

Sergeant John Clifford Fitzpatrick

Regimental number: 204286

13th Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: probably 8 March, sometime between 1893 and 1899 - died: 29 September 1918

Sergeant John Clifford Fitzpatrick (also known as Jack) was probably born on 8 March, in Laurier, Manitoba, Canada.¹ However, records reflect different years of birth between 1893 and 1899.² He was the second child and eldest son of William and Jimena (Mena) Fitzpatrick.³ His father was born in about 1866 in the United States and his mother in 1876 in Ontario.⁴ William and Jimena probably had six children:⁵ Stella (born in about 1894), Clifford, Beatrice Alice (born in 1899),⁶ Florence Ruth G. (born in 1900),⁷ William V. (born in about 1903), Harold O. (born in about 1904) and Grace E. (born in about 1906).

In 1906, the family was living in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.⁸ In December 1907, Jack's father, William, died there.⁹ His mother probably remarried. In 1916, she was Mina Mires, living with Edward Mires (or Myers/Myer) and they had a son, Edward, born in about 1914.¹⁰ Jack's step-father was born in about 1881 in the United States. He came to Canada in 1910. In 1916, the family was living at 381 Avenue K in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where Jack's step-father, Edward, was a teamster. Jack was already a soldier.

Jack first enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (Regimental number 13101) on 21 September 1914 in Val Cartier, Quebec.¹¹ He declared that he was born on 8 March 1895 and was 19½ years old.¹² He was 5' 7" tall, had a fair complexion, blue eyes and fair hair and was a Presbyterian. He sailed for England on 3 October 1914 with the 5th Canadian Infantry Battalion and joined the Front in France on 9 February 1915.

On 24 May 1915, Jack was injured in a bayonet charge near Festubert in northern France by a bullet to his right hand. He was treated in the field and then sent to the No. 9 General Hospital in Rouen and, from there, to the Whitechapel London Hospital for a couple of weeks. He then went to the Bromley and Monks Horton Convalescent Homes in June and July respectively. He was discharged from Monks Horton in August. He had lost some flexibility in his fingers and there was some muscle wasting, but he could still grasp quite well and write. However, while he was at Monk's Horton, the Medical Board determined that he could not return to regular duty, but should be transferred to light duty with the Postal Service. The Board determined that his capacity to earn a living had been reduced by a quarter. Jack agreed to a discharge on 26 October 1915. His conduct had been very good and the only reason for discharge was that he was no longer physically fit for service as a result of injuries that he had received on active service. He sailed to Canada on the ss Metagama on 15 November 1915. He was eligible for a pension from 1 January 1916.

Just a month later, Jack enlisted again. He enlisted this second time on 10 February 1916 in Saskatoon. He was a painter and now gave his date of birth as 8 March 1897, which meant that he was just under 19. (The 1916 Canadian census, for which data was first collected in June 1916,¹³ showed Clifford, as a soldier, but living with his family.¹⁴ His year of birth was given as about 1899.) He indicated that he had previously served for fifteen months with the 5th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the medical history form accompanying his enlistment documents noted a slight stiffness in his hand from the bullet injury.

While he was still in Canada, Jack was promoted to Corporal in March 1916 and to Sergeant in June. However, he was reduced to Corporal again in July, then promoted again to Sergeant in August. This appointment was confirmed in September. He left the following month for England, sailing on the ss Laconia from Halifax in September 1916, arriving in Liverpool on 6 October 1916. He transferred to the 96th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Shortly after arriving in England, Jack was hospitalised with gonorrhoea – at first in the Military Hospital in Shorncliffe and then in the Canadian Hospital in Etchinghill, which specialised in venereal diseases. He was initially admitted in December 1916 and discharged in mid-January 1917.

Jack transferred to the 5th Reserve Battalion in January 1917, but went to France on 4 March 1917 with the 13th Battalion. He had reverted to his permanent grade in February 1917, in order to go overseas, but was promoted again twice later that year – to Corporal in July and Sergeant in December.

