

# Spr Urban Mayo, 11th Fd Coy

Urban Mayo was born in London, Ontario on 27 June 1918 to William and Emma Mayo. He had four brothers: Earl, William, and Alan and Ernest, and two sisters: Myrtle and Ruby. Urban left school at age 16 after Grade 9 and, at the time of his enlistment, he had been working with Bennett and Wright as a plumber apprentice for four years. Urban supported his parents financially as his father was in his 80s at the time and partially blind while his mother was elderly and partially incapacitated. He enlisted on 30 May 1940 at No 1 District Depot in London ON. He was age 22 and single at the time.

Urban was soon transferred to the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company on 3 July 1940 while the unit was undergoing training at Camp Petawawa, ON. He embarked for the United Kingdom with the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company at Halifax, NS on 22 August 1940. In England, the unit was occupied with training and working on projects to improve the defences of the United Kingdom. During his time in England, he met and married Janet Falconer of Fife, Scotland on 14 May 42. Urban qualified as a Plumber Group "B" in May 43.

Urban embarked for France with his Company on 5 July 1944. He had been appointed Acting Lance Corporal on 9 February 1943 and was to be a Corporal on 15 October 1944 but, as was not uncommon, was reverted to the rank of Sapper at his own request

In France, the company soon started obstacle clearance and bridge construction in the Caen area. After Caen, the company supported the Allied advance in France and then through Belgium, Holland, and eventually into Germany. Among its operations, the company participated in the Battle of Falaise, The Scheldt, The Rhineland, and The Rhine. By the end of February 1944, the unit had arrived in Germany as the Allied forces continued to push back the enemy.

On 16 March, the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company began to check a stretch of ground near Cleve, Germany for mines in order to make the area safe for the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada. By the next evening, the mine-clearing parties had found many German Riegelmine 43 anti-tank mines that they safely lifted and stored in two dumps. At 1300 hrs the next day, Sapper Mayo was part of Lieutenant O. H. Taylor's party of nine that set out to destroy the mines in the two dumps. A half-hour later, something went terribly wrong. There was a terrific explosion and all were killed. No evidence was ever found to indicate why the tragedy had occurred.

Sapper Urban Mayo was Killed in Action at age 26 on 18 March 1945. He was given a temporary burial the Canadian Military Cemetery at Bedberg, Germany. He was moved to his permanent grave in the Nijmegen Canadian Military Cemetery that is now named the Groesbeek Canadian Military Cemetery.

