

Prouse, Charles
10-E-12

Private



Bedford, Devonshire, England noted a Canadian Army clerk when Charles Prouse enlisted in Timmins, Ontario on January 5, 1942. That turned out to be a typo; Charles was born on November 5, 1914 in Bideford, Devonshire, England as the son of Jack and Rose Jane Prouse. He was the only one in the family (a brother and two sisters) who emigrated to Canada at the age of 14. Hence, he gave as address Sandy Falls, Ontario.

He already had had many years of work experience. At that time he worked for Nabob Mines in Timmins as a machine operator in a gold mining firm. According to his own statement, he was born on a farm and also had had about six years of experience as a labourer on various farms.

In February 1943, in a second interview after completing basic training, we get to know him a bit better. Charles stated that he had stopped school after 6 years of education. He had found arithmetic his favourite subject. Football was his most-liked sport and in his spare time he sometimes played pool billiards or read fiction books. On occasion he liked to have a smoke and an alcoholic drink. Looking ahead, Charles indicated that he would like to be assigned to a carrier platoon during his army service and that after the war his desire was to work on a dairy farm.

Charles got his first military experience with the Algonquin Regiment in Niagara Falls. Initially, this regiment had a "Home Defence" role, i.e. guarding Canada's own territory. It was deployed in Newfoundland from February 1942 to early February 1943.

In October 1942, Charles was admitted to Botwood Hospital for about ten days. For reasons unknown due to unclear handwriting.



Botwood Hospital

In May 1943, Charles qualified as driver III for tracked vehicles.

In June 1943, the regiment, with Charles in the ranks, went to England. The arrival was on the 19th of that month. In 1943 he was further trained as a Bren gunner on a carrier and in December he was also allowed to officially call himself a carrier driver.

In mid-January 1944, he was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. Whether he celebrated this is unclear, but it has been recorded that he was unlawfully absent for a day. The pay was withheld, he was not further punished.

In May 1944, the service records reported an admittance to No. 13 Canadian General Hospital in Cuckfield, England. This time the reason is known: an appendix surgery. On July 21, he was fit and was assigned to the Essex Scottish Regiment (ESR).

The next phase in his military career was the crossing to Normandy. Charles landed there on July 25, 1944, six weeks after D-Day. On July 29, 1944, he was reported as "wounded". It was a gunshot wound to the right hip. For treatment, he again went to a hospital in England.

After treatment, he returned to his unit on September 7, 1944. That went well until October 2, 1944, when Charles was injured for the second time. This time to the right of the chest, he spent almost two weeks in hospital. After this, Charles was placed in a supplementary unit. No particularities were noted in his service records over that time.

The War Diary of the Essex Scottish reported their presence in an area near Groesbeek until January 1945. They filled their time with patrolling, small skirmishes during reconnaissance in occupied areas in almost constant bad weather conditions.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Re to
At GROESBEEK Ref Groesbeek 1:25000	8 Feb 45		Before dawn broke, the preparation for the attack on the REICHSWALD Defences had started. At 0500 hrs the entry "All Hell Broke Loose" crisply describes the thundering of a thousand guns which softened the resistance of the enemy for the attacking forces. The morning of the attack was a cool gray one and the air of quiet confidence present with the Scottish Troops was very inspiring. In spite of some shelling of our own area in retaliation for the terrific hail of steel shells and rocket projectiles directed against Jerry, the battalion was an enthusiastic audience for the show which developed during the day pretty much according to plan. At night 'D' Coy provided a covering party of two sections for English sappers, otherwise there was very little activity on our own part. The war was moving past us.	
At GROESBEEK Ref Groesbeek 1:25000	9 Feb 45		The weather was not designed to assist the operation in hand. It rained heavily and visibility was poor. In spite of great efforts on the part of the Engineers to turn tracks into roads, they could not do away with the mud and traffic movement became a real problem. The Battalion spent the day stretching it's legs after a long session in slit trenches. We could not leave the area, not because of operational commitments, but rather because there was no road space available totroops not immediately concerned with the attack. An informal patrol from 'C' Coy investigating some wrecked gliders sprung some mines and three soldiers were injured. Contact patrols were no longer required by Brigade - normal security guards being maintained in Sub-Unit Areas.	Ap
At GROESBEEK Ref Groesbeek 1:25000	10 Feb 45		The weather followed the previous days forecast - cloudy with intermittent rain and showers. News of the advance was eagerly awaited when the hourly BBC newscasts rolled around. News of the advance came regularly, however. At 0830 hrs word came from Brigade to concentrate as previously planned. This, being interpreted, meant a scurrying for available accommodation in or near GROESBEEK. Most of the companies managed to squeeze into buildings which after a little hasty patching kept most of the unit dry. The Paymaster and the YMCA arrived in the battalion area to administer their respective "comforts" to one and all.	Ap

