

Robert Harold Johnston

Private, 46th Battalion, Saskatchewan Regiment (?), Service #257142

Born: 10 September 1893, Boissevain, Manitoba
Died: 27 September 1918 in France, age 25 years and 17 days.

Robert's Family - The Johnstons of Boissevain, Manitoba

Robert's parents were Harriet Eliza Dulmage and Robert Johnston. Harriet was born in Athol Tp, Prince Edward County, Canada West but met and married Robert after her family moved to Huron County in the 1860s – they were married 22 October 1879 in Morris Tp, Huron County, Ontario. Harriet and Robert's first two children were born in Huron County, but the family had moved to Boissevain, Manitoba by the time their third child arrived in 1884. Robert Harold was their 8th and final child, with 5 older sisters and 2 brothers.

Harriet Dulmage wrote articles and stories for Methodist publications and sometimes for the Winnipeg newspapers. Many were under the nom de plume "Hyacinth" and often dealt with temperance issues and the evils of drink. Harriet died young, aged just 39, in 1896.

Between 1901 and 1906 Robert Johnston moved his eight children to Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan. Father and son were living in Graytown, Sask when Robert Harold was called up on January 12, 1918. The father had remarried at some point to Sophia, but the marriage has not been located.

Robert's Irish Palatine Ancestry

Harriet Eliza Dulmage was the youngest child of **Jonathan Allen Dulmage** (1814-1900) and **Christiana Wright** (1815-1901) who were married 13 March 1838 in Prince Edward County, Upper Canada.

Jonathan Dulmage was the son of **Jacob Dulmage** (1778-1841) and Sarah Huff (b1785) who married 23 March 1802 in Adolphustown, Upper Canada.

Jacob Dulmage was the son of David **Dulmage UEL** and his wife Mary Jennings.

David Dulmage was son of **Jacob Dolmage** (c1720-1781) and his wife **Margaret Embury**, daughter of **Andreas Imberger**.

Jacob Dolmage was the son of **Gerhardt Dolmetsch** (c1697-1769) and his wife Elenor.

Gerhardt Dolmetsch was the son of **Johann Adam Dolmetsch** (c1678-1751) and his wife **Elisabeth Lorentz**. Johann Adam, vine dresser, was one of the original Palatine refugees who was sent to Castle Matrix, Ireland by Queen Anne.

Robert's Participation in the Canadian Corps

A resident of Graytown, Saskatchewan, Johnston lived and worked on the family farm. Like many farm boys who could not be spared to go to war, Johnston did not volunteer at the outbreak of war, but was drafted under the Military Service Act of 1917. He officially entered the Canadian Corps on 12 January 1918 at the age of 24.

Part of the 4th Division, the 46th Battalion was raised in Moose Jaw in 1914 and trained at Sitwell Camp before embarking to England. The battalion fought in every major Canadian engagement from 1916 onwards; when Johnston joined the battalion, likely in the spring or summer of 1918, they were gearing up for what would be Canada's last great engagement of the war, the Hundred Days.

Johnston wrote home on 24 August 1918, that he was 'not up to [his] batt.[alion] yet so there is no news'. In fact, the 46th Battalion had just finished the Allied push at Amiens, begun on 8 August, at the cost of 114 men wounded, killed or missing. **Johnston would have entered the line as a replacement for one of those killed, possibly either before or after the battle for the Drocourt-Queant Line.** Whenever he entered the Front, Johnston would be part of the 46th Battalion's assault on the Canal-du-Nord, 25 days after they took the D-Q Line.

Canal-du-Nord, Sept 27, 1918

The **Canal-du-Nord** presented a considerable obstacle for the Allies; nearly dry, all crossing points had been bombed by the Germans, who held the higher ground on the far bank.. On the morning of 27 September, the Canadian front fell silent and a surprise barrage hailed the attack of the Canadian Corps in early morning. **Private Johnston was likely hit during the first two waves, seriously injured in both legs by a German machine gun.** His wounds were bandaged and he was evacuated to No.30 Casualty Clearing Station for transport further down the line.

Private Johnston did not survive the afternoon - he died age 25; one of the 46th Battalion's 370 casualties of the day.

Source: <https://greatwarcentre.com/2015/11/17/a-farmer-in-france-robert-harold-johnston/>



Robert's Resting Place

Robert Harold Johnston is buried in the Bucquoy Road Cemetery, Ficheux, France (4 1/4 miles south of Arras)

Prepared by: **Nancy Cutway UE**

Robert Harold Johnston is my 1st cousin twice removed – my grandmother Hazel Dulmage Austin's first cousin.

This article was originally prepared for the World War I Project of the Irish Palatine Special Interest Group of the Ontario Genealogical Society in 2017.