



French-speaking Paul Emile Desautels was born on October 29, 1914 to a Catholic family in Montreal, Quebec in Canada. His father François had already died in 1932, his mother Maria Charpentier-Desautels was still alive when World War 2 broke out. He had 4 brothers and 6 sisters. After primary school and high school, Paul had gone to work as a day labourer. Paul was a bachelor when he joined the Canadian Army voluntarily on September 29, 1939. He was then about 1.70 metres tall, weighed 67 ½ kilos and had blue eyes and dark hair. He also had a hernia surgery.

He stays in Canada until June 30, 1940 and leaves for Europe via Halifax. From there to Iceland and on November 3, 1940 he arrives in Scotland for further training. Throughout the training, he was regularly punished for incorrect behaviour, such as showing up at a parade unshaven. He is assigned to the regiment Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal. On August 18, 1942, he was deployed in Operation Jubilee (the landing on the shores of the French city of Dieppe), which ends in a major failure for the Allies. Paul is reported missing a day later (August 19, 1942).

Some time later the German authorities mention him in an official report that he is in Germany as a prisoner of war and is assigned No. 42839 in Stalag IXC, a POW-camp in Eastern Germany. He is forced to work in the extraction of lime and in the lime kilns. He was killed by carbon monoxide poisoning on May 31, 1943.

Initially he was buried locally in Bad Briba, Eckartsberga district. Shortly after the war he is reburied in the British cemetery in Berlin. In 1949 his remains come to Holten Canadian War Cemetery.

Paul's grave is adopted by Mrs. R. Jansen from Oldenzaal. She also seeks postal contact with his family in Canada. After the war, his personal items are sent to Paul's family; garments, toiletries, a personal letter, an address book, 2 identity pictures and a bag with Red Cross items. They also receive unpaid wages and the following awards Paul had earned: the 1939-1945 Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal and the CVSM with clasp.

