

John Amyotte
World War II

Regiments: Artillery - 76th Battery and Ninth Toronto Field

Decorations:

Arenas of Combat: Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany

John Amyotte was born on November 8, 1913 in Lebret, Saskatchewan.

I was working on a dairy farm and I was there for just about enough to eat. So, one morning I told the boss that I was going to join the army. He thought I was looking for greener pasture. I told him I was going to try. I walked to Indian Head, 12 miles away, that day and went and signed up with 76th Battery. I don't how long we stayed at Indian Head. That's where we took mostly all our basic training. That was foot drill and everything that you're suppose to know. We stayed in tents at Indian Head. From there we were transferred to Petawawa, Ont. We were there for quite a while. I was with the 25 Pounder Guns. We trained for artillery. From there we took the boat in Halifax. We landed in Grenwich, Scotland and from there we were transported to Aldershot, England. We did practically all our training there. We went all over England for schemes, learning how to operate guns, and stuff like that. We stayed maybe a year. From there, I don't why, I was called up to go to a different artillery outfit, The Ninth Toronto Field. From there we landed in Naples in Italy. Then we went into action. Our first fight was in Montecino. We had the Sergeant and Sam Anna, he was the layer of the gun and I was second on the whata do you call it, if he got a switch, you grab a handle on the back of the gun and you move it, say if they gave you 2 degrees right, well you moved it, the tailgate. Just enough for the layer to get close to it, then he would lay. Then when they on, he got the order for 10-20 rounds of gunfire, we fired that many rounds. It was like that all the way through. Just depended on who we were supported and what....you know. We were there for 18 months. We had quite a battle there at the City of Okland, Coreano Ridge but we managed to get through it. At Casino there, we were in one position quite a while. The food truck used to come in at 12:00. Those sons of guns knew that the food truck was coming in and they would start shelling. Everyone would have to jump in the slit trench. We lost some men. I was lucky. I didn't get no injuries. We had our good times and bad

times. From there to Corneano Ridge, well we fought pretty well all the way until we got the order to move. We didn't know where we were going. I laughed, I had laundry out and this lady that was doing it, when the officer told us that if we had laundry out, get it whether it is finished or not. I spoke to her in Italian and asked if my laundry was done. She says (in Italian). I told her that I had to have it. We were leaving Italy. She says to me, (in Italian) "Where are you going," and I told her in Italian, "I don't know," so she gave me my laundry. I took it and I didn't know where I was going myself. We landed in Marseilles, France from there we went Belgium, Holland and into Germany. When the war finished we were in Germany, a

place called Gieve, or something like that. We had some good times and bad times. We were stationed in Brighton, England. That was a beautiful place right beside the ocean. We have very nice barracks. We were stationed right in the city.

If we were called off on rest, we would go on leave. While we were in action, nobody got leave. You just kept on going until everything was clear. They decided what they wanted to do, keep advancing. There was nobody else to hold. We supported the infantry while they were advancing. We would lay barrage over top of them to keep lifting the range until they got to their fighting positions. You got to give the infantrymen whata you call it, because they were the boys that took the beating. That's for sure. We just supported them, laid down the barrage in front of them when they were advancing. They are the ones that got it. They got casualties and they would just keep on fighting. We were in a different position than they was. They were a darn sight closer to the enemy than what we were. If we seen a target, maybe a convoy, we would blast them. We never knew until they gave us the cease fire whether we got out objective or not. Right then you didn't know what was going on. If you got prepared to move then you knew you did something. If you moved backwards, you were retreating. There were a lot of times we retreated but we were a support group. We went where we were needed. The Battery L's came from Toronto. I was a Westerner, I was the only Westerner there in that battery.

We went first into battle, at Casino. Where we had the biggest battle was at Coreanno Ridge, then when we took that we kept on until we got prepared to move. We didn't know where the heck we were going ourselves, until we got to Leg Horn in Italy. We took the boat and landed in France. Nobody knew, just the officers, what was going on. We went through...well we didn't do much fighting in France and Belgium and Holland, but as soon as we got in Germany...then we didn't fight very much there. The war was over. That was a happy day.

I had 2 brothers, Paul Amyotte and Frank Amyotte, in the South Saskatchewan, they landed in that Dieppe Raid. They had quite a battle there too. My brother had to swim, he threw his pack out and he had to swim to the barge where they were evacuating them. Some German soldier picked up his pack and his paybook was in there. Two years after that, my mother got his paybook in the mail from Germany. Wanted to know if this boy was killed in that raid. I thought that was very nice of him. My other brother was with me in the 76th Field or when we got into France, he was with the South Saskatchewan, so he transferred over to our artillery.

Life After The War

I was lucky, I didn't get hit or anything. I just got a busted ear drum from the gun blast. I was right beside the gun all the time. We got through it alright. Some of them got it that's for sure. I was lucky. If you got wounded you got a pension, but I got everything free from the DVA, you know, medical, glasses and any time I see a doctor I keep all my appointment cards with me and they give me a cheque. I don't have to pay for nothing, medicine or doctor's care or if I went to the hospital. They have been pretty good to me.

I was discharged in 1945 and I worked for Ramsey and Bird for 15 years and I was at the sawmill for 11 winters up in the Yukon and on the oilrigs. All the experience I ever had was in the army. Like as far as in Canada, we just trained. When we were sent overseas, we were there for action any time. As long as we

were needed. I seen a lot of countries, which I've never seen if I was in civilian life. I liked the army.