

MELANCTHON IN WORLD WAR 2

With the outbreak of War in August, 1939 Canada would again find itself embroiled in a World War. Canada would formally declare war on Germany on September 10, 1939. It would declare war on Italy on June 11, 1940 and Japan on December 7, 1941. Over the next years through 1945 Canada would enlist over 1.1 million men and women into the various military services, although over one-half would never leave the country. The population of Canada in 1940 was just over 11.5 million. Of the many who served over 42,000 would pay the ultimate sacrifice and another 55,000 would suffer casualties.

Melancthon Township would do its part. With a population of less than three thousand residents approximately 120 would enlist. Unfortunately there would be sixteen who did not come home, four of whom were sons of fathers who had served in World War 1. The following summary provides a glimpse into the lives of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. The stories of those who "came home" will be told at a later date.

The stories are shared, for the most part, based on the order of their deaths chronologically from 1940 through 1945 with the initial five stories being of those who served in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

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Robson Thomas Jewitt



Robson Thomas Jewitt was born on March 15, 1918 near Thamesville, Ontario. He was the son of Reverend Thomas Jewitt and Edith Burgess. Reverend Jewitt was a Presbyterian Church minister (after 1925 he became a United Church minister) and his life and that of his young family would travel across Ontario. In 1921 the Jewitts resided in Kent County and according to the 1931 Census the family resided in Englehart in northern Ontario. It was well into the 1930s before the family took up residence in Hornings Mills, Melancthon.

Robson Jewitt had completed his formal schooling by 1935 and he obtained employment working in construction. With the outbreak of war Robson decided to enlist as he sought to serve in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He enlisted on June 25, 1940 at Trenton, Ontario. His flight training took place initially in Trenton where he received his flight Sergeant wings. He would be assigned to then train new recruits how to fly being based in Malton, Ontario.

By way of background the Canadian government had signed an agreement with the British government on December 17, 1939 in which it undertook to establish and operate flight training facilities across Canada. The training facilities would provide training to flight personnel from various Commonwealth countries and some European countries. Canada with the agreement to establish and fund the operations obtained from the British government the recognition of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Over the course of the War the British Commonwealth Air Training Program would train over 130,000 flight personnel with programs in Elementary Flying Training, Service Flying and in Bombing and Gunnery School. Over 73,000 of those trained were Canadians. The sad fact was that during the training exercises there were 856 who died. Robson Jewitt was one of those who died.

On December 21, 1940 Sergeant Robson Thomas Jewitt while training another pilot near the Malton Airport would lose his life when the Finch aircraft collided with another aircraft resulting in both Robson

Jewitt and his trainee being killed.

Robson Thomas Jewitt's funeral service was conducted at Trinity United Church, Shelburne. He would be buried in the Shelburne Cemetery in what became the family plot as his parents and brother would later join him.



Alvin Ernest Lighthouse



Alvin Ernest Lighthouse was born on December 3, 1921 at Hornings Mills. His parents were Herbert Lighthouse and Elizabeth Morrow. His mother had been born in Conover and raised in Melancthon Township while Alvin's father was born and raised in Mulmur Township where he farmed his whole life. Following his parents wedding in Creemore in 1905 the family would live in Mulmur and where Alvin was raised together with his six brothers and one sister.

Alvin attended the Beech Valley elementary school through 1936 and Honeywood High School in 1936-37. After school he was involved by necessity in helping his father farm over the next four years. He would make some big changes in his life in 1941 as he relocated to Winnipeg, Manitoba obtaining work as a stockroom clerk working for Trans Canada Airline and on October 21, 1941 he married Lillian Elizabeth Campbell.

On August 10, 1942 he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force for training and service as an Air Gunner. He would receive his training in Brandon, Manitoba. On January 26, 1943 he would embark for England, arriving on February 4, 1943.

Immediately on his arrival he was assigned to serve with Bomber Command in England.

On April 14, 1943, while conducting a training exercise in England, Alvin Lighthouse together with his five crewmates in the Wellington bomber, were killed in a crash in Gloucester, England. He and the crew would be buried in the Cirencester Cemetery where a total of fourteen World War 2 servicemen are buried.

On April 20, 1943 Alvin Lighthouse's family was advised of his death. The news of his death would be shared in both the Shelburne Free Press and the Orangeville Banner.

Alvin Ernest Lighthouse would be remembered with his name on the Shelburne Cenotaph, the Hornings Mills cenotaph and on the Honour Roll in the Presbyterian Church, Hornings Mills.

Two of Alvin's brothers, James and Harry, had also enlisted and served to serve in the War.

His family's connections to Melancthon were recognized with the burial of Alvin's parents in 1952 and 1956 in the Hornings Mills cemetery.



Cirencester Cemetery, England

Willis Henry Armstrong



Willis Henry Armstrong was born August 5, 1920 in Riverview, Melancthon. His parents were Elmer Roy Armstrong and Gertrude Henry, both of whom had long connections to Melancthon Township. The Armstrong family were farmers. Willis had one brother and five sisters.

Willis attended Section School #10 between 1925 and 1931 before attending Shelburne High School from 1932 to 1938. He was actively involved in sports according to his military personnel file. Following his graduation from school he worked on the family farm and obtained a job as an egg grader with Canada Packers in Shelburne. He served with the Lorne Scots Regiment until July 1, 1940 before enlisting.

