

July 24, 2015      George M Ryan 02 E 08      Memories to

| Attached is a brief recollection of George Ryan, as provided by his last living sibling, Nora Ryan- Somers, who resides in L'Ange-Gardien, Quebec (adjacent to Buckingham Quebec).

George was one of 8 children born to Dennis Ryan and Mary Gahagan. The Ryan children in chronological order included: Margaret, Frank, Carmel, Philip, Stella, George, Nora and Patrick.

Philip died at 7 months of age, due to illness, but Nora remains uncertain of his exact cause of death. Mary Gahagan, their mother, died following the birth of Patrick in 1927. At that time, because the children were so very young, some of them were required to be moved from home to be cared for by relatives. Margaret, due to poor health, was relocated to live at their maternal grandparents' home, (the Gahagans), in West Templeton (Quinnville), Quebec, approximately 2 miles from the Ryan homestead. Frank, Carmel and Stella remained on the farm with their father. George left to stay with his aunt and uncle (Dennis's sister and brother named Elizabeth and Thomas Ryan) in Thurso, Quebec. Nora was placed with Dennis's sister, Mrs. John Dwyer and her family in nearby Perkins, Quebec, and Patrick, the newborn baby, moved to Buckingham, Quebec, to live with their aunt Ellen and uncle George Murphy (Dennis's sister). Months later, Nora was also moved to live in Buckingham at Murphys', and later she relocated to live in Thurso with George.

Nora reflected on a humorous memory of the time when she and George were living in Thurso. One day, she and George were sent to the neighbor, Miss McNulty, to be babysat while their aunt Lizzy, went to Thurso for groceries. It so happened that Miss McNulty was making dandelion wine that day. So, during their time with Miss McNulty, they carefully observed the process and made up their minds that they

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bringing meat to the Ottawa Market for sale. Their trip by horse and sleigh included an approximate 6 hour journey from their farm in West Templeton to the city. She recalled that their biggest concern in going to the market was that they would find themselves crossing the Interprovincial Bridge from Gatineau to Ottawa at the same time as the train. For support, Nora and George would try to meet up with a group of local farmers for the bridge crossing in order that they could guide and assist them if the horses became spooked by the sounds and vibration of the train on the bridge. While they were quite young at the time, they also knew enough to place side blinders on their horses as they crossed that dreaded bridge.

George was very a sociable fellow who loved to listen to the radio, play cards and checkers by the hour, with neighbors in the evenings. His friends included mainly local people, including the Robinson and Kehoe families. During the summer months, when time allowed he and his siblings would travel around mainly by bicycle, and later, when his older brother Frank, bought a 1929 Ford car, George quickly learned to drive that car. He also taught Nora to drive. During the winter months, the family would extensively use a horse and sleigh for transportation. Their weekly trips included going to church in West Templeton (Quinnville) Quebec, buying groceries in the local town of Perkins, and periodically, travelling to the Ottawa Market.

Nora fondly remembered that the night before George departed for war service (leaving by train from Union Station in Ottawa, Ontario bound for the coast in Nova Scotia), for the first time in their family history, George and all of his siblings stayed together at their family home in West Templeton (Quinnville). Together with George's girlfriend, Viola Thompson, the next evening, everyone saw George off at Union Station.



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would also like to sometime try their hand at "bootlegging". The following day, when back home at the Ryans', while Lizzy was busy, together, Nora and George picked a basket of dandelions and placed them in a big crock with water. They then added 5 pounds of Lizzy's precious sugar as they had seen done by Miss McNulty. Needless to say, when Lizzy discovered that her sugar was missing, and the purpose for which it was used, Nora and George found themselves in deep trouble. At the ages of approximately 6 and 7, their "bootlegging career" came to a quick end!

George attended school in Thurso, Quebec, and later in West Templeton (Quinnville) near their homestead. Nora attended two years of school in Buckingham and later joined her family, along with George at a country school in West Templeton (Quinnville). When George was approximately 16 years of age his father died at home of a heart condition, and the children were left to fend for themselves.

George remained on the farm with Nora and Frank. Together, they carved out a living there while also doing odd jobs to pay for the mortgage on their farm. The other siblings mostly worked in the city, and they would regularly visit Frank, Nora and George on the farm. The youngest, Patrick, continued to live in Buckingham, and then attended his senior schooling in Ottawa. At a young age, George left the farm to work in Havelock, Ontario, as an electrician's assistant. From there, he left for western Canada where he officially joined the Essex Scottish Regiment. According to Nora's recollection, he was trained in the Forces as a driver.

George was a jolly, yet somewhat quiet type of guy. Together with his siblings, he worked very hard on the farm and he participated in all facets of life in the country, including helping to run the household, (i.e. prepared meals, baked) as well as he did outside work, milking cows, etc. He cut wood and Nora also remembers herself and George

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While overseas, George regularly communicated with his siblings at home, often expressing concern about how they were fairing out in the country, and particularly on the farm. He greatly appreciated care packages, and for the most part, indicated that he was tolerating his war assignment quite well. In one letter, he suggested that he was confident that the war would soon end and that he would be back in Canada for his sister, Stella's wedding, that was planned for June, 1945. Tragically, two months before the wedding, George was killed in action on April, 4th of that year, just before the war ended. His family was informed about his death on April 11, 1945. They were devastated.

Years later, his siblings, Carmel, Frank, Nora, Patrick and his wife, Nora, and Margaret's son, Arnold, travelled together to Holten to visit George's grave. Since then, other nieces and nephews, and also a great-niece and great-nephews have visited his grave site.

Pictures of George and his medals remain proudly displayed in a shadow box, in Nora's quarters near Buckingham, Quebec. His entire family in Canada continue to be very proud of him and his service to Canada.