



Warrant Officer Class 1
WALTER EDWARD DOYLE
06-A-09

Warrant Officer II, WALTER EDWARD DOYLE was born at 99, Harrison Avenue, Etobicoke, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on 12th February 1917. Before enlisting in the army he was an automobile

mechanic, and worked for the Pneumatic Insulating Co. 24, Adelaide Street, East Toronto. Walter's father was Maurice Joseph Doyle. He had been born in Hartford, Connecticut, USA, in 1884, of an Irish mother and an American (Pennsylvanian born) father. The paternal side of Walter's family were from Irish, Roman Catholic Christian stock. Maurice died of heart problems in 1937. Walter's mother was Ethel May Walton. She had been born in England, in 1892, and arrived in Quebec, 1908, on the "SS Tunisian", with her parents and older sister Florence Alice. Ancestors of the Walton family had been farmers, butchers and millers in the Derbyshire area of England. They came from a fairly affluent, non-conformist Protestant Christian background. Ethel May and Maurice Joseph married in Toronto 1916, in the presence of a Roman Catholic priest. Their son, Walter, later professed to be a atheist. Walter had one sister, Florence Doyle (named after her maternal aunt). She had been born 1918, like her brother, in Etobicoke, Toronto. She suffered ill health most of her life, and died in 1943 while Walter was serving abroad. As an unmarried woman, Florence had given birth to a son, John David Doyle, in 1942, not long before her death. Soon after her death he was adopted and renamed John Robert Deelman. Walter and Florence had one other sibling, Glen, born 1931, but he was not a blood sibling. He had been adopted into the family.

Before he enlisted for military service in the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, in 1939, Walter had married, but he was already, "trying for divorce", according to his army records. These records also state that Walter's wife was aged 22, and "didn't care" about his enlistment. The same records, (and a subsequent letter sent to Walter's English partner, following his death,) noted that Walter served bravely and with distinction in the European Allied Campaign. They also reveal that in 1940 Walter had shrapnel removed from a knee, and in 1941 suffered from jaundice. In 1943 Walter met Gwendoline Maud Elizabeth Lewis, in London, U.K. Gwen, like Walter, had been married before, but had separated from her husband two years earlier. Walter and Gwen entered into a common-law marriage, planning to have a family and move to Canada after the war. In January 1945 Gwen gave birth to Maureen Katrina Lewis, Walter's daughter. Walter chose his daughter's first name, but the baby was given her mother's married surname for convenience, due to the unresolved marriage situation. Walter's mother Ethel was not informed of the birth. Evidence suggests she was not emotionally close to her son; in addition, knowledge back in Canada of Walter's London family would have hindered his divorce proceedings. Walter died in Enschede, Netherlands, in a road accident on 26th May, 1945. He and an army friend had been on a scheduled-duty, away from the army base, with Walter driving their transport -vehicle. On the return journey to base, the two men found, and attended a local dance, continuing their journey later, in the early hours of the morning. The vehicle Walter was driving then struck a tree, which resulted in Walter's death and injuries to his passenger-friend. An inquiry found that the tree was situated in a dangerous spot. It had already caused the

death of four other victims. News of Walter's death did not immediately reach Gwen. She wrote to Mick's (Walter's) commanding officer asking for news of her partner because he had not written to her, as was his custom. On understanding the couple's relationship, the officer relayed the unfortunate details, following which the army advised Gwen not to contact her partner's family in Canada. They said his mother was elderly, (she was only 53??) and had suffered too many tragedies; knowledge of Walter having a partner and baby in the UK would cause her undue anxiety they said. (From the adoption-papers of Ethel's other grandchild in Canada, it appears Ethel was not very maternally inclined. In reality, contact with her two grandchildren was probably not her first interest.) Within a year of Walter's death, Gwen's brother Cyril, persuaded her and her legal husband to try and attempt a reconciliation. He told the couple they had both been traumatised by the war, and were both now left to cope on their own. He succeeded in his quest, but the reunion was never a happy one, and Gwen began to suffer from chronic depression. Maureen grew up thinking her adopted father was her natural father, - although she knew her mother went to the Canadian Bank in Central London each month to collect a sum of money for her, and that as a young child she was especially privileged to receive parcels from the Canadian Red Cross. It was not until the age of 29 that Maureen found out about her true paternity, and was told the monthly money-payments were her pension being the dependant of a deceased Canadian soldier. Maureen began a project to find out as much as possible about her father.

