

Burrison, Reginald Meredith
Sergeant
14th Canadian Hussars
8th Reconnaissance Regiment
L 53516



Reginald Burrison was born on October 4, 1920, in Ribstone, Alberta, Canada, the eldest son of Clifford Meredith Burrison and Beatrice May McCagherty. His parents had married on May 13, 1918, in Ribstone, Alberta. The family were members of the United Church and moved to Biggar, Saskatchewan, on April 1, 1930. Reginald had two brothers, Richard Lloyd and Melvin James, and a sister, Luella Margaret, who later married Thompson. Father Clifford, a section worker for the Canadian National Railway, died in Edmonton in 1958.



Reginald left school when he was 16 years old, after which he worked on a mixed farm for four years but got fed up.

Public school Biggar

He then spent five months with the Canadian Railway, and in 1939-1940 he worked as an assistant at a food, meat, and clothing company in Biggar. Before reporting for duty, Reginald spent two months as Butter

Maker at the Dairy Pool dairy in Biggar. After his military service, he wanted to return there or become a mechanic.

Biggar is a town in the province of Saskatchewan in central southern Canada. It was initially a small settlement, but due to the construction of the railway in 1870, the population had increased substantially.



Reginald was still living with his parents when he enlisted in the Army on February 18, 1941. He was 1.71 m tall, weighed 71 kg, had hazel eyes and brown hair. His favorite sports were swimming, skating, shooting, hockey (center), baseball, and basketball.

He started his military career as a Trooper in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. From Farnham, Reginald went to St. Hyacinthe to train as a Lance Corporal. He received thorough training for weapons, first aid, map reading, et cetera.

A few months later, he was already on his way from Halifax to the UK, where he arrived in Gourock on July 2, 1941. After a few days' leave, he continued his training as a Lance Corporal with the 14th Canadian Hussars, the A Squadron in the assault troop. He passed the Training Test of Elementary Training in August of that year and was in the Field from July. On October 3, 1941, Reginald was hospitalized. He got hit by the gearbox of a vehicle. Reginald was sleeping on the ground when the truck ran over him. He sustained multiple bruises and abrasions, especially on his back. After staying in hospital for a week, he continued his training. In March 1942, he was promoted to Driver Mechanics 'C' and Lance Corporal Carrier Commander. In between, he passed the Driver Mechanized Transport test and became A/Corporal.

In September 1942, he was in the 8th Canadian General Hospital and back in the field at the end of October. His home address changed to Marlborough, Alberta, on January 20, 1943. Reginald continued to switch assignments. At the end of January 1943, he was with the 32nd Canadian Reconnaissance Regiment and the Royal Montreal Regiment First Aid Post For All-Purpose. At his request, Reginald became Trooper again on December 6, 1943. On July 6, 1944, he left for France, and from July 27, he changed to Lance Corporal once more.



The 8th Reconnaissance Regiment.

This Regiment was the reconnaissance unit of the Canadian Army during the advance from Italy to the Netherlands. The 8th Reconnaissance Regiment (14th Canadian Hussars) received its training and coastal defense instructions in the south of England in the first three years of the war. It was not until July 6, 1944 (1 month after D-Day) that the troops arrived in Normandy, France, and then began their duties as infantrymen. Regrettably, they suffered the first three deaths on July 13.

After the German troops retreated from Northern France towards Belgium and the Netherlands, the Regiment started its actual task: to be a reconnaissance unit during the advance of the 1st Canadian Army. As a result, they participated in the liberation of essential ports such as Dieppe and Antwerp, the Battle of the Scheldt, the liberation of towns and villages in the Netherlands, and the invasion of Germany. In the meantime, fierce fighting took place, and many people were killed and injured on both sides.

