

Girard, Armand Joseph

Private

The Loyal Edmonton Regiment

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

M/8868

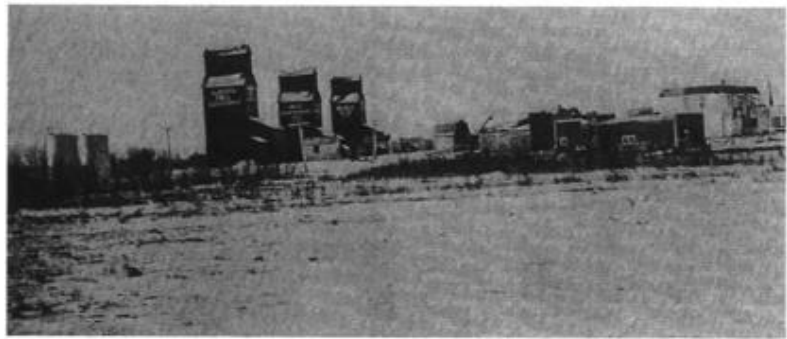


Armand Joseph Girard was born 14 February 1914 at the hamlet of Therien, located between Mallaig and St. Vincent in the County of St. Paul, Alberta (AB). His French Canadian parents Guillaume (“William”) Girard and Eveline Boucher were married at Quebec in 1900. The Roman Catholic couple had their first four surviving children there: Honore, Emelda, Philippe and Juliette. The Girard family migrated west in 1911 to farm near Therien, a francophone community in northeast Alberta.

Six more children were born in Alberta: Angelo, Armand, Adrien, Hedwidge, David and Aurore. Armand’s sister Emelda married Francois Carle in 1923 at Therien, the same year their eldest brother Honore died. Their sister Juliette married Edgar Normand of St. Vincent in 1927.

Both French and English were spoke in the Girard home. Armand attended school at Therien until completing grade 8 age fourteen and then worked full time on his father’s farm.

Armand learned to drive both tractors and trucks and did some grain hauling. His second eldest brother Philippe married Mary Garneau in 1934 and died in 1938.



Therien elevators (circa 1930)

Armand married Ruth Werstiuk at Therien, AB July 1941 and they moved to Thorsby, AB to start their family. Armand's youngest brother David was



called up under the National Resources Mobilization Act about that time. After enlisting at Camrose, AB and his initial training he was assigned to the Winnipeg Grenadiers that formed part of Force "C". He was sent to the British Colony of Hong Kong with his regiment to bolster its defences against a Japanese invasion.

Winnipeg Grenadiers, Hong Kong November 1941

Private David Girard was reported missing in action 21 December 1941 during the Battle of Hong Kong, which soon fell to the Japanese with many prisoners of war taken. The Girard family would not receive word of his fate until after the end of World War Two.



Calgary Herald 26 December 1941

Armand and Ruth welcomed their first child Louise in 1942. Armand decided to join the Canadian Army, attesting at Calgary, AB 27 January 1944 age 30.



He was sent to Grande Prairie, AB for basic training, then returned to Calgary Currie Barracks for advanced infantry training 10 April 1944. He was admitted to the Calgary Military Hospital for 8 days at the end of May.

Currie Barracks, Calgary, AB aerial

Armand was cleared for overseas service and given embarkation leave that summer to see his family. Ruth was pregnant with their second child and gave birth to Constance 31 August 1944 while Armand was in transit. He disembarked in the UK 6 September 1944 where he reported to the Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit.

Armand was selected for duty as a replacement soldier with 1st Canadian Infantry Division which was engaged in the Italian campaign. He disembarked in Italy 29 September 1944 and was taken on strength by the Loyal Edmonton Regiment (LER) that fall.

