

Chorney, Peter

Trooper

Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)

2nd Armoured Regiment

M/105941



Peter Chorney was born January 25, 1919, in Star, near Edmonton, the capital of Alberta. He grew up on the family farm with his parents and nine other siblings. His parents were Nicholas Chorney and Julia Pasemko who had immigrated to Canada in 1903 from the Ukraine, according to his military personnel report.

Peter was the sixth of 10 children. His three sisters were Emilie (Kazlauskas), Mary (Wilson) and Jusia (Parcawij). Peter's six brothers were Anton, Fred, Joe, John, Paul and Steven. Two brothers, Anton and John, served in the Canadian army. Anton was a tank trooper fighting overseas.

He completed Grade 8 in an Alberta rural school at the age of 16. He spoke two languages: English and Ukrainian. Peter was a member of the Greek Catholic Church.

Peter was interested in sports and mechanics. He played many different types of sports including baseball, hockey, and skating. However, at age 13, he broke a broken leg which never set properly. This injury restricted him from playing these sports.

Prior to entering the army, Peter worked on his parents' farm but he also hired out as a farmhand for others. He learned how to work with horses and to operate tractors. For three months, he also worked in a garage as a helper. In his personnel assessment, Peter said his passion was to become a mechanic, and he was hoping to become one after the war.

On January 9, 1943, he enlisted with the Canadian Armoured Corps in Calgary, Alberta. According to his military documents, he had blue eyes and brown hair. He stood five feet four inches tall, and weighed 133 pounds. Peter was also described as having a "willing attitude" and a "pleasant manner." He had a sturdy physique due to working as a farmer. The personnel assessment report stated that Trooper Chorney was "no doubt, very reliable."

After getting basic training in Calgary, Peter was sent to Camrose, Alberta for a few months until he was transferred to Camp Borden in Ontario on April 1. He received basic gunnery training in the military and became a qualified driver (Class III).

On August 27, 1943, he was sent overseas to the United Kingdom. He stayed in the United Kingdom for many months to make preparations until he embarked once again on February 18, 1944, and landed in Italy the next day. He fought in Italy for exactly one year, during which he took part in the Italian Campaign.

On February 18, 1945, Trooper Chorney's regiment was transferred to France, where he landed two days later on February 20. The regiment made its way north to the Netherlands, and fought in the Battle of Otterlo.

According to the war diary for the Lord Strathcona's Horse regiment, he was dangerously wounded in action by Schmeiser machine gun fire during an unsuccessful outflanking attempt. Unfortunately he died from the wounds on the next day, April 17, 1945, at the age of 26.

Operation Dutch Cleanser was the codename for the 5th Canadian Tank Division as it advanced rapidly through Otterlo, Barneveld and Putten. The Canadian and British tanks had set up a headquarters in Otterlo.

But on the night of April 16 and into April 17, a formation of German troops, estimated at 1,000 men, launched a ferocious attack on the headquarters. In this fierce battle, the Lord Strathcona's Horse Regiment had losses of 14 killed or missing and 28 wounded or died of wounds.

Trooper Peter Chorney earned six medals for serving in the military, He also received a Good Conduct Badge on January 9, 1945.

- 1939-45 Star
- Italy Star
- France-Germany Star
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp

He was temporarily buried with religious rites in Otterlo, about 19 kilometres north of Arnhem, Netherlands.

After the war ended, his remains were moved to the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery. The grave references are **XIV. H. 1.**



FACES TO GRAVES

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Life story written by Adam Dapoz & Alissa Dias-Buckley, students from All Saints High School, Kanata, Canada for Faces to Graves courtesy of Vanessa Kirtz, teacher at All Saints High School.

Additional research and editing provided by Kurt Johnson.

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial
- Ancestry
- Find a Grave
- Details on battle of Otterloo <https://www.visit-ede.com/military-tourism/ede-war-memories/april-1945-difficult-liberation-of-otterloo>
- Roland Vogelaar, Dutch researcher, provided additional research with War Diary for April 17, 1945

Lord Strathcona's Horse (Peter's Regiment) War Diary for April 16, 1945
(Peter Chorney is mentioned at 2000)

MONDAY APRIL 16, 1945. Weather : Sunny and warm.

0030 Squadron "O" Group. Order of battle given. B Squadron to move off behind "C" Squadron in the dark at 0500 hrs.

0400 Reveille

0500 Reg't moves off.

0515 "C" Squadron has two tanks knocked out; "B" Squadron held up by enemy fire just before road block at MR 670911.

0600 B Squadron passes road block.

0615 Squadron encounters A/Tk Gun fire on entering Otterloo (MR 654912) Four bazooka rounds fired at Lt. Guest's 4th Troop tank. 1 round hits, destroying tarpaulin and wash bowl.

0700 105's and 1st Troop smoke out A/Tk Gun, rest of the squadron pass through. Lt. Eyres remains behind to convoy RHQ past corner. Trooper Ferry captures 12 Prisoners with their weapons at MR 653912.

0730 Squadron pulls off road at MR 616914 and takes up fire posns. A Squadron passes through. Troops brew up. Sporadic shelling.

