

Caron, Joseph Paul Roland

Lieutenant

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal

Royal Canadian Infantry Corps

D136117



Joseph Paul Roland Caron was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on 26 July 1915 to Joseph Amedee and Elmina Caron.

The family lived on 1452a Rue Logan Est in Montreal and attended the Roman Catholic Church.

His Father worked as a night watchman in Montreal

Joseph went seven years to a Public School, followed by four years at La Trappe High School where he studied chemistry. After this he followed for one year business studies at the High School. Leaving school he started working at the administration of the Provincial Government of Quebec as an account.

According to the National Resources Mobilization Act, he joined the army in April 1939 at the No 4 District Depot.

On 16 June 1942 he joined the Active Service of the Canadian Army and he was sent to the Officers Training Centre 44, St. Jerome, Quebec, as a Private.

A month later he was promoted to the rank of Cadet and again one month later he started at the Officers Training Centre in Brockville, Ontario.

On 7 November 1942 Joseph successfully completed his training and was recommended for promotion and appointed to the rank of 2/Lieutenant.

A week later he was sent to A23 Anti-Aircraft Coast Defence in Halifax, Nova Scotia

In May 1943 he was posted to the 10 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Debert.



In June 1943 he was granted annual leave for two weeks and on 11 June 1943 he was granted permission to marry Mis Gabrielle Comeau of Montreal in Tracadie. He changed his home address in 813 Mont Royal East, Montreal, Quebec.

After his leave he was transferred to the A2 Canadian Army Training Centre, Petawawa and three months later back to A23 in Halifax. On 19 November 1943 he was sent to the No 1 Transit Camp in Windsor, Nova Scotia and five days later he embarked and arrived in England on 4 December 1943.

In England he followed courses and training at the Canadian Military Headquarters and on 24 October 1944 he completed his course with the qualification 'good'. In his Certificate of Military Qualification was noted that Joseph was a good officer, he needed little assistance in his leadership, he can be relied upon, had always a good humour also under trying conditions. Joseph was very keen in alertness and had a good knowledge of arms. He had good tactical knowledge, was in fair physical conditions and had plenty of guts.

Joseph was transferred to the 4th Canadian Infantry Training Regiment On 3 November he embarked and arrived a day later in France. At the end of December 1944 he was posted to 10 Canadian Base Reinforcement Battalion Canadian Infantry Corps.

On 5 February 1945 he was attached to Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, Royal Canadian Infantry Corps.

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal (FMR) fought in North-West Europe as part of the 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Infantry Division.



In January the Allied had launched a new plan: the Rhineland Offensive. The Rhineland Offensive consisted of several large-scale offensives designed to break through the German defence line in Western Europe. Operation Veritable was an important part of this because of the famous 'pincer movement' which aimed to drive the German forces out of the area between the Maas and the Rhine, a front only twelve kilometres wide.

After a force of over 500,000 soldiers had been assembled in the east, around Groesbeek and Nijmegen, including the First Canadian Army under General Crerar and the British 30th Army Corps under Lieutenant General Horrocks, Operation Veritable began on 8 February 1945. The British and Canadian forces were to advance from the north, while the American Allies were to close the gap from the south, closing in on the Germans.

At the beginning of January 1945 Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal (FMR) were stationed in the region of Cuijk, The Netherlands. For the time being, the tasks appeared to be mainly limited to guard duty and reconnaissance patrols.

During the first two weeks of February the FMR were moving to an area in and between Cuijk and Nijmegen. Their commander was Lieutenant Jacques A. Dextraze.



Lt. Col. Jaques A. Dextraze (third from the left) and his Tac HQ

On 8 February 1945 at 5.00hrs a formidable artillery barrage marked the start of the "Battle of the Rhine", first part was called 'Operation Veritable'.

17 February 1945 the FMR moved to a concentration area at Bedburg (Germany). In their war diary is written: "Many civilians still cling to the ruins of this much war-torn town, they didn't show any signs of hostility."

