

L/Sgt Joseph Patrick Walsh (Service # G23259)



Joseph Patrick Walsh was born May 21, 1916, near Red Bank, Northumberland County, New Brunswick, the son of James Michael Walsh and Nellie Teresa (Gillis). James was from Doyle's Brook and was of Irish descent, and Nellie's parents were from Red Bank and were Scottish. The family attended the Catholic Church. Joseph was one of nine children. His two brothers, Richard, and Albert, would also serve overseas with the Canadian Army in WW2. The family was raised on a farm near Doyle's Brook. Records show that Joseph left school at age fourteen after completing grade eight. This was common as there were no school buses, roads were not plowed in the winter, and high schools were much farther away. These were also the early Depression years, with high unemployment rates. Joseph stated that in better times he would have pursued work with the railroads as a fireman. However, despite the odds, Joseph found work in the lumber business with Lawrence McLean in Chelmsford and worked there for ten years.

Britain and Canada declared war on Germany in September 1939. The following spring, young New Brunswick men in their humble rural communities were now visited by recruiting teams in clean new uniforms with shiny boots. Recruits were offered \$1.30/day plus a uniform, meals, and accommodation. Veteran William Clancy from Chatham stated these wages were double that of a woodsman.

On June 27, 1940, Joseph enlisted with the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment in Newcastle. He sent \$20 per month home to his mother and also began purchasing Victory Bonds. Basic Training was completed at Newcastle, followed by further training at Camp A30 at Sussex. A year later, on July 21, 1941, the regiment, along with the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division sailed for the United Kingdom on the *Duchess of York*. Despite an emphasis on secrecy, historian Will Bird wrote, "The roads along the harbour at Halifax were lined with hundreds of cars and waving civilians. Flags were flapping in the breeze and car horns were honking. It seemed that all the world knew what was happening."

The first close-up sights of England were made sailing up the Mersey River to Liverpool. The docks, warehouses, and ships had been the target of numerous German air raids, and destruction was everywhere. The warehouses were reduced to piles of twisted steel and rubble, and the shores were lined with the bombed-out hulls of partially submerged ships. It was now clearly understood that they were at war.

Now in the United Kingdom, the regiment spent almost three years in intensive physical training and rehearsing beach landings throughout England and Scotland. Joseph was promoted to Corporal in June 1942 and then Lance Sergeant in May 1944. In January of 1944, he was awarded the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal.

On D-Day (June 6, 1944), Joseph landed in Normandy near the village of Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer with A Company under the command of Major Archie MacNaughton. A and B Companies were part of the first wave of the landing. At about 8 a.m. their landing craft doors opened and the men poured out under heavy fire. They scrambled over barriers, mines, and boobytraps and ran for the security of the seawall. A Company now made their way to a gap in the wall. Already they had suffered heavy casualties. Using explosives, they blasted a path through the bales of barbed wire covering the gap and were into the village and fighting house to house. It was now discovered that the houses were protected with mines and snipers were everywhere.

In addition, many of the buildings were connected by tunnels or trenches allowing the Germans to escape and reposition themselves. But with repeated efforts using grenades and flamethrowers, they cleared the houses and the streets. The War Diary records that by 11:15 a.m., Hitler's Atlantic Wall had been broken, all Company objectives had been achieved, and the NS(NB)R was in control of Saint-Aubin.

L/Sgt Joseph Patrick Walsh made it across the beach with the help of his platoon commander Lt Merle Keith. L/Sgt Walsh was then killed along with several others by mines buried next to the seawall. He was twenty-eight years of age. Historian Will Bird wrote that A Company had suffered twenty-nine casualties securing the beach and clearing the town. Joseph's No. 3 Platoon was made up of 37 men. Nine had been killed and ten were wounded including Lt Keith. Major Archie MacNaughton was killed later that same day at Tailleville.

