

### Pte Alfred Blanchard (Service # G23165)



Joseph (Alfred) Blanchard was born September 20, 1921, in Grand Anse, Gloucester County, New Brunswick. The village is situated on the Acadian Peninsula on the shore of Baie des Chaleurs. His parents were Benjamin A. Blanchard and Laura (Godin). Alfred had two siblings, Romeo, and Theodule and all three boys would serve in the Canadian Army in WWII. Growing up during the Depression years Alfred, like many others, left school at an early age. Records show that he spoke both English and French and found work at the Bathurst Pulp and Paper Mill.

On June 3, 1941, Alfred enlisted with the Canadian Army at Bathurst. Basic training was completed at Camp No.70 at Fredericton followed by further training at Camp A14 at Aldershot Nova Scotia. In November 1941, he was transferred overseas to the United Kingdom and assigned to the Canadian Infantry Reinforcement Unit (CIRU). The following June Alfred was placed with the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment. The regiment spent the next two years in intensive physical training and rehearsing beach landings throughout England and Scotland.

On D-Day (June 6, 1944), Alfred landed in Normandy near the village of Saint Aubin-sur-Mer with A Company under the command of Major Archie MacNaughton. A and B Companies were the first units to come ashore. At about 8 a.m. their

landing craft doors opened and the men poured out under heavy fire from artillery, mortars, and machine guns. They scrambled over barriers and mines and ran for the security of the seawall. A Company now made its way to a gap in the wall. Already they had suffered heavy casualties. Using explosives, they blasted a path through the bales of barbed wire covering the gap and were into the village and fighting house to house. It was now discovered that the houses were protected with mines and booby traps, and snipers were everywhere. In addition, many of the buildings were connected by underground tunnels or trenches allowing the Germans to escape and reposition themselves. But with repeated efforts using grenades and flamethrowers, they cleared the houses and the streets. The War Diary records that by 11:15 a.m. the German defenses had been eliminated, all Company objectives had been achieved, and the NS(NB)R was in control of Saint Aubin. Historian Will Bird wrote that A Company had suffered twenty-nine casualties securing the beach and clearing the town.

Records show that Alfred Blanchard was part of No. 3 Platoon, with platoon commander Lt Merle Keith. Their platoon suffered heavy casualties. Reverend Raymond Hickey, Padre of the NS(NB)R wrote that Alfred Blanchard was killed on the beach on the morning of June 6. He was twenty-two years of age. Lt Keith was also badly wounded and later that same day Major Archie MacNaughton was killed at Tailleville. Reverend Hickey sent condolences to the Blanchard family.

For his service to Canada, Pte Alfred Blanchard was awarded the following medals; the 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, Defense Medal, War Medal 1939-45, and Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. Pte Alfred Blanchard is buried in Beny-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery in Calvados, France, Plot I. D.11. His name is also engraved on one of the North Shore Regiment monuments that stand along the seawall in Saint Aubin-sur-Mer.

D-Day Monument on the seawall promenade,  
Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer, Normandy, France  
Photo by Gary Silliker

