

Lance Sergeant William Francis Stewart (1901-1944)



Born in Donegal Ireland William Francis Stewart was the first son of Sir Harry Stewart Baronet and Lady Stewart. If had survived the war he would have inherited the title. He did not.

In the 1920s the family was facing financial difficulties. As such, he and some of his siblings immigrated to Canada and the British colonies. By 1923 he was working as a labourer and had married Lucy Dorothy Mabel Metcalfe-Smith in St Georges Church in Vancouver.

By the time the war came he was working as a longshoreman and living in Burnaby. He joined the 6th on June 11, 1940 when it was temporarily located in New Westminster. He qualified as a carpenter shortly after enrolment and shortly before the unit left for England

became a L/Cpl. By November of 1941 he was a Corporal, by August of 1942 a A/L/Sgt and a L/Sgt in July 1943.

On D-Day he was a member of 2 Platoon which landed with the infantry in the first wave. He was in command of a 6-person engineer team in support of #12 platoon of B Company of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. Immediately upon arriving on the beach they came under heavy mortar and machine gun fire. He survived the initial landing but was later shot by a sniper. The round hit him on the left side of the head and knocking him unconscious. By 10 PM that night he had been taken to 2 Field Dressing Station. He died from his wounds early on the morning of June 7, 1944. As Lt Mustard, the commander of 2 platoon said

“L-Sgt W.F. Stewart was a sad thing. I spent from 1941 to 1944 with these boys and this was a personal friend about 45. He was well educated and Irish. “ – We Were There.

His wife Lucy survived him and passed away in Burnaby on July 11, 1956. They had no children. Following the death of his father on March 23, 1956 the title passed to William’s younger brother who became Sir Joceylyn Harry Stewart the 12th and current baronet.