

Eldon M. Tolman

August 14, 1920-February 2, 1990

Son of Mahonrimoriancumer Tolman and Effie Shumway

(Thoughts by Mary Tolman, Keith Harris and Cindy Harris as written down as they traveled to his funeral)

Eldon was my second oldest brother. We grew up in a single parent home because our father died when we were very young. But we had a good, loving mother, who taught us love, and loyalty and to mesh as a family. We have enjoyed this special closeness all our lives-a closeness that I wonder if I have taught to my own family. I hope so.

Eldon was a good, older brother to me my entire life. A couple of early memories: I was six years old and it was a cold, wintry day. We had asked Dad if we could get a ride to school (probably one or two miles). He said, "No, I'm not going today," so we started out down the road to school. About middle way there, here came dad, but his car was so full of other kids he had to pass us right up!

We children were all born on a small farm southwest of Lovell, Wyoming. We had a small ditch running through the yard with a bridge to walk across to get to the barn, etc. We were asked to go to the stream and clean new potatoes. Small rags to do this were kept just under the bridge to be used over and over. I remember this as an example of how carefully we used and cared for our meager means.

Eldon was working at the bakery one summer and mother and Kay took a trip to Utah. I was left home mainly to cook for Eldon and kept the house in order. Eldon was trying to get in the air corps but he had rather flat feet. When he came home for lunch he would eat and the rest of the time was spent trying to pick up marbles off the floor with his toes to try to develop his arches!

We were a very close-knit family, probably for several reasons-we only had a mother, and it was the depression. No one had much so we never had a feeling of going without. We all contributed, no matter how small. Our mother was an intelligent, smart woman. She did many things to bring in an extra dollar, and somehow this family had great loyalty to each other. If we were in the right, Effie

was by our side. But if we were in the wrong, we paid! I remember the boys bringing watermelons home one evening and they were soon marched right back to the place where they were stolen and mother stood there until they apologized. We always knew mother loved us. She let us play cards in the home because she wanted to know where her children were. She went into debt and paid monthly payments so her children had a presentable home to bring their friends to. Early on Eldon knew the key to mother's door! He was perceptive. Mother got lots of comfort from Eldon. He was active in his church responsibilities and in helping her at home. He was ahead of his time in believing women were equal. At an early age he made me feel of worth.

I grew up with three older brothers, all who were very good to me and showed me love often-(something a girl without a father craved). Eldon had a gift of expression that was unique and could express it in a soft, pleasing way. He had a talent for exploring an issue without hitting it head-on and was able to express his opinion without being abrasive. If he believed something, he could insult you without you hardly noticing it! His sarcasm was almost soothing and he had the ability to make his point in a tactful way that I envied. Eldon was smooth and had nice manners. He dressed nice, had polish. We all had family nicknames-his was "Honeydoll" and it seemed to fit him when we were growing up. He came home from prison camp in Germany and was so good to me. I had Jim-Keith was in the service, and I had two toes that needed attention. He took time with me.

When he was first missing, Dr. Tom called me at work in the small town of Lovell and said, "Mary, come by my office and I will go with you to tell your mother." This we did. Kay had died a few months before and Mother felt now another son! Before we went to bed that night, we kneeled in prayer and then asked the Lord to watch over Eldon. I said to her, "Mother, I know the Lord wouldn't take two of your sons. Eldon is alright." That night mother had a dream and saw Eldon parachute safely from a plane. We found out later this is what happened.

We lived in a small town and Eldon was a favorite son. If we received information about his situation from the Red Cross, Eldon, or anyone, it was always published in the paper and the town was informed.

Eldon seemed to always have a depth to him that was unusual. He worked at having a grasp of the important truths and principles, a special intuitiveness of what your feelings were a, special spirit, a depth of understanding of truths and principles that isn't common. He reached this through study and work. He always had a desire to go on a mission. He accomplished this many ways, being a prisoner of war, going to Yellowstone Park on weekends as a Stake Missionary, a guide on Temple Square and helping three sons with their missions.

Eldon had class. He was not a respecter of persons. He loved to take the opposite view, whether he believed it or not, to start you thinking!

Eldon loved knowledge and books. He had a library to be admired. He was able to get his education and maintain his good sense. He loved his country and put his life on the line for it. He was a true patriot. He loved history and was especially informed about the history of his own country. He seemed to have an affinity with his forefathers.

Eldon had complete love for his wife and family. He also had the capacity to love beyond his immediate family and maintained a close-knit extended family. He had broad interests: in education, politics, genealogy, history, church events, priesthood, gardening, administration, world events, home, carpentry, cooking, writing, being a good teacher, bringing knowledge to others. He could have been successful in any one he chose and was.

The Lord has told us that "when we are in the service of others we are in the service of our God." Eldon knew this principle, he believed it, he lived it.

Eldon, dear brother, we will miss you so, but we are glad you are free from you pain. You were an example to us all.

May you enjoy the reunion that is going on now!