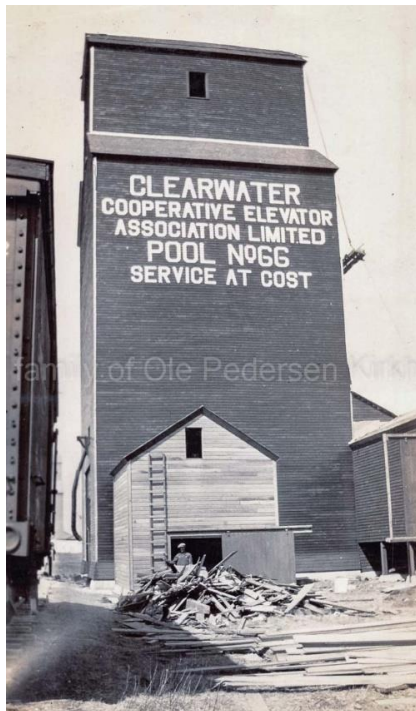


Bridal, Jack Wesley
Rifleman
Royal Winnipeg Rifles Regiment
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps
H/42139



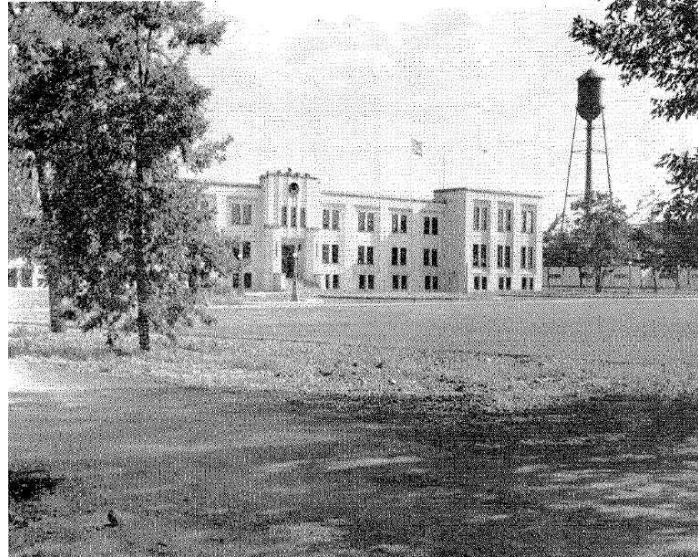
Jack Wesley Bridal was born 10 December 1924 at Crystal City, a small farming community in south central Manitoba. His parents Clifford Thomas Bridal and Lulu Leila Heddon were both of English heritage from farming families. They married at Regina, Saskatchewan in 1921 and moved to Coronation, Alberta to homestead. Their first child Harry was born there followed by Kenneth. The Bridals returned to Manitoba to take up farming around Clearwater, near Crystal City, and had seven more children after third born Jack: Vernon, Thomas, Maurice, Betty, Joyce, Gladys and Eleanor.



Clearwater, Manitoba grain elevator 1928

The Bridals identified with the United Church and although Jack liked school, quit after grade 7 at age fourteen to help on the farm. He liked music, dancing and shows during his free time. He drove tractors, trucks and cars plus helped with the repair work, with an ambition to become a mechanic. Like his elder brothers, Jack chose to join the army.

Jack enlisted with the Canadian Active Service Force at Winnipeg 14 February 1942 aged seventeen. He mis-stated his birth year as 1922 due to being underage. He was fairly tall at 5'9" but only 131 lbs and described by the medical examiner as having "poor general physique" for a 19 year old. Jack did his basic training at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba and then posted to the Canadian Signals Training Centre near Kingston, Ontario where he was housed at the Vimy Barracks at Barriefield.



Vimy Barracks, Barriefield, Ontario

Jack attained the rank of Signaman and served 227 days with 'very good conduct' before producing his birth certificate showing he was actually underage. Jack was discharged 28 September 1942 and went back home to farming, where his father owned a section with 400 acres cultivated.

**ARMY ACTIVE
CANADIAN ACTIVE SERVICE FORCE
DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE**

M.F.M. 7 A
23M-540 (5240)
H.Q. 1772-39-1653

This is to Certify that No. 42139 (Rank) Signaman
Name (in full) BRIDAL, Jack Wesley enlisted in
the 1st Canadian Corps of Signals, AF,
CANADIAN FIELD FORCE at Winnipeg, Man. on the 14th
day of February 1942
HE served in Canadian Army Active (In Canada)
and is now discharged from the service by reason of S.A.S.A. 1022 (A) Between 17
and 18 years of age at date of application for discharge.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS SOLDIER on the DATE below is as follows:—

Age <u>17 yrs. 7 mos.</u>	Marks or Scars <u>None</u>
Height <u>5' 9"</u>	<u>None</u>
Complexion <u>Fair</u>	
Eyes <u>Blue</u>	
Hair <u>Brown</u>	<u>Conduct very good during</u>
Signature of Soldier <u>Jack Bridal</u>	<u>227 days service</u>
Date of Discharge <u>28 Sep 42</u>	Issuing Officer <u>D. V. Roland</u>
<u>Vimy Barracks,</u>	Rank <u>Lieutenant</u>
<u>Kingston, Ont.</u>	Date <u>28 September 1942</u>

N.B.—As no duplicate of this Certificate will be issued, any person finding same is requested to forward it in an unstamped envelope to the Record Office, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, Canada.

DUPLICATE FOR FILE (P.T.O.)

Jack re-enlisted over a year later 18 October 1943 age 18, having grown an inch and put on some weight. He wanted to become a paratrooper and told the interviewing officer that his girlfriend and parents would not object to it. The officer wrote on Jack's personnel record: "Motivation is good – not much participation in

sports but accustomed to hard work on the farm. Has a rather adventuresome spirit... Rather reserved in manner but no evidence of nervousness in interview. Please assess for Paratroop purposes."

