



Private James Joseph MALONEY

10-H-06

James Joseph Maloney was born, Aug 13th, 1925 on a farm near Mossbank, Saskatchewan. He was the fourth of ten children born to Mike and Mona Maloney. He was a quiet young man, who worked hard on the farm helping to make ends meet. He liked to play hockey and did some curling in the winter. He was a talented carpenter.

James enlisted as a Private with the Canadian Army on June 1, 1944 in Regina, Saskatchewan, at the age of 18. He did his basic training in Regina and then was transferred for artillery training at Camp Shilo, Manitoba.

James joined the army to follow in the footsteps of his two older brothers, Albert and Frank. Albert was serving with the Royal Canadian Corp of Signals and Frank was with the Special Service force (American / Canadian) also known as the "Devil's Brigade" in Anzio, Italy. Like many other young men from Mossbank, James enlisted because it was "the thing to do". After his basic training he was granted leave and returned home to Mossbank for Christmas. One person recalls him being a bit nervous about the war and unsure about the future. He left Canada on January 11, 1945 for England and disembarked on January 17, 1945. He began his preparations for the Netherlands in February and arrived there on March 13, 1945.

He became a Private with the South Saskatchewan Regiment, which was a part of the 2nd Canadian Infantry division, of the First Canadian Army and the 2nd Canadian Corps. His commanding officer was Lt-Col V. Stott. As a member of A Company, James became one of many reinforcements heading for the Netherlands. From March 23 until the 31, 1945 the First Canadian Army was involved in Operation Plunder. It was an aggressive assault in the Reichswald Forest. The army had crossed the Rhine River at the Black Friars Bridge, near Rees. The South Saskatchewan Regiment was working northward along the Dutch-German border near the communities of Bienen, Millingen, Wals, Wieken, Gendringen and Etten. The war diaries of the South

Saskatchewan Regiment tell of the very heavy fighting and high casualties in the regiment.

On March 11, 1945, James sent a letter home to his mother. In the letter he says

"We don't have any mattresses to sleep on over here, but I'll get used to it. Will soon be close enough to get a look at old Hitler, pretty soon, I hope. I am the only one left in this Regiment from the guys I took training with. I'll tell you more when I get home. Love to all, Jim."

This would be his last letter home.

On the last day of James Maloney's life, the Saskatchewan Regiment came to the town of Etten. It was early in the morning on March 31, 1945. Etten is about 20 miles from Arnhem, and only a few miles from Terborg. It was overcast that day and there were showers. According to an eyewitness, Mr. Jan Kaalberg, there was heavy fighting in the area. German mortars were firing from across the field at the farmhouse where Mr. Kaalberg and his family were hiding in the basement. It was about 9 am. Mr. Kaalberg was 14 at the time. He remembers peeking out of the cellar and seeing hundreds of Canadian soldiers in the farmyard. His family waved a white blanket to let the Canadians know they were in the house. Later in the day after the battle was over, he and his family came out of the cellar. They looked through a hole in the wall of the kitchen on to the backyard of the house. There they saw the body of a Canadian soldier, who had been killed by shrapnel. This was James Maloney. It was a few hours later, that other Canadian soldiers came and moved James to the side of the road and buried him. His helmet was left and a wooden cross was left along with his badges.

Mr. Kaalberg had several young sisters and every week they would place pretty flowers on the grave. He stayed in this spot until April 17, 1946 when he was moved to the Holten cemetery. James was just 19 years old and he had been in Holland only 17 days.

In a letter to James's mother, on April 12 1945, other Dutch eyewitness's put it this way.

"It was 9:00 in the morning when the first Canadians came into our town. There were a few German soldiers in the town. Not a lot of them. In our house they make one of them POW and at our neighbor's house five of them. Then for a moment the shellfire stops and we thought it is over now and we are free and we shake hands with our Canadian

erators. We are happy. But then a moment later the shellfire starts again ... then we saw what happened and we were very angry because a German soldier had to shoot a mortar to our Canadian friends. It came from a great distance and hit our friend James and he died at once. He fell for this land and our liberty. We put him in some nice Dutch blankets and then he was buried... To tell you this, we are very happy that a Canadian soldier also killed the same German soldier who killed James. He deserved it."

On April 4, 1945 Captain Harry Adams wrote a letter to James's mother. He wrote...

"Private Maloney was killed by shrapnel while the company was advancing upon the town of Etten, Holland the 31st day of March. He was spared suffering and pain, because death was instantaneous and he is resting in a temporary grave near Etten. He will be removed to a Canadian Cemetery... While your son was with us he proved to be a good soldier, esteemed by his comrades and well liked by both the officer and men. His willingness and cheerfulness endeared him to all and his loss is a blow not only to his platoon but also to his company. It is hard to understand the death of loved ones especially when they are so young, but God is kind Mrs. Maloney and in Him alone can we find comfort...."

