

Bourgon, Ernest Joseph Edgar

Private

**Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry
Highlanders**

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

C/123700



Ernest Joseph Edgar (he was also referred to as Eddie) Bourgon was born on June 26, 1923 in Timiskaming, in northern Quebec. His friends and fellow comrades used to call him "Shorty." Edgar was the child of Ernest Bourgon and Blanche Beaudoin. His parents had three children: Edgar, Marie Jacqueline and Joseph Alex Simeon. He was the oldest of the three. When he signed up for the war, he lived at 225 Carruthers Ave, Ottawa, Ontario.

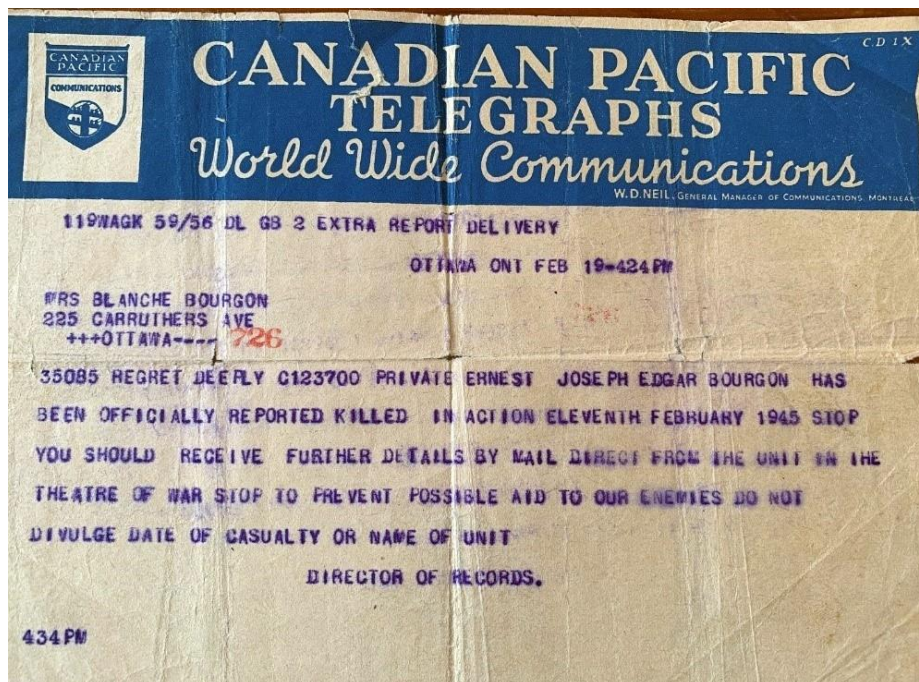
Edgar voluntarily left school after completing grade 7 as he had to go to work. Bourgon had many different jobs before enlisting into the army. He mainly worked as a truck driver for C. Vachon & Sons in Ottawa in their coal dealers business. He also had jobs as a taxi driver, a wood cutter, and coremaking worker in a foundry. Edgar was a Roman Catholic.

Private Bourgon enlisted into the Canadian army on March 23, 1944. According to his military records, he was described as standing five foot two inches, weighing 129 pounds and having blue eyes with light brown hair. His personnel assessment report stated that he liked playing sports and had excellent stamina. He was described as to be assertive, self-confident, alert, and had a good attitude about being in the army. He attended the training courses at the Canadian Infantry Training Centre in Farnham, Quebec. After performing well in training, he went into the Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit (Rifle Division). He reported for duty on October 21st, 1944. According to his elementary training records, he could handle rifles and two-inch mortars skillfully and knew how to use

them effectively. He was very fast and confident with Bren machine guns. In common training, he excelled at physical training, marching, fundamental training, and cooking in the field. Edgar was described as having a good insight and was familiar with most of the other training fields such as grenades, application of fire, booby traps, etc. He had a proficient sense of the Projector Infantry Anti-Tank (PIAT) as well.

Private Bourgon left Canada on October 13, 1944 arriving in the United Kingdom On November 23, 1944, he was sent to Northwestern Europe. On December 4, he was transferred to the Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders regiment.

Attacked by German troops on February 11, 1945, his regiment came under heavy fire. Private Edgar Bourgon died of wounds from an enemy machine gun. In a February 17, letter, his commander, Major J.W. Braden wrote home to his mother, Blanche Bourgon to tell her how her son had died on the battlefield near Cleve, Germany.