In July 1, 1940 Willis enlisted with the 48th Highlander regiment. He would receive his early training at Camp Borden through July, 1941. He then transferred and trained with the Royal Canadian Air Force through July, 1942. His training was initially at Valcartier and Victoriaville, Quebec before completing his training as a Pilot in Moncton, New Brunswick.

With the rank of Sergeant, Pilot Willis Armstrong would embark from Halifax for England in August, 1942. He was assigned to the 3rd Squadron for further training in at RAF Base, Cranswick, Yorkshire, England.

On July 11, 1943 while conducting a weather test flight the plane would crash and Pilot Willis Henry

Armstrong would die. He would be buried at the Harrowgate (Stonefall) Cemetery, Yorkshire, England. The inscription his family would choose for his headstone "Until We Stand Divided We Fall".

His family would receive a telegram on the day following the crash to advise of his death.

The family and community would remember Willis Henry Armstrong at a memorial service conducted in Riverview. He would be further remembered with his name on the Shelburne cenotaph and with his name, together with two other Riverview soldiers, on a memorial bible in the Riverview church.

Ernest Caldwell McLean



Ernest Caldwell McLean was born on September 22, 1921. His parents were John Caldwell and Agnes May McLean. He had a brother who was two years older and a sister two years younger. The family farmed in Melancthon, just north of Shelburne.

Ernest attended Section School # 1, known as the Silk School, from 1928 until 1934 before attending Shelburne High school from 1934-1939. His military personnel file indicates that he had participated in sports, particularly baseball, prior to his enlistment.

He enlisted on February 26, 1941 in Toronto with the RCAF, although his military personnel file has documents with some different dates, in Toronto. Through until July, 1941 his interest and training was directed to becoming a pilot but by July, 1941 he recognized that being a pilot was not his interest as he apparently had some eyesight limitations. Thereafter the focus of his training was on becoming a Flight Sergeant Air Observer for which he became qualified by January 17, 1942.

On March 3rd, 1942 he left Canada for England. He would be assigned in September, 1942 to the 101st Squadron of the Royal Air Force based at RAF Holme on Spalding Moor, East Yorkshire, England to be a crew member on the Lancaster Bombers. The primary function of the Squadron was to provide anti-submarine warfare and reconnaissance.

On December 8, 1942 the mission was to assist in a mine laying operation in the waters off of Denmark.

The Avro Lancaster and the crew of seven never returned. Apparently the plane had been hit and damaged by enemy flak causing the plane to crash near Esbjerg, Denmark with the death of three crew members while the remaining four were taken as prisoners of war. Ernest was one of those who was killed.

Ernest Caldwell McLean was buried in the cemetery in Esbjerg (Fourfelt) Cemetery, Denmark. His family would have the inscribed on the headstone "Ever Held in Proud Remembrance".

His parents were notified of his death by telegram. The news would be shared with the community and reported in the local newspaper. His name would later be inscribed on the Shelburne Cenotaph.

His parents remained in Melancthon until their deaths when they were buried in the Shelburne Cemetery.



Esbjerg (Fourfelt) Cemetery, Denmark

Robert Francis “Frank” Galbraith



Robert Francis Galbraith was born on October 1, 1922. His parents were Robert Galbraith and Francis Irene Kirby had married in Angus, Ontario before eventually locating to E1/2 Lot 3 Concession 1, Melancthon. He had one brother and two sisters. His father, born in Wellington County, had served Canada in World War 1. His father according to the information in Robert's military file was employed as a Melancthon Township Clerk.

Robert attended Section School #1, the Silk School, in Melancthon between 1929 and 1936 before attending the Shelburne High school until 1939. His military personnel file indicates that Robert had an interest in various sports, including winter sports as well as hunting. He apparently was an expert marksman. He further served in the Lorne Scots Regiment in Dufferin Peel between 1940 and 1941 until his enlistment.

Following his formal schooling he would obtain employment as a shipping clerk in Toronto through until his enlistment on August 6, 1941 with the RCAF. He sought to become a pilot. He attained the rank of Pilot officer by June, 1942. He was then transferred to a Base on Sea Island, British Columbia before being assigned to the American base in Alaska, USA through until August, 1943. On December 5, 1942 he attained the rank of Flying Officer. He would later be recognized for his efforts while serving to assist the US forces in the north Pacific with the award of the US Air Medal by the American government. His

military personnel file discloses a report dated July 29, 1943 commending him for his exceptional performance and that he would later qualify for a flight command position.

In September, 1943, having moved to the top of the list for a position overseas in the European War theatre, he embarked with the RCAF from Halifax for England. He would be based for a time with the Typhoon Squadron, Red Hill, Surrey, England before being assigned to the 181st Fighter squadron, RAF first in France and then in Holland. He was flying the Spitfires and Hurricane fighter aircraft and had attained the rank of Flight Lieutenant. On April 5, 1945 Robert piloted his last mission.

