

Lorensen, Clarence Warren

Trooper

South Alberta Regiment

**29th Armoured Reconnaissance
Regiment**

L/100368

Royal Canadian

Armoured Corps



SOUTH ALBERTA REGIMENT
(29th Cdn Arm'd Recce Regt.)



Mary and Lewis Lorensen

Clarence Warren Lorensen was born 29 March 1917 at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (SK). His father Lewis Lorensen was from South Dakota, USA of Danish parents and emigrated to Canada around 1909. He married Clarence's mother Mary Ethel Smith, who was of Scotch/Métis heritage, at MacDowall, SK, Duck Lake Rural Municipality, in 1915. The couple identified with the Church of England and homesteaded around MacDowall, where Lewis was also a lumber man. They had six children: Elva, Clarence, Kathleen, Melvin, Joyce and Noel.

Clarence attended school until completing grade 9 age seventeen. He worked on his family's mixed farm and was interested in mechanics. Clarence became a member of the Apostolic Mission and found employment at nearby Prince Albert, SK cutting ties.

Clarence decided to join the Canadian Army, attesting 20 April



MacDowall, SK



Reconnaissance (Recce) training Camp Dundurn, SK WW2

1942 at Regina, SK age 25. He was then 6' tall, 149 lbs with blue eyes. He remained in Regina for his basic training and was promoted to acting Lance Corporal 16 May 1942. Clarence was transferred to the Canadian Armoured Corps (CAC) and sent to Camp Dundurn, SK 15 July 1942 to train as a Trooper. He qualified as Driver Class III (Wheeled) the next month and for Tracked

vehicles a year later. Clarence qualified as CAC Operator Group "C" 25 September 1943 at Dundurn and was cleared for overseas service.

Clarence disembarked in the UK 1 December 1943 where he reported to the CAC Reinforcement Unit. He was taken on strength by the 29th Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment, South Alberta Regiment (SAR) 23 December 1943. The SAR was part of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division and had arrived in the UK summer 1942.

In April 1944 the SAR was placed under command of 10th Brigade, the infantry component of the 4th Division. Brigadier General

Jim Jefferson from Edmonton, Alberta was appointed to command 10th Brigade after a successful Italian campaign. The SAR's job would be to support three Ontario infantry battalions of that brigade in the coming campaign: Algonquin Regiment, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Argylls) and Lincoln & Welland (Links). The SAR had been a fully trained



29th Armoured Recce Regt. (SAR) training in U.K. WW2

infantry unit before being converted to armour so adjusted easily to its new role.

The SAR was ordered to waterproof its vehicles on 20 May 1944 so that they would be able to drive off landing craft through water onto a beach. They did not participate in the Allied D-Day invasion that June and were left waiting in southern England in reserve. Clarence disembarked at Courseulles-sur-mer (Juno Beach) 22 July 1944 with his regiment. It took a few days to get all their equipment unloaded.

The SAR moved closer to the front line 29 July 1944, travelling through bombed out Caen, France. The 29th Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment (SAR), supporting 10th Brigade, gained invaluable battle experience in the month of August against the depleted German Army and suffered setbacks along the way in Normandy. They established a reputation for toughness and determination at St. Lambert-sur-Dives during the Battle of Falaise Gap, where "C" Squadron leader Major David Currie was awarded the Victoria Cross, the only such award to the CAC during the war and the only one awarded to the Canadian Army in Normandy.

The SAR was involved in another major action at Moerbrugge, Belgium 8-12 September, the opening round in the Battle of the Scheldt. The tough fighting there cost the South Alberta Regiment eleven men killed, including three officers, and 27 wounded. They led a clearing action up to the south coast of the Scheldt and provided ongoing recce patrols with the help of Belgian and Dutch resistance groups. Their next significant engagement was the Battle for Bergen op Zoom 25-27 October. The SAR again experienced substantial losses coming up the dirt road they called 'Hulk Alley' which was heavily mined. They occupied Bergen op Zoom, Netherlands with the Germans blowing bridges as they withdrew.

The retreating Germans had stripped that part of Holland, leaving the Dutch with little food and no fuel. The winter of 1944-45 became known as the 'Hunger Winter'. SAR soldiers shared their rations with their hosts.

In mid January 1945 the SAR did some shooting over the Maas River, focusing on the island of Kapelsche Veer near Capelle. The Regiment played a key role in Operation ELEPHANT later that month 26-30 January in assaulting a German outpost there, supporting the Lincolns and Argylls. That bitter action cost the SAR 4 killed plus 5 wounded.

