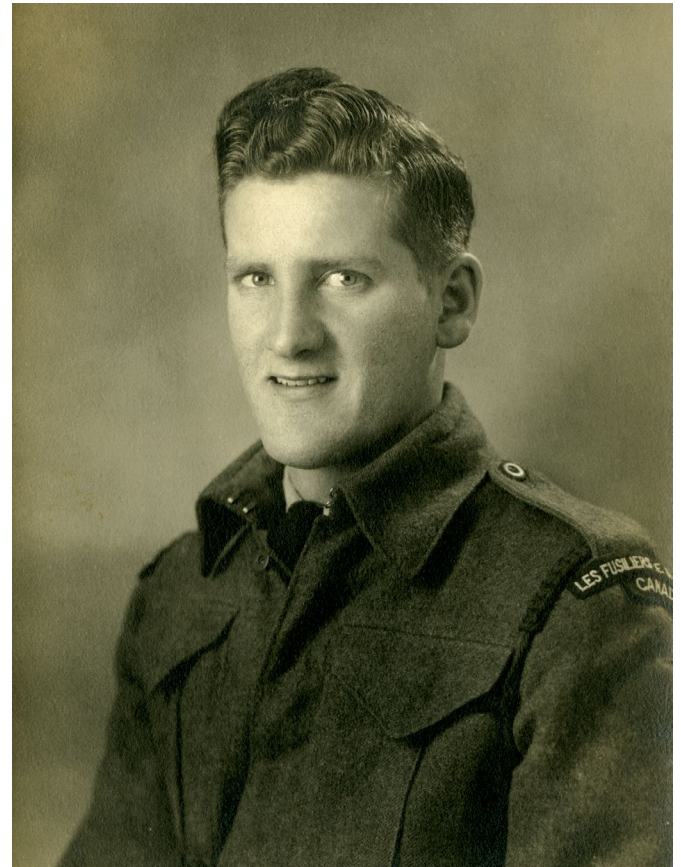**SUPPLY LINE**

René Morin
Canadian Army

Reluctant to enlist for military service during the Second World War, René was conscripted and sent to Europe. He was killed at the age of 20, after only one week at the front.

René Morin, in his army uniform.
Courtesy of Mélanie Morin-Pelletier

Early Years

René was born on April 28, 1924, and was only 15 when the Second World War began in 1939.

He was second-eldest of nine children, and lived in Edmundston, New Brunswick.

Conscripted for Military Service

For personal reasons, René was not keen to serve in the military. Ultimately, the choice was not his to make.

In June 1940, following Germany's stunning military success in Europe, Canada passed the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA). This made military service mandatory for all able-bodied males — but for home defence only.

These conscripts were pressured to volunteer for overseas service. In 1942, the rules were changed to allow conscripts to be sent overseas, should it become necessary.

In 1943, just a few days after his 19th birthday, René was called up for military service. He had a medical examination, was found fit, and began training. He remained in Canada for the time being, as no conscripts were being sent to Europe — yet.

The following year, amidst fierce fighting in Italy and Northwest Europe, the Canadian army needed reinforcements. Unable to find enough volunteers among men serving on the home front, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King decided to order the conscripts overseas.

In early 1945, 12,908 of them were sent across the Atlantic.

René had been at home on leave when he was called up for overseas service. He went, reluctantly, and was among the first conscripts to leave Halifax for England on 9 January 1945.

René was assigned to the Royal 22e Régiment. By 7 April 1945, he had joined them in the Netherlands.

On 14 April, his unit was engaged in clearing out the Germans from a forest near Apeldoorn. According to his comrades, René was having difficulties with his Bren gun, and came under fire.

He was hit by a German bazooka and killed instantly, just a few weeks before the end of the war in Europe. René had been at the front for one week. He was 20 years old.

Remembrance and Recognition

Of the 12,908 conscripts Canada sent overseas in 1945, 69 were killed. Private René Morin is buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery in the Netherlands.