

2017

An Incident in Pocheon: The Death of Sapper Gilles Ducasse

Andrew Burtch

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh>



Part of the [Military History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Burtch, Andrew "An Incident in Pocheon: The Death of Sapper Gilles Ducasse." *Canadian Military History* 26, 2 (2017)

This Canadian War Museum is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Canadian Military History* by an authorized editor of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact scholarscommons@wlu.ca.

CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM

An Incident in Pocheon

The Death of Sapper Gilles Ducasse

ANDREW BURTCCH

Abstract: The Canadian War Museum supports developmental research. This article is a by-product of the author's continuing research into Canadian casualty records of the Korean War. This research helps to create a better picture of the makeup of the Canadian Army Special Force in Korea. When completed, it will shed greater light on when, where, and under what circumstances the 516 Canadians who are listed in the Korean War Book of Remembrance died. The research consists of a full review of the service records of Canadian military personnel who died in Korea or in support of the war from 1950 to 1956. The ATIP division of the Library and Archives Canada has generously supported this research through conducting speedy review and release of the necessary files. The author would like to thank Lesley Bilton-Bravo, Mike Abbotts, Marc Frève, and Le Phung for their work in providing access to the records and for screening the files for sensitive personal information.

Le Musée canadien de la guerre soutient les recherches en matière de développement. Découlant des recherches assidues de l'auteur sur les archives canadiennes des victimes de la Guerre de Corée, cet article précise la nature de la force spéciale canadienne en Corée. À terme, il jettera un éclairage nouveau sur les 516 Canadiens figurant au livre du souvenir de la Guerre de Corée, précisant le moment, l'endroit et les circonstances de leur décès. Cette recherche consiste en un examen complet des dossiers du personnel militaire canadien mort en Corée ou en service pour cette guerre, entre 1950 et 1956. La division AIPRP de Bibliothèque et Archives Canada a généreusement soutenu cette recherche en étudiant et partageant rapidement les dossiers nécessaires. L'auteur aimerait remercier Lesley Bilton-Bravo, Mike Abbotts, Marc Frève, et Le Phung de lui avoir donné accès aux dossiers, tout en protégeant les informations personnelles de nature confidentielle.

© Canadian Military History 2017

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER stood in the middle of the road passing through the small village of Simgong-ni, Pocheon, Korea with three others.¹ It was 11:00 at night on 11 August 1952. His M1 Garand was in hand, its muzzle pointing down at the road. At his feet was the prone body of Sapper Gilles Ducasse, Royal Canadian Engineers, lying in a spreading pool of blood from a bullet wound to his inner thigh. Pockets of villagers began to gather outside their houses and move towards the body when headlights flooded the road. A Canadian jeep pulled up to the scene, and three soldiers came out. One of the Americans said, “Let’s get out of here!” and dispersed on foot. Lieutenant Alan Johnstone, 23 Field Squadron, Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE), one of the Canadians in the jeep, waved down a passing American soldier who evacuated Ducasse to the engineering troop’s First Aid Station. Before getting in his jeep and following Ducasse, Johnstone picked up an American helmet dropped by one of the fleeing soldiers. Back in troop lines, the medical assistant who was meant to be posted to the First Aid Station was nowhere to be found, so Johnstone and the two sergeants accompanying him found a shell dressing to pack the wound, then had a unit truck move Ducasse to the 8228th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. A criminal investigation began.²

Ducasse’s story is one of 516 Canadian soldiers, sailors, and airmen included in the official tally of Canadian fatalities during the Korean War. The investigation into his death helps to shed some light on Canadian casualty management during the Korean War, as well as the importance of witness narratives played in criminal investigation and courts martial. In Ducasse’s case, getting to the bottom of how and why he was killed required weighing diverging accounts from Canadian, American, and Korean sources. The findings in this paper are drawn from Ducasse’s service record accessed through the Access to Information and Privacy Division at Library and Archives Canada, as well as published U.S. Army court martial records.

Born in Quebec City on 19 July 1930, Ducasse was the youngest of three children in his family. His mother died when he was 10,

¹ Today referred to as Pocheon, in the original documents the village was named Pochon. This paper will use the contemporary spelling.

