



Thomas Patrick Mulvihill was born on September 5, 1920, to parents of Irish heritage: Daniel Morgan Mulvihill (1870-1943) and Margaret Alice Moore (1878-1937) who operated a farm near the rural village of Ashdad in Renfrew County in Eastern Ontario.

The family consisted of nine children: Martin, John, James, Leo, Margaret, William, Aileen, Howard and Thomas, known as “Tommy”, who was the youngest. He obtained his junior matriculation at St. Joseph’s Separate School in nearby Calabogie but he quit school to help his older brothers on the Ashdad farm after his mother, 59, died in 1937. The family attended the Roman Catholic Church of Most Precious Blood in Calabogie and the Catholic Church

in Mount St. Patrick.

His last job before military enlistment was working as an underground miner at the Upper Canada Gold Mine in Kirkland Lake where his father had moved after retiring.

His nephew , Bill Bates, whose mother, Margaret, was the oldest sister, tells about how determined Tommy was to enlist in the army and go off to war.

“My mother told me that Uncle Tommy tried in Kirkland Lake to get into the army -- first time, he was rejected for bad hearing and second time for bad eyesight. But in 1943 he tried a third time going down to Toronto (recruiting office) and he got accepted,” said Mr. Bates.

Sure enough, the medical examination which had been taken on Feb. 5, 1943 in Kirkland Lake showed that Tommy was “deaf in right ear since age 12.” This examination report in Mulvihill’s service files reported that he was six feet even in height and weighed 170 pounds. He was fully re-examined in May and August and he was confirmed as “A1” medical status.

Tommy Mulvihill had enlisted with the Canadian Army in Toronto on Feb. 16, 1943, two days after his father, Daniel Mulvihill, 72, had passed away at the home of his daughter, Aileen Temple, in Kirkland Lake in Northern Ontario. He went for basic training in Brantford and Camp Borden, both

in Ontario.

Six months later, Private Mulvihill was shipped overseas, arriving in the United Kingdom on Sept. 1, 1943. He was transferred to an infantry regiment, the Royal Regiment of Canada, on Dec. 16, 1943. Like many of the 14,000 Canadian service personnel in the U.K., Private Mulvihill began months of special training for the massive Allied operation which was the D-Day invasion of the Nazi-occupied continent.

After the Allied beachhead at Normandy had been established, more troops and supplies were sent to France. The First Battalion of the Royal Regiment arrived -- Private Mulvihill disembarked at Juno Beach on July 6, 1944.

A week later, he was seriously injured during the Battle of Normandy. The field medical report stated that Mulvihill's wound was "laceration to his scalp from a mortar bomb" and he suffered "exhaustion." He returned to his regiment on Aug. 23. Back in combat, Mulvihill was promoted to acting corporal on Sept. 2 and confirmed as corporal on Dec. 4. Then he became an acting sergeant on Jan. 17, 1945.

His older brother Private William Mulvihill who also fought in the war was a bren gunner with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry Regiment. He had been injured during a 1945 battle and was recuperating in London,

England when news of his brother's death came. Private Mulvihill was awarded a Mention in Despatches' for gallant and distinguished service. Such an award is approved by the British King George VI.

Sgt. Tommy Mulvihill was killed on April 14, 1945. It was during the Battle of Groningen in northeast Netherlands. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade had launched a major attack on this German stronghold.

The circumstances of his death were clearly described by Major T. R. Wilcox in an April 17 letter who personally wrote to Aileen Temple as the next-of-kin listed with the Canadian forces.

“During the subsequent street fighting he was shot in the head and instantly killed with a burst from an automatic submachine pistol,” wrote Major Wilcox who was an officer in the Royal Regiment.

Sgt. Mulvihill was killed “less than 20 yards from me,” stated Major Wilcox. “And I am glad to say that the German who shot was killed less than five minutes later.”

