



Louis Feldman was born in Montreal on July 17, 1909. He is the son of Max and Clara Jane Feldman. In his pocketbook, Louis writes that his father is Romanian by birth and his mother is English. The family is Jewish.

Some family history:

The 1921 census lists a total of six children. Arranged by age (descending): Sally, Samuel, Louis, Adella, Morriss, and Minnie.

The 1931 census notes that Clara is a widow and only the last four of the children mentioned are still at home.

Louis himself reported the following when he enlisted for active service on June 25, 1940:

Sally lives in Verdun, Quebec; Samuel in Albany, N.Y., USA; Adella and Minnie in Windsor, Ontario.

Morris must have already enlisted, as "Army" is noted for him.

The medical report does not mention any details. Louis is 1.65 m tall and weighs just under 68 kg. He has black hair, brown eyes, and is described as "dark-skinned." Louis had completed elementary school.

He stated that he had a reasonable command of English, French, and Hebrew. He listed his occupation as 'Pioneer'.

Louis was first assigned to the District Depot in London, Ontario.

Three weeks later, he was transferred to Camp Borden, Ontario.

He was assigned to the Road Construction Company of the Royal Canadian Engineers. (RCE)

In mid-November 1940, Louis receives his first 'punishment'; three days' pay is withheld because he has been absent without leave for 'some time'.

On December 2, 1940, Louis is transferred to Petawawa, where an Engineers training center is located.

He is then granted 14 days' leave.

Louis extended this leave by seven days on his own initiative. This offense was punished by the commander in February 1941 with ten days in the brig and seven days' pay withheld.

On April 29, 1941, Louis arrived in Gourock, Scotland.

In early May 1941, Louis took another day off.

This time, it meant four days of confinement and four days' pay deducted.

In June, he was officially granted a week's leave.

Louis' file is littered with punishments.

In July and September 1941 and in April 1942, he was 'illegally absent' (AWL) for increasingly shorter or slightly longer periods of time.

The withholding of pay or having to stay inside for a few days did not seem to bother him.

In April 1942, it was truly 'a long time'; Louis had been 'missing' for almost eighteen days.

The court martial (F.G.C.M. = Field General Court-Martial) sentenced Louis to 40 days in prison and 65 days without pay.

Louis served his sentence in Headly Barracks, also known as 'Erie Camp' (built by the 6th Field Squadron of the RCE)

In August 1942, he was granted five days' leave.

Then Louis' file jumps to January 1943, which begins for him with 14 days of leave in February. His pay is \$1.50 per day.

In mid-February 1943, the censor intercepts a telegram from Louis addressed to the Brantford Shriners Club, a Masonic fraternity.

He complains that he has been in the United Kingdom for two and a half years and has never received a parcel like the other boys. He also writes specifically that he would like help to 'get out of here'. He is looking for a friend

He concludes by saying that he is 31 years old and unmarried.

In May 1943, he refuses an assignment and subsequent order from his superior to go to work. Ten days' pay is the price for Louis.

At the beginning of July 1943, he is incorporated into the strength of the Engineers' mechanical maintenance company.

In October 1943, things get serious. Louis rented a room in London during a leave of absence. He was caught stealing private property and ended up first in a police cell for four days and then in Wormwood Scrubs prison for a month. When he was released, he was assigned to the 8th Field Squadron of the Royal Canadian Engineers and received a short training course as a 'painter'.

December 1943 is a series of absences. In total, he is punished with 21 days of confinement and 24 days of pay deduction.

January 1944: 14 days of confinement and 15 days of pay deduction.

On February 23, 1944, he spends a day at a "First Aid" post.

He is reassigned to the Road Construction Company.

In May 1944, Louis is incorporated into the strength of the 8th Field Squadron of the RCE. The unit is scheduled to cross over to France.

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POSTAL & TELEGRAPH CENSORSHIP. SUBMISSION No. 5

P.C. 72

Terminal Mail Air Office

Letter from A 35108 Spr. FELDMAN . L.

To Brantford Shriners' Club, Brantford, Ont. Canada.

Address No. 1 Road Con. Coy. Royal Canadian Engineers C.A.O.

Date of Letter 8. 2. 43.

Language English.

ORIGINAL LETTER: SUBMITTED TO: 12 FEB 1943

Submitted ☒ Photographed

Retained ☐ Released

Returned to Sender

Seen by: Naval Adviser Air Adviser I.M.12

SUBJECT (Include necessary references to Watch Lists, with Authority requiring the Watch)

Attempt to procure pen friend through a Club -

X Extract :- "I am writing to you and I am going to ask you to try and help me out if you are able to do so, I haven anyone in Canada to be good to me... I am always looking for some good friend to sent me one of them good box's that all the boys do getWhat I mean is that you could try and get me a friend in your city. . I do love to know some one because I do like to write...I have been in England for over 2 1/2 years now and I have never as yet got anything from anyone it sure makes a fella feel bad."

