

Cpl Maurice Duruisseau, 9th Fd Sqn, MM

Background

The role played by the 9th Field Squadron during the Kapelsche Veer battle is told in the article [Engineer Gallantry at Kapelsche Veer](#).

Maurice Duruisseau was born in North Vancouver, BC on 20 July 1908. He enlisted in the 6th Field Company, RCE, on 4 October 1939. He was initially posted to No 2 Fortress Company in Esquimalt before being posted to the 4th Field Park Squadron in Petawawa in April 1941. Maurice arrived in the UK in November 1941. He held the acting rank of sergeant with the 9th Field Squadron when he was selected for the plastic explosives team. He fought through Normandy, Belgium, the Netherlands and into Germany with the 9th Field Squadron, receiving his Military Medal “for bravery in the field” during the Kapelsche Veer action in January 1945. See the Citation below.

On 18 April 1945, a company from the Lincoln & Welland Regiment crossed over the Küsten Canal in Germany to secure a bridging site for the 9th Field Squadron. The squadron built a Class 30 Bailey bridge under fire over the 100-foot canal while their comrades of the 8th Field Squadron continued rafting operations started two days earlier. The bridge, named the Algonquin Bridge for the unit that had initially captured the far bank, remained under constant fire. On the morning of 20 April 1945, Cpl Maurice Duruisseau, MM, was killed by a shell while working on the bridge approaches. He was 36 years old and left a wife and two children in Canada. He is buried in the Holden Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands.



Citation

On the night of 30 January 1945 during the operation against the enemy bridgehead on Kapelsche Veer, Corporal Duruisseau was despatched to carry a message to a Reconnaissance Sergeant of the squadron who was working with the forward company of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada on the east side of Kapelsche Veer. The message contained instructions for the Sergeant to make a reconnaissance of a Sherman tank which had been reported to have been knocked out by a bazooka and to either find a route around the tank which was blocking the way or to find out if the tank could be moved or blown off the route. The tank had been knocked out in the middle of an enemy position at approximately 099498 Holland Sheets 10 Northwest and Southwest. Upon arriving at the forward company position, Corporal Duruisseau found that the Reconnaissance Sergeant to whom he was deliver the message had returned to Squadron Headquarters. The infantry were having a discussion



regarding sending in a strong patrol to reconnoitre the stranded tank. Corporal Duruisseau listened to the discussion for some time and then volunteered to carry out the instructions which he had been told to deliver to the Reconnaissance Sergeant. He was then provided with [a guide] and after working ahead for 60 yards the guide pointed at the general direction of the tank and left. Corporal Duruisseau crawled a further 200 yards through enemy positions and thick mud. On the way in two Verrey lights were shot off and he at once came under very intense rifle fire. It was then necessary for him to work his way further forward between intermittent periods of illumination, crawling among enemy weapons slits, until finally he reached the knocked-out Sherman. Corporal Duruisseau then made a complete and thorough reconnaissance of the tank. His report on the information required was later found to be accurate to the last detail. This reconnaissance was vital to the success of the operation because it was found that the tank blocked off the route and could not be moved. Immediate work was started on an alternate route, the work being completed in time for an attack at first light. The initiative and great courage of this Non-Commissioned Officer was certainly beyond the call of duty and has served as a fine example to all ranks in his squadron.