

Cpl. Emile George Frenette, (Service # G22513)



Emile George Frenette was born February 6, 1918 in Robertville, Gloucester Co. NB, the son of Georges Frenette and Josephine Comeau. He had seven siblings Gilbert, Fidele, Richard, Gerard, Ulyses, Lillian and Alma. His brother Fidele also served with the Canadian Army and spent time overseas. Emile attended the local rural school and left school after completing grade seven at age thirteen. This was common during the Depression as boys needed to work and help support the family. Emile worked on his father's farm for seven years. His enlistment documents show that the family was Roman Catholic, and that Emile was bilingual, read newspapers and magazines and enjoyed swimming, baseball, hunting and fishing.

Emile enlisted with the North Shore (NB) Regiment in Bathurst on June 22, 1940, but shortly afterwards decided to marry Mary Anne Graziella Hache. Emile received approval from the regiment, as well as Graziella, and several weeks later on August 6, 1940, they were married. Emile and Graziella had two children, George Joseph Roger Frenette and Marie Constance Denise Frenette. In Sept. 1940 Emile was promoted to Lance - Corporal.

In the army it was discovered that his learning ability was above average and Emile was encouraged take numerous courses. He was promoted to Corporal in April 1941. On July 18, 1941, Emile, along with the regiment, embarked for the UK from Halifax. He arrived in Liverpool on July 30<sup>th</sup>. where he continued training and in July 1942, was promoted to Lance - Sergeant. In November 1943, Emile returned to New Brunswick where he attended the Canadian Infantry Training Centre (CITC) in Utopia. The following year, in August, he was sent back to the UK and enrolled in a Non-Commissioned Officers School. In November Emile was transferred to NW Europe and in January 1945, was back with the North Shore Regiment.

By early April, 1945, the Canadians had successfully crossed the Rhine in Germany. They were now ordered to turn northwest, cross the border back into Netherlands, capture all German held regions and liberate Netherlands. On April 6, the regiment, as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade, was given the task of capturing the Dutch town of Zutphen on the east shore of the IJssel River. In Zutphen there were many young German soldiers, cornered and fighting with desperation. They were excellent shots and Nazis to their death. The ground was too soft for tanks and so the attack proceeded without their protection. Allied artillery fired 25-pound shells into the town and the entrenched Germans responded with their own artillery from the west side of the IJssel River. During the intense fighting on the morning of April 6, Cpl. Emile George Frenette was caught in a burst of machine gun fire. He was rescued and evacuated to a field hospital. The medical reports state that he received severe wounds to his left chest. There was lung damage and he had lost a lot of blood. He was given morphine and died at 1325 hours. He was 27 years of age.

For his service to Canada Cpl. Emile George Frenette was awarded the following medals; the 1939-45 Star, France & Germany Star, Defense medal, War Medal 1939-1945 and CVSM with Clasp. Cpl. Emile George Frenette is buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands, Plot 2. G. 2. Zutphen was captured on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Chaplain R. M. Hickey wrote that he buried over 20 North Shore soldiers at Zutphen. Mass was held in the remains of the Zutphen school house and as men came up for communion he could see in their faces, the hope that the end was near.