

# Spr Sydney George Oliver – 11<sup>th</sup> Fd Coy

Sapper Sydney George Oliver was born in Cardiff, Wales in 1909, the son of George and Eleanor May Oliver, of Cardiff. Single, he had a brother Alfred and a sister Jessie. He was a construction worker in London, ON, when he enlisted on 28 December 1939 and was assigned to 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company had been mobilized on 1 Sep 1939 in Sarnia, ON. After some local training, the unit concentrated for training at Camp Petawawa, ON. Sydney was qualified as a Pioneer Concretor on 27 Jul 1940 and as a Pioneer on 4 April 1941.

Sapper Oliver embarked for England from Halifax on 22 Aug 1940 with the main body of the company. In England, they were initially engaged in training and employed on camp construction at Aldershot in the County of Sussex. The Company moved to Battle, Sussex in November 1941 as part of operational defence plan for the south-east part of England. In May 1942, when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division was placed in Corps Reserve, the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company moved to Seaford, Sussex and settled down to a period of more construction and routine training until more rigorous training started in preparation for the Dieppe Raid.

On the Dieppe Raid Sapper Oliver was a member of Major Sucharov's Party of 92 All Ranks organized into eight teams and distributed among the Landing Craft. Their primary tasks were to support the landings on RED and WHITE beaches by clearing mines and other obstacles, preparing beach exit routes for tracks and wheels, breaching the Esplanade wall and getting the engineer stores and equipment where they were needed.

Sapper Oliver's team was assigned to WHITE Beach and was transported in Landing Craft Tank 3A. Several of the LCTs were unable to land. The survivors of the 71 sappers of the beach assault parties that made it ashore did the best they could to assist the tanks over the beach and the wall. The timbers, required for ramping over the higher parts of the sea-wall, however, never became available and they did what they could with chespaling.

Like the infantry, the engineers were frequently pinned down and their work was greatly hampered by the enemy fire. Sapper Oliver was Killed in Action on the beach later in the day. He is buried in the Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery, Hautot-sur-Mer, France.



**Headstone of Sapper Sydney George Oliver in the Dieppe Canadian War Cemetery**



**RCE Dieppe Memorial in Newhaven, England**

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