² Statement by Sgt J.E McIsaac, CIR #19-2162 A4/A, in Personnel Records of Sapper Gilles Ducasse, SE-103598, Library and Archives Canada; United States. *Court-Martial Reports: Holdings and Decisions of the Judge Advocates General Boards of Review and United State Court of Military Appeals, Volume 7*. Pp. 298-299.



Sapper Gilles Ducasse [Canadian Virtual War Memorial]

and his father, a carpenter, looked after the children in rural Quebec, moving them from Métis-sur-Mer to Sulley, Quebec, near New Brunswick. Ducasse left school at the age of 16 after completing the 9th grade, though he then studied at a technical school for approximately a year on general subjects.³ After school, he worked at a variety of jobs as an unskilled labourer, including at an ironworks, in road construction, and as part of a Canadian National Railways track repair crew. When the railway couldn't give him further work, he approached the Canadian Army in January 1949, believing that a depression was coming and the armed forces would offer job security. He served in a cadet unit while in school, and his older brother

had joined the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, so the armed forces may have seemed a natural choice to Ducasse. His father accompanied him to the recruiting office and gave his blessing to his 18 year old's plan. Ducasse was not interested in serving in the infantry, seeking to learn a practical trade, and he managed to use his technical school experience as sufficient grounds to be accepted into the Royal Canadian Engineers. He overcame the doubts of the recruiter who noted "his command of the English language is practically nil."⁴

Ducasse behaved well in the armed forces, and learned the trade as a driver and vehicle mechanic in the RCE's No 4 Works Company, with periodic attachments to 1 Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the Lord Strathcona's Horse in Chilliwack, British Columbia. In April 1952, he was ordered to embark for Korea, where he was taken on strength with 23rd Canadian Independent Field Squadron, which replaced the 57th Canadian Field Squadron.

³ In the personnel files reviewed to date, the average grade completion for casualties in Korea appears to have been the 8th grade.

⁴ Personnel Selection Record, 10 January 1949.

Little on his service record indicates the work he was doing, but 23rd Field Squadron occupied its first months in theatre performing extensive road maintenance, and while the Canadian brigade was in reserve, it prepared for expected summer rains. 1 Troop, the unit to which Ducasse was attached, worked on re-opening a timber camp. As a vehicle mechanic, he likely kept the many trucks needed for these intensive works operational, apparently without complaint or incident.⁵ A day after the Canadian brigade returned to the front lines from reserve, and three months from the day he arrived in Korea, Ducasse was dead.

The investigation into how Ducasse was killed, and who did it, began with the Canadians and soon expanded to include American investigators. Lieutenant Alan Johnstone of 1 Troop, 23rd Field Squadron, was first to the scene after the American soldiers fled, and did much of the initial sleuthing. Just before moving back to troop lines with his men and the body, Johnstone picked up an American helmet painted with an 8th Army insignia, corporal's chevrons, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Corps Castle that had been left on the roadside. After seeing to Ducasse's medical evacuation, Johnstone detailed patrols from his troop to cover the area to search for the suspects. Looking in the discarded helmet's liner, he found the initials N.G., and asked Sergeants Gardiner and J.E. McIsaac, who had helped treat Ducasse, to go with him to check nearby American units.

In the early hours of the morning of 12 August, Johnstone, Gardiner, and McIsaac located Corporal Nicholas Gregoras of the 194th Engineers' Battalion Headquarters Company in his bunk. "He admitted that the helmet was his ... but that someone else must have used it that evening." Further, when asked for his rifle, Gregoras asked unprompted "if there had been a shooting and if anyone had been killed." The weapon was brought from another tent where "he had left it to be cleaned," and on examination Johnstone and his sergeants confirmed it had been recently fired. Johnstone returned the weapon to Gregoras's warrant officer, left for his lines and notified the nearby Military Police checkpoint of his findings. They contacted

⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel K.J. Holmes, *The History of the Canadian Military Engineers Vol III, 1946-1971*. Ottawa: Military Engineers Association of Canada, 1987. Pp. 230-233.

the divisional American MPs who took Gregoras into custody.⁶ Agent Wilbur C. Winkler of the U.S. Army's 19th MP Criminal Investigation Detachment began his investigation.

