



William James Sullivan was born on October 13, 1911, in Mile End, London, England.

The 1911 census records reveal, William James's parents had another son, George Albert, (3 years) and a daughter, Ellen, old 5 years by then. The family was Roman Catholic.

In the 1910s, Mile End was a densely populated working-class district in London's East End. Characterized by deep poverty and overcrowding, the area was simultaneously the heart of a vibrant immigrant community and a crucial cradle for significant social and religious reform movements.

According to family lore, the children were orphaned at a young age, and the boys were sent to Canada as so-called 'British Home Children'.

There is no evidence to confirm whether they were truly orphans.

William James's marriage certificate lists the name of his father but not the name his mother; however, his brother's 1948 marriage certificate lists the names of both parents.

The 'British Home Children' were boys and girls from the United Kingdom who were sent to British dominions and colonies.

The 'orphan' myth:

Although they were generally referred to as orphans, only about 10% to 12% had actually lost both parents. Many children came from struggling families who had been misled into believing their children would receive an education and a fresh start.

PARTICULARS to be supplied by the person solemnizing the MARRIAGE

016532

(The marriage shall take place on the 25th inst. at 10 o'clock, A.M.)

REGISTERED GENERAL
SOLICITOR
NOV 1 1914
25 2 10 10

BROTHROW		BRIDE	
NAME AND SURNAMES	William James Sullivan ✓	Marie Juliette Luette Jeunissen	
AGE	26 1/2 1911	24 1/2	
RESIDENCE WHERE MARRIED	Camp of Widdifield	Camp of Widdifield	
PLACE OF BIRTH	Mids End, Old Lane, South Western Cochet, Birmingham, England	Sudbury, Eng.	
EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION	Bachelor (Student, M.B.B.S. Bristol)	Domestic Housewife	
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE	Roman Catholic	Roman Catholic	
LOCAL RESIDENCE	George Albert Sullivan	Jeffrey Jeunissen	
PROFESSION OF RELIGION	Methodist	Methodist	
DATE OF MARRIAGE	25th inst.	25th inst.	
WITNESSES	Widdifield	Sudbury	

I certify the above named parties were married by me at Widdifield
in the County of Widdifield this 25 day of October 1914

Registration Certificate number 4405

Signature G. D. Morley

Roman Catholic Denomination

Address Widdifield

Can bride read? Yes write Yes

Can bride read? Yes write Yes

THIS FORM NOT TO BE USED WHEN MARRIAGE IS BY LICENSE

It is unclear when William James and his brother exactly arrived in Canada.

What is certain, however, is that their sister Ellen remained in London.

Family accounts indicate that the brothers were initially placed somewhere in Quebec; although separated, they were reportedly able to maintain contact. It is also clear that they were both placed in reasonably good homes and were not exploited, as so many others were.

William James eventually settled in North Bay, Ontario. He worked on the construction of the airfield. (*It officially opened in late 1938.*)

On July 18, 1940, William James enlisted at the district depot in North Bay for active service in the Canadian Army.

Records show that he was married to Julia Sullivan and that they had two sons: Donald William James, aged three, and Ronald Robert, who was just over a year old at the time.

The marriage certificate records that he married Marie Juliette Loretta Jeanjeaneau—her official maiden name—on October 29, 1934. She was from Sudbury, Ontario.

William James also underwent an initial medical examination. The report lists no unusual details, noting only the standard information: height 5'3"; weight: 140 lbs; brown hair and brown eyes.

His file was later updated to note his extensive experience in agricultural work and his reputation as a horse trader.

It was also confirmed that he had worked on the construction of the airfield.

William James remained in Toronto from the time he enlisted in July 1940 until February 1943.

During this period, he was assigned to the Home War Establishment (H.W.E.).

The Canadian Home War Establishment comprised the military forces and the industrial and civil defense networks tasked with defending Canadian territory.

In December 1940 and July 1941, he was hospitalized for a week due to inflammation of the throat.

In February 1943, William James was transferred to Camp Borden in Ontario. He remained there until August 1944.

His file also notes the birth of their third son, Peter John, on March 18, 1943.