On April 5, 1945 he flew an armed reconnaissance mission directed over the Lingen-Cloppenburg area of Germany. A letter dated June 21st, 1947 from the War Department of the RCAF that forms part of Robert's file discloses details of the mission and Robert's role. He was involved in included multiple attacks, while under heavy enemy anti-aircraft fire, on German trains. The letter describes that ultimately Robert's plane was hit by enemy flak and exploded on impact in the early morning hours of April 5, 1945 near Hartlage, Germany.

Robert's death was reported to his parents and in the local newspapers but the RCAF had not located Robert's remains. It was only in 1949 that the military advised Robert's parents that an American recovery unit had located Robert's body buried in a cemetery near the crash site. The military advised the family that Robert Francis Galbraith had been re-interred in the Rheinberg British Military Cemetery, Germany, a cemetery honouring over three thousand servicemen, many of them flight crew members of the RAF and Allied forces. His parents had the words "Until the Day Dawn and the Shadows Flee Away" inscribed on his headstone.

He would be remembered for the years to come with his name on the Shelburne Cenotaph and by a Marker at his parent's headstone in the Shelburne Cemetery. His name was also inscribed on the Honour Roll at St Paul's Anglican Church, Shelburne.

Robert John Maxwell



One reason Canadians honour those who served Canada in the different Wars is to recognize the sacrifice and commitment each “soldier” made in the war effort whether the individual served in the front lines of battle, in the various corps providing medical, nursing or dental care, or in providing administrative duties required and in some cases remained in Canada fulfilling any number of necessary functions and in some instances simply committed to service as long as they were able. In some instances even those caught up in preparing to serve in the conflict had their life interrupted by causes other than war. Robert John Maxwell was one such soldier.

Robert John Maxwell was born July 4, 1921 near Corbetton. His parents were William Maxwell and Anne Robinson, both from Melancthon. William and Anne had married in Dundalk in 1919 after William had returned from serving Canada in World War 1. Robert had two brothers and two sisters. Robert attended school until he was age thirteen, leaving as he was needed to assist the family. Robert’s mother passed away in April, 1936. Robert would work as a truck mechanic in Dundalk for approximately three years before obtaining work in Toronto with Atlantic & Pacific working in the warehouse.

On October 5, 1942 Robert enlisted with the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps. He would do his training at Camp Borden holding the rank of Trooper. On April 17, 1943, with the requisite permission of the Canadian military obtained on April 10th, he married Elizabeth Grant in Toronto. He would continue to train at Camp Borden preparing for the anticipated embarkation to serve in Europe. On March 15, 1944 he celebrated the birth of his daughter Caroline.

Robert's military personnel file reveals on Robert's return from personal leave no doubt related to the birth of his daughter that he took ill being admitted to the Camp Borden hospital in late March, 1944. On April 5, 1944 he would take a sudden turn for the worse and he died, the apparent cause being liver failure.

Robert John Maxwell was buried in the St Paul's Anglican Church cemetery in Dundalk.

James "Buddy" Holford Galloway Dodd



C. H. G. DODD
Killed

Photo from newspaper reporting his death

James Holford Galloway Dodd, apparently otherwise known as Buddy, was born on November 22, 1922 in Orangeville. His parents were Richard Holford Dodd and Eva Galloway who had married in 1918. He had three brothers and three sisters. The family relocated from Orangeville to live in Melancthon for approximately six years, including the years 1931-1935 when James attended Section School #9, the Mills school, where he was a classmate of Harold Whitten whose story is herein..

Following his leaving school he and the family relocated to Toronto. James would obtain employment as a truck driver.

On December 14, 1942 James enlisted in Toronto. He would do his training at Camp Borden with the Armoured Corps being qualified as a driver holding the rank of Trooper. In July, 1943 he would be taken on strength in England with the Canadian Grenadier Guards , Royal Canadian Artillery Corps holding the rank of Guardsman.

On July 20, 1944, while continuing his training in England, he would have his life ended as the military truck he was operating in the dockyards of London was struck by a flying German bomb. The Flying Bombs were part of the German attack strategy launched on June 13, 1944 following the Normandy landing of Allied military on June 6, 1944 directed at London, England. The German flying bombs, known as V-1, were known by those in England as the Doodlebug or Buzz Bomb. The flying bomb attacks would

continue until August, 1944 when the Allied forces overran the German launch sites in France. The Flying Bombs were deadly and destructive.

James Holford Galloway Dodd was buried in the Brookwood Military Extension Cemetery, Surrey, England. His parents would have the following words inscribed on his headstone "And While He Lies in Peacefull Sleep, His Memory We Will Always Keep".

His parents would receive the news of his death and, pursuant to the Will he had signed on December 17, 1942, thereafter his mother would receive the Wartime Gratuity of \$250.17 representing his outstanding pay and a "gratuity" calculated based upon the number of days he had spent in training in Canada and the days in England.



John Sprott Lusty



John “Jay” Sprott Lusty was born on September 29, 1922 in Redickville, Melancthon. He was the son of Charles Lusty and Victoria Dynes, both of whom had been born in the Redickville area of Melancthon and who had married in Hornings Mills. The Lusty family left Redickville for York Township in June, 1926. John had one brother and one sister.

