



Theodore Herman, known as Ted, was born in Toronto on 14 March 1910. His Jewish parents, Edward Herman (1883–1942) and Eva Baratz (1883–1959), were both from Central or Eastern Europe. Both Russia and Poland are cited as their country of origin; his grandfather, Isaac Herman, is said to have been born in Vilnius, Latvia. His parents married in 1906 in Massachusetts, USA, and moved to Canada two years later. They had four children: Louis, Theodore, Rose and Carl.

After leaving public school, Ted attended Oakwood Collegiate Institute in Toronto for five years. He studied at the University of Toronto and earned a Bachelor of Commerce and Finance in 1934. He then earned a Master of Arts from the Department of Political Science & Economics at the same university. He also completed an eight-month course at the Institute of Chartered Accountants. Ted was not the only member of the Herman family with an academic background: his brothers both studied law, and his sister psychology.

In addition to English, Ted read German, French, Spanish, and Hebrew, but by his own statement, he was not fluent in these languages. He enjoyed reading books on history and sociology. He was also a good athlete; his favourite sports were rugby and rowing.



THEODORE HERMAN Toronto, Ont.
Commerce and Finance; Varsity Juniors Inter-collegiate Rugby Champions I; U.C. Rugby II, III, IV; Rowing III; Commerce Club; Fabius Club; Student League.

Mentioned in 'Torontonensis', the University of Toronto's 1934 yearbook.

Ted worked for several months as a manager at a tobacco factory, where he supervised forty workers. The last six years before he entered military service, he worked as an accountant at N. Perlmutter & Co., Chartered Accountants.

On August 26, 1942, Ted volunteered for the Canadian Army in Toronto. To meet the age limit of 28 for the *Canadian Armoured Corps (CAC)* he stated that he was born on March 14, 1914. The same page of the enlistment form states that he had served in the reserve unit of the Toronto Scottish from April 1928 to September 1930, which would mean he had started at the *age of 14*. The recruiters saw no reason to ask further questions; Ted looked young and was in good health. His enlistment form contains the following assessment:

Big build, confident, good appearance. Has good education and work experience as an accountant, but wants to leave this behind, go to C.A.C. with a view to finding promotion and becoming an officer. Is frank, and agreeable in manner, wants to work and is ambitious to do well. Likely to have good stability, to learn quickly and to be able to take responsibility.

Ted was indeed assigned to the Armoured Corps. After two months of basic training in Fredericton, New Brunswick, he was transferred to the CAC training center in Camp Borden, Ontario. He completed part of his training at other locations: a three-month officer training course in Gordon Head, British Columbia; a three-week Intelligence course at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario; and a two-month Security course in Brockville, Ontario. During his training period, Ted received several promotions; in August 1943, he was promoted to Lieutenant.

On May 25, 1944, Ted arrived in Camp Debert, Nova Scotia, where he was prepared for his deployment *overseas*. He embarked in Halifax on June 5 and arrived in England two weeks later, where he was assigned to 2CACRU, a reinforcement unit of the Armoured Corps. At his own request, he was transferred to the infantry. There, he disclosed that he had given an incorrect date of birth when he enlisted and that he was born in 1910 instead of 1914. The infantry presumably attached less importance to his age; his service record was corrected, and that settled the matter.

On March 9, 1945, two and a half years after he enlisted, Ted left from England for the European mainland. A few days later, he joined his unit, the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry — the *Rileys* — part of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division. At that time, the Rileys were stationed in the Reichswald Forest near Kleve, having fought in the Rhineland Offensive to capture the west bank of the Rhine north of the Ruhr. Like other regiments, the Rileys had suffered heavy losses during the Rhineland Offensive. They were given time to rest and to incorporate reinforcements — including Ted — into their ranks.

By the end of March, the 2nd Infantry Division was able to cross the Rhine near Rees after a bridgehead on the opposite bank had been established. A rapid advance into the northern Netherlands began.

On April 13, 1945, after Assen had been liberated, the 2nd Infantry Division advanced toward Groningen. The lead troops consisted of a column of tanks from the *Fort Garry Horse*, followed by 'Kangaroos' — tanks without turrets — which were used to transport soldiers from the Rileys. They approached the city from the southwest. At the city limits, the Canadians encountered a roadblock. They came under fire from machine guns and *Flak* anti-aircraft guns positioned near the Stadspark. This marked the beginning of the Battle of Groningen, which would last until April 16.



*Elderwolde, April 13, 1945.
Rileys in 'Kangaroos' on their
way to Groningen.*

*Source: Groninger Archieven.
Photo: D. Guravich.*

As dusk fell, the Fort Garry Horse's tanks withdrew: they were too vulnerable to anti-tank weapons. The Rileys continued fighting and managed to clear the Paterswoldseweg south of the Parkweg and capture the Stadspark. However, they were unable to capture the strategically important Parkbrug bridge over the Noord-Willemskanaal.

On this day, April 13, Ted was killed by a sniper while he and his men were transporting prisoners of war away from the front.

Ted was buried on April 14 at a temporary military cemetery in Elderwolde, a few kilometers southwest of Groningen. In 1946, he was reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Holten, where he now rests in grave 03.G.16. His headstone bears a Star of David containing the Hebrew inscription "תנצבה", an acronym for "May his soul be bundled in the bundle of eternal life."



After his death, Theodore Herman was awarded the following Canadian military decorations: the *1939–1945 Star*, the *France and Germany Star*, the *Defense Medal*, the *War Medal 1939–1945*, and the *Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp*.

Oakwood Collegiate Institute in Toronto has a memorial dedicated to students who lost their lives in World War I and World War II. It shows the names and photographs of 105 students who were killed in action during World War II, including Ted. This is the source of the photo at the beginning of this life story.



Sources

This biography draws, among other sources, on the websites of Library and Archives Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and the genealogy websites Ancestry, MyHeritage, and Find a Grave.

The following sources are also worth mentioning:

- Rome, D. (1948) *Canadian Jews in World War II, Part II: Casualties*.
- *Torontonensis: The Year Book of the University of Toronto 1934*, Volume XXXVI.
- Michiel Pronk assisted in interpreting the inscription on Ted Herman's headstone.

© 2026 Walter Ravenek