Jack was found unsuitable to become a paratrooper for medical reasons. He was stationed back at Barriefield with his former rank of Signaller with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (R.C.C.S.) 3 November 1943. He was fairly proficient with Morse Code, able to send and receive it at the rate of 15 words per minute. Once there he expressed an interest in becoming a despatch rider as part of the R.C.C.S. but was not selected for that duty. Jack was transferred instead to infantry 28 December 1943.

Jack became a Private and completed advanced infantry training at Camp Shilo, Manitoba between January and April 1944. He was granted extended compassionate leave to help his father on the farm from 13 April to 1 October 1944 while his brothers Harry and Kenneth were serving overseas. After returning from his leave of absence that fall, Jack was cleared for overseas service and sent to Camp Debert, Nova Scotia. He was aboard a vessel over the Christmas period and disembarked in the U.K. on 1 January 1945 where he was assigned to the Canadian Infantry Training Regiment. He likely had what was the first airplane ride of his life several weeks later from the U.K., deplaning in Northwest Europe 12 February 1945. Jack was then taken on strength by the Royal Winnipeg Rifles (RWR) 23 February 1945.

The RWR, also known as the Little Black Devils, along with the other 7th Brigade battalions (Regina Rifles and Canadian Scottish) of 3rd Canadian Division were among the first Commonwealth infantry units to land at Juno Beach (Courseulles-sur-Mer) and suffered heavy D-Day losses. The next few days were even worse for them, experiencing another 300 casualties at the small village of Putot-en-Bessin, almost half of the battalion's combat strength. After a few weeks rebuilding with reinforcements, the RWR battled their way through Normandy and helped liberate Channel ports.

The Little Black Devils had participated in the Battle for the Scheldt and spent most of the winter in static operations near Nijmegen, Netherlands before moving out with their 7th Brigade and 3rd Infantry Division in February 1945 as part of the First Canadian Army under Operation VERITABLE. They had just finished clearing Moyland Wood and were conducting training exercises around the ruins of the German city of Cleve when Jack joined them as a replacement Rifleman.

The RWR and 7th Brigade remained behind the lines during the next phase of the Rhine offensive, Operation BLOCKBUSTER. The Allies had decided to seize two crossings over the Rhine River with the main effort in the north in the Emmerich-Wesel sector. The Little Black Devils were finally on the move

the evening of 27 March, crossing the Rhine by means of a pontoon bridge that the engineers had constructed. Once across, they were ordered to capture the village of Netterdan, as a precursor to a larger operation designed to seize the town of Emmerich on the following day.



Rhine River pontoon bridge 1945



The RWR made a two-phase attack on the night of 28 March, securing their objectives and capturing numerous German prisoners. The three 7th Brigade battalions attacked Emmerich late in the afternoon on 29 March, with the RWR fighting through the north part of the small city (population 16,000) against fairly heavy resistance and settling in for the night. Jack Bridal, age 20, was killed that day.

One of Jack's sisters later related the story of how he died. "Jack was killed... he was cleaning his buddy's gun in a shack when a German sniper got him in the back and through his heart so he died instantly. Jack's buddies kept in touch with my parents for quite some time after his death as they thought highly of him."

Rifleman J.W. Bridal was temporarily buried at Vrsasselt Cemetery near Emmerich, Germany and later relocated to Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery near Nijmegen, Netherlands, grave reference **XX. G. 10.**

Jack Bridal's campaign medals:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France-Germany Star
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp



Photo credit www.lestweforget1945.org



Jack Wesley Bridal is listed as one of their local WW2 fallen at the Crystal City, Manitoba War Memorial.

Bridal Lake, northwest of Granville Lake was named after him in 1970 as a place of honour by the Manitoba Government.



Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Ancestry public trees

Clearwater, Manitoba grain elevator picture

<https://www.grainelevators.ca/manitoba/clearwater/>

Vimy Barracks, Barriefield, Ontario picture

<http://tothosewhoserved.org/can/army/canarmy01/illustrations.html>

Royal Winnipeg Rifles <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/official-military-history-lineages/lineages/infantry-regiments/royal-winnipeg-rifles.html>

Reid, Brian (2010). Named by the Enemy – A History of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles

Rhine River pontoon bridge 1945 picture

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pontoon_bridge_Rhine_River_1945.jpg

The Rhine Battle Map 23 March – 1 April 1945

<https://www.canadiansoldiers.com/history/battlehonours/northwesteurope/rhine.htm>

Crystal City, Manitoba War Memorial picture

<http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/crystalcitywarmemorial.shtml>

Buchner, A. and Holm, G. (2002) A Place of Honour – Manitoba's War Dead Commemorated in its Geography

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl

He was the third of the ten children of Clifford and Lulu Bridal of Clearwater, Manitoba. He had enlisted previously but was discharged when it was discovered that he was under-age. He re-enlisted the day after his 18th birthday



Jack Wesley Bridal (1924 - 1945)

His sister recalls that (1 August 1995):

Jack was out working on a farm at age 15 for Norris Stone of Clearwater. When Jack finished that job, Stone gave Jack a bonus of a beautiful dapple-grey horse named Daisy which he treasured and loved. Later he worked for Bernie and Vera Stewart of Clearwater while waiting to join his two older brothers in the service. Jack landed in England on December 25, 1944, and from there went to Belgium and Germany. The night Jack was killed ... he was cleaning his buddy's gun in a shack when a German sniper got him in the back and through his heart so he died instantly. Jack's buddies kept in touch with my parents for quite some time after his death as they thought highly of him.