

**Caron, Gustave Joseph**  
**Private**  
**South Saskatchewan Regiment**  
**Royal Canadian Infantry Corps**  
**M/1534**



Gustave ("Gus") Joesph Caron was born 1 December 1924 at Falher near Peace River in northwestern Alberta. His French Canadian parents Joseph Patrick Caron and Marie Cleophee Lattereur married at Percé Gaspé, Quebec in 1914. They had their first four out of an eventual twelve children while living there: Alphonse, Aline, Aime and Simonne.

*Percé Gaspé, Quebec*

The Roman Catholic Caron family then moved to Melaval, Saskatchewan for a short time where Alexandre was born and Joseph worked as a carpenter. Joesph applied for and received a quarter section (160 acres) land grant to homestead near Falher, Alberta in 1920. The rest of their offspring became native Albertans: Yvon, Jean, Gus, Gilbert, Elise, Edouard and Paul.



Gone but not forgotten by locals is the vintage railway station that used to stand in the south-central Saskatchewan village of Melaval, near Lafleche. (Photo: via Tammy Jimmes.)



The Caron children learned to speak both English and French. As a boy Gus liked playing baseball and hockey, then going to dances and movies when he was older. He attended three years of High School, completing

grade 11 before quitting to work full time age eighteen. Gus spent a month with his father as a carpenter's apprentice before taking a job as a clerk at the Giroux Brothers General Store in nearby McLennan. Gus also drove a light delivery truck as part of his duties and was interested in learning about accounting. Despite no evidence of any of Gus's older brothers serving, he decided to join the Army age nineteen.

Gus attested 17 April 1944 at Calgary, Alberta. He was a slight man at 5'3" tall, 114 lbs with blue eyes. The recruiting officer wrote of Gus: "Young, intelligent, better than average education, small and lightly built. Pleasant personality, appears to be a reliable type of person. Suitable for trades or specialized training." Gus was sent to Cornwall, Ontario for basic training.

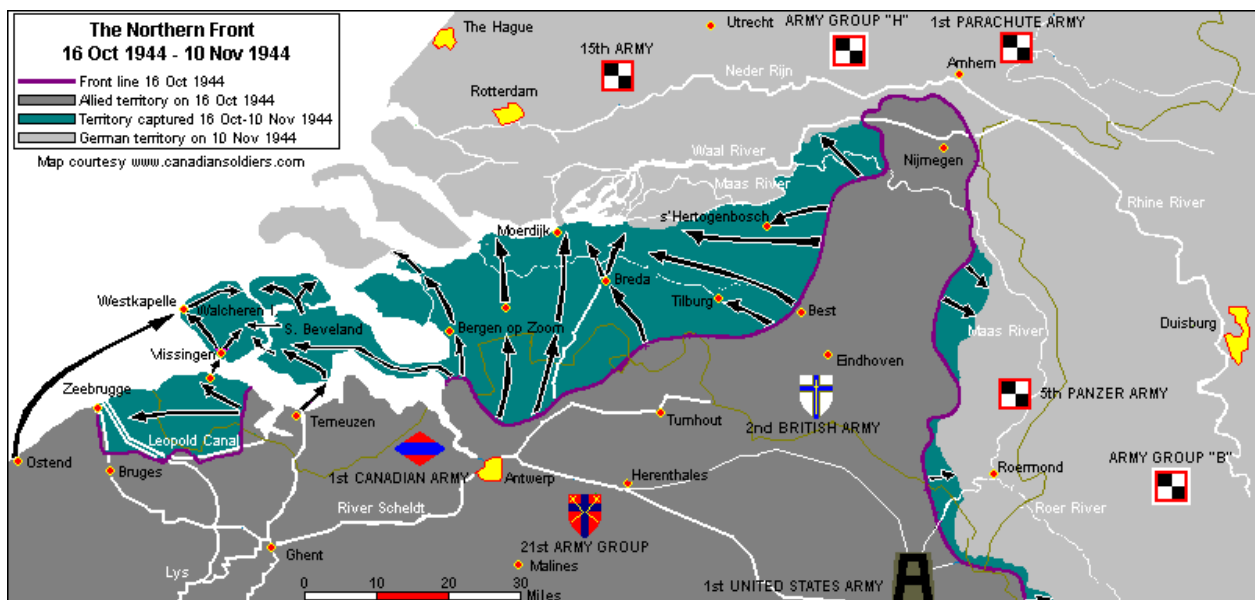


Gus's training report of 30 June 1944 stated: "This man is a good worker, knows his work and is well liked by the men in the platoon. He is very energetic and should make a good soldier". Gus was then interviewed for his suitability as a potential driver operator, but rather than send him to Camp Borden for advanced instruction it was decided that he could complete his training overseas.

