

SOLDIER'S
SON

BEN W. McCLELLAND

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Jackson

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KILLED IN ACTION

Masontown, Pennsylvania

December 24, 1944–January 25, 1945

On Christmas Eve of 1944, Mom received a telegram reporting tersely that Dad had been missing in action since the seventeenth, the second day of the Battle of the Bulge. Try though she might, she could get no further information from the government about his fate. With a toddler and twin infants, Mom observed the holidays filled with dread and distress. Following weeks of worry, she returned on the first day of the winter term to continue teaching her second-grade class. For her, staying busy with her pupils' reading, spelling, mathematics,

and penmanship was preferable to sitting at home waiting day after day. As one of the twins, I did not hear about this episode of Mom's life until years later when my cousin Rosemary, who was a pupil in Mom's class, recalled it.

One day in late January, Rosemary's mother, my aunt Rose, appeared at the classroom door with another telegram in her hand. One glance at Aunt Rose's grim face and Mom fainted. Aunt Rose helped Mom out to the car and drove her home.

WESTERN UNION

Washington, D. C.

Dated 1/25/45

To Mrs. MaryAnne W. McClelland

201 North Main Street

Masontown, Pa.

Report now received through the International Red Cross that your husband 1st Lt. Ewing R. McClelland who was previously reported missing in action was killed in action on 23 December while a Prisoner of

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War of German Government. The Secretary of war extends his deep sympathy. Concerning letter follows.

J. A. ULic.

Adjutant General