

COIGACH'S SACRIFICE IN THE GREAT WAR



Compiled by Clare Church

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIF	Australian Infantry Force
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BMD	Births, Marriages and Deaths
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
CWGC	Commonwealth War Graves Commission
IGI	International Genealogical Index
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
RML	Records of the Men of Lochbroom
RNR	Royal Naval Reserve
SDGW	Soldiers Died Great War
TNA	The National Archives
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment

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INTRODUCTION

This memorial has been prompted by visiting Achiltibuie during the summer of 2008 and noticing on the war memorial the number of men from this remote part of Scotland who made the supreme sacrifice for their King and country during the Great War.

I discovered that a book *Records of the Men of Lochbroom who fell in the European War 1914-1918* (RML) had been published, the information therein collected and arranged by Mrs. Edith Fraser of Leckmelm in 1922. This has proved to be a useful source of information regarding the men from Coigach, including individual photographs. The introduction to the book states that “*Major and Mrs Fraser addressed full enquiries to the surviving relatives and have visited every home in Lochbroom which has lost a son or brother.*” Unfortunately some of the details are inaccurate, most noticeably the date of death. This record attempts to correct the errors, although it is accepted that even now the full truth may never be known.

Additionally, extracts from the relevant War Diaries and Regimental histories have been included in order to describe the circumstances in which the men died. Of course, the resource aids are significantly easier to obtain in the 21st century compared with the 1920s. For example, one has access to censuses, parish records, and other information via the Internet and many records are available at the National Archives at Kew, London.

This record has been laid out according to the date of death. Where a man has transferred from one Regiment or Battalion to another, that unit in which the person was serving at the time of death has been listed.

I am most grateful to those relatives of these men who have provided additional information regarding their fallen heroes.

I have not so far researched the lives of the men from Coigach who perished in WW2, but may do so in the future. Nevertheless, they shall

NOT BE FORGOTTEN.

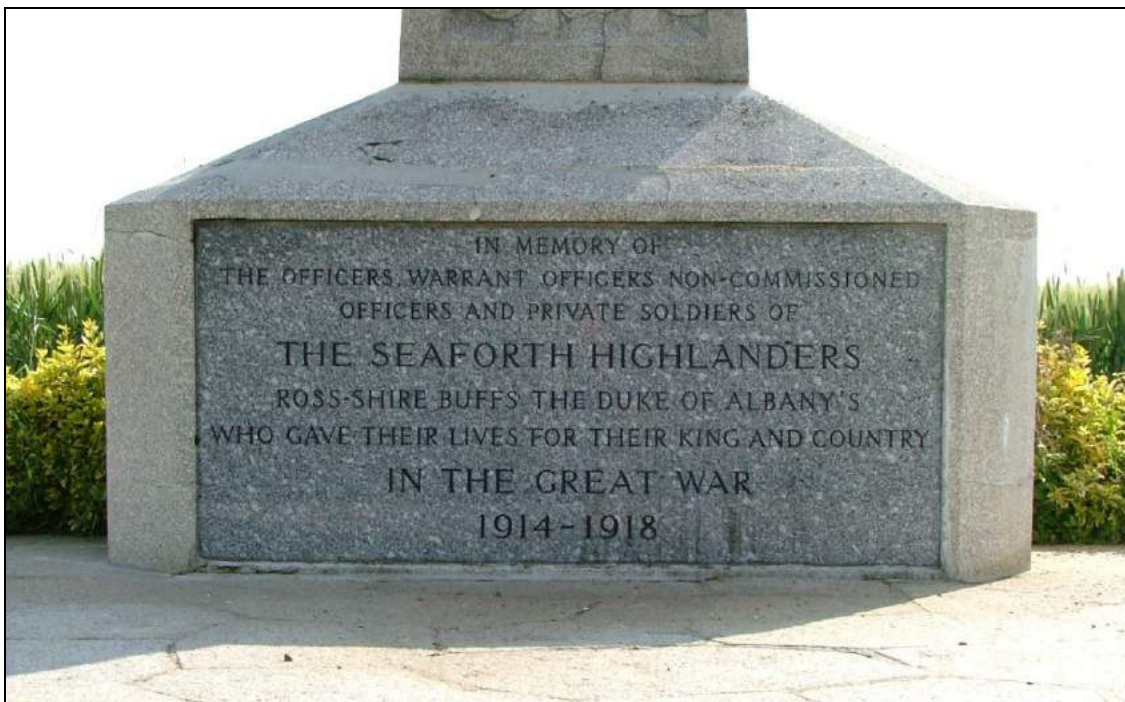
Clare Church

April 2010

THE BUILD UP TO THE WAR AND MOBILIZATION

The majority of the men who perished from the Coigach district served in the **Seaforth Highlanders**. Other Regiments represented were The Lovat's Scouts, Cameron Highlanders, Gordon Highlanders, Machine Gun Corps and Royal Engineers. Men who had emigrated in the past from this area came forth to fight, representing Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America. Finally, four men who served in the Royal Naval Reserve made the supreme sacrifice.

I have included two men who are not listed on the Coigach War Memorial, namely **2nd Lieutenant Simon Mackenzie**, who was born and lived for the first few years of his life in Achiltibuie, and **Murdo McKenzie**, 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders who died on 13th October 1915. One RNR man on the War Memorial is a mystery – **John Maclean** - who cannot be traced. Maybe he died a few years later. There is a John Maclean, brother of Murdo Maclean RNR. But he is not mentioned as having died.



Nick Saunders

Extract from **Records of the Men of Lochbroom**

4th Seaforths (Territorial Battalion)

The first move of this Battalion (immediately upon mobilisation in the first week of August) was to camp on the north-eastern seaboard of Ross-shire. Here good work was done in forming the first coast defences in Ross-shire. A week or ten days later came a sudden call to friends in Lochbroom to bid the Battalion, now transferred to Inverness, farewell. No motors or motor drivers were now available, all having been requisitioned by the Government, and the sixty mile drive was accomplished in a large old-fashioned horse-driven brake. At the same time Government vehicles carried away from Lochbroom fresh contingents of smart uniformed lads in kilts, khaki tunics and glengarries to the final muster of the Battalion at Inverness.

We gathered that the destination of the 4th Seaforths was, for the time being, to be the town of Bedford. About 3,000 troops were now quartered in Inverness. The Headquarters of the 4th Seaforths was in the College buildings, on the north side of the River Ness. We had an opportunity of seeing the Battalion on a "route march," Col. Mason Macfarlane in command. An advance party, under Major Charles Blunt, having now left for Bedford, and there being an immense amount of work for the officers and Adjutant to attend to, we deemed it wiser not to wait for the actual departure of the Battalion from Inverness (on the 14th August), but to return to our own homes in Lochbroom.

It was not till the first days of November, 1914, that we travelled to Bedford, where many Highland troops were in training, to see the Battalion depart for France. Previous to their departure the 4th Seaforths were drawn up for inspection in the grounds of Bedford Grammar School, and close to its ivy-clad buildings. Brigadier-General Duncan Macfarlane, C.B., inspected, and then addressed the Battalion. After the inspection was over, small pocket Testaments (the gift of Col. Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth) were presented to the men, and we spoke a word of "Good-bye" to many of the lads.

Warm congratulations from the Brigade Major were privately received as follows:

"The transformation of this Battalion is most remarkable. In June last, at camp at Kingussie, one seldom saw a more raw body of recruits. Now they

are well-disciplined men, almost up to the standard of regular troops, and a very few weeks' more training will make them entirely so."

That the above testimony of efficiency was in no way overstated is proved by the fact that the 4th Seaforths were the first Battalion of the Highland Territorial Brigade selected for active service in France, and that in consequence of this fact they became entitled to the so-called "Mons Medal," only issued to those troops which reached France before the middle of November, during the first stage of the war usually described as "the first Battle of Ypres."

Thursday 5th November 1914

Then came the day of the departure of the 4th Seaforths for France, mercifully one of bright autumnal sunshine. Many a parent and relative had travelled 600 miles from the north of Scotland to bid their dear ones farewell. Some of the lads were but bright faced boys still in their teens. They marched past, fully equipped with haversacks, water bottles, overcoat, rifle and entrenching tool. It was easy to distinguish the Highland lads from the small percentage of Scotsmen who had joined the 4th Seaforths from London. Never had departing troops (the first to leave Bedford for the battlefields of France) a more enthusiastic send-off. Dense crowds of onlookers, friends and relatives, lined the streets.

The Lovat's Scouts

It was on the 5th of August, 1914 that Major Angus M'Neil, commanding the West Coast Squadron of Lovat's Scouts, arrived in Lochbroom to buy up horses, and to give his men, who had assembled to meet him, their instructions for mobilisation. When the Lovat's Scouts were sent to the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915 they were not accompanied by their horses; nor did they require them later in France, when picked men from the Lovat's Scouts were sent to the front lines as Snipers and Observers. These specially picked men underwent a course of several weeks' training at Beaufort, first under Colonel Ewen Grant, and when he accompanied his Snipers to France, Lt. Col C. Pelham Burn took over the training of the Snipers and Observers.

February 1921

Alice Fowler

1915

During this first complete year of the Great War six men from Coigach died in varying circumstances.

At sea

Archibald MacLeod who served on *HMS Viknor* was the first man from Coigach to lose his life. His ship sank off Ireland on 13th January after hitting a German mine.

