

Caron, Albert

Lance Sergeant

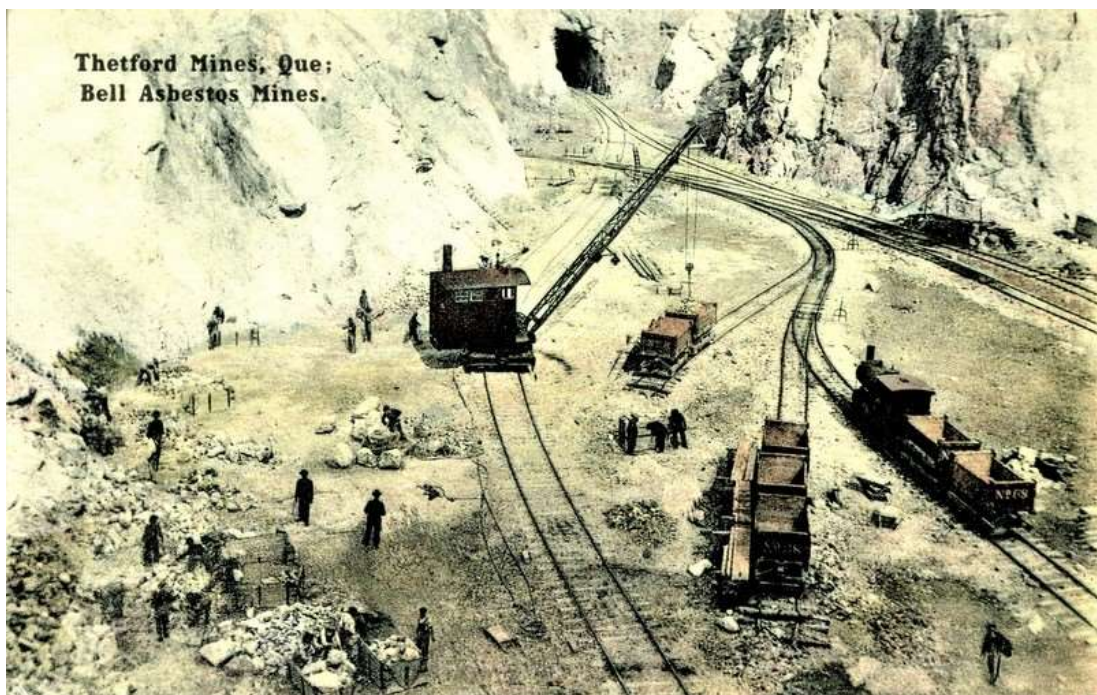
Le Régiment de la Chaudière

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

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Albert Caron was born in the town of Thetford Mines in Quebec, Canada, on 6 October 1917. He grew up in a French-speaking and large Roman Catholic family. His parents, Anna Lachance and Arthur Caron, married on 5 July 1915 in Thetford Mines and had eight children. In order of birth: Leo, Albert, Gilberte, Rene, Ethel, Guy, Denine and Jacques. Leo and Rene served both in the army in Lauzon, Canada. A statement on Alberts' will showed that father Arthur had left his family on 5 January 1942 and that they did not know where he was. He had not been heard from again and contributed nothing financially.



Thetford Mines is located in south-central Quebec in the Chaudière-Appalaches region, 107 km south of Quebec. In the 20th century, it was one of the world's largest mining and production centres of asbestos. Also called the asbestos capital of the world. In 1949, there was a major five-month asbestos strike. In 2012, asbestos production was stopped and, due to health risks, there was a total ban by the Canadian government in 2018.

Albert was 14 when he dropped out of school after Grade 5, and he too went to work at Asbestos Mines in Thetford Mines. He had five years of



Asbestos at Thetford Mines, Quebec Canada

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work experience here. After the war, Albert did not want to return to this job, but wanted to be trained as a mechanic.

On 10 May 1940 twenty-two-year-old Albert reported for active service. He was medically examined after his enlistment, Albert had blue eyes, black hair and a dark appearance. He was 5'4.7,5" tall and he weighed 115 lbs. which was underweight.

