

Budreau, Melvin Edwin
Private
Royal Hamilton Light Infantry
B119945



Melvin Edwin Budreau was born on the 28th of June 1925 in Burk's Falls, Ontario. He was born as son of Annie and Thomas Budreau.

Thom and Annie had 3 sons, of which Melvin was the middle son. His older brother was Carl Herbert and his youngest brother was Garnet.

The family lived a happy family life in Burk's Falls. Their religion was United Church of Canada.



*Thom and Annie,
Melvin's parents.*



*Melvin, 6 years
old.*

Melvin's older brother Carl Herbert, born in 1919, served overseas as well. His niece Jo-Anne (daughter of youngest brother Garnet) remembers in 2019:

"My uncle Private Carl Herbert Budreau went to war married to his wife and they had a young 2 year old daughter. He went to war as a really nice guy. But he returned home all messed up. He even left his wife and daughter. We all didn't know at that time that my uncle was going through a lot from the war and back then veterans didn't get the help needed. I sure understand now he must have had a lot of pain in his brain and in his heart..."



Carl Herbert & his wife Geneva Bernice Budreau

Carl sends home pictures, which give an impression of the war in Europe:



Falaise.



Field grave of a comrade...

Ruined village...



Melvins's youngest brother Garnet was born in 1932, he was just a young boy when his 2 older brothers joined the army.

Carl (21) and his younger brother Garnet (8).

Melvin went to school and made it till the 8th grade. As young man he worked as an express delivery man and truck driver for Canadian National Express in Toronto for 8th months.

At an age of 18 he decided to enlist for military service. On the 7th of December 1943 he enlisted for service at the No.2 District Depot in Toronto.

Melvin was a good developed and healthy young man, with a height of around 170cm and he weighed around 65kg. His hair was brown and he had blue eyes. On the end tip of his left thumb he had a scar. During his enlistment he was a single young man.

Melvin was taken on strength at No.23 Basic Training Center in Newmarket Ontario and started his military training on the 26th of February 1944.

On the 29th of February he was send to #1 Canadian Armoured Corps Training Regiment in Borden, Ontario. Where he qualified himself as driver i/c Cl. III.

From the 1st of June 1944 he was transferred to the Canadian Armoured Corps Trained Soldiers Regiment and continued his training.



Melvin in uniform.

On the 3rd of July 1944, something else happened. Melvin requested permission to marry Nellie whom he had met a year earlier.

He is granted special leave, and Melvin gets married to Nellie Margarite Kennedy on the 17th of July 1944 in Huntsville, Ontario. Nellie is Canadian as well, and she is born on the 22nd of November 1921 in Sundridge Ontario.

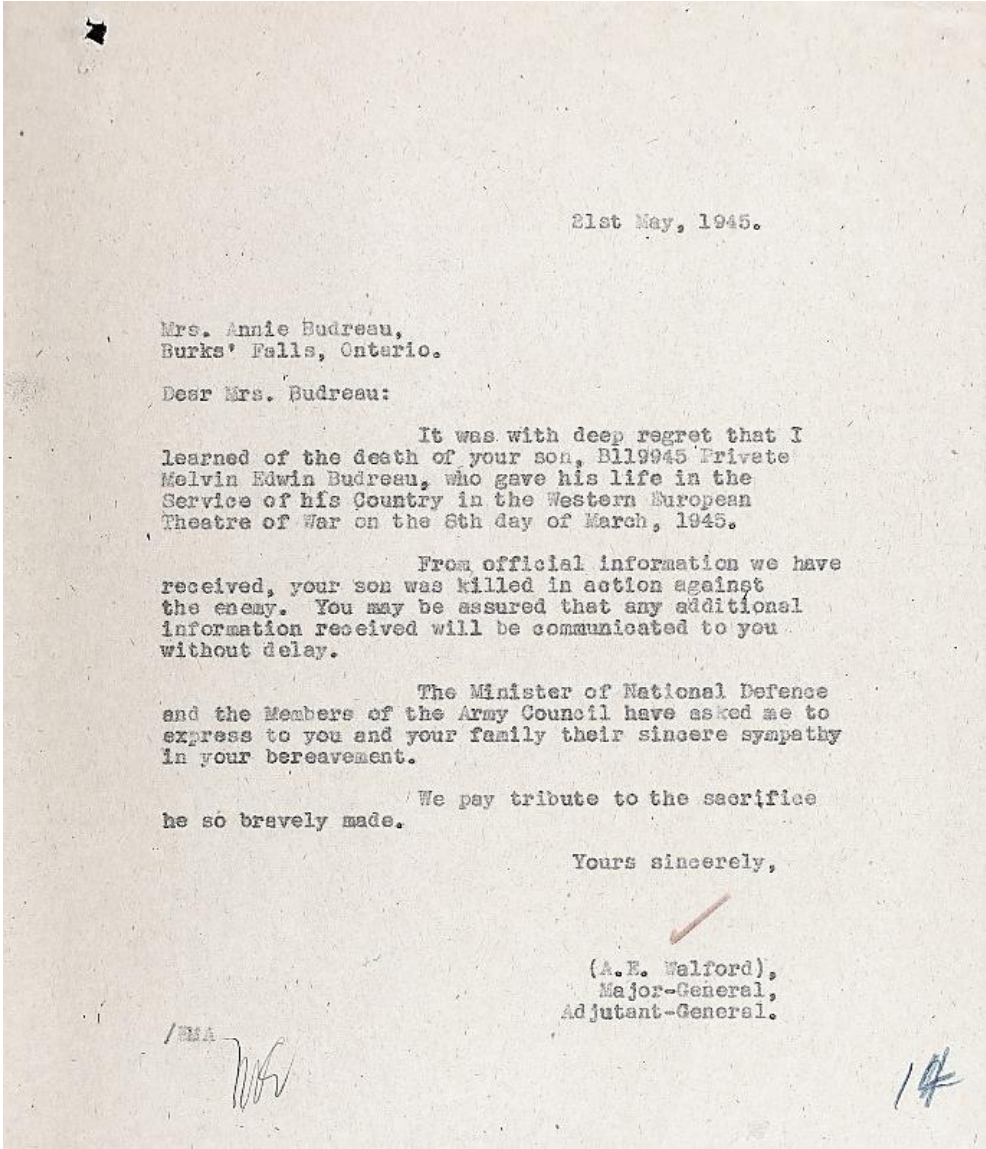
On the 14th of October 1944 Melvin embarked in Canada, to disembark in the United Kingdom on the 20th of October. To continue his training on the 18th of November and he was taken on strength with the Canadian Infantry Training Regiment.