The Western Front

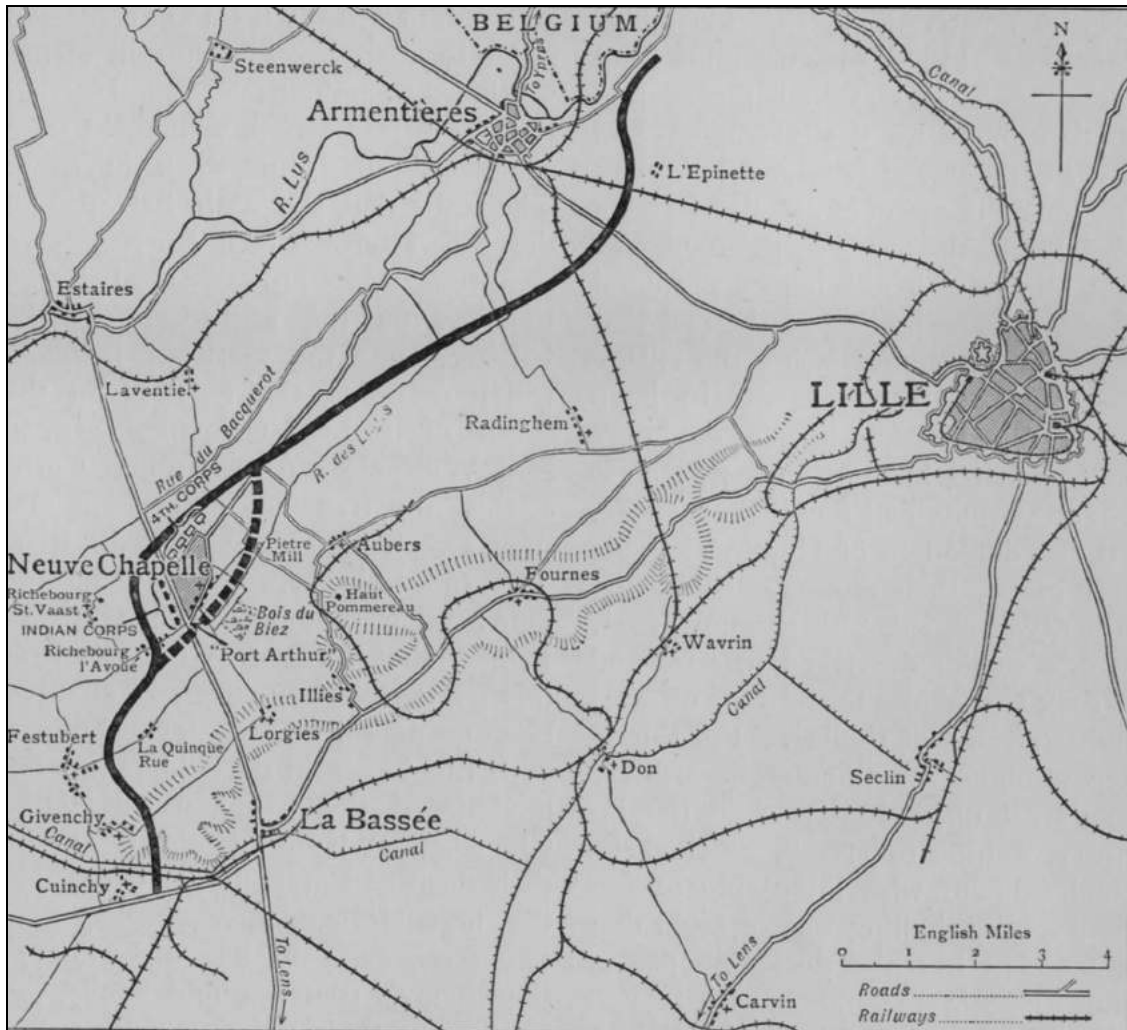
Early 1915 saw both sides more concerned at trench living in the severe winter conditions rather than worrying about each other.

Murdo Campbell fell ill shortly after arriving in France and died on 10th February.

By spring the flow of Canadian, Indian and Territorial reinforcements to replace the much-weakened six Divisions of the original British Expeditionary Force enabled the British line to be extended southwards. In April the Germans, using their new weapon of poisonous gas, attacked the Ypres Salient.

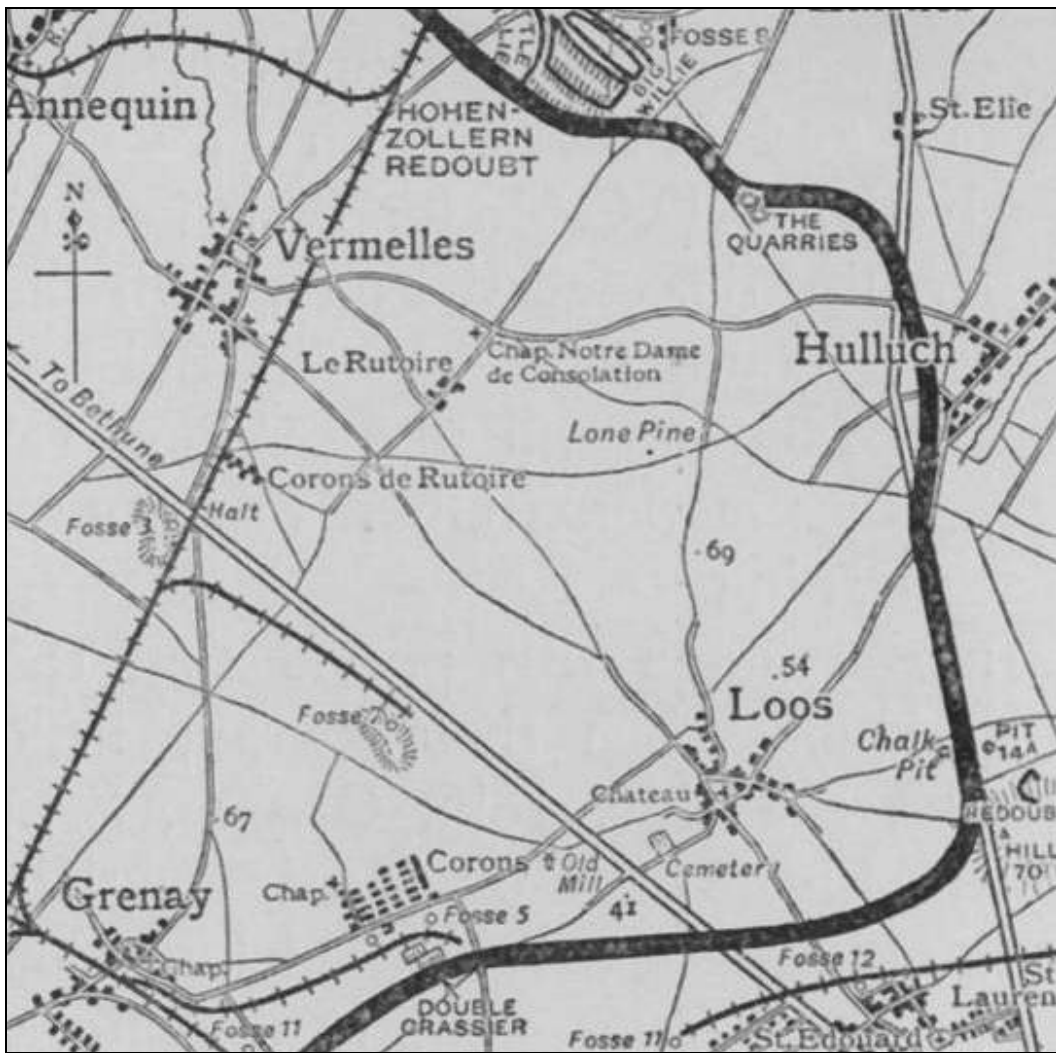
Territorial formations now began arriving in France and the promise of many more divisions, raised by Kitchener in his new Army, was becoming a reality. The British Expeditionary Force gradually took over more French trenches until our line stretched from the sea to Loos.

Limited offensives were tried in the spring and summer at Neuve Chapelle, Aubers Ridge and Festubert. The limited successes achieved emphasised the need for heavy artillery and an increased supply of ammunition.

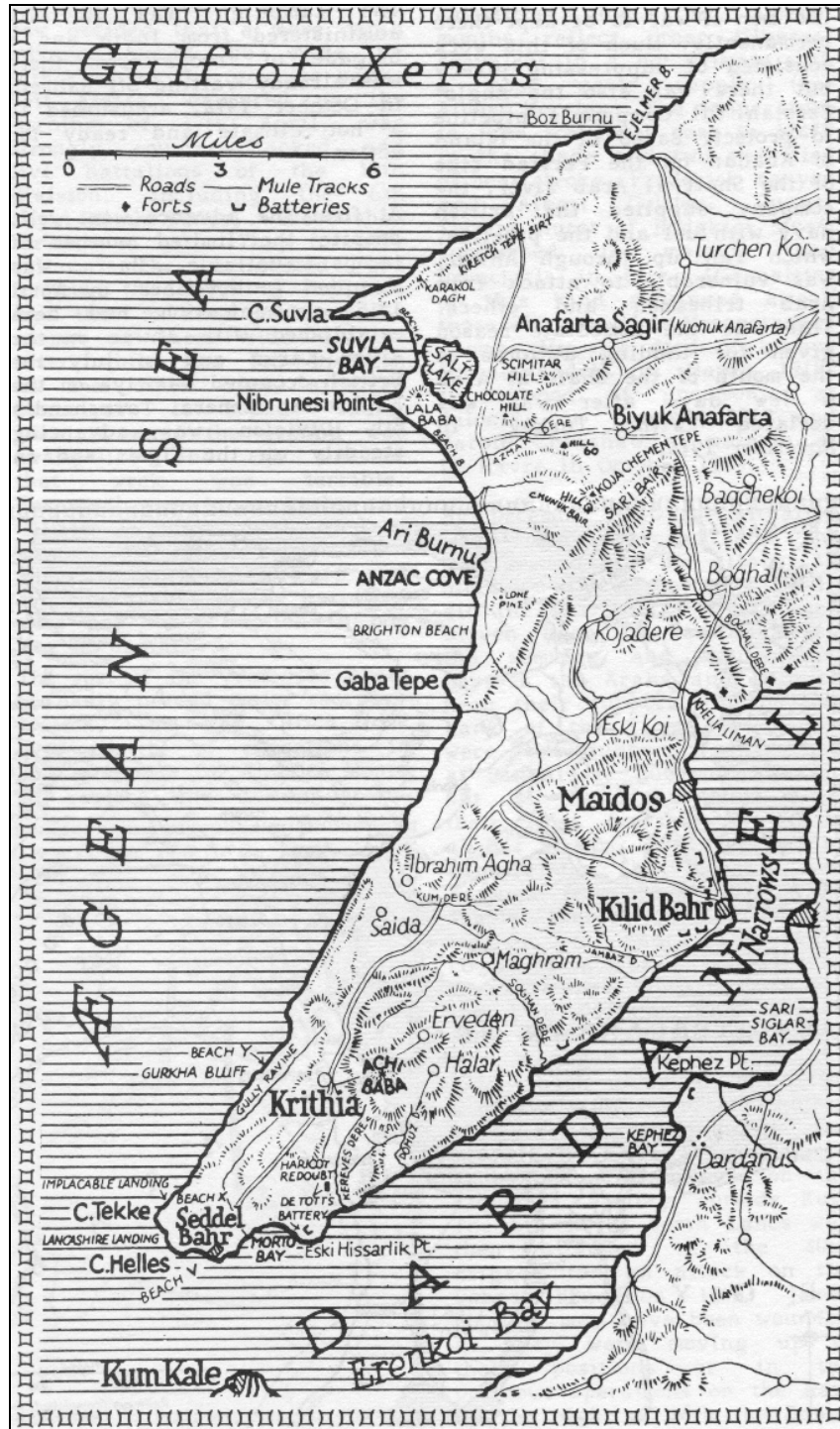


Donald Mackenzie was killed in action on 9th May at Aubers Ridge.

