

Acting Sergeant John Lockhart Hickman (1911- 1944)



John Hickman was from Portage La Prairie Manitoba and moved to Victoria with his parents. When the Second World War started he was working as a pipe fitter-mechanic with the Ontario Power Commission in Ear Falls.

He returned to Victoria and enlisted in Esquimalt in April 1940 with Number 11 Detachment of the Royal Canadian Engineers. In July he transferred to 6 Field Company in North Vancouver and a month later the unit left for Debert.

He was promoted to L/Cpl shortly before leaving Debert and by mid 1942 was a Cpl England with the 6th. He became a L/Sgt in 1943. In March 1944 he asked permission to marry Amelia Hutchings a young English widow with a daughter. He was 33 and she was 26. They were married on May 14, 1944. A few weeks later her new husband sailed for Normandy.

He served with distinction during the Normandy campaign and on August 4, 1944 became an A/Sgt. By October the 6th was engaged in the Battle of the Schelt in Holland.

On October 31 1944 the 6th was tasked with the construction of a 120 ft long bailey bridge over a canal in Retranchment Holland. During the build Jack Hickman was killed by a mortar blast. Other unit members were wounded by shrapnel and one by a Schu mine. After many interruptions the bridge was finally opened for traffic. The 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade crossed the bridge and attacked the German garrison at Knocke.

His funeral was held the next day at the military cemetery near Eccloo. Everyone who could attended the service did with only a small crew left on duty at the new bridge. His remains now rest in the Adegem Canadian War Cemetery in Belgium. The bridge he helped build was named in his honour and a memorial to him stands at the site.

Around 1948 Amelia Hickman and her daughter left England and moved to Victoria, initially living with John's parents. She eventually moved out, got her own house and worked as a ward clerk in a local hospital. She was tragically killed on March 13, 1967 when she was hit by a car while crossing a street in Victoria. She was survived by her daughter and grandchild.