John Frances McDermott

John McDermott was born on November 7, 1895. His father died of tuberculous when John was about eight years old. The family struggled and they were very poor. A year later, in 1903 the police were called to evict a mother and six children from their home in St. Paul, Minnesota. At this point John's mother either died or the children were taken away. The next record we find for John, in 1905, he is living in an orphanage with his two brothers in Minneapolis. In 1910 he is living with the Thomas Connelly family in Mendota Heights, working as a farm hand. He ended up attending high school in Rosemount and staying with Mary Hogan and her family just outside town.

On July 1918 he enlisted and was assigned to Company C, 4th Antiaircraft and Machine Gun Battalion. He trained at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina as a wagoner. He did go to France but we are not certain of the details. He returned home from Brest, France on the USS Seattle, arriving at Hoboken, New Jersey on January 8, 1919.

When the war ended, he returned to Rosemount, Minnesota, this time living with a friend, Joseph Heinen and his family. Joseph was his age and also served in WWI. He was working as a carpenter and Joseph as a machinist and both were employed by the Rosemount Police Department as night watchmen. On the night of May 20, 1923, John was asked to work for Joseph, as he had been injured in an automobile accident as was in the hospital. John agreed. While on the job, he observed two suspicious men near the bank and since there had been rumors of trouble, he immediately called the "gun squad" from their beds to help apprehend the suspects. One of the policemen, William Hagemeister shot John by accident thinking he was one of the suspects. John died the following day. William Hagemeister was absolved of any blame and he served as an honorary pallbearer at his funeral. John received full military honors and is buried at St Joseph's Cemetery in Rosemount, Minnesota.