Clowery, Albert Phillip Private 10-C-3



Albert Phillip Clowery—known as Albert—is born on March 15, 1920, in Coaticook, Quebec.
He is the son of Patrick William Clowery and Delia Clowery (née Houle). The family, which would eventually grow to include four more sons and two daughters, is Roman Catholic. French is the primary language spoken at home, though they also speak English.

Albert enlists for active service in the Canadian Army on June 29, 1940. Prior to this, he has served for nearly a year as a reservist with the 72nd Field Artillery Battery.

Albert states that his last employer was Mason & Parker Ltd., where he worked in the chair-manufacturing department.

In the 1940s, Mason & Parker of Canada Ltd. was a well-known company in Coaticook, Quebec, producing items such as wooden toys, blackboards, and specialty furniture.

Before Albert can fully enlist, he must pass a medical examination. His records indicate that he stands 5’5” tall and weighed 130 lbs. A scar near his left elbow is noted as an identifying feature.

Albert starts at the district depot in Montreal. In September 1940, he spends a week in the hospital, though the reason for this is unknown.
At the end of the year, he is assigned to the Sherbrooke Fusiliers, though he remains in Montreal.
From March 24, 1941, to April 8, 1941, he is "missing."
His file contains the notation "AWL" (Absent Without Leave)—he has taken a few weeks of leave on his own initiative. Upon his return, he is sentenced to 20 days of detention, and 45 days pay are withheld.

After passing through the machine-gun training center in Three Rivers, Quebec, Albert arrives at Camp Borden, Ontario, in September 1941. This is the site of the training program for personnel assigned to the Canadian Army Service Corps (CASC).

The CASC was responsible for transporting supplies from the rear areas to the front lines. They delivered all rations, ammunition, petroleum products, and various other necessities, utilizing a wide range of vehicles—from three-ton and ten-ton trucks to forty-ton tank transporters.

At Camp Borden, Albert once again takes unauthorized leave for a few weeks. As this is his second such offense, he is sentenced to 28 days of detention, and the forfeiture of 40 days' pay.
By the end of 1941, the documents for his transfer to the United Kingdom (UK) is finalized. After a few days of pre-embarkation leave, he departs by troopship, arriving in the UK on December 17, 1941.
Records in Albert’s file regarding 1942 are sparse. Notably, he is disciplined twice for again taking unauthorized leave.

In 1943, he again is AWL on a few occasions. Each time, this cost him a significant number of days' pay.

In ‘43 he is shifted between various units, each time with the designation "for all purposes"—meaning he can be deployed wherever he is needed.
Throughout almost all of 1944, Albert is assigned to the Medical Corps; here, too, he has no fixed role but is available for general duty. In the meantime, he had obtained his driver’s license for wheeled vehicles.

In early November 1944—months into the Allied invasion—Albert is assigned to a reinforcement unit. The crossing to the European mainland and the harsh reality of war lay ahead.
On November 11, he arrives in Antwerp and is assigned to the Algonquin Regiment.
His file contains only a few more entries; the final one reads: "Died of wounds."
The war diary of the Algonquin Regiment provides information about Albert’s five months of front-line service.

By early November 1944, the regiment has already endured intense fighting in the southern Netherlands (the Battle of Welberg).
They take up positions along what was known as the Meuse line, roughly between the towns of Drunen and Waalwijk. The weather conditions are brutal during this severe winter, marked by heavy frost and snow. The dugouts along the dike offer barely any shelter.

There is little opportunity for rest; reconnaissance missions are carried out, and patrols are conducted both day and night. On November 21, 1944, the regiment faces a tragic event: a 30-man patrol enters an enemy minefield, resulting in nine deaths and twelve wounded.
At the end of January and the beginning of February 1945, they are relieved and granted a few weeks of rest.
In February 1945, the Rhineland Offensive begins, with the objective of pushing German forces back to the east bank of the Rhine.

The Rhineland Offensive consisted of three phases:
Phase 1: The northern pincer and advance (Operation Veritable) – Beginning February 8, 1945, British and Canadian forces launched an offensive from the Nijmegen area into the heavily defended Reichswald and the vicinity of Kleve, aiming to clear the territory between the Meuse and the Rhine.

Phase 2: The southern pincer and link-up (Operations Grenade and Blockbuster) – On February 23, 1945, American units joined the offensive from the south (Operation Grenade). This was followed by Operation Blockbuster, which sought to defeat the remaining German units west of the Rhine and reach the river.

Phase 3: The Rhine crossing (Operations Plunder and Varsity) – During the night of March 23–24, 1945, the Allies crossed the Rhine in force near Rees, Xanten, and Wesel, supported by large-scale airborne operations (Operation Varsity).

The Algonquins do not take an active part in Phase 1.
However, they are deployed during the second phase, Operation Blockbuster.

On February 26 and 27, 1945, the regiment sees action during the assault on the so-called "Hochwald Gap"
(the area between the Hochwald and the Balberger Wald).

Here, they encounter fierce resistance and suffer heavy casualties, particularly around the towns of Uedem and Veen in Germany.
Albert appears to have come through this battle relatively unscathed; there are no notations in his file to suggest otherwise.



Algonquin Regiment moving forward near the Hochwald Forest, Udem, Germany, March 1st, 1945.

Photo by Jack H. Smith. Department of National Defence / National Archives of Canada, PA-192879.

On March 31, 1945, the regiment crosses the Rhine.
It then moves into Dutch territory, passing through places such as Millingen and Lochem, heading toward Bornerbroek (April 4, 1945).
A confrontation with the enemy awaits the Algonquins near Wierden; the battle for the liberation of Wierden is intense. Once again, luck seems to have been on Albert's side.

The advance continues onto German soil. Esterwegen is reached on April 11, 1945. The Küstenkanal (Coastal Canal) is reconnoitered, and the regiment's next task—following the crossing of the canal—is to secure the route toward Edewecht and Bad Zwischenahn.
In the early hours of April 17, 1945, the north bank of the Küstenkanal is reached, and a bridgehead is established. By the afternoon, the unit faces counterattacks. The Germans deploy heavy equipment, including a self-propelled armoured howitzer. The resulting shelling causes several casualties.
Support is requested from the artillery, but it proves largely ineffective.
Meanwhile, further casualties are reported among the Allied troops.

Private Albert Phillip Clowery is among those wounded; help arrives too late, and he passes away that same day.

He is initially laid to rest in a temporary grave near Lorup, Germany.
On March 3, 1946, he gets his final resting place at the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten (Plot 10, Row C, Grave 3).

He is awarded:
the 1939–1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939–1945, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



Sources:
www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com;
www.canada.ca/library-archives;
wikipedia, wartimesproject.com;
war Diary Algonquin Regiment,
project '44.