

Myer, Ernest Floyd
Private
Calgary Highlanders
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps
M104220



Ernest Myer was born to Andrew T. Myer and Christina Myer on November 11th, 1908 in Ponoka, Alberta. Ernest stood at 5 feet 7 inches, weighing 144 pounds, with brown hair and blue eyes. He was a physically fit man as a consequence from his long days on the farm. Ernest grew up in an agriculturally centered family, dropping out of school after completing the fourth grade. He spent the remainder of his childhood working on the Myer family farm, with his 11 younger siblings. Ernest's family has deep roots in Ponoka's community history.

His grandfather, Cook Myer, was a very important member of the Ponoka farming community. He was appointed the Land Guide of Ponoka in 1899 and is one of the town's founding fathers. Cook Myer opened a boardhouse for travelers visiting Ponoka, located on the corner of 50th Street and 50th Avenue, what is now the present day CIBC Ponoka branch. These strong connections to the Ponoka agricultural community caused Ernest to become a farmer at heart and it was clear he felt passionate about his chosen profession. He listed it multiple times throughout his attestation papers, also mentioning he would like to return to doing what he loved after his tenure in the military.



He had a close relationship with his sister Viola, whom he exchanged letters and gifts with. He told her of a woman he had met whilst serving his country. He even announced that he had proposed to her and that he planned on bringing her back home to his family in Alberta.

Ernest and his sister Viola.

Ernest Myer signed up for the Canadian Military on September 9th, 1942. Ernest was later posted to the general reinforcements of the Canadian Armed Forces in the 13th Company. Ernest started his basic training in Camrose, Alberta, and was transferred to Calgary to continue his training at Sarcee Camp. He left Calgary on June 3rd, 1943 and departed from Canada for Europe on June 10th. After 8 days at sea, he arrived in England on the 18th of June. Upon arrival, Ernest Myer was transferred to the Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit to complete his basic training overseas.

On March 17th, 1944, Ernest completed his training in England and was then awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp for voluntarily joining the Canadian Armed Forces.



Ernest Myer right.

Ernest was assigned to the Calgary Highlanders, more specifically Charlie, AKA "Cork", Company on August 31st, 1944, as one of twenty reinforcements deployed to the unit in Belgium. The Calgary Highlanders were late in entering the war, as they did not see any action until 1942, in the Dieppe Raid. Their involvement in the Dieppe Raid was minimal, as they only deployed a small mortar platoon. They then spent the majority of 1943 training in England, becoming more prepared to battle the German forces. The Highlanders were also involved in the famous battle of D-Day, as they deployed "A" company to aid in the fighting on Juno Beach. "A" company suffered some heavy casualties on the day of and in the coming weeks as a result of the battle.

Myer then joined the unit after D-Day and soon found himself and his fellow Highlanders driving the German front line back with the Allied forces. Ernest's first mission as part of the Highlanders was the Siege of Dunkirk, not to be confused with the Battle of Dunkirk in 1940. The unit passed through Les Planches, their first objective, and moved towards Dunkirk. However, they were stopped by heavy enemy artillery, not allowing them to proceed. They were soon withdrawn and the responsibilities of taking the German garrison were handed off to the 1st Czechoslovak Armoured Brigade.

After the Siege of Dunkirk, Myer found himself and his unit clearing the town of Wyneghem, Netherlands of German defense, as part of a Canadian led offensive to secure the port of Antwerp. Following the capture of Antwerp the Highlanders began chasing German retreating forces up the Antwerp-Turnhout Canal.



Then, after only a month of active duty, Ernest Myer was injured after narrowly escaping death on September 29th, 1944. When he was grazed by a sniper's bullet just above his left eye during the fighting at the Antwerp-Turnhout Canal in Northern Belgium. After spending 11 days on rest to recover from his injury and with multiple visits from his then fiancé to boost his morale, Ernest was taken back on strength by the Calgary Highlanders on October 9th, 1944.

