



In a land where only the mighty ruled, and glory stemmed from two strong hands on the handle of a claymore, there are few ancient heroes to rival the great Somerled, Lord of the Isles, from whom the Clan MacAlister are descended. Forever one of the most legendary figures in the history of Scotland, the half-Viking, half-Scottish Somerled founded a tradition of military heroism in the late 12th century which was to be passed down through the generations of MacAlisters. It was Somerled's great-grandson, Alasdair Mor, from whom the Clan took its name, with MacAlister meaning "son of Alasdair" (the Gaelic form of Alexander). Alistair Mor possessed lands in South Knapdale in Kintyre and founded the Clan seat north of West Loch Tarbet, but while his name became bonded to Scottish history for all eternity, Alistair was slain battling the Lord of Lorne in 1299.

Clan MacAlister's loyalty to the Crown of Scotland was a characteristic of the Clan down through the centuries. In recognition of their fealty, King James III bestowed upon the chief, Charles MacAlister, the stewardry of Kintyre in 1481. Such was the Clan MacAlister's affinity with the Crown that King James IV elected to use Tarbet Castle as a naval supply base during his arduous struggle against the powerful Lord of the Isles. As Macalisters spread through Scotland, some settled in Stirlingshire in the 14th Century, changing their Celtic name to the more familiar lowland version of Alexander. Here the branch flourished, controlling the estates of Menstrie, only a few miles from the royal Stirling Castle. As courtiers they became influential, with William Alexander of Menstrie an instrumental figure in the Scottish

settlement of Nova Scotia, a province of Canada.

Clan MacAlister, under the chiefship of Alexander of the Loup, took up arms in aid of the dethroned Stewart monarchs, helping the Jacobite forces attain victory at the battle of Killiecrankie. The MacAlister troops later fought with the royalist forces against Prince William of Orange in the Battle of the Boyne. However, it was the MacAlisters' support for the Scottish throne which ultimately ruined them. When Bonnie Prince Charlie's 1745 Jacobite Rebellion failed with the tragic defeat at Culloden, the MacAlisters of Tarbet became bankrupt and were forced to sell their castle and ancestral lands. The Clan's fortunes were bolstered by the 18th Century marriage of Charles, the 12th Chief of Loup, to the heiress of Somerville of Kennox in Ayrshire, which to this day is the residence of the Chiefs of Clan MacAlister.

The Clan crest is a dexter hand holding a dagger, with the motto "Fortiter" meaning "boldly".

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