



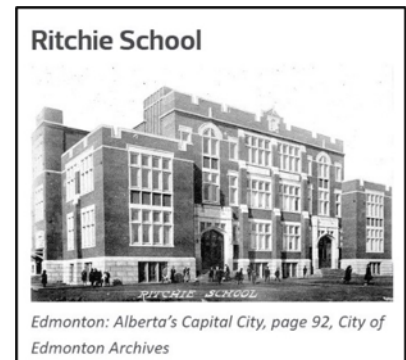
On October 1, 1919, John Charles Pape - known as John - is born in Benton, Alberta. He is the son of John Andrew Pape and Francis Pape, née Bell. John's father is a plumber/gas fitter. John's parents have the British nationality, as has John. His parents married in Sheffield, England, and departed from Liverpool to Quebec, Canada, on April 26, 1913, aboard the 'Laurentic'.

John will remain their only child. The family attends the Church of England, and the spoken language is, naturally, English.

John attends primary school at the Ritchie School in Edmonton, Alberta, where the family is living at the time.

After grade eight, he decides to call it quits and leaves school at the age of 14.

(Later, while serving in the military in England, he takes a two-year correspondence course in electrical engineering and machinery.)



John has various jobs; among other things, he works as a salesman for 'Farm and Ranch Review', a well-known and popular magazine in western Canada; at a machine workshop John lasts six months.

Soon after the death of his father on July 6, 1939, John decides to enlist in the Canadian army. He is, at the time, a driver at Gainers Ltd.

During the 1930s (the Great Depression), the meat processing plant Gainers Ltd. in Edmonton, Alberta, formed a crucial part of the local economy.]

John enlists at the recruitment office in Edmonton on September 23, 1939.

Following his medical examination, he is assigned to the Edmonton Regiment. (*) The medical report lists standard details—height 5'9"; weight 155 lbs—but includes a specific note: he is missing the ring finger on his right hand.

Such characteristics are recorded to aid in potential identification.

During his initial interview, John indicates that he prefers to remain in the military rather than return to civilian life. He is interested in the idea of working as an army driver.

As for sports, he is interested in baseball and hockey; he has no other hobbies and shows absolutely no interest in reading.

He is not particularly adept at social interaction; the interviewer has the impression that John is constantly bored.

Nevertheless, he is considered to possess certain leadership qualities, which—it is believed—he can further develop within the army.

() The Edmonton Regiment was mobilized in Canada in September 1939. A major recruitment campaign in Alberta helped it quickly reach full strength. After a brief period of*

training, the men boarded a troopship in Halifax that took them to Greenock, Scotland, where they disembarked on December 30, 1939.

The year 1940 is filled with training and exercises, primarily in an area of Surrey, England.

John is allowed a week's leave and is promoted to Lance-Corporal in April 1941.

His service record notes several courses he completed before he begins serving as a corporal in July 1941.

Then, his record notes something remarkable: John is assigned to the detachment deployed for Operation Gauntlet.

Operation Gauntlet was a commando operation carried out on West Spitsbergen during the Second World War to prevent the rich coal mines from falling into the hands of the German Wehrmacht. It was a joint operation involving Canadian, British, and Norwegian commandos that took place between August 25 and September 3, 1941.

This marked the first deployment of Canadian troops in World War II—contrary to the prevailing view that Dieppe, in 1942, was the first engagement involving Canadians.

More than 450 of the personnel on Spitsbergen were Canadian; while some served in communications roles, the majority were drawn from the Canadian Engineers.

This operation is a success and is carried out without casualties.

By September 9, 1941, all troops are back in the United Kingdom (UK).

John's military training continues. In April 1942, he is a acting sergeant, he completes a course on chemical warfare.

He officially is to be a sergeant in late July.

In December 1942, he is removed from the regiment's active roster and placed on the list of a "paper unit" because he returns to Canada.

In January 1943, John is briefly registered in Calgary before being transferred to Gordon Head, British Columbia, where an officer training center is located.



Gordon Head BC.

John remains at Gordon Head until September 1943.

In the meantime, he completes a series of courses. By late May 1943, he is promoted to lieutenant and is appointed as an instructor at the infantry training center in Calgary, Alberta, starting in September 1943.

The assessment of John, prepared at Gordon Head, describes him as reliable and hardworking, with extensive military knowledge.

He demonstrates initiative and strong leadership qualities.

September 1943 is a significant month for John.

His mother passes away on September 5, and on September 18, he marries Velma Jean Oldham.

By then, they already have a daughter together, Bonnie Elizabeth, born on March 28, 1941.

John is on leave during Christmas 1943 and the 1943–1944 holiday season. In January 1944, he attends a 'refresher course' for officers in Brockville, Ontario.

Meanwhile, negotiations have been underway at government level since late 1943 to allow Canadian officers to serve in the British Army.

John has indicated his willingness to go to the United Kingdom as an officer and serve with a British unit. A project known as: Codeword CANLOAN.

CANLOAN Officers

In the autumn of 1943, the British Army faced a severe shortage of infantry lieutenants and captains—ranks associated with roles such as platoon or company commander. These infantry officers operate on the front lines during combat.