Here, the Canadian and American investigations diverged.⁷ A review of personnel records of Canadian fatalities during the Korean War reveal that when a soldier is killed in action or died of wounds, the accompanying paperwork is fairly sparse. A researcher will find a record of interment, a medical examination or casualty card, along with their service record indicating where and how they were killed. In the case of an accidental death, suicide, or, as Ducasse's death appeared to be, a murder, the standing orders were for the unit or higher formation to conduct a board of inquiry. These could be perfunctory assessments or statements of fact, or detailed investigations, meant to determine fault and whether the death was a result of military service. These Boards also met very quickly after the service member's death. In Ducasse's case, officers of 23rd Field Squadron convened the Board the next day, calling witnesses to report circumstances to their commanding officer, Major E.T. Galway, who forwarded the board's findings to the commander of 25 Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier M.F. Bogert. After reviewing the facts of the night's events, Galway informed Bogert that "I concur with the findings of the Board and I am of the opinion that an unknown American soldier without any apparent provocation shot SE 10398 Spr Ducasse G, resulting in his death from exsanguination." Bogert signed off on this version of events on 18 August 1952.⁸

Included in the Board of Inquiry proceedings was a statement taken by a local Korean villager which provided some additional context to Ducasse's death. Kim Joo Moo, as he was named in the report, a store owner in Simgong-Ni, near Pocheon, gave his account of Ducasse's whereabouts and behaviour on the night of his death. The town adjoined one of the UN's Main Supply Routes (MSR), and nearby

⁶ Proceedings of Board of Inquiry, 12 August 1952, found in Personnel Records of Sapper Gilles Ducasse.

⁷ Since the suspect was American, the Americans conducted a criminal investigation and court martial. Canadians proceeded according to their own procedures and held a Board of Inquiry, which could compel testimony but was not a criminal proceeding. For more on Canadian military justice during the Korean War, please see Chris Madsen, *Another Kind of Justice: Canadian Military Law from Confederation to Somalia*. Toronto: UBC Press, 1999, pp. 109-112

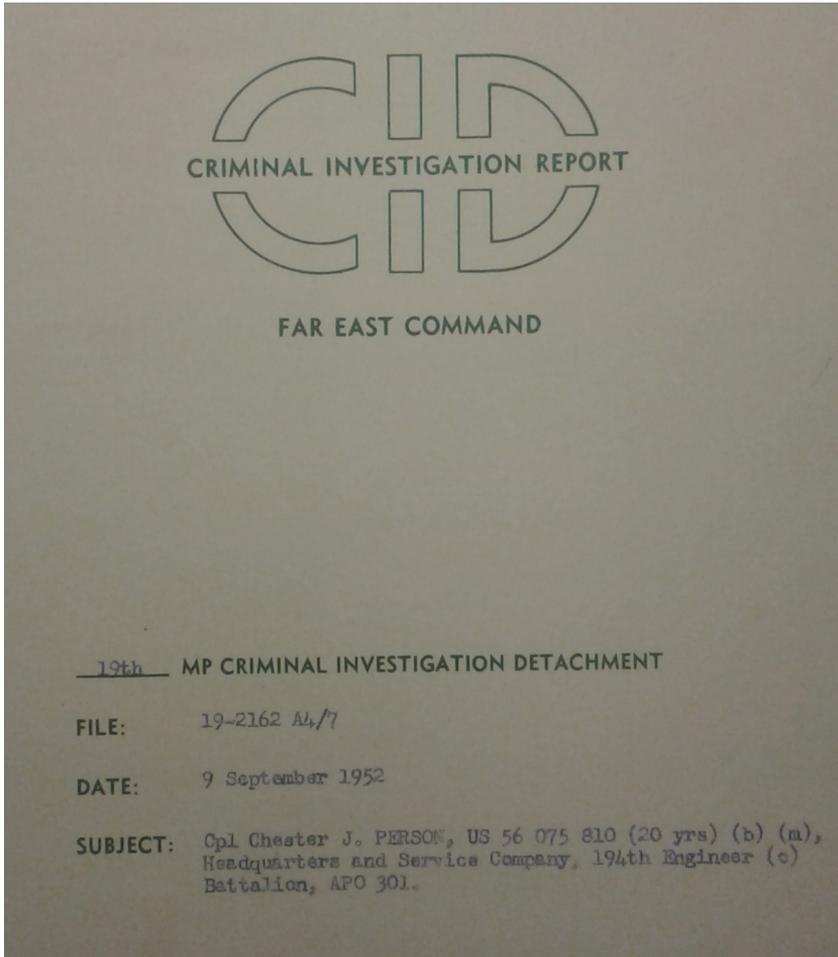
⁸ Proceedings of Board of Inquiry, 12 August 1952, found in Personnel Records of Sapper Gilles Ducasse

