

RAMESBOTTOM, Edward (#A/2858)

Edward Ramesbottom had a younger brother who served in the Great War and died as a result of his service. Approximately twenty years later, fifty-year-old Edward, with a son serving in the navy, decided to serve his country. He would die less than three years later of natural causes while serving in the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve during the longest continuous campaign of the war.

Edward Ramesbottom was born in Byng Inlet, Parry Sound, Ontario on March 25, 1888, the son of Jonathan and Mary Jane (nee Pilon) Ramesbottom. [Note: The 1891 census records Edward's birth year as 1883. However, his Death Certificate, Circumstances of Casualty Card and gravestone record his birth year as 1888]. Jonathan (born 1846 in Weston, Ontario, a mill labourer) and Mary Jane (born 1860 in Algoma, Ontario) Ramesbottom were blessed with twelve children together: Robert (born 1875); John (born 1876); James (born December 1877, died 1938, buried Lakeview Cemetery, Sarnia); Mary-Margaret (born 1881); Percival (born 1885); Jennie (born March 1890, died 16 days later); Edward; Leah (born 1891); Harvey (born 1893); Earl Ernest (born March 28, 1896); Lola (born 1899); and Gertrude (born 1900). In March 1911, when Edward was 23 years old, he lost his father to heart disease. Seven years later, in 1918, he suffered the loss of his mother Mary Jane. Both Jonathan and Mary Jane Ramesbottom are buried in Byng Inlet, Parry Sound.

Edward's younger brother Earl Ramesbottom served in the Great War. At the age of twenty, Earl (born in Parry Sound) enlisted in the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force on July 27, 1916 in Parry Sound, becoming a member of the 162 Battalion. He recorded his next-of-kin as his mother, Jane, in Byng Inlet. He stood five feet five and a half inches tall, had gray eyes and dark hair, was single and living in Byng Inlet at the time. He was employed as a lumber inspector in the lumbering trade. He was transferred to the 234th Battalion in Toronto in November 1916. Nine months after enlisting, he sailed from Halifax in mid-April 1917, arriving in Liverpool on April 29.

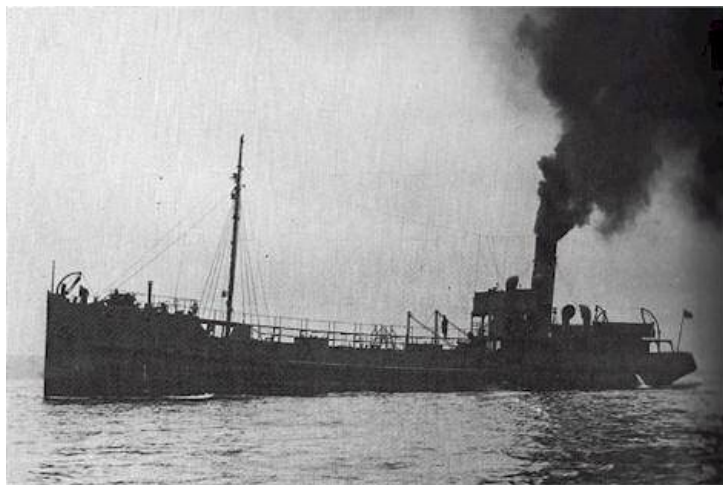
Five weeks later, on June 7, 1917, Earl Ramesbottom arrived in France becoming a member of the Infantry, 75th Battalion with the rank of Private. On several occasions in the latter part of 1917, he was treated for a painful, chronic ear infection. Nine months into the new year, on September 30, 1918, he was seriously wounded during the Battle of Cambrai. He was unconscious lying on the field for 24 hours before being admitted to #33 Casualty Clearing Station "dangerously wounded" by a gun-shot wound to the head (frontal region of his skull). He was operated on the first time in France and then sent to England. He was operated on again, treated and remained in various hospitals there until being invalided back to Canada in February 1919. On arrival, he was admitted to Spadina Military Hospital in Toronto and was eventually discharged from St. Andrew's Military Hospital in mid-September 1919. He was discharged from the CEF as "medically unfit" on September 18, 1919 in Toronto. Only one-and-a-half years later, on March 17, 1921, Earl Ramesbottom died in Davisville Hospital, Toronto, the result of his military service. He is buried in Byng Inlet, Parry Sound.

