

Sgt Ronald Charles Murray - 2nd Fd Coy

Sergeant Ronald Charles Murray was born in Zimin, India in 1909, the son of Captain Charles John Murray and Florence De-Longe Murray. He had two brothers: Thomas and Keith and a sister Dorothy. Ronald was married to Norah of London, ON. Prior to enlisting, he had been a Sapper in the 7th Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers, Non-Permanent Active Militia in London since 1933. He was experienced as a truck driver.

Sapper Murray enlisted in the 7th Field Company, Active Force on 4 September 1939, almost immediately upon the unit's mobilization. He was qualified as Pioneer and was promoted to Acting Sergeant that day and became Substantive Sergeant on 25 January 1940.

Sergeant Murray embarked for England on 12 May 1940 - well before the main body of the 7th Fd Coy. They embarked in August 1940. Until he re-joined his unit late in 1941 in England, Sergeant Murray attended a number of courses.

For a short period December 1941 - January 1942 he held the appointment of Acting Sergeant Major.

By the time he re-joined his Company it was in Battle, Sussex as part of operational defence plan for the County of Sussex 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 to a period of more construction and routine training until more rigorous training and exercises began in preparation for the Dieppe Raid.

During the Dieppe Raid, Sergeant Murray was a member of the Lieutenant Millar's Party of 55 All Ranks that was tasked to demolish a large number of targets in Dieppe. Organized into four teams, Murray was in charge of the 13-man "A" team whose primary task was to demolish a number of cranes in the dock area in the town of Dieppe.

Upon landing on RED Beach and under fire, the surviving team members assisted the advance up the beach and attempted to advance 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. All the Millar teams were hard-pressed to rally. Many of the sappers had drowned in the surf labouring with their heavy loads, had been killed outright, or were suffering extreme wounds. Despite the best efforts to rally the team, they were unable to continue to advance towards their assigned demolition targets. Sergeant Murray was Killed in Action. He is buried in the Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-sur-Mer, France.



Headstone for Sergeant Ronald Charles Murray in the Dieppe Canadian Cemetery



RCE Dieppe Memorial in Newhaven, England

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