



John was born on November 21, 1911, in Oshawa, Ontario, the son of George Albert Culbertson and Mary Ann Culbertson, née Smoke.

John's father is registered as a farmer.

John's mother died in June 1916, at the time the family then lived in Belleville, Ontario.

John had one brother, Gilbert, born in 1913.

John's father remarried in May 1937, to Mabel May Sero.

John then gained two half-brothers and two half-sisters.

Both half-brothers were given the surname 'Culbertson'.

Because John's mother is officially a First Nation member of the Mohawk Band from the Tyendinaga Reserve of Deseronto, Ontario, John is also recognized as a First Nation.

English is spoken at home, it is unclear to what extent John also speaks the indigenous language, Kanien'kéha; he did not report it upon entering the military. The family is a member of the Church of England.

John enlisted, relatively late in the war, in Kingston, Ontario.

The date: June 14, 1944, exactly fourteen years after his wedding day.

On June 14, 1930, he married Mabel Florence Brown.

Their son, John Harry, was born in 1932.

In June 1944, John filled out the forms. He stated that his brother Gilbert lived in Buffalo, USA, and his half-brother Albert was overseas with the Canadian troops.

He also reported that he had completed grade eight in elementary school.

He had already worked for 16 years at Corbin Lock in Belleville, a manufacturer of a wide range of locks.

John's field of expertise was brass moulding.

After the war he could join the company again.



During the medical examination, it was recorded that John was 1.65 m tall and weighed just under 65 kg.

His characteristics were: brown hair, brown eyes, and a circular scar on the side of his right leg.

John's military service began at the District Depot in Kingston, and he was immediately assigned to a Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE) reinforcement unit. After barely a month, he was transferred to the Engineers' training camp in Petawawa, Ontario.

John was granted embarkation leave from November 5 to 21, 1944, and at the end of November 1944, he departed for the United Kingdom, arriving on December 9.

He was again assigned to a reinforcement unit for the RCE.

His pay increased to \$1.50 per day.

John spent New Year's Eve in the barracks, but in mid-January 1945, he was granted seven more days' leave.

Then came the harsh reality of the front. On April 11, 1945, John set foot on mainland Europe.

He was assigned to the 8th Field Squadron of the Royal Canadian Engineers.

This unit had already gained considerable experience.

When John arrived, the unit was recovering from a German raid on their headquarters in Sögel, Germany, on April 10, 1945. Six men lost their lives due to this attack.

The squadron, now with John in its ranks, continued its advance towards Lorup, but barely arrived there, they were sent on to Neu Arenberg.

Towards Friesoythe, with a detour towards the Küsten Canal.

Here, the RCE men faced a difficult time. The south side of the canal was riddled with mines, and the north side was heavily defended.

Once this crossing was complete, the route to Edeweicht and on to Bad Zwischenahn must be cleared, repaired and kept accessible.

On April 30, 1945, the Canadian troops stood on the outskirts of Bad Zwischenahn.

They encountered no heavy resistance, but they did suffer casualties from mines and snipers.

One of those casualties was Sapper John Culbertson.

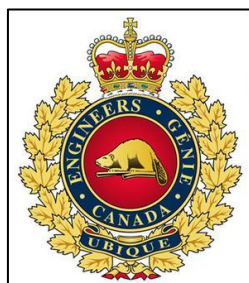
John was given a temporary grave in Osterscheps and was later transferred to the CWGC Canadian Cemetery in Holten. Plot 6, Row E, Grave 6 is his final resting place.

His headstone reads:

**A thought true and tender
To show I still remember.
Rest in peace.
Loving wife.**

He was awarded:

the 1939-1945 Star; the France-Germany Star; the 1939-1945 War Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



Sources:

www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com; www.canada.ca/library-archives, www.myheritage.nl