

## Jacob, Joseph. Sergeant.

4-H-15



Joseph Jacob was born on December 23, 1918, in Cowansville, Quebec. His father was also named Joseph Jacob, and his mother was Melvina Jacob.

Joseph was the third child; he already had two older sisters and, according to the 1931 census, two more sisters and two brothers would be born after him. The French-speaking family was Roman Catholic.

Joseph enlisted for active duty early in WW2, enrolling on July 29, 1940. He left school at 15. He also learned to speak English while working. His work experience includes working as a machine assistant at a printing company from 1933 to 1938, and then, until his enlistment in 1940, at Bruck Silk Mills in Cowansville. He was promised a job when he returned.

*When Bruck Silk Mills Limited was founded in Cowansville in 1922. Bruck was the first company in the country to weave silk using the modern method, using gum. The mill was very successful for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and provided employment for a large number of Cowansville residents. It was at La Bruck—as its francophone workers called it—that the first yard of silk was woven in Canada and also where the first Canadian flag (the Maple Leaf Flag) was produced in 1964.*



Company picnic Bruck silk Mills in 1939

Joseph was married when he signed up for the military. On November 14, 1937, he married Eveline Tepinay, two years younger than him, in Cowansville. Joseph's leisure interests include bowling and swimming and he plays the harmonica.

No special characteristics were noted during his medical examination. He is 5'7½" tall and weighs 135 lbs. He has blue eyes and blond hair. He was declared 'fit for all services'.

He himself indicated that he would like to become a D.R. (Despatch Rider) in the "Provost Corps".

He also stipulated that \$35 should be transferred to his wife each month. His response when asked why he was enlisting is noteworthy. He countered with a question: why wasn't he called up as a conscript?

Initially, Joseph was assigned to the 24<sup>th</sup>/75<sup>th</sup> Field Battery, R.C.A., C.A.S.F. In December 1940, he was 'Absent Without Leave' (AWL) for several days.

Consequences: 12 days' pay withheld and 10 days 'Confined to Barracks' (CB).

In January 1941, he was transferred to St. Johns, Quebec. There, he spent two months in the hospital because of V.D. Whether this was related to his AWL is unclear.

He did, however, request a transfer to Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal. This was granted, and by April 1941, he was in the infantry. He was granted a few weeks' leave and then reported to the district depot in Montreal.

For further training, Joseph had to report to basic infantry training in Sherbrooke, Quebec, in May 1941. He had to increase his skills in Farnham, Quebec, where he taken on strength in the end of July 1941.

In August '41 Joseph was again 3 days AWL. Pay was withheld and again CB for a week.

In early November 1941, he spent a week in Notre Dame Hospital in Montreal. No reason for this was given in Joseph's file.

Drunkenness was the reason that Joseph, in December 1941, got into trouble with the military police. He spent Christmas and New Year's Eve in jail

On January 8, 1942, he was released and returned to Farnham. While awaiting his departure for the United Kingdom (UK), Joseph was granted a few days' embarkation leave before boarding a troop ship in Halifax. On March 9, 1942, he set foot in the UK and attached to a reinforcement unit.

In August 1942, he was taken on strength by the Fusiliers Mont-Royal (FMR) and participated in various training exercises, including one at Havannah Barracks in Bordon, Hampshire.

*From September 1939, the Canadian Army used the camp at Bordon and neighbouring Longmoor as its European base. The site played a crucial role in housing troops and training the Canadian forces before and after D-Day.*

Joseph's file for the remainder of 1942 and 1943 lists several training courses. For example: mine handling, basic artillery training, and a special anti-tank course. He actually met the requirement of being "fit for all purposes," as declared after his medical examination.

In July 1943, he was promoted to Lance Corporal and in December 1943, he was allowed to wear the corporal stripes on his uniform. He was also awarded the Voluntary Service Medal with Clasp in January 1944.



By then, he was already eligible to be Acting/Sergeant, pending his final promotion.

Joseph was allowed a private leave for 7 days, on return he reported for another special anti-tank course at the end of April 1944, at the Canadian School for Artillery in Larkhill UK.

*In 1944, Canadian anti-tank training focused heavily on preparing for the invasion of northwest Europe. The emphasis shifted from basic training to specialized, operational, and tactical training with advanced weapons. Key aspects included training with the anti-tank gun and, for the infantry, the PIAT (Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank).*



PIAT

Preparations for D-Day were underway, and Joseph Jacob, assigned to the Fusiliers Mont-Royal, landed on Juno Beach in Normandy in the early morning hours of July 7, 1944.

The FMR then began their advance through northern France, fighting at Carpiquet, Caen, and Falaise, among other places. On September 8, 1944, they crossed the border into Belgium, where they suffered many losses crossing the Albert Canal.

In October 1944, the FMR was deployed in the liberation of the southwest Netherlands, with the goal of liberating the port of Antwerp. Joseph Jacob, who was officially allowed to wear the sergeant's stripes on October 29, 1944, survived all these operations without any major problems.

In November 1944, the FMR were part of the "Guard on the river Meuse" in the Mook region. Although this period is often described as 'static', patrols were conducted constantly.

The war diary mentions four patrols on November 13, 1944, Sergeant Jacob's fateful day.

It also notes two casualties. One of them was likely Sergeant Joseph Jacob.

He was given a temporary grave at the cemetery in Heumen. In Holten, at the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery, he was given his final resting place in plot 4, row H, grave 15.

In 1948, Mrs. Elderink-Dijckmeester from Enschede adopted his grave.

*He was awarded:  
1939-1945 Star; France-Germany Star; Defence Medal; War Medal 1939-1945; and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.*

Sources:  
[www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org); [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com); [www.canada.ca/library-archives](http://www.canada.ca/library-archives);  
Wikipedia, project '44.

**13 NOVEMBER 1944**

Weather: fair Visibility: poor

Same posns with one fighting patrol, one recce and two contact patrols. 2 cas. A/Capt M.Perusse and Lieut J.M.Letellier left this afternoon for Cuyk, as instructors on 2 Cdn Inf Div NCOs school.

