

## **Private John Robert Hourie<sup>©</sup>**

**Regimental number: 2273324**

**52nd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force**

**born: 21 February 1894–died: 3 October 1918**

Private John Robert Hourie was born on 21 February 1894,<sup>1</sup> the son of Joseph Hourie and Margaret Moore of Selkirk, Manitoba. Both Joseph and Margaret were Metis<sup>2</sup> and Margaret's family may have descended from the first Metis in the Red River Settlement.<sup>3</sup> Both were born in Manitoba—Joseph on 1 February 1864 and Margaret on 5 August 1866.<sup>4</sup>

Margaret's first child may have been Gertrude Jones, born on 2 March 1889 in Selkirk.<sup>5</sup> Gertrude's father may have been John Griffith Jones,<sup>6</sup> but there is no evidence of a marriage between Margaret and John or a long-term relationship. Similarly, it is not clear that Margaret and Joseph were actually married. No record could be found and, in the 1901 Census, Margaret is identified as Joseph's "concubine," although they appear as husband and wife in all other census records after 1901. It was also not possible to identify with certitude all their children, but the siblings who appeared in census records with John include:

- Ethel Kate (born on 9 August 1896), known as Ethel and maybe Catherine<sup>7</sup>
- Joseph Stanley (born on 19 August 1898, but died nearly three years later, on 9 April 1901)<sup>8</sup>
- Elsie May (born on December 1902<sup>9</sup> known as both Elsie and Mary)
- Victor (born on 5 July 1906)<sup>10</sup>
- Stewart (born about 1914)<sup>11</sup>

In 1891, John's father was a farmer lodging with a Moore family in Selkirk.<sup>12</sup> However, it does not appear to be Margaret's immediate family and there is no evidence of where Margaret and her daughter Gertrude were at the time. In 1901, Joseph (then a fish labourer) and Margaret were living together in Selkirk with four of their children. Gertrude was known as Gertrude Hourie.<sup>13</sup> Ten years later, Joseph was a carpenter, working for a boat builder, and living on Lily Avenue in Selkirk.

John enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 31 March 1917 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.<sup>14</sup> He was a teamster, 5' 5½" tall and had a dark complexion, brown eyes and black hair. He first enlisted with the 18th Reserve Battalion. He was hospitalized at the Winnipeg General Hospital on 12 December 1917 with furunculosis (a severe form of folliculitis, possibly needing incision and drainage).<sup>15</sup> He recovered fully and was discharged twelve days later.

John embarked for England on the SS *Tunisia*, arriving on 19 April 1918. He went first to the Canadian military camp in Seaford, East Sussex. From there, he went to France with the 52nd Battalion on 5 September 1918 and joined his unit five days later.

His battalion, called the New Ontario Battalion, had been recruited in northern Ontario, mobilized at Port Arthur, Ontario and first landed in France in February 1916. The battalion took part in many major battles of the war and, at the time of John's death, was probably taking part in the Battle of the Canal du Nord, part of the Allies' Hundred Day Offensive leading to the armistice in November of that year.<sup>16</sup>

The Canal du Nord was Germany's last defensive position before the Hindenberg Line. It was a major obstacle for the Allied force because the Germans had built the unfinished canal into its

defences and had made crossing the canal as difficult as possible. The parts that were not flooded or swampy were heavily guarded. The Allied offensive took place between 27 September and 1 October 1918. The Canadian objective was twofold: first, secure the Canal du Nord and Bourlon Wood and secondly, to take the bridges at Canal de l'Escaut and high ground near Cambrai, all on the east side of the canal. This was in preparation for the Battle of Cambrai a couple of weeks later.<sup>17</sup>

Three weeks after he joined his unit in France, John was fatally wounded.

