



Private Joseph Eugene Edgar Duclos died fighting with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry at the battle of Groningen as the Second Canadian Infantry Division drove the German Army out of northern Holland in April 1945. Joseph's story began in September 1924 when Joseph's father Edgar Duclos, a 29-year-old French-Canadian born in Montreal, married Virgine Maurice, 10 years his younger in her home town of Field, Ontario. The following year Joseph was born 29 July 1925 in Cache Bay, Ontario just outside of Sturgeon Falls.

His early life consisted of various moves throughout the northern Sudbury region. Joseph lived in Felix for three years then moved farther north to Gogama for a year. Likely his father, Edgar, sought work wherever it was available during the Great Depression as did many other families living in northern Ontario at the time. Joseph's family then spent a month living in Sudbury before settling back down in Sturgeon Falls in North Bay around his fourth or fifth birthday. For the next decade or so, Joseph attended St. Joseph's School until he was 16 years old.

In early October 1941 he successfully joined the Canadian Army with the Sault Ste. Marie & Sudbury Regiment (SSM&SR), claiming he was eighteen. For the next year, Joseph took part in Basic Training in North Bay, Camp Nanaimo on Vancouver Island, and Camp Borden in Barrie as a Trooper. At Borden, Joseph was discharged from the army for being underage on July 6, 1942. The following year, he reapplied as a volunteer on January 9, this time providing his actual date of birth. Although he was still 17, Joseph Duclos moved throughout various Basis Training Camps and reserve depots as a Trooper with the Sault St. Marie and

Sudbury Regiment. By late October 1943, he had completed Basic Training and reported for All Purpose training as a Private in Sherbrooke, Quebec. On August 4, 1944, Private Joseph Duclos disembarked for England, arriving about a week later on August 11, taking on strength in the Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit. On September 1, 1944, Private Joseph then officially took on strength with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry from the Canadian Reserves in the United Kingdom.

Although Joseph was transferred out of the SSM&SR, he fought closely alongside the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division and the Algonquin Regiment. In September 1944, while the Algonquin's fought for the Leopold Canal, Private Joseph Duclos and The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry took the port of Dunkirk to the southwest. Joseph and the Algonquin's then met up during the Battle of the Sheldt in later in October. In the early days of the month of October the RHLI and Duclos advanced north of Antwerp to secure the eastern opening of the Beveland causeway, securing the town of Woensdrecht on October 16. This then allowed the Algonquin's and the 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Div to bring up the rear and continue north to Bergen-op-Zoom and into central Holland. Duclos continued to fight east into the Scheldt, successfully pushing the Germans out the Beveland peninsula by the end of October.

Much of the fighting subsided for Private Joseph and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Div when the Beveland causeway was secured October 24, 1944. It seemed that Joseph found this a perfect opportunity to destress from the tensions of battle as he was Absent Without Leave (A.W.L.) for roughly 2 days starting from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October. Holding a line from Dunkirk to the Meuse River, the RHLI and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Div spend most of the winter near Nijmegen preparing for the spring 'Operation Veritable' offensive across the Siegfried Line into the Rhineland. Southeast of Duclos, the Algonquin's continued to fight the German army in hopes to secure the

north shore of the Meuse River near Drunen. Throughout this time, Private Joseph was A.W.L. for a period of 11 days from December 18-29, 1944. On January 14, Private Joseph received his second Drunkenness infraction. Throughout the static period of November 1944 to early February 1945, morale in the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry would have very likely been low due to the unrest in the Regiment as each soldier had to complete their assigned tasks in the bitter cold without much to keep entertained. After months of hard fighting up the Dutch coast into Holland, Private Joseph's mind was surely fixed on relaxation and a few drinks. On February 27, the Second Canadian Div., along with Joseph Duclos and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry advanced on the Hochwald forest and by the early days of March 1944 the Germans had begun to retreat. The RHLI did not take part in the crossing of the Rhine during March 1944 but crossed peacefully at the end of the month with eyes on the German occupied town of Groningen. The 2nd Canadian Div. fought north to liberate the town of Groningen from the beginning of April. Although they encountered relatively light resistance from the German Army as they advanced towards Groningen, it was during the fighting to liberate the town when Private Joseph Duclos lost his life on April 14 at the young age of 19 years old. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Div. then liberated the town 2 days later in April 16, 1944. Joseph Eugene Edgar Duclos' sacrifice was selfless and brave during the battle to liberate the people of Groningen as were those of the many others fellow Canadians who fell during this campaign.

Originally buried in the farm region of Groningen, Private Joseph's remains were then relocated to Holten Canadian Military Cemetery (Grave 11, row E, plot 5), where we stand today. To commemorate his sacrifice, I would like to leave tulips with his headstone, as a token of personal thanks and appreciation for his strength and determination throughout his service. As Holland sends flowers to Ottawa each year to thank our brave Canadian soldiers for their bravery, I feel Private Joseph can be personally thanked for his bravery throughout the European campaign and during the liberation of Groningen on this day as well.

4 August 1944

- S.O.S. Army in Canada

5 August 1944

- T.O.S. Army Overseas

11 August 1944

- Disembark in United Kingdom
- T.O.S. Canadian Infantry Reserve Unit

30 August 1944

- Arrive in France, T.O.S. Canadian Infantry Corps (CIC)

1 September 1944

- T.O.S. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry from CIC
- Aftermath of battle for Verrieres Ridge
- Reinforcements from taking port at Dieppe
- **Take port of Dunkirk with 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Div**
  - o RHLI push from south with Royal Regiment of Canada and Essex Scottish Regiment

**Battle of the Sheldt (2 October – 8 November 1944)**

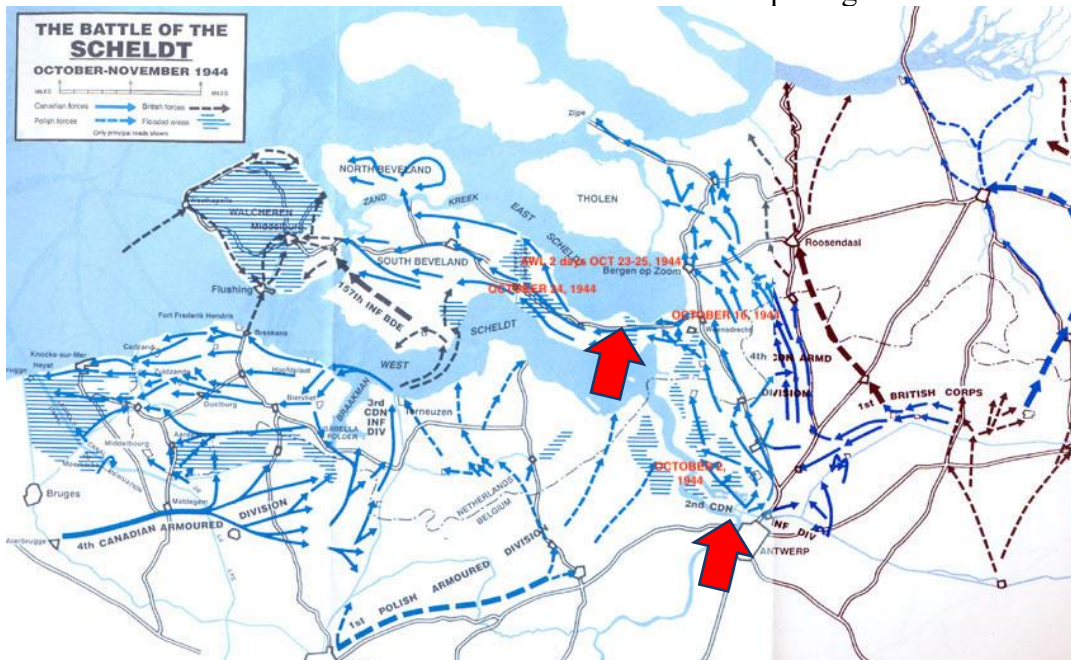


2 October 1944

- RHLI w/ 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Div advance north of Antwerp to secure access to South Beveland

16 October 1944

- RHLI has secured town of Woensdrecht at eastern opening to South Beveland



23 October 1944

- Private Joseph Duclos A.W.L. 1 day 23 hrs.

24 October 1944

- Entrance to South Beveland secured from the East



Canadian Royal Hamilton Light Infantry carriers moving through the Dutch village of Krabbendijke on the Beveland Causeway, 27 October 1944

November 1944 – early February 1945

- Largely static period for the Canadian Infantry
  - o Preparation for Spring offensive across Rhineland/Siegfried Line
- Held Line from Maas (Meuse) River to Dunkirk

18 – 29 December 1944

- Private Joseph Duclos A.W.L.
  - o Boredom waiting around/planning

14 January 1945

- Private Joseph Duclos receives second Drunkenness fine
  - o Boredom waiting around/planning

8 February 1945 – **Operation Veritable**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Div to clear Reichswald Forest east of Netherlands-German border to break through Siegfried Line
- Clear Hochwald forest and close off west of the Rhine

21 February 1945

- Crack Siegfried Line past the Reichswald
- Advance to Hochwald Forest

27 February 1945

- 2nd Div launches offensive at Hochwald

28 February 1945

- Private Joseph Duclos S.O.S. to RHLI regroup and plan to take northern half of forest

1 March 1945

- T.O.S. take Hochwald Forest

3 March 1945

- S.O.S. regroup after Hochwald forest cleared, prepare for final push for the Rhine
- ALQR (Algonquin Regiment) @ Hochwald Gap

4 March 1945

- Private Joseph Duclos T.O.S. RHLI

10 March 1945

- Final push on Xanten permanently forces Germans east of the Rhine

23 March 1945

- Allied forces cross the Rhine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Div and RHLI not to cross, push coastal north to liberate northwest Netherlands

18 – 29 March 1945

- Private Joseph Duclos A.W.L.
  - o 9 day trek north to Groningen

**13 – 16 April 1945 - Battle for the Town of Groningen**

14 April, 1945

- Private Joseph Duclos K.I.A.



Joseph Eugene Edgar Duclos

Date of Birth: July 29, 1925

Date of Enlistment: October 6, 1941 (actually 16) claims DOB April 29, 1923

January 9, 1943 at 17 yrs old (turning 18 in July)

City and Province of Enlistment: North Bay, ON

Service Number: B-59171

Rank: Private

Force: Army

Unit: at enlistment Sault St Marie & Sudbury Regiment

Overseas: Royal Hamilton Light Infantry

Royal Hamilton Light Infantry (SOS from Sault St. Marie and Sudbury Regiment YEAR?)

Date of Death: April 14, 1945

Age (at death): 19

Country of Burial: Netherlands (Holland)

Cemetery: Holten Canadian Military Cemetery (originally in Holland Rosenberg (Groningen))

Grave Reference: grave 11, row E, plot 5

Location: Netherlands (Holland)

Book of Remembrance: Page 511 Second World War Book of Remembrance

Honours and Awards: 1939-45 Star

France-Germany Star

War Medal

Canadian Volunteer Service Medal w/ Clasp

Height/Weight: 5' 6 ½"

Colour of Eyes: Brown (Hazel)

Marital Status: Single

Religion: Roman Catholic

Next of Kin (and relationship): Mrs. Virginia Duclos (Mother)

