian Army in WW2. After Japan entered the war in December 1941, Japanese-Canadians who had not signed up already were prevented from serving in the Canadian military. He is the only Japanese Canadian on the Saskatchewan roll of honour.

Tanaka Lake, located at 60° 00' 01"N 103° 52' 02"W, on the border of Saskatchewan and North West Territories, was named in his honour on 6 December 1956.

Trooper Tanaka was initially buried near where he fell in Kalkar, Germany and is now buried at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, Netherlands, grave **XXIV. B. 14.**

He is remembered by the words: "Tis a Token of Love and Remembrance
of a Son Who Was One of the Best"

Awards: 1939-45 Star, France & Germany Star, Defence Medal, War
Medal 1939-45, C.V.S.M. & Clasp.



Life Story Richard Russell, Research Team, Faces to Graves.

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