

Murray S. Ritchie

Biography

Military and Public Service 1976 - 1990

Struggling with dyslexia, Murray had a hard time completing school assignments and, at times, retaining written information. This, coupled with his obsession with all things rock n' roll and the opposite sex, started his mind to wonder contemplating a way out of school and his hometown. One option was to drop out and join a rock band but given his age it seemed unlikely that he could pull-off gigs in nightclubs and bars.

One fateful spring morning, while walking to school with a head full of spring fever, he ran into a school friend's brother who was heading to Winnipeg on the bus to join the Navy. Murray tagged along. Armed with a new fake ID purchased from an ad in Rolling Stone magazine, he thought it would be a good opportunity to try it out as his travel companion was already 18. They could hit up a bar in the big city after his friend was done with his business.

During his wait at the recruitment center, while his friend was in writing aptitude tests etc., a recruiter looked Murray in the eye and said, "You're next." Without hesitation Murray jumped up, handed the recruiter his fake birth certificate and was escorted to a room to write a few tests. This was followed by an interview which quickly became a hand on a bible swearing allegiance to the Queen.

At the age of 15, Murray found himself on a military transport jet heading to the east coast to start basic training. This would be followed by a short time at Camp Borden in Ontario, Canada for Medical Assistant training. This training proved to be a bit out of reach for the underaged dyslexic teenager and he quickly re-mustered into the infantry. Murray was whisked off to CFB Wainwright in Alberta to join up with others entering the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Murray's time with the PPCLI proved to be enjoyable but short lived as he was posted back to Winnipeg following combat arms training. Since he had joined the military to escape, he found it logical to leave. Unfortunately, he neglected to ask permission and once he relocated himself to the west coast, living on base with the third battalion, he was discovered, invited to stay in a jail cell for a few weeks and then discharged. All the while the military remained blind to the fact that he had not yet turned 18.

Following the military adventure, he returned home to Selkirk where he would eventually find work on the local ambulance. This led to a job with the city ambulance in Winnipeg which, due to restless feet, in 1983 he left to attend a paramedic program at United Hospital, University of North Dakota in the US.

Graduating and successfully obtaining a US National Registered Advanced Life Support designation (NREMT-P) he returned to Canada where work was unattainable as very few jurisdictions in Canada had advanced life support services. After a failed attempt to secure work on the west coast, in 1986 he accepted an offer to move to Saudi Arabia and work at a National Guard hospital. This choice led to joining the medical detail who served the then Crown Prince Abdullah. Several years later, following a downturn in oil and gas, Murray would return to serve royalty in Brunei. He worked at a private sports medicine clinic which served the Sultan of Brunei's family and adjacent Polo Club.