an intersection led to a country road where some Korean houses had been transformed into brothels. It was here, Kim reported, that he saw Ducasse, “a ballheaded [*sic*] soldier in a Canadian uniform fell to the ground from the rear of the truck.” By Kim’s account, Ducasse then stumbled into his store, tousled his hair and called him a good boy before proceeding across the street to chase after a Korean soldier. After about 50 paces, he recalled, Ducasse fell down and did not get back up. He was found prone by the four American soldiers on their return from the brothels to the MSR. Kim testified that only one of the Americans was armed with a rifle, and the rest were unarmed when they went to investigate Ducasse on the ground. “The Canadian soldier got up and a scuffle followed. One of the American soldiers yelled and then a shot sounded.” Thereafter, much as Johnstone and the other Canadians witnessed, the American soldiers split up and dispersed.⁹ From the Korean witness statement it appears that Ducasse, who had been on a leave pass and was returning to his unit, was intoxicated, a detail not mentioned to the Board by the Canadians who recovered him, and that there had been a physical altercation resulting in Ducasse’s death.

The American investigation, completed in a report dated 9 September 1952, was much more detailed than the Canadian Board of Inquiry, and turned up a much different story than that observed by the Canadians or the Korean witness. The investigators, Sergeant First Class Wilbur C. Winkler and Warrant Officer First Grade W. H. Chandler of the 19th MP Criminal Investigation Detachment, picked up where Johnstone left off, interviewing the medical team that attended to Ducasse, and then seeking out Kim Joo Moo and another Korean witness whose testimony did not form part of his report. Winkler obtained from Johnstone the helmet, as well as a .30 calibre cartridge case the Canadian engineer had retrieved from the intersection at Simgong-ni during a subsequent visit.

On 13 August, a day after the Canadian Board of Inquiry concluded its investigation, Winkler interviewed Gregoras. Gregoras told Winkler that another soldier, Private First Class Robert Nugent, had asked to borrow his steel helmet a few days’ before the killing, and that he didn’t think anything of it until Johnstone showed up. He explained to Winkler that his rifle had also been borrowed by

⁹ Statement by Kim Joo Moo, 20 Years of Age, MAle, of No 624 Shin Gong-Ni Shin Book Myon Pochun-Goon” Found in Personnel Record.



CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT

FAR EAST COMMAND

19th MP CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DETACHMENT

FILE: 19-2162 A4/7

DATE: 9 September 1952

SUBJECT: Cpl Chester J. PERSON, US 56 075 810 (20 yrs) (b) (m),
Headquarters and Service Company, 194th Engineer (c)
Battalion, APO 301.

[Library and Archives Canada]

another engineer to fire at the range that day, which was why it smelled strongly of cordite.