First Canadian Army launched Operation VERITABLE 8 February (Feb) 1945. By 21 Feb they had closed in on Hochwald Layback and planned a new operation to take it. Operation BLOCKBUSTER was to be carried out by 2nd Canadian Corps, including 4th Canadian Armoured Division, and was scheduled to commence 26 Feb 1945.

The SAR mobilized 22 Feb from Nijmegen, Holland to Germany, travelling through two inches of mud along the road. BLOCKBUSTER kicked off 0430 hours, 26 Feb 1945. The first two phases of the attack were completed by 2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions plus 4th Armoured Division, including the capture of the high ground above Udem in the face of stubborn German opposition. The way was clear for the third phase of the operation – the attack on the Hochwald Gap by the SAR and Algonquins, and the ridge to the south by 11th British Armoured Division.



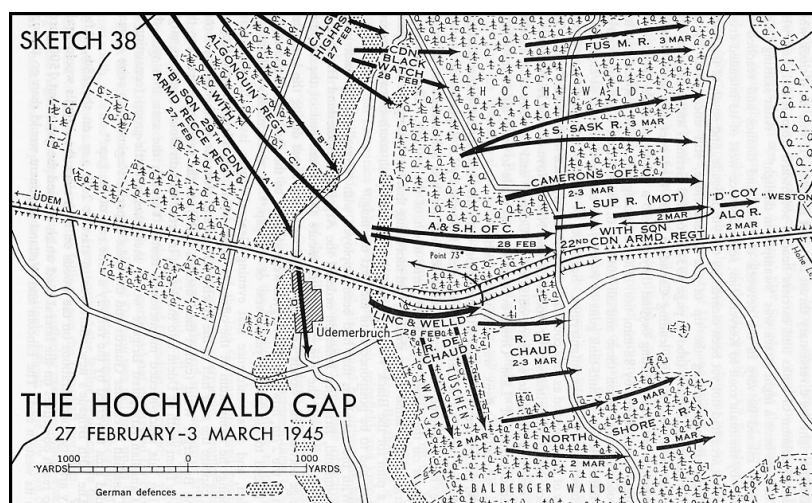
SAR Trooper hooking cable to tow a Sherman tank 26 Feb 1945

With the Algonquins on their back decks, the South Albertas moved out of Hau at 0800 hours 26 February to be in position for the attack scheduled for that night. Recce parties had marked the route but progress became difficult as the tanks and wheeled vehicles tried to get through thick mud with the consistency of prairie gumbo. It was churned up to a depth of three feet by the preceding Divisions' traffic.

The SAR spent nearly an entire day trying to move a distance of less than five miles. It took almost 12 hours to get within a mile of the start line. Their tank crews were already exhausted and falling asleep on duty before the battle began. The South Albertas, with "A" Squadron leading and carrying Algonquins on their decks, moved out at 0130 hours 27 Feb. They had to detour around a Brigadier vehicle from 2nd Division that was stuck on the road, and the light Stuart tanks all got bogged down. Some

Shermans also got stuck and it was finally every tank for itself. As a result, only about half of the tanks and infantry made it to the starting point in time for the attack. The attack went in at 0600 hours just as dawn was breaking. The shallow

The SAR spent nearly an entire day trying to move a distance of



valley was a giant bog which "B" Squadron had difficulty traversing, making them sitting ducks for German artillery. B-3 Troop tanks became pinned down but the two surviving tanks of B-1 moved forward with the Algonquin "C" Company and helped them take their objective.

"A" Squadron met with disaster when its column of tanks and Algonquin carriers missed its way in the network of roads and ditches after skirting Udem. The area had still not been cleared and German anti-tank guns were waiting in deadly ambush. The three SAR leading tanks were instantly knocked out by 88-mm fire. The eight remaining were trapped and had no room to turn. Soon these and all but one of the thirteen Algonquin carriers fell victim to German anti-tank and infantry gun fire, with survivors making their way back to the Kirsell area. "A" Squadron was badly depleted and held back from further combat until they were able to regroup. The South Albertas suffered additional casualties before their battle for the Gap ended in the afternoon 2 March when the Regiment was relieved.



SAR Sherman and Stuart tanks advance 7 March 1945

The SAR provided close support for the Algonquins in an attack on Veen, Germany 7 March 1945 in a costly battle for 10th Brigade which secured their objectives the next day.

