

**Bisaillon, Edgar**

**Private**

**Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Regiment**

**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**

**E/4757**



Edgar Bisaillon was born on 18 January 1916 in Verdun, Montreal, Province of Quebec, as son of Alphonse Bisaillon and Josephine Guay. His father was a blacksmith, later an elevator mechanic.

His mother died on 3 May 1920 at the age of 36, after giving birth to twins on 2 May 1920. The two girls died not long after their birth. Already on 3 January 1911, triplets had been born, two boys and a girl, who had also died shortly after their birth.

Edgar had two older brothers, Charles and Rosario, as well as two older sisters, Alice and Gracièla. Edgar was Roman Catholic.

After the death of his mother, Edgar was placed in a monastery at the age of 4, where he remained until he was 5 or 6 years old. Then he went to Public School for a year. At the age of 9 he went to an orphanage for a year. Then he went back to the Public School.



*College Saint Vincent de Paul in Laval*

At the age of 15, he entered the College Saint Vincent de Paul in Laval, Quebec, to study accounting. After two years, he went to St. Patrick's College for a year to learn English. Edgar was bilingual: he spoke French and also English.

After school he went to work and had all kinds of jobs all over Canada. Finally, he worked without pay as a car mechanic at the garage company Legault in Montreal for nine months.

An important reason for Edgar to join the army was that he could then become a mechanic and at the same time would be paid, fed and clothed.

When he actually enlisted as a volunteer with the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment (Van Doos) in Montreal on 27 November 1939, he was unmarried and lived with his father. His health was good, he was 5 ft.6 tall, weighed over 147 lb., and had blue eyes, blond hair and a fair complexion. He did not drink or smoke.

After having made a will on 5 December 1939, in which he bequeathed all his possessions to his father Alphonse Bisailon and in which he named his eldest brother Charles as executor of his will, Edgar left from the port of Halifax with the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment with the SS Aquitania to the United Kingdom on 9 December 1939 to be trained in Europe for the fight against the Germans.

On December 17, 1939, the troopship arrived in the harbour of Greenock, Scotland. Initially, Edgar was stationed at Guillemont Barracks in Cove, Hampshire.



*s.s. Aquitania*

In January 1940 he was transferred to the training centre Aldershot. Edgar was transferred to the Royal Canadian Engineers at Headley on 20 May 1941 for a short engineer training. He returned to the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment on 7 June 1941. After 46 months of intensive combat, weapons and gas training (including 284 days in detention), Edgar left for Italy on 28 October 1943 for Operation 'Husky'. On 9 November 1943 he arrived in Italy.

In November 1943 Edgar took part in Italy in the battle at the Sangro and in December 1943 at the Gully and Casa Berardi. After his detention, he still took part in the fight against the Germans in January 1945 at the purification of the Granarola Salient and in February 1945 at the Senio Curve.

At the end of the battle in Italy, Edgar was wounded on 25 February 1945 and was transferred from the front line to the Casualty Cleaning Station (CCS) behind the regimental aid post (RAP). On 7 March 1945 he rejoined his regiment.

On 15 March 1945 as part of Operation Goldflake, Edgar departed with the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment via the port of Livorno from Italy to France, where he arrived in Marseille on 17 March 1945. From Marseille they went in convoys through France and Belgium to Germany and the Netherlands for the last campaign against NAZI Germany. From 6 April 1945 the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment was going to participate in the last operation of the Second World War in Europe.

During his time in the army Edgar was hospitalized a few times. The first time was a day admission on 21 February 1940 in the Cambridge Hospital for an eye examination, which resulted in Edgar having to wear glasses.

On May 25, 1941, he was hospitalized for the second time, now in No.5 General Hospital at Taplow, from which he was transferred to No.2 Canadian Infantry Holding Unit at Witley. After an examination into his psychological condition, he was allowed to leave the hospital again on 30 May 1941.

Edgar was admitted to a hospital (No.15 General Hospital in Bramshott) for the third time on 23 September 1941 for sleeping problems and nightmares. On 28 September 1941 he was referred to No.1 Neurological Hospital in Basingstoke, Hampshire, for further diagnosis and treatment of his neurological problems.

During the examination by his neurologist Major H.H. Hyland Edgar said that he had nightmares, talked in his sleep and sleepwalked. He had little affiliation with his comrades-in-arms and had nothing in common with them. He did not agree with their political views, they always complained about the food and they dated girls of the wrong kind. Furthermore, Edgar found it extremely frustrating that he had still not been able to train as a mechanic, despite his repeated requests to do so. One of the reasons he joined the army was precisely because he would be trained as a mechanic.

He had now been in England for one year and 10 months and had done nothing but military exercises, learning how to handle a Bren gun and the like. He felt neglected and unfairly treated by certain NCOs. For him that had also been the reason why he had been absent without permission a number of times. He was concerned about his future.

Furthermore, he indicated not to drink, to be very serious, to study a lot, to read the newspapers and to try to get ahead and not to waste his time on worthless things. For that reason he had no real friends and was introverted. He could not find anyone who could be a good companion for him, the other people were far too frivolous.