After his arrival in France, Jack had a number of illnesses. In May 1917 he was admitted to the No. 12 Canadian Field Ambulance with scabies. He rejoined his unit a few days later. In August, he received gunshot wounds to both his legs and was admitted to the No. 16 General Hospital in Le Triport. He was discharged to the Base Depot two months later. In December 1917, he was once again treated for a few days for scabies. Eight months later, on 31 August 1918, he was admitted to the No. 14 Field Ambulance for treatment of the effects of shell gas. He was discharged to duty on 12 September. Just two weeks later, he was wounded, fatally this time, with gunshot wounds to his abdomen.¹⁵ He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 27 September and died there two days later. He was buried the next day in the Duisans British Military Cemetery (Grave 92, Plot 7, Row A) with the Canadian chaplain W. Fisher presiding.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹⁶ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1917 and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁷ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

His mother, who was living at 324 Avenue R., South Saskatoon was notified of his death.¹⁸ In September 1916, he had made a will in favour of his sister, Beatrice, but, in 1917, he made a second will in favour of his mother.¹⁹

Jack was awarded the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).²⁰ Like most soldiers, he was probably also awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918 and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).

Jack's step-father, Edward Myer, died on 26 November 1918²¹ – just two months after Jack's death, two weeks after the Armistice and about a year after the birth of his second son. He was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Saskatoon the same day. Mena and Edward's second son, possibly called Burns, was born in about 1917.²² In 1921, Jack's mother was still living in Saskatoon with his sister, Grace, and the two children Mina had with Edward – Edward and Burns.

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- ¹ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>; accessed 24 March 2016), entry for Jack Fitzpatrick, Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 3123 – 3J, Item Number: 391763. Unless otherwise noted, all information about his military career comes from this source.
- ² Various sources give his birth year as either 1893, 1895, 1896, 1897 or 1899. (Various dates are shown in different documents in his "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," entry for Jack Fitzpatrick; "1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 24 March 2016), entry for Clifford H. Fitzpatrick, Province: Manitoba, District: Portage la Prairie, Sub-District: Townships 10, 11, 12 in ranges 8, 9 west, Sub-District: 9; "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 24 March 2016), entry for Clifford Fitzpatrick, Sub District Desc.: (A - I) City of Saskatoon)
- ³ "1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," entry for Clifford H. Fitzpatrick
- ⁴ *Ibid.* unless otherwise noted.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ "Vital Statistics Agency, Manitoba," (<http://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/>; accessed 23 March 2016) entry for Beatrice Alice Fitzpatrick, Registration number: 1899,21718649
- ⁷ "Vital Statistics Agency, Manitoba," (<http://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/>; accessed 23 March 2016) entry for Florence Ruth G. Fitzpatrick, Registration number: 1907,002738
- ⁸ "1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," entry for Clifford H. Fitzpatrick
- ⁹ "Vital Statistics Agency Manitoba," (<http://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/>; accessed 22 March 2016) entry for William Fitzpatrick, Registration number 1907,002738
- ¹⁰ "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," entry for Clifford Fitzpatrick
- ¹¹ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," entry for Jack Fitzpatrick
- ¹² A discharge document from October 1915 indicated that he enlisted on 18 August 1915 and his birthdate was 8 March 1896. ("Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," entry for Jack Fitzpatrick)
- ¹³ ("About the 1916 Census," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1916/pages/about-census.aspx>; accessed 2 April 2016))
- ¹⁴ "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," entry for Clifford Fitzpatrick
- ¹⁵ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2016), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 692
- ¹⁶ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ¹⁷ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 17 June 2015)
- ¹⁸ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 692
- ¹⁹ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914-1918 – CEF," entry for Jack Fitzpatrick
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ "Canada, Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 24 March 2016), entry for Edward Myer
- ²² "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 12 March 2016), entry for Mina Myres, Province or Territory: Saskatchewan, District: Saskatoon, District Number: 227, Sub-District: Saskatoon (City), Sub-District Number: 39, City, Town or Village: Ward 2 Polling D 10