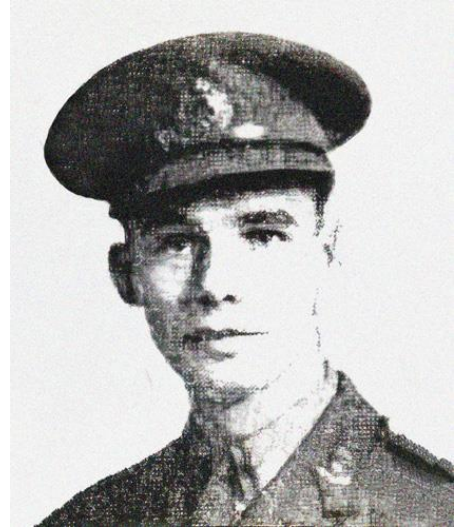


Cannon, Robert Henry
Lieutenant
Royal Canadian Engineers
7th Field Company



Robert Henry Cannon was born in Hamilton, Ontario on 29 June 1923. His father, Anson, was a physician and surgeon. In addition to Robert, his mother, Robertha (Bertha), had a son, Donald, and a daughter, Margaret.

Robert was fortunate for the time to have completed his Junior Matriculation at high school. He had done some farm work before he was accepted into the Royal Military College (RMC College Number 2741) in 1940. Robert had intended to become a Civil Engineer and later indicated on his Attestation Paper that he planned to return to university after the war.

While attending RMC, Robert attended the A5-Canadian Engineer Training Center in Petawawa (A5-C.E.T.C) in the summer of 1941. On 4 August 1941, he was granted the temporary rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

Robert graduated from RMC in 1942 and entered the Regular Force at #2 District Depot in Hamilton, Ontario on 10 July 1942. He was again posted to A5-C.E.T.C., where he was confirmed in the rank of Lieutenant on 10 October 1942. On 2 January 1943, Robert was posted to Kemptville, Ontario to the Canadian School of Army Administration. Upon



completing his course, he was transferred to #1 Transit Camp and proceeded overseas on 7 August. In England, he was taken on strength of No.1 Canadian Engineer Reinforcement Unit. (1 C.E.R.U.)

Lieutenant Cannon participated in various training courses and exercises during the next few months. He obtained his qualification as a Motor Cyclist III and the qualification "G" in Waterproofing – which involved preparing vehicles for fording and entry onto beaches from offshore. He was attached to Exercise "SPAN," where the three Royal Canadian Engineer formations of II Canadian Corps conducted a "bridge gallop" training exercise. They bridged various water gaps and craters in succession under as close to battle conditions as possible. Robert also attended the Field Engineer Officer's course at the Royal Engineer School of Military Engineering at Ripon, Yorkshire. On 13 May 1944, he was detached from 1 C.E.R.U. and transferred to a replacement holding group. Lieutenant Cannon embarked for France on 7 June 1944, one day after D-Day.

On 4 August 1944, Robert was posted to the 7th Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers.



Over the next several months, 7th Field Company took part in actions with the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division at Bourguebus Ridge, St. Andre-Sur-Orne, Falaise, Foret De La Londe, Dunkirk, Wyneghem, Antwerp Turnhout Canal, the Scheldt and Walcheren causeway and the advance into the Reinland. Road maintenance, mining and lifting mines, and water supply were the main tasks, but the company also repaired and constructed bridges and operated rafts.

The 2nd Canadian Division was advancing towards Xanten, Germany on 8 March 1944. The Germans had fortified the town to block the advance by blowing two large, very wet craters on the route. After taking over the responsibility of clearing the route from the 2nd Field Engineer Company, the 7th Field Company dispatched 1 and 3 Platoons to carry on the work. Lieutenant Cannon was the Officer Commanding 1 Platoon and proceeded up the road in an armoured bull-dozer to reconnoitre a way through Xanten. Unfortunately, he was ambushed, and the dozer was hit by bazooka fire. Robert was killed, and the dozer operator was injured.

Lieutenant Robert Henry Cannon was Killed in Action on 8 March 1945 at the age of 21.



He was given a temporary burial at the Canadian Military Cemetery in Bedburg, Germany.

He was later given his permanent burial in the Nijmegen Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **VIII. E. 15.**

Lieutenant Robert Cannon (RMC 1940) is remembered by his classmates on the Memorial Arch at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario and in a memorial stained glass windows to their fallen comrades.



For his service to Canada, Lieutenant Robert Henry Cannon was awarded the:

- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and Clasp
- France and Germany Star
- 1939-1945 Star,
- 1939-1945 War Medal
- Defense Medal



Biofraphy by Robert Swingle for Faces to Graves.

References:

War Service Record. Library and Archives Canada

7th Field Company War Diary

The Canadian Virtual War Memorial

The History of the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers: Volume II by Kerry and McDill

Ancestry.ca

* If you have a photo of this soldier or additional information please contact info@facestograves.nl