



John Mahony, VC

John Mahony was born on 30 June 1911 in New Westminster, British Columbia. Before the Second World War he was a militia officer in The Westminster Regiment, and remained with his unit as it was mobilized overseas.

On 24 May 1944 Major Mahony was tasked with establishing a firm bridgehead across the Melfa River in central Italy. He led his company across the river while under heavy artillery fire. A small bridgehead was established and Mahony's company managed to hold their tenuous position for five hours under continuous enemy fire until reinforcements arrived.

Early in the action, Mahony was wounded in the head and twice in the leg, but he refused medical aid and continued to direct the defence of the bridgehead, despite the fact that movement of any kind caused him extreme pain. It was only when the remaining companies of the regiment had crossed the river to support him that he allowed his wounds to be dressed and even then, he refused to be evacuated, choosing instead to stay with his men.

For his exemplary leadership and courage during this action, Mahony was awarded the Victoria Cross. He died in London, Ontario on 15 December 1990.