In September Sir Douglas Haig, commander of First Army Corps, was ready to go on the offensive. He chose **Loos** as the place for a serious breakthrough. With the lessons of the earlier attacks, the first use of gas available and seasoned troops to hand for the assault, the breakthrough was achieved, but not exploited. However **Murdo Mackenzie** was killed on 28th September and a comrade **Murdoch Mackenzie** lost his life on 18th October.



The other major campaign of 1915 – Gallipoli, claimed the life of **John Campbell** who was severely injured in June and died in Egypt on 19th July.



Gallipoli Peninsula

ARCHIBALD MacLEOD

Seaman
Royal Naval Reserve
2822A
H.M.S. Viknor
died on 13th January 1915 aged 27



Archibald was born on 10th September 1887, the son of Murdo and Maggie Macleod (née McCraigne) of Hillside Cottage, Polbain, Achiltibuie. Maggie came from the Isle of Jura and she met her husband when he boarded with her family while working as a mason building a distillery at Caigenhouse there. They subsequently married on 17th January 1878.

In the **1891 census** Archibald was aged 3, living at Polbain with his mother (32) and siblings Roderick (12), Jane (11), William (5), Katie (2), and Donald (2 months). Father was boarding at a Cottar's House, still employed as a mason. Head of the household was Simon McKenzie (69) and his wife Margaret (67). A second boarder was Murdo's brother Neil.

In **1901** Archibald was staying with his grandmother Christina McLeod (77) and uncle Neil McLeod (46) at Neil Mason's Cottage. His parents' were resident at Murdo Mason's Cottage, father's occupation now being crofter

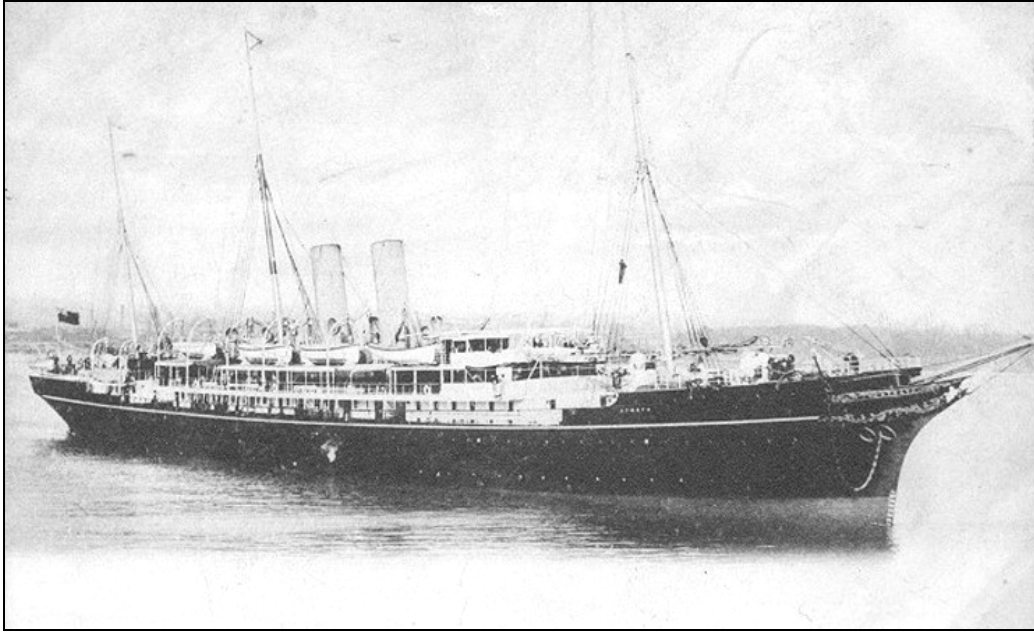
and mason. In the intervening 10 years the family had grown, with additional members being Alexander (7), Dina (5), and Mary (2). Also in the house were Kenina (niece) aged 19 and Alice (daughter) aged 17.

On 17th August 1910 Archibald enlisted in the Royal Naval Reserve as an Able Seaman. Prior to World War One he served on several ships, namely the *Illustrious*, *Saturnia*, *Cassandra*, *Pretorian*, *City of Sparta*, *Greatham* and *Galteo*. His voyages took him to Canada and India. In 1913 he was promoted to 2nd Mate. During this year he returned from India and served on *HMS Duncan* for 28 days on manoeuvres from mid July to mid August. This ship was assigned to the 6th Battle Squadron in the Second Fleet at Portsmouth, where she served as a gunnery training ship in the commissioned reserve.

In the first few days of the Great War he joined the Drake Battalion, Royal Naval Division (RND) on 16th September 1914. The RND had been formed in 1914 from naval reservists for whom there were no ships on which to serve. The brief training had taken place at *HMS Victory III* Crystal Palace. The whole division of 3,000 men was sent to Antwerp in a forlorn attempt to prevent the Germans entering Belgium. They were very ill equipped for the task and many men had no greatcoats. Some did not even have rifles. There were substantial losses but most of the Drake Battalion, which numbered about 800, returned to England.

Archibald studied gunnery at Whale Island, Portsmouth Harbour at *HMS Excellent*. This was only a short period between 14th November and 12th December. He was then posted to *HMS Viknor*.

Built by Robert Napier in 1888 as the *Atrato* for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company she was 421 feet long with a 50' beam and registered as 5347 tons. The *Atrato* could carry 279 passengers and was used for the routes between England and the West Indies.



Atrato

In 1912 she was renamed the *Viking* for her new owners, the Viking Cruising Co. With the outbreak of WW1, most passenger liners were requisitioned by the Admiralty for war service, and so was the *Viking*. In 1914 she was converted into an armed merchant cruiser and renamed *HMS Viknor*. The *Viknor* was assigned to the 10th cruiser squadron and was used to patrol the waters between Scotland and Iceland.

HMS Viknor was under the command of Commander E O Ballantyne and had a crew compliment of 22 officers and 273 ratings. These were made up of Royal Naval Reserves, 25 of whom came from the Newfoundland Division.

The ship sailed from England on 1st January 1915. Twelve days later, on the 13th, while on active patrol duty in heavy seas off Tory Island, Donegal coast, Ireland she struck a German mine and sank with the loss of all hands. For unknown reasons, the ship, which had been in wireless contact with shore, sank without ever sending a distress signal.

In Conamargie Friary, Ballycastle are four unknown graves of seamen from *HMS Viknor*.

Archibald is remembered on **Portsmouth Naval Memorial on Panel 10.**



Nick Saunders



Nick Saunders

According to RML, all his four brothers served in WW1:

Alexander, 4th Seaforth Highlanders. He received the Distinguished Conduct Medal at Neuve Chapelle.



Lochbroom Lives

The following article appeared in Ross-shire Journal on 20th October 1916:

Corporal A Macleod, Seaforths, won the DCM and in recognition of which he was, on 21st September, presented by the inhabitants of Coigach with a double gold Albert with pendant replica of his medal bearing the following inscription:

“Presented to Lance-Corporal A. Macleod from the inhabitants of Coigach on the occasion of his winning the DCM in France, September 1916”

Corporal Macleod belongs to Polbain. He is 23 years of age, and has been in the Territorials since he was 18. Previous to the war he was for some time a motor-car driver with Mr G. Morrison, Caledonian Hotel, Ullapool.

Donald, First Depot Battalion, Alberta Regiment, Canadian Army
No. 2629975

He was born 21st February 1891.

On enlistment his trade was Deckhand (Drifter)

His address was General Delivery, Spokane, Washington, U.S.A.

He enlisted at Calgary on 20th December 1917

He was severely wounded near Amiens in 1918

Roderick, (possibly) Private, 10/432, N.Z.E.F

William Private 6/500, N.Z.E.F, wounded at Gallipoli.

MURDO CAMPBELL

Lance Corporal

765

1/4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
died on 10th February 1915



Murdo was the son of Alexander and Bella Macleod Campbell of Polglass, Achiltibuie. They had married sometime before the **1881 census** when their first child Annabella was aged 3, and her younger brother John was 1. They were resident at Polglass 6 with Alexander's occupation listed as Crofter.

Murdo was born in 1886. In **1891** he was resident with his aunt Catherine Stewart aged 56, at Brae Polglass, Household schedule No. 72. His father aged 38 was at Polglass at Household No. 50. Also listed there are Annabella (12), John (11), Christy (9), Alexander (8), John Campbell (34) nephew, Mary Campbell (60) sister, James Stewart (26) nephew. Bella his mother had died the previous year and she is buried in Badenscallie Burial Ground. Her headstone reads:

Erected by **ALEXANDER CAMPBELL** Poolglass
In memory of his beloved wife
BELLA McLEOD
Who died 8th Feb 1890
Aged 38 years

In **1901** Murdo is back in the family home at Household No. 50 with his father Alexander, brother Alexander, and Maggy Campbell (52) stepmother at Hill, Polglass, Household No. 50. Father is now a fisherman. He and Maggy had married sometime between 1891 and 1901.

Murdo enlisted in the 4th Seaforths with the rank of Private in February 1914. At some stage he was promoted to Lance-Corporal.

He married **Mary Ann MacLeod** (born 5th February 1887 at Inverkirkaig, Assynt) on 16th July 1914 at Altandhu, Coigach.

He was mobilized on 4th August.

He proceeded to France on 5th November and arrived at the Theatre of War two days later. He soon fell ill, and it is not certain whether he was with his battalion as described below.

Extract from War Diary 4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
(WO 95/3941)

1915

31st January: Left Ferfay 9 a.m. Arrived Hinges 1.30 p.m. where we billeted. Snow during march.

February:

1st: Left Hinges at 9 a.m., reached billets at Richebury St Vaast at 1 p.m. On this day we rejoined Dehra Dun Brigade (1st & 4th Seaforths, 2nd & 9th Gurkhas). Captain Bridge commanded a fatigue party of A & B Corps to carry hurdles etc. for redoubt in Rue de Bois. Lieut. Fitzroy with half of 7 Coy found a guard for redoubt west of Rue de Berceaux.