Chandler proceeded to interview Nugent, who had dropped the helmet on the road, to get his account. He and three other soldiers had left their company area to visit the brothels off the MSR. Upon leaving, Nugent said that military police warned them that “two men had been killed the night before in the same area and that we had better get out of the village and advised us to return with several men during the day if we intended to return.” In Nugent’s account, they encountered Ducasse when he “suddenly jumped out of the

bushes on the right ... side of the road just a little bit behind me.”¹⁰ According to his account, Ducasse grabbed Nugent’s rifle and tried to take it from him, falling over when Nugent kicked him in the crotch. Nugent and another American soldier, Walter Mayberry, then beat him with the barrels or butts of their rifles, until he stood up holding what Nugent thought was a knife, at which point their companion, Corporal Chester J. Person, a cook in the 194th Engineers, shot Ducasse in the thigh. They ran when the Canadian jeep showed up, thinking it was the Koreans, and hid by the MSR until they found the American truck they had arranged to pick them up. Nugent did not think he was fighting a Canadian: “All during the scuffle I believed the man to be a Korean or Chinese male as he was much larger than I, dressed in a light, dark pants, and no cap. All during the scuffle I did not hear him say anything that I could understand.”¹¹ Mayberry’s account was in accord with Nugent’s, but did not mention anything about Ducasse brandishing a blade.¹² Indeed, a search of the site did not turn up any knives, and authorities did not list any of Ducasse’s possessions at the time of his death, save his uniform. There were, however, several fist-sized rocks on the roadside.

When interviewed on August 13th, Corporal Person again agreed with Nugent’s story - that Ducasse had ambushed them from the roadside, was hit several time with rifle butts, and rose again to attack Nugent with a rock. Person fired low, “intending to stop him by hitting him in the leg or hips,” before running with the rest of the Americans to avoid what they thought were Koreans.¹³ Several days after his death, Ducasse’s remains, now in Seoul, were again examined to find evidence of the scuffle reported by the American soldiers, but after four days of intense August heat, the examiner only noted that “there are so many putrifactive changes that it is impossible to determine the extent of any head injuries or the possible time relationship between the gun shot wound and the head injuries.”¹⁴ Following this last examination, Ducasse was buried at the UN Military Cemetery in Tangkok, Korea on 19 August 1952.

¹⁰ Exhibit R, Interview with Pfc Robert L Nugent, CID #19-2162 A4/n, Found in Personnel Record of Sapper Gilles Ducasse

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The investigation contained records of a brief interaction following Mayberry and Nugent’s interview, where Nugent threatened to kill Mayberry for “telling on us”.

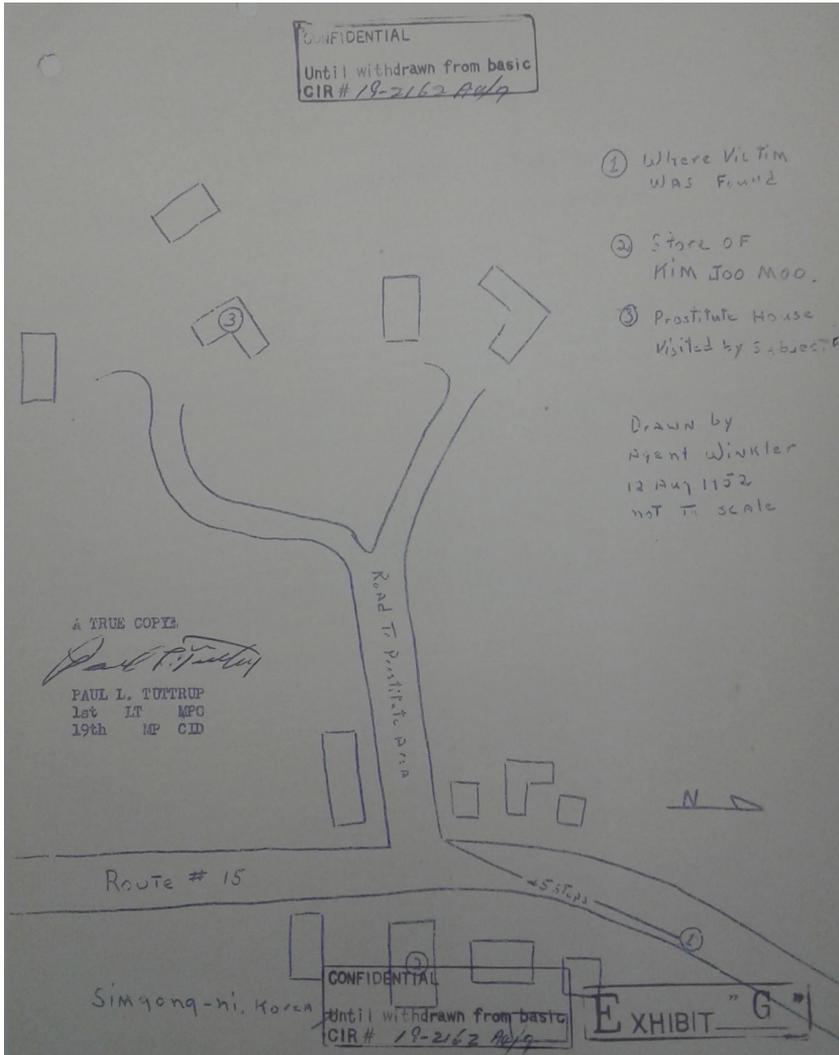
¹³ Exhibit Q, Interview with Corporal Chester J. Person, CID #19-2162 A4/n

