

Pigeon, Romeo Edward. Private.

4-H-7



Romeo Edward Pigeon, nicknamed Romeo, was born on January 11, 1923, in Spragge, Ontario. He is the son of Ulric Pigeon and Marie Rose Anna Pigeon, née Loubert. Romeo's father died in 1939.

The 1931 census records read that Romeo had three brothers and a sister. The family is Roman Catholic.

Romeo finished elementary school and attended high school for a few months. He speaks English and French. As the eldest son, he had already contributed significantly to the family's livelihood.

When he reported for active duty on November 1, 1942, he had already worked several winters in forestry and a summer in a sawmill. He had also been employed for a year and a half by the Chromium Mining and Smelting Corporation in Sault Ste. Marie, where he had lived since 1941.

When Romeo signed up he indicates that he has been paying \$100 per month to his mother for two years. Romeo has it recorded that, during his service, \$25 should be transferred to his mother every month.

Before enlisting, Romeo had already served under the N.R.M.A. Act.

To clarify:

In 1940, Prime Minister King introduced the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA). This act required a national registration of all eligible men for homeland defense and authorized the government to "conscript every man in Canada for military training in the defense of Canada." The NRMA also granted the federal government conscription and exemption powers, but only for homeland defense duties, such as guarding civilian internees and German prisoners of war, protecting airports and ports, and watching for submarines. Ultimately, only 2,400 conscripted men actually fought in Northwest Europe.

It is striking that Romeo's file states that he did not serve in the Alutian Islands.

To clarify:

The Alutian Islands are located in the North Pacific Ocean, between the USA and Russia.

The Japanese occupied the Alutian Islands of Attu and Kiska between June 1942 and July 1943.

On August 15, 1943, Canadian and American units landed on Kiska. Although Canadian NRMA personnel could not be deployed overseas without their own consent, the Alutians, partly due to their strategic location, were not considered "overseas territory." A small number of NRMA soldiers were deployed for this operation.

N. R. M. A. #5
Form No. 1

Register No. _____ National Roll No. _____
The P.M.G. H.Q. File No. **462-2-17781**

CANADIAN ARMY (ACTIVE)
Computation of Service
War Service Credit

Regt. No.	Rank when S.O.S.	Service	Christian Name in Full
B25599	Pvt	PIGEON	ROMEO EDWARD

Branch and Transfers of Service

1st Enlistment	2nd Enlistment	3rd Enlistment	4th Enlistment
The Central Can Army Detach			
C.A.O.	C.A.O.	C.A.O.	C.A.O.

Total Service: **46** Days

	Total Service	Overseas Service	Not Service
Western Hemisphere	46	Nil	46
Overseas Service			
Total	46		
Add Non-qualifying Service			Nil
Total Service			46

REGISTRATION DETAILS:
1. Dux S.O.S. Overseas _____
2. Dux S.O.S. Overseas _____

Remarks:
Comptroller's Signature _____
Checker's Signature _____
Date Computed: **15/11/43**

N.R.M.A. NO SERVICE IN THE ALUTIAN ISLANDS

ACTIVE SERVICE FROM 15/11/42 TO 15/11/43

UNDER REVENUE ACT, 1941, HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, BASED ON SERVICE UNDER THIS ACT

FROM 15/11/42 TO 15/11/43

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FROM 15/11/42 TO 15/11/43

SEE ATTACHED FORM NO. 1

Romeo had to report to Brantford, Ontario, for basic training.

He stayed there for about six weeks. His file states that he was assigned on December 10, 1942, for a transfer to Fort Benning in Georgia, USA, for parachute training.

By January 9, 1943, Romeo had already qualified as a paratrooper. He was then officially taken on strength by the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion (1CPB).



The training exercises at Fort Benning continued for him until early April, when he was granted two weeks' leave.

He returned to Canada and reported to Camp Shilo, Manitoba, on April 15, 1943.

Romeo remained in Manitoba only a short time.

At the end of May 1943, he was allowed embarkation leave before his depart to the United Kingdom.

He arrived there on July 28, 1943.



Practicing mass-dropping at Ringway

After a month at a staging post, Romeo reported to the Airborne Forces Depot/School at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, the training center for parachute troops, on September 2, 1943.

He was to familiarize himself with British equipment and disciplines. Tactical training for parachute troops was also provided there.

Romeo underwent his final jump training at the Airfield Detachment at RAF Ringway.

Romeo's file leaves much to be desired. A few administrative changes can be found for the remainder of 1943 and early 1944.

There are no records of a possible D-Day airdrop. According to his file, Romeo arrived by ship on August 8, 1944.

Nor is there any record of his involvement in the Ardennes Offensive or the Rhineland Offensive.

The files of Romeo indicate his presence on the mainland of Western Europe: in France from August 8 to September 6, 1944, and in Germany from March 24 until his death on April 8, 1945.

The last entry in his file: '*Dropped in Germany on March 24, 1945*'.

Initially, the home front was informed that he had been killed in action on the 9th of April 1945. This was retracted in a letter in May 1945.

It states that he was wounded on April 8, and died of his wounds that same day.

The war diary reads that the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion is penetrated deep into Germany early April 1945. They had a special mission.

To clarify:

On March 26th and 27th, 1945, the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion began its deployment from Bergerfürth, near Wesel, Germany. Final destination: the Baltic coast near Wismar, if feasible.

Their primary objective was to keep the Red Army out of Denmark, and preferably further away. Over the next six weeks, the men of 1CPB covered the 480 kilometers. On May 2, 1945, they arrived in Wismar, a few hours ahead of a Russian reconnaissance unit.

On April 8, 1945, the fateful day for Private Romeo Edward Pigeon, the unit was near Luthe, Lower Saxony.

The advance continued towards Ricklingen, encountering fierce enemy resistance, as evidenced by his diary entry.

1CPB lost 4 casualties, one of them must have been Romeo Pigeon.

He was given a temporary grave near Neustadt am Rübenberge, northwest of Hannover.

The reburial was on August 23, 1946, in Holten at the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery.

The grave reference: Plot 4; Row H, Grave 7.

He was awarded:

The 1939-1945 Star; the France-Germany Star; the Defence Medal, the 1919-1945 War Medal, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.

His gravestone reads:
**Loved dearly in life
and living still
in the hearts of those
who never forget.**



Sources:

www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com; www.canada.ca/library-archives, www.myheritage.nl

8 APRIL 1945

Weather clear and sunny. Bn moved off at 0900 hrs, with C Coy, Vickers and Mortars on tanks, B HQ B party, A Coy and B Coy on foot. AT LUTHE 1827 opposition was met in the form of a tank and a few infantry. Bn mounted an attack and the enemy retreated just before the town was stonked by 25 prs and mediums. The attack was carried through to RICKLINGEN 208272, where bridge 201270 was captured intact. A Coy led this attack and came under mg and arty fire from a Ferdinand SP gun, which caused 4 casualties. The bridge was found to be prepared for demolition, but RE's cut the explosives away and rendered the bridge safe. American tps of the 9 Army took over