



The L27 prefix to his service number signifies that Conrad Fleury was one of the original Regina Rifles to enlist when the regiment was raised in the summer of 1940. Conrad's father ran a timber mill in Green lake, but the family, including Conrad and his four sisters, moved around to various communities in the Meadow Lake area. Conrad would have joined D Company of the regiment in Prince Albert, or B company in North Battleford.

The original recruits, about one thousand in total, trained together at Dundurn, Saskatchewan, through the summer of 1940. In September they boarded the trains for a

long trip cross-country to Debert, Nova Scotia, and a brand new base they helped build, clearing seven square miles of land and constructing barracks. The big Debert air base was right next door.

In August of 1941 it was time to ship out overseas. The Empress of Russia, still smelling of the over-ripe sugar cane it had been carrying, carried "johns" as the Regina Rifles were known, to Glasgow, Scotland. A train ride later they had arrived at the huge Ramillies Barracks at Aldershot in the South of England and she beginning of almost three years of exercises in preparation for the inevitable invasion of mainland Europe. As vital as the basic battle drill and battalion training was, "much of it was a dreary , monotonous and repetitious nature", according to one description.

Sergeant Conrad Fleury landed in Normandie with the Regina Rifles on D-day. Over the next ten months Sergeant Fleury , in charge of a Support Company anti-tank platoon – a half dozen men and a carrier pulling a six-pound gun- fought in all the regiment's battles from the tentative beachhead on the Green sector of Nan beach all the way to Germany. Bretteville-L'Orgeuilleuse, Carpiquet, the Abbey of Ardenne, Calaise, The Scheldt, Moyland Wood, the clearing of southern Holland – Conrad Fleury served in all those actions and survived them.

"He was my Sergeant" says Gordon Wilson. "We dug a lot of slit trenches together. With me at six feet three inches and Fleury at about five foot three, it was a Mutt and Jeff deal". Wilson tells a couple of stories about the good buddy he calls simply "Fleury". Alternating two hour shifts on guard duty one night. Wilson would light a match in Fleury's face to wake

him up. Fleury response would be to stick his revolver – the only weapon he ever carried- into Wilson’s face, saying he couldn’t ever be too sure who it was waking him up. On another occasion, at Leopold Canal, with the bullets flying every which way over their slit trench, the two of them got ready to move to a safer position. That was an easier matter for Fleury, armed only with Smith & Wesson handgun, than it was for Wilson, with his rifle and Bren gun and related gear. He asked Fleury for a little help, but the only response was a suggestion to throw the rifle in the canal if he couldn’t carry it. “That’s what I did. It’s there still” Wilson says. And near Nijmegen, the two of them kept warm one morning with some sparring. “He gave me a belt on one arm and I gave him one. I could see he `d done some boxing” Wilson says.

Eventually Gordon Wilson was wounded and left the regiment. He never did hear for sure what happened to Conrad Fleury . But in 1995 while strolling through the Holten Canadian War Cemetery in Holland, Wilson saw Fleury’s gravestone. Remembering the happy-go-lucky, likeable, French speaking “ little squirt” he had served with, Wilson laid a flag and poppies on Fleury’s grave.

In April 1945, the Regina Rifles, part of the 3th Canadian Infantry Division, had the task of cleaning the area from Deventer north to Steenwijk, Holland and beyond to the North Sea. It was the final fortnight of the war: the end was clearly in sight. Still, as historian C.P. Stacey notes, there were “spasmodic exchanges of machine gun, mortar and artillery fire”.

One such exchange claimed the life of Conrad Fleury on April 22, 1945. Robert McWillie, who served as a dispatch driver attached to sergeant Fleury’s platoon, recalls that the platoon had taken up a position in the southeast edge of the town of Scheemda. Setting up a six-pounder anti-tank gun in the yard of a house and using a stone shed as a observation post, they could see smoke rising from the enemy’s position in a field adjacent to the town. “We also realized”, McWillie says, “that the enemy had us under surveillance”.

Conrad Fleury was manning the observation post while others ate lunch. Moments later three enemy eighty-eight shells struck the anti-tank gun, the shed just above the observation window, and the house. “Conrad was in the stone shed with field glasses watching the terrain through a small window”. McWillie recalls “We carried him nearby first aid station but it was already too late”.

Fleury Creek in Saskatchewan is named in honour of Conrad Fleury, one of the last Canadians to die in the liberation of Holland.



Fleury Creek (54°36' N, 108°34' W), viewed here from the south, is located 130 air miles southwest of La Ronge in Meadow Lake Provincial Park. Accessible from Highway 904 at Flotten Lake, Fleury Creek flows for fifteen miles from the Mostoos Escarpment of the Boreal Plain.