



Sgt Roy Rushton who jumped into France on June 5, 1944, then served as a Sergeant in Korea passed away on June 17 at age 100. Rest in peace, Roy. Your duty is well and finally done:

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry should hold a special parade for Sergeant Roy Rushton, who died in a veterans hospital in Nova Scotia at 3 a.m. on June 17 at age 100. Roy was a very special soldier. Wounded in France and Holland in the Second World War he had jumped into Normandy on June 5, 1944, a day ahead of the June 6 D-Day landings. He fought with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion for two months until there were less than 200 of the originals left.

After hospitalization and recuperation in England, Roy and his para comrades were rushed to fight in the Bastogne region during the Battle of the Bulge in late 1944.

Roy and his comrades were then sent to fight in Holland, where he was wounded a second time.

When Canada appealed for volunteers for a new unit called the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade (Special Force), Roy gave his mother the keys to the convenience store he had opened and went to the nearest recruiting depot. He was one of the first soldiers to enlist in August, 1950. His veteran's knowledge and his utter bravery proved of great benefit to the soldiers of 10 Platoon, D Company, the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Many of the soldiers were fresh recruits, hurriedly trained. Their battalion was at strength early in September and they were on the Pacific in October, sailing for Korea.

Roy pushed them hard, but with comradely kindness – with love – during their hurried battle training in Miryang, near Pusan.

Six weeks later they were in the line as the Canadian contingent of the 27th Commonwealth Brigade, which was under command of a British major general.

In the first major attack on an enemy hill Roy's platoon commander was badly wounded in the knee. Roy took his binoculars and map case and took command, leading the platoon in its final charge.

He was an inspiration not just to the men of his platoon, but to everyone in the company – which, because it had more than its share of tough battle assignments, became known as "Dirty Dog Company."

In the March 7, 1951 attack on a huge enemy position designated Hill 532, the skies were filled with snow clouds and air support did not come. It took hours to climb to the enemy fortifications

where a two hour fire fight ensued at a range of 50 yards. The enemy kept the attacking Patricia's pinned with machinegun fire and an endless rain of grenades.

Roy's company sergeant major, "Swede" Larson was shot through the shoulder throwing a grenade at the enemy.

Near him Sergeant Frank Potts was shot through the arm. He raised up again to fire at the enemy soldier who had shot him and was shot in the other arm. Both Larson and Potts were sent back to Canada, but both returned voluntarily with the Patricia's Third Battalion in 1952. Roy's platoon commander was knocked out of action and fell far down the slope, leaving Roy once again in command of 10 Platoon.

Within 200 yards of the summit, there was no progress. His men were pinned by devastating enemy fire.

Night was coming and even if they somehow unseated the enemy Roy knew his bone tired men would be counterattacked in force. There was no support in place for a night battle.

Roy contacted the company commander and advised him to stand down and get permission to call off the attack.

That was done and B Company took up positions at the base of the hill as D Company withdrew. The next morning B Company moved onto the hill virtually unopposed. The enemy had withdrawn, but left many of their dead soldiers behind.

Roy was able to visit Korea again in July, 2003, as a veteran delegate with a Korean War Pilgrimage group sponsored by Veterans Affairs Canada.

He had been in a veterans hospital for the past year, having fallen and broken a hip. The order of March for the Second Patricias, as Roy would proudly say, often was "D Company in front with 10 Platoon leading!"

Most of those who served with him have passed on. Those who have not, surely will remember the gregarious, good natured, tough as nails soldier who played a guitar in rest positions and who sang like a nightingale.

His son, Robert, who served in the Second Battalion Patricias in the 1970's is handling arrangements. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Margaret Rushton, sons Robert, Brady, Barry and Roy Jr., and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

AIRBORNE / VP