

## Pte. Donald Charles Jagoe



G2958

Donald Charles Jagoe was born May 1, 1925, in Timmins Ontario, the son of Lyndon and Margaret Jagoe of Bathurst, Gloucester Co. NB. There were only two children, Don and his older brother Hubert Clair Jagoe. Hubert also served overseas with the Canadian Army in WWII. Don's parents separated when Don was four and his father brought his two sons back to Gloucester Co. His father became a farmer near New Bandon and the family attended the local Presbyterian Church. After war broke out Don's father served with the Veteran Guards of Canada (Service # G15482). Don was also close to his uncle Lestock L. Jagoe who lived nearby.

Don attended a rural school two miles from home at Pokeshaw. At age fourteen after completing grade six he left school to work on his father's 75 acre farm. In winter Don frequently worked for the lumber companies but also worked for Eastern Canada Stevedores as a freight handler in Halifax. Records show that he enjoyed hunting, fishing, swimming, skating, and dancing. He played the harmonica, read modern fiction and liked working on trucks and cars.

Donald enlisted with the Canadian Army in Fredericton on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1944. He was eighteen years of age. Test results at the time indicated that Don had an "exceptionally high learning ability". He was recommended for an enriched program during basic training and was to be considered for a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO).

Don completed basic training in Newmarket, Ontario, was recommended for service with the Canadian Armoured Corps (CAC) and assigned to the Canadian Armoured Corps Training Regiment (CACTR) at Camp Borden in Ontario. In late May Don was transferred to the Canadian Infantry Training Centre (CITC) in Aldershot NS and late in the summer spent time in the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Training Centre in Debert NS.

On October 13<sup>th</sup> Don embarked for the UK and upon arrival, seven days later, was assigned to the Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit (CIRU). Because of excessive infantry casualties, it was common in late 1944 to transfer soldiers from other units and with other skills into the infantry regiments. Don was transferred to Europe on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> and spent January near Nijmegen, the Netherlands. On February 2, 1945 he was assigned to the North Shore (NB) Regiment and placed with "B" Company.

On Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the Canadians crossed the border into Germany and were now clearing 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 a platoon of 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.

In his May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 interview with Lou Daley, Pte. William R. MacCallum, who was wounded in the same battle stated *"We had no chance. I run through that field, I run you know zig zag ....lying there bullets flying. Don Jagoe was laying down on the field. there was such thick shelling. I was digging a trench. I called him over to my trench ...he got up ... he was running... and... he didn't make it."*

Pte. Donald Charles Jagoe was killed in action on Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945. He was nineteen years of age. 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.

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

Pte. Donald Charles Jagoe is buried in Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands; Plot IX. H. 8.

Note that the photo and much of the data for this biography were provided by Lou Daley of Charlottetown PEI.