1030 Squadron pulls out onto road advancing west behind A Squadron.

1045 "B" Squadron stops along road at MR 562948. Civilians bring out jugs of milk and pass it around to the tank crews.

1400 Squadron moves off again, advancing behind through A Squadron. Order of battle, 3rd, 1st, HQF, & 4th. Move west along lateral MR 562948 - 556948, turning right at latter reference point, and moving north along secondary road.

1530 3rd Troop fires at enemy tank which appears behind railway crossing at MR 563993.

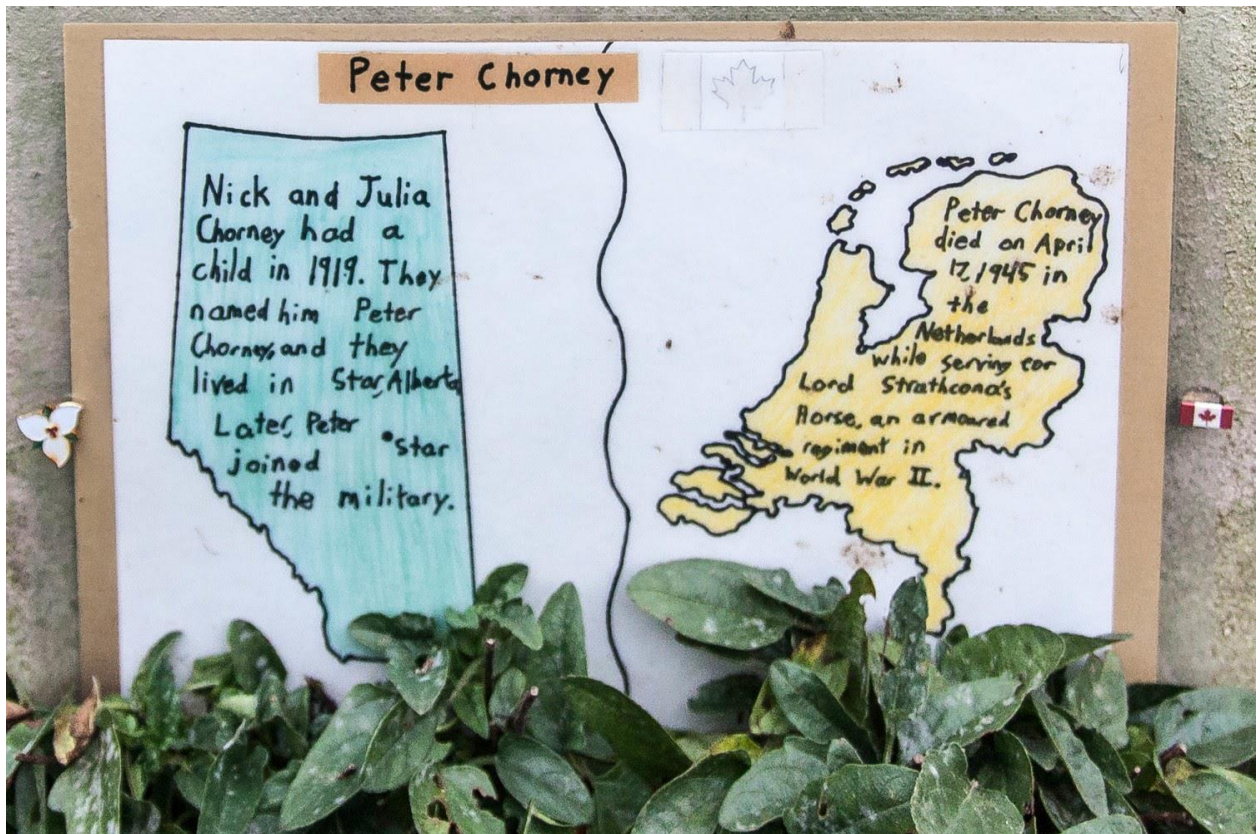
1615 1st Troop takes over lead of Squadron. Sgt. Shular in position at MR 542987 has suspension holed by 88mm, but continues on.

1630 Sgt. Shular knocks out A/Tk Gun and towing vehicle at MR 539989. Sgt. Montney Knocks out A/Tk Gun at MR 537986. Flak Gun also knocked out by Squadron. Advance is impeded by yet another A/Tk Gun at MR 538985. Artillery is brought to bear on this posn but it falls too short, wounding two cows in barn. No casualties to our own troops.

2000 3rd and 4th Troops advance up trail MR 542988 - 542990. 1st Troop covers 3rd and 4th Troops. Latter two troops are supported by platoon of Westminsters. Outflanking attempt is unsuccessful. Tpr. Chorney, 4th Troop and 8 Westys are wounded by Schmeizer Fire.

2045 3rd and 4th Troops withdraw to former posns under smoke screen laid by 1st Troop and HQF 105's.

2100 Squadron harbours in farmyard at MR 542988 with C Squadron, and Westminsters. 1st Troop tank with Corporal Golden captures 26 prisoners in RHQ Harbour area at MR 548986.



A note left on Peter Chorney's grave at Groesbeek.

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl