

Archer, Burgess Douglas Eayers, Rifleman 12-E-15



Burgess Douglas Eayers Archer was born on November 1, 1924 in Toronto.

Son of John Douglas and Rebecca Louise Archer.

In the family, adherents of the Church of England, there were 4 brothers and a sister.

Three brothers also served actively.

He had attended Essex St. Public school.

After that he had various jobs.

A year and a half at Dominion Patterns, a mold making company, where he worked as a press helper.

After that he worked for a roofing company for more than six months.

Before he officially enlisted on January 11, 1943, he had already served 14 months as a volunteer in the B-Squadron of the Governor General's Horse Guards. He had combined this with a part-time job as a delivery boy for a Drugs & Grocery Store.

His medical report stated that he had brown hair and eyes and a scar above his left eye.

At a length of 1.70 m, he weighed less than 58 kg. There was also a note of "underweight". He was cooperative and had a positive attitude towards the military.

He indicated that he would like to become a driver, preferably with an Irish Regiment. Although he did not have a driver's license, he did have "a little" driving experience.

He was considered suitable for infantry training.

He received initial training at the district depot in Newmarket after which he was transferred to Camp Borden in May 1943, where he remained until the end of 1943.

He had, apparently, difficulty with discipline, he received several notes: Absent without Leave (AWL) That cost him several days' pay.

Finally, after the fourth time, he was punished; 4 days CB.

That means: Confined to Barracks, so staying inside. But he also received good reviews and enjoyed leave in the second half of July 1943.



He completed his drivers training. However, in January 1944 he was again sentenced to 7 days' CB, again due to AWL.
He was given official leave in the last week of January 1944.

Upon his return he was assigned to the Canadian Armoured Corps Trained Soldiers Regiment. (C.A.C.T.S.R.)
(Armed Forces without abbreviations? That's unthinkable!)

On March 8, 1944, Archer was Struck of Strength (SOS) from Camp Borden and he left for the Windsor "transit camp" in Nova Scotia, awaiting departure to the United Kingdom.

The official time table stated that he was considered as serving "overseas" on March 27, 1944.

Still assigned to a reinforcement unit.

There were hardly any further notes to be found from his "English period".

A striking one on May 5, 1944:

His third given name was officially stated to be "Eayers"; this had apparently been overlooked in all previous forms.

Then, June 9, 1944 was listed as the first entry.

Not the expected crossing to Normandy, but departure for the southern European front. Arrival in Italy on June 22, 1944.

On June 28, 1944, he was Taken on Strength (TOS) to 4th Princess Louise Dragoon Guards.

During his time in Italy, it was also noted that he was careless with his clothes. Furthermore, upon inspection, he was missing 1 pair of shoes (?).

The cost of a new pair came at his own expense.

On December 12, 1944, he was wounded by shrapnel.

A head wound and wounds to the left leg and left hip.

On January 29, 1945, he was dismissed of treatment.

The next entry is from the crossing Italy – France.

SOS on the Italian front as of March 14, 1945.

TOS in the 11th Infantry Battalion at the end of March 1945.

On April 8, 1945, he enjoyed two weeks of "rotation leave" in England.

Upon his return, Archer was assigned to the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, until his death by drowning in Amsterdam.

His death raised many questions. The date of death was described as "arbitrary". Mentioned were the 4th and 8th of August 1945.

The Medical Certificate of Death reported: August 7, 1945.

On August 15, 1945 he was provisionally buried in Hilversum.

As usual, an investigation was launched into the circumstances of the drowning in Amsterdam.

The conclusion was that there had been no offence under the Army act, no foul play, no improper conduct and that he was not on official duty.

However, this was no consolation for the relatives.

The final resting place for Burgess Douglas Eayers Archer is in Holten.

Grave reference: 12-E-15

