

METCALFE, William Stuart

(A/50101)

William "Bill" Metcalfe was born in Sarnia on February 21, 1921, the son of Karl Steadman Metcalfe and Julia Stuart Metcalfe, of Port Huron, Michigan. His grandfather was Lieutenant Colonel W.W. McVicar. William attended public school in Petrolia, Central High School in London, and then finished his education at Sarnia Collegiate Institute. He was a member of Central United Church and also of the Central Century Club, serving as the club's pianist on Sunday afternoons. After high school, William obtained first class honours in his second year at Toronto Conservatory of Music. When William enlisted, he recorded his place of residence as 309 North College Street, Sarnia and his occupation as a grocery clerk.

William joined the Canadian Army on August 13, 1940, in Sarnia, with the Kent Regiment. He trained at Chatham, Wolsey Barracks in London, and Kingston where he took a P.T. course. William was then transferred to the trade school at Hamilton, where he took a special course in Wireless. From there he was sent to Camp Borden with the 5th Canadian Armored Division, going overseas in October 1941. Overseas with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals 5th Canadian Armored Division, he had the rank of Signaller. He trained in England and while there he married Helen R. Appleby on February 17, 1943 at Chelsea, Middlesex. The new Mrs. Helen Metcalfe was originally from Petrolia, Ontario. William and Helen would have one son together. Later, at the time of William's death, his wife Helen and son resided in England.

William went on to serve a year and a half in Italy, with the British 8th Army in the Central Mediterranean Forces, and was also in Belgium and Holland. In late 1943, not long after his arrival in Italy, William wrote a letter to his grandfather in Sarnia, Lt. Colonel W. W. MacVicar. The following are portions of that letter:

I never saw so much filth and poverty anywhere. These towns are beyond all imagination. The first few days here were beautifully warm, and we thought there was something to this "Sunny Italy" business, despite the fact that the nights almost "did us in". Don't know when I ever ran into such bone-biting coldness. You can put on everything you own, and still shake like a model T Ford.

Then came the rains, and believe me, it has everything that England ever showed us in the way of rain beaten by a mile. We are bivouacked in a vineyard, using pup tents as a home. They aren't too bad except that every time you touch the canvas when it is raining, the water pours through in torrents, and being so low we are always touching them, so, there being no room upward, we decided to go down, and now are sleeping some three feet below the surface of the ground in something that is a cross between a tent and a dugout. It is not bad, though, and actually it is comparatively dry and quite warm. We are thankful that conditions are no worse than they are. They definitely could be very much worse. The food is good and can be supplemented with all kinds of oranges, apples and nuts.

The one thing here worth mentioning is the music one can hear anywhere in the streets. It seems to be the only thing these people can do properly, and they do it under the least provocation. Some poor broken specimen of humanity shuffling along will suddenly burst forth in a flood of song that would put Nelson Eddy to shame, and when they get about half "vino-ed" up you should hear them.

Speaking of "vino", it is no wonder these people got licked at every turn of the wheel if they have been drinking that brew ever since they were infants. It's vile! About the only thing I can say for it is that it would make good ink.

Approximately one month after VE Day, marking the end of war in Europe, on June 4, 1945, William Metcalfe would lose his life in Groningen, Holland. In mid-June of 1945, Lt. Col. W.W. McVicar in Sarnia would be notified of the death of his grandson, Signaller William Stuart Metcalfe, which occurred in Holland on June 4. William Metcalfe would later be officially listed as,

Overseas casualty, in the field (Holland), cause of death drowning. Twenty-four year old William Metcalfe is buried in Holten Canadian War Cemetery, Netherlands, Grave VI.B.13. William Metcalfe's name is also inscribed on the Petrolia cenotaph in the Town of Petrolia.

SOURCES: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, J, L, N, S, 2C, 2D

August 14th, 2015|Comments Off

William Stuart Metcalfe

No description

by

Julia Iliescu

on 19 January 2015

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Transcript of William Stuart Metcalfe

William Stuart Metcalfe

Personal Service Information

William was a son of two loving parents named Karl Steadman Metcalfe and Julia Stuart Metcalfe. He grew up living on 309 North College St. Sarnia Ontario. He was husband of Helan R. Metcalfe. William was born February 21st, 1921 and was born in Sarnia, Ontario. He reached a height of 5'8" and weighed 138 pounds. His eyes were hazel and wore glasses. He went to Petrolia High school and, played basketball and was on a swim team. His religion was United Church.

Military Service Record

William Enlisted August 13th, 1940 (age 19) in Chatham Ontario. The force was army and unit The Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. Service number was A/50101 and served for 5 years. (until age 24) Awards and Badges received were the Italy star, France and Germany star, 1939-1945 star, defence medal and war medal. William died June 4th, 1945, a month after the war has ended.

Williams War Bride

When William enlisted to the war he had no relationship, and World War Two drew to a close and in the months following it, many Canadian soldiers married European women. The brides were young and mostly British. Some were pregnant or already had young children.

Williams Death

After 5 years of serving in the war, William survived until the war was finished. As he was

waiting to return home to his friends and family he was in an accidental drowning overseas. His war wife Helen was waiting for him to return back home after the war ended **so she could go to Canada with him**. The war ended on May 8th, 1945 and he died on June 4th , 1945.

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In memory of
Signalman
William Stuart Metcalfe
June 4, 1945

Military Service:

Service Number: A/50101
Age: 24
Force: Army
Unit: The Royal Canadian Corps of Signals

Additional Information:

Son of Karl Steadman Metcalfe and Julia Stuart Metcalfe; husband of Helen R. Metcalfe, of Petrolia, Ontario.