On September 29, 1913, twenty-five-year-old Edward Ramesbottom, a marine engineer residing in Kenora at the time, married twenty-three-year-old Marion Hutchinson in Kenora, Ontario. Marion, the daughter of Frank and Annie (nee Heslop) Hutchinson, was born in Southport, England, and had immigrated to Canada in 1911, initially residing in Ottawa. Edward and Marion Ramesbottom had only one child together, a son, John Edward, born in 1915. At some point, the Ramesbottoms moved to Sarnia. In 1921, the Ramesbottom family were living at 192 Lochiel Street, and later moved to 150 Talfourd Street, Sarnia.

Years later, their son John Edward, would be employed for a time on Great Lakes ships. John Edward also served in World War II, joining the Royal Canadian Navy, and attaining the rank of Chief Stoker. In October 1940, Petty Officer John Edward Ramesbottom was transferred from *HMCS St. Francis* to *HMS Eyebright*. So, for a time, both father Edward and his son John Edward were serving in the Royal Canadian Navy at the same time.

Prior to enlisting, Edward Ramesbottom was employed as a marine engineer on a Standard Oil tanker, and before that, he had been on the *SS Maplecourt*, which operated out of Sarnia for a time. The *SS Maplecourt* was well known in this city--it was owned by United Towing and Salvage Company Limited which had a branch in Sarnia. In May 1940, the 3,388-ton steam merchant vessel left Sarnia for overseas service. In early February 1941, on its way from Montreal to Preston, England, the *Maplecourt* was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine in the North Atlantic. Her entire crew of 37 was lost. Though none of the crew on board were from Sarnia, the attack on the *Maplecourt* made big news in Sarnia.

Edward Ramesbottom joined the navy, becoming a member of the Royal Canadian Naval Reserve. Beginning on the opening day of the Second World War, the **Battle of the Atlantic** would be the longest continuous campaign of the war, and one in which Canada played a central role. The Royal Canadian Navy, along with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Canada's Merchant Navy, played a vital role in defending the country's eastern coast and escorting convoys of ships carrying men and essential machinery, arms, fuel and basic resources between North America and Europe.



HMCS Moonbeam

Edward was in the navy for 2 ½ years, and at sea all that time. His last post was as Chief Engine Room Artificer, Third Class, aboard the *HMCS Moonbeam*. The Quebec-built ship, originally the *M & F Hopper Barge No. 1*, was launched in 1913, later becoming the Department of Transport *D.M. Hopper Barge No. 1*. Early in the war, she was acquired by the Royal Canadian Navy and renamed. The RCN acquired two Department of Transport hopper barges in December 1940, converting them to fuel oil carriers, commissioning them *HMCS Moonbeam* and *HMCS Sunbeam*. Based out of Halifax, they carried fuel oil for use on the east coast and at St. John's, Newfoundland. After the war, the *HMCS Moonbeam* would be sold in 1946 becoming the *Oakbranch*, and would be sold again in 1960, becoming the *B.L.L. 24*. It was eventually scrapped in 1971.

On December 25, 1942, Christmas Day, fifty-four-year-old Edward Ramesbottom of the RCN Reserve, died of natural causes aboard ship in St. John's, Newfoundland. Only days later, his wife Marion in Sarnia received a telegram from Ottawa informing her that her husband Edward had died suddenly. No particulars were given of the circumstances of his death, but the message stated that a letter would follow. When the message was received, their son John Edward of the R.C.N. was home in Sarnia on convalescent leave as the result of an injured hand.

Edward Ramesbottom, 54, is buried in Forest Road Anglican Cemetery, St. John's, Newfoundland, Plot 24 Section D, Grave 25. On his headstone are inscribed the words, EDWARD RAMESBOTTOM E.R.A. 3RD CLASS, RCNR A/2858 H.M.C.S. "MOONBEAM" 25TH DECEMBER 1942 AGE 54 SADLY MISSED BY WIFE AND SON. REST IN PEACE.

From: *The Sarnia War Remembrance Project*, by Tom Slater