

## Corporal Frank Charles Crawford 10-B-3



Frank Charles Crawford was born July 6, 1923 in Marrtown, New Brunswick to Chester and Ethel Crawford. He grew up in Codys, Queens County, New Brunswick where he resided until enlistment. Frank's parents raised fourteen children on their family farm. Frank had seven brothers and six sisters: Merton, Harold, Ronald, Ralph, Roy, William, Robert, Jeannette, Ada, Eva, Lillian, Hazel and Sylvia. The family belonged to the Church of England.

Crawford completed the seventh grade in public school before becoming a woodsman like his father. He had five years of experience working for Walter Wood as a woodsman on Coles Island and six years of experience farming on the family farm.<sup>1</sup> Crawford dreamed of becoming a machinist after the war.

Prior to enlistment, Frank was on compensation for twelve days, claiming his left arm was bothering him. He enlisted in the Canadian Army on January 25, 1943 at the age of nineteen, to fight in the Second World War. He was five foot ten, weighed 155 pounds and had twenty/twenty vision. He was not suffering from any diseases and was soon deemed to be in good physical condition. At the time of enlistment, Frank's parents had lost three sons. Roy their eldest died in 1930, at age thirty. William, their second eldest child died in 1920 at the age of twenty-eight. Robert, their youngest son died in 1940 at the age of eleven.

**Military Movements:** Frank Charles Crawford was taken on strength on January 25, 1943 at the No.7 District Depot in Fredericton, New Brunswick. His training as a Private took him to Utopia, New Brunswick. Here he was tested and qualified as a class three driver. By October 1943, he was receiving further training for all purposes at the A.M.M. School in London, Ontario. In late 1943, Crawford attended driver mechanic (carrier) training in Woodstock, Ontario. Having completed this course, he qualified as a driver mechanic class one. On December 4, 1943, Frank returned to Utopia, his final training destination in Canada before departing for overseas, where he qualified as a class two driver mechanic. He was granted holiday leave from December 30, 1943 to January 3, 1944. He received fifty cents vacation pay per day. Crawford was given seven days of special leave from March 2 to 8, 1944. He left Debert, Nova Scotia with the No.1 Training Brigade on May 1 and arrived in the United Kingdom on May 7, 1944<sup>8</sup> where he was given further mechanical training.

Crawford was taken on strength by the Canadian Infantry Brigade on September 9, 1944. Shortly thereafter, he received notification that his parents had relocated to Apohaqui, Kings County, New Brunswick. He embarked from the United Kingdom on October 14 and arrived in Belgium October 15, 1944. Five days later, he was taken on strength by the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. On November 10, 1944, Crawford was appointed Acting Lance Corporal. The next record entered notes his promotion to Acting Corporal on March 10, 1945.

**The Final Days:** The last major assault for the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry of the Second World War would be in Xanten, Germany. The original plan for Canada was for the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade to capture the town and the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade to follow through and take the slightly higher ground beyond. The initial plan of attack by the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade was turned back, the Canadians regrouped for a larger attack by the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigades and the 129<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Division, including the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. Frank Charles Crawford fought this assault with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. The Third Reich was losing its grip. Its air and artillery support was weak but German soldiers remained determined. Many were fanatical and at times the fighting involved face to face combat. Even the bayonet, rarely used during this part of the campaign, came into play.

In mid-April, 1945, after a two-day rest, the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion was transported from Haren, 125 miles to relieve the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry in the Second British Army's drive on Bremen. They patrolled German soil for five days without being involved in any action. On April 24, they began a single-thrust advance toward the village of Falkenburg. They proceeded cautiously as the roads were heavily mined and machine-gun fire attacks were frequent. On May 2, 1945, the battalion was in the southeastern part of Oldenburg, Germany. On this day, the battalion came under machine-gun fire, taking two lives. One would have to assume Frank was one of the two lost. The battalion was forced to withdraw without reaching the objective.

Corporal Frank Charles Crawford was killed in action just six days before the war ended. Sylvia, his youngest sibling, was only seven years old. His earnings and personal belongings were given to Ethel Crawford, his mother. Throughout Frank's years serving, he earned the 1939-45 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal and the C.V.S.M and Clasp.

**Lest We Forget:** Frank Charles Crawford was initially buried in a roadside grave in Moorhausen, Germany and was later reburied in the Holten Canadian Military Cemetery in Holland in Plot 10, Row B, and Grave 3. There are over 1355 Canadian soldiers buried there; all were killed in the last few months of the war as Canadians fought to liberate Holland. Frank Crawford died at the age of twenty-one.

