

Spr Elmer Shova – 11th Fd Coy

Sapper Elmer Shova was born in Wikesport, ON in 1918, to William and Eliza Shova. He was a single man and had work experience as a blacksmith and a carpenter when he enlisted in his hometown on 12 September 1939.

Sapper Shova was assigned to 11th Field Company in Sarnia, ON. After a short period of local training, the unit concentrated at Camp Petawawa, ON for more training. During this period he qualified as a Carpenter on 29 July 1940. Elmer embarked for England from Halifax on 22 August 1940 with the main body of his company.

In England, the company continued training and was tasked with constructing the Canadian camps in the south-east of the country. In November 1941, they moved to Seaford, County of Sussex, as part of operational defence plan for Sussex and settled down to a period of more construction and training. In May 1942 their routine was changed as the pace and focus of training increased and exercises were conducted to prepare for the Dieppe Raid.

During the Dieppe Raid, Sapper Shova was a member of Major Sucharov's Party of 92 All Ranks tasked to provide the close engineer 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.

Sapper Shova was a member of Lt Wood's team of 15 sappers and an infantry platoon of 33 from the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry that was assigned to WHITE Beach and transported in Tank Landing Craft 3A. Under heavy fire, several of the LCTs were unable to land. The survivors of the sappers of the beach assault parties that made it ashore did the best they could to assist the tanks over the beach and the Esplanade wall. They did what they could with the available chespaling as the timbers necessary for ramping over the higher parts of the sea-wall were not available. Like the infantry, the engineers were frequently pinned down and their work was greatly hampered by the enemy fire. Sapper Shova was Killed in Action. He is commemorated on the memorial panels at the Brookwood Military Cemetery, in Surrey England.



Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey, England



RCE Dieppe Memorial in Newhaven, England

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