

Turner, Stanley Edward

Private

The Calgary Highlanders

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

M – 39575



Stanley Edward Turner was born on 6 August, 1919 in Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. His parents were William Henry and Annie Turner; Annie was British born. By the time Stanley Edward went into the army, both parents had died but it is not clear when. He lived with his stepmother Maggie Turner and had a stepbrother, George Ellis, and an uncle, George Arthur Turner. He belonged to the Church of England.

At the end of grade 6, when he was fifteen, Stanley Edward left school and went to work on a farm. He learned to drive a tractor, truck and car there and was also able to repair vehicles. After the war he wanted to go back to the farm in Balsam Grove, Alberta.

In 1940, the National Resources Mobilization Act came into force in Canada. Available men had to register for army service in order to defend the homeland in the first instance. Later these men were also deployed for service overseas. One of these men was Stanley Edward Turner and on 19 March, 1941, he enlisted in Calgary, Alberta for his compulsory service. He left the farm in Balsam Grove and was given army number M - 600050. He was found to be a healthy, single man, 1.72 m tall, weighing 75 kilo, with blue eyes, brown eyes and a dark skin colour. There were scars on the fingers of his left hand.

He spent the first fifty seven days of his service in Camrose Training Centre and this included five days in hospital when he contracted German measles.



He then went to the training centre in Red Deer, Alberta for a further seven weeks.



Barrack, A-20 Camp Deer, 1940

After his stay in Red Deer, Stanley Edward's service time was postponed for some unknown reason, but in November, 1941 he was again conscripted in Calgary where he was placed in the District Depot. Almost immediately, he stayed away without permission from 22 November to 23 December and lost 32 days' pay. He also let someone escape from the camp while he was on duty. In July, 1942 he was given a month's leave, probably so that he could help with the harvest on the farm. When he returned he was transferred to the Experimental Station Suffield, Alberta, a military research station, five kilometres to the north of Suffield. Here, during WWII, British and Canadian Military were trained in the use of biological and chemical weapons and methods of defence against them. Stanley Edward stayed there for the whole of August and then returned to Calgary. In December he was admitted to the Mewata Military Hospital for five days. He remained in Calgary for more than a year until 17 January, 1944. For the last months of his service he was stationed in the Duncan training centre, British Columbia and on 5 June he signed up again for active service in the Canadian Army.

He was then 24 years old and gave the name of his stepmother, Maggie Turner as contact person.

ITEMS 17, 18 AND 19 WILL NOT BE COMPLETED UNLESS A MAN ENLISTS FOR GENERAL SERVICE ANYWHERE.

DECLARATION TO BE MADE BY MAN ON ATTESTATION

17. I, Stanley Edward TURNER, hereby engage to serve in any Active Formation or Unit of the Canadian Army so long as an emergency, i.e., war, invasion, riot or insurrection, real or apprehended, exists, and for the period of demobilization after said emergency ceases to exist, and in any event for a period of not less than one year, provided His Majesty should so require my services.

Date 5 June, 1944. Stanley Edward Turner
(Signature of Recruit)

After signing up, Stanley Edward was given a new service number: M39575 and a medical examination. He was found to be fit except for some varicose veins in his left leg; which bothered him when he wore short trousers and stockings. When asked what he liked to do in his free time, he mentioned various sports: softball, basketball, ice hockey and skating. He liked hunting and fishing and regularly read books. The interviewing officer found him serious, motivated and willing to serve overseas.

Stanley Edward remained in Duncan, B.C. for the first two months after joining up, From 27 June until 15 July, 1944, he was admitted to the Victoria Military Hospital and on 8 August he returned to Red Deer, Alberta to the training centre there. A week later he was away without permission for nearly two days and was confined to barracks for a week, losing two days pay. At the beginning of October he was transferred again to the A-16 training centre in Calgary where he completed his military training and was considered ready for service in Europe. At this point he obtained permission to marry Viola May Beanblossom and was given 17 days leave with two days extra for the coming overseas service. The marriage took place on Saturday, 25 November, in Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. Then he returned to Calgary and was soon transferred to Debert, Nova Scotia on 1 January, 1945. Here he boarded ship for England, arriving there on 11 January.

Only two weeks later, Stanley Edward had travelled to the war zone (probably the Netherlands) and joined the reinforcement troops on 17 February. There is not much information available for this time, but as the Canadian troops were taking part in Operation Veritable, it is likely that he was placed with the Calgary Highlanders regiment, taking part in the fighting around the Reichswald forest in Germany, near the Dutch border and Nijmegen.

After weeks of heavy fighting, it was finally possible for a huge army to cross the Rhine and start to liberate the northern and eastern parts of the Netherlands. The Canadians moved through Uft, Terborg and Gaanderen.

On Easter Sunday, 1 April, they reached Doetinchem via the Terborgseweg. Members of the Dutch resistance were waiting for them on the eastern outskirts of the town. After a short discussion, a big group surrounded the town and the Canadians moved towards the centre. A fierce battle ensued in and around the centre of Doetinchem. The Germans had blocked the roads with trams filled with concrete. The Canadians used flame throwers among other weapons in order to defeat the enemy. Dozens of German soldiers were killed and many buildings were burned down. Nine Canadian soldiers also died. Not until the following afternoon, Monday 2 April was Doetinchem liberated.



Canadian forces arriving at Terborgseweg,
1 April 1945 (Photo: Hans Hendriksen ©)

One of the nine Canadians killed was Stanley Edward Turner, after not even two months at the front. He died on 1 April in the streets of Doetinchem. He was temporarily buried near the Oosseld school in the Dennenweg.

His body was later transferred to the Canadian Military Cemetery in Groesbeek, plot **XIX. C. 14**.



For the 299 days of active service, he received the following awards:

- 1939 – 45 Star
- France & Germany Star
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp



*Pine Grove Cemetery,
Rocky Mountain House, Alberta*



*Canadian War Cemetery,
Groesbeek, The Netherlands*



Monument in the Mark Tennant Plantsoen, Doetinchem

CHRIST SHALL CLASP
THAT BROKEN CHAIN
CLOSER
WHEN WE MEET AGAIN



Life Story: Sigrid Norde, Research Team Faces To Graves

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

<http://www.calgaryhighlanders.com/history/highlanders/1939-45/dcompany.htm>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/147803442/viola-m-turner>

http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?id=search_record_detail&fl=0&lg=English&ex=00000650&rd=151703&sy=cat&st=&ci=4#

<http://www.reddeer.ca/about-red-deer/history/history-of-red-deer/centennials-and-anniversaries/red-deer-during-the-wars/>

<https://mijngelderland.nl/inhoud/canons/doetinchem/doetinchem-in-de-tweede-wereldoorlog>

<https://www.hummelo.nl/geschiedenis-hummelo/tweede-wereldoorlog/547-de-bevrijding-van-hummelo-2-april-1945.html>

<http://www.hanshendriksen.net/>