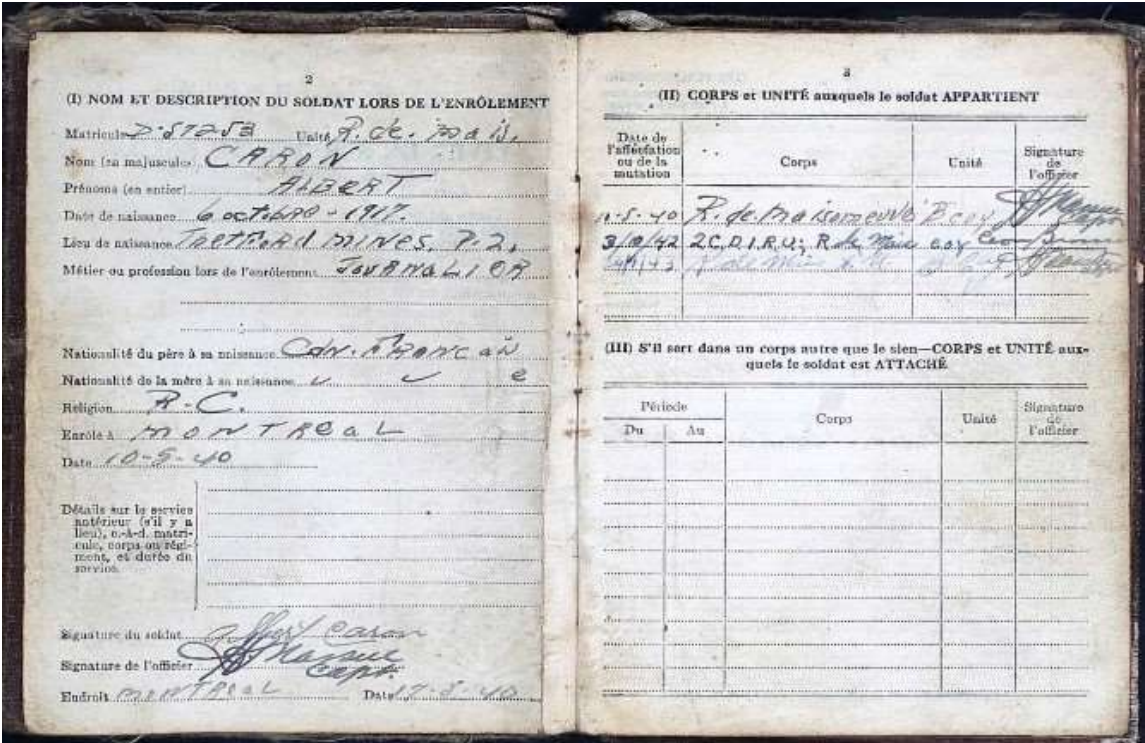
He started his training in Montreal with the B Company of the Regiment de Maisonneuve. Soon he was transferred to Camp Valcartier and on 25 August Albert embarked in Halifax for Greenock, Scotland. He arrived in Scotland on 5 September.

Until 16 December 1940 Albert served in Aldershot as a Private.

At the beginning of January he was admitted in the 8 Canadian Field Ambulance, after two days he was discharged and could continue his training.

On 23 September 1942 he was wounded again and this time he was transported from the 11 Field Ambulance to the 1 Canadian General Hospital where he stayed till 3 October.

During the years 1942 and 1943 Albert was several times 'away without leave', so he went out without permission and was punished. Albert stayed with the B Company of the Regiment de Maisonneuve and continued his training. For his efforts, he received the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp on 15 January 1944. Albert got wounded again and was transported from the 18 Field Ambulance to the 13 General Hospital and was discharged on 20 May 1944.



After his recovery Albert was assigned to the Régiment de la Chaudière (R de C) and with this regiment he left for France on 7 June 1944. Two months later he was promoted to Lance Corporal, in December to Corporal and on 8 January 1945 he became Lance Sergeant.

