

Boucha Henry Wilfred

10-G-06



Corporal Henry Wilfred Boucha enlisted in the Canadian Army in July 1942 and served for almost three years in Canada, the UK and Europe. He died of wounds on 8 April 1945, a month before VE Day.

Henry came from a small fishing village on beautiful Lake of the Woods in northwestern Ontario. His parents were Elmer Ernest Boucha and Nancy Beacham. Elmer had moved to Lake of the Woods from Michigan in the 1890s, along with his father and three brothers. They were all commercial fishermen and skilled boat builders. The small community that grew up around their new home became known as French Portage. Henry's mother Nancy Beacham was from a Scottish-Metis family in Norway House, Manitoba. She came to Lake of the Woods around 1908

with her mother and brother. Elmer and Nancy were married in May 1913 and Henry was born at French Portage on 17 February 1914. He had seven younger brothers and sisters, including two sets of twins. His father was a fisherman and lighthouse keeper and he also operated a small tourist camp on the lake. The boys worked as fishermen and fishing guides and spent the winters cutting timber in the bush.

Henry and his brother Alex were both called up for service early in the summer of 1942. Henry was 28 years old and working as a fishing guide at the time. He completed his basic training in Fort William, Ontario and signed his attestation paper there on 17 July, enlisting with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. He was married in Fort William on 8 August to a local girl, Dolina Helen Reith, and two weeks later he was sent to Winnipeg. He was attached to the 3rd Battalion, Royal Winnipeg Rifles and in October his unit moved to Camp Debert in Debert, Nova Scotia. Henry went overseas the following spring, embarking in late March 1943 and arriving in the UK on 3 April. He was attached to the Lake Superior Regiment on 25 June 1943 and awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp in January 1944.

Henry was sent to France in July 1944 and he served in Europe for nine months. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on 1 August and to Corporal on 3 February 1945. Corporal Henry Boucha died of wounds on 8 April 1945, a month before VE Day. He was buried in a hospital cemetery in Oostmarsum, Holland and after the war he was re-interred in Holten Canadian War Cemetery. He's commemorated on the Cenotaph in Kenora, Ontario.

His parents said in an obituary notice:

"In loving memory of our dear son and brother Cpl. Henry Wilfred Boucha, died overseas. Our son's place is vacant. And yet he isn't dead. Along the road to heaven. He is just a step ahead."

Lovingly remembered By Mum, Dad and family

