



John Angus Beaton was born on November 23, 1913 in Mabou, Nova Scotia, Canada to a large Roman Catholic peasant family of Scottish descent. He grew up with 8 brothers and 2 sisters. His parents were Alexander and Mary Beaton.

John did not excel in school but could read well and apart from English he also spoke and wrote Gaelic. He played baseball.

Like so many Canadian children at the time, his school days ran until he was 14 years old. Until that age, education was free, after which it had to be paid for. Many families could not afford that and children therefore went to work rather

than continue at school. So did John, he didn't like school anyway and eventually ended up in mining in Quebec and Ontario. That did work out well for his hearing and after 10 years he left the mining business and found a job in road construction on the other side of Canada, in British Columbia. There he lived in a hotel.

On August 13, 1943, he was drafted to serve in the Canadian army under the so-called NRMA legislation.

The National Resources Mobilisation Act (NRMA) was a response by the Canadian government to Germany's military successes in Europe in 1940. It gave the Canadian government the opportunity to strengthen its army and further expand its war participation. In principle, these conscripts could not be sent abroad. From 1942, the need for fresh front troops was so great that they too were deployed in Europe.

At the time of registration, he is 1.75m tall and weighs 77kg. He is healthy, stable, comerative and has a robust appearance. He has no idea what to do after the war but for the army service he has a preference for mining/drilling (genie troops). But the army sees more in him as a gunner (or they needed more of them).

He began his military training in Halifax until February 1944 and ended up in various transit camps in Canada. He obtains his driver's license and is assigned to the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (RCASC). A supporting unit in the army which is responsible for transportation, among other things. He is content with his work as a driver and is willing to go overseas to be deployed there.

Relatively late in the war, he sets off for Europe, where he arrives on the continent on February 28, 1945. He is assigned to the 2/3rd Infantry Division Transport Company. The 2nd and 3rd Canadian Infantry Divisions were involved in the liberation of the eastern and northern Netherlands and part of northwestern Germany. After the war, they were still deployed for police tasks, infrastructure restoration, ammunition clearance, etc.. It is therefore that we find John on January 27, 1946 in a Canadian Military Camp near Oldenburg.

After lunch, it is 12:15, John walks in the company of some comrades to their quarters when he is suddenly shot from behind by a Canadian soldier. As it seems without any reason. John Beaton is hit and puts it on a run. But the shooter aims again and shoots four more times. Four bullets penetrate John's body and he dies on the spot, aged 32.

The shooter in question appears to be in possession of two weapons illegally and he is arrested. A psychiatric examination follows and on April 25, 1945, he appears before the court martial.

Despite the many witness statements that clearly show what happened, the investigation team apparently drew the conclusion that the suspect could not be put on trial because of his poor mental condition.

That must have been hard for the Beaton family. First they get the message that their son has been fatally shot by a fellow soldier and then that the person responsible will not be punished for this.

After being buried in Osterscheps for a few months, John Angus Beaton was reburied at the Canadian Cemetery in Holten on March 7, 1946.



Photo courtesy of Inverness Academy Memorial Wall
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On his headstone it reads, very fittingly, in Gaelic; Fois shiorruidh do'anam. Meaning "may he rest in peace".

1202/1/T/9	8.A.4	59
K. 54642 Private		
J.A. Beaton		
Royal Canadian		
Army Service Corps		
27th January 1946	Age 32	
(Cross)		
Fois shiorruidh do'anam		

Honours: 1939-45 Star, France-Germany Star, War Medal, CVSM & Clasp

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Sources:

<https://library-archives.canada.ca/>

<https://www.cwgc.org>

wikipedia

