

Obituary



Reg. No. 9040, Staff Sergeant Bertie Henry James

With startling suddenness, Bertie Henry James, 51, was claimed by death on April 2, 1940 at his home 39 Fourth Avenue, Ottawa. He was stricken just as he was about to partake of his noon-day meal.

Staff Sergeant James was born December 24, 1888, at Red Post, Camerton, England. When a young man he worked as a miner in Somersetshire for three years, coming to Canada in 1912. In that year he joined the Dominion Police, remaining with that Force until it, along with the R.N.W.M.P., became the R.C.M.P. on February 1, 1920. Throughout his service Staff Sergeant James was employed in the Criminal Investigation Branch where his fine character and pleasing manner gained the respect of all his fellow workers.

The untimely passing of Staff Sergeant James removes a well-known figure from the local sporting world. "Bert" was an esteemed member of the Ottawa Curling Club—an outstanding player who seldom lost an important game; but when he did it was with good grace and full credit given his opponents. A legion of friends mourns the demise of this fine sportsman who had learned how to win but without forgetting how to lose. Possessing many curling trophies, Staff Sergeant James will also be remembered as a champion horse-shoe pitcher, at one time holder of the Ottawa city title in this sport.

During his twenty-seven years' service he came into close contact with various other government branches. That his associations with other departments were valued and respected is evidenced by this letter received from the Chief Inspector, Explosives Division of the Bureau of Mines:

It is with deepest regret that we learned yesterday of the sudden passing of Staff Sergeant B. James, C.I.B.

For a number of years this Division has called on Staff Sergeant James for much information of diverse kinds and his unfailing courtesy and willingness to assist have been of inestimable value to us.

To those of the staff who had the privilege of knowing him, he exemplified the spirit of helpfulness for which the Force stands, and his loss will be keenly felt by those who came in contact with him as well as those with whom he worked.

In the funeral sermon, the Rev. Dr. McNairn quoted from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar these fitting lines to Brutus:

"His life was gentle, and the elements,
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

The funeral, semi-military in character, was attended by forty-four members who marched in the cortege, and six Staff Sergeants acting as pallbearers. A detail of ten Ottawa City Police walked in the procession, in addition to many executive members of the Ottawa Curling Club and other local sporting organizations. Commissioner S. T. Wood was present to pay his respects.

A wealth of floral offerings were received from the R.C.M.P. Headquarters Social Club, the Headquarters C.I.B., the Ottawa Horseshoe Club, the Directors and members of the Ottawa Curling Club and the Central Branch, Canadian Legion. Burial took place in Beechwood Cemetery.

Surviving the late Staff Sergeant James are his widow; a son, Arthur, now a S/Constable in the Force; two married daughters; a brother, Percy. His father, John James, and several brothers and sisters are living in England.