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News
Local
Regional
National
International
Sports
Political
Nouvelles
Editorial
Lottery
Health
Wawa and Area
Local Sports
Public Notices
School News
Nouvelles Scolaires
Weather News
Columns
It's Our History, Our Country
Basic Black
Nuts N Bolts
Pathways
Paws N Claws
Other Columns
Announcements
Births
Obituary/Memorials
Thank You's
Entertainment
Movies
Highlights

Home > Columns > It's Our History, Our Country > James Montgomery "Jimmy" Doohan

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James Montgomery "Jimmy" Doohan

March 3, 1920

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by Ronald Wolf



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James Montgomery "Jimmy" Doohan (1920–2005), best known as Montgomery Scott (Scotty) on the TV show and movies Star Trek, was born in the youngest of four children of William and Sarah Doohan, who emigrated from [Northern Ireland](#), was born on this day.

His father was a pharmacist, veterinarian, and dentist; his mother was a homemaker. Doohan's father reportedly invented an early form of [high-octane gasoline](#) in 1923.

The family moved to [Sarnia, Ont.](#), and Doohan attended Sarnia Collegiate Institute and Technical School where he excelled in mathematics and science. Doohan also enrolled in the 102 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps.

At the beginning of the [Second World War](#), Doohan joined the [Royal Canadian Artillery](#). He was commissioned a lieutenant in the 13th Field Artillery Regiment of the [3rd Canadian Infantry Division](#).

His first combat was the invasion of [Normandy](#) at [Juno Beach](#) on [D-Day](#). Shooting two [snipers](#), Doohan led his men to higher ground through a field of [anti-tank mines](#), where they took defensive positions for the night.

Crossing between command posts at 11:30 p.m., Doohan was hit by six rounds fired from a [Bren gun](#) by a nervous Canadian sentry: four in his leg, one in the chest, and one through his right middle finger. The bullet to his chest was stopped by a [silver cigarette case](#). His right middle finger had to be amputated, something he would conceal during his career as an actor.



After the war, Doohan started his acting career. His TV career began with a [CBC](#) radio show appearance on January 12, 1946. He took a drama class in Toronto, and later won a two-year scholarship to the [Neighborhood Playhouse](#) in New York City, where his classmates included [Leslie Nielsen](#), [Tony Randall](#) and [Richard Boone](#).

I had the great pleasure to meet Doohan while he attended a convention at University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ont. in 1980. I found him to be fun, full of life as he answered many questions from the audience.

Doohan suffered from [Parkinson's disease](#), [diabetes mellitus](#), and [pulmonary fibrosis](#) in later life. In 2004, he was diagnosed with [Alzheimer's disease](#).

On July 20, 2005, at 5:30 a.m., Doohan died at his home in [Redmond, Washington](#) with his wife Wende and long-time friend and agent, Steve Stevens, at his side. His agent identified the cause as pneumonia and Alzheimer's disease.

In what may be regarded as an [ironic coincidence](#), Doohan died on the anniversary of the [Apollo 11](#) lunar landing, arguably the greatest engineering achievement in human history. Almost two years after his death, approximately one-quarter ounce (7 grams) of Doohan's ashes was sent into space, as he had requested in his will.

The ashes, along with those of Mercury astronaut [Gordon Cooper](#) as well as almost two hundred others, were launched on the [SpaceLift XL](#) rocket, on April 28, 2007, when the rocket briefly entered outer space in a four-minute [suborbital](#) flight before parachuting to earth, as planned, with the ashes still inside.

On earth, or in space, Canadians can be found making contributions to the world and in our history, our country.

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001150/>

[http://memory-alpha.org/en/wiki/James Doohan](http://memory-alpha.org/en/wiki/James_Doohan)