

## **Joseph Fine**

**Trooper D38025**

**8<sup>th</sup> (New Brunswick) Princess Louise's Hussars**

**5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Regiment**

**Personal Information:** Joseph Fine was born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1921 in Montreal, Quebec to William and Mary Fine. He grew up alongside his brother, Frank and his sister, Agnes, under the care of their parents in Plage-Laval, Quebec.

Joseph endured seven years of public schooling until leaving school at the age of fifteen after four months at Strathcona Academic High School. Joseph was then working for his father who was a merchant. Joseph played the role of a driver for his father's business for two years until his time of enlistment.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout this time Joseph enjoyed many athletic past times. These included swimming, bowling, hockey (he played left wing), rugby and ping pong.<sup>2</sup> Joseph also had a musical side as he enjoyed playing the harmonica. He was bilingual as he spoke both English and French languages fluently.<sup>3</sup>

At the age of 19 on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1941 in Montreal, Joseph Fine enlisted for patriotic reasons and stated that he joined with the intention of going back to work eventually with his father and brother.<sup>4</sup>

Joseph was in excellent physical shape. He was 5 foot 5 inches and weighed 131 pounds. Joseph was a single Hebrew man with brown eyes and black hair and had not been burdened with any diseases.

**Military Movements:** Joseph trained in Borden, Ontario as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Armoured Regiment, Fort Garry's Horse and left Canada on November 9<sup>th</sup> 1941 for England. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1941 Joseph and the 10<sup>th</sup> Armoured Regiment landed in England where they trained. In October of 1942 Fine was hospitalized for seven days and on June 2 1944 he prepared along with his comrades to leave England for one of the biggest invasions in history.<sup>5</sup> Joseph arrived in France at Juno Beach on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 for D-Day with the 10<sup>th</sup> Armoured Regiment and proceeded through France.

**The Final Days:** Canada had a major role given to them by the military planners at this point and that was to take control of one fifth of the beaches where the allies would land to begin liberating Europe from the Nazis. D-Day was an attempt to change the tides and liberate from the west 'Fortress Europe'. The 10<sup>th</sup> Armoured Regiment went on from Normandy to take part in battles at Carpiquet, Falaise, and Boulogne in France. They then proceeded on to Belgium.

In the months after D-Day, the allies were in need of supplies to come their way and a good seaport was needed to make this a reality. The Belgian port of Antwerp was the only way to create this reality but was controlled by the Germans. Canadian forces led the way to clear out German occupants from the Scheldt River's shores and create an opening for shipping. 6000 soldiers died in this victorious act and was a key factor in the liberation.

In the fall of 1944, Operation Market-Garden was on-going but this air attack on Germany was not followed by success. At this point Germany was a fierce competitor and would not let the war end in 1944. The "Hunger Winter" was a time of great sadness for the Dutch people in 1944 and 1945. Food was scarce and transportation was not common and thousands of Dutch people died of starvation and the cruelty of cold.

On February 1945 the First Canadian Army were among allied forces to push the Germans back across the Rhine and out of Holland. That April Canada helped to take back canals and houses in the Netherlands as they pushed through to the North Sea. The Canadians cleared Apeldoorn but did not continue west for fear that the Germans would flood the city. The Canadians allowed for a truce and made it possible for the Dutch people to get supplies. It was much appreciated by the Dutch people.

When the remaining German forces surrendered on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the Dutch people shouted kind words and cheers at the Canadian troops. More than 7600 Canadians died for this liberation.

Joseph Fine was taken on strength by the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Regiment (8<sup>th</sup> Princess Louise's Hussars) on July 7<sup>th</sup> 1945. The war had ended in May but thousands of Canadians remained in Europe helping with reconstruction. On December 4<sup>th</sup> 1945 while working at 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division Headquarters, Joseph Fine was given directives to drive a Captain Rigney to Amsterdam and back using a Jeep.<sup>6</sup> Little did the honourable soldier know he was soon going to be taking his last breath.

Joseph was involved in an accident when his Jeep hit a tree.<sup>7</sup> He was thrown into a canal and Dutch people nearby removed him from the canal and took him to a barn attached to a house. He would die there 15 minutes later at 10:45 PM.

When Walter Grant, Supervisor of the Canadian YMCA Granite Club, at Leeuwarden was looking through the vehicle he found papers in the glove compartment to verify the man who had passed was Joseph Fine from the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division.<sup>8</sup>

There were no eye witnesses to Joseph's death but an inquiry was held and an autopsy showed that he had died from a concussion with ruptures to the spleen and kidney being secondary causes of death. In his death, Joseph helped his family with the insurance policies he had purchased.<sup>9</sup> During his time in the military Joseph received the 1939-1945 Star, France & Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal, and the C.V.S.M. Clasp. He is commemorated on page 514 of the Second World War Book of Remembrance.

**Lest We Forget:** Joseph Fine is buried at the Holton Canadian War Memorial Cemetery in the Netherlands, Plot 3, Row E, Grave 11. After the end of the hostile fights, 1300 of Canada's soldiers were brought to Holton Canadian War Memorial Cemetery. Joseph Fine is one of those 1300. He was 22 years old when he died on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, 1945.

### **Archival Reference**

Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine obtained from Library and Archives Canada.

### **Internet Sites**

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/cem?cemetery=2020600>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/d-day-the-allied-invasion-of-normandy-1.775929>

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/detail/2227214>

<http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/historical-sheets/netherlands>

**Joseph Fine**  
**In Our Hearts, In Our Freedom, In Our Country**  
*Lest We Forget*

### **Footnotes:**

1. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
2. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
3. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
4. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
5. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
6. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
7. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
8. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.
9. Military service file of Trooper Joseph Fine, Library and Archives Canada.

**Biography courtesy of the Lest We Forget initiative of Belleisle Regional High School located in  
Springfield, N.B.**