

Spr John Ramsay – 11th Fd Coy

Sapper John Ramsay was born in 1904, the son of John and Maggie Rae Ramsay of Grangemouth, Scotland. He had a brother James and sisters Margaret and Janet. John was married to Maggie Clement Ramsay of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. A Fitter by trade, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Engineers on 24 July 1940 in Montreal, QC.

Sapper Ramsay started his sapper training on 1 August 1940 at the Engineer Training Centre in Camp Petawawa, ON. Six months later, he embarked at Halifax for England on 2 February 1941. On arrival, he was held in the Engineer Holding Unit until 17 May 1941 when he was assigned to the 11th Field Company.

When Sapper Ramsay joined the unit they were employed on camp construction at Aldershot in the County of Sussex. His training continued and he was qualified as a Fitter on 22 October 1941. The Company moved to Battle, County of Sussex in November 1941 as part of operational defence plan for the south-east part of England. In May 1942, when the 2nd Canadian Division was placed in Corps Reserve, the 11th Field Company moved to Seaford, Sussex and settled down to a period of more construction and routine training. The intensity of training soon picked up as the company prepared for the Dieppe Raid.

During the Dieppe Raid Sapper Ramsay was a member of Major Sucharov's Party of 92 All Ranks that was tasked to provide the close support to the landings on RED and WHITE Beaches. Their tasks included clearing mines and other obstacles, preparing beach exit routes for tracks and wheels, breaching the Esplanade wall and getting the engineer stores and equipment to where they were needed. The Party was organized into eight teams and distributed among the Tank and Infantry assault landing craft. Ramsay was a member of Barnes Team.

Several of the Tank Landing Craft were unable to land. Sapper Ramsay and Sapper Bissette, plus four infantry soldiers were transported in LCT 5A and were assigned to RED Beach to clear obstacles for the tanks. They encountered heavy enemy fire at the beach. The survivors of the sappers of the beach assault parties who made it ashore did the best they could to assist the tanks over the beach and the Esplanade wall. They had to improvise with the chespaling for ramping over the higher parts of the sea-wall because the required timbers never became available.

Like the infantry, the engineers were frequently pinned down and their work was greatly hampered by the enemy fire. Sapper Ramsay was severely wounded and he was returned to England after the raid. He Died from Wounds and is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey, United Kingdom



Sapper John Ramsay



Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey, England

{...with research assistance by the Canadian Military Engineer Museum...}