"Do write soon will be looking for letter from someone here I

Operating Unit Section Examiner D.A.C. Date

Hol/P.C.(H) 5/9 5872 ESNH pp DAW 11.2.4

On July 30, 1944, Louis lands in Normandy with the unit.

How he manages to do so during the advance through France and Belgium is a mystery, but at the end of August, when the unit is near Orville, France, he is again punished for "absence."

This time it costs him 7 days' pay.

The same applies to the third week of November 1944, when he again had to hand in seven days' pay.

Louis' file then has quite a few gaps in the timeline.

Therefore, the following information about the 8th Field Squadron is based on an eyewitness account, which was later recorded in writing.

Still listed in the strength of the 8th Field Squadron RCE, Louis qualifies as 'Painter C'.

At the beginning of December 1944, the entire Squadron is in the 's-Hertogenbosch region.

The relatively quiet winter months of 1944/1945 for the Engineers were spent in the southern Netherlands and used to replenish equipment and manpower and to test new equipment.

According to the diary of a member of the Squadron, Christmas dinner was served in a hall in Schijndel.

This was followed by a period of 'rest' near Breda.

At the end of January 1945, the 8th Field Squadron was deployed in the capture of Kapelsche Veer.

The Rhineland offensive, intended to push the enemy back behind the Rhine, was launched on February 8, 1945, with Operation Veritable.

The 8th Field Squadron RCE also saw action. Kleve, Hochwald, and Sonsbeck are the places mentioned in their reports. At the end of February 1945, Louis was given nine days' leave, which he spent in England

In mid-March 1945, the 8th was given a few weeks' rest and was stationed near Tilburg.



Genie soldaten van de Royal Canadian Engineers leggen het dek op de Blackfriars Bridge over de Rijn bij Rees, Duitsland op 30 maart 1945. Fotobibliotheek en Archieven Canada

At the end of March 1945, the unit moved back to the Kleve area.

The plan was to build a bridge over the Rhine at Emmerich. The preparatory work was disrupted by enemy fire.

In order not to waste any time, on April 1, 1945, the Division, including the 8th Field Squadron, crossed the Rhine at Rees using the Blackfriar's Bridge

After crossing the Rhine, the course of the Canadian advance was changed.

On April 2, 1945, the unit crossed the German-Dutch border, with Ruurlo as their destination.

En route, their task changed and their destination was altered.

The new mission is to cross the Twente Canal south of Delden.

They succeed, but the Squadron suffers greatly in the process.

An example:

A bicycle lying on the side of the road turns out to be booby-trapped.



Delden, April 1945

(A **booby trap** or tripwire mine is an improvised weapon that, like a landmine, is hidden and activated by the victim).

It is unclear how the explosive is activated, but what is clear is that seventeen Engineers are injured.

Two Engineers are also injured in a jeep accident near Delden, two have an accident with their motorcycles, and one man is trapped between two cars.

Louis Feldman does not experience the bridge building and mine clearance 'up close'. As a 'painter', he is assigned to the Staff Company, which normally has its base a little further behind the front lines.

After crossing at Delden, the squadron continues its advance via Almelo and Meppen. At around 6 p.m. on April 9, 1945, the Engineers arrive in Sögel, Germany.

The headquarters of the 8th Field Squadron, with the Staff Company and a communications unit, was established slightly north of Sögel near a group of buildings and a crossroads.

The text in italics below is taken from an eyewitness account by a member of the 8th Field Squadron RCE.

"On April 10, 1945, shortly after 8:00 a.m., gunfire rang out.

Hindered by thick fog and accustomed to the sound of firearms, there was no adequate response from our side.

When we realized we were under attack, only about twenty men managed to quickly take cover and assume their positions.

Everyone, regardless of rank or position, who could handle a weapon sprang into action.

About 20 Germans and a number of snipers attempted to take out the headquarters of the 8th Field Squadron.

The Engineers manage to keep the enemy at bay until two tanks come to their aid.

Then the battle is quickly over.

The balance is struck.

The commander is wounded, his deputy has been killed.

Three other Engineers have also been fatally wounded.

One of the dead is Sapper Louis Feldman.

Louis is given a temporary grave in Sögel.

He is laid to rest at the CWGC Canadian Cemetery in Holten.

The grave reference: Plot 11; Row C; Grave 3.



Sherman tanks in Sögel. Original photo.
Archive of the Municipality of Sögel.

He was awarded:

the 1939-1945 Star; the France-Germany Star; the Defense Medal; the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.

The file contains a copy of a letter from Mrs. Helen Cumber dated September 1945. She writes that she was Louis' fiancée and that they were going to get married.

She also asks about the estate, because Louis is said to have made a will in her favor.

This appears to be the case, as he had already recorded this in January 1944

