

Corporal Charles Murray GODDARD

03-E-07

November 11, 1908 was a very special day in the Goddard resident, as this day was when Charles Murray Goddard was born. He was born in Penobscus, New Brunswick to the family of Courtney and Isabelle Goddard. Charles had blue eyes and brown hair and his family attended the Baptist church. Charles was the middle child of three children; he had one brother, Gideon, and a sister, Greta. Charles lived on a farm and had a total of three years of farming experience. He raised canaries and loved hunting. He also enjoyed playing basketball as a forward. As an adult Charles worked in Saint John, New Brunswick at T. McAvity & Sons, Ltd. where he earned \$25.00 per week. He had worked from 1926 to 1940 before enlisting in the Canadian Army.

On October 26, 1932 in Saint John, New Brunswick Charles had found the girl he would marry; Mrs. Grace Goddard. They had three children together: William, James and John Goddard. Two days before Christmas of 1936, Charles's mother, Isabelle, unfortunately passed away. He was twenty eight years old when she died. As the war raged in Europe, Charles was a bit hesitant to enlist but he knew it was where he belonged. He felt compelled to join the army in 1940. He stated in his enlistment papers that he hoped to become a mechanic after the war.

Charles had served in the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1929-1932. He was 32 years old when he enlisted on July 23, 1940. He was then taken on strength by the 8th Hussars. He first had his training

in Canada for a year and 3 months. Then Charles proceeded to England to continue with more training. He disembarked on October 20, 1941. He eventually qualified as a gunner. Charles took training courses to become a driver operator, rank C. On October 22, 1942 Charles had attained the rank of Corporal.

On October 26, 1943, Charles left England with the Hussars to serve in the Mediterranean. He disembarked in Italy on November 8, 1943. There the Hussars played an important role in the Italian campaign as they advanced through the Liri Valley and saw action at the Gothic Line and Coriano Ridge. By early 1945, the Hussars were told they were moving on. Their services were no longer needed in Italy.

On February 19, 1945 the Hussars sailed from Italy to Southern France, and then they were transported by rail to Northwest Europe. After refitting the tanks, the 5th Armoured Regiment went into action. Their objective was to help liberate Holland and push the Germans north of the country. As time went on the Germans surrendered; 3,000 Germans laid their guns down and became prisoners of war.

As the war ended the 5th Armoured Regiment celebrated a deserving allied victory over the Germans. On January 26, 1946 the regiment arrived in Halifax and by the next day they were in Sussex. Unfortunately, Charles Murray Goddard was not one of them.

After the Germans had lost many men and equipment in Holland they had had enough. As they marched out by the hundreds, they laid down their guns and surrendered. At this point in time the Canadians found themselves surrounded by the Dutch who were finally liberated after five years of Nazi occupation.

From the 1st to 5th of May, 1945, only "C" Squadron of the 8th Hussars was in an operational role, trying to take out two towns north of Delfzijl, Holland, while Charles and the rest of the regiment concentrated at Paterswolde to the west of Delfzijl. The men got away from the mud and tension and finally were able to take showers, sleep and put on fresh clothes.

On May 5th, 1945 there was a message received stating "Cancel all offensive operations; ceasefire at 0800."¹ All of the 8th Hussars were overjoyed by this message, and more importantly that this war was over. Three days later May 8th, was known as "VE Day" or "Victory in Europe Day", where Charles and the rest of the regiment spent their time celebrating what they had accomplished. There were even groups of men waiting to hear the King and Prime Minister Winston Churchill proclaim their victory. After that, the afternoon was spent at church giving their thanks to God.

In the days that followed, there were many ceremonies and celebrations. Sunday May 13th, 1945 was a day of honour for the 8th Hussars who had lost their lives in Holland; with a minute of silence and a salute to the men who had fought and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Ten days later on May 23rd, 1945 the entire 5th Armoured Division came together for one last assembly. In a square, the tanks paraded for three hours and the soldiers reflected on their experiences and their contributions during their time with the 8th Hussars.

During this time of celebration on May 31st, 1945 Charles died accidentally. The cause as stated on the Certificate of Registration of death was: "Blockage of the trachea and

resultant strangulation following the inhalation of a large food particle.

Charles Murray Goddard died on May 31st, 1945 and is now resting at the Holten Canadian Military Cemetery with 1,394 other service men of the Second World War. Next of kin was Charles's wife, Grace. His three children who were now 11, 9 and 4 years of age had lost their father. Lest we forget what Charles has done in the name of freedom. Charles must not be forgotten. He received many medals including: The Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp, Italy Star, France & Germany Star, Defence Medal and War Medal.

