



Ingersoll, a town in Oxford County on the Thames River in southwestern Ontario, Canada.

John was born here on August 29, 1925.

Son of Benjamin Alexander MacMillan and Mary (Minny) MacMillan, née Heard.

Jack, his nickname we use here, enlisted in London, Ontario on November 16, 1943.

His medical report stated that he was just under 1.65 m tall and weighed 78 kg. It was also stated that he had black hair and blue eyes. Recorded too, was that he suffered from chronic rhinitis.

He gave his occupation as: machine operator and warehouse manager.

His knowledge of languages: English. He stated that he was Roman Catholic.

Jack had one sister, but he had already lost his brother in the war. Joseph Francis MacMillan (1910-1943) was aboard HMCS St. Croix. He did not survive its torpedoing.



Joseph
Francis

To clarify:

On September 20, 1943 this ship was torpedoed. Initially 81 men were rescued by HMCS Itchen. Three days later this ship was also torpedoed. Only one man from the St. Croix survived the second torpedoing.

On November 16, 1943 Jack was taken on strength (TOS) by No. 1 District Depot in London, Ontario.

After a few weeks the first transfer followed; No. 2 Canadian Artillery Training Centre Petawawa was his new destination.

In addition to the artillery training, there was also a training centre for the "Engineers". Petawawa was a huge camp; in 1943 the occupation was at its peak: approximately 20,000 men were trained here at the same time.

Jack was added to the list A2, training for "all functions".

In March 1944 his pay was increased to: \$1.40 per day.

He was granted two weeks leave in April 1944.

He was given the temporary rank of Lance-Bombardier, his pay increased with 10-dollar cents per day.

In late August 1944 he was reverted in rank to "Gunner", but his pay remained at \$1.50 per day.

The last days of August he had a few days leave, awaiting his transfer to Debert in Nova Scotia. This was the assembly point for troops destined to go to the United Kingdom.

On October 14, 1944 Jack embarked and arrived in England on October 20. As expected he was assigned to a reinforcement battalion.

The next transfer for Jack was an Infantry Training Regiment; it soon became clear why: he was taken on strength by a detachment that would be translocated to Italy.

He embarked at the end of January 1945 and arrived in Italy on February 6, 1945. He was then taken on strength by the Perth Regiment.

To clarify:

The original Perth Regiment, after mobilization in Canada, spent the early years of WW2 in garrison and training in Britain. It saw combat in Italy as an infantry battalion in the 11th infantry Brigade of the 5th Armoured Division. The Perths soon gained a reputation for courage, initiative and reliability. In early March of 1945, all Canadian troops which had been fighting in Italy were transferred to Belgium resulting in all five Canadian divisions fighting as a team. In some of the hardest actions of the war, the Canadians drove the Germans out of northern part of the Netherlands Holland and helped to end the war.

The deployment in Southern Europe lasted for Jack a few weeks. On March 3, 1945 he went by ship to Marseille, where he arrived on the 6th.

Then the long journey north began for him to be deployed in the advance through Eastern and Northern Netherlands.

The "Battle Honours" of the regiment mention: IJsselmeer; Delfzijl Pocket and North-Western Europe.

The Perths were also involved in the fighting at the Neder-Rhine and the south east region of the Netherlands: Didam, Doesburg and Driel.

Then they advanced north: Ede, Lunteren up to Harderwijk.

Here Jack and the regiment were given a few days rest.

Then they made a larger translocation, they moved to the area around Loppersum the province of Groningen.

They took over the positions of another unit and liberated Spijk, Bierum and Godlinze.

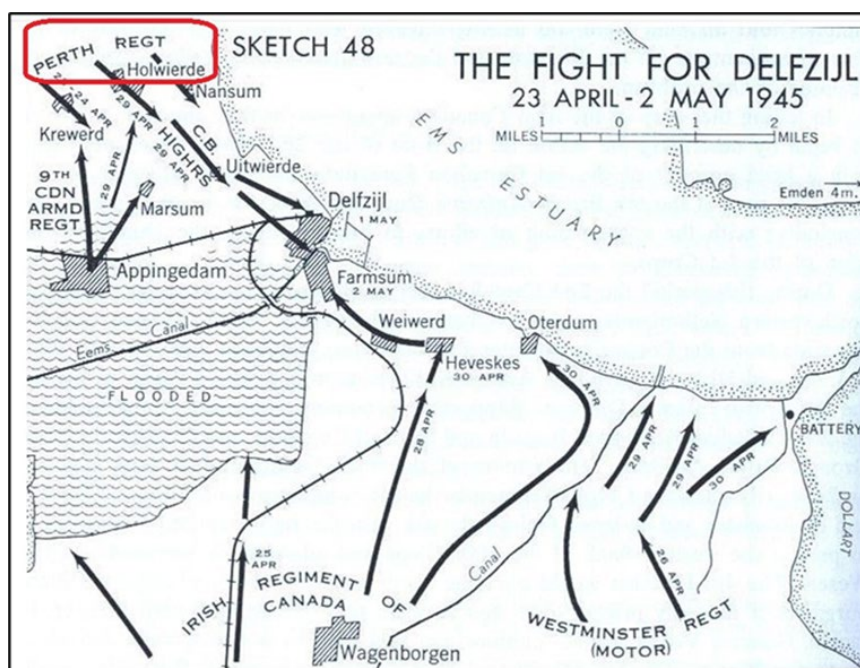
After that, the Perth Regiment had a hard time in the fighting in the so-called "Delfzijl Pocket".

Jack's Regiment was deployed to clear the outer defense of Delfzijl.

A tremendous undertaking against strongly fortified positions, manned by some 2700 enemy troops, and strongly supported by naval guns set up in concrete positions.

With little artillery support available, the Regiment attacked and captured the towns Krewerd, Holwierde and Nansum.

Nansum in particular was a difficult obstacle to take.



Quote April 28, 1945:

Perth Regiment

This regiment once again experiences a day of heavy fighting and shelling. They make little progress, but eventually manage to capture coastal battery Nansum.

The regiment captured the fort on the dike above the latter village. More than 800 Germans were captured and the outer defenses were breached.

Quote April 29, 1945:

Perth Regiment

Nansum is completely captured, after which the unit sets up bivouac between Nansum and Holwierde to recover from the heavy fighting of the previous days. They are still fired upon from Delfzijl, but no further combat actions take place that day.

On April 28, 1945, during the fighting along the dike towards Nansum, John Theodore (Jack) MacMillan was fatally wounded. He was given a temporary grave in Wirdum, west of Appingedam.

In the church of Holwierde there is a plaque commemorating the fallen (50) in the northern sector of the Delfzijl Pocket.

Jack's name is also mentioned on it. (The spelling is not entirely correct).

Jack's final resting place is the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten.

Reference: 5-B-14.

He was awarded:

1939-1945 Star; Italy Star; France-Germany Star; War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.

