



On the twenty-seventh of March, 1943 life would change forever for young Roland Aubry. On this day at the young age of nineteen years old, Roland would volunteer to be one of the many brave Canadian soldiers that would travel overseas to partake in the European theatre of war. Born on the twenty-seventh of February 1924 in Ottawa, Canada; this French-Canadian spent much of his adolescent years in Northern Ontario, growing up in a small town called Sturgeon Falls. Growing up in a roman catholic household alongside his two sisters and two brothers, Roland was instilled with good attitudes and habits. Enjoying sports such as baseball and rugby, Roland was a strong and rugged boy despite his 5'7", 145lbs physique who also enjoyed things such as running, swimming, etc. As physical activity and work were more appealing lifestyles for Roland than school could

provide, Roland's academic life suffered. Only passing his grade nine at the age of eighteen, Roland left school to commence his working life. Developing a skill and passion for heavy machinery, Roland obtained himself a position working for the Canadian Pacific Railway during the summer holidays of 1941. This seasonal position saw Roland work as part of the cleanup gang, however, his work ethic did not go unnoticed in the city of Sudbury, Ontario. In July 1942 Roland obtained employment at the International Nickel Cooperation as a Machine Operator, before moving down to Hamilton in August 1942 to accept a machine shop operator apprenticeship at the Otis Fenson Cooperation. During his time in the work industry and away from home, Roland picked up a terrible habit of smoking cigarettes. Roland would remain as an apprentice in Hamilton until January 1943, before beginning his volunteered journey through the unforgiving theatre of war being fought on European soil.

Military Career

Once returning to Northern Ontario, Roland took little time before enlisting in the Canadian Army, signing his attestation papers on March 27th, 1943. Even with his background in mechanical work, Roland demonstrated much anxiety on the possibility of being trained in another trade. This, alongside his lack of education and academic knowledge, led army examiners such as Capt. LeBel to propel the new Private Roland Aubry into the infantry division. As a healthy young man, Pte. Aubry passed his medical examinations with flying colours, however, was plagued with issues in his mouth. Pte. Aubry's dental hygiene was recorded as fair, containing multiple teeth needing cementation, as well as a few irreplaceable teeth. Nonetheless, Pte. Aubry was cleared to join the military, beginning his basic training on the first day of May 1943. However, despite the suggestion of keeping Pte. Aubry in the infantry, Pte. Aubry's training included a Carrier CRSE course in the later stages of 1943; adding carrier driver to his military duties.

After spending 2/3 of the year in training camps in Central Ontario, Pte. Aubry was finally called to deploy. On December 15th 1943, the Canadian Army sent large amounts of soldiers overseas to the UK, reporting for duty on the twenty-second of said month. Following a few months of exercise and training, Pte. Aubry's first taste of combat was right around the corner. In early summer 1944, Pte. Aubry alongside the 48th Highlanders of Canada was sent from the UK to Italy to partake in the liberation attempts of Italy. On August 14th, 1944, Pte. Aubry was returned to S. France for a short duration, before being sent back to Italy on December 7th, 1944. During his time off the battlefield, Pte. Aubry volunteered to be a part of the I Special Services Brigade. With his great performances throughout his time in Italy, his great physical shoes and his level of respect and pride ensured he was chosen for the task. Unlike many other soldiers throughout the war, Pte. Aubry decided to not partake in the consumption of alcohol. As historians all know, alcohol was used as a social lubricant during these times, a way to grow morale and bonds throughout the companies. Even though Pte. Aubry did not partake in the alcohol consumption, he was unable to break his guilty pleasure of smoking cigarettes, averaging 15 a day. His final tour to Italy would come to an end on the thirteenth of March 1945, as Pte. Aubry would return to France and prepare for what would be the final month of his heroic service. The 48th Highlanders made their way to Northern Europe to join the I Canadian Corps; alongside the Algonquin Regiment, to continue pushing the Nazi's back and liberating Holland. The I Canadian Corps was tasked with Operation Destroyer and the liberation of Nijmegen, before continuing their way north towards Apeldoorn and Harderwijk. After successfully aiding the I Canadian Corps to victorious battles during Operation Destroyer and the liberation of Nijmegen, Pte. Aubry wasn't fortunate enough to make it to the next objective. Pte. Roland Aubry was killed in action on the twelfth of April 1945 in Wilp, slightly east of Apeldoorn. To commemorate his heroic service, Pte. Aubry was honoured with five service medals: 1939-45 Star, Italy Star, France & Germany Star, War Medal, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal & Clasp.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pte. Roland Aubry heroic sacrifice is one to be honoured. As a young nineteen-year-old, Pte. Aubry sacrificed his life and future to volunteer in a war being fought overseas, with very little direct impact on his life. Putting his love for his family, friends, sports aside, Pte. Aubry answered the call of duty. Killed in action at the age of twenty-one, Pte. Aubry embodied the qualities of a strong Canadian and of an honourable human being. His services will never be forgotten, as his sacrifice has led him to step into immortality.

By Patrick-Aurel Fournier