5 Glenrock Road, Parry Sound

Liam Francis

Tpr Duckett, Leslie Albert 14H  
 P/O Duckworth, Alan Murray RCAF  
 F/L Duckworth, Ernest Verdun RCAF  
 Pte Duclous, Joseph Eugène Edgar RHLI  
 F/S Ducloux, Floyd Arthur RCAF  
 Sgt Duffney, Peter RWps Rif  
 Capt Duffy, Frank Fields RCASC  
 Pte Dufort, Roger Rde Mais  
 Pte Dufour, Louis Joseph Fus MR  
 F/S Dufresne, Edward Charles RCAF  
 Pte Dufresne, Georges André RCIC  
 Pte Dufresne, Victor James RCASC  
 Pte Dufresne, Yvon R22-R  
 Pte Dugas, Réginald RCASC  
 F/L Duggan, John Philip, DFC RCAF  
 Pte Duggan, Thomas Augustine  
 Sgt Duggan, William Francis As SH of C 17H  
 Col supp Duguay, Arthur Fus MR  
 Tir Duguay, Gaston QOR of C  
 Pte Duguay, Joseph Rde Chaud  
 Pte Duhamel, Jean-Baptiste  
 Pte Duke, John Fredrick Camerons of C L Sup R  
 Pte Duke, Stanley Frederick RCIC  
 Cpl supp Dumais, Jean-baptiste R22-R  
 Pte Dumais, Rosario Joseph Rde Chaud  
 Pte Dumas, Ernest Fus MR  
 Pte Dumas, Joseph Jean-Baptiste RCASC  
 Pte Dumas, Maurice George Rde Chaud  
 TEL Dumberry, Lucien Joseph RCNVR  
 PO Dumont, Joseph Edward RCNR  
 L/Cpl Dunbar, Edgar John RCE  
 Pte Duncan, John Lyons RHLI  
 WO1 Duncan, John William RCAF  
 P/O Duncan, Robert Allison RCAF  
 P/O Duncan, Stanley Maxwell RCAF  
 Pte Duncan, William Gordon  
 Cpl Dunham, Burton Essex Scot Gen List  
 MM Dunlop, Ronald Ewing RCNVR  
 Lt Dunn, Bernard Donald  
 Pte Dunn, Dennis Clifford Line & Well R RCASC  
 Pte Dunn, John RCME  
 FO Dunn, Leonard Acton RCAF  
 Pte Dunn, Theodore Stafford Alg R  
 Pte Dunn, William Edgar Alg R

Capt Dunne, Thomas VGC  
 Pte Dunnett, William Norman Alg R  
 P/O Dunnigan, William John RCAF  
 FO Dunning, Kenneth Valentine RCAF  
 Sgt Dunning, William John Anderson RCAF  
 P/O Dunphy, Hugh Ashley RCAF  
 WO1 Dunsloth, Nathaniel, MBE Gen List  
 Pte Dupéré, Michel Adrien Joseph RCASC  
 Pte Dupère, Théophile Rde Chaud  
 Pte Duphette, Wilfred Henry RCASC  
 Pte Dupuis, Léo Joseph C Scot R  
 Rfn Duralia, Max QOR of C  
 L/Cpl Durand, Edward John RHC  
 Tpr Durdle, Glenn David 14H  
 F/S Durling, Maurice Vaughn RCAF  
 P/O Durman, Grant RCAF  
 Pte Durocher, Wilfred Albert Alg R  
 Cpl Duruisseau, Maurice, MM RCE  
 Pte DuSomme, William John Peter Alg R  
 Pte Dassault, Phillipe Rde Mais  
 Sgt Dutcher, Eldon Alexander N Shore R  
 Gdsm Duthie, Maurice Edward Thomas GGFG  
 Pte Duthoit, Raymond Lee RCAMC  
 F/S Dwyer, Eric RCAF  
 Maj D'As, Arthur Warren RCASC  
 L/Cpl Dyball, William Leslie Alg R  
 Rfn Dyck, John QOR of C  
 Pte Dyer, Guy RCASC  
 L/Cpl Dykstra, Lloyd Nelson  
 Capt Dymond, Donald William Nth NS Highrs Alg R  
 Sgt Dynes, Harry RCAF  
 Rfn Dyson, Richard Isaac QOR of C  
 Cpl Dyson, Thomas Edward RC Sigs  
 Tpr Dzikowicz, Adolf RCD  
 AB Edie, Clifford John RCNVR  
 Pte Eagles, Kenneth Waldon Alg R  
 Cpl Eardley, Albert Rudolph Osborne RCAF  
 Cpl Eargy, Clifford W. RASC