When his training was completed, Melvin was embarked on the 12th of February 1945 and disembarked in the mainland of Europe".

When Operation Veritable is in its last days, Operation Blockbuster II is launched. The objective of this operation is to take control of the German town of Xanten, and to make an end to the battle of the Rhineland.

On the 8th of March 1945 Melvin is fighting the enemy in the area of the German town of Xanten. Together with 3 other men of his anti-tank unit Melvin is killed in action.

Melvin's brother Garnet remembers in 2019:
"We listened to the radio broadcasts daily, to stay on top of the war developments in Europe. And I remember very well the sad day of the 21st of May 1945, when Canadian Army Officials came at our house to deliver the message Melvin was killed in action".



Melvin was killed in action on the 8th of March 1945 at an age of 19 years old. He was originally buried in a temporary burial ground in Xanten, Germany.

In July 1946 he was exhumed and reburied in Groesbeek, grave reference **VII. E. 11.**



Life Story Kim Huvenaars, Research Team Faces To Graves.

Sources:

A special thank you to Garnet Budreau en Jo-Anne Budreau-Dydyk as they shared their family pictures and personal memories with us.

Library and Archives Canada

Commonwealth Wargraves Commission

Boudewijn Bleekman, Omroep Gelderland

Melvin's grave has been adopted and taken care of by Bertha van Steensel (from Nijmegen) and her partner Noor van Gessel.



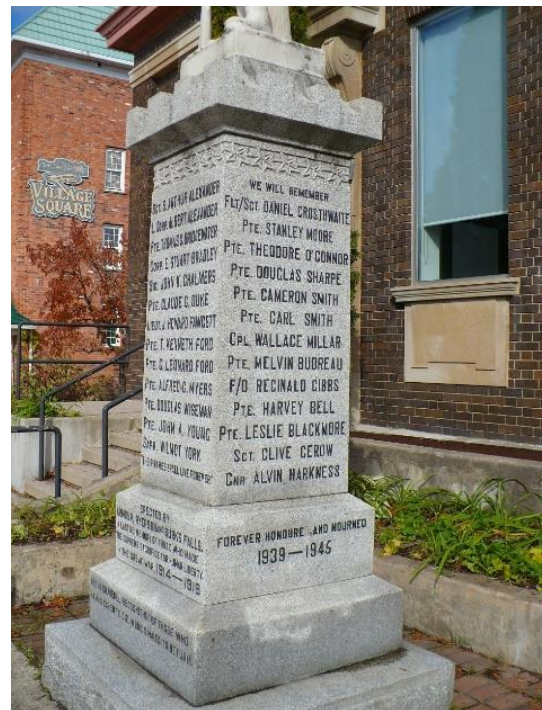
Noor van Gessel, left & Bertha Van Steensel on the right.



In the early years after the war Bertha and Noor kept in contact with the family Budreau by sending them letters and pictures. The family Budreau, who did not had the opportunity to visit Melvin’s grave, always wondered who these 2 Dutch women were, but they answered their letters.

In 2019 Garnet and Jo-Anne started a search. Unfortunately Bertha and Noor had passed away already. But Garnet and Jo-Anne managed to find relatives of Bertha and were able to thank them for Bertha taken care of Melvin’s grave.

Melvin is commemorated on the War Memorial in Burk’s Falls. His name is written on the memorial.



War Memorial in Burk’s Fal.