The Essex Scottish Regiment took part in Operation Veritable during the Rhineland Offensive, the advance through the Reichswald towards the Rhine. The first few days of the operation passed without a fight for the Essex Scottish.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	F t
Lv CL VE Ref Nijmegen 1:25000 Ar Near CALCAR Ref Calcar 1:25000	17 Feb 45		At 0630 hrs final timings were issued for the attack and just beofre 1100 hrs the bn moved off to an assembly area between CLEVE and CALCAR. At 1100 hrs and 'O' Group at Brigade Hq set 'H' Hour at 1500 hrs. By 1200 hrs the battlion had reached the Assembly Area and deployed. At 1350 hrs word was given that the time for the attack had been delayed. 7 Brigade was given the job to firm up the Brigade Start Point before our attack was launched. Some shells landed in the area and two men of 'D' Coy were slightly wounded. Otherwise, there was nothing of note and much of the idle time was spent plucking feathers and carving steaks from the local poultry and live stock.	

Mid-February was relative rest for the regiment. There were moved to a assembly area between Kleef and Kalkar for their next deployment. This, however, was postponed and another unit was involved. The men filled their freed up time with catching and slaughtering chickens.

Eventually, at the end of February 1945 Charles' regiment took part in the attack on the Hochwald Gap.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
(Continued) Near KEPPLEIN Ref UDEM 1:25000	27 Feb 45		under small arm resistance to secure our start line. During the day our 'A' Coy relieved 'D' Coy of the RHLI in order to make firm the left flank. The RRCs were at this time being harrassed by high velocity weapons, mortars and snipers which were apparently coming from the HOCHWALD. Patrol was maintained as before.
Near KEPPLEIN Ref UDEM 1:25000	28 Feb 45		The weather was clear and a good day for the Tac Air Arm. The G.O. again proceeded to Bde for an 'O' Group - time 0930 hrs. On returning an 'O' Group was ordered at 1430 hrs where we discussed our operations for the attack on the HOCHWALD. At 1830 hrs an 'O' Group was again called to put Coy Comds in the latest picture. Around 2000 hrs we moved off with 'A' Coy leading and 'D' Coy behind taking the right axis of the advance. On the left was 'B' Coy leading with 'C' Coy behind. At 2100 hrs 'A' & 'B' Coys were both passing the start line. They moved forward and attained their objectives with very little opposition and passed beyond 300 yds where both forward coys began to run into heavy mortar fire and small arms. Few casualties were suffered, mostly leg wounds. 'B' Coy attained their second objective while 'A' Coy experienced more difficulty however with use of flame and 6 pdrs were able to consolidate on objective. At 0240 hrs 'B' Coy as instructed sent out a Recce in force to edge of the HOCHWALD and reported wire and trench system covered with MMG and mortar fire. This sub-unit had to withdraw. Around 0400 hrs we got the result of 'A' Coy's patrol who reported enemy in strength 200 yds ahead. Tac HQ moved to a new location in DELSANHOF with the exception of Rear BHQ, about 1000 yds W of HOCHWALD. At 0500 hrs an 'O' Group was to have been called for all coys, but 'A' & 'D' Coys were not able to attend. The plan then was to have 'D' & 'C' Coys move through 'B' & 'D' Coys supported by one troop of tanks (Sherbrooke Fusiliers and artillery. 'H' Hour was set at 0715 hrs but due to road conditions zero hr was set back to zero plus 30 in order to get tanks crews into position.