Because Edgar had had no more sleep disturbances, but did have a mild form of anxiety neurosis, the neurologist advised that he be released from the hospital and be returned to his unit. The neurologist did recommend

for Edgar to receive training as a mechanic and to give him the opportunity to adapt to the army.

The director of the Neurological Hospital, Captain A.C.R. M'Genigle, authorized to release Edgar from hospital on 10 October 1941 and to allow him to return to his unit.

Military discipline was very hard on Edgar. He had to appear in the field on 23 March 1943, because he had been absent for 21 days without permission (Army Act 15.1). Enough was enough for his superiors. Edgar already had a criminal record of 14 offenses, including for unauthorized absence (Army Act 15.1), for conduct contrary to good order and military discipline (Army Act 40) and for three charges of insubordination against a senior officer (Army Act 15.2). The court martial sentenced Edgar to 9 months of detention.

On 26 March 1943, Edgar was transferred from Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment to No.6 Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit to serve his sentence in an Erie Camp detention barracks in Headley near Bordon. The discipline in this prison camp was strict and living conditions were Spartan.

On July 26, 1943, Lieutenant-Colonel C.H.Walker of the Canadian Military Headquarters granted Edgar a 153 day reduction in sentence.



*Detention barracks Erie Camp in 1941 under construction*

Also in Italy Edgar had to appear before the Drumhead Court Martial, because he had been absent for 13 days without permission between 2 and 14 December 1943 (Army Act 15.1) and because he had sold parts of his equipment, clothing and belongings of the regiment worth \$45.90 (Army Act 24.1). For these offenses, the Court Martial sentenced Edgar to 1½ years in prison on 23 December 1943. On 17 January 1944 Edgar was transferred from the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment to No.1 Canadian Base Reinforcement Depot and transferred to No.9 Field Punishment Camp to serve his sentence.

On 22 December 1944, Edgar received a 182 days reduced sentence.

In total, Edgar spent 689 days in detention during his military service.

It is particularly sour to realize that Edgar would not have died on 23 April 1945, if he had not been granted a reduction of his sentence of 182 days on 22 December 1944 ...

During the advance from Hoevelaken to Hooglanderveen on 23 April 1945, the 18<sup>th</sup> platoon of the D Company of the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment was fired on by Germans near the little farm of Ariën Ruitenbeek on the Nijkerkerstraat in Hooglanderveen at approximately 6 pm. Edgar Bisailon was killed there together with his comrade Théophile Roussel.



In turn, the Canadians set fire to Ariën Ruitenbeek's farm with flamethrowers. The damage to this little farm was extensive: fl 15,200.

*Farm Ariën Ruitenbeek on a painting*

Edgar was temporarily buried at the Protestant Cemetery in Nijkerk after a church service.

On 18 June 1948 Alphonse Bisailon received a photo of the grave of his son Edgar at the Protestant Cemetery in Nijkerk. This photo was taken by Mrs Luteijn, the wife of Reverend Adriaan Luteijn of the Grote- or Catharinakerk in Nijkerk.



Private Edgar Bisailon's Awards:

- 1939-45 Star
- Italy Star
- France-Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp

On 5 May 1945 Alphonse Bisailon received a letter from Major-General Alfred Ernst Walford with the message that his son Edgar gave his life in the service of his homeland on 23 April 1945 in the fight against the Germans. He expressed his sincere condolences for this loss and paid tribute to Edgar for the sacrifice he had made.

In memory of his son Edgar, Alphonse Bisailon had a sung church service



held in the Catholic Church of St. Clotilde in Montreal on Wednesday 23 May 1945. For this, he paid \$35.00 to the church board. The Canadian Government reimbursed him for this amount.

Bisailon on 2 July 1945. They included a New Testament, several photographs and letters, a notebook, two dictionaries, a tin box containing press studs and newspaper clippings, and a \$50 bond in the Eighth Victory Loan.

*Victorie Bonds*

His personal belongings were sent to his father Alphonse

*Obligation*



At the time of his enlistment, Edgar's salary was \$1.30 a day, later increased to \$1.40 and on 1 January 1943 to \$1.50 a day. From 1 December 1939 to 1 May 1945, his father Alphonse Bisailon received a grant of \$20 a month from the Canadian government. His war allowance of \$1693.91 was paid to his father on 29 March 1946. By virtue of Edgar's will, his father Alphonse Bisailon was the sole heir.

This war allowance was based on 1286 days of service, while his actual service was 1975 days. The 689 days Edgar spent in detention were not eligible for the war benefit.

On 2 October 1945, Private Edgar Bisailon was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **XIV. E. 14.**

*photo  
Alice  
van  
Bekum*



The inscription on his headstone reads:

**FILS DE ALPHONSE BISAILLON**

(son of Alphonse Bisailon)



Life story: Piet Smink for Faces To Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives

\* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl)



In the context of the theme of the National Committee 4 and 5 May for 2024 "Freedom tells: prelude to 80 years of freedom", the Orange Committee Hoogland, together with the Orange Association Hooglanderveen, placed a plaque with the names of those who died in Hooglanderveen on May 4, 2024. Canadian soldiers Edgar Bisailon and Théophile Roussel placed on a memorial column at the Roman Catholic church St. Joseph in Hooglanderveen.