In May 1943, his wife moved with the children to North Bay, Ontario.

In July 1943, William James was granted a few weeks' leave.

At Borden, William James is shuffled back and forth between various units, each time with the duty designation 'f.a.p.'.

This stands for 'for all purposes'—meaning he could be deployed wherever he was needed.

In late 1943, he was involved in, among other things, the fifth fundraising campaign for the sale of war bonds. Many military personnel purchased one or more bonds.



In 1943, Canada launched two large-scale fundraising campaigns for 'Victory Loans'—the fourth (May 1943) and the fifth (October–November 1943)—utilizing promotional parades, displays of military equipment, and domestic mobile 'convoys' to encourage civilians to buy war bonds.

The fifth Victory Loan (October–November 1943) raised over \$1,500,000.

In March 1944, William James spent a brief period in the hospital. No specific record was made of this, so the reason remains unknown.

The circumstances regarding his personal life in early June 1944 are unclear.

He was granted seven days of 'compassionate leave'.

This is best described as:

'Leave for urgent personal reasons, enabling an individual to deal with pressing, critical personal or family situations—such as the death, funeral, or life-threatening illness of a close relative.'

In August 1944, William James left Camp Borden and was transferred to Orillia, Ontario, for basic infantry training.

Two months later, he was posted to Ipperwash, Ontario, for advanced infantry training.

In December 1944, he was granted a week of embarkation leave before heading to Camp Debert in Nova Scotia. This was where the troops, destined for deployment to Europe, were assembled.

William James boarded a troopship on New Year's Day, 1945.

He set foot on land in the United Kingdom on January 10, 1945.

He was assigned to a reinforcement battalion, by plane he was brought to the combat zone on the mainland of Europe on February 17, 1945.

On February 28, 1945, William James was assigned to the Algonquin Regiment. Operation Blockbuster had just begun; its objective was to force a crossing of the Rhine.

The Algonquin Regiment, part of the 4th Canadian Armoured Division, saw action during the assault on the Hochwald Gap in Germany.

They faced fierce fighting and heavy casualties, notably during operations around Udem and the village of Veen in Germany.

William James evidently survived these actions unscathed; his file contains no records to the contrary.

On March 31, 1945, the regiment crossed the Rhine.

The regiment then moved into Dutch territory.

They advanced via Millingen to Lochem (April 2, 1945) and continued toward Bornerbroek (April 4, 1945). A confrontation with the enemy in and near the city of Wierden was imminent.

The town was heavily defended, despite the fact that Canadian troops had already bypassed it to the east and north.

During the night of April 5–6, 1945, the Algonquin Regiment launched an attack on Wierden, supported by tanks from the 4th Canadian Armoured Division.

Assault after assault was repelled. Air Force Typhoons were called in to engage enemy positions.

On Saturday, April 7, 1945—the fateful day for William James Sullivan—all Canadian attacks stalled in the face of heavy, accurate artillery fire.

There was no choice but to call in the Typhoons for support once again, though even that did not yield immediate success.

By the night of April 8–9, 1945, the Germans had withdrawn.

After five days of fighting, Wierden was liberated on April 9, 1945.



Algonquin Regiment moving forward near the Hochwald Forest, Udem, Germany, March 1st, 1945.

Photo by Jack H. Smith. Department of National Defence / National Archives of Canada, PA-192879.

Lance Corporal William James Sullivan was temporarily buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Wierden.

On 4 February 1946, he was laid to rest at the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten: Plot 5, Row A, Grave 10.

He was awarded the following:

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

The inscription on his headstone reads:

**A happy home we once enjoyed
how sweet the memory still
Death has left a loneliness
The world can never fill.**



For his wife Julia, the handling of the aftermath of the death of her husband took an unpleasant turn.

When she opened the package supposed to contain her late husband's personal effects, she discovered items belonging to someone else.

She lodged a complaint by letter and returned the package.

On December 4, 1948, Julia remarried George Albert, the brother of William James.

She also had a son with him, who was named George.

Bronnen:

*www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com;
www.canada.ca/library-archives; wikipedia,
wartimesproject.com; War Diary Algonquin
Regiment.*

