

Pte James William Boyle (Service # G6359)



James William Boyle was born October 4, 1925, on a farm, in the Rusagonis-Wassis district of Sunbury County, New Brunswick, about 20 km south of Fredericton. He was the son of John Thomas Boyle and Alice Gertrude (Carney). Both John and Alice were from Sunbury County. The Boyles owned about 500 acres of which 100 acres had been cleared and was being farmed. James was one of eleven children; four brothers Maurice, John, Frederick, and Charles, and six sisters Greta, Agnes, Loretta, Mary, Mabel, and Vera. Two of his brothers, Maurice and John also served in the army in WWII. James attended St. Thomas College in Chatham, completed grade ten, and left school in 1941. He had played most sports while in school, was keen to go hunting when he could, and was described as outgoing and funny. After leaving school, James went to work for three years on his father's farm and gained experience driving trucks. During this time, he became engaged to a teacher.

Records indicate that in July 1944 at age eighteen James was drafted into the militia for home defense duty. This was common under the new National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA) that came into effect in 1940. He reported to the No. 7 District Depot in Fredericton on July 4 and two days later revised his status by enlisting for active service wherever he might be needed.

Basic training was completed at Camp No. 70 at Fredericton and advanced training at Camp No. A 30 at Utopia. Two independent assessments described Pte Boyle as intelligent, willing, and hard-working, and recommended that he be considered as a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO).

In December James was sent overseas and arrived in the United Kingdom on January 1, 1945. After training for a month in the UK he was transferred across the English Channel and on March 13 was placed with the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment.

The Canadians had just captured much of the Rhineland (western Germany, south of the Rhine River). The NS(NB)R was in the Reichswald (the Imperial Forest) and was preparing to cross the Rhine into the heart of Germany. The crossing of the Rhine was considered by many to be the second D-Day. On the evening of March 24, the NS(NB)R, under the temporary command of the 9th Brigade, prepared to cross the river near Rees, Germany. The men were loaded into troop carriers and driven to Kalcar, SW of Rees, where they transferred to Buffalos and DUKWs (all-terrain vehicles). At midnight the Buffalos and DUKWs headed for the Rhine about 1 Km west of Rees. While an artillery duel between the Germans and the Allies was still active all around them, group after group were transported across the Rhine with little opposition. By 1:30 a.m. on March 25 the regiment was across the river and ready to fight, but again there was surprisingly little enemy activity on the opposite bank.

On the morning of March 26, the NS(NB)R was preparing to move north from the Rhine with orders to capture the town of Millingen. The resistance, however, was now much stronger than expected. The attack on Millingen was eventually successful but the cost was seven men killed in action and twenty-eight wounded. Among the fatal casualties was LCol Rowley, commanding officer of the North Shore (NB) Regiment.

In early April the Canadians turned northwest and crossed the border back into the Netherlands to capture all German-held regions and liberate the Dutch. The NS(NB)R and the Régiment de la Chaudière were given the task of capturing the Dutch town of Zutphen on the east bank of the IJssel River. Zutphen would be attacked from the east in the early morning of April 6. In preparation, regular patrols were sent out to obtain further details of the German positions.

The War Diary states that on April 5 at 1 p.m. the NS(NB)R and Chaudières established an assembly area in the woods, two miles to the east of Zutphen. Father R. M. Hickey described Zutphen in his book *The Scarlet Dawn*, "All the canal bridges had been blown; the ground was too soft for tanks and the only cover the men could find was the dykes that were covered with snipers and German machine-gun nests."

At 8 p.m. on Apr. 5, the NS(NB)R and Chaudières were in position and the attack commenced at 3:30 a.m. on the morning of April 6.

The Chaudières led the attack into the heart of the town. North Shore D and B Companies advanced on their right via a rail line and A and C Companies followed on the Chaudière's left flank.

The German snipers were numerous, deadly accurate and all progress was brought to a halt at a canal on the eastern edge of the town.

On Saturday, April 7, the NS(NB)R took the lead and were able to get three troop carriers with machine guns and flamethrowers across the canal via a sunken bridge and close to the enemy defenses.

After a short reconnaissance tour of the site Sgt. Roy Savoy climbed into his carrier and drove full speed into the defended streets shooting flame into every door and window while Browning machine guns fired at almost anything that moved. He then wheeled around in an intersection and applied full flame to the enemy stronghold. Sgt Glendenning and Sgt. Howatt repeated the exercise with their own carriers.

The North Shore troops then moved in and secured positions around the warehouses and rail yard for the night. On April 8, Zutphen was cleared right through to the IJssel River and many Germans had surrendered.

Father Hickey wrote "I buried over 20 North Shore soldiers at Zutphen and most of them had been picked off by snipers... Next morning, I said Mass for the men in the remains of a schoolhouse in Zutphen... and as men came up to Holy Communion, in each war weary face, I could read my own fondest hope, the hope that the end was near."

Pte James William Boyle was killed in action on April 5, 1945. He was nineteen years of age. For his service to Canada, James William Boyle was awarded the following medals; 1939-45 Star, France & Germany Star, War Medal 1939 -1945, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.

James William Boyle is buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands, Plot I. G. 11.

The Holten Canadian War Cemetery and the grave of Pte James William Boyle



Photos courtesy of the Mark Veldhuis of the Holten Canadian War Cemetery