



Romeo Guilmain was born in Montreal on March 26, 1917. He was the second son of Adélarde Guilmain and Emma Guilmain, née Savary. His older brother was named Roger. After Romeo, the family expanded with Liliane, Henri Paul, and Thérèse.

French was spoken at home, and the family was Roman Catholic. When Romeo enlisted for active duty on September 11, 1943, he reported that he was a barber and musician. His father was also a barber and Romeo had helped out a few days a week in his father's salon, gaining experience there.

Romeo was already married when he enlisted. In February 1938, he married Marie Rose Poisson and they had a son, at the time 1½ years old, who was baptized as Joseph Adélarde Claude.

Romeo left school at 16, noting that he had repeated several classes. The standard medical information was registered. He is 5'8" tall, weighs 137 lbs. He has blue eyes and brown hair and is considered suitable for the army.

A detailed selection report states that he speaks both French and English. He is described as friendly and neat, somewhat slightly built, but with a positive attitude towards service. Someone who is a hands-on person.

His work experience is interesting. He worked for three years at a design and advertising agency; seven years at various companies, including a brewery. In the last few months before his enlisting, he was a musician in a dance orchestra. Romeo studied violin for approximately eleven years. He has only moderate interest in sports and social activities.

The report states that he is expected to be suitable for infantry training, but that his experience as a barber might also be useful.

Romeo's military training began at the district depot in Toronto. After a few weeks, he was transferred to the training center in Sorel, Quebec. There, he was briefly hospitalized more than once. The reason for these stays was not recorded in his file.

From mid-November 1943 to mid-January 1944, Romeo was imprisoned in Montreal for a civil conviction. Back in Sorel, he spent another week in the hospital.

Romeo's next transfer was in mid-March 1944. He was attached to the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps (RCOC).

The RCOC was responsible for procuring all the material supplies the army needed, from weapons and clothing to motor vehicles. The Corps also provided maintenance and repairs until February 1944, when repair and maintenance was taken over by a newly formed Corps: The Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

Romeo's station then became Longue-Pointe, a central depot in a Montreal neighborhood. He trained as a warehouse worker and qualified in June 1944.

In July 1944, Romeo's file reads that he had separated from his wife. The monthly payments he had ordered, were now to go to his sister-in-law, Cécile Martin, who had taken over the care of his son.

In mid-July 1944, Romeo was transferred to the infantry. He was assigned to the training center in St. Johns, Quebec, where he was disciplined for being "Absent without Leave" for a period of 24 hours.

Romeo's crossing to the United Kingdom was imminent.

He was assigned to No. 1 Training Group of the brigade and transferred to Debert, Nova Scotia.

During World War II, Camp Debert in Nova Scotia was a vast military complex that served as the final assembly and training location for Canadian troops en route to Europe.

On September 6, 1944, the units arrived in the United Kingdom (UK) by troop ship. Private Romeo Guilmain was one of them.

He was assigned to the 3rd Reinforcement Battalion. After participating in some training exercises, Romeo departed for Europe. On October 7, 1944, he landed on Juno Beach in Normandy. After a week, he was assigned to Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal.

This unit had, by then, crossed the Albert Canal in Belgium and was on Dutch soil, in Putte, just across the border with Belgium.

Their movements continued northwest. During the night of October 21st/22nd, they relieved the Essex Scottish; they came under heavy fire, suffering several casualties. Was one of them Romeo Guilmain?

He was initially reported missing, later as "killed in action." He was given a field grave in Nederheide behind a house.

In April 1946, Romeo was reburied at the CWGC Canadian Cemetery in Bergen op Zoom, and on September 9th, 1946, he was finally laid to rest at the CWGC Canadian Cemetery in Holten.

His grave can be found in plot 4, row G, number 7.

He was awarded:

1939-1945 Star; France-Germany Star; War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.

Sources:

www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com; www.canada.ca/library-archives; wikipedia, project '44

21 OCTOBER 1944
Weather: fair Visibility: Fair
Bn returns to Conc area and moves forward to NEDERHEIDE relieving the Essex Scot Regt. Change over completed during night. Heavy shelling and mortaring. Few casualties.
22 OCTOBER 1944
Weather: Cloudy and cold Visibility: fair
Bn on def posn. Intermittent shelling and mortaring. Patrols.
The I.O., Lieut L.P. Bergeron is wounded in a car accident.