John enlisted with the Toronto Scottish Regiment in May, 1941 having served in the Reserves from February 20, 1941 until May 23, 1941. He would leave with the Regiment from Halifax for England in November, 1941. He would continue to train in England being taken on strength by the Queen’s Own Rifles Regiment on August 6, 1943. As with most of the Canadian Army the years through until June, 1944 were largely confined to England, excepting the Dieppe Raid in 1942 and the contingent that formed part of the Italy campaign starting in the fall, 1943.

On June 6, 1944 John would land with the Queen’s Own Rifles Regiment as part of the D Day landing at Juno Beach. The War Diary for the Regiment reflects that in early June the Canadian forces were preparing for what they knew was coming. On June 5th, at approximately 11 pm, the Regiment embarked from the Southhampton harbour in rough sea, before landing on Juno Beach at approximately 7:45 am June 6, 1944 and thus launching the D Day landing and Normandy invasion.

Over the ensuing days the Regiment would move forward as part of the Allied forces concentrated attack. On June 11, 1944, at approximately 1 pm, the Regiment was engaged with a German counter attack described in the War Diary as “all hell broke loose” with the enemy mortar and machine guns. The Diary noted that the Queen’s Own Rifles sustained numerous casualties.

On June 11, 1944 John Sprott Lusty paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The Lusty family would receive notice of John’s death including a formal letter dated July 5, 1944. The news of John’s death was reported in the July 6, 1944 issue of the Shelburne Free Press.

Rifleman John Sprott Lusty was buried in a temporary grave in Les Saullets, France. He would in January, 1946 be reburied in the Canadian Military Cemetery at Beny-sur-Mer. His headstone is inscribed with the words from his family "He Liveth Twice Who Lives His First Life Well".

John Sprott Lusty is remembered on the Shelburne Cenotaph and is referenced on his parent's headstone in the Waterloo Parkview Cemetery.



With the Normandy invasion following DDay well underway in Europe the Canadians found themselves fully engaged on both the Italian and Northwest Europe fronts. One day in August, 1944, August 28th, would join two soldiers from Melancthon Township in each of Italy and France.

Norman Albert Bell



Norman Albert Bell was born on February 27th, 19 in Badjeros, according to his military personnel file. His parents were Albert Leslie Bell and Minnie May Curran, who had married in Shrigley in 1919. Norman, the oldest child, would have five brothers and one sister.

Norman apparently attended school in Redickville until grade 8, leaving school in 1938 to work on the family farm for the next three years which was then near Whitfield. In 1941 he relocated to Toronto where he obtained employment as a press operator in the Aluminum Goods & Munitions factory, making munitions for the war effort.

He would remain employed until he enlisted in Toronto on January 6, 1944, just shy of his twentieth birthday. On completing his basic training Norman would find himself embarking from Halifax for England on July 18, 1944, arriving July 27, 1944.

On August 3, 1944 he was taken on strength by the Royal Winnipeg Rifles as a rifleman, joining his unit in France on August 15, 1944. The Rifles were part of the 7th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Canadian Division.

Within two weeks, on August 28th, Norman would die while being part of the Rifles efforts as they liberated the citizens of the municipality of Authieux sur Port Saint Quen, France from the German occupiers.

Norman would be buried with twelve of his comrades in an orchard in Anthieux with the promise of the Town Mayor in a letter dated November 1, 1944 directed to the families of those soldiers who had died that the townfolk would attend to the graves as if the twelve were members of their family. Norman, in fact, would be reburied in October, 1947 to the Calais Canadian Military Cemetery in Inglevert, France, some fourteen kilometers from Calais, France.

On Saturday September 9th, 1944 Norman's parents would receive a telegraph from the War Department advising of Norman's death. The news was immediately shared with the community as reflected in the newspaper publications the following week.

Norman would be remembered with his name being on the Shelburne Cenotaph.



William Alexander Allan



William Alexander Allan was born on March 11, 1917 in Riverview, Melancthon Township. His parents were George Allan and Emma Mary Moffatt, both having been born in Melancthon. He had two brothers and four sisters.

William attended Section School #15 in Riverview. He would work as a farm labourer following his schooling.

On January 8, 1942 William enlisted with the 48th Highlander Regiment in Hamilton, Ontario. He would receive his basic training through June 1, 1942 before leaving from Halifax for England on June 2, 1942. He would remain in England through until June 13, 1943. On June 14, 1943 the Regiment travelled to Italy to be part of the Italian campaign with the Canadian Corps, landing in Sicily on July 10, 1943 before joining the push northward.

William would attain the rank of Lance Corporal in April, 1944 but chose to revert back to Private in July, 1944.

The Allied push northward was in a word, hard, with the German army fighting each step of the way through some very tough conditions and terrain.

The Regimental War Diary for August 28, 1944 indicates the Regiment was south of the River Foglia. The Diary commences with the entry for the day being "This day will, along with December 25th, 1943, go down as one of the most difficult and unpleasant that the Battalion has had to experience". For William Alexander Allan that statement would be the understatement as he would pay the ultimate sacrifice.

William would ultimately be buried at the Montecchio British Empire War Cemetery near Pessro, Italy. He would join eleven others from his Battalion who died between August 26th and September 4, 1944, including seven who had died on the 28th of August. The War Department sent a letter including a photo of the burial site on May 6, 1947. The Cemetery holds the remains of 582 soldiers, 289 being Canadian.

