

Hickie, Emidia Austin
Private
G/63323
North Shore (New Brunswick)
Regiment
Royal Canadian Infantry Corps



Emidia Austin Hickie was born May 12, 1922, in Five Fingers, Restigouche Co. New Brunswick. His birth certificate records his name as Augustin Amédé Hickie but throughout his life, he was known to everyone as Meddie. His parents were Joseph John Hickey and Marie Philomene O'Brien. They were Catholic and of Irish and Acadian descent. When Meddie was young the family moved west. Joseph John as he was known, worked in the forest industry in Powell River BC and for a while in northern Ontario near Moonbeam. After a few years however, they returned to New Brunswick and a farm near Nash Creek. Joseph John now worked the farm in the summer and in the lumber camps in the winter. Meddie was the oldest of four children, two sisters Kathleen and Margaret, and a brother Charles who also served with the infantry overseas. (Service # G604664). Three other siblings died in infancy. The family attended Saint Joseph Church in Nash Creek and Meddie attended school in Doyleville.

At age twelve he had completed grade six and went to work on his father's farm. Meddie worked with the horses and the tractor and drove the car. In the winter, Joseph John used the tractor with the boys to haul pulp. For a time Meddie was also employed with the Bathurst Pulp and Paper Co. When not working he enjoyed skating, hockey, playing cards, baseball and going to dances. Susan Hickey, who wrote a history of the

Hickey family stated that Meddie also had a girlfriend that he planned to marry after the war.



Emidia(Meddie) around 1940.

Added information from Kathleen Furlong, nee Hickie, sister of Meddie: Meddie took the part of being big brother very seriously however he was also a prankster. As father Joseph John spent the week in the woods and on farms, Meddie had to grow up fast and take on much of the hard work around the families remote cabin in the forest. Meddie was very fond of Country music. He did own an acoustic guitar but from Kathleens memory he was not the best in singing and playing.

In December 1942, Meddie was drafted into the Militia for home defense duty under the new National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA) that came into effect in 1940. He registered at the No. 7 District Depot in Fredericton and was assigned Militia Service # G602906. Basic training was completed at Camp No.71 near Edmundston. In February 1943, Meddie changed his status and enlisted with the Canadian Army for active duty wherever he would be needed and was given a new service # G63323. He assigned \$20 of his pay each month to be sent to his mother. In May Meddie was placed with the Canadian Artillery Reserve Unit (CARU) and in July was shipped overseas to the UK. Training with the artillery unit continued through the fall of 1943 and early 1944. During the preparation for the invasion of Normandy, Meddie was transferred to the infantry and in April 1944 he was placed with the North Shore (NB) Regiment.



Meddie at home

On June 10th Meddie was sent across the channel and caught up with the regiment who were now advancing south in Normandy. The regiment spent late June fighting in Cairon and Lasson and in July in the deadly battle at Carpiquet.

In early August the NSR was moving south from Caen towards Falaise and on August 10th, they were assigned the capture of the village of Quesnay. Quesnay was pretty much surrounded by woods. Approaching the village from the north, the regiment needed to cross 1.5 km of wheat fields then pass through the woods before reaching Quesnay. The Canadian Artillery had fallen behind and was unable to provide support. Unknown to the regiment, the woods surrounding Quesnay were heavily defended with 88 mm guns, tanks, mortars and many German snipers in trees. As the North Shore's approached the woods, the Germans fired phosphorous shells that quickly ignited the dry August field. Their choices now were to run for the woods, straight through the German guns or die in the fire. They ran, and despite some protection from the smoke suffered heavy casualties. By the following morning They had lost 93 men, 22 killed and 71 wounded. Maj. Ralph Daughney had been killed and Lt. Col. Buell badly injured. Major. J. E. Anderson took over command of the regiment and was able to pull the men back north to Bretteville le Rabet

A few days later on Aug. 13th, Pte. Hickie was injured. Records show that the injury was to his foot and there are few other details. He was initially treated by Doc. J. A. Patterson and spent the next few

months in recovery in the No.10 Canadian General Field Hospital west of Bayeux, France.

When Meddie returned to the regiment they were in the Nijmegen area of the Netherlands preparing for the invasion of Germany. It was wildly busy and resembled England before D-Day with the buildup of thousands of troops and tons of supplies.

On Feb. 8th, 1945, the Canadians pushed across the border into Germany and were now taking control of the Rhineland (western Germany south of the Rhine River). One of the deadliest battles in the Rhineland was fought for the capture of the village of Keppeln. Allied intelligence had reported that there was no significant enemy activity at Keppeln and the assistance of tanks would not be required.

On February 26th, Lt. Col. Rowley received orders to advance and sent the North Shore B & C Companies across a thousand yards of open farmland to seize Keppeln. Intelligence was wrong. The Germans waited until the North Shores were 150 yards from the German line and then opened fire. Everywhere North Shore men were falling dead or wounded. There was nowhere to hide. A & D Companies were at least a mile behind when news of the slaughter arrived. The North Shore would need armoured support and a plan was created in which A Company was to lead with 42 North Shore soldiers mounted, exposed, on top of a squadron of tanks of the 1st Hussars Regiment. As the tanks approached the village the men were shooting like mad into the enemy trenches. Some of the tanks hit mines and blew up, some were destroyed by artillery and others got stuck in the mud. Only six of the fourteen tanks survived.

Despite heavy losses the NSR advance succeeded. Fighting continued house by house and by evening Keppeln belonged to the North Shore. The cost was 28 North Shore soldiers killed in action and 56 wounded. Pte. Emidia Austin Hickie was killed on Feb. 26, 1945. Military documents indicate that he was twenty-two years of age. Estate documents completed and signed by his mother state that he was twenty-one years of age.

For his service to Canada, Pte. Emidia Austin Hickie was awarded the following medals; the 1939-45 Star, France & Germany Star, War Medal 1939-45, Defense Medal, and CVSM with Clasp.

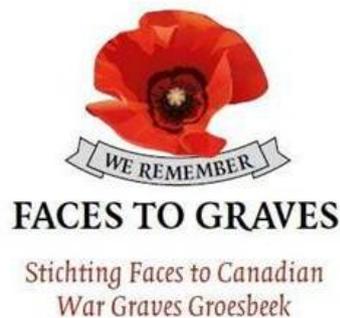
Emidia Austin Hickie is buried in Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands, **Plot X. A. 12.**

When the war ended, his brother Charlie returned home and the family moved to Jacquet River. Philomene passed away in August 1983 and is buried in Saint Gabriel's Cemetery at Jacquet River. At her request, she went to the grave with Meddie's medals pinned to her dress above her heart.

Written by Bruce Morton, brucehmorton@gmail.com

Note that Lou Daley of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island provided the photograph and data for this biography. More family photos are provided by Doug Hickey.

Susan Hickey of Dalhousie, New Brunswick family provided history and additional family history by Doug Hickey and Kathleen Furlong, nee Hickie.



Biography made available for Faces To Graves, with courtesy of Bruce Morton





Emidia's mother Philomene left and father Josef John right.

Emidia's brother Charles center

Emidia's father and first born grandson named after Emidia



Charlie somewhere in the Netherlands.

