



Walter Samuel White, nicknamed Walter, is born in Toronto on April 29, 1912.

His father is Walter George White, and his mother is Nellie (Nelly) Rose White, née Snoxell.

His parents are both English by birth. Walter's father is a veteran of the First World War. He is a plasterer by profession.

The English-speaking family is Anglican and has, besides Walter, three other sons and two daughters.

According to their entry documents, the family arrived in Montreal on April 26, 1926, on the ship "Ausonia."

Walter left school at fourteen. He later explained that his earnings were needed for the household. He did, however, learn quite a bit; typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping are not unfamiliar to him.

Initially, he worked as a plasterer for four years, following in his father's footsteps. When Walter enlists for active duty on June 21, 1940, he has worked for 12 years as a lens grinder at Imperial Optical Co. in Toronto, so he is a skilled craftsman.

Imperial Optical was founded in the early 20th century and by the 1930s had established its reputation as a major player in the Canadian optical industry.

The company specialized in manufacturing high-quality lenses and distributing a wide range of eyeglass frames, aimed at optometrists.

Walter has already started a family by June 1940. On December 14, 1935, he married Majorie Lillian Ward. They have a son, William Walter, born on August 14, 1939.

Walter also has to see the medical examiners. Noted is, that he is 5'5" tall and weighed 155 lbs. He has blue eyes and brown hair, special feature: a scar from an appendectomy. A vision test reveals he needs glasses.

He was declared fit for all purposes. His interests included baseball and skiing.

All three of Walter's brothers serve their country, one in the Royal Canadian Air Force and two in the Canadian Army.

Walter has already gained some military experience before enlisting. In 1927 and 1928, he served as a reservist in the 2nd Corps of Guides.

The Corps of Guides was an administrative corps of the militia and a precursor to the Canadian Intelligence Corps. During the 1920s, the Corps lost its appeal. Recruitment declined, and few companies were actually active.

Among those active were two in Toronto, serving with approximately 855 men between 1912 and 1929. Small units were expensive and yielded little results. It was disbanded on March 31, 1929, and its personnel were incorporated into the Canadian Signal Corps.

Immediately after enlisting, Walter is assigned to the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (QOR). As early as August 1940, he is sent to Newfoundland for four months with the so-called "W" Force.

"W" Force was a Canadian army unit formed in 1940-1941 to defend Newfoundland against potential enemy attack during the Second World War. The unit consisted of Canadian troops and was responsible for protecting vital infrastructure and coastal defense, along with British and American troops. This led to significant militarization of the region until the end of the war.

Walter is granted leave during the second half of December 1940 and also spent New Year's Eve at home.

In May 1941, Walter is transferred to Hamilton, Ontario. The Canadian Army Trades School (CATS) has just started here. The school offers training in electrical engineering, welding, cooking, and other essential skills.

Here, Walter qualified as a driver/mechanic.

In February 1942, he is granted two weeks' leave.

In April 1942, Walter is promoted to be an Acting Corporal and transferred to a detachment training for the Canadian Parachute Battalion. He does not pass and he returns to the CATS in Hamilton for further training.

There, he qualifies as a driver for vehicles with wheels.

On November 19, 1942, their daughter is born; she is named Alice Lynn.

Walter remains in Hamilton until mid-1943. He is reverted to Private and transferred to Orillia, Ontario, for infantry training.

After successfully completing training as an instructor, Walter is promoted to Lance Corporal in September 1943. Just before Christmas 1943, he is granted a week's leave.

At the end of February 1944, Walter is transferred to Camp Borden, Ontario. He is then assigned to the CAC, the Canadian Armoured Corps, which has a training centre here.

The training in 1944 is intensive and focused on specialized skills for armoured vehicles such as the Sherman tank.



Training in Camp Borden

Walter also qualifies as a driver/mechanic for tracked vehicles (carriers) and in June 1944, also for tanks and as a gunner.

The crossing to Europe came closer. In July 1944, Walter is granted a week's embarkation leave. He departs for the United Kingdom (UK) on a troop ship, arriving on August 10, 1944. Initially, he is assigned to the Winnipeg Grenadiers.

This unit is not destined for combat on the mainland of Europe, but remains in Scotland for training and is incorporated into the 3rd Canadian Infantry Training Battalion.

Walter Samuel White did cross over to the Western European front.

On October 17, 1944, he arrives in Belgium and is taken on strength by the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (QOR).

He serves with the QOR until disaster struck in the north of the Netherlands.

For Walter, his West-European time starts with a long nighttime movement: via Lokeren, St. Nicholas, and Antwerp in Belgium, the advance goes further into the Netherlands via Tilburg, 's-Hertogenbosch and toward Nijmegen. The troops covered the final stretch to Berg en Dal on foot.



December 1944 and January 1945 are often described as relatively quiet. However, the war diary reports daily patrols and contact with the enemy. The weather conditions were also far from pleasant. Meanwhile, a massive force was being built up in the region.

After the largely unsuccessful Operation Market Garden, a Canadian-British force of approximately 400,000 men and approximately 35,000 vehicles was built up in the Nijmegen region during the winter of 1944/1945. A similar American force was assembled near Roermond.

The goal: to push the German units back beyond the Rhine.

On February 8, the Canadians and British launched their attack on the Rhineland with Operation Veritable. They encountered fierce resistance in the Reichswald Forest. It became the bloodiest battle ever on German soil. By March 10, the western bank of the Rhine was almost completely cleared of German troops.

During the night of March 23 and 24, the Allies crossed the Rhine at Wesel and Rees using amphibious vehicles. On March 24, another 16,000 paratroopers landed on the other side of the Rhine. This was the largest single-day airborne operation ever. On March 29, the Rhine crossing was complete, and the Rhineland fell into Allied hands. The Rhineland Offensive claimed 25,000 Allied and over 60,000 German casualties.

After the start of Operation Veritable, the QOR took up defensive positions in and around Millingen aan de Rijn on February 9, 1945.

They remained there until the Allies had successfully crossed the Rhine.

The QOR suffered more than 50 casualties during the winter (until the end of March 1945).

Walter Samuel White must have endured these operations without any major problems. His file certainly contains no such record.

The last entry for Walter: Killed in Action April 16, 1945.

Where were the QOR in April 1945?

After crossing the German-Dutch border the QOR advanced north.

They fought at Laagkeppel from 3 until 5 April 1945; at Deventer from 9 until 11 April 1945; and at Wons, Pingjum and Witmarsum in Friesland from 16 until 18 April 1945.

The Canadians wanted to prevent the Germans from further fortifications in North Holland via the Afsluitdijk. Therefore, they launched the attack on the Afsluitdijk from 16 April 1945 on.

