

A SISTER'S LOVE

By Robert Williamson

There is nothing more compelling than a story of a sister's love for a brother who played a major role in the final victory of D-Day. His name was Earl McAllister. Born in Hamilton, he was descended from prominent mountain pioneer families. Only a small man, 5 feet 3 inches tall and 135 pounds, he was fearless for his size. When he joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, they had trouble fitting him with a uniform. His belt came up almost to his arm pits. He went overseas in February 1944 as the Allies prepared for the Normandy invasion. Held in reserve, his battalion arrived in France to reinforce the Canadian Division south of Caen on July 21. Their task was to pin down the German 7th Army at Falaise while General Patton's American Army, swept around behind the enemy, creating the Falaise Pocket, a brilliant strategic trap, August 17 to 21, 1944.

It was at this time, that twenty-one-year-old Earl McAllister, dealing with a dazed and confused enemy, achieved the impossible. With rocket firing Hawker Typhoon fighter bombers hunting overhead, he captured 160 enemy troops in three separate engagements in a single day. By using what has been described as a combination of "gall, psychology and courage" this Argyll private convinced the enemy to lay down their weapons and march into captivity. Clearly it was an unprecedented feat and attracted world media attention. Falaise brought a successful conclusion to the D-Day Invasion as the Allies began a rapid advance across France and Belgium, while McAllister was promoted to Lance Sergeant.



Earl's mother, Mrs. Ruby Dell McAllister, nee Binkley, feared that her son's audacity in the line of fire would be the death of him, and it was. On October 20, 1944, Lance Sergeant McAllister was killed by a sniper while attempting to rescue one of his men in the vicinity of Kapellenbosch, Belgium. At the time, the Canadian army was advancing on the north shore of the Scheldt Estuary to open the vital port of Antwerp. Earl McAllister is buried in the Bergen-Op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery in southern Holland.

Earl's sister, Mountain resident, Joyce (McAllister) Morrison, Mason, approaching her centennial, has dedicated her final years to having her brother recognized for what he did as part of Operation Overlord at the Falaise Pocket. She has had his name inscribed on a memorial wall at the Veteran's Legion Hall across from Lime Ridge Mall. A veteran's support group, the North Wall Riders Association have assisted her by placing a memorial plaque at Peace Memorial Park, a former mountain school site east of Upper Sherman in the vicinity of Queensdale Avenue. Dedicated to peace at the end of World War One, the school was demolished a decade ago, but the beautiful entrance arch was preserved. Thanks to a sister's love, Earl McAllister's bravery is now a part of that lasting memorial.



Photos and resources provided by Kathryn Morrison Kohut, daughter of Earl's sister Joyce Morrison Mason.