2nd: D & E Corps relieved the portion of the gurkhas in the trenches S of the Rue de Bois. A party consisting of contingents from each of the other Coys under Capt. Cameron for work on reserve trenches in the Rue de Bois. Casualties: one dangerously wounded & 2 or 3 slightly wounded.

3rd: Digging party from A & B Coys worked at redoubts to E & W of Rue de Berceaux. Richebury St Vaast was shelled in evening about 7 o'clock.

4th: Battalion left Richebury at 2.15 p.m. & went into billets on road between Vielle Chapelle & Lacoutine.

5th: Battalion under Coy arrangements. Battalion is first in waiting.

6th: A party of 150 men of A & B Coys (+ a few of C & G) proceeded to the Rue de Bois to make a protection for the main street.

8th: General Jacob addressed the Battalion on the subject of discipline etc. At 11 the Bn moved from Vielle Chapelle & reached its billeting area near Calonne at 1 p.m. Here it expects to remain for 10 or 12 days.

Murdo died of pneumonia on 10th February 1915 in Hospital at Boulogne and is buried at

Wimereux Communal Cemetery

in Grave I.C.29A

Because of the sandy nature of the soil, the headstones lie flat upon the graves.



CWGC

“How sleep the brave who sink to rest.
By all their country’s wishes blest.” – William Collins

After the war Mary Ann married Donald MacLeod on 3rd April 1919 in Inverness. They had five children at Camuscoille, Coigach. She died on 12th September 1960 in Lairg aged 73.

Mary Ann's brother, **Murdoch MacLeod** also made the supreme sacrifice in WW1 (see page 40).

DONALD MacKENZIE

Private

1937

**4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
died on 9th May 1915
aged 35**

According to *Records of the men of Lochbroom*, **Donald** was the son of Alexander who lived at 132 Polglass, Achiltibuie. This book states that he died aged 35, which would indicate that he was born 1879/80. It also mentions that he had two brothers who were killed in WW1, namely **Murdo** and **Thomas**.

Alexander married his wife Catherine (née Mackenzie) on 23rd February 1871. In that year's Census on 2nd April they were living with Catherine's parents at Achiltibuie. Alexander's occupation is listed as Fisherman. Catherine died on 27th August 1872, a few days after the birth of her daughter Kettie on 10th August.

Alexander then moved to Glasgow and later Inverness. Bella MacKenzie was a member of this household acting as mother for the children.

In the **1881 census** the family was living at 7 Nelson Street, Inverness. Those resident at this address were:

Alexander (42) General Labourer, born Lochbroom;
Bella (33) born Lochbroom; Kettie (8) born Lochbroom;
John (6), born Glasgow; Duncan (4) born Glasgow;
and **Donald** (2) born Inverness.

Cela Beale, who is a relative of this family has provided the following information:

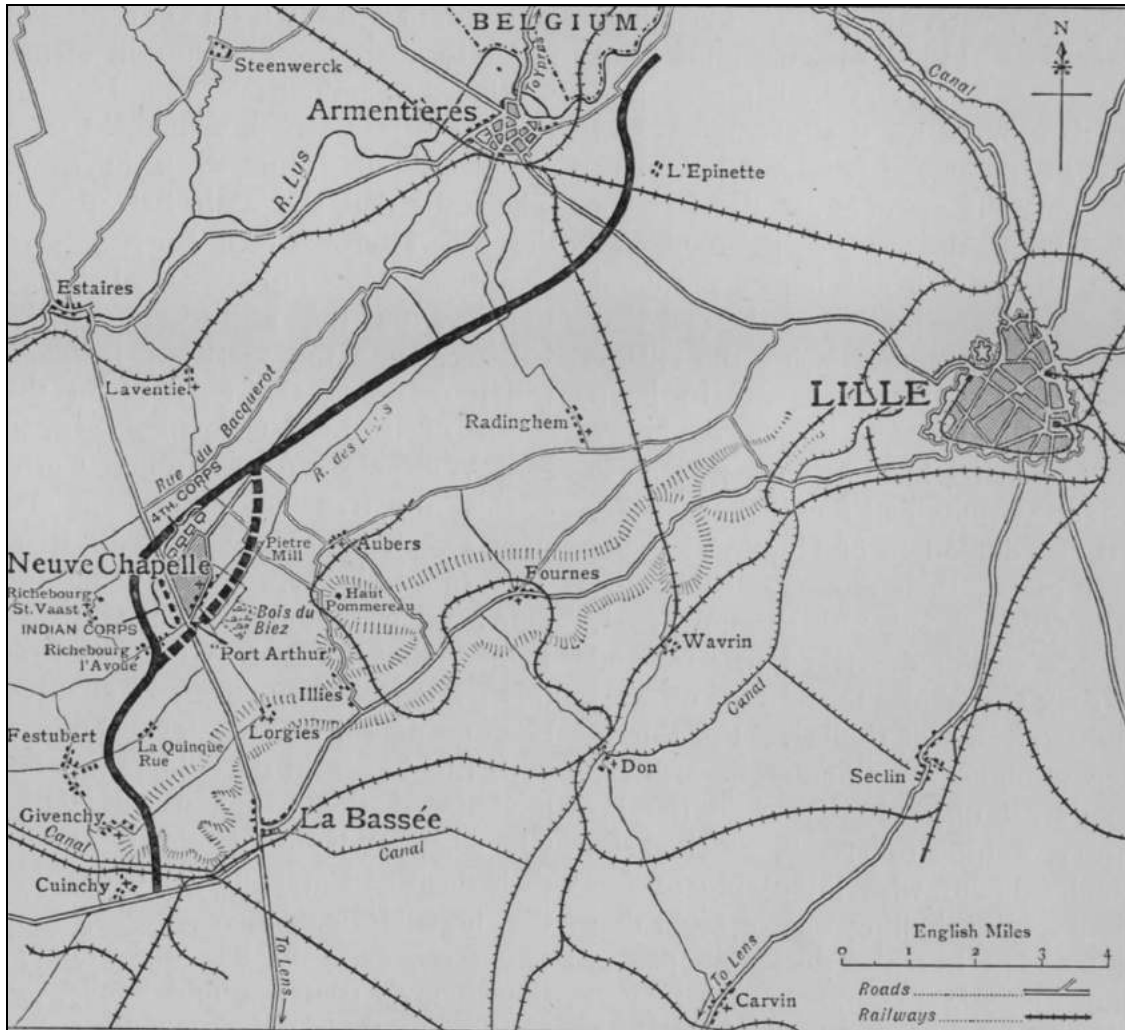
“Alexander did not marry Bella. She was the sister of his deceased wife Catherine and the law prohibited marriage of this relationship until the early 20th century. However, all the children of Bella and Alexander were registered as having a mother named Catherine.”

In 1891 the family was still living in Inverness, but had moved to 9 Lotland Place. However, **Donald** was not present and his whereabouts have not been established. His youngest sister, Bella, was aged 4 and a newly born brother, Thomas, was 9 months. Mother Bella dies prior to 1895 because the 1901 census reveals that Alexander (60) had a new wife, Mary. They were now living at Roderick Duncan's House, Achiltibuie, with Mary's father Roderick (92) and their youngest child Thomas (10).

Donald's biography now jumps to the beginning of the Great War. At the time of his enlistment on 8th August 1914, Donald's occupation was farm servant at Newton, Conon. SDGW says his residence was Dingwall. Initially the men were set on preparing defences at Nigg for the naval base at Cromarty. They then moved to Bedford and were brought up to strength with new recruits. The 1/4th Seaforths were one of the first territorial battalions to go to France, leaving on 5th November. The Battalion was kept to rear areas at first due to an outbreak of scarlet fever. On 20th December they joined the 1st Seaforth Highlanders in the 19th Indian (Dehra Dun) Brigade, 7th Indian (Meerut) Division.

Their first major action was at Neuve Chapelle on 10th March 1915 with 168 casualties, but they acquitted themselves well alongside regular soldiers. On 13th March the 1/4th Seaforths marched to billets in the vicinity of Locon where it reorganised and refitted. On 23rd March a draft of 128 men arrived from Bedford. They were at Bout de la Ville on 24th, then at a camp on the Estaires-La Basée road. They took over trenches in Duck's Bill sector on the 28th, were relieved on the 31st and moved back to camp. The Battalion then marched via Vieille Chapelle and Port Levis to La Croix-Marmuse on 1st April; then took over trenches in front of Neuve Chapelle. Positions are recorded as near Brewery Road and in Hill's Redoubt. They were relieved on the 27th and marched to billets between the crossroads at Les Huit Maisons and Vieille Chapelle.

On the 5th May one and a half companies moved up to a position on the Rue du Bois, on the left of the 6th Jats who were in the orchard. On 7th May orders were explained relating to the attack on Aubers Ridge in which the 1/4th Seaforths were to co-operate. From right to left the 2/2nd Gurkhas, 1/4th Seaforths and 1st Seaforths, with the 6th Jats and 1/9th Gurkhas in support. The objective was to carry the enemy lines to the farther side of the Bois du Biez and link up with IV Corps.



The Battle of Aubers Ridge began on 9th May 1915 when the First Army made a two-pronged attack on the German line that ran from just south of Neuve Chapelle to Bois Grenier three miles south of Armentières. The intention was to link up and encircle the German positions. With preparations for the second Battle of Ypres to the north, much of the artillery support was committed there, leaving the Aubers Ridge action relatively unsupported.

The land in this area is very flat and is intersected by drainage ditches, some of which are too wide to jump, being ten to fifteen feet across. There was little natural cover for infantry and the various enemy positions were difficult to see and identify. The German front line was between 100 and

500 yards from the British. Further behind the German lines, the land gently inclined up to the Aubers Ridge – which gave a significant observation point for the enemy.

At 5.00 a.m. on 9th May, 600 artillery weapons opened fire, followed 40 minutes later by an infantry advance. The 4th Seaforth Highlanders were part of the southern prong aimed towards Aubers Ridge. The barrage had been inaccurate and short of shells, the German wire had not been cut and no small-arms supporting fire had been arranged for the advance. Little or no progress was made and by 3.00 a.m. the next day all of the British troops were back where they had started and nearly 12,000 officers and men were casualties.

The attack was a dreadful failure, the Battalion only getting about half way across in short rushes; the few who got further were held up by the still intact wire. Casualties would have been heavier if Major Cuthbert had not refused to allow his left half Battalion (No. 3 & 4 Coys) to leave the trenches. At roll call on the 10th May only 5 men of No. 1 Coy answered their names and a similar number from No. 2. The final count given in the history was 3 officers and 62 Other Ranks killed; 5 officers and 127 Other Ranks wounded; 19 Other Ranks missing, all believed killed. **Donald** was one of those who failed to answer the roll call.

