

# RISKS LIFE TO SAVE AIRMEN, PILOT'S BRAVERY COMMENDED

## Flight-Sgt. W. M. McQueen Makes Landing in Channel After Shooting Down Nazi Fighter—Rescued After Three Days

A battered British bomber, returning from a raid on Leipzig, late last year, was set upon by a speedy Nazi fighter plane, whose pilot closed quickly for the kill. Another British bomber, flying nearby, winged over sharply, sprayed the Hun with machine-gun fire, put him to flight and took up pursuit. Eventually, the German plane was shot down. The pursuing bomber, out of fuel, made a pancake landing in the Channel. According to information received by relatives here, the gallant pilot of the pancaked bomber is a Hamiltonian—Flight-Sgt. W. M. "Mel" McQueen. He was rescued from the Channel with the rest of his crew three days after the exploit.

### Recommended for D.F.C.

"Mel" McQueen is 24, a son of Mrs. Ivy McQueen, 113 Belview avenue, and a former track star at the Hamilton Technical Institute. His wife resides at 265 Queen street south. A brother, L.A.C. Morley McQueen, is a radio technician in the Middle East.

According to the airman's mother, he is most uncommunicative in his letters and only when other members of the crew revealed the brilliant exploit to relatives

did he sketch the story for his wife and mother. Although he makes no mention of it in his own letters, other members of the crew reveal he has been recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross.

### Stalked by Nazis

The pattern of the story, from details which the family has gathered, runs like this:

Flight-Sgt. McQueen had been on operations six months. He had made about ten trips over German targets and on his way back from a raid on Leipzig overtook a battered British bomber, stalked by a



### Nazi fighter.

Despite the weight of the ponderous craft he was flying, the shortage of fuel and the fact that his job for the night had been completed, Flight-Sgt. McQueen swung sharply over to engage the enemy aircraft. He might have continued on safely to his base, leaving the wounded bomber at the mercy of the fighter, but chose to attack instead.

When the fighter was driven off, Flight-Sgt. McQueen and others in the crew agreed to follow it. Somehow in the pursuit, and resulting combat, the rear guns of the bomber were brought to bear on the fighter. Charles Beach, tail gunner and son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Beach, Toronto, is given credit for downing the plane.

The bomber swung sharply home, but while still over the Continent the supply of fuel began to fail. Sgt.-Pilot McQueen gave them the choice of bailing out over enemy-held territory or staying for an attempted pancake in the Channel. They stayed, the pancake was effected and after three days in the Channel air-sea rescue service picked them up.

Flight-Sgt. McQueen is a former employee of the National Steel Car Corporation plant. He got his wings at Brantford in December, 1942. His father, who died five years ago, served throughout the last war with the 5th C.M.R.'s.

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