A very touching aspect of the story was what Major Wilcox related about the recovery of Sgt. Mulvihill's body. “For a few hours his body lay on the sidewalk where he fell -- covered with a blanket. When we came to remove his body, we found that the Dutch civilians had already covered it

with beautiful flowers which they had taken from their homes and placed on the body, even though the fighting still raging in the streets.”

Major Wilcox called Sgt. Mulvihill “a very brave man and a splendid sergeant” who showed great leadership as a platoon commander with the Royal Regiment.

“All through the company great sorrow was felt at his loss. Only time will heal your (Aileen’s) loss but you know that he died fighting for a cause that he believed and we believe to be both just and right,” concluded Major Wilcox.

After the liberation, Queen Wilhemina of the Netherlands recognized the many acts of extreme bravery and leadership from Canadian servicemen who fought the German forces which had occupied the country since 1940. Her Royal Decree on Dec. 8, 1945, awarded many high honours to 455 servicemen.

Lance-Sergeant Thomas Patrick Mulvihill was awarded posthumously the Bronze Lion (Bronzen Leeuw). The medal was recommended by Lieutenant-Col. R. M. Lendrum, commanding officer of the First Battalion, Royal Regiment of Canada.

It reads: “Early in the morning of 14 April 1945, Lance-Sergeant Mulvihill was in charge of a platoon of the Royal Regiment of Canada in the assault ... (on Groningen). The

enemy had set up pockets of resistance using 20-millimetre `flak` guns, machine guns and sub-machine guns.

`The crossfire from these posts was intense and it was with great difficulty `that Sergeant Mulvihill fought through two blocks of houses,` stated the report. ``On two occasions the withering automatic fire threatened to break up the assaulting platoon but by his fine example and courageous leadership this Non-Commissioned Officer (Mulvihill) kept his force fighting on until the objective was gained.``

The Royal Regiment`s report concluded: ``Unfortunately at the moment of final success Sergeant Mulvihill was shot at close range and killed. Had it not been for his utter disregard of personal safety and his inspiring bravery in pressing forward the attack the platoon would not have been successful and the whole company plan prejudiced.``

Once the Canadian forces had liberated Groningen, the war dead were buried in the temporary cemetery at Assen. After the war, Sgt. Thomas Mulvihill`s remains were transferred to the Holten Canadian War Cemetery where he is buried in Grave 9, Row E, Plot 10. The inscription on his headstone reads: "May his soul Rest in peace."

The Canadian government awarded him posthumously the Defence Medal, War Medal 1939-1945, the 1939-45 Star, the France-Germany Star and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal as well as the Memorial Cross was sent to

his sister Aileen Teeple as his next-of-kin. The Bronze Lion medal was forwarded much later.

A high requiem mass for Thomas Patrick Mulvihill was celebrated on May 1, 1945, in the Roman Catholic Church of Most Precious Blood in Calabogie. It was attended by neighbours and friends of the late Sgt. Mulvihill.

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\*Veterans Affairs Canada, The Canadian Virtual War Memorial

\* Library Archives Canada, WWII Service Files of War 1939-1947

\* The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Casualty Files

\* Map of the Canadian assault on Groningen is from the book *De bevrijding van Groningen*, by W.K.J.J. Van Ommen Kloeke.

\* The April 17, 1945 letter of Major T. R. Wilcox was supplied by Sgt. Mulvihill's nephew Bill Bates of Devon Alberta, who is the son of Margaret Mulvihill.

\* The photographs of Sgt. Mulvihill in uniform and at home as well as his various medals were supplied by

another nephew and his wife, Donald and Elizabeth Teeple of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. He is son of Aileen Teeple.

\* The photograph of the brother, Private William Mulvihill, was supplied by his son, Greg Mulvihill, of St. Catharines, Ontario..

\* Report on the recommendation from the Royal Regiment of Canada for his Bronze Lion citation was supplied by Joel Stoppels through the WW2Talk forum website.