

Murray John C

10 D 10

OFFICIAL NUMBER	V53755.
26-10-24.	27 see file

When signing up for the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Murray stated 1924 to be his year of birth. Source: Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947

D-day was already over when John Christopher Murray signed up to join the Canadian army. Murray was still very young at the time. He was born on October 26, 1927. Being a 16-year-old he wasn't allowed to join any military rank but he really wanted to enlist so he decided to pretend he was older than he really was. When filling in and signing the Enrolment and attestation papers he added two years to his actual age. According to that official document he was born on October 26, 1925, two years prior to his actual date of birth.

Remarks
Montreal Div. Str.
"Unsuitable" Sub. 20-3-43
Under Age.

Unsuitable, being 'under age.' Source: Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947

It wasn't the first time Murray pretended to be older than he really was. Back in 1943 he had already signed up as a volunteer in the Canadian Navy. He then claimed he was born in 1924. In March 1943 he was said to be unsuitable for the marines, the reason being that he was 'under age.'

He tried again in 1944, this time with the Canadian Ground Force. Red-haired Murray with his length of 5.8 feet and a weight of barely 64 kgs was rather small. When he signed up for the ground forces though, having added not three but two years to his actual age, he didn't seem to be that small so he was allowed to enroll.

John Christopher Murray had a British father. His Canadian mother had died at an early age. John lived together with his father William Murray, his little brother William and his sisters Shirley, Mary, Kathleen and Maureen.

He was considered a decent boy, eager to learn and ambitious. Eventually John was officially allowed to join the army on June 20, 1944. He did all of his army practices flawless. Early December 1944 he was allowed a week of leave, prior to being shipped to England right before Christmas, where he arrived on New Year's Day.

He was assigned to the Stormont Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders of Canada Regiment. On February 13, 1945 he arrived from England and entered combat on the battlefields of Northwestern-Europe.

On May 1, 1945 Murray became involved in fights in Northern-Germany. In the early afternoon he was hit by a shrapnel. He got seriously injured to belly and back. His medical record states that he was given morphine around half past two in the afternoon.

When he entered the temporary hospital his condition was already very critical. He was partly unconscious, he was very pale and his breathing was shallow. His heartbeat was regular.



Tombstone of John C. Murray in Holten Canadian War Cemetery. Picture: Jan Braakman

In the course of the evening his situation deteriorated. At just over 8 o'clock in the evening the physician on service noted that his breathing was gradually slowing down. John C. Murray was officially pronounced dead that evening at 20 minutes to 9.

On May 2, 1945 Murray found a temporary resting place in Meppen, Germany. Chaplain Pierre Cagnon was in charge of the ceremony. Murray was later reburied in Holten Canadian War Cemetery. He is resting in plot 10, row D, grave number 10. On the day he fell in battle he was a little over 17 years old, 17 years, 6 months and 5 days to be specific. This makes him the youngest soldier buried in Holten.