



**SUPPLY
LINE**

Albert Socqué

Defence Industries Limited

While working at an explosives factory, 32-year-old Albert rescued a co-worker from a catastrophic fire. Both survived, despite serious burns, and Albert received a medal and citations for his bravery.



Portrait of Albert Socqué from the newspaper detailing his heroic acts, around 1941.
George Metcalf Archival Collection
Canadian War Museum 20100138-005_3

Defence Industries Limited Plant

In 1940 and 1941, Defence Industries Limited opened an explosives plant in Valleyfield, Quebec. Known as “Nitro,” at its peak the

factory employed more than 3,000 people. One of these was Albert Socqué, who had been born in Valleyfield in 1909.

A Dangerous Job

Working at an explosives plant is a dangerous job. As a truck driver, one of Albert's duties involved driving to the various Defence Industries Limited buildings to collect nitro-cellulose scrap for disposal.

On July 23, 1941, Albert was collecting the highly flammable material with his colleague Roger Gareau. As Albert was backing the truck up to their dump site with Roger guiding him, disaster struck. The nitro-cellulose in the back of the truck caught fire, leaving Roger surrounded by flames as high as 6 metres.

Albert jumped out of the truck, and charged through the flames to rescue Roger. Albert dragged Roger to the nearby St. Lawrence River, about 60 metres away, to drown the flames.

Albert's quick thinking saved Roger's life. Albert himself suffered serious burns in the rescue.

Albert's bravery was officially recognized later that year, first with the Meritorious Service Safety Medallion, issued by the Institute of Safety Engineers of Canada, and with the Appreciation Medallion, issued by the Province of Quebec Safety League. He received both awards at a special ceremony at Defence Industries Limited on 28 October 1941.

On 10 June 1943, Albert learned that he had been awarded the George Medal. Created in 1940 by King George VI, the George Medal recognizes acts of great courage.

In November, Albert and his wife attended a ceremony in Ottawa, Ontario, at which he received his medal from the Governor General of Canada.

Remembrance and Recognition

Albert died in Valleyfield, Quebec in 1989, at the age of 80. His medals were passed down

to his son, Marcel Socqué, who in 2010 donated them to the Canadian War Museum.