By that time, the British Army had been fighting on multiple fronts for several years, and casualties in these roles had been heavy. With the planned invasion on the horizon, this shortage threatened to become a major problem. Canada, however, had a surplus of these young officers—men who were motivated and eager to join the fight. Following extensive consultation between Britain and Canada, the green light was given in February 1944 for the following scheme:

- A maximum of 1,450 infantry officers and 50 logistics officers could be seconded.
- Participation was strictly voluntary.
- Pay was provided by Canada in accordance with Canadian standards.
- Age limits: 33 years for lieutenants, 37 years for captains.
- British promotion regulations would apply.
- Canada retained the right to recall the officers if necessary.
- The initiative was given the codename CANLOAN.

High numbers of applications were expected in Canada, as many officers believed that participating in combat would accelerate their promotion. Some were so determined to see active service that they accepted a reduction in rank to qualify.

Nevertheless, the initial estimate for the number of applicants was not met.

Ultimately, 623 infantry officers and 50 logistics officers were selected.

They were assigned a service number beginning with "CDN," followed by a sequential number based on the order of their application. The dedication and performance of the CANLOAN officers were beyond question.

The list of decorations and promotions is long. Their commitment and courage also had a dark side.

The toll: 128 killed, 310 wounded, 27 taken prisoner, and one missing.

Eleven of the fallen are buried in Holten. Their headstones can be identified by the maple leaf, the service number beginning with CDN, the inscription 'Royal Canadian Infantry Corps', and the British regiment to which they were attached.

Lieutenant John Charles Pape is selected, his CANLOAN number: CDN/487.

He is granted a week's embarkation leave and is relocated to Sussex, New Brunswick, in early April 1944. There, the selected officers assemble in preparation for the crossing to the United Kingdom.

A large group of CANLOAN officers, including John, departs from Halifax on May 4, 1944, aboard the troopship *Empress of Scotland*, arriving in Liverpool on May 11, 1944.

John is initially assigned to the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and by late May 1944, to a reinforcement unit. In June 1944, he is listed with the 7th Parachute Battalion of the

6th Airborne Division. His unit is not dropped into Normandy but lands in France by troopship on June 15–16, 1944.

Not included in John's file is the birth of his son, Richard Michael Gurney, on July 14, 1944.

As of August 2, 1944, John is authorized to be acting captain.

In late August 1944, John develops health issues. He is transferred via the 225th Para Field Ambulance to Morrison Hospital in Swansea, Wales.

He is suffering from a stomach ulcer. He is discharged from the hospital in late September and temporarily assigned to an Air Force depot unit.

John's next move is remarkable.

He transfers to the Parachute Training School at Ringway, near Manchester.

In early December 1944, he qualifies as a parachutist and is reassigned to the 7th Parachute Battalion.

On December 24, 1944, John and his unit are hastily transported to Belgium by ship.

The 6th Airborne Division is deployed to the Ardennes.

The division arrives by ship—partly at Calais and partly at Ostend—and travels by truck to the front southeast of Dinant, arriving on Christmas Day. The Battle of the Bulge has started.

By Boxing Day, they hold the front line between Dinant and Namur.

They then receive orders to launch a counterattack to drive out the enemy east of Dinant, Rochefort, Grupont, and Bure.



Training at Ringway

In early January 1945, the 7th Parachute Battalion sees heavy fighting—including at the villages of Bure and Grupont—amidst harsh weather conditions.

During this fighting, John is wounded on January 4, 1945; he is struck in the neck by shrapnel from a shell.

His injuries prove not to be serious, and he is discharged from the hospital on January 17, 1945. He then returns to the 7th Parachute Battalion.



Troops near Bure

John arrives just in time to be dropped during Operation Varsity, the airborne operation supporting the troops attempting to cross the Rhine between Wesel and Emmerich in Germany.

John's unit, the 7th Parachute Battalion, was dropped near Hamminkeln, north of Wesel. One of the objectives was the capture of the Diersfordter Wald, a forest overlooking the Rhine where several roads connecting the region's towns converged.

Operation Varsity is considered the largest single-day airborne operation of the war.

Once ground forces have successfully crossed the Rhine, the advance into Germany—heading towards the Elbe and the Baltic Sea—begins.

The 6th Airborne Division sets out from Wesel on March 23, 1945.

John and his men were fortunate enough to hitch rides on tanks belonging to the 6th Guards Tank Brigade for a great part of the advance.

Resistance is not strong and they make rapidly progress.

This continues until April 7, 1945, when the vanguard encounters unexpectedly strong resistance.

The capture of Wunstorf Airfield, near Hanover, is fiercely contested.

John Charles Pape's platoon is caught in a severe ambush.

John, his platoon sergeant, and about ten others are killed in a hail of machine-gun fire.

John, and many others, are initially buried in the cemetery at Neustadt (Germany).

On August 23, 1946, he is reinterred at the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten; his final resting place is: Plot 4, Row H, Grave 8.

He is awarded:

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

His headstone bears the inscription:

**The souls of the righteous
Are in the hand of God**



Sources:

www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com; www.canada.ca/library-archives; wikipedia, wartimesproject.com; codeword CANLOAN ISBN 1-55002-167-2