



Alcide Gatien Charlebois was born on April 18, 1924 in Haileybury, the 3rd of a family of 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls. The family later settled in Rouyn, where his father and eldest brother Yvain worked in the police. According to family, he was not fond of school. He was raised bilingual, French and English. Alcide was a smart, very sporty student. Spent summers in Laverlochère in Temiscamingue on his uncle's farm. He skipped the 5th and 6th year classes at St. Michel School. Then completed the 8th grade, partly at primary school, partly at secondary school. Left French-language

school at age 15 and English-language school at age 18. He had to help his father on the farm. In this way, his father hoped to exempt him (and his brothers) from military service as the sons of farmers. Alcide therefore settled on his father's plot of land in Farmborough (about 19 kilometers from Rouyn) where he devoted himself to the cultivation of the land for 5 years.

In the army

However, Alcide volunteered for military service on July 19, 1943 and was approved. He is described as calm, friendly, positive. Good adaptability, cooperative and balanced. He doesn't drink or smoke. His wish is to join the Royal 22nd Regiment and train in a French training center. He is described as a good asset who can be a good soldier and a good officer. Recommendations: to the infantry and training in French. He is trained in Toronto, Sorel, Valcartier and Debart. About Valcartier he says that it is a very beautiful camp with many opportunities for relaxation. For example, there are 4 cinemas, 4 alcohol-free (!) canteens and 4 alcohol-serving canteens. He finds the training difficult, especially the commando training. During his training, he was absent 3 times without permission. He visits Rouyn at the end of November 1943 in connection with the upcoming embarkation for Europe.

In February 1944 he went overseas as a soldier in the Essex Scottish Regiment. When he arrived in England, he wrote a letter to his brother saying that England is a beautiful country, but quite old. There is no snow, but it is damp and cold. He has a lot of trouble getting used to the English

money, as well as the English accent. But he says he's not alone, as English Canadians are also struggling to understand that.

Combat career

France

Alcide joined the Regiment de la Chaudière in early June 1944 and took part in the invasion of France on June 6, 1944.

He writes to his parents about this time and hopes they won't worry too much about him. Everything is going very well with him and he is still in good health and is coping well. He has been in France with the Invasion Troops for quite some time now and he wanted that. He says the French are very happy to see them, especially the French-Canadians. Yet it is not the France he had imagined. He has already collected several German souvenirs because there are plenty of them!

Alcide is captured in Carpiquet, Normandy, July 5, 1944. He escapes the same day. On July 9, he is heavily bombed in an open-air encampment without protection. Can't remember anything after that until he recovers in the hospital. He is hysterical and deaf in his left ear. In the hospital he refuses to get up for 2 days. After getting up again, he feels better and is asked to dig graves. He refuses. Alcide asks to return to his own regiment. He was injured a second time on August 14 and so seriously that he was transferred to a hospital in England for medical care on August 17. It is an injury caused by a piece of shrapnel at the bottom of his right leg.

Italy

As soon as he recovered, he requested to serve in the Royal 22nd Regiment and joined them in Italy on October 1, 1944. During the battle in Italy he sustains several injuries from a bomb explosion. He later tells his brother Yvain in a letter that his leg has completely healed. He says he heard the news of conscription declared by the MacKenzie King government. Undesirable, as far as he's concerned. He also tells Yvain not to rely too much on the propaganda in the newspapers, because the reception in Italy was not that nice at all. He was slightly wounded in the head (eye) and leg during fighting on December 4, 1944.

On January 24, 1945 he was promoted to corporal. He says that it is tough in Italy. He says it is "the most cursed and filthiest country" he has been in lately. But he also said that he has visited several historical places since he was here and that was really the only meaningful thing in this country. He had seen Naples, Pompeii, the lost city, Mount Vesuvius and many other places.

On March 18, 1945, he arrived back in France with his regiment and was part of the battle in Belgium from March 25, 1945. He fought in Germany from April 5 to April 10. Then his regiment crossed the border for the liberation of the Netherlands. He became involved, among other things, in Operation Cannonshot (the crossing of the IJssel between Gorssel and Wilp). He was killed during this operation on April 14, 1945, 4 days before his 21st birthday.

Testimony from Bernie Goulet; "It was about 11 a.m. on an April morning and Alcide's company was tasked with attacking a strong enemy position. A platoon that preceded them suddenly came under heavy fire and had no way to withdraw. As section commander, Alcide was ordered to make a decisive attack on the left flank. During their progress, Alcide suffered a minor injury to his leg. When he stood up to request artillery support, he was hit by a burst from a machine gun. He suffered fatal injuries to his abdomen, the right side of his body and his legs. He died instantly, without suffering. He died trying to save his comrades."

Alcide is initially temporarily buried in Wilp, a village about 6 kilometers southwest of Deventer. That grave will be temporarily marked with a wooden cross for identification.

The last letter that Alcide sends his family is dated March 27 and written from Belgium. The family will receive that letter on the day he dies! He also writes that everything is going well and that he would rather fight in northern Europe than in Italy.

4 days later the family hears of his death. The family was officially notified of Alcide's death by Defense on April 26, 1945.

Later testimonies praise him for his heroic efforts and mention that he enjoyed the confidence of the officers and the respect of his friends.

On January 24, 1946, Alcide's remains were exhumed and transferred to a new grave at the Canadian military cemetery in Holten. This cemetery is a Canadian cemetery and the grave will be maintained in perpetuity. The grave is initially marked with a metal cross that is later replaced by a memorial stone with a personal inscription. Alcide's family chooses: *J'ai combattu le bon combat, j'ai gardé la foi, j'ai reçu la couronne de justice* (I have fought the right fight, I have kept my faith, I have received the reward for justice got).