Gus passed through the Windsor, Nova Scotia transit camp and disembarked in the U.K. 27 July 1944 where he was assigned to the Canadian Artillery Reinforcement Unit. Due to high casualties during the invasion of Normandy, he was transferred to Infantry 31 August 1944. Following a six week training period in the U.K. Gus was landed in Belgium and taken on strength as a replacement soldier 20 October 1944 by the South Saskatchewan Regiment (SSR) at Hoogerheide, Netherlands.

The SSR fell under 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division and had participated in the disastrous Dieppe raid in 1942. They landed in France 8 July 1944 as part of 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which included the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada and Les Fusiliers Mont Royal battalions. After helping the Allies force the Germans to retreat from Normandy, the SSR worked to clear Channel ports, including liberating Dieppe.

The Allies had gained control of the port of Antwerp, Belgium but could not ship vital supplies there until neutralizing German artillery fortifications on the Walcheren Peninsula that had been impervious to air attack. It fell largely to the Canadians to clear them out in the Battle for the Scheldt.



On 26 October 1944 the SSR and 2<sup>nd</sup> Division brigades advanced on the heavily mined Zuid-Beveland Peninsula. The SSR were the first to cross the canal at Vlakte, creating a bridgehead and repulsing German counterattacks on 28 October. Gus survived his first taste of battle at Beveland.



Canal at Zuid-Beveland, Netherlands



2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division was moved into static operations around Nijmegen, Netherlands 8 November 1944. Most of the activity in the area consisted of patrolling and sniping, with the SSR stationed at Mook.

SSR soldier on patrol duty

The SSR settled into a routine of daily patrols, to be back at their base each night by 23:30 hours before the nightly enemy barrage. In their War Diary entry for November 19/20, 1944, the SSR diarist reported: "Patrolling in the area will be much more difficult by reason of denseness of the trees and the danger of mines which the Germans have scattered profusely".

WAR DIARY OR INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY			555 Div (Can)
INSTRUCTIONS: Reporting preparation of War Diaries (which will be kept from first day of publication, revision or amendment), are contained in P.M. Regs. Vol. 1.			Original, duplicate and originals to be forwarded to G. I. & D. Liaison for disposal.
This page will be prepared:			(Leave blank and not required)
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information
LN 743518 Ob 14 34 40	19 Nov 44		a coy to evacuate their casualties. D Coy evacuated their own casualties. At 1400 hrs enemy planes were overhead. They were probably only reconnaissance as they did not attempt to land or strafe our positions. They were immediately engaged by our own anti-air guns. During the afternoon HQ moved to their new area at 734523. HQ was set up in house at 734524. The Fus B.N. then took over the building we had been in. The Fus B.N. are taking over the reserve to pass for G Coy Inf Bde and at 1400 hrs the Coyd Post under Capt. A. G. G. was moved from their location to the area which had been occupied by the Fus B.N. at 743518. This new post is a little different than the ones we have been in. There are no buildings, and everyone has a hole in the ground for their house. Due to the amount of rain they have had lately the mud is starting to worry everyone, because if it keeps up it will be impossible for the soldiers to move around. After last light the Coy of C started to move into our positions and at 2230 hrs the changeover was complete. A, B, G, and D Coy then started to relieve the Fus B.N. weather: Clear in morning, cloudy with fresh wind in afternoon.
LN 736523 Ob 12 14 40	20 Nov 44		at 0145 hrs the changeover with the Fus B.N. was complete. The changeover was reported complete without incident but at 0630 hrs C Coy reported that three of their men were missing. These men marched in with the coy and have apparently been taken prisoner as there was no evidence of a scuffle. At 0905 hrs Lt. G.N. Macdonald went to HQ of G Coy Inf Bde for the patrol programme for night 20/21 Nov 44. Patrolling in the area will be much more difficult by reason of the denseness of the trees and the danger of mines which the Germans have scattered profusely in this area. Bolt trenches in this area have assumed the proportions of a dugout, with a slit at one end for sniper sniping. East of the trenches are lined with silk parachutes that the men have gathered from the surrounding area. The roofs are quite substantial, built of logs and covered by several feet of earth. The Coy dugout itself has been made very comfortable also, by the addition of table, stove, and chairs. A Sn O Pip was set up by the I Sec at 741514. Observation will be restricted a great deal because the least movement in this area brings down a cascade of fire. The dugout itself is in a dugout some ten by eight feet in size. It is quite comfortable.