Twenty days after returning to active duty, Ernest and the Calgary Highlanders were part of yet another operation, approximately 80 kilometers Northwest of their previous mission in Antwerp. This mission was to establish a foothold on Walcheren Island and push inland to the German coastal guns that had been harassing Allied ships trying to drive up the coast towards Germany. The original plan was to cross the river on assault boats, but, due to poor weather conditions, they were forced to withdraw from that plan and come up with a new one. The new plan was to march up a 40 yard wide, mile long causeway, "straight as a gun barrel" as the soldiers described it. At midnight, on November 1st, The Black Watch, a separate Canadian regiment, began their march up the narrow causeway under fire support from Le Régiment de Maisonneuve and the Calgary Highlanders. After confronting heavy German fortifications and suffering heavy losses they withdrew. Next it was the Highlander's "Baker" company's turn, and they found it equally as difficult and soon withdrew. Then, at dawn, "Dog" company, also from the Highlanders, managed to inch down the causeway and storm the fortifications, in the process taking 19 German prisoners and disrupting German defenses. All 4 companies of the Calgary Highlanders crossed the bridge and fanned out along the eastern part of the island. However powerful counter attacks against Myer and the Highlanders caused them and the Black Watch to withdraw from Walcheren Island, leaving Le Régiment de Maisonneuve only a small bridgehead on the island.

On February 8th, 1945, the Calgary Highlanders began their drive towards the Rhineland with an attack on the small, German occupied, village of Wyler, Netherlands. At this point in the war Hitler had declared a "Festung", a call for all Nazi supporters to fight to death. Making the German occupied territory even more treacherous to manoeuvre and conquer. At 5:00AM, the regiment began a heavy artillery barrage in order to loosen up German defenses in Wyler. At 10:42AM 'A' and 'D' companies advanced on the town of Wyler. At 11:00AM 'A' and 'D' companies came under mortar fire, but were eventually able to proceed. Ernest Myer and his comrades began their advance on the village of Wyler at 11:18AM. 'C' company, containing Ernest Myer, ran into schu mines during their approach. Ernest Myer and his comrades from 'C' and 'D' companies ran

into stiff opposition and 'C' company suffered heavy casualties. 'A' company reached their objective by 2:00PM and the Highlanders prevailed. They reached all their objectives by 8:00PM and took nearly 200 prisoners, however during the attack Ernest Floyd Myer had fallen victim to the fighting less than 3 kilometers north of our current location.

He was transported to the Dutch city of Nijmegen, where he was buried at the Nijmegen Canadian Temporary military cemetery.

Later he was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, his final resting place. Grave Reference **V. A. 6.**

Ernest received the France and Germany Star Defence Medal as a token of appreciation, from the United Kingdom for his service as a member of the British Commonwealth in the Second World War, along with his Volunteer Service Medal and clasp.



The French and Germany Star

We would like to point out during his initial psychological evaluation, Captain R. Stewart, Army examiner, did not speak highly of Ernest Myer's intellectual ability. Quoting him as saying "*There is no chance of this man completing basic training. Recruit should not have been enlisted except for a special job (if such is possible) as he is hopelessly incapable of taking instructions*". These harsh words were taken right off of Ernest Myer's medical evaluation. The army examiner also critiqued Ernest Myers spelling ability and Captain R. Stewart even referred to Ernest Myer as a "High Grade Moron". The negative comments made by the army examiner, Captain R. Stewart, did not deter Ernest Myer from serving his country. Ernest proved the examiner wrong when he completed his basic training and was sent overseas. Once he was in Western Europe he proved the medical examiner wrong once again when he was put into active duty with the Calgary Highlanders and he valiantly served his country. Ironically the military commented on Ernest's poor spelling, however it was a clerical mistake on our community's cenotaph that

stopped us from uncovering Ernest's history and properly memorializing Ernest Floyd Myer. Ernest Myer is remembered here in Groesbeek Cemetery for his actions and sacrifice during the Second World War. Our nation is forever grateful for the courage and devotion of this Ponoka boy.

Lest we forget Private Ernest Floyd Myer.

Life story by Aidan Stiles and Sean Rowland.



Biography made available for Faces To Graves, through the intervention of Ron Labrie.