

The world was blessed when Franklin Joseph was born on June 13 1921 as the son of Seymour (British) and Catherine Crook (Belgian), of Thorburn, Pictou Co., Nova Scotia. He was the husband of Mary Crook.

He had grew up on a MacLellan's farm and had one brother Lawrence (5 months) and three sisters Martha (22), Patricia (6) and Catherine (4). His religion was Roman Catholic. Frankie got the chance to attend a two-room schoolhouse in Greenwood, Pictou County. It was a four-mile walk there and back for the Crook family.

Sometimes, when it was to snowy, they were not able to make it, or they took a horse and carriage for travelling. Frank loved to attend dances every Saturday night when he was fifteen, loved to fish, ride horses on his farm, and had a special craft for carving wood. He also preferred the name Frank or Frankie opposed to Franklin and loved to tease his sisters.

Joining the army was a thing Frank wanted to do for his country. Before the war, Frankie was a labour worker and had an art for carving objects out of wood. He worked in the lumber woods alongside his cousin Seymour. The two grew up together and both fought for their country in the Second World War, but were in different regiments. Like most of the young men who came over here, their thoughts and images of the war dramatically changed. After being in action, Frank even said to his family at home not to believe the radio or newspapers because they tell the story differently than it really is. He was a hardworking soldier always in action or in the trenches. Frank served in Canada, Great Britain, Italy and North West Europe. He also had to endure the hardship of one of his closest friends dying. His life was hard and tiring, but Frank was a hero to many, especially W.N. Smith Watt and Lieutenant Charles Irving. In 1944, brave Frankie took down the enemy while in Italy and saved the lives of these two deserving men. This heroic task cost him a shell in the back and he didn't return to action until December 1944.

Frank also met and married Mary Connelly while in England. She was sent over with special permission of her mother in law to Canada in 1944. Unfortunately they were not able to spend the rest of their lives together, for Frankie died three weeks before the war was ended on April 14 1945. He was 23 years old.

I had the pleasure of meeting his youngest sister Catherine while doing my research. The lives of their family were so drastically changed. She was among the youngest and didn't really get the chance to fully know her brother Frankie. She enlightened me on a childhood story where Frankie's mother found a family of mice in an abandoned drawer in the barn. His mother immediately threw them outside, which Frankie got very upset about. He thought he'd been able to keep them as pets. Even though I did not get the chance to personally know Frankie, he was an extremely loved man. He was described as 'happy to go lucky' and well liked by all.

Catherine and her family were fortunate enough to be standing here themselves. They travelled to the Canadian cemetery in Holten a few years ago to honour and say farewell to a brother and a man they never really had a chance to know and grow old with. I am very honoured to have been able to get the opportunity to enhance my life

from Frankie's story, and get a little closer to knowing a hero. Being here today, I feel not only privileged but also more aware of what a soldier's life was like during the war. Frankie was an example of our hardworking, deserving soldiers. Canadian's soldiers should never be forgotten, and we will help to ensure that their torch of Remembrance is held high for future generations.

We remember you Frankie Joseph Crook, and I will never forget you.

Written by and read loud near his grave by Jenna White of Pictou N.S.

Youth delegate 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Netherlands Pilgrimage

May 2005

Frankie is temporarily buried at the Achterhoek near Wilp. He was reburied on January 26 1946 in Holten and his grave was adopted by a family from Apeldoorn.

At his headstone: He is not dead, He is just away. With a cherry smile. And a wave of the hand. R.I.P.

His medals were:

39-45 Star; Italy Star; France-Germany Star; Defence Medal ; War Medal ; CVASM & Clasp