¹⁴ Exhibit W, Medical Certificate dated 16 August 1952.

DUCASSE, Gilles			
Army serial No.	Grade	Arm or service	CI
SW 104532	Spr	Unk	
Organization (If AAF personnel, indicate pilot, non-pilot flying pers., ground pers., or avn. cadet)			DI
23rd Fld Squadron RCE 25 CIB			EI
Age	Race	Length of service	Date of admission
Unk	W	Unk	11 Aug 52
Source of admission:			
DIRECT			
Name and location of reporting installation:			
MASH 8228th A.U. APO 301			
Cause of admission, additional diagnosis, operations, change of status. (Continue on next fold if necessary)			
Gun shot wound, perforating right upper thigh with laceration of right femoral artery.			
Death due to exsanguination, due to laceration of femoral artery. Circumstances of wound unknown. Pronounced dead on arrival at MASH 8228th AU at 23 45 hrs 11 August 1952.			

Author's photo. [Library and Archives Canada]

The final piece of evidence in the case took some time to arrive. The Canadian engineer, Johnstone, had revisited the scene of Ducasse's death and found a spent cartridge casing, which he turned over to the American investigators. The MPs sent it along with Person's rifle to their Criminal Investigation Laboratory on 27 August and received the results on 4 September 1952. The investigators learned that cartridge case had enough similarities in the breechface markings to



Winkler's drawing of the crime scene. [Library and Archives Canada]

establish that the cartridge found at the scene of the shooting was from Person's rifle.

On 6 September 1952, Winkler and Chandler submitted the conclusions from their investigation, based on interviews and the physical evidence. "Cpl PERSON did, by his own admission, at Simgong-ni, Korea, on 11 August 1952, while attempting to prevent

bodily harm from himself, and others, justifiably shoot Spr DUCASSE, with a M-1, U.S. Army Rifle, thereby causing his death.”¹⁵

Person, who had remained under the custody of his commanding officer, was soon court martialed in the field. The evidence from the investigation - that he and his colleagues had been attacked, in an area where two soldiers had been killed the night before, was sufficient to convince that “the accused acted reasonably in the defense of one of his companions and in the prevention of the commission of a felony,” and so the authorities dismissed the charge of voluntary manslaughter. However, Person was charged and found guilty, on 8 October, of aggravated assault against Ducasse, which was odd given that the provision of self-defence had resulted in the more serious charge’s dismissal. He was sentenced to a dishonourable discharge, to be carried out after three years of confinement at the U.S. Army Stockade in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.¹⁶

This was the news that awaited Ducasse’s father, Joseph Octave Ducasse, when he wrote to the Canadian Army through the Royal Canadian Legion asking about the circumstances of his son’s death, and the whereabouts of his son’s camera and binoculars.¹⁷ The Army’s adjutant-general, Major-General W.H.S. Macklin, informed him that his son had been killed by an American soldier, who had faced military justice for the crime.