Extracts from 4th Bn Seaforth Highlanders War Diary (WO 95/3941)

1915

30th April: Machine guns were relieved by those of 39th Garhwals. Companies completed cleaning up, refitting etc. The Bn was issued with Balmoral bonnets with khaki covers. The change in the appearance of the men is great, the variety of headgear before having been very noticeable.

1st May: The Battalion was turned out at 5 a.m. owing to a German bombardment but nothing came of it, our guns evidently effectually replying to the fire of the Huns. An exciting incident occurred about 8.30 p.m. The barn occupied by G Company went on fire. The barn itself was completely gutted out, but most of the outhouses, live-stock etc. and the dwelling-house were saved. Parties came from 2/2nd Gurkhas, 2nd Black Watch, RFA & RMA.

- 2nd May *Sunday: Church Parade behind Headquarters at 11 a.m.*
- 3rd May: *Two machine guns under Sgt. Ross relieved two guns of the 6th Jats in the orchard, Rue du Bois.*
- 4th May: *At 5 p.m. the C.O. read a paper by Maj. Gen. Haking [CO, 1st Division] on the attack in trench warfare.*
- 5th May: *Company inspections, No. 1 at 10.30 a.m. and the others at hour intervals. C.O. and Mr Dewar went up to Rue du Bois in forenoon. Gen Ross, Highland Division paid a visit in afternoon. At 7 p.m. No. 1 Company with C Company & two remaining machine guns went to Rue du Bois; position on left of 6th Jats, who are in the orchard.*
- 6th May: *In trenches. Heavy shelling by both sides throughout the day. Two guns were relieved by 2/2nd Gurkhas, but remained in trenches at Vieille Chapelle. Company drill in morning and afternoon.*
- 7th May: *In trenches. Two casualties in No. 2 Company soon after dawn. Heavy shelling again. Adjutant came up about 5 p.m. and explained plan of attack to come off on 9th in co-operation with the French at Arras. In Vieille Chapelle General Jacob explained the attack to officers & Sgts. He was very optimistic.*
- 8th May: *Very little shell-fire. Heavy firing from south was heard about noon. Battalion left Vieille Chapelle about 8 p.m. and reached trenches about 11 p.m. Nos. 2 & 3 were in front line, 4 in support.*
- 9th May: *4.06 a.m. Sunrise and all very quiet on this front.
5.00 a.m. British bombardment opens with field guns firing shrapnel at the German wire and howitzers firing high explosive shells onto front line.
5.30 p.m. British bombardment intensifies. The 1/4th Seaforth Highlanders were so badly hit by enemy fire that no men got beyond their own parapet and the front-line and communications trenches were soon filled with dead and wounded men.*

Donald was killed in action on 9th May in this battle. He has no grave so his name is remembered on

Le Touret Memorial to the missing,

on **Panel 38 or 39.**



CWGC

JOHN CAMPBELL

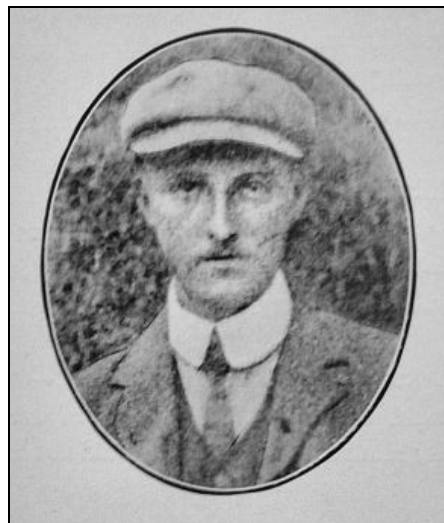
Private

140

13th Battalion, Australian Infantry

died on 19th July 1915

aged 29



John was the son of Murdo and Ann (née McKenzie) of Achabraigh, Achiltibuie, who had married on 9th January 1873. In the **1881** census Murdo's occupation is listed as Crofter and Fisherman.

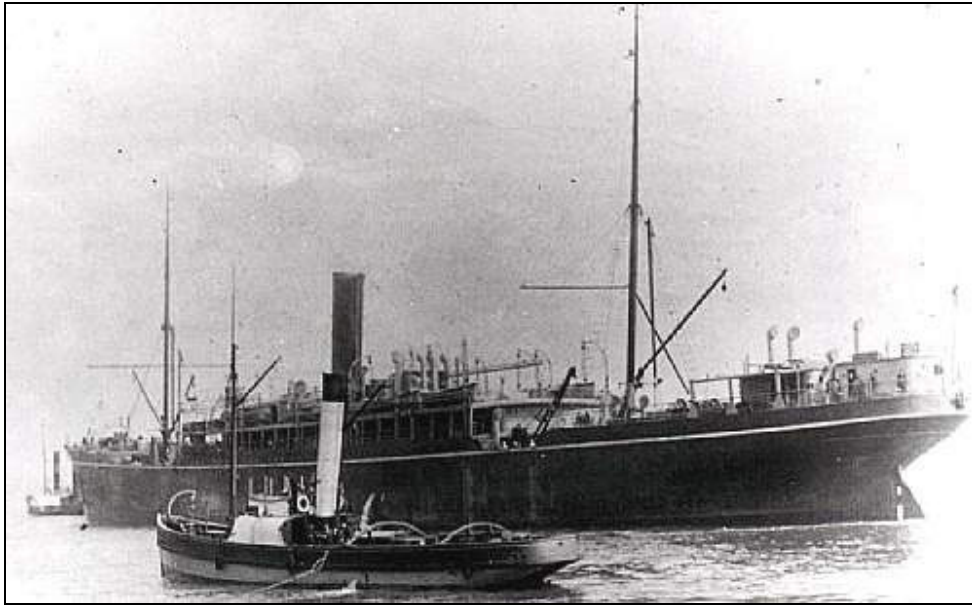
In the **1891** census on 5th April father is not present. Mother is Head of house at Achbrae, aged 43. The children were: Angus (17), Mary (15), Murdo (13), Ann (11), Jessie (8), **John** (5), and Alick (3). Ten years later the family home is listed as Gamekeepers House, Coigach. Mother is still Head of the household, with those present as Ann (52) crofter, Angus (27), Ann (21), Jessie (18), **John** (15) and Alexina (13). Also living there was Jane McKenzie, a sister of Ann.

According to his Attestation Paper John joined the Australian Imperial Force on 1st October 1914, aged 26 years, 1 month, which calculates that he was born in the autumn of 1888. His attested age is probably an underestimate because the 1891 census records him as aged 5, therefore born in 1886.

On enlistment with the AIF, John's trade was stated as Labourer. His sister Mary Ross (married surname) was his next of kin, her address being The Maines, Invergordon, Scotland. He took his oath at Rosehill, New South Wales, Australia. On his form his personal details were, height 5'10", weight 154 lbs, Complexion Fair, Brown Eyes. Religion: Presbyterian.

John was appointed to 'B' Company, 13th Battalion on 21st December at Broadmeadows. The 13th Battalion, with the 14th, 15th and 16th Battalions formed the 4th Brigade, commanded by Colonel John Monash. John embarked at Melbourne on Transport A.38 *Ulysses* on 22nd December. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the ship proceeded to Egypt, arriving in early February 1915. When the Brigade arrived in Egypt it became part of the New Zealand and Australian Division. The troops landed at Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula in the afternoon of 25th April 1915 (see map page 8). From May to August, the battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the ANZAC front line.

On 29th May at Gaba Tepe, John received gunshot wounds to his face. He was admitted to hospital ship *Gascon* and remained there for 4 days. He unfortunately did not survive a second infliction of gunshot wounds, this time to his right arm and fractured ribs – severe. He had been shot on about 27th June, as it is recorded that his right arm was amputated on the hospital ship *Sicilia* the following day, under the direction of Lt. Col Bird.



HS Sicilia

Transfer to No. 17 General Hospital Alexandria took place on 8th July. This hospital was established in April 1915 and was located in the Victoria College. Initially there were no female nursing staff, which proved to be a disaster after the wounded men from Gallipoli arrived. Thus the General Hospitals were at first supplied from local resources, these being gradually replaced by Army nurses augmented by the VAD.



No. 17 General Hospital, Alexandria 1915

John was very ill on admission and at once placed on the dangerous list. He died of wounds and pneumonia at 2.00 p.m. on 19th July (according to his medical records). The diary entry for his final day reads:

“Passed a fair night. Much worse this morning: very cyanosed, sweating all over, signs of pneumonia all over left lung. He suddenly collapsed and died at 2.0 p.m. in spite of every attention.

(Signed) G. Green, Lieut. R.A.M.C.”

John was buried at **Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery in Grave No. 2087**, on 21st July, the ceremony administered by the Rev. A. J. Oliphant.

His grave is now recorded as **Plot K, Grave 130**.



CWGC

Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery

MURDO MacKENZIE

Private

7123

1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders

died on 28th September 1915

aged 42?

