**Gill, B.E., Cpl.**

K42051 Corporal Basil Eric Gill of the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry died of wounds received in action on 22 July 1943 and is buried at the Agira Canadian War Cemetery, Sicily, Italy. Basil was born on 19 July 1920 in Cabri, Saskatchewan. He was raised on the farm near Cabri attending school until the age of fifteen having completed grade eight. At this time in 1935 his family moved to Armstrong, British Columbia due to the draught and crop failures in Saskatchewan. They purchased a small fruit farm near Armstrong where Basil Gill finished his education. After school he worked on the family fruit farm with his twin brother as well as working at a gravel pit. On 6 October 1939, he joined the Militia in Kamloops, British Columbia serving with the Rocky Mountain Rangers. Pte Gill transferred to the Active Service Force in Kamloops, British Columbia on 6 December 1939 and was posted to the Canadian Scottish Regiment at Otter Point, British Columbia. On 7 February 1940 he was transferred to the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry Regimental Depot in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Suffering from measles he was hospitalized in Winnipeg from 13 to 21 March 1940. Having completed basic and infantry training he was appointed Acting Lance Corporal on 1 May 1940. L/Cpl Gill deployed overseas arriving in England on 17 July 1940 and was taken on strength to the 3rd Canadian Infantry Holding Unit. He took the Physical Training Course during the month of August 1940. Finally on 27 March 1941 he joined the Patricias, reverting to the rank of Private at his own request. In August of 1941 the Patricias became part of Force 111 which was assembling in Scotland for operations at Spitsbergen. The force was to destroy the coal facilities on the island in the arctic. The force was downsized and the Patricias did not deploy returning to 1 Canadian Infantry Division’s area in England. On 1 November 1941 he was appointed Acting Lance Corporal and confirmed in that rank on 7 February 1943. He was promoted to Acting Corporal on 26 April 1943. The regiment sailed out of England on route for Operation Husky and landed on the beaches of Sicily on 10 July 1943. He fought with the Patricia’s advancing north through Grammichele, Piazza Armerina, and Valguarnera. The Patricia’s advance to the edge of the town of Leonforte and established a firm base for the Edmonton Regiment to assault the town. The Eddies took a large portion of the town before the German unleashed a counter attack on the dispersed companies. The men from Edmonton held in Company defended localities waiting for reinforcements from the Second Brigade. Prior to the attack the enemy had blown the only bridge into town so the engineers working under fire put a span across the gap. Not knowing the fate of the Edmonton Regiment the brigade ordered a dash to the town which was conducted by ‘C’ Company and tanks of the Three Rivers Regiment. Charlie Company moved quickly under indirect and small arms fire to the edge of town and then assaulted to the centre relieving the headquarters company of the Eddies. The Patricia Company continued to clear the town without the aid of armour. Two more companies were committed to the battle linking up with Charlie Company to successfully evict the enemy from the town and surrounding hills. During this heavy house to house fighting, Cpl Gill was wounded in action and evacuated to No.4 Canadian Field Ambulance suffering from a gunshot wound to the abdomen. He succumbed to his wounds the same day and was buried near the school at Valguarnera. After the war he was reburied at the Canadian war cemetery. Cpl Gill was awarded the 1939-45 Star, Italy Star, Defence Medal, War Medal and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp. He was the son of Eric Every and Dorothy May Gill of Armstrong, British Columbia. His twin brother Sapper James Oswald Gill was serving in the Royal Canadian Engineers overseas. Cpl Gill was the brother of Thomas Lyle Gill, Kenneth John Gill, Donald Edward Gill, Alan Gill, Garth Francis Gill, Muriel Grace Hay of Armstrong, British Columbia, Sgt. Beatrice Catherine Gill who was serving in the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, Rosalie Jennie Gill, Elizabeth Audrey Gill and Patricia Edith Gill of Armstrong, British Columbia, Dorothy Jessie Gill and Violet Marjorie Gill.

**Memorial Mountain, British Columbia** (map sheet 82L/6) 50° 25’ 37”N 119° 06’ 56”W, located east of Armstrong, was named in memory of those who died on active service during World War Two from the Armstrong-Spallumcheen Area on 11 November 1998.