However, Person’s initial conviction was not the end of the story - his charges were submitted for appellate review after he was transferred to the stockade, and the U.S. military lawyers reviewed his case in January 1953. Their view relied heavily on the accounts from the four American soldiers, including Person’s own account. The appeal board took their testimony of feeling endangered very seriously. The review mentions the MPs’ warning to the soldiers about the risks of lingering in the area, emphasizing that Person and his friends, “noticing the furtiveness in the actions of the apparently frightened Korean villagers, their apprehension increased.”¹⁸ This

¹⁵ Final Report, Case #19-2162 A4/7, Found in Personnel Record.

¹⁶ Court Martial Reports, p. 299.

¹⁷ In the personnel records of Canadian casualties from the Korean War, as in other wars, there is often correspondence from the family, often asking for some keepsake that was sent over with the deceased, or, just as often enough, pleading that their remains be sent home to be buried in Canada. MGen W.H.S. Macklin to J. Gerald Coote, 17 November 1952. Found in Personnel Record.

¹⁸ Court-Martial Reports, p. 300

is an interesting conclusion to have reached, since while all of the soldiers mentioned in their interviews that they had been warned off the area by MPs, none of them mentioned any strange activity in the village, as they were walking down the road to meet a friend's truck.¹⁹

In this narrative of four soldiers in "hostile" territory, Ducasse's sudden appearance, too, was cast as alien. The officers on Person's appellate review characterized Ducasse as "a man in dress not identifiable as a military uniform sprang out of the bushes and attacked.... The unknown assailant, whom we can assume was Ducasse, was shouting or screaming in a *foreign tongue*"²⁰ We can assume that the foreign language mentioned here was French. They interpreted Kim Joo Moo's testimony as evidence of a "drunk and quarrelsome" soldier who had attacked a Korean soldier just two minutes before the American arrived, but did not mention that Kim also testified that the Americans found Ducasse already lying in the middle of the road when they arrived.

The appellate review concluded that they viewed the American soldiers' fear as genuine, that Ducasse had attacked them unprovoked "in a manner not unlike that employed by guerillas" and "that the accused was not required to wait until Ducasse had succeeded in gaining possession of Nugent's rifle." Finally, they considered that Person had shot Ducasse at the urging of his fellow soldiers, and when he did, fired low to injure without intending to kill the Canadian. They then delivered their conclusion: "the board of review finds the findings of guilty incorrect in law and fact and such findings of guilty and sentence are set aside. The charges are ordered dismissed."²¹ It is unclear from here what became of Corporal Person, though in his defence it was stated that he had been drafted to serve in Korea, and his period of service was set to expire. Before the shooting, he was due to be rotated out of Korea but no replacement had arrived, and he had hoped to return to California to look after his parents.²²

Whatever one thinks of the merits of either the initial guilty verdict or Person's later exoneration, it is worth considering that

¹⁹ See the interview with Corporal Walter Mayberry, 13 August 1952. "When we arrived at the intersection I saw two (2) men running up the road, however I did not think it was strange."

²⁰ Emphasis mine. Court-Martial Reports, p. 300.

²¹ Court Martial Reports, p. 302.

²² Ibid, p. 300-301

both depended to a great extent on conflicting accounts.²³ From the Canadians' perspective, we see a Canadian soldier, under the influence of alcohol, shot without provocation by an American soldier. From the Korean eyewitness, an account of an obviously impaired, obnoxious, but otherwise jovial soldier who was passed out in the road before being woken up by American soldiers and killed in a scuffle. And finally, the narrative that seems to have borne the most weight, the American narrative of danger and ambush by a "foreign" attacker, shot in self-defence. Weighing these three narratives of the incident in Pocheon was difficult at the time, and it would be challenging and irresponsible, with a distance of 65 years, to reach a definitive conclusion of what precisely happened on the night of 11 August 1952. We can, however, suggest that the American soldiers' accounts match up at least in part because they had an opportunity to craft their own narrative, from the point where they ran from the Canadians after the shooting and were picked up by a fellow military engineer, to the time they were apprehended and interviewed. Their driver had told the MPs investigating that when he picked up the four soldiers, "they seemed very exciting about something but did not tell me anything." It could be suggested that the group may have tried to cover their absence from camp, since the MPs' final report notes that the soldier in the unit orderly room recorded their departure and return time from the unit area, and though the soldier "maintained that even though he knows Army time and the moon was bright enough to see the sign out sheet, he made a mistake and filled the "time in" entry as 2205 hours," or an hour before the shooting. However unlikely, the inconsistency may have been human error, but the real question was – did Ducasse ambush the soldiers from the bushes, or did the scuffle result after the soldiers stumbled into him on the road, and he awoke in a panic?