Gus Caron received a gunshot wound to his chest 20 November 1944 and was admitted to 11 Canadian Field Ambulance but died that day, age 19.

**DIED OF WOUNDS**  
**Alberta Regiment**  
CARON, Gustave Joseph, Pte.,  
M1534, Mrs. Cleophee Caron  
(mother), McLennan.

*Calgary Albertan, December 1944*

Private Gustave Joseph Caron was temporarily buried at Jonkers Bosch Cemetery in Nijmegen, Netherlands and later relocated to nearby Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **III. E. 5.**



The inscription on his headstone:

AU REVOIR,  
MON ENFANT BIEN-AIME.  
AU CIEL NOUS NOUS REVERRONS.  
MAMAN

(GOODBYE, MY BELOVED CHILD. IN HEAVEN WE WILL MEET AGAIN. MOM)

*Photo courtesy Alice van Bekkum*

Gus Caron's campaign medals:

- 1939-45 Star
- France-Germany Star
- War Medal
- Canadian Volunteer Service Medal/Clasp

*Posted on Canadian Virtual War Memorial*

**Mrs. P. H. Fortier was a visitor at McLennan this week, where she attended a memorial service for Pte. Gus Caron, who was recently killed in action overseas.**

Newspaper clipping – Son of Joseph Patrick & Cleophe Caron  
Brother of Alphonse, Aime, Alexandre, Yvon, Jean, Gilbert,  
Edwourd, Paul, Aline, Simone and Elise Peace River Record  
Gazette Dec 8, 1944, Page 15 Peace River, Alberta, Canada



## **FACES TO GRAVES**

Stichting Faces to Canadian  
War Graves Groesbeek

Biography by Jim Little, Research Team Faces to Graves.

### Sources Consulted:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Library and Archives Canada

Veteran Affairs Canada – Canadian Virtual War Memorial

Ancestry public trees

Newspapers.com

Percé Gaspé, Quebec picture [https://www.communitystories.ca/v2/tour-de-la-gaspesie-90ans-decouverte\\_90years-discovery/story/the-perce-rock/](https://www.communitystories.ca/v2/tour-de-la-gaspesie-90ans-decouverte_90years-discovery/story/the-perce-rock/)

Melaval, Saskatchewan picture <https://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/a-melaval-mini-mystery>

Falher, Alberta picture <http://www.prairie-towns.com/falher-images.html>

Cornwall, Ontario Basic Training Centre June 1944 picture  
<https://cornwallcommunitymuseum.wordpress.com/2016/01/20/artifact-of-the-week-cornwall-army-basic-training-centre-no-31-flag-pole-crown/>

South Saskatchewan Regiment cap badge, war diary, images and information  
<http://www.saskatchewanmilitarymuseum.ca/SSR/>

Buchanan, G.B. (1957). The March of the Prairie Men. Digital version:  
<http://www.saskatchewanmilitarymuseum.ca/SSR/history/mpm.html>

Northern Front Map October/November 1944  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd\\_Canadian\\_Division\\_during\\_World\\_War\\_II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2nd_Canadian_Division_during_World_War_II)

Zuid-Beveland Canal map [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canal\\_through\\_Zuid-Beveland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canal_through_Zuid-Beveland)

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



Kayla Budd left a letter at Gus Caron's Groesbeek gravesite when visiting on Remembrance Day, November 11, 2015.

November 11<sup>th</sup>  
2015

Dear, Joseph, Gustave, Caron

I have done a bit of research about you. I have discovered that you were a Canadian Soldier who fought in World War II, you died of wounds, ~~and~~ by November 20<sup>th</sup> <sup>1918</sup> you were dead. I ~~was~~ so touched by what you have done for the country of Canada. I wish you truly knew how much it has meant to me. Because of the story of your fight for freedom every Nov 11 I will remember you and your allies who had to suffer through the hard times of war.

I feel the need to <sup>write</sup> ~~write~~ to you, (Joseph, Gustave, Caron) about who you are and what the world has become. Joseph you were an amazing man and because of you <sup>and</sup> your friends in the army, I am living today fighting my own battles of life. Today the world has evolved from what it used to be; <sup>to what it is now</sup> we have technology, cars, modernised weapons, even robots. I know you yourself will not get this letter, but in spirit I hope you will see that lots of people love you and care for you. You are a true hero, to me and to every Canadian. Love  
Thank you for your hard work and dedication.

Sincerely,  
Kayla Budd

One of your biggest fans.