On 9 January, the R de C set up camp at the Holdeurnse Hof in Berg en Dal, the Netherlands. They laid mines day and night in front of their own lines; the enemy was nearby. On 17 January they moved again, this time to Driehuizen, which was in Brakkenstein, a district of Nijmegen. Here they stayed for a fortnight and trained every day. Then they had to move on again, to the Vlietberg (near the Oude Waal), Nijmegen.

The Germans had breached the dykes, the whole area was flooded and there were huge traffic jams. On 7 February, the men were briefed about

the new attack, Operation Veritable, at the end of the meeting, chaplain Major J.R. Daicourt, gave the soldiers general absolution and Holy Communion.

The next day, 8 February, the R de C went to the Ooijpolder, just before Leuth, opposite to the Thornse Mill. As they passed the embankment near Bison Bay, they were attacked by enemy



Members of the Chaudière Regiment march along a dike, Nijmegen, Netherlands, February 1945.
COLIN CAMPBELL PHOTOGRAPH, LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA—PA143767

machine guns, leaving many soldiers wounded. They had to move on, but since the Germans breached the dykes and the water was rising, the troops could only move by amphibious vehicles. The attack was thus delayed, but they progressed and were in Bedburg, Germany on 22 February 1945.



Infantrymen of Le Régiment de la Chaudière riding on an M-10 A1 tank destroyer vehicle

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On 26 February, an attack was planned on a series of enemy strongholds near Keppeln.

On 24 February, preparations were made for the attack. A patrol was sent to an area as close as possible to the area to be attacked to

gather as much information as possible and map everything out. Starting line was to be the road Northeast to Southwest through Halvenboom.

In the afternoon of 25 February the Battalion moved down to its concentration area. The move was completed by 18.00 hrs.

All companies had shelter for all their men so that a quiet night could be spent before going into battle.

At 8.30 hrs the A & B Companies crossed the starting line under heavy enemy arty fire, including quite a few airbursts. Both companies suffered casualties but superb leadership on the part of all officers saved the day. The B Company quickly advanced and conquered territory.

Enemy troops had hardly time to man their weapons, quite a few being hit by bren or sten fire while on the run to their weapons or trenches. The A Company had a tougher and slower going, the enemy arty fire was very heavy and snipers were everywhere, two tanks were knocked out by an 8.8cm gun. The C & D Company arrived, contact between the companies was established. At 10.45hrs when within some 100 m of the objective the arty fire lifted and what seemed a white flag was hoisted by the enemy, two platoons reached forward to be met by heavy MG fire from a building and also from three tanks dug in around the building. A heavy fight started and men had to seek cover in shell holes, the companies had to move back.

Finally at 18.30hrs the arty fire was brought down with tank fire, they moved forward and 19.00hrs the objective was reached and the mopping started. The enemy having to be dragged out of every neck and cranny, more than twenty-five prisoners of war were taken and also a complete German Regimental Aid Post with Regimental Medical Officer. At 19.30hrs the entire objective was ours. Positions were reinforced by tanks that remained behind until relieved by their own artillery and by A Tanks Guns. At 20.00hrs reports came in that consolidation of all companies was well on its way.



In the evening all men were proud of this day because they had carried it successfully. To the veterans of "D" day there was no doubt that this had been the toughest action yet.

The saddest part of this day was the number of casualties, the highest in a single battle: 15 killed and fifty-five wounded.

Also Lance Sergeant Albert Caron, aged twenty-seven, was killed on 26 February 1945. He was temporarily buried in Bedburg, Germany and on 12 September 1945 reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery grave reference **IX. G. 7.**

Text on his gravestone reads:

DO NOT CRY AT MY DEPARTURE
BECAUSE IT IS A NEW LIFE
THAT I START

Albert received the following awards:

- 1939-1945 Star
- France and Germany Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp



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Additional research and editing:

Research Team Faces to Graves.

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

Sources:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Library and Archives Canada
- thecanadianencyclopedia.ca
- www.canada.ca

*Cenotaph in Thetford Mines: name of Albert Caron.
Photos: waymarking.com/Mychell*