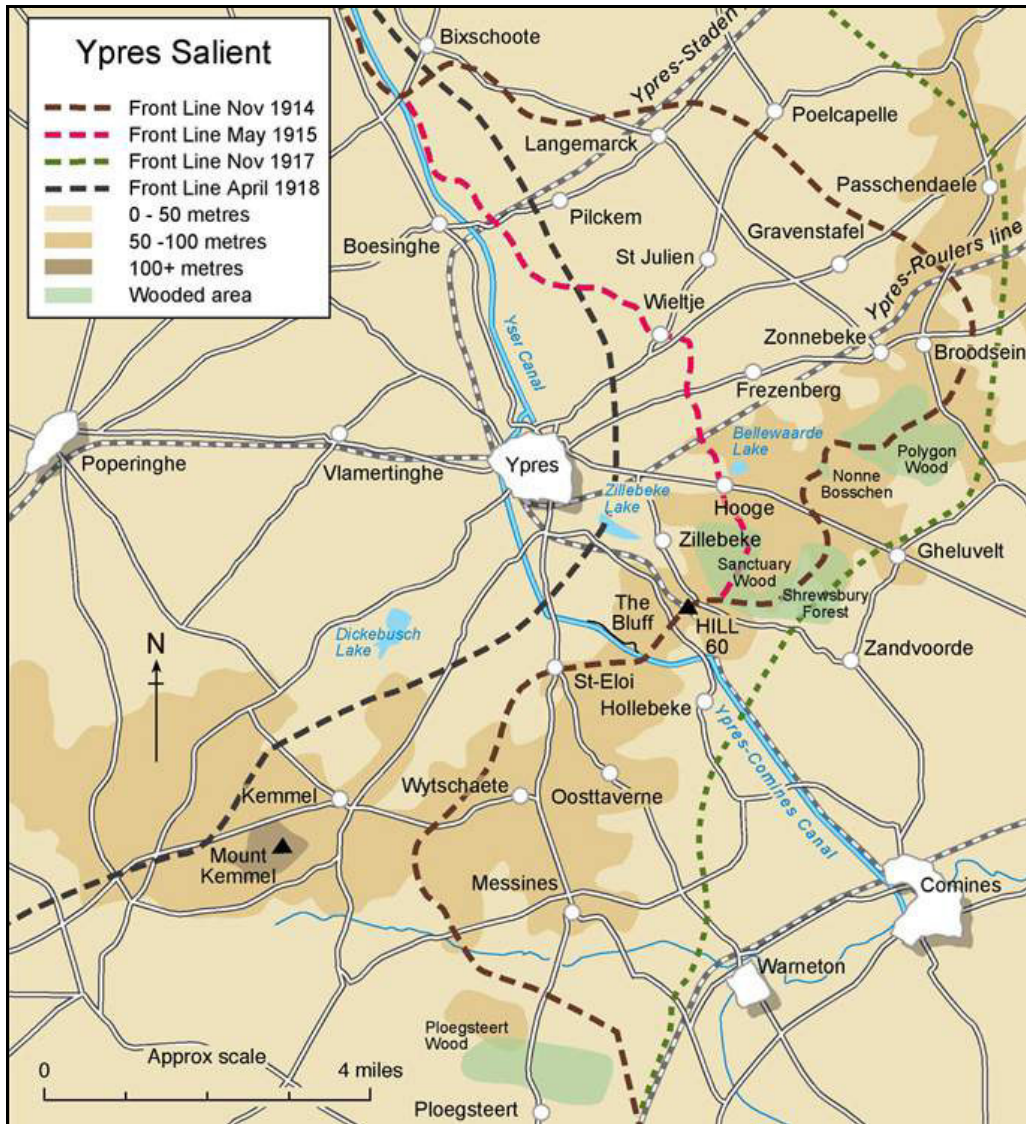
RML says that **Murdo** was the son of Alexander Mackenzie of 132 Polglass, Achiltibuie. He cannot be found in any census with certainty.

The IGI records that a **Murdoch Mckenzie** was born on 19th June 1873 at Lochbroom (this could be incorrect) with father being Alexander McKenzie, and mother Catherine (née Mackenzie). It is known that Catherine died on 27th August 1872, so is Murdo really the son of Bella, Catherine's sister who subsequently lived as Alexander's wife (though not officially married)?

Cela Beale, a relative, says "Alexander did not marry Bella. All the children of Bella and Alexander were registered as having a mother named Catherine. The law prohibited marriage of this relationship until the early 20th century."

SDGW states that Murdo was born at Inverness, lived there and also enlisted in this town. He joined the 1st Cameron Highlanders at the beginning of the Great War in August 1914 and landed at Le Havre, France on the 14th. On 5th September he joined the 1st Brigade in the 1st Division.

The 1st Cameron Highlanders were involved in the Defence of Gheluvelt (1st Ypres) 29th -31st October 1914.



CWGC

At the end of October large concentrations of German assault troops assembled for a further breakthrough, putting the most vulnerable point of the Allied line, the sector held by the British between Ploegsteert Wood and Gheluvelt, in grave peril. The morning of 29th October saw repeated mass German infantry attacks astride the Menin Road against the British 1st and 7th Divisions, forcing them back to Gheluvelt. A day of desperately vicious close-quarter fighting ended with British units regaining much lost ground. Intense German attacks towards Gheluvelt were renewed the following day, but made little progress in the face of disciplined British defence. By nightfall, though heavily dented, the British line had not broken. Saturday 31st October witnessed the main German assault, with Gheluvelt central to

momentous events. The first German attacks, were repelled but following intense enemy shelling, a second German onslaught around 10 a.m. overwhelmed the defenders. By 11.30 a.m. German troops were in Gheluvelt and the British defensive line had been pierced.

Following a precarious reconnaissance of the situation around midday, the last available reserves: 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment was instructed to recapture Gheluvelt and stabilise the line. In a most dramatic counter-attack this remnant force surprised German troops in the grounds of Gheluvelt Chateau and forced their retreat. Contact was established with British outposts to the north-east and the line restored. The German efforts at breakthrough to Ypres were frustrated.

Battle of Loos:

The Battle of Loos was one of the major British offensives mounted on the Western Front in 1915. It marked the first time the British used poison gas during the war. It also witnessed the first large-scale use of Kitchener's Army units.

The attack: The date of the attack was planned for 25th September 1915 and on the 21st the British artillery commenced its four-day preparatory bombardment – firing off 250,000 shells.

At 0550 hours the gas was released and at 0630 hours the 1st Army climbed out of its trenches and attacked the German lines.

The British were wearing rudimentary gas masks which consisted of a hood with eyeholes, which were very uncomfortable to wear and made breathing difficult. Many soldiers decided to take the chance with the gas rather than the incapacitating gas mask. They were weighed down by heavy packs, tired quickly, and the field was soon filled with discarded gear.

The 1st Division in the centre attacked the Lone Tree Ridge, but barbed wire stopped the attack. The Germans used a heavier gauge wire than the lighter British concertina wire, and used heavy wooden cross supports rather than single corkscrew stakes. A small group from the **1st Cameron Highlanders** found a gap in the wire and advanced to the village of Hulluch. The village was empty because the Germans had retreated to a rear defence line, but the Highlanders could not hold without reserves, and had to retreat.

At the end of the first day there were enormous casualties. The lack of artillery was a weakness. The following day the 21st Division of reserves attacked Hulluch and marched over the dead bodies from the 1st Division killed the day before. On September 27th the assaults on Hill 70 again failed. On September 28th General John French had used all his reserves but was unable to break the German lines, and the French took over the Loos sector.

Full account of operations by 1st Bn on 25th September 1915
(TNA WO 95/1264)

*At 5.30 a.m. on the 25th September 1915, the 1st Brigade in conjunction with other troops was ordered to assault the front German trench lines immediately south of the Hulluch-Vermelles Road. The immediate assault of the 1st Brigade was carried out by the 8th Berks and 10th Gloucesters, supported by the 1st **Cameron Highlanders**, who followed in two lines at a short interval, 2 companies in each.*

These three battalions carried the first two lines of trenches, and the Camerons, acting on previously issued orders, passed through the two leading battalions and continued the assault through the enemy's third line and finally reached the position on the western outskirts of Hulluch Village. At one time several men of the Cameron Highlanders were actually in Hulluch Village and found it practically deserted and the enemy remaining out at the further side. Owing however to the lack of immediate supports the village could not be held and the final position occupied was some 500 yards on the west side of it, where they were later joined by parties from various Regiments, including those of other Brigades and Divisions. There undoubtedly was, for an appreciable period, a gap in the enemy's defences, but the necessary troops to force their way through were not at hand. During the operations, two Field Guns, with ammunition, were captured by the Battalion. 3 machine-guns were also taken, one being undamaged. So far as at present ascertained the casualties of the Battalion were 17 officers and 369 men.

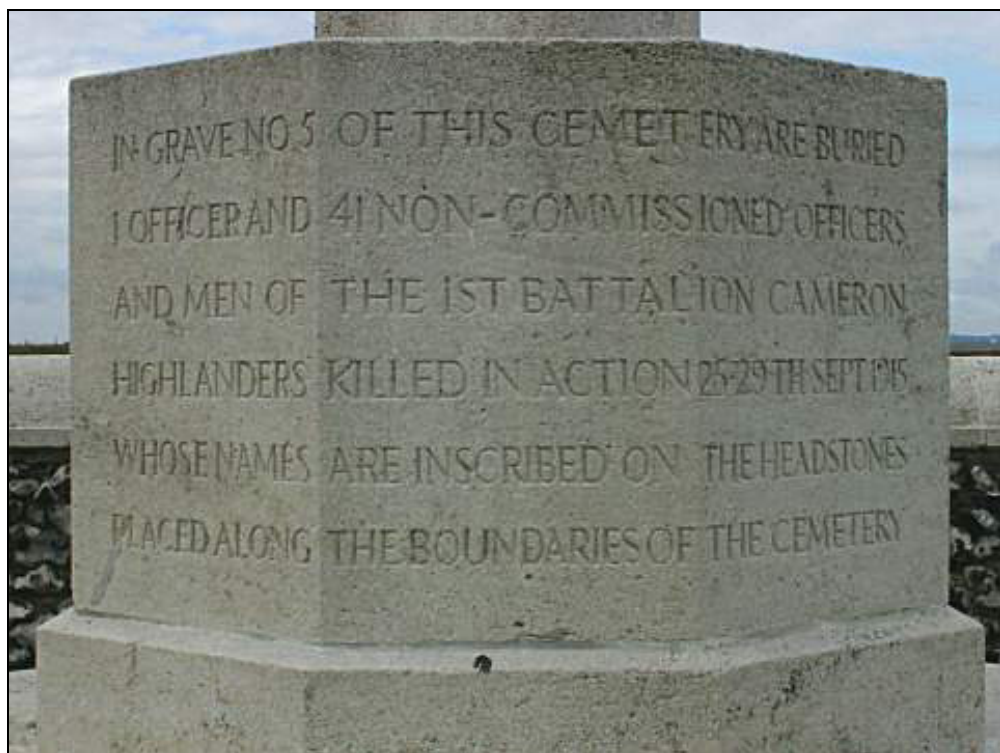
Murdo was killed in action on 28th September 1915. He is remembered on

Special Memorial No. 39 in the Ninth Avenue Cemetery, Haisnes.



Ninth Avenue Cemetery, Haisnes

CWGC



CWGC

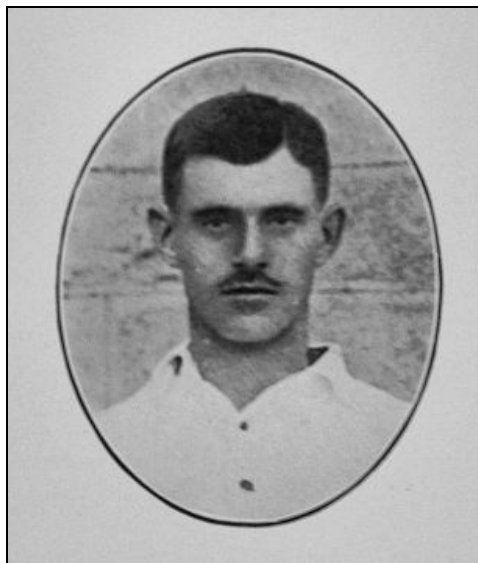
His comrade **Private Murdoch McKenzie, 7277** (no relation) (see page 34) was also killed in the Battle of Loos.