For his service to Canada, L/Sgt Joseph Patrick Walsh was awarded the following medals; the 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defense Medal, War Medal 1939-45, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. L/Sgt Joseph Patrick Walsh was initially buried near the beach, and later re-buried in the Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery in Calvados, France, Plot I. D.14. His name is also engraved on one of the monuments to the Canadians killed on D-Day, which stands along the seawall in Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer.

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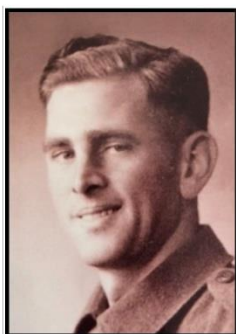
Joseph Patrick Walsh was born May 21, 1916, on a farm near Red Bank, Northumberland Co. NB, the son of James Michael Walsh and Nellie Teresa Gillis. Joseph was one of nine children and his two brothers, Richard and Albert, both served overseas with the Canadian Army. Records show that Joseph left school at age fourteen after completing grade seven. These were the Depression years and this was common. He found employment in the lumber business working for Lawrence McLean in Chelmsford and worked there for ten years.

On June 27, 1940, Joseph enlisted with the North Shore (NB) Regiment in Newcastle. Basic Training was completed at Camp A30, the Canadian Infantry Training Centre (CITC) at Sussex. A year later on July 18th, the regiment sailed for Liverpool on the Duchess of York. Now in the UK, the regiment spent almost three years in intensive physical training and rehearsing beach landings throughout England and Scotland. Joseph was promoted to Corporal in June 1942 and then Lance Sergeant in May 1944.

On D-Day (June 6, 1944), Joseph landed in Normandy at Saint Aubin-sur-Mer with A Company under the command of Major Archie MacNaughton. A and B Companies were the first units to come ashore. At about 8 AM their landing craft doors opened and the men poured out under heavy fire. They scrambled over barriers, mines and booby traps and ran for the security of the seawall. A Company now turned to the right and made their way to a gap in the seawall. Already they had suffered heavy casualties. Using Bangalore Torpedoes, they blasted a path through the bales of barbed wire covering the gap and were into the village and fighting house to house. It was now quickly discovered that the houses were protected with mines and snipers were everywhere. In addition, many of the buildings were connected by underground tunnels or trenches allowing the Germans to escape and reposition themselves. But with repeated efforts using grenades and flamethrowers, they cleared the houses and cleared the streets. The War Diary records that by 11:15 AM the German defenses had been eliminated, all Company objectives had been achieved, and the NS (NB) REGT was in control of Saint Aubin.

L/Sgt Joseph Patrick Walsh made it across the beach with the help of his platoon commander Lt. Merle M Keith. L/Sgt Walsh was then killed with several others by mines along the seawall. He was twenty-eight years of age. Historian Will Bird wrote that A Company had suffered twenty-nine casualties securing the beach and clearing the town. Joseph's No. 3 Platoon was made up of 37 men. Nine had been killed in action and ten were wounded including Lt. Keith. Major Archie MacNaughton was killed later that same day at Tailleville.

For his service to Canada, L/Sgt Joseph Patrick Walsh was awarded the following medals; the 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defense Medal, War Medal 1939-45, and CVSM with Clasp. L/Sgt Joseph Patrick Walsh is buried in Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery in Calvados, France, Plot I. D.14.



In 2019 the Royal Canadian Mint issued a new silver dollar to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day. They chose to use an image from that rare film footage of the North Shore (NB) Regiment landing near Saint Aubin-sur-Mer.



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In 2019, in recognition of the 34 NS(NB)R soldiers killed on D-Day, memorial plaques were created for each veteran killed, and were placed in Miramichi schools. The plaques included a brief biography, photos, and an image of the 2019 Canadian silver dollar showing the NS(NB)R landing. The plaque dedicated to L/Sgt Joseph Walsh has been placed in Miramichi Valley High School, NB.