The LER, also known as the 'Loyal Eddies' formed part of 2nd Brigade with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) and the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada. 2nd Brigade and 1st Canadian Infantry Division (1CID) had served in the Italian campaign since summer 1943. Following a rest period at the town of Riccione near Rimini, 1CID was given the job of breaking through a succession of closely spaced rivers and canals including the Lamone and Senio Rivers in early December 1944. They forced the Germans back beyond the Naviglio Canal where the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment were hanging on to a foothold they had gained. On 13 December the LER "C" and "D" Companies moved up with some tanks from the British Columbia Dragoons to reinforce them. After two more days, the Germans gave up and retreated to the Senio River line under pressure of an attack by all three battalions of 2nd Brigade. By Christmas Allied Command decided that no further efforts would be made to break through the German lines for the rest of the winter. The enemy kept up an aggressive program of raiding and patrolling through January and February. Armand received a wound to his abdomen 5 January 1945 from a High Explosive shell fragment.

**Girard, Armand Joseph, Pte.;
Mrs. Ruth Girard (wife),
Thorsby, Alta.**

CASUALTY WING EXTRACTS			
"A"	"B" 370	"C"	"POW"
NAME <u>GIRARD: ARMAND JOHN</u>			DATE <u>3014/447/38</u>
RANK <u>PTE</u>			AUTH: <u>5 Jan 45</u>
REGT NO. <u>M8868</u>			THEATRE <u>AAI</u>
UNIT <u>LOYAL EDMONTON REGT</u>			
HOSPITAL PARTICULARS			
ADMITTED			DATE
TRANSFERRED			DATE
DISCHARGED			DATE
DIAGNOSIS	<u>SW (HE) SMALL ABRAS ABDOMINAL WALL</u>		

Edmonton Journal January 1945

The LER and 1CID were redeployed to Northwest Europe early in 1945 under Operation GOLDFLAKE .

Allied ship loaded with vehicles and supplies entering Marseilles, France Harbour 1945 during Operation GOLDFLAKE

Armand disembarked with his regiment at Marseilles, France 15 March 1945 and travelled in convoy with 1CID to Belgium.





The Loyal Eddies and 2nd Brigade crossed the IJssel River between Zutphen and Deventer in the Netherlands 11 April 1945 to support 3rd Canadian Infantry Division.

PPCLI preparing to cross Ijssel River 11 April 1945

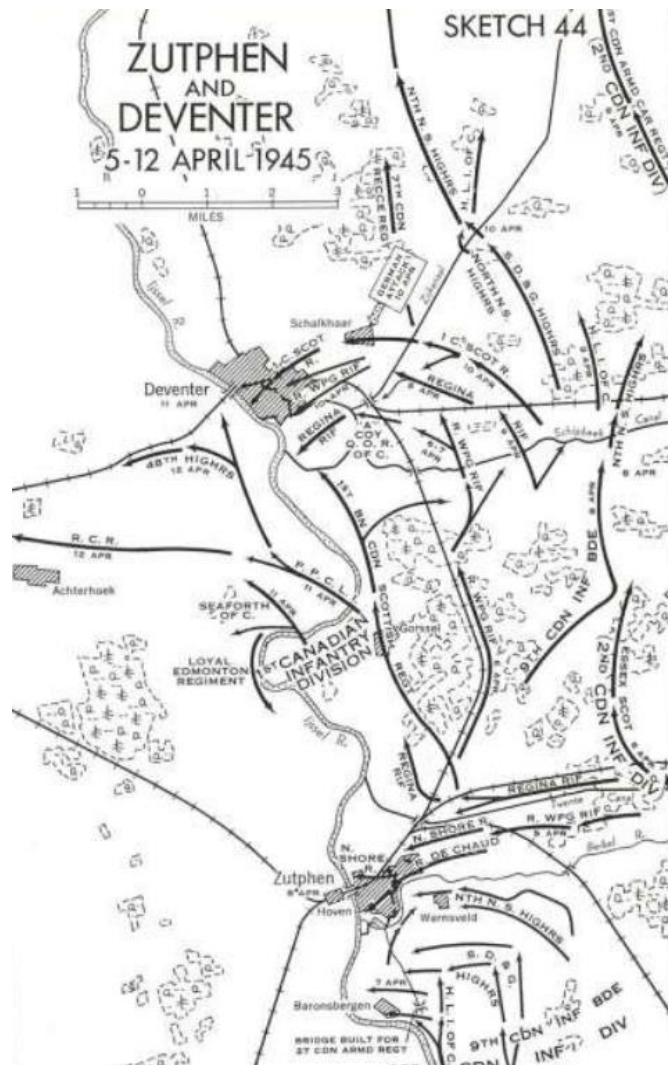
They deployed into position as a bridgehead on the left flank of the Seaforths on the west side of the Ijssel by 01.45 hours 12 April. "C" Company then relieved a company of Seaforths. A pontoon bridge was rapidly constructed and all necessary battalion vehicles were able to cross by 03.15 hours. The LER "A" Company advanced south at 14.30 hours 12 April 1945, supported by artillery fire and a troop

of tanks to attack the enemy positioned at a dyke wall west of the river. They captured 13 prisoners. "D" Company made a similar advance, using mortars and flame throwers. "B" Company then made their advance and by 17.15 hours were firm on their objectives. Armand Girard was one of several LER casualties that day, killed in action age 31.

Armand's widow Ruth had by then moved back to their hometown of Therien, Alberta with her young children.

GIRARD, Armand Joseph, Pte.,
M8868, Mrs. Ruth Girard (wife)
Therien.

Calgary Albertan May 1945



1st May, 1945

Mrs. Ruth Girard,
Therien, Alberta

Dear Mrs. Girard:

It was with deep regret that I learned of the death of your husband, M8868 Private Armond Joseph Girard, who gave his life in the Service of his Country in the Western European Theatre of War on the 12th day of April, 1945.

From official information we have received, your husband was killed in action against the enemy. You may be assured that any additional information received will be communicated to you without delay.

The Minister of National Defence and the Members of the Army Council have asked me to express to you and your family their sincere sympathy in your bereavement.

We pay tribute to the sacrifice he so bravely made.

Yours sincerely,

(A.E. Walford),
Major-General,
Adjutant-General.

*Widow's letter
2-5-45*

JLR

Private A.J. Girard was temporarily buried at Gorssel, Netherlands and later relocated to Holten Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **I. D. 11**.

Photo Credit lestweforget1945.com

The inscription on his headstone:

WHAT WOULD I GIVE
YOUR LOVING SMILE TO SEE.
TO HEAR YOUR WELCOME VOICE
THAT MEANT SO MUCH TO ME

Armond Girard's campaign medals:

- 1939-1945 Star
- Italy Star
- France-Germany Star
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal/Clasp





Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Newspapers.com

Ancestry.com

Precious Memories: Mallaig-Therien, 1906-1992

https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/CS.aspx?VP3=DamView&VBID=2R3BXZ0KE33ZZ&PN=78&DocRID=2R3BF1O1K0I7D&FR_=1&W=1540&H=750&RW=1540&RH=750

Currie Barracks, Calgary, AB photo <https://militarybruce.com/abandoned-canadian-military-bases/closed-bases-with-military-presence/alberta/>

The Loyal Edmonton Regiment cap badge picture

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/official-military-history-lineages/lineages/infantry-regiments/loyal-edmonton.html>

The Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum

<https://www.lermuseum.org/news/72-world-war-2-remembered-loyal-edmonton-regiment-1945-q2>

Operation GOLDFLAKE information and photo

<https://www.silverhawkauthor.com/post/operation-goldflake-i-canadian-corps-move-from-italy-to-northwest-europe-1945>

David Girard Winnipeg Grenadiers information and gravemarker

<https://www.hkvca.ca/cforcedata/indivreport/indivdetailed.php?regtno=M65920>

* Do you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl

Ottawa, Canada,
19th July, 1945.

