

BEERS, Thomas Clinton

Private

North Shore (New Brunswick)

Regiment

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

G50714



Thomas Clinton Beers was born July 9, 1920, in Harcourt, Kent Co. NB, the son of Joseph Kirby Beers and Sarah Eliza Shirley (known as Sadie). Kirby was a Section Man for CN Rail and the family attended the Anglican Church. Thomas was one of eleven Children. Brothers Bliss and George also served in the Canadian Armed Forces. At a young age, before completing grade eight, Thomas left school and worked in the logging camps and with the railroad.

On January 8, 1942, he was drafted into the militia for home defense duty under the new National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA) that came into effect in 1940. Thomas reported to the No. 7 District Depot in Saint John and was assigned NRMA service # was G600924. Records show that he was 5' 8 1/2" in height, had hazel eyes, black hair and weighed 150 lbs. He was then sent to the Canadian Army Training Centre (CATC) Camp No.70 in Fredericton. Two weeks later Thomas changed his status by enlisting for active duty wherever he was needed. Upon completion of basic training, he was assigned to the Royal Canadian Artillery (RCA) and over the following year trained as a Gunner with both the St. John Fusiliers and Le Régiment de la Chaudière. In June 1943 records show that Thomas transferred to the infantry and was sent to the Canadian Infantry Training Centre (CITC) Camp A30 near Utopia. Training included the use of rifles, Bren guns, Sten guns, Mortars, PIATS, gas defense techniques and the handling of mines and booby traps.

In October 1944 Thomas embarked for the UK. He spent a short time with the Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit (CIRU), was awarded a Good Conduct badge and in November was sent across the channel to northwest Europe. On January 5, 1945, Thomas was assigned to the North Shore (NB) Regiment.

In January 1945, in preparation for the invasion of Germany, the Nijmegen area of Netherlands became wildly busy. It resembled England before D-Day with the buildup of troops and tons of supplies. Before launching the offensive, however, Allied headquarters wanted to know exactly where the German army was, its strength and its plans. As a result, there was a constant demand for more information and German prisoners to interrogate. The North Shore, like all regiments, made regular dangerous patrols into enemy territory to obtain both. Lt. Col. Rowley ordered one such patrol, on January 8th at 4 pm, in broad daylight. The target was a nearby enemy trench near Wyler Germany, on the Dutch-German border. The mission was accomplished, three Germans were captured, and it was all over in twenty minutes, but the cost was high. Nine North Shore soldiers were killed and eight wounded.

On Feb. 8th, 1945, the Canadians pushed across the border into Germany and were now taking control of the Rhineland (western Germany south of the Rhine River). One of the deadliest battles in the Rhineland was fought for the capture of the village of Keppeln. Allied intelligence had reported that there was no significant enemy activity at Keppeln and the assistance of tanks would not be required. On February 26, 1945, Lt. Col. Rowley received orders to advance and sent the North Shore's "B" & "C" Companies across a thousand yards of open farmland to seize Keppeln. Intelligence was wrong. The Germans waited until the North Shores were 150 yards from the German line and then opened fire. Everywhere North Shore men were falling dead or wounded. There was nowhere to hide. "A" & "D" Companies were at least a mile behind when news of the slaughter arrived. The North Shore would need armoured support and a plan was created in which "A" Company was to lead with 42 North Shore soldiers mounted, exposed, on top of a squadron of tanks of the 1st Hussars Regiment. As the tanks approached the village the men were shooting like mad into the enemy trenches. Some of the tanks hit mines and blew up, some were destroyed by artillery and others got stuck in the mud. Only six of the fourteen tanks survived.

Despite heavy losses the NSR advance succeeded. Fighting continued house by house and by evening Keppeln belonged to the North Shore. The cost was 28 North Shore soldiers killed in action and 56 wounded. Private Thomas Beers was wounded in the battle for Keppeln. A casualty report

states that he received shell or shrapnel wounds to his head and left shoulder. He died on February 27, 1945. Thomas was twenty-four years of age.

For his service to Canada, Pte. Thomas Clinton Beers was awarded the following medals; 1939-45 Star, France & Germany Star, War Medal 1939-1945 and CVSM with Clasp.

Thomas Clinton Beers is buried in Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands; Plot **XVI. G. 16**.



Biography by Bruce Morton, brucehmorton@gmail.com



Biography made available for Faces To Graves, with courtesy of Bruce Morton.



Thomas family – source Information Centre War Cemetery Holten.