The news of William's death rocked not only his parents and family but the community with the news being shared in the Dundalk Herald on September 9, 1944. One brother, George Bremmer Allan was overseas serving in his Regiment and one can only imagine the impact of learning of his brother's death.

William Alexander Allan would be remembered by the Riverview community in the Riverview United Church and with the engraving of his name on the Shelburne Cenotaph to remember the sacrifice.

Gordon Macauley



Gordon Macauley was born October 20, 1919. He was the only child of Angus Macauley and Maude Coutts who had been married in 1913. Both parents had been born and raised in the greater Dundalk area. The 1921 Canada census indicates that they lived in Collingwood while the 1931 Census indicated that they were then living in Holland Township, Grey County.

Gordon had completed his elementary education and part of one year of high school before leaving school at age fourteen as he was needed to assist his father. His father was a carpenter and farmer. On Gordon leaving school he worked with his father for three years, then for two years as a Painter's helper before doing odd jobs for three years, all through the Depression years. In 1941 he obtained employment with Russell Brothers in Owen Sound working as a machinist on diesel engines.

His military file indicates that he had an interest in various sports and in music.

On October 8, 1942 Gordon enlisted in Owen Sound. He declared his occupation as a carpenter.

Gordon would undertake his basic training for the infantry before training as a Sapper for the Engineers. He would do his training in Owen Sound and Kingston. He would serve in Petawawa and in Chilliwack, British Columbia. On November 28, 1943 he would embark for England. From December, 1943 through June, 1944 he continued with his training and was qualified as a tradesperson (Carpenter) serving with the Royal Canadian Engineers, 2nd Field Company. On July 5, 1944 he shipped out from England to France with the rank of Sapper. The Engineers were responsible for all manner of Army requirements, including dealing with sweeping for mines left by the enemy.

Through September, 1944, according to a tribute to Gordon Macauley on the website of the Association of Canadian Military Engineers, the Engineers were involved in clearing the routes through to Caen, bridging the Oren River and clearing the Channel ports of debris and mines.

By October, 1944 the Canadian forces in northwest Europe were in Belgium, near Antwerp, pushing the Germans back. On October 5, 1944 Gordon Macauley was killed in action while attempting to clear mines left by the German Army. Apparently a civilian got too close, stepped on the mine resulting in the death of the civilian and Gordon Macauley.

Gordon was buried in a temporary cemetery in Hoboken, southwest of Antwerp, Belgium before being relocated to the Schoonselhof Cemetery, Antwerp, Belgium in September, 1946.

On October 6th, 1944 Gordon's family received a telegram advising of Gordon's death and then received the formal written notification dated November 2, 1944. The family had earlier in the War moved as an address change is noted on Gordon's military file.

News of Gordon's death was shared with the community, the Owen Sound newspaper sharing the news on October 14, 1944. The family was then living in the "Maple Valley" district, according to the newspaper which presumably meant the Maple Grove section of Melancthon just east of Dundalk. The Orangeville Banner would also share the news in its issue of October 26, 1944.

Robert Edgar Emerick



Robert Edgar Emerick was born September 18, 1918 in Hornings Mills. His parents were Hilton and Sadie Alice (Huggins) Emerick who had married in Hornings Mills in 1915. Robert had two sisters and also a brother, Jack, who would serve in the RCAF. The family continued to reside in Hornings Mills, his parents ultimately being buried in the Hornings Mills cemetery.

Following his attendance at school where he apparently, according to his military personnel file, completed his second year of high school in 1931 he had worked at a variety of jobs including at the Hornings Mills basket factory (1932-1936), Canada Steamship Line as an Able Seaman on the Great Lakes (1936-1939) and in construction with his father in 1939 as a stone mason.

Robert's military personnel file reveals that he had an interest in sports, hunting and fishing, had even some preliminary training as a pilot and experience as a truck driver prior to his enlistment in 1939. In addition he had served with the Peel & Dufferin militia in 1935-36.

On September 19, 1939, less than two weeks after Canada declared war on Germany, Robert enlisted in Oshawa, Ontario with the Ontario (Tank) Regiment. He would do his training at Camp Borden.

On June 10, 1940 Robert Edgar Emerick left Canada for England where he continued his training. His military file indicates that by December, 1940 Robert was expressing interest in being trained as a Pilot or Air Gunner but nothing appears to have happened with this interest as he would continue his

training, being qualified as a Cook by September, 1941 and a Signaller by September, 1942. His file indicates a series of transfers between the 48th Highlander regiment and the Unit responsible for specialty training.

His file indicates that he with his fellow soldiers in the 48th Highlanders went to Italy in October, 1943. He was appointed as an Acting Lance Corporal in December, 1943 and the appointment was permanent by mid-1944. In World War 2 the 48th Highlanders had 1865 soldiers serve in the Battalion, 1591 serving overseas on the fronts it fought, sustaining numerous casualties/deaths, both in Italy and in Europe.