Charles was re-assigned to the Essex Scottish Regiment on March 12, 1945, then billeted behind the frontliine in the Reichswald.

After seen various action during Operation Plunder, Charles' unit went north in early April 1945, crossing the border with the Netherlands again and then almost non-stop to the Doetinchem area.

The Essex Scottish Regiment swiftly approached Zutphen. There a scout platoon got

Near ZUTPHEN Ref ZUTPHEN SHEET 3803 1:25000	3 Apr 45		The weather was murky and overcast. During the morning a recce party under the command of Lieut. FRASER went to feel out the enemy near ZUTPHEN and ran into trouble. We suffered one killed and three wounded and Lieut. FRASER himself, was missing until the evening when he returned under cover of darkness, wounded in the shoulder, and gave us valuable information of enemy positions. At 1630 hrs. the CO and IO went to Bde and received the movement order which was to take us over the canal by ferry to a new concentration area in the RRC lines. Around 1730 hrs. the CO passed his orders on to the Coy Commanders. In the meantime, our 'B' Coy took over from 'B' Coy RHLI to release it for the crossing of the canal and strengthen the bridgehead. The crossing was delayed due to enemy activity and we finally got across with our Company intact about 0245 hrs.
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into trouble. It is unclear whether Charles Prouse was part of a carrier crew with these scouts.

Once past Zutphen, the regiment went towards the Twente Canal. In the war Diary no actions are mentioned at the canal, nor at Laren (Gld). Apparently, other units have taken the lead here. The crossing of the Schipbeek and the advance towards Holten was also not specifically mentioned in the diary.

The first mention of action was at April 10, 1945; the crossing of the Overijssels canal and attacking actions on targetl "Park 1813". This was part of the Lemelerberg. This hill was occupied without any problems and without casualties. One peculiar note: the headquarters of the Essex Scottish were already there before the companies arrived.

At: Park 1813 NIJVERDAL SHEET 1:25000	10 Apr 45	During the night the QOCH commenced moving in to our positions. Bn started moving off to new objectives on high ground dominated by a so called "Park 1813". During this move we crossed the OVERIJSSELSCH CANAL in assault boats. TAC vehicles then crossed the bridge. Without any opposition whatsoever, we took over Park 1813 which had formerly been a German strong point and HQ. This operation was unique in two ways. First no casualties and secondly TAC HQ beat all Coys to the objective.
PARK 1813 Ref LEMELERVELD 3504 1:25000	11 Apr 45	The day began with a beautiful dawn and the arrangements were made by all to have sunbaths. However the war was not over and at 1330 hrs. a balls was called at Bde. At 1430 a platoon of carriers and one A/TK gun left to clear South West of OMMEN (Cmms Sheet 1:25000) No enemy found in the woods. Reluctantly we left Park 1813 at 1913 hrs. to a Bn concentration area in HOOGEVAN, a town of canals and bridges which were all blown by retreating enemy.
OUTSIDE ASSEN Ref HOOGEVAN SHEET 1:25000	12	O group was called at which Div. gave objective as GRONINGEN with and intermediate Bde objective, ASSEN. Move commenced at 1120 hrs. in TCV's and we arrived at ZWIGGELTE at 1315 hrs. There an O Group was called immediately. We were now situated approximately 3000 yds from GRANJE KANAAL. Our leading Coy, 'B' Coy, came under small arms fire and it was soon noted the road was heavily mined. Pioneers were called on. Two Jeeps carrying pioneers followed a tank up the highway. The tank was hit by a bazooka setting fire also to the pioneer jeeps and the ammunition and explosives in the Jeeps wounded Mr. SHEPPARD and eight pioneers. In the ensuing advances several skirmishes were fought by our Coys and from POW's taken many conflicting reports came to us about the strength of the enemy in the town. Late that night the Engineers, covered by our Rifle Coy's fire removed debris and fixed a necessary bridge and checked for mines. Our Rifle Coys dug in at the outskirts and just inside of the town.

