

Paquette, Maurice. Corporal

11-F-7



Maurice was the son of Wilfrid and Julia Paquette. Born in Montreal on November 25, 1918, but came, with the family, to Ottawa at a young age.

His brother Roland was younger; one sister, Marguerite, was older and he had three younger sisters: Jacqueline, Georgette and Pauline.

He had attended St. Charles school, but after grade 4, at the age of 16, he had left school behind. He reported speaking French and English.



At the age of 16 he had started working at "M. Bouchard Abattoir" as a butcher. He stayed there for 8 years.

He then worked for another year at Charlie Tomas' abattoir, before he signed up for the army, early July 1942. After the war, he was promised, that he would be able to work there again.

He reported his profession as "butcher". His medical report noted the multiple scars on his left and right hands. Maurice volunteered for two years before enlisting. From August 1940 to July 1942 he was assigned to the 1st Corps of the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps.

To clarify:

The RCASC moved supplies from depots, warehouses or ports to the front lines.

Transported were: all the rations, ammunition, petroleum products, and all other necessities.

The RCASC had a variety of vehicles ranging from three- to ten-ton trucks and forty-ton tank transporters.

Maurice's military "career" began at the District Depot in Ottawa.

In mid-July 1942 he went to a basic training centre in Ottawa and in mid-September 1942 to the basic centre Valcartier.

The next transfer for Maurice was via Debert to Halifax. There he embarked for the United Kingdom on December 12, 1942. He arrived there on the 18th.

In January 1943, the record reads: *"while on guard, he was found 'sitting in a truck'".* It cost him 5 days' pay.

Maurice would remain in England until July 1944, on the 7th of July 1944, he disembarked in France. He was assigned to the French-speaking unit "Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal". (Short: FMR)

Maurice was appointed acting corporal in September 1944.

He undoubtedly experienced the entire advance through France and Belgium up to the southwest of the Netherlands.

The regiment was deployed in the "Battle of the Scheldt". The battle to make the port of Antwerp accessible for the supply of men and equipment.

In Waarde, municipality of Reimerswaal, is a monument that commemorates the FMR.

Maurice's service records mention that he was wounded on 25 November 1944, during the fighting in the southwest of the Netherlands.

The medical card stated: "bullet wound right scapula".



In mid-December 1944 Maurice reported back to his unit.

Then a period of relative peace during the winter months.

When the build-up of troops and equipment was completed, the attack on the Reichswald was launched, "Operation Veritable".

The opening of the Rhineland offensive in which the FMR also participated.

Nevertheless, at the end of February, Maurice was given 7 days personal leave to visit Paris. He reported back on the 28th of February.

To clarify:

The Rhineland offensive.

After the partial failure of Operation Market-Garden, the German units were to be pushed back behind the Rhine.

The offensive had three phases. "Operation Veritable" started on 8 February 1945 with the attack on the Reichswald. After the capture of Kleve and Goch, the restart was made with "Operation Blockbuster" and "Operation Grenade" to make contact with the 9th American Army at Geldern.

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal were ordered to clear the road to Xanten. A tough action for the regiment. The fighting continued until the Rhine was crossed with amphibious vehicles at Wezel and Rees in the night of 23 to 24 March. In support, 16,000 paratroopers had landed on the eastern bank of the Rhine. The largest Airborne action in one day. On March 29, 1945, the Rhine crossing was accomplished.

The toll for this: approximately 25,000 Allied casualties and an estimated 60,000 German.

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, with Maurice in their ranks, were in the end of March 1945, on their way to the Dutch border. During the advance to Gendringen (NL), the regiment encountered stiff resistance on March 31, 1945 and lost a number of men.

On April 4, 1945, the regiment sent out a strong combat patrol to test the defenses of the city of Zutphen.

The regiment did not participate in the heavy fighting at Laren-Gelderland on the 5th of April 1945.

But during the advance to Holten, the Schipbeek Canal had to be crossed, an important line of defense for the Germans. During this translocation, Corporal Maurice Paquette was killed.

After being temporarily buried near Lochem, he was given a final resting place in Holten; reference 11-F-7.

He was awarded:

1939-1945 Star; France-Germany Star; Defence Medal, War Medal 1939-1934 en de Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.

