

Spr Cyril Hodson - 2nd Fd Coy

Sapper Cyril Hodson was born in Manchester, England in 1915. He was the son of David and Hilda Hodson and had two brothers: Joseph and James. Before enlisting he had experience as a clerk and a driver.

Cyril enlisted in London, ON, on 20 September 1939. His Attesting Officer was Major G.H. McTavish, Commanding Officer of 7th Field Company - the same officer that was to command the Dieppe Raid Engineer force. Alfred joined 7th Field Company that had been mobilized on 1 September. The company first trained in the London area and then concentrated for training at Camp Petawawa, ON. Cyril was single when he enlisted but married Mary Elizabeth Whimster of Stratford, ON on 1 February 1940 before deploying to England.

The unit embarked for England from Halifax on 22 August 1940. The 7th Fd Coy was employed in England on camp construction at Aldershot when he arrived. On 5 April 1941, he qualified as a Pioneer and April also saw the birth of his son Arthur David in London, ON. The 7th Fd Coy next moved to Battle, Sussex in November 1941 as part of operational defence plan for the Sussex County area. In May 1942, when the 2nd Canadian Division was placed in Corps Reserve, the 7th Field Company moved to Eastborne, Sussex and settled down for what was expected to be a period of more construction and routine training. That situation was to change, however, when the more intense training and exercising began in preparation for the Dieppe Raid. Cyril qualified as a Driver on 13 July 1942.

On the Dieppe Raid, Spr Hodson was a member of the Millar Party of 55 All Ranks organized into four teams with tasks to demolish a variety of targets. Hodson belonged to the 13-man McMurray "B" team whose primary task was to demolish an assigned number of warehouses in dock area in the town of Dieppe.

On landing on RED Beach and under fire, the surviving team members assisted the advance up the beach and attempted to move to their demolition targets in town. As with many of the landed troops, however, they were prevented from advancing because of the intense fire from the full range of German weapons. The entire Millar team was hard-pressed to rally as many had drowned in the surf while labouring with their heavy loads, or had been killed outright, or were suffering extreme wounds. Despite the best efforts to rally the team, they were unable to reach their assigned demolition targets. Hodson was Killed in Action. He is buried in the Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-sur-Mer, France.



Headstone for Spr Cyril Hodson in the Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery



RCE Dieppe Memorial in Newhaven, England