



Chaplain Captain Albert Edmund MCCREERY

12-B-05

By Allen Abel.

Sometime in the afternoon of May 4, 1945, in the final hours of Canada's engagement in the European phase of the Second World War, a 27-year-old officer named Albert Edmund McCreery, son of an Irish Protestant dairy farmer from Ingersoll, Ontario, left his regiment's base camp to locate wounded Canadian prisoners. The injured men, Captain McCreery told his comrades before he set off, were being abandoned by fleeing Nazi troops. He had to find them.

Another officer went with him. They never came back..... No one knows how Capt. McCreery died. The Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War, written in 1995, can cite only "circumstances which remain obscure." His body, run through with bullets, was found a few days later in the boggy terrain between the Dutch-German border and The North Sea. The body of his fellow officer, Lieutenant N.A. Goldie, was not found. By then, the fighting was, in theory, finished. So it is quite possible that Capt, MacCreery was the last Canadian killed in combat in the European War. He was a chaplain and he was unarmed.

Albert E. McCreery, padre tot the Canadian Grenadier Guards, held the rank of Honorary Captain. He was First buried under a small wooden cross in the Lutheran churchyard in the German hamlet of Wiefelstede, west of Bremen.

Albert McCreery went from Bible school to McMaster University in Hamilton and it was there that he

volunteered for the war in 1940. Although as a divinity student he had served churches in several Ontario communities, he did not join up to be a chaplain; rather, he became an officer in The Royal Canadian Armoured Corps. But when the padre of The Grenadier Guards was wounded, Albert agreed to be ordained a Baptist minister and to take his place. It may be that leaving the role of combatant cost him his life.

In other lands, the legend of an unarmed Protestant chaplain who became their last hero for a six-year war might be sung by every schoolchild. But not in Canada. The mysterious "errand of mercy" of Lt. Goldie and Capt. McCreery receives only three sentences in the Official History. In *A Nation Forged In Fire*, by Jack Granatstein and Desmond Morton, it is stated that "an officer and a padre of the Canadian Grenadier Guards left their lines to try to assist German wounded. Both were killed." The newspaper *Canadian Baptist* reported, that Albert McCreery "went forward to give aid to the crew of a tank that had been hit. It was there that he was shot by a sniper." What actually happened, no one knows. Albert McCreery was the son of Samuel J. and Laurette McCreery from Ingersoll, Ontario. He became 27 years old.

His wife Eva, a slim woman told, "But I guess I didn't accept the idea that he was killed. Anytime I'd seen anybody with a baret on, I thought it was him. I always thought he was going to appear. Somewhere. Sometime. But after visiting his grave in Holten and seeing his Stone, I stopped having those thoughts that he might come home one day. I must have found peace there".