On 25 February the officers were briefed for Operation Blockbuster, the FMR was ordered to capture high ground west of Calcar. Next day the attack commenced at 04.00 hrs, together with the Camerons of C, the FDL, the South Saskatchewan Regiment, the FMR reached the objective without much opposition.

During March the FMR continued to advance in the Reichwald and on 13 March the FMR was ordered to move to the area around Rindern-Kellen. The FMR crossed the Rhine on 28-29 March and moved to the direction of the border with The Netherlands.

On 30 March the FMR were in the region of a little village, Gendringen (NL) with around 50 houses. The FMR was ordered to capture this village with the FMR Company, each Company consisted of three platoons of about 30 soldiers. One of the Platoon Commanders was Joseph Caron, his platoon had to advance first. The platoon of Caron was advancing Gendringen.



Eye witness report from two civilians
(interview with Hans Bresser en Rudi Grin in the Ganzeveer):

"a Canadian tank was firing near Wieskamp's farm, between Striekwold and Giezen, in the outskirts of Gendringen (Wieken). Behind this tank were a number of infantrymen. Somewhere from the Pol near Ulft (Dutch village), shells were fired by the Germans and one shell landed exactly behind this tank. The explosion resulted in the death of five soldiers of the infantry regiment Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal."

Roland Alfred Barry, Edmond Coulombe, Jacques Fortin and Alphonse Robert were killed instantly and were buried in a field grave near Megchelen. Bernard Gaston Pilon was badly wounded and later died in a hospital in Bedburg, Germany. All soldiers were later reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek.

The other seriously wounded was Joseph Caron, he had several serious injuries and he was transported to the 10 Canadian Field Ambulance, unfortunately he did not survive his severe injuries. His medical report stated that he is so badly wounded that "he was tired and wanted to die".

On 5 April 1945 Joseph Paul Roland Caron died at the age of twenty-nine. Later he was reburied at the Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery, grave reference **XIV. C. 8.**

Text on his headstone:

EN MEMOIRE
DE MON CHER EPOUX
MORT GLORIEUSEMENT
EN DEFENDANT LA PATRIE

Awards:

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



FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian
War Graves Groesbeek

Life story: Else Schaberg, Research Team Faces To Graves.

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

Sources:

- Paul Wilbers
- Maarten Koudijs
- Interview Ganzenv eer
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Library and Archives Canada
- Canadian Virtual War Memorial

The Family of Paul Wilbers adopted the grave

War Graves Commission:	GROESBEEK
Family address:	Madame Paul Caron, 813 Mont-Royal "Est", Montreal-P.Q. Canada
Adoption address:	Mr. P. Wilbers, 5, Cromwellburgstreet, Groesbeek.
Correspondence:	4456 Madam Caron.

Full name: C A R O N J P R.	Nationality: Canadian
Serial Number:	Rank: Lieutenant
Army formation: Fusiliers M-R.	Religion: RC
Temporarily buried:	Seen:
Permanently buried:	E.T.A. (Date of wounds): (reported missing):
Canadian military cemetery-GROESBEEK	DCW 5-4-1945
Flac: XIV Row: G Grave: B	
Particulars:	

Paul Wilbers:

"My parents corresponded regularly with his widow Gabrielle after the war. She wrote only in French. We had the impression that she was fanatically French-speaking. From that correspondence, it appeared that the given name was Paul (the second name). Gabrielle never married again. She became a nurse.

My father was headmaster of the boys' school in the village of Groesbeek and adopted (as a role model?) Caron's grave immediately after the war. In the photo with my three brothers, you can still see the original grave crosses from the 'first' cemetery. I was born in 1948 and was probably in the cradle at the time of the photo. When I was born, there was already contact with Gabrielle Caron, for I was named after him, and after her (Paul Gabriel) . She was my "godmother on distance". I can still remember her occasionally sending a 10 Canadian Dollar note (then 100 guilders). I was proud of my Canadian godmother."



Herbert, Hans en Willebrord Wilbers



Paul Wilbers