He took part with his company in the attack upon the left flank of Cambrai on October 1, 1918, and was severely wounded in the head and right arm by enemy machine gun bullets. He received first aid, and was ultimately taken to No. 1 Casualty Clearing Station, where he died from the effect of his wounds two days later.<sup>18</sup>

A casualty clearing station was a military medical unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or military hospital.<sup>19</sup>

He died on 3 October 1918 and was buried in Duisans British Military Cemetery (Plot 8, Row A, Grave 91) with the Canadian chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Étrun, near Arras, France. The first burials in the cemetery took place in March 1917.<sup>20</sup> No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918 and was stationed near Duisans for two months. As a result of the serious and urgent nature of the cases admitted to No. 1 CCCS, the death rate was high in October—a total of 83 deaths occurred during the month.<sup>21</sup>

A letter was sent to his mother in Selkirk to notify the family of his death. She was also the beneficiary named in his will.

John was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).

After the war, John's parents and their two youngest children were still living on Lily Street in Selkirk and probably still building fish boats.<sup>22</sup> Both his parents died in Selkirk—Margaret in 1929<sup>23</sup> and Joseph in 1936.<sup>24</sup> Only limited information is known about John's siblings after the war.

On 31 January 1912, Gertrude married William James Phillip [*sic*] in Winnipeg.<sup>25</sup> In 1921, they were living in Selkirk, with four children.<sup>26</sup> Four years after Gertrude's marriage, Ethel Kate married her brother-in-law's older brother—Henry Archibald (known as Archibald) Philips. Both William and Archibald were the sons of William and Charlotte Philips, farmers in St. Andrews (about 15 kilometres from Selkirk).<sup>27</sup> Ethel Kate and Archibald married on 2 February 1916 in St. Andrews<sup>28</sup> and, a few months after their wedding, Ethel Kate and Archibald were living with Archibald's parents in St Andrews.<sup>29</sup> Sadly Ethel Kate died two years later, on 8 November 1918, in St Andrews.<sup>30</sup>

John's brother Victor may have married Mabel Favell on 4 July 1928 in Selkirk.<sup>31</sup> His youngest brother Stewart probably married Lizzie Smith on 19 November 1935.<sup>32</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> “Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records–Births,” *Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency* (<https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca>: accessed 17 July 2020), entry for John Robert Hourie
- <sup>2</sup> “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 July 2020), entry for Joseph Hoverie [sic], Province: Manitoba, District: Selkirk, District number: 11, Sub-district: Selkirk (Town/Ville), Sub-district number: 6
- <sup>3</sup> “Manitoba, Canada, Census Indexes, 1832–1856 & 1870,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Marguerite Moore; “Canadian Genealogy Index, 1600s–1900s,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Caesar Moore
- <sup>4</sup> “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry*, entry for Joseph Hoverie [sic]
- <sup>5</sup> “Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records–Births,” *Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency* (<https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca>: accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Gertrude Jones. The mother’s name was given as Moore and Gertrude appears on census records with the Hourie family.
- <sup>6</sup> “Anderson Family Tree,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 July 2020), entry for Margaret Ann Moore. A John Griffith Jones was granted land in Manitoba near Brokenhead, about 35 kilometres from Selkirk, in 1890. (“Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada, Homestead Grant Registers, 1872–1930,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 July 2020), entry for John Griffith Jones)
- <sup>7</sup> “Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records–Births,” *Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency* (<https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca>: accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Ethel Kate Moore. Joseph and Margaret’s entry in the 1901 census record includes a daughter, Catherine, born in about 1897. However, all subsequent censuses indicate that they had a daughter, Ethel, born in about 1896. In 1916 an Ethel Kate Hourie married Archibald Philips and, in 1916, Ethel Kate’s birthdate is given as about 1896. No Manitoba birth record could be found for either a Catherine or Ethel Kate Hourie in this time period. It is assumed that Catherine and Ethel Kate are the same person and that Ethel Kate’s birth in 1896 was registered under her mother’s name, Moore.
- <sup>8</sup> “Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records–Births,” *Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency* (<https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca>: accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Joseph Stanley Hourie; “Web: Manitoba, Death Index, 1871–1947,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Joseph Stanley Hourie
- <sup>9</sup> “1911 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 July 2020), entry for Joseph Hawrie [sic], Province: Manitoba, District: Selkirk, District number: 22, Sub-district: 32 - Selkirk, Sub-district number: 32; “Web: Manitoba, Death Index, 1871–1947,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Elsie May Hourie
- <sup>10</sup> “Web: Manitoba, Birth Index, 1870–1917,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 July 2020), entry for Victor Ronald Hourie
- <sup>11</sup> “1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 March 2020), entry for Joseph Hourri [sic], Sub-district: 04, Sub-district description: (A & B) Town of Selkirk, Enumeration district: 4
- <sup>12</sup> “1891 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Joseph Hourie, Province: Manitoba, Enumeration district number: 6
- <sup>13</sup> “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry*, entry for Joseph Hoverie [sic]
- <sup>14</sup> “Personnel Records of the First World War,” *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>: accessed 9 July 2020), entry for Hourie, John R., Reference: RG 150, Accession 1992–93/166, Box 4530 - 63, Item number: 474305, Digitized service file - PDF format: B4530-S063. Unless otherwise noted, all information about John’s military service comes from this source.
- <sup>15</sup> Personal communication from whom?
- <sup>16</sup> “52nd Battalion (New Ontario), CEF,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/52nd\\_Battalion\\_\(New\\_Ontario\)\\_CEF](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/52nd_Battalion_(New_Ontario)_CEF): accessed 6 July 2020)
- <sup>17</sup> “Battle of the Canal du Nord,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Canal\\_du\\_Nord](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Canal_du_Nord): accessed 18 July 2020)
- <sup>18</sup> “Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 July 2020), entry for John Robert Hourie

