

Lance Sergeant Victor Edwin Bristow

Regimental number: 192452

16th Battalion, Canadian Infantry

born: 14 June 1893 — died: 11 February 1918

On 31 August 1915, Victor Bristow enlisted with the 92nd Overseas Battalion in Toronto, Ontario. He was just over 22 years of age and was living with his parents at 72 Armand Avenue in Toronto. Victor was 5 feet 10 inches tall with grey eyes, brown hair and a fair complexion. He worked as an electrician and had served with the Sharpshooters Militia prior to enlisting.¹

Victor Bristow was the only child of Edwin James Bristow (b. 1866) and Eleanor Eliza Rogers (b. 1869).² He was born on 14 June 1893 and was baptized in his Parish Church in Hackney, London, in April of 1894.³ Victor grew up in London.⁴ Victor's parents were both natives of London, and were married in St. John's Parish of Hackney in the summer of 1892.⁵ Victor was born a little less than a year later.⁶ As of 1911 Victor, age 17, was living with his parents at 10 Mount Pleasant Mansions, Upper Clapton, London.⁷ He was employed as a stock exchange clerk, while his father, Edwin, worked as a commercial traveller.

In April 1913 Victor and his mother Eleanor sailed on the *SS Ionian* from Le Havre, France, for Quebec, Canada, where they joined his father Edwin and settled in Toronto, Ontario.⁸ They were still living there in August 1915, when Victor enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF).⁹

After his enlistment, Victor received training in Canada. On the Casualty Form - Active Service found on his CEF file, is a statement that says he was promoted to lance corporal by December of 1915 and in February 1916 to a full corporal. There is a line through these two entries and in May 1916, that same form indicates that Victor boarded the *SS Empress of Britain* in Halifax and sailed for England with the 92nd Battalion. It is uncertain what this signifies, but on his arrival in England Victor's record indicates that he "arrived in England as an Acting Corporal" on 30 May 1916. At that time he was posted to the East Sandling Camp at Shorncliffe, Kent.

By October of that same year, Victor was again promoted, this time to lance sergeant.¹⁰ A lance sergeant was a rank in the armies of the Commonwealth given to a corporal so that he could fill a post usually held by a sergeant. It is now only retained in the Foot Guards and the Honourable Artillery Company in the British Army.¹¹

PTE. V. BRISTOW DEAD.

Pte. Victor Bristow, only son of



Mr. Edwin Bristow, 73 Armand avenue, previously reported wounded, has since succumbed to his injuries. He enlisted in May, 1916, with a Highland unit, and was promoted to the rank of corporal before

Pte. V. Bristow. proceeding overseas. On reaching England he was given his sergeant's stripes and from May, 1916, to August, 1917, acted as sergeant instructor in Sandling Camp. He reverted to private in order to get to France. He was 24 years of age, and was employed by the Toronto Electric Light Co.

In January 1917, Victor transferred to the 5th Reserve Battalion. In mid-March, Victor was admitted to hospital, where his tonsils were removed. He was discharged a month later and returned to duty. In August, Victor reverted to the permanent rank of private in order to be posted to the front.¹² He was then posted to France and arrived in the field at the end of September 1917.¹³

On 9 February 1918, Victor was wounded in an accident when one of his comrades discharged his rifle while cleaning it. This occurred in a dugout in the front line of Hill 70 near Lens. Victor was given immediate attention and evacuated to the No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where he was admitted.¹⁴ He was treated there, but died two days later on 11 February 1918 of that gunshot wound.¹⁵

Information found in the files on his gunshot wound is conflicting. The Chaplains' log from the Casualty Clearing Station says he was wounded in the chest and abdomen, while the Casualty Report and other documents found on his CEF file say he was wounded in the thigh and back.

Whatever the case, he was 24 years of age when he died on 11 February 1918. He was buried later that same day. His father was advised of his death and his grave can be found in the Barlin Military Cemetery Extension, Pas-de-Calais, France, in Plot 3, Row E, Grave Number 13.¹⁶

During the war the Barlin Cemetery was often in disputed territory. The extension was first used by French troops in 1914, then by German forces and later for Commonwealth burials. The Extension contains 1,094 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and a number of French and German war graves. The current Barlin Cemetery Extension was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens after the war ended.¹⁷

Victor was posthumously awarded the Canadian Overseas Service Scroll and memorial plaque and his mother Eleanor was given the Memorial Cross.¹⁸

Victor's parents remained in Toronto. Eleanor took a trip home to England in 1920.¹⁹ Edwin Bristow died at 65 years of age (on 20 April 1931) in Toronto of coronary thrombosis.²⁰ He is buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery and was mourned by his wife Eleanor.²¹ After her husband's death, Eleanor returned to live in London, England,²² where she died on 2 December 1942, aged 73.²³

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¹ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx; accessed 11 July 2016) entry for Victor Bristow, Reference: RG 150 Accession 1992-93/166, Box1078-14, Item number: 64745, Digitized service file: B1078-S014

² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com; accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Victor E. Bristow, Registration district: Hackney, Sub-registration district: Central Hackney, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 05, Household schedule number: 139, Piece: 216, Folio: 122, Page Number: 21

³ "London, England, Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com; accessed 26 August 2016), entry for Victor Edwin Bristow, Record type: Baptism, Borough: Hackney, Register type: Parish Registers

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- ⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Victor Bristow, Registration district: Hackney, Registration district number: 11, Sub-registration district: North Hackney, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 6, Piece: 1039
- ⁵ "London, England, Marriages and Banns, 1754–1921," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Edwin James Bristol and Eleanor Eliza Rogers, Parish: St John, Hackney, Borough: Hackney, Register type: Parish register
- ⁶ "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Victor Edwin Bristow, FHL film number: 2214815, Reference ID: p23
- ⁷ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Victor Bristow
- ⁸ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 25 August 2016), entry for Eleanor E. Bristow, *SS Ionian*
- ⁹ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx: accessed 11 July 2016) entry for Victor Bristow
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ "Lance Sergeant," *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lance_sergeant: accessed 15 December 2016)
- ¹² "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx: accessed 11 July 2016) entry for Victor Bristow
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Victor Bristol
- ¹⁵ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914–1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Victor Bristow, Service number: 192452
- ¹⁶ "Global, Find A Grave Index for Non-Burials, Burials at Sea, and other Select Burial Locations, 1300–Current," *Ancestry* and *Find A Grave* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Pvt. Victor Bristow.
- ¹⁷ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 11 July 2016), entry for Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension
- ¹⁸ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx: accessed 11 July 2016) entry for Victor Bristow
- ¹⁹ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865–1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 25 August 2016), entry for Eleanor E. Bristow, *Empress of France*
- ²⁰ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938, 1943 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 25 August 2016), entry for Mr. Edwin James Bristow
- ²¹ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938, 1943 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 25 August 2016), entry for Mr. Edwin James Bristow
- ²² "UK Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878–1960," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 2 November 2016) entry for Eleanor Bristol, Duchess of York
- ²³ "England and Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966, 1973–1995," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com: accessed 2 November 2016) entry for Eleanor Eliza Bristow