The Canadian forces in Italy in 1943-44 were part of an Allied force pushing the German forces northward from Sicily and then through Italy. The 48th Highlanders were serving with the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade, 1st Canadian Division. The Italian forces surrendered in June, 1944 and the German forces were forced to retreat ever slowly, established what became known as the Gothic Line of defence. The geography of northern Italy was difficult, there being numerous rivers, valleys and mountains to navigate, with numerous villages and cities creating a very difficult front on which to fight in the fall, 1944. The War Diary for the Highlanders on October 16, 1944 described the scene as the Battalion moved forward. It describes an incident where one of its jeeps struck a "mine" causing serious injuries to the two occupants, one being a Signaller. One can only assume the Signaller was Robert for the records indicate it was on October 17th, 1944 he died of injuries sustained. A temporary grave would be "home" to twelve 48th Highlanders who paid the ultimate sacrifice between October 14th-18th, 1944 in that piece of Italy.

Robert's parents would receive the telegram no parent wanted to receive and a few weeks later received the official letter dated November 13, 1944 from the War Department. News of Robert's death would be shared in the Orangeville Banner, Shelburne Free Press and Toronto Star.

Robert's fiancée, Muriel Downey, also of Melancthon, would receive the news of her fiancée's death. She would never marry.

Robert's body would be relocated from the temporary cemetery to the Cesena British Empire War Cemetery, Italy in April, 1947, a cemetery that includes 775 graves of soldiers from Commonwealth countries. Robert's headstone would have the message from his family inscribed "I Often See His Smile as He Bade His last Goodbye and Left Home Forever in a Distant Land to Die".

Robert Edgar Emerick would be remembered his community with a church service on November 9, 1944. His name is also on the Honour Roll in the Hornings Mills Presbyterian Church, the Hornings Mills Cenotaph and the Shelburne Cenotaph. His parent's headstone in the Hornings Mills Cemetery references Robert.



Cesena British Empire War Cemetery, Italy

Harold Whitten



Harold Whitten was born August 28, 1922 in Corbetton, Melancthon Township. His parents were James Daniel Whitten and Margaret Campbell, both of whom had been born, married in 1920 and lived in Melancthon. Harold's father was a veteran of World War1. Harold would have two brothers and one sister.

Harold attended Section School #9, Melancthon through to Grade 8. He then joined his family in farming. His mother had died in 1929 when Harold was only seven. Harold's family lived, according to the 1931 Canada Census, on the family farm with Harold's grandmother, an uncle and an aunt and cousins.

On November 24, 1942 Harold enlisted. Following his basic training he would serve in Gander, Newfoundland from October, 1943 until July 12, 1944 with the Royal Canadian Artillery before shipping out to England on July 13, 1944. He would continue his training until he embarked for Europe on October 17, 1944 with the Canadian Scottish Regiment, an infantry battalion. He would not join his Unit until December, 1944 in Belgium.

The Canadian Scottish Regiment was part of the 3rd Canadian Division as it formed part of the Allied forces that were pressing the German forces back through Belgium, Holland and into Germany. By early February, 1945 the Canadian forces stood at the Rhine River, Germany, in an area known as Sinister Forest. In that section of the Rhine River the lands were susceptible to flooding putting any military force at a huge disadvantage. In February, 1945 the Allied offensive was named Operation Veritable as the Canadian forces allied with British and American forces to press forward, seeking to force the end of the War.

The Canadian Scottish Regiment in conjunction with other Canadian battalions action in mid February, 1945 was at Moyland Wood. The War Dairies indicate that the Canadian Scottish composed of four Companies with a mission from February 17-21st that had at least some serving on a section of land that was quite exposed and that would become known as Slaughter Hill, the battalion sustaining numerous casualties.

Harold Whitten on February 18, 1945 was one of the fatal casualties.

Harold's father would receive notice first that Harold was missing but the message was then updated that Harold was indeed dead. A formal letter dated March 21, 1945 would follow. News would then be shared with the community of Melancthon, including news articles in the Toronto Star and Owen Sound Sun. He would be remembered on the Shelburne Cenotaph.

Harold was buried in a temporary cemetery in Germany before being relocated to the Groesbeek Canadian Military Cemetery, Netherlands in August, 1946.



Groesbeek Canadian Military Cemetery, Netherlands

John Edward "Jack" Johnson



Jack Johnson was born on August 17, 1917 in Toronto. His parents were Harry Johnson and Sadie Jamieson, Sadie having been born near Shrigley in 1892. His parents would relocate to near Corbetton, after spending some time in Last Mountain, Saskatchewan, at least based on the 1921 Canada census. He had one brother and two sisters. His father Harry died when Jack was thirteen, in May, 1930. His mother would in 1932 remarry to Lewis Hudd, also of Corbetton. Jack's brother William would serve in the Canadian navy in WW2 while Jack's two sisters predeceased him.

In the years following his attending two years of high school in Dundalk, Jack worked in farming, lumbering and as a truck driver in the years leading up to 1940.

On June 7, 1939 Jack married Helen Bennington in Dundalk. They would have two children, Gloria born April 20, 1940 and, a child Jack would never see, Bethaline born February 14, 1945.

Jack served in the Lorne Scots from March 1, 1939 until November, 1939. He enlisted to serve in the War when he enlisted on March 26, 1940 in Toronto.

Jack's enlistment was to serve in the Canadian Dental Corps. Through until April 8, 1942 he served as a dental assistant in Canada in Toronto, Guelph and Camp Borden. On August 8, 1942 he shipped out to England serving as a dental assistant until August, 1943.