MURDOCH McKENZIE

Private

7277

**1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders
died on 13th October 1915
aged 32**



Murdoch is not listed on the Achiltibuie War Memorial, but is included here because the CWGC website reveals that his family lived in the village. The omission is probably because there were two Murdo/ch Mc/ackenzies.

He was born on 9th April 1883, the son of Hector and Sarah (née McLeod) of Badenscallie, Achiltibuie. They had married on 25th February 1876. Hector's occupation is listed as Fisherman.

Regrettably, Sarah died whilst giving birth to Murdoch so he never knew his mother. In the 1891 census Hector and his children were living with John (Hector's brother) and his wife Catherine and their own children - Jane, John, Roderick, Simon and Angus. This large extended family was living at a residence known as Newton, Badinscallie.

Observation of the 1881 and 1891 censuses reveal that Hector raised four sons: Roderick (born c. 1878), John (born c. 1880), Angus (born c. 1881) and lastly **Murdoch**. Father Hector died on 15th July 1898. By 1901 the sons had dispersed. Murdo was probably the person listed as resident at Invernauld, Rosehall Sutherland, aged 17, a Farmer's Servant at the home of John and Isabella Sharpe. Birthplace was recorded as Coigach.

On enlistment into Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders in August 1914 he was initially stationed in Edinburgh, then shortly afterwards crossed to Le Havre, and on 5th September joined the 1st Brigade in the 1st Division.

He took part in the defence of Gheluvelt (1st Ypres) on 31st October 1914. On 11th November the Germans used the Prussian Guard to assault the front line. Probably Murdoch was wounded for the first time here. Although the Battle officially finished on 22nd November 1914, it was known as 'the graveyard of the Old Contemptibles;' 1st corps lost over half its effective strength in the month.

RML says that Murdoch was injured three times. His records are not available but information regarding his final days is given here:

War Diary 1st Bn Cameron Highlanders – October 1915
(WO 95/1264)

- 4th: *Informed that Brigade takes up trench line north of Loos on night of 5th.*
- 5th: *Went into support trenches ½ mile north-west of Loos in support of Black Watch who held first line from north of Chalk Pit towards Hulloch.*
- 6th: *Remained in trenches and collected about 5 wagon loads of equipment cast away by 21st Division.*
- 7th: *Moved into 1st line in relief of 8th Royal Fusiliers in front of Hulloch.*
- 12th: *Arranging for intended assault on German Trenches along road running N and S about ¼ mile west of Hulloch. Men dug all night and carried bombs, stores etc. getting no rest.*
- 13th: *On the afternoon of 13th October, the 1st Brigade was ordered to assault the German Trench Lines to the west of Hulloch. The 1st Cameron Highlanders were on the left of the line; they had a front allotted to them of some 200 yards and in addition had to hold our own French line facing north. Two companies preceded by strong*

bombing parties attacked over the barricades and down the two trench lines leading into the German position.

One Company attacked on the right over the open and the remaining company was detailed to hold the northern face. A company of the Sussex Regiment was in close support.

At 2 p.m. the assault commenced preceded by an hour's bombardment and a discharge of gas and smoke bombs. The company attacking over the open suffered severe losses from machine gun and rifle fire from the northerly and north-easterly flanks and was unable to gain the German position. The parties bombing down the German trench leading to the front made considerable progress, but the German bombers were in strength in front of them and owing to the numerous casualties suffered by our bombers, who became greatly reduced in numbers, were unable to make good any further way and were eventually bombed back to the original points from which they started and forced to re-erect the barricades which had previously existed.

The want of success on this flank may be attributed largely to the very heavy fire brought to bear by the enemy from the left front, and from the fact that the guns had failed to cut the German wire. In connection with the attempts to bomb Germans out of their trenches, it would appear that along the main and forward communicating trench little cuts were made at the side for bombers to stand in. From these they could cover the trench up which we had to advance, with the minimum of risk to themselves.

14th: Relieved by 8th London Regiment which was 3 hours late.

*An analysis of the attack revealed that the **1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders** broke through, or rather found the gap in the German line at Hulloch. By the time the Brigade actually believed them it was too late to capitalise on this and the Germans counter-attacked. The battalion took 364 casualties reducing it to a strength of 4 officers and 200 men.*

Murdoch followed the same path as **Private Murdo Mackenzie, 7123**, and died a few days after him.

He was killed in action on the 13th October. He has no known grave so he is remembered on the

Loos Memorial on Panel 119 to 124.

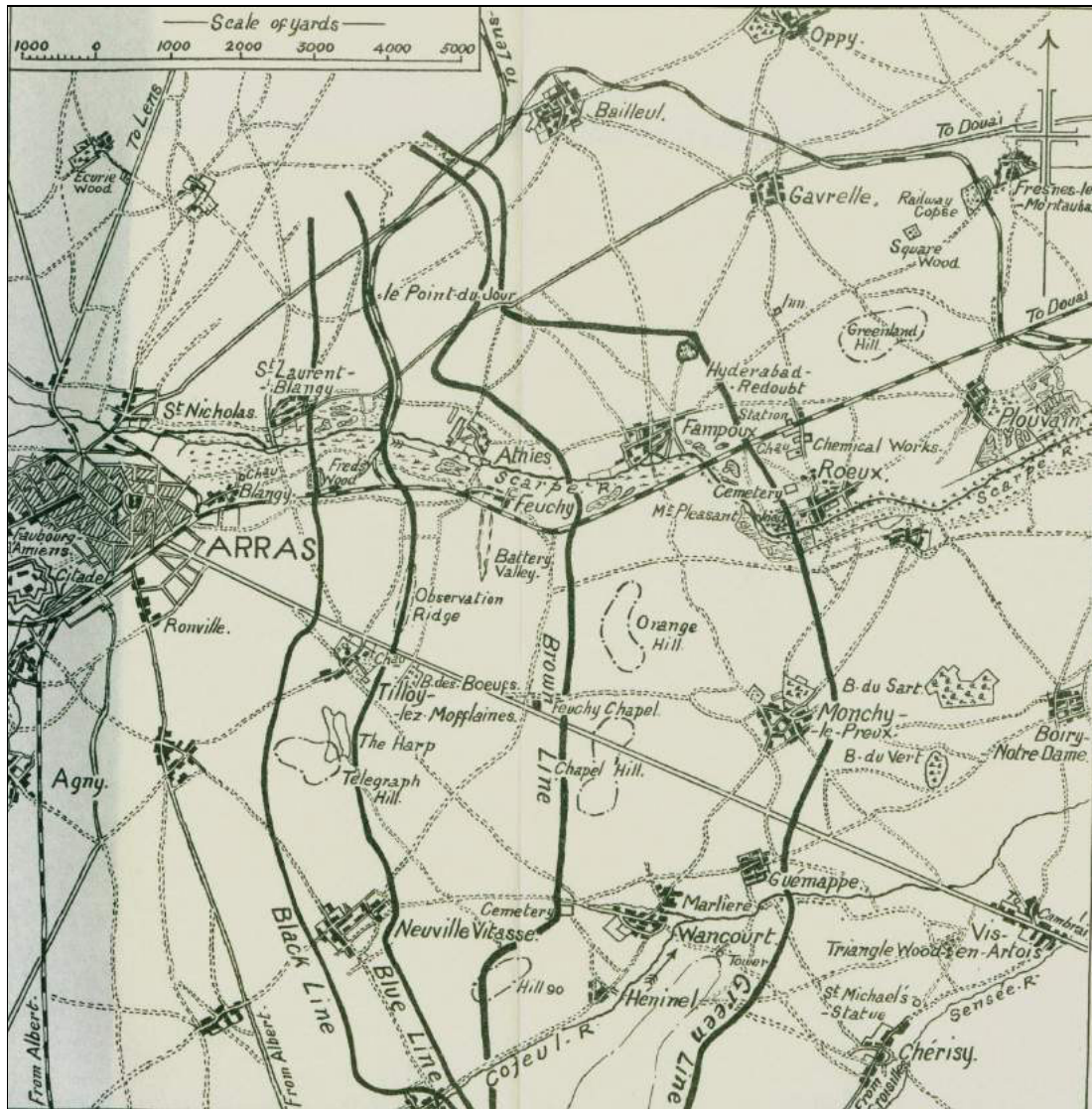


CWGC

RML states that Murdoch had one brother serving in the Royal Navy.

George Maclean fell ill in Salonika after surviving the Gallipoli campaign. He died on 16th November at sea.

Simon Mackenzie was killed in action on 7th December 1916 at St Laurent-Blangy, near Arras.



MURDOCH MacLEOD

Lance Corporal

1488

1st/4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders

died on 29th June 1916

Aged 26

Murdoch's parents were Roderick and Annie Macleod of Altandhu, Achiltibuie. For some reason, although he was killed in action in WW1, he was not included in the RML book. The reason may be because the author did not realise that there were two Murdo(ch) Macleod's from Coigach who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Father Roderick was born in 1844. He was a fisherman in his 20's and 30's. He married Ann MacLennan, daughter of Kenneth MacLennan and Mary Urquhart, on 21st December 1882. He died on 5th December 1916 at Altandhu of influenza & heart-failure aged 72.

Family Members were:

Mary Ann Macleod born 5 February 1887 Inverkirkaig, Assynt. She married **Lance Corporal Murdo Campbell** (see p. 15) son of Alexander Campbell and Bella MacLeod on 16 July 1914 at Altandhu. Two weeks later he left for France and died there the next year of illness.

Murdoch MacLeod born Mar 1890 Inverkirkaig, Assynt. Died on 29th June 1916 aged 26 – this person

Kenneth Macleod born 1892 Inverkirkaig, Assynt.

In **1891** the family were living at a dwelling on the road from Lochinver to Inverkirkaig. Father was a fisherman.

Father was aged 47, mother Ann 35, Jane 7 (Mary Ann), **Murdoch 1**.

The family moved to Altandhu around 1896 and in the 1901 census these persons were present at Rory Red Cottage:

Roderick, 57, listed as Crofter and Boat Carpenter

Ann 45, Jane (Mary Ann) 17, **Murdoch 11**, Kenneth 9.