During the night of 31 March/1 April 1945 the SAR became the first armoured unit of 4th Division to cross the Rhine River at Emmerich, Germany on a temporary pontoon

bridge. 4th Division was ordered to take over the next German defensive obstacle, the Twente Canal in Holland about thirty miles to the north. 10th Brigade would lead the division's advance and hopefully seize a bridge over the Twente in the vicinity of Lochem, Netherlands. Daylight on 2 April found the SAR scattered in four or five vehicle groups on the road to Ruurlo. A Recce patrol including a Stuart tank commanded by Sergeant Tom Paterson cleared landmines before crossing a bridge. As they came around a bend in the road near an unblown bridge over the Twente Canal, one of their tanks was hit by a German anti-tank gun. The crew baled out

and Paterson picked up the wounded crewmen. Paterson's Gunner, Trooper Clarence Lorensen was hit by German small-arms fire before they could get under cover, dying of his wound age 28.

LORENSEN, Clarence W., Tpr.,
L. Lorensen (father), Mac-
dowall, Sask.
DIED

Saskatoon Star-Phoenix 8 May
1945

16th April, 1945.

Mr. Lewis Lorensen,
MacDowall, Saskatchewan.

Dear Mr. Lorensen:

It was with deep regret that I learned of the death of your son, L100368 Trooper Clarence Warren Lorensen, who gave his life in the Service of his Country in the Western European Theatre of War on the 2nd day of April, 1945.

From official information we have received, your son died as the result of wounds received in action against the enemy. You may be assured that any additional information received will be communicated to you without delay.

The Minister of National Defence and the Members of the Army Council have asked me to express to you and your family their sincere sympathy in your bereavement.

We pay tribute to the sacrifice he so bravely made.

Yours sincerely,

(A.E. Walford),
Major-General,
Adjutant-General.

*~ x Mother
19-4-46*



Photo courtesy lestweforget1945.org

Trooper C.W. Lorensen was temporarily buried at Ruurlo, Netherlands and later relocated to Holten Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **X. H. 5**.

Clarence Lorensen's campaign medals:

- 1939-45 Star
- France-Germany Star

- Defence Medal
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal/Clasp



Clarence Lorensen is remembered as one of their local WW2 fallen at the MacDowall, SK Cenotaph.

MacDowall, SK Cenotaph

Lorensen Lake, Saskatchewan was named after him as a geo-memorial site.



Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Saskatchewan Virtual War Memorial

Ancestry public trees

Newspapers.com

MacDowall, SK image <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2131973153755909/>

Lorensen - Pocha lineage information and photo <https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/149592.Paquin-Pocha%20by%20P%20Redhead%202019.pdf>

Graves, Donald E. (1998). South Albertas – A Canadian Regiment At War

Hochwald Gap map and information <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/Canada/CA/Victory/Victory-19.html>

MacDowall, SK Cenotaph image <https://www.cdli.ca/monuments/sk/macdowall.htm>

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl



The Lewis and Mary Lorensen children. Back, L. to R. Melvin, Kathleen, Noel. Front: Elva, Lewis and Joyce.



Noel Lorensen
Birthdate August 18, 1933
Passed May 27, 2008

Noel Lorensen resided in the MacDowall, Saskatchewan area all his life except for a short stint in Hinton, Alberta in his younger years. Farming, trucking, logging and his sawmill provided his livelihood. Noel's passions included King Trapper competitions of which he won often, and stockcar racing throughout his life. He also served his community holding the positions of councillor and Reeve in the RM of Duck Lake, SK. He often volunteered with the young people in the community as a soccer coach and mentoring. Noel had strong faith in God and a full spiritual life. He published three books on his beliefs and life experiences. His loving wife Clela was with him for 51 years of marriage, which resulted in six children, 15 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. All who knew him loved and cherished their brother, father, grandpa, uncle and friend. The Memorial Service will be Sunday June 1st, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Mackenzie Chapel, 9th St East, Prince Albert, SK 306-763-8488. Donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation are welcome.

Saskatoon Star-Phoenix 2008

Clarence Lorensen and his siblings trace their Métis ancestry back to maternal grandmother Mary Matilda Pocha and her father (their great grandfather) Joseph Pocha, originally from the Manitoba Red River Settlement.



Joseph Pocha (1833-1916)

(photo – Teresa Watne Danzer)