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- <sup>19</sup> "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty\\_Clearing\\_Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station): accessed 2 May 2020)
- <sup>20</sup> "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 7 October 2015)
- <sup>21</sup> "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/>: accessed 17 June 2015)
- <sup>22</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 July 2020), entry for Joseph Hourie, Province or territory: Manitoba, Enumeration district: 35, Sub-district number: 56, District description: Comprising that portion of the town of Selkirk, as incorporated lying north of Manitoba Avenue
- <sup>23</sup> "Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records–Deaths," *Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency* (<https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca>: accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Hourie, Margrete [*sic*]
- <sup>24</sup> "Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records–Deaths," *Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency* (<https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca>: accessed 17 July 2020), entry for Hourie, Joseph
- <sup>25</sup> "Web: Manitoba, Marriage Index, 1881–1937," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 July 2020), entry for Gertrude Jones
- <sup>26</sup> "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 July 2020), entry for Gertrude Phillips, Province or territory: Manitoba, District: Selkirk, Municipality: Ward, Enumeration district: 35, Sub-district number: 26
- <sup>27</sup> "1901 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 July 2020), entry for William Philips Province: Manitoba, District: Selkirk, District number: 11, Sub-district: St Andrews, Sub-district number: 6
- <sup>28</sup> "Web: Manitoba, Marriage Index, 1881–1937," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 July 2020), entry for Ethel Kate Hourie
- <sup>29</sup> "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 12 March 2020), entry for Ethel Kate Phillips [*sic*], Sub-district: 10, Sub-district description: Townships 14 and 15, whole or fractional, ranges 3, 4 and 5, E.P.M.
- <sup>30</sup> "Web: Manitoba, Death Index, 1871–1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 20 April 2020), entry for Ethel Kate Phillips [*sic*]
- <sup>31</sup> "Web: Manitoba, Marriage Index, 1881–1937," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 July 2020), entry for Victor Hourie
- <sup>32</sup> "Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records–Marriages," *Manitoba Vital Statistics Agency* (<https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca>: accessed 19 July 2020), entry for Hourie, Stewart