In September, 1943 he "re-enlisted" for Officer training which he undertook in October, 1943 in Brockville. He would attain the rank of 2nd Lieutenant on February 25, 1944 before being assigned for more training in Vernon, British Columbia. In September, 1944 he transferred to the Royal Hamilton

Light Infantry Regiment.

On December 25, 1944 Jack left Canada reporting for duty in England on January 9, 1945. He would travel to Europe to join his Regiment on February 17, 1945 in Germany to be part of Operation Veritable as the Canadian forces entered Germany at the Rhine River. The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry was part of the 2nd Canadian Division, who served with the 3rd Canadian Division and other Allied armies.

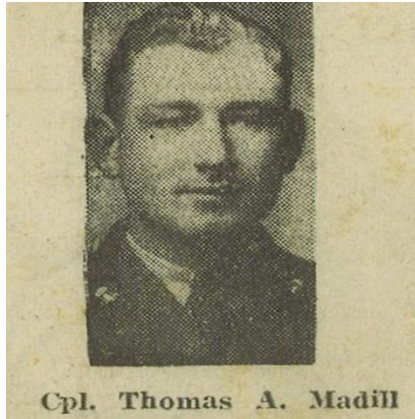
By February 21st the HHLI and the Essex Scottish Regiments were serving together as part of the Battle of Reichswald. Unfortunately for the Allied forces the American army was late to the battle so the German forces were able to focus on the Canadian forces. Over the following two weeks the Canadian and British units would have over 8,500 killed and wounded soldiers but on February 19th the RHLI and Essex Scottish sustained 329 casualties.

It is anticipated, although not certain, that it was on February 19th, only two days into his war, that Jack Johnson, who had just been promoted to the rank of Captain, sustained the injuries that would result in his death on February 28th, 1945, for the Germans had been beaten back and largely withdrawn by February 22nd, 1945.

News of Jack Johnson's was shared with the community in Melancthon, initially after the report of his being wounded and then on his death as the Shelburne Free press and Toronto Star reported. He would be remembered in a memorial bible at the Riverview United Church and on the Shelburne Cenotaph.

Jack Johnson would initially be buried in a cemetery near Cleve, Germany before being relocated to the Groesbeek Canadian Military Cemetery and Memorial, Netherlands, joining his Melancthon "neighbor" Harold Whitten and over 2600 other soldiers in graves together with another over 1000 soldiers on a Memorial with no known graves. The inscription on Jack's headstone "A Faithful Husband, One of the Best, May God Grant Him Eternal Rest".

Thomas Alva Madill



Thomas Alva Madill was born April 7, 1918 in Melancthon. His parents were William Stephen Madill and Jerusha Jane Hamilton. Both the Madill and Hamilton families had a long connection to Melancthon. Thomas would have eight brothers and one sister. One of his brothers would also serve in WW2 and one brother became Chief of Police for the Shelburne Police.

Thomas attended Section School #11 (the Mills school), Melancthon and following school worked on the family farm.

He enlisted to serve with the Lorne Scots Regiment in Orangeville on July 1, 1940. Following basic training he would serve with the Royal Canadian Artillery between May 9, 1941 and September, 1943 being stationed initially in New Brunswick, then in Newfoundland (Cape Spear and St. Johns) before serving in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In October, 1943 he was transferred, at his request, seeking service overseas. He would receive further and ongoing training in Canada before being sent to England in April, 1944.

He would be sent to France in early June, 1944 before being assigned and taken on strength by the Royal Winnipeg Rifles on July 7, 1944. He would thereafter serve in northwest Europe. His military service file reflects some promotions and reversion in ranks, Private to Acting Corporal, through the fall, 1944 before it is clear he held the rank of Lance Corporal as of February 8, 1945. During his service he would do duty as a Stretcher –bearer and also be Mentioned in Dispatches (bravery) for his rescue work of wounded soldiers while under fire.

Through late 1944 and into the spring of 1945 the Canadian army was pushing hard through Belgium, Holland and into Germany. The Royal Winnipeg Rifles, 1st Battalion, were serving with the 3rd Canadian

Division, as both the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions formed part of the Allied forces as they liberated the people of Holland.

On April 7th, as part of the ongoing ferocious battles being waged, the Royal Winnipeg Rifles were directed to cross the Schipbeek Canal to establish a bridgehead for launching an attack on the town of Deventer, Netherlands.

For Thomas Alva Madill it would be his battle, occurring on his 27th birthday. He sustained dangerous wounds to his chest and would five days later succumb to his injuries on April 12, 1945. Notice of his death would be received by his family and community. The tragedy of his death was magnified by the death of his father three months later, on July 16, 1945.

Thomas would be remembered by the community and his family. He was listed on the Honour Roll of the Hornings Mills Presbyterian Church, have his name inscribed on the Hornings Mills memorial cenotaph and his name referenced on the family headstone for his parents in the Shelburne Cemetery.

Thomas was buried initially at the Lochem Civil Cemetery, Netherlands before ultimately being relocated in June, 1946 to the Holten Canadian War Cemetery, many of the other 1300 soldiers being Canadian. His family would have inscribed on his headstone "He Hath Fought the Good Fight. He laid down his life for his Friends".