The liberation of Ommen, Hoogeveen and the area towards Assen took place not without a fight, as recorded.

On April 13, 1945, the advance continued with the Essex Scottish up front. It was

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
ASSEN Ref ASSEN SHEET 3005 1:25000	13 Apr 45		The woods on either side of the road were cleared and at 0500 hrs. our 'B' Coy was ready to spearhead the attack. Small battles took place as houses were cleared. Many POW's were taken. Fairly early in the morning the centre of the town was reached and our Coy consolidated. Our casualties were very light. Our Bn. was accustomed to warm welcomes by liberated Dutch towns but the tumultuous reception given by the people of ASSEN outdid everything previously experienced. Even with small arms fire flying dangerously near, the happy citizens could not be restrained from rushing about tossing flowers at our vehicles and serving refreshments to our men. TAC was set up in the sumptuous town hall which was situated close to the town jail. The latter was the scene of many heart-rendering and dramatic episodes. First the moving scene as the gates bust open releasing 300 Dutch prisoners to the waiting arms of their friends. Later the same jail was host to the previous jailers as hundreds of German prisoners were temporarily billeted there for questioning. The full cycle of justice was reached when Dutch collaborators and informers were paraded through the crowds to ponder over their treason in the relative security of the very jail to which they had sent many patriotic Dutchmen. No honest Dutchman shed a tear of sympathy that day. No Canadian, participating now as a spectator, could feel anything but pride for the part his country and Regiment had played in once more enthroning decency and justice in the fair city of ASSEN. But the war was not yet over. Ahead of us lay the largest city in North HOLLAND, GRONINGEN But to give the enemy no reprieve or rest, the order of the day was, "On to GRONINGEN!" At 1700 hrs. the Bn. moved off and 2 hours later TAC was already established at the TWEE PROVINCIEEN HOTEL" at PATERSWOLD, 7km south of GRONINGEN The plan was that during the night the RHHL would feel out the enemy in the Southwest sector of GRONINGEN. We were to move through the RRG, established just South of GRONINGEN, and take the first streets of the city and reach the Canal.

the day that proved to be fatal for Charles Prouse. Despite the fact that the troops were able to

penetrate quickly to the centre of Assen and the losses were described as "susprisingly light".

In the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, we find eight names of fallen soldiers of the Essex Scottish Regiment on April 13, 1945.

Charles was given a temporary grave in Assen.

On March 21, 1946, he was given a permanent resting place in Holten where he rests in grave 10-E-12.

NO.	B.55696	Rank	Private	Name	PROUSE, Charles
Unit	Essex Scottish Regt		Date of death	13th April, 1945.	
Died at	Holland				
Cause	Killed in action.				
Death occurred on strength of Forces H.Q.	405-P-15644				
N/K	Mrs. Rose Prouse,		Relationship		Mother
25 TORRINGTON ST.					
Address Bideford, Devon, England.					
Remains buried in Holland Assen sh. Trouingar. 1/10000 Cemetery					
M1 MR 210/894					
State location					

CHK ✓ OVER ✓

Charles Prouse was awarded the following awards:

1939-1945 Star; France-Germany Star; Defence Medal; War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.

His last unit was the Essex Scottish Regiment. This regiment had counted a total of 562 dead during the fighting of the Second World War.



Herman Sligman
ICB Holten
Februari 2025