Extract from a diary of the 8th Reconnaissance Regiment:

- July 1, 1944, we start in Goodnestone (UK) with clearing and cleaning of the barracks
- July 2: departure of the crew in their vehicles to the shunting yard for ship's cargo and the cars are made watertight for the crossing
- July 4: from London Docks to the ship
- July 5: in the evening with a tugboat out of the harbor
- July 6: via the Thames with calm waters across the Channel
- July 7: just before midnight, the ship arrives in Caen in France
- July 8: with LST (Landing Ship Tank) land around 6:00 PM, where the vehicles are made roadworthy again and driven to the harbor
- July 13: the first encounters with the enemy, several bombs are dropped and the first fatalities occur

- July 15: under shellfire and no communication possible, only via the wireless of the Scoutcars
- August 9: preparations for the classic Recce task
- August 31: have already penetrated far towards Dieppe

Unfortunately, A/Sergeant Reginald Burrison was killed in a tragic accident on November 13, 1944, in a house in Alphen, the Netherlands.

According to an official report, an accidental shooting occurred, and Reginald died from negligent handling of a weapon. The shooter received a severe reprimand for this.



R. Burrison

Sergeant Reginald was temporarily buried in Alphen and reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave reference **XV. G. 2.**



Tekst on his tombstone:

OUR BELOVED SON
SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS

Photo: Liesbeth Huisman

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Presidents and Members of Courts of Inquiry or Boards of Officers will familiarize themselves with the Overseas ROs dealing with the subject of Courts of Inquiry and Boards of Officers.
2. The rank, name, appointment and unit of the Convening Officer must be given.
3. The unit of all Members of the Court must be indicated.
4. The signature of each officer composing the Court or Board must be affixed at the end of these Proceedings, together with the date and place of the sitting of the Court.
5. Unless otherwise required by the Convening Order, only one copy of these Proceedings will be prepared.

PROCEEDINGS of a Court of Inquiry.....
 assembled at In the Field.....
 on the 14 th Day of November 1944.....
 by order of Lt Col B.M. Alway, Comd 8 Cdn Recce Regt (14 CH).....
 for the purpose of Inquiring into & reporting upon the circumstances
 surrounding the death of
 L53516 Cpl Burrison R......

PRESIDENT

C.D. WILLIAMS Capt 8 C Recce Regt (14GH)

MEMBERS

I.J. Nokony 8 C Recce Regt (14CH)
 L.A. McKenzie, Lt 8 C Recce Regt (14 CH)

The Court..... having assembled pursuant to order, proceed to examine
 the witnesses who stated as follows

Ref. 10/Pers/2 Folio 199.
 12 Jan 45
 For A.G.4.

Report accident by the witnesses

On the 13 Nov about 2000 hrs, Tprs Fryers, Dodds, Pellowe, Bell, Cassie and myself were in the kitchen of the house where we occupy a post at MR 425665. I was writing a letter, some were reading, 1 man was on the set. I suddenly heard a shot and looked up. Tpr Burrison had been hit and he was staggering. Russell got hold of him and lowered him to the floor. Sgt Arksey and Fryers applied first aid & Pellowe called up and notified Sqn HQ.

There was electric light on in the rooms and it was quite bright. There were a number of weapons around and each man had his personal weapon. There was no horse-play.

(Signed) A.W. Caldwell.

D3090 Tpr Fryers, EW.

About 2000 hrs the 13 Nov 44, I was sitting in the kitchen of the house which we occupy as an O.P. and section post. There were 4 men on duty and the remainder, about 12, were off duty. In the room with me were Cpl Caldwell, Tpr Dodd, Tpr Cassie, Sgt Arksey and Tpr Pellowe.

Everything was quiet and most of the chaps were reading. I was seated by the door leading outside. Burrison was at the other side of the room with his feet on the oven door and his back to me and the rest of the room. Sgt Arksey was seated at the opposite end of the stove from me and facing Burrison at an angle.

Suddenly I heard a shot and looked from my book. I thought at first that someone had dropped a round in the fire but I saw Burrison rise from his chair very quickly and turn around holding his stomach with his hands. I jumped up and helped Sgt Arksey lower him to the floor and administer first aid. We found a wound in the center of his chest but it was not bleeding. He started to bleed from the mouth and about 4 minutes later he died. He said nothing from the time he was hit till he died.

(Signed) E.W. Fryers

H14453 Tpr Bell W.R.