Holten Canadian War Cemetery, Netherlands

For those readers who might find it reading about the atrocities of war gone too far the following story is horrific. Any war, any death or casualty resulting is terrible but when the cruelty of man is superimposed the inhumanity pales. For readers who wish to read more about what happened to the Canadian soldiers who served in Hong Kong in 1941 you are referred to a book titled "The Damned, The Canadians at the Battle of Hong Kong, 1941-45" by Nathan Greenfield. The author references James Mortimer's experience at page 317 of the book.

James Lake Mortimer



James Lake Mortimer was born on June 1, 1921 at Star City, South Milford, Saskatchewan. His parents were John Wilson Latimer and Martha Snell who had married in Redickville in 1919. They would relocate to Saskatchewan for a few years but return in the 1920s to Melancthon. James would have one sister, Irene. The family on returning to Melancthon would rent a home, John providing farm labour for some years before the family established a bakery in Dundalk.

James attended Section School #13 (the Henderson school), Melancthon graduating from Grade 8 before attending a year of high school. He would then become a Baker, as he described himself on his eventual enlistment papers, although he also worked for two months for International Nickel as a surface worker in Lavoche, Ontario. He was also a very good hockey player playing for a period of time in Dundalk with the Intermediate team.

James would enlist on June 22, 1940 in Toronto with the Lincoln & Welland Regiment. His training was largely in the greater Niagara region. He would transfer to the Royal Rifles of Canada, 1st Battalion, in October, 1941 on learning that the Battalion was seeking recruits and would be shipping out to serve overseas. On October 18, 1941 the Battalion was deployed to Hong Kong, then a British

colony/protectorate, together with a Battalion from the Winnipeg Grenadiers to provide military support even before Japan had launched its attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. The two Battalions were known as C Force.

It did not take the Japanese military long before it attacked various islands and China following the declaration of war on December 7, 1941. The Japanese forces overtook Hong Kong quickly and decisively, overwhelming the limited military deployment of Canadian and British soldiers. On December 25, Christmas Day, 1941 Hong Kong surrendered.

James Mortimer along with many of his fellow soldiers and many British soldiers were rendered Prisoners of War on December 25, 1941. The two Canadian battalions that had formed part of the Hong Kong defence sustained massive losses as 927 were killed or wounded and the remainder, 1185, were prisoners of war. Many more would die, 267, over the next years under horrific conditions in what were in effect slave labour camps. The soldiers were systematically starved, beaten and tortured and many of the survivors would suffer from health conditions for the rest of their lives.

For James and his fellow soldiers they would remain largely in prisoner of war camps in Hong Kong for much of 1942 but conditions were brutal as the Japanese would not acknowledge the need to comply with the Geneva Convention for the treatment of prisoners. As for communication with the outside world there was very little. James Mortimer's mother apparently received four letters prior to December, 1942 from her son but they had been very much censored. She received no communication after December, 1942.

For James Mortimer there is little that is known of what happened to him through to December, 1943. It would be learned much later that he had been shipped from Hong Kong to Japan in August, 1943 for placement in the prisoner of war camp at Niigata. A review of his military personnel file reveals more glimpses into the horror he experienced as his files contains records of investigations conducted post the War into the conduct of the Japanese commanders and the guards. James file contains numerous letters and testimony provided to the inquiry into his death.

The file indicates that he had been accused of stealing from Red Cross relief packages that had been hoarded by the Japanese themselves while the prisoners of war for whom the packages were intended starved. He and other soldiers were presumptively punished for their actions in December to March, 1944, in the midst of very cruel winter conditions.

The statements on file indicate that he was staked to an outdoor stake, without much by way of clothing, with his hands tied behind his back. He was left 24/7 in that position, for the most part without any food and often while being beaten and assaulted by the guards for much of January through February, 1944. By the time he was released he was suffering considerably including from gangrene.

On March 7, 1944 Rifleman James Mortimer died.

It would not be until early March, 1945, almost a year later, that his parents would learn of his death. This was despite repeated inquiries by his parents of the military and government seeking information. There is even a letter on file from the spring, 1944, months after he died, from Red Cross International inspections of Niigata that had been denied access to any information about soldiers who had died.

For James parents who had left Dundalk in 1942 to reside in Galt, Ontario one can only imagine the pain and grief.

News of James Mortimer's death was shared in the Kitchener newspaper with a small excerpt in the Dundalk newspaper. This experience post the end of World War 2 in Europe was shared by many of the families of the Canadian soldiers who served in Hong Kong; they had been in large part forgotten.

James Mortimer's family would ultimately receive from the Canadian government his back pay for the period he had been a prisoner of war but it would be many. many years before the Canadian government acknowledged the wartime service of the Hong Kong veterans.

For James Mortimer he is now referenced in the records of the Museum of Dufferin but his name does not show on any cenotaph or memorial. The Section School Register for Section School #13 from 1955 references James Mortimer having died.

James Mortimer's body was exhumed from the Niigata prison in January, 1947 to be buried in the Yokohama British Commonwealth War Cemetery, Canadian section, in Japan. His grave marker contains the engraving "He was Beloved By All Who Knew Him".



