

Belanger, Jean Paul Private Plot 3, row 3, grave 8

The French-speaking Canadian Jean Paul Bernie was born on June 24, 1925, in Montréal, Quebec. He grew up in the catholic family of Joseph and Sophrida Belanger. He had one older brother(Maurice), and three younger brothers (Marcel, Régent and Robert).

Before the unmarried Jean Paul joined the army, he had already been working as a chemical assistant for Canada Drug Company, a wholesaler in Montreal.

At the age of 18 he enlisted in the army on May 5, 1944. He passed his medical test and started his military career on September 26. He was trained in Canada to be an infantry soldier.

He left Canada on 18 December, and arrived in England on December 25. There he received further training to be deployed in Europe. He arrived on the mainland of Europe on January 29, and was added to the Régiment de Maisonneuve. This is what Jan Braakman wrote about Jean Paul Belanger: "The regiment was deployed in building a bridgehead across the Rhine river. When this mission had been accomplished, Jean Paul and his mates moved north, by way of Terborg and Doetinchem, in the direction of the Twentekanaal near Almen. Belanger's regiment was then deployed in the liberation of Laren, Gelderland. The next task of the Régiment de Maisonneuve was to extend the bridgehead in the Laren direction, so that the Black Watch regiment could capture the village. But this did not go as smoothly as planned. The German resistance was fiercer than foreseen, and Jean Paul paid for his efforts with his life. The next day he was buried in a field near Almen, where 39 of his pals were also given a provisional grave. There was a short ceremony, celebrated by army chaplain T.P. Tait. Jean Paul's personal belongings were sent to his mother. During the short time that he served he only had the most necessary things on him: a cigarette lighter, a Waterman pen set, a rosary, letters, photos, a prayerbook and two coins".

It was not until a week later that his parents officially learnt about their son's death, through a telegram from the military. A sung mass is celebrated then in the parish of Ste. Cecile in Montreal. Jean Paul was later transferred to the Canadian cemetery in Holten. He became 19 years old.

In 1946, Jean Paul was posthumously awarded these medals: the 1939-1945 Star, the France & Germany Star, the War Medal, and the CVS Medal & Clasp.