On the 13 Nov 44 about 2000 hrs, I was in our section post. I was reading when suddenly I heard a shot & looked up. Burrison rose from his chair grasping his stomach, half turned. Sgt Arksey & Tpr Fryers lowered him to the floor. I saw nothing of the events leading up to the accident. If I had noticed, I could, from my position have seen Sgt Arksey but, as I was reading, I noticed nothing.

(Signed) W.R. Bell

D76047 Tpr Dodds J.

About 2000 hrs on the 13 Nov 44 I was in the section post we occupy. Amongst those present was Sgt. Arksey. I observed him with his pistol out. I paid no particular attention to this as it was usual in this post to keep weapons handy. I heard a shot & looked up, about 4 minutes after I had noticed this, and saw Burrison rise from his chair and spin around. He was caught by Sgt Arksey & Fryer and lowered to the floor. He said nothing and died about 5 minutes later.

(Signed) J. Dodds.

Letter from the Army Command to Reginald's father regarding the accident

- Army -

14th June, 1945.

Mr. Clifford M. Burrison,
Greencourt,
Alberta.

Dear Mr. Burrison:

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 6th instant concerning the regretted death of your son, L.53516 Sergeant Reginald Meredith Burrison.

A Court of Inquiry was assembled in the Field on the 14th November, 1944, for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances surrounding the death of your son and the following is a precis of the corroborated evidence:


"On the 13th November, 1944, at about 8.00 o'clock p.m., Sergeant Burrison and other personnel of his troop were sitting in the kitchen of a house which was occupied as an observation and section post. Sergeant Burrison was sitting in front of the stove talking to a comrade who had his pistol on his lap as it was usual to keep a personal weapon handy in that area in case an enemy patrol walked in the door. Sergeant Burrison's comrade was going to move so he picked up his pistol and placed his hands on his thighs to assist himself up. In doing so, the pistol was accidentally discharged and the bullet hit Burrison in the chest. Sergeant Burrison did not speak after being hit and died about four minutes later. The opinion of the Court was that Sergeant Burrison was accidentally shot by a pistol in the hands of a comrade and the Officer Commanding, 8th Canadian Recce. Regt. (14th Canadian Hussars), concurred with the opinion of the Court."

According to information received from the Overseas Military Authorities, the remains of Sergeant Burrison were buried with religious rites in a temporary grave located at a point approximately eleven miles North-East of 'S Hertogenbosch, Holland.

The grave will have been temporarily marked with a wooden cross for identification purposes and in due course the remains will be reverently exhumed and removed to a recognized military burial ground when the concentration of graves in the area takes place. After this has been done, the new grave will be photographed and a print of the picture will be forwarded to you as soon as it is available. It should be borne in mind, however, that for obvious reasons, it may be some considerable time before this can be carried out.

Please accept my sincere and heart-felt sympathy for the irreparable loss you have suffered.

Yours truly,


(C.L. Laurin) Colonel,
Director of Records,
for Adjutant-General.

EMD

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In Northumberland, Ontario, a bay has been named after Reginald: Burrison Creek.

Reginald Burrison received the following awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France-Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp

The Memorial Cross (for courage and bravery) was sent to Reginald's mother after the war.



Life story: Liesbeth Huisman-Arts, Research Team Faces To Graves.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

War Diaries Canada WW II Project 44.ca

Foto's: Biggar fotocollectie, test.MemorySask.ca

Info Richard: Edwin van der Wolf, Canadese Begraafplaats in Holten.

Reginald's younger brother, Lance Sergeant Richard Lloyd Burrison, enlisted with the Paratroopers in Saskatoon on January 6, 1942. He broke his leg on his first parachute jump and after recovery continued his training with The Lake Superior Regiment. In June 1943 he also left for England. On April 25, 1945, Richard was shot dead by a sniper while escorting a captured German officer near Edeweucht in Germany. He was temporarily buried at Osterscheps and reburied at the Holten Canadian War Cemetery on March 9, 1946, grave reference **7. C. 14**.



His tombstone has the same text as his brother Reginald's tombstone:

OUR BELOVED SON
SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS

Richard was posthumously nominated for The Military Medal for bravery and leadership in May 1945. On November 3, 1949 in Alberta, a lake was named after him: Burrison Lake.

