

Cpt Malcolm Stewart Smith

10-D-13



Malcolm Stewart was born on January 1 1913 in Chicago USA as the son of Charles and Margaret Stewart Smith; husband of Leonore Fraser Smith, of Niagara Falls, Ontario.

His profession was a lawyer MA and his religion the Christian Science.

Captain Malcolm Smith or MacSmith as most knew him belonged to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. Originally he enlisted the Lincoln & Welland Regiment but he went to the Argylls with the aim of getting overseas sooner.

He accepted a lower rank just to get overseas. He almost completed a PhD in history at Columbia University and was practicing lawyer. Captain Smith was an academic and an intellectual, but had the unique ability to relate to people who weren't. He had the ability to establish rapport with everyone he met, no matter what rank. No one who met Malcolm could forget him because he was a honest man, funny man, but most notably, a personable man. He was extremely well read; he would read anything he could get his hands on.

He enlisted on August 10 1940 and came to the battalion in 1944 as a platoon officer. He was much older than the average platoon officer and many felt it was ludicrous for him to have such a job. His close friend Cpt Claude Bissell said: "I should have been by any standard among the minds that direct rather among the bodies that fight" After a few weeks of being a platoon officer, Cpt Smith landed the job of Intelligence Officer replacing the then Intelligence Officer, Cpt Milton Boyd who was killed in action on August 10 1944. Lt Col Stewart needed someone immediately and felt Cpt Smith was best for the job. A couple of weeks later, the regiment's then Adjutant Cpt Don Seldon was captured at Igoville (France). Because it was a natural step from Intelligence Officer to Adjutant, Cpt Smith was given the job and Cpt Bissell took his place as Intelligence Officer. Cpt Smith could be found late at night setting up his headquarters and hammering ability to go from frustrated to amiable in a matter of seconds. Malcom's interpretation of his job was an odd one; he had a habit of drifting up to front lines, casually borrowing a weapon and a helmet. On one occasion on September 14 1944 he recovered the body of a comrade, Cpt John Lloyd Johnston, in an area in which the Germans were still pouring out shells. It was on the south bank of the Maas River in Heusden in 1945 where Cpt Smith was wounded on one of his trips to the forward positions. It was late January and Cpt Smith was not content to sit in the headquarters so he had taken a Jeep as far forward as he could to give important information to the platoon commander. On his way back, Cpt Smith was hit in the back of the legs by fragments from a nearby mortar bomb. Fortunately, none of the fragments were very big. This landed him in the hospital for just over a month.

After he was discharged from the hospital, Cpt Smith was keen to get back to his unit.

A single bullet found Malcolm Smith in the final days of the war while he was attempting to cross the Ems River in Germany. He died instantly on April 8 1945.

If there is one thing everyone had to say about him, it was that he was an exceptional man ". Mac had woven himself more securely into the heart and the imagination of the battalion than any other officer" his close friend Cpt Clause Bissell, remembers.

Mac's Lt Col Dave Stewart said: "He was witty and he was intelligent and nervous , but he was salt of the earth ".

He was temporarily buried in Gross Fullen near Meppen, Germany and reburied on March 18 1946 in Holten.

At his headstone: From failing hands we threw The torch Be yours to hold it high
His medals are:

39-45 Star; France-Germany Star; Defence Medal ; War Medal ; CVASM & Clasp

Written by and read loud near his grave by Robyn Levie of Mississauga Ontario

Youth delegate 60th Anniversary Netherlands Pilgrimage

May 2005