Telegraph received by Mrs. Blanche Bourgon, Ernest Joseph Edgar Bourgon's Mother, on February 19, 1945 from the Director of Records.

Major Braden wrote that "At the time it happened, my company was attacking a small village, "Rendurne", on the northern end of the Siegfried line, we had had a very tough go that afternoon. But we were still pushing forward and by two o'clock in the morning of 10 of Feb we had broken through the heaviest defences and into this small village. Rendurne, where only a few Germans were left. Those that were left were trying to get away and some by means of a motor vehicle tried to shoot their way out of us, this was when your son got hit. The enemy were firing a machine gun from this car and a burst hit Edgar. I was very close by at the time and I can assure you there was no suffering whatsoever, which is every soldier's wish when his time does come., but even though I

know it is of no condolence to you, some of Edgar's pals made sure that the German will fight no more."

His letter also showed the high esteem his comrades felt towards "Shorty" Bourgon when Major Brads stated "Even though "shorty" as we used to call him, was only with us a short time, all the lads grew to know and like him. He was always in high spirits and nothing was too much trouble for him to do. I had become quite well acquainted with your son and I can assure you that he did his duty to the fullest and was still doing so when he paid the supreme sacrifice. "

Letter received by Mrs. Bourgon from the Chaplain, 16 September 1945:

16 Sept 45

My dear Mrs. Bourgon-

Please excuse my delay in writing & offer you my very sincere sympathy in your sorrow over the death of your dear boy Ernest. No doubt you have long since received the official notification as to details, but I feel even at this late date you shall appreciate the few which I, the Priest of his Brigade, can now add.

I can not claim to have known Ernest personally - there were so many & such frequent changes in personnel that to know each boy there, was almost an impossibility. However as often as circumstances would permit I said Mass for the Boys & gave them every opportunity to receive the Sacraments.

The Sunday previous, as well as three days prior to his death I said Mass in his Unit lines - and gave all present General Absolution & Holy Communion. I feel certain that Ernest must have been amongst the many

to whom I then gave Holy Communion. I can assure
you the Lays were marvellous in their piety &
take every opportunity to approach the Sacraments
before a Big Push. I regret that I could not have
been with your boy when he died - duty called
me elsewhere - his body was recovered & he was buried
with full military war time honours in a temporary
Cdr. Military Cemetery.
I have since daily included Ernest in my masses -
you may rest assured I shall continue to do so.
Once again please excuse my delay in writing &
to accept my sincere sympathy in your sorrow.
May God bless & console you - & may the Sweet
Mother of Sorrows help you bear this heavy cross
of suffering sorrow.

Sincerely in Christ
Donald A. Kerr Major
Senior Chaplain (R.C.)
3rd Cdn. Inf. Div. (Cdn)

Letter received by Mrs. Blanche Bourgon from Major J.W. Braden on February 17th, 1945. J.W. Braden was a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of the Stormont Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders (SD&G Highrs).

17 Feb. 45 -
Major J.W. Braden. S. D. & G. Highrs
CAO. B.W.I.F.

My Dear Mrs Bourgon

I feel it my duty Mrs Bourgon to tell you as much as in my power to tell about your son Edgar's death. As well I would like to take this opportunity to express to you my deepest feelings as well as the feelings of all the lads of my Coy. Even though "Shorty" as we used to call him, was only with us a short time all the lads grew to know and like him. He was always in high spirits and nothing was too much trouble for him to do. I had become quite well acquainted with your son and I can assure you that he did his duty to the fullest and was still doing so when he paid the supreme sacrifice.

At the time it happened my Coy was attacking a small village "Kendun" on the northern end of the

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Suffered here, we had, had a very tough
op that afternoon but were still pushing
forward and by two o'clock in the
morning of 10 of Feb we had broken
through the heaviest defenses and into
this small village. Remained, where only
a few Germans were left. Those that
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and some by means of a motor
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of us, this was when your son got
hit. The enemy were firing a machine gun
from this car and a burst hit Edgar.

I was very close by at the time and
I can assure you there was no suffering
what so ever, which is every soldier's
wish when his time does come. The
entire burst hit him in the chest, but
even though I know it is of no
consolation to you, some of Edgar's pals
made sure that the German will
fight no more.