Dear Mrs. Girard:

I deeply regret to inform you that no further news has been received relative to your son, M65920 Private David Girard, who has been officially listed as missing since the 21st day of December, 1941.

The Army Council have been regretfully constrained to conclude that he gave his life in action against the enemy at Hong Kong, and it is consequently being recorded that M65920 Private David Girard is now for official purposes presumed to have been killed in action on or about the 21st day of December, 1941.

The Minister of National Defence and the Members of the Army Council have asked me to express to you and your family their sincere sympathy in your bereavement.

We pay tribute to the sacrifice he so bravely made.

Yours sincerely,

(A.E. Walford),
Major-General,
Adjutant-General.

/EMA
Mrs. Evelyn Girard,
Therien, Alberta.

The Canadian Army finally informed David Girard's family that he was presumed to be dead in July 1945. It was later learned that he was either hit by shrapnel or a machine gun bullet which killed him. One of his comrades Private Maltman stated that he took the dog tag from David's body before he was captured as a prisoner of war. He turned it in to the Army authorities when he was finally released following the Japanese surrender.

Private D. Girard is buried at the Sai Wan War Cemetery in Hong Kong, China.



GIRARD—On August 27, Mrs. Marie Eveline Girard of 10830 92 Street, age 84 years, passed away. She leaves her husband, William; two sons and three daughters, Angelo and Adrien, Edmonton, Mrs. Juliette Norman, Therien, Mrs. Aurore Bergeron, New Westminster, B.C. and Mrs. Hedwidge Sharron, Vancouver; also 24 grandchildren.

Funeral services Thursday, 10 a.m., at St. Vincent, with interment in the St. Vincent Cemetery. Rosary Wednesday evening at 9 o'clock at the funeral home, Connelly-McKinley Ltd.

Edmonton Journal August 1962

GIRARD—On September 18, 1962, William Girard, 10830 92 Street, aged 96 years. He leaves, two sons Angelo and Adrien, Edmonton; three daughters, Mrs. Juliette Norman, Therien, Mrs. Aurore Bergeron, New Westminster, Mrs. Hedwidge Charron, Vancouver; 33 grandchildren; 33 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services Saturday, 10:30 a.m., at St. Vincent, interment in St. Vincent Cemetery. Rosary Friday, 8 p.m., at the Funeral Home, Connelly-McKinley Ltd.

Edmonton Journal September 1962

NORMAND, Juliette

On August 7, 1987 Mrs. Juliette Normand of St. Paul, formerly of Therien, passed away aged 78 years.

She is survived by eight sons and four daughters, Alphonse and his wife Cheryl of Therien, Ted and his wife Lorraine, Alex and his wife Jenny of Edmonton, Rolland and his wife Julie of St. Paul, George and his wife Marge, Edward and his wife Elsie, Louis and his wife Terry and Robert and his wife Barbra, all of Prince George, Madeleine and her husband Gerald Ryan of St. Paul, Annette and her husband Ray Gervais of Mallaig, Georgette and her husband Ray Hurtubise of St. Paul and Blanche and her husband Lucien Michaud of Prince George; also 41 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren; one brother and one sister, Angelo Gerard and his wife Isabell of Oyama, B.C. and Hedwidge and her husband Leo Charron of 100 Mile House, B.C. Predeceased by her husband Edgar on April 5, 1987; five brothers and two sisters, Honore, Philip, Armand, David, Adrien, Emilda, Carle and Aurore Bergeron.

Prayers Sunday, August 9 at 8:00 p.m. at St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church, Therien. Mass of Christian Burial Monday, August 10, 1987 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Agnes Roman Catholic Church, Therien, Reverend Father C. deChamplain will be the celebrant with interment in the church cemetery. Yewchin's Funeral Chapel Ltd., St. Paul, 1-645-5177.

Edmonton Journal September 1987