²³ It is also worth noting that in many cases, Canadians initially convicted of serious charges in Korea received stiff sentences, only to have them substantially reduced or dismissed after leaving the theatre. Madsen suggested, in a review of Canadians tried for attempted rape and murder of Korean civilians, "Once the immediate need of providing a deterrent for other soldiers contemplating such behaviour was fulfilled and the general public lost interest, the Department of National Defence quietly returned the disgraced soldiers back to civilian life as quickly as possible." Madsen, 110. The military lawyers reviewing Person's conduct may have followed similar logic.

In practical terms, and certainly, to his brother and father who survived him, the question was moot. Five hundred and sixteen Canadians are listed as having been killed in Korea, 312 of whom were killed in action or died of wounds suffered in battle. Ducasse was one of the 204 Canadians whose death was attributable to other causes.²⁴ As part of my research into personnel records from the Korean War, these “other causes” include the routine fatalities suffered in war from vehicle accidents, accidental discharges, and illnesses, to the tragic cases of suicide, mishap, but they also include the mysterious, or unresolved, such as what occurred to Sapper Gilles Ducasse in Pocheon in August 1952. Each death mattered – to the soldier’s immediate family, to their community, and in the calculus of risk that underwrote decision making as to whether and how Canada would join future missions. The objective of this research project is to gain a clearer appreciation of where, how, and under what circumstances Canadian soldiers died in Canada’s “forgotten war” in Korea.



²⁴ The Korean War Book of Remembrance has its origin in 1957, following a suggestion to the Department of National Defence by colleagues in the Department of Veterans Affairs that additional books should be commissioned once DND finished its work on the Second World War Book. The Personnel Members Committee at DND considered the idea, and in consultation with Colonel C.P. Stacey replied to the suggestion to include books encompassing post-Confederation casualties, including the 1884-85 Nile Expedition, the South African War, and the Korean War. As casualty records had been transferred out of DND to the DVA, Defence Minister George Pearkes suggested to A.J. Brooks, Minister of Veterans Affairs, that DVA take on the work. Pearkes to Brooks, 15 July 1957, LAC RG 24 Acc 1983-84/167, Box 7687, file 4-1-1 pt 3.

The final casualty figure of 516 war dead was reached after discussion by the Personnel Members Committee in a meeting on 29 November 1957, in consideration of a number of questions from Alan Beddoe, the contracting artist responsible for producing the Korean Book. The PMC concluded that “The cutoff date for death to be recorded is fixed at December 31, 1956. The effect of the decision is that any death ruled by the CPC to be related to service in a theatre of operations, or to service as a special enrollee, which occurred on or before December 31, 1956 is recorded. ... special cases for individual decision by the [Deputy Minister] and if the [Deputy Minister] directs, by DND.” PMC Meeting, 29 November 1957, LAC Alan B. Beddoe Fonds MG 30 D 252 Vol. 31 File “Korean War Book of Remembrance”. No provision was made for consideration of post-discharge deaths, as that would have been too laborious and time-consuming to undertake, so the “actual” number of deaths related to Korean War service are likely much higher than the “official” number 516.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Burtch is the Canadian War Museum's post-1945 Historian. As curator of Gallery 4: A Violent Peace, he is responsible for all questions relating to conflicts from the beginning of the Cold War to the present day. He has worked to develop temporary and permanent exhibitions about the Afghanistan war, the Cyprus peacekeeping mission, the Korean War, military medicine, and war and media. His most recent exhibition is a new module in the Museum's Experience Gallery: *New World Disorder* – tracing Canada's involvement overseas from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the conclusion of the Afghanistan mission. Dr. Burtch's book, *Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada's Cold War Civil Defence*, received the 2012 CP Stacey Award for military history.

Dr. Burtch is also an Adjunct Research Professor with the Department of History at Carleton University.