

**Branconnier, Rene**

**Private**

**Le Régiment de la Chaudière**

**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**

**B 631797**



Rene Branconnier was born in St. Charles, Ontario, Canada, on 4 November 1923 to Alphonse and Evan Branconnier. His parents married in 1921 in St. Charles and they got ten children. Rene was the eldest, he had two brothers Henri and Jean, four sisters Dolores, Therese, Cora, Dora. Three more children were born and died young.

Rene went to Public School, but did not like school and wanted to help on the farm. So he left school when he was thirteen and had completed Grade 7. He went to work on the farm.

The Roman Catholic family moved to 393 Huron Street, Niagara Falls, Ontario, in 1940, and Rene started to work there for six months as a



baker's helper. He did not like the work and he looked for another job and so he started working at the Canadian Carborundum LTd factory in Niagara Falls.

Carborundum was a major manufacturer of abrasives, grinding wheels and sharpening stones.

After the war Renee would like to become an auto mechanic.

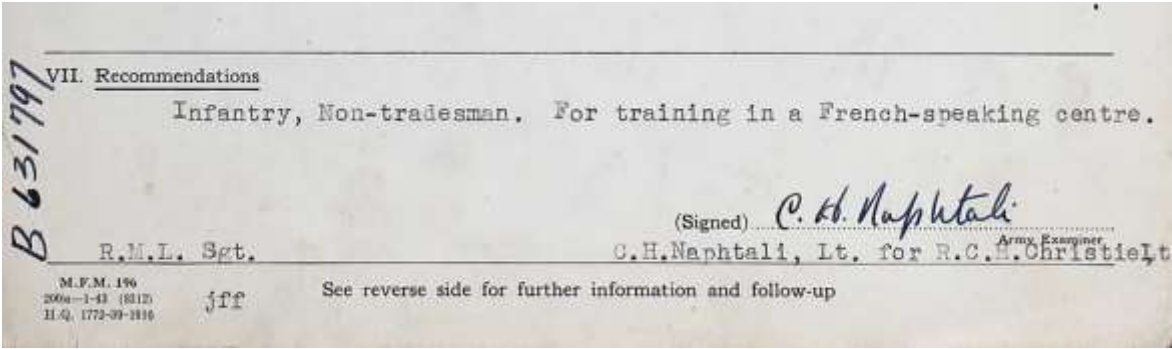
On 23 July 1943 Rene as a Private, enlisted in Toronto and was placed at the # 10 Company Infantry.

Three days later he was interviewed by the Army Examiner (AE) and he wrote in his report about Rene. He was a young French Canadian recruit, he was 5'6" tall and he weighed 130 lbs, he had dark brown hair and hazel coloured eyes.

He tended to be somewhat retiring, but had a genial disposition. He was honest and cooperative, he seemed to possess low-average learning ability and spoke English as well as French, the latter being his mother tongue. He appeared to have done a good deal of hard work since leaving school, and created the impression of an earnest young man, who wanted to adjust to life in the service.

Rene was raised in a large harmonious family. He had no complaints about his health. Although a little immature, socially, for his age, he seemed quite well-adjusted. He stated that because of his life in the country and then his long hours of work, he had never become interested in sports, and had few leisure time activities.

Rene should be able to complete training allocated to Infantry. He expressed a preference for training in a French-speaking centre.



The AE recommended 'Infantry, Non-tradesman, training in a French-speaking centre.'

And so it happened.

On 6 August 1943, René was posted to the No 45 Basic Training Centre in Sorel, Quebec.

Two months later, he continued his training at the A13 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Training Centre in Valcartier, Quebec.

In the first month of the following year, Rene was sent to Stratford, Ontario, where he went to serve with the Victoria Rifles as a Rifleman. With this unit Rene remained for a period until, via Allanburg in Ontario, he was transferred to Niagara-on-the-Lake and continued training with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Edmonton Fusiliers. By then it was September 1944. Rene stayed here for two months and was then granted leave until 25 December. When he reported back for duty, he was posted in Toronto as a Private with the Royal Rifles of Canada.

When the year 1945 was two days old, Rene left Canada by ship with the Royal Regiment of Canada and eight days later he arrived in the UK. On arrival, he was assigned to the 5 Canadian Infantry Training Regiment.

On 23 February, he left with a reinforcement unit for mainland Europe and a week later was posted to the Régiment de la Chaudière

No 21		6 mars 1945		Dernier Ordre No 28 1 mars 1945		
<b>1. AUGMENTATION DE L'FFECTIF</b>						
Les soldats sous-mentionnés sont pris sur l'effectif du Régiment de la Chaudière avec effet du 2 mars 1945 et postes comme suit:-						
<b>CIE A</b>						
D-106675	Sdt	Arseault,	E	E-9036	Sdt Paquet,	H
D-101633	Sdt	Juger,	FE	D-48923	Sdt Pinette,	L
A-604013	Sdt	Austin,	A	A-29539	Sdt Hébitaille,	JM
E-102588	Sdt	Beaumont,	D	E-102231	Sdt Rock,	P.
E-102141	Sdt	Bouchard,	F	E-100847	Sdt Rousseel,	M
G-124736	Sdt	Bourgeois,	G	G-1407	Sdt Roy,	A
E-6098	Sdt	Caissy,	R	G-122976	Sdt Saumier,	A
E-4687	Sdt	Casabon,	A	E-102073	Sdt Binard,	E
D-157648	Sdt	Chevier,	G	E-39106	Sdt Tardif,	E
B-144789	Sdt	Landrieault,	JA	G-5467	Sdt Leger,	F
G-64971	Sdt	Leblanc,	VE			
<b>CIE B Coy B</b>						
D-145460	Sdt	Hedard,	V	D-146980	Sdt Delair,	FE
E-627454	Sdt	Belanger,	V	D-46989	Sdt Bellavance,	L
D-125789	Sdt	Bergeron,	C	D-145339	Sdt Breton,	M
E-610612	Sdt	Bernier,	A	E-519842	Sdt Dusque,	A
D-650837	Sdt	Sarube,	R	D-157808	A/Sgt Goyette,	R
D-205303	Sdt	Bibeau,	PO	E-14431	Sdt Soucy,	A
D-652423	Sdt	Biponnesse,	G	E-100891	Sdt Turmel,	FE
D-135412	Sdt	Bilodeau,	A	E-626454	Sdt Binson,	LP
E-106791	Sdt	Boisvert,	A	G-603956	Sdt Bouchard,	A
G-604090	Sdt	Boulay,	V	B-631793	Sdt Bransonier,	R
E-102140	Sdt	Bourgeois,	FE	D-137952	Sdt Bourget,	A
D-146664	Sdt	Boyer,	A			

