



Peter Duffney was born on November 10, 1915, in Starbuck, Manitoba. His father was Irish by birth, his mother French-Canadian.

His father had already died in 1918. Peter had three sisters, one half-brother, and four half-sisters. He grew up on a farm.

He considered himself a farmer and was familiar with all the machinery used in agriculture.

After his military service, he wanted to buy his own farm.

Peter reported that he spoke both English and French, although the former was his main language. He was Roman Catholic and unmarried. After elementary school, he had attended high school for one year.

He must have had a slight build, 1.80 m tall and only 65 kg on the scale.

His recreational activities included fishing and skiing; he had also played first base in a baseball team.

Peter's first destination, in August 1940, was #100 Canadian Military Training Centre in Portage-la-Prairie, Manitoba. This would remain his "work address" for a long time. He was soon appointed an instructor there.

In early March 1941, Peter was admitted to the sickbay for a few days with scarlet fever.

On March 29, 1941, he married Margaret Helen Scott (1918-2002).

He was promoted to corporal on April 15, 1941.

About a year later, in May 1942, Peter was appointed sergeant.

He had signed up for the paratroopers and successfully completed his initial training, as reported on August 24, 1942.

That training took place at Fort Benning, Georgia, USA.

Back in Canada, Peter was, on paper, assigned to #117 Para 10.

His station was then Fort Garry, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

During New Year's Eve 1942/1943, Peter and Margaret enjoyed a week's leave.

That his son, Robert (Scott) was born 9 months later, September 4, 1943, cannot be a coincidence.

His assignment to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion became, emotionally, a "problem" for



**Jump tower Fort Benning**

his wife.

In an interview with his Army Examiner in January 1943, Peter indicated that he was voluntarily withdrawing from the Parachute Battalion.

He was granted this. Paratroopers with a wife and a young child were not the preferred men of the selection board.

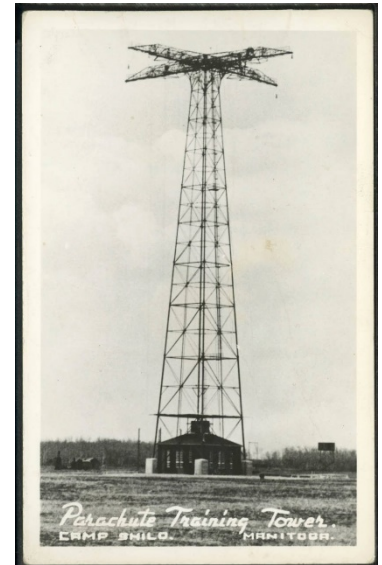
In the summer of 1943, Peter enjoyed a few more weeks of leave.

In October, Peter was transferred to Camp Shilo, about thirty kilometers east of Brandon, Manitoba.

Here too, Peter was deployed as an instructor.

By then, the paratrooper training program in Canada had begun there.

In early November 1943, we find Peter in Camp Debert, Nova Scotia, the staging area for troops destined to cross to the United Kingdom.



On December 14, 1944, Peter boarded in Halifax and on December 22, he set foot on British soil.

Initially, he was assigned to a Reinforcement Unit.

In January 1944, we find a remarkable note:

Peter Duffney was assigned to the Canadian Night Vision Training & Testing Unit.

A unit that focused on "night vision equipment" (infrared and residual light amplification).

This technical equipment was already in use by some German units in 1939.

Certain infantry units used the so-called "Vampir" system.

A portable system mounted on the well-known "Sturmgewehr 44".



**Vampir System**

After that, Peter was shifted back and forth, "on paper", between the special unit and reinforcement units, depending on where he stayed for a certain period of time.

Certain is, that Peter arrived on the European mainland on February 12, 1945. He was assigned to the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. (RWR).

The RWR (nicknamed the Little Black Devils) saw significant fighting, including during the Rhineland Offensive.

At Emmerich, the regiment faced three days of heavy fighting.

At Moyland, Germany, they cleared forests where other units had failed.

They were also deployed during the liberation of the eastern part of the Netherlands. Near the city of Deventer, among other places.

Sergeant Peter Duffney would not go further than Deventer.

(g) Court of Inquiry (See Overseas RO 2022, paragraph 9).

(i) Has one been held ? When ? ..... **Yes 28 Apr 45** .....

(ii) Will one be held ? When ? ..... **N/A** .....

(h) Disciplinary action taken (if any required) or other remarks **A simple accident. It is my opinion that this injury was not caused by improper conduct on the part of Sgt Duffney and was not caused or contributed to by his culpable negligence.**

Date ..... **9 May 45** ..... A/ Comd ..... **J T CARVELL) Maj R Wpg Rif** .....

3/63 MFB 371 40/P&S/683 (4594) See Part IV Overleaf

On April 9, 1945, he died, according to reports, from various wounds sustained when a grenade accidentally exploded. Peter was standing too close.

He was initially buried in Oxe, near Deventer. He was finally laid to rest at the CWGC Canadian Cemetery in Holten, in plot 2, row B, grave 11.

*He was awarded:*

*The 1939-1945 Star; the France-Germany Star; the Defence Medal; the 1939-1945 War Medal; and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.*

