

Lieutenant Martin George VAN SANTVOORD

Martin (or 'Van' as he quickly became called by his colleagues), was born in Appleton, Wisconsin, USA on 19 July 1916. It is not known when he or his family moved to Canada, but he completed his High School education and was a machinist before the outbreak of war. In 1940 he enlisted first in the wartime 3rd (Res) Battalion of the Irish Fusiliers of Canada (Vancouver Regiment); as a married man he began active duty as an officer cadet at OTC(WC) on 19 March 1943. There he graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant on 18 June and qualified as a Lieutenant (Infantry) at A.16 Calgary on 17 July 1943. He joined the active service battalion of his regiment at Vernon on 19 July 1943, and returned to A.16 instructional duty on 16 August 1943. On 19 May 1944 he was attached for six months to OTC(EC) Brockville on Instructional duties, and then took a four weeks course in Small Arms at CSATC Nanaimo, ending on 7 November 1944. On 19 December 1944 he arrived in the UK and by 19 February 1945 he was in NW- Europe as a reinforcement officer for The Canadian Scottish Regiment, joining the 1st Bn just after the severe fighting and losses at Moyland Wood. He was in service as Pioneer Officer in the Rhineland and at Emmerich, and gave valuable help in the liberation of Didam by virtue of his fluency in the Dutch language. This talent was again put to very good use in the fighting to free Deventer and elsewhere, as the unit moved into central and eastern Holland. Perhaps because he was so useful, and undoubtedly because there was a shortage of rifle platoon commanders, he was posted to 'A' Coy in mid-April 1945. On 21-22 April he commanded the I8 Platoon but was killed by enemy action early in the fight to liberate Wagenborgen, a part of the homeland of his ancestors.

His decorations include:

1939-45 Star, France-Germany Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp and the War Medal 1945.