

Pte Norman Joseph Letendre

2-C-5



Norman Letendre's service files are not unambiguous about his place and date of birth. Dates that are mentioned are January 21, 1921, May 5, 1922 and May 5, 1923. He was either born in Edmonton or Lac Ste. Anne, both in Alberta, Canada. He was the son of Samuel and Mary Callahan, she was of indigenous descent. Norman was a Métis and spoke English and Cree. He helped at the farm and was a member of the Roman Catholic Church.

His father died in 1923. His mother remarries Norman Letendre. Norman gets one half-brother, Clarence Letendre, and two half-sisters, Violet Anne and Dorothy Letendre.

Norman joins the Canadian Army in Edmonton on August 15, 1940 and is assigned to the Edmonton Fusiliers. He constantly has disciplinary problems during his training and further service for which he was punished. This eventually leads to him being discharged from the army on July 16, 1941.

Norman regrets his actions that led to this conviction and writes to the military what he can do to return to the army; he is very eager to serve his country.

On February 18, 1942, he signs up under the surname of his biological father, Callahan, and states that he was born in Edmonton on May 5, 1922.

The army finds out in June 1942 that he has registered under a false name and he admits so. For this he is punished with a prison sentence of 42 days.

His mother writes an extensive letter to the army leadership in which she indicates that there are many mitigating circumstances, that he is a good son and that she would like him back on the farm because her illness makes it difficult for her to run the farm on her own. She also explains why Norman used his own father's name; sadly, Norman got beaten up by his stepfather.

Norman continues to serve in the army and embarks to the United Kingdom on 1 December 1942. In June 1943 he is assigned to the Loyal

Edmonton Regiment and then sent to Sicily to take part in the liberation of Italy.

There he commits a crime for which he is convicted to 3 years in prison.

Two officers testify to Norman's good character as a soldier and his "exceptionally good record in action." After having served part of his sentence, he is redeployed at the front.

Norman participates in the further advance of his regiment during the battles in Italy and leaves for France on March 3, 1945. His regiment takes part in Operation CannonsHOT.

Norman is killed on Thursday, April 12, 1945 at the age of 22 in the area of the village of Voorst, the Netherlands. He is temporarily buried in Gorssel before being reburied in Holten on January 4, 1946.

His medals were the 1939-45 Star, The Italy Star, The France Germany Star, The Defence Medal, The War Medal 1939-45, and the CVSM & Clasp.

After the war, his grave was adopted by Mrs. van Lay- H. Voerman from Enschede.

Norman's mother was honored with The Memorial Cross on January 21, 1963.



Holten, september 2023