

Brooks, Walter James, Private

11.D.3



Walter James Brooks was born May 24, 1917, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. His parents were Joseph and Florence Brooks.

He grew up in a Roman Catholic family with 10 children, 8 boys and 2 girls.

Walter James was the 6th child.

One of his brothers, Bob Brooks, was a sergeant in the 48th Highlanders.

Notes from the medical examination report: brown hair and blue eyes, 6 feet, 5 inch tall and weighed \pm 136 lbs.

He was identified by a scar on the bridge of his nose and a scar on the back of his left hand. In 1940 Walter had had a middle ear infection, the hearing in that ear was reduced by 25%. Otherwise, he was completely healthy, as the medical examinations showed.

As a child, Walter attended the "Dovercourt Road Public School" in Toronto. After high school, Walter attended technical school for 3 years, but he did not finish the course in "power engineering.

In April 1935, he was almost 18 at the time, he went to work at a paint factory. There he worked for a year and 3 months. After that, Walter worked as a mechanic for about 4.5 years.

Before Brooks enlisted in the Army, he worked as a truck driver. In his spare time, Brooks made furniture and was into mechanics. He also did hunt, fishing and swimming. He could even play the guitar.

His first enlistment was on May 15, 1942, he was registered at M.D.#2 Clearing Depot. A basic training followed at Training Center 23 in Newmarket, Ontario.

On June 19, 1942, he reported for active duty at Connaught Camp. On his first enlistment he was still registered as "unmarried," but on his second enlistment that had been changed to "married."

On June 12, 1946, he was married; his spouse's name was listed in the records as: Kathleen Rita Brooks.

In September he was taken on strength at No. 3A District Depot in Kingston for "general duty."

On Sept. 16, he was granted embarkation leave until reveille on Sept. 21, 1942.

Embarkation soon followed. He embarked for transport to the United Kingdom as early as Sept. 29, 1942.
Arrival there registered as Oct. 8, 1942.

In England, he qualified as a driver for various vehicles.
He was "shuttled" back and forth between different CIRU's.
An abbreviation of Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Units.
On April 22, 1943, he was taken on strength in the Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders.

On January 15, 1944, he was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp. The latter for "oversea service."

Embarked for the Normandy landings as early as June 4, 1944.
It is recorded that he already landed in France on June 6, 1944, D-Day.
He was a serious soldier, as on Aug. 6 he was awarded the "Good Conduct" decoration.
From January 4 to 12, 1945, he was "on leave".

He had experienced the entire campaign from D-Day until that fateful day, April 28, 1945 while crossing the Ems near Leer in northwest Germany.
His body was not immediately recovered and he was reported "missing."

Months passed before he was recovered and identified.
Initially, he was given a temporary grave near the bridge over the Ems.
His wife Kathleen did not receive the official death notification until November 1945.
The few personal effects still found, were damaged by the water, but were sent to Canada anyway.

Whether Walter James Brooks was still able to see his little son Larry, who had been born in 1943, is not entirely clear.



In the records was 3x a P/L notation; (Privilege Leave).
This could indicate visits to Canada.