On 1 March the regiment was in the area near Uedemerbruch, Germany. Rene was assigned to the B Company of the RdeChaud. The RdeChaud had fought its way from Keppeln to Uedemerbruch, that battle started on 26 February and continued on 1 March when the RdeChaud launched the attack south of the railway line at Tüschenwald. Fighting continued for days until the Germans withdrew on 6 March.

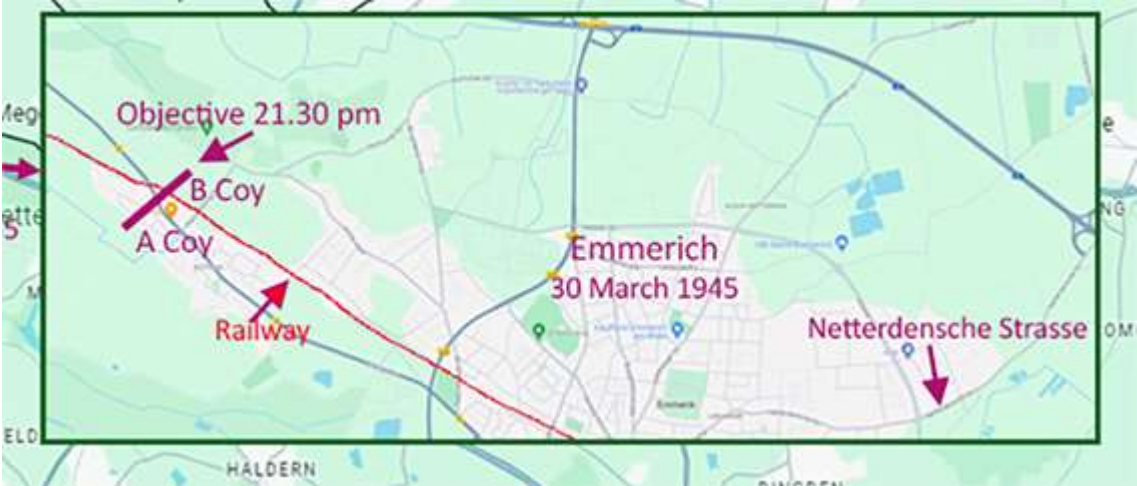


On 11 March, they left towards the Reichswald to arrive in Materborn on 13 March, where they bivouacked for several days. Preparations for Operation Plunder began on 23 March. On 28 March, the RdeChaud left at 3am, passing the first line at Materborn. The convoy was reasonably protected by fog but was still under continuous machine-gun fire from the Germans. At 6.00 am, they managed to cross the Rhine and arrived at Esserden. They moved on and arrived in Dornick at 4.30pm.

The next day was Maundy Thursday, they had rest and the chaplain celebrated three masses.



On 30 March - Good Friday - very early at 00.30 am the RdeChaud set off for Emmerich, the company commanders had a consultation at Emmerich a 07.00 pm and decided to continue the attack.



At 08.00 pm the attack was continued, the companies had to move from Netterdensche Strasse through Emmerich to an area near the railway just before Hüthum, they had to be there at 09.30 pm.

The A company was to advance to the left of the railway and the B company to the right of the railway. They came under artillery fire and A Company was sent to the area where the shelling was coming from. Company A and B both eventually managed to reach their objective, at the cost of two casualties.

One of them was Private Rene Branconnier. He was killed in the battle on Good Friday, he was only twenty-one years old. Rene was buried at a temporary cemetery in Vrasselt, Germany. He was later reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, The Netherlands, grave reference **XX. G. 11.**



Text on his gravestone:

SADLY MISSED BY FAMILY

Rene received the following awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France & Germany Star
- War Medal 1939-1945



Life story written by:

Jasmijn Zhao en Rozemijn Dings, students at Titus Brandsmalyceum, Oss, The Netherlands.

*Additional research and editing:*

*Else Schaberg - Research Team Faces to Graves.*

\*If you have a photo of this soldier or additional information, please contact [info@facestograves.nl](mailto:info@facestograves.nl)

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Library and Archives Canada
- <https://www.project44.ca/>

## Niagara Falls Soldier Is Killed In Germany

Pte. Rene Branconnier, 21, has been killed in action in Germany, according to news received by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alphonse Branconnier, Niagara Falls.



Born in St. Charles, Ontario, Pte. Branconnier was educated there and went to Niagara Falls four years ago. Prior to his enlistment in July, 1943, he was employed at the Canadian Carborundum Company plant. He went overseas in January this year.

Two brothers and four sisters, John, Henry, Dolores, Theresa, Cora and Doris, all at home, survive besides his parents.