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with Avi Finegold





## Nick Yudell: A war hero's art finds an audience (80 years later)



**N**ick Yudell was a budding artist who took black-and-white photos of everyday life in Winnipeg during the 1920s and '30s, and in rural Manitoba, where he was raised in the province's southern city of Morden.

But after enlisting in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1940, he left his extensive collection of prints and negatives behind with family for safekeeping.

Yudell died in action during a bombing raid over German-occupied Tunisia in 1943. He was 26.

Now, thanks to art professor Celia Rabinovitch—a cousin who discovered the contents of Yudell's collection in a box in her father's basement—a major exhibit called *The Lost Expressionist* has been mounted.

It's currently on display at the Manitoba Museum until Dec. 18, 2022.

As a military historian of Canada's Jews in the Second World War—something I chronicled in my 2019 book, *Double Threat*—I'd always known about Yudell's service. I've lectured about him to audiences around Canada. I had even travelled to the island of Malta to pay my respects at the memorial column in Valletta.

His name is engraved on the Air Force memorial column, alongside others who served in the Mediterranean Theatre but have no known grave.

After knowing only how he died, I was deeply moved to see his collection of personal photos—which showed me also how brightly and vibrantly he lived. ■