CWGC gives details regarding Murdoch's death and where he was buried, but surprisingly, SDGW does not have any details about him.

Seaforth Highlanders:

1/4th (Ross Highland) Battalion

August 1914: at Dingwall. Part of Seaforth & Cameron Brigade in the Highland Division.

7 November 1914 – left the Division and landed at Le Havre, and on the 12 December 1914 joined the Dehra Dun Brigade in 7th (Meerut) Division on the Western Front

6 November 1915: transferred to 137th Brigade in 46th (North Midland) Division

13 November 1915: transferred to 46th Brigade in 15th (Scottish) Division

7 January 1916: transferred to 154th Brigade in 51st (Highland) Division

Extract from

War Diary, 1/4th Seaforth Highlanders June 1916 (WO 95/2888)

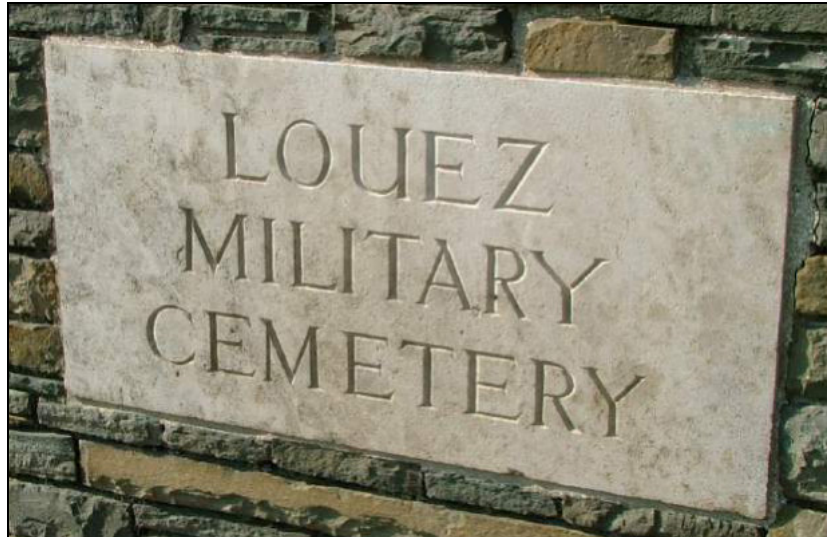
Near Roclincourt

28th: Artillery activity continues, our guns bombarding the enemy trenches several times during day. Battalion relieved 4th Gordons in trenches in L1 Sub-sector in the evening. Night was quiet.

29th: At "Stand To" the German artillery opened fire on our front trenches and shelled heavily for over half an hour, damaging our trenches and causing some casualties. At 3 p.m. our artillery heavily bombarded German front line trenches and our men set off smoke candles, machine guns and trench mortars also co-operating. The German trenches were again bombarded at 4 p.m. with good results, their trenches being badly damaged. Two patrols went out at 11 p.m. reaching German wire and heard work going on. Casualties **1 killed** and 6 wounded.

Murdoch was that man killed on 29th June 1916.

He is buried at Louez Military Cemetery, Duisans, in Grave I.E.3.





Photos: Nick Saunders

HUGH MacLEOD

Private

1487

1st/4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders

died on 6th September 1916

aged 26



Hugh and Murdoch, No. 1488 (see page 40) with the same surname but not brothers, possibly enlisted on the same day, as their numbers are consecutive. Hugh's parents were Roderick and Christina (née Mackenzie) of Achlochan, Achiltibuie. They were married on 5th February 1880. In 1881 Roderick, occupation Fisherman, was aged 29, living with his parents Roderick and Jemima at Achlochan 5. Christina, his wife, was aged 25.

All the children were born at Achlochan. Hugh, the youngest, was born in 1890. In 1891 Roderick is listed as a Crofter, aged 39, Christina aged 36. Their children were John (10), Jessie (9), Roderick (7), Penelope (5), Katie (3) and **Hugh** aged 1. Also living with them was Margaret McLeod aged 44, a sister of Roderick. Roderick died on 15th June 1893 aged 41. In 1901, family members living at the School Master's House were Christina (45) John (20), Penelope (15), **Hugh (10)** and Jeanie (8).

Hugh joined the 4th Seaforths on 25th March 1913.
Mobilized 4th August 1914
Proceeded to France 5th November 1914
Killed in action 6th September 1916 near Armentières.

Extract from :

1/4th Seaforth Highlanders War Diary – September 1916

1st: Bailleul- Battalion was in Divisional Reserve near Bailleul in Training Camp. Battalion route march and outpost scheme carried out.

2nd: Romarin. Battalion moved to huts at Romarin. Gas alarm was sounded at 11 p.m. but none came in our direction.

3rd: Trenches – Church parades. Battalion relieved 11th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in front line near Ploegsteert. 3 Coys in front line and 1 in support.

4th: Wet day. Line very quiet.

5th: Wet day. Enemy shelled Armentieres. Our casualties, 1 wounded.

6th: Bright day. Artillery and trench mortars active on both sides. Several enemy aeroplanes came over our lines. One of our aeroplanes was hit by a shell and came down in German lines. Work done repairing trenches, building dug-outs and cleaning trenches. Casualties: 3 wounded.

There is no mention of anyone killed in action, but most likely Hugh was severely wounded and died shortly afterwards on 6th September.

The chaplain wrote of him :-

“I hope it will be some comfort to you that your boy worthily discharged his duties, and served his country right nobly. He was very brave to the end, as he was always”.

He is buried in **Cité Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentières**
in Grave II.F.39.

He is also remembered on a family headstone at Badenscallie Burial Ground.



Roddie Macpherson

Notice that the wrong date of death is given for Hugh.

GEORGE MacLEAN

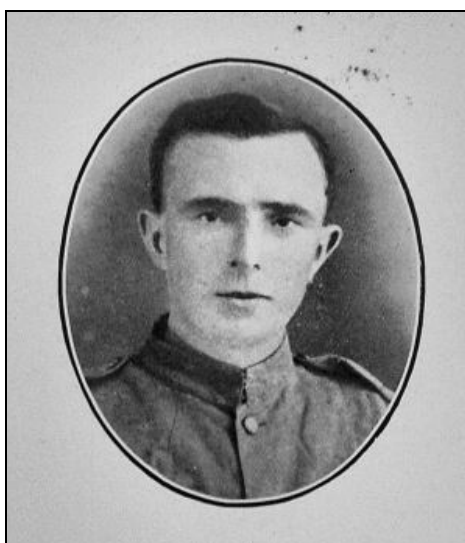
Private

4172

1st/2nd Battalion Lovat's Scouts

died on 16th November 1916

aged 21



George was the son of Jane McLeod of 5 Achiltibuie. He was born at Achduart in about 1894. In 1901 he was living with his grandfather, John McLean, at the Gamekeepers House. He had a twin sister Ettie also aged 7 in 1901. Mother is listed as Jeannie McLean aged 26. Before enlisting, George's employment was with the Post Office at Dundee.

He joined the Lovat's Scouts in June 1913 (part of the Highland Mounted Brigade) and enlisted at Ullapool. At the outbreak of WW1 on 4th August 1914, a total strength of about 1200 men were mobilized. They were billeted in farms near Beaufort with the officers in Beaufort Castle and the Lovat Arms Hotel, Beauly. The 1st Regiment with three of the squadrons coming from the islands took longer to mobilise, but between the 17th and the 28th August the men left by train for Huntingdon for training. They remained there for three months in poor billets. At the end of October the Highland Mounted Brigade was inspected by King George V. Then, suddenly on the

15th November orders were given for the Brigade to leave by train the next day for Grimsby. Guard duties on a 16-mile stretch of coast between Sutton-on-Sea and Skegness then took place. On 16th December German battle cruisers came in near the coast and shelled Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby for an hour, causing many civilian casualties. On 15th April the Highland Mounted Brigade was relieved by the 2nd Brigade of Scottish Horse. Orders to sail for the Mediterranean for action on the Gallipoli Peninsula against the Turks were issued.

Extract from *British Regiments at Gallipoli*

1/2nd Lovat's Scouts Yeomanry

1915

September: *Hunstanton, Norfolk. To Devonport and sailed Andania for Egypt (8th). Arrived Alexandria (18th). To Lemnos (20th), Suvla Bay (26th). Landed during night and to Salt Lake Line attached to 2nd Mounted Division.*

October: *Began tours in front line – “A” Section. General Sir Ian Hamilton recalls visiting the trenches held by both 1st and 2nd Lovat's Scouts (8th). Just after leaving those of the latter, the General, accompanied by “Birdie” (General Sir W. R. Birdwood) became lost and found themselves standing just 200 yards from the enemy's line – about half way between 2nd Lovat's Scouts and the Turks. Noticing this both officers turned “and ran for it – for our lives, I mean.” Lieutenant I. Forsyth-Grant died of wounds (19th) received during patrol prior to attack on enemy strong point at Azmak Dere Barricade (17th). Operation successful.*

November: *Relieved by 1/1st Herefordshire (2nd) and to Salt Lake Line. Relieved 1/7th Royal Welsh Fusiliers in front line (27th).*

December:

Began evacuation. Last party left firing line (20th) and to Imbros.

The Regiment arrived in Egypt in February 1916. The 1st and 2nd Lovat's Scouts with a company from 1/3rd Scottish Horse on 27th September 1916 formed the 10th (Lovat's Scouts) Battalion, the Cameron Highlanders. This unit moved with its Division to Salonika in October 1916 and joined the 27th Division.

George was only in Salonika for less than a month when he fell ill and was transferred to the hospital ship *Essequibo*. He died of dysentery on 16th November.

He was buried at sea and is remembered on **Chatby Memorial, Alexandria, Egypt.**



CWGC

Chatby Memorial in background

SIMON MacKENZIE

2nd Lieutenant
7th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
died on 7th December 1916
aged 27



Simon was born at Achiltibuie on 24th May 1888, the youngest son of Kenneth and Jane (née MacLean). Kenneth was employed as a Mason and Crafter. RML indicates the family lived at Achiltibuie before moving to Ullapool in the 1890s.

Kenneth was born in 1826 at Lochbroom. Jane was born in 1849 at Dundonnel. They married in the late 1870s, and their first son George was born in November 1880. In 1881 the family's address is listed as Achilbituie, House No. 1, Kenneth aged 52, Jane 28 and George 5 months. Also resident was Angus, Kenneth's brother, unmarried, aged 49.