He is buried in a small cemetery
on the side of the hill about two miles
west of Cleve. His personal effects are
being looked after by our Padre and

they will eventually reach you.

Let me once again express my
deepest sympathy to you and your
family.

I remain sincerely yours

Maj J. H. Braden

C. S. A. Coy.

S. H. G. High, CAD
B W E F

17 Février 1945.

De: Major J.W. Braden, S.D.G. Highs, C.A.O. BWEF.

Chère Madame Bourgon,

Je sens que c'est mon devoir, Madame Bourgon, de vous faire part de tout ce que je sais au sujet de la mort de votre bien-aimé fils Edgar. Je profite de cette occasion pour vous dire ma profonde douleur et celle de ma compagnie à votre endroit.

Même si votre fils que nous avons surnommé "Shorty" n'était avec nous que depuis peu de temps, tous et chacun avaient appris à le connaître et à l'aimer. Il était toujours de bonne humeur et le travail quelque difficile qu'il fut, ne lui faisait pas peur. J'étais moi-même très intime avec votre fils et je puis vous assurer qu'il a fait son devoir jusqu'au bout, et jusqu'au sacrifice suprême.

Au moment de la tragédie, ma compagnie attaquait un petit village nommé Rendurne situé au nord de la ligne Sigfried, nous avançons malgré les rudes fatigues de l'après-midi. Vers 2 heures le lendemain matin, 10 février, nous avons défoncé une forte ligne et avons même pénétré dans le village de Rendurne. Il ne restait que quelques allemands qui tentaient de s'enfuir. Ils essayaient de se frayer un chemin en tirant sur nous d'une auto qu'ils avaient, avec une mitrailleuse. C'est de cet mitrailleuse qu'une volée de balles frappa Edgar. Il était très près de ses assaillants à ce moment-là et je puis vous assurer que votre fils n'a pas souffert; c'est toujours le souhait de tous les soldats quand ils doivent affronter l'instant fatal.

La volée de balles frappa Edgar en pleine poitrine; je puis vous dire que les amis d'Edgar ne tardèrent pas à venger la mort de leur ami en faisant disparaître à tout jamais ce sale boche.

Edgar est enterré dans un petit cimetière situé sur un coteau à deux milles de Clèves, à l'ouest.

Ces objets personnels seront recueillis par notre Aumônier et le tout vous sera envoyé dans le plus court délai.

Permettez encore une fois que je vous offre mes condoléances les plus sincères ainsi qu'à votre famille si grandement affligée.

Je demeure sincèrement vôtre,

Maj. J.W. Braden, O.C.A. Coy.

S.D.G. Highs, CAO. BWEF.

Translation in French.

According to a letter written by his commanding officer, Bourgon was in the "A" company which was following the "C" company through Donsbruggen and the two companies pushed along the main road leading to Rindern. The "A" company had been ordered not to wait in Rindern but to go straight through the main road. "A" company then went through all houses in the street, clearing them of any enemies.

His initial burial location in February of 1945 was in Waldsschlossen on the Nijmegen-Cleve Road near the German town of Cleve.

On February 21, 1946, his remains were reburied in the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, Netherlands, grave reference **XX. F. 5.**

His headstone is inscribed:

TOO DEARLY LOVED TO BE FORGOTTEN

MOTHER, DAD, AND FAMILY.



Biography: Yazan Aldehim and Parinita Girish, students from All Saints H.S, Kanata, Canada for Faces to Graves, with courtesy of Vanessa Kirtz teacher at All Saints H.S. Additional research and editing provided by Kurt Johnson.

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Library, and Archives Canada
- Canadian Virtual war Memorial
- Pictures provided by Celina Berube (Niece of Edgar Bourgon)
- The 3rd Edition, Up The Glens, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Highlanders, 1868 - 2018 written by Brigadier General (Retired) William J. Patterson, OMM, CD, UE



The grave of Edgar Bourgon - photo Alice van Bekkum.

In memory of
Pte. Ernest Joseph Edgar Bourgon
 C 123700
 Died on 11 February, 1945
 Age 21
 Son of Ernest and Blanche Bourgon,
 of Ottawa, Ontario.
 Remembered with honour
Groesbeek
Canadian War Cemetery
 Gelderland, Netherlands.

Private
Bourgon Ernest Joseph Edgar

Glen Memorial