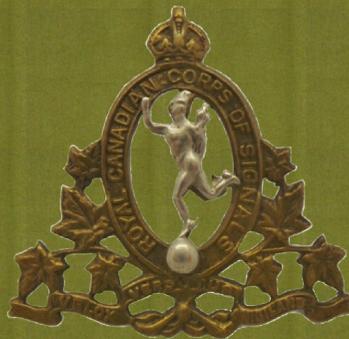


Sir Major John “Jack” Gross

Major, Royal Canadian Corp of Signals

Family Life:

John was born on November 2, 1919 to parents Charles Gross and Arnetta Schmidt in Listowel, ON. Shortly after his birth, John's family moved to Kitchener, ON where he lived until 1942. John attended King Edward Public School, from 1926 to 1932 for Kindergarten to grade 6. From 1932 to 1934, John attended Suddaby Public School for grade 7 and 8. John delivered the “Toronto Telegram” by bicycle to the whole city of Kitchener from 1929 to 1934. In 1934, John started high school but one month in, his principal asked him if he would like to work at J. Forsythe Shirt Company in Kitchener, ON. John left high school in 1934 to sell ties until 1937. From 1937 to 1939 he was the payroll clerk at Dominion Tire Co. On August 24, 1946 John married Margaret Louise Guymer in London, ON. From 1946 to 1950 John lived in London, ON where he worked as the Store Manager for Firestone Tire. During this time, John and Margaret welcomed their first daughter, Linda in November 1948. In 1951, the family moved to Calgary, AB when John became the District Manager for Firestone Tires. During this time John and Margaret welcomed another daughter, Mary in April 1951 and a son, John in March 1953. In 1954, the family moved back to London, ON as John became the District Manager for South Western Ontario with Firestone Tires, a position he held with the company until 1962 at which time he became the Ontario Territorial Manager for Firestone Tires out of Toronto, ON. During this time the family continued to grow with the birth of daughter Catherine in November 1956 and son Michael in September 1959. In 1965, the family moved again to Grimsby, ON as John was appointed Vice-president of Sales Canada for Firestone Tires. In 1977, John retired and opened up his own Firestone store in St. Catharines, ON. At the age of 82, John retired in 2011 and turned the store over to his eldest son John. Sadly, Margaret passed away July 21, 2008. In that same year John moved to Port Elgin, ON where he has lived ever since.



Decorations:

- 1939—1945 France and Germany Star
- 1939—1945 Defence Medal
- Meritous Service Medal with Bar
- 1939-1945 War Medal with Oak leaf
- Chevalier de l'ordre de Leopold II avec Palme medal Knighted by the King of Belgium for his courage and bravery at the battle of Scheldt.
- Belgium Croix de Guerre 1940 avec Palme medal

Service History:

John joined the Navy Reserve in Kitchener, ON at age 16 in 1935. He was hoping to become a Morse Code Wireless Operator on a ship and so he set out to learn Morse Code. John joined the Radio College of Canada which was a commercial wireless operators school. After 4 years of night study, John accomplished the speed of 24 words per minute which was needed to pass the examination and receive his certificate. The certificate was needed to become an Officer aboard a ship before the Second World War. By 1939-40 his rank was “Corporal” in the Signal Platoon of the Headquarters Company of the “Scot Fusiliers of Canada”, but when the war broke out in 1939, he found out that too many ships were sinking from battle: he immediately transferred to the Army. At the same time, John was asked to be an Officer in the Royal Canadian Corp of Signals and go to war. There was a slight problem with John's citizenship because his birth was not registered and he did not yet meet the education requirements for a Signal Officer as he had left high school early to work. John was able to obtain a birth certificate from the doctor his mother had at the time of his birth and he attended a 2 hour examination at the Board of Education whereby, at the conclusion of the session he was granted a “Senior Matriculation” from the Province of Ontario. John was now eligible to attend the “Officers Training Course” in Brockville, ON in the fall of 1940. Following this course, he travelled to Kingston, ON where he took a “Officers Training Course” at the RCCS (Royal Canadian Corp of Signals) from which he graduated as a full Lieutenant. Sept. 1941 to Nov. 29, 1941 at the Officers Training Centre qualified for Lieutenant rank. Dec. 1941 to Apr. 1942 ranked Lieutenant, Signals A.F. from Royal Roads. Following all the studies, examinations, qualifications and rewards for his efforts (1941-1942) he set out for a 6 week trip on boat (where he clearly and distinctly discovered that he was prone to seasickness) to Scotland for the first landing on his ultimate destination of England for his first posting to the position of “2nd in Command of D Section” as a Signal Master at the Divisional Headquarters of the 3rd Canadian Division which

Interesting Stories:

Jack told this story a number of times, in an Indiana Jones sort of way, like it was no big deal: “The Nazi's stole my friends jeep and had it in a cave, so we went in and got it. Luckily it was a hospital in the cave the they were unarmed”. Apparently they all just let Jack get in the jeep and he drove away. The key here is that he didn't know it was a hospital beforehand and the Nazi's were unarmed. He just went in anyway – as recounted by Jimmy Corupe (friend)

Lessons Learned:

I am sure the John will pass on to today's generation of Canadians, “Remember the Fallen who have given up their lives for the cause of freedom and democracy”. Join your local Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion where you will find comradeship in the activities and purposes of the Legion. On November 11th of each year – wear a poppy to confirm your thoughts. – Jack Tennant (comrade & friend)

The most important thing he told me was that the reason he survived the war, and had all amazing life experiences, was that he always had a sense, when looking back, the he was “guided” – Jimmy Corupe (friend)

On the eve of D-Day, Dad and all the soldiers in his regiment waited in their landing craft, the Chaplain, who was a Roman Catholic priest, held communion. These soldiers of every denomination joined together in celebration of the Lord's Supper. It mattered not what religion they belonged to – all took part in this truly unifying, ecumenical moment. I know that for my Dad this was the most poignant experience he had during the war – this coming together and setting aside of all differences between men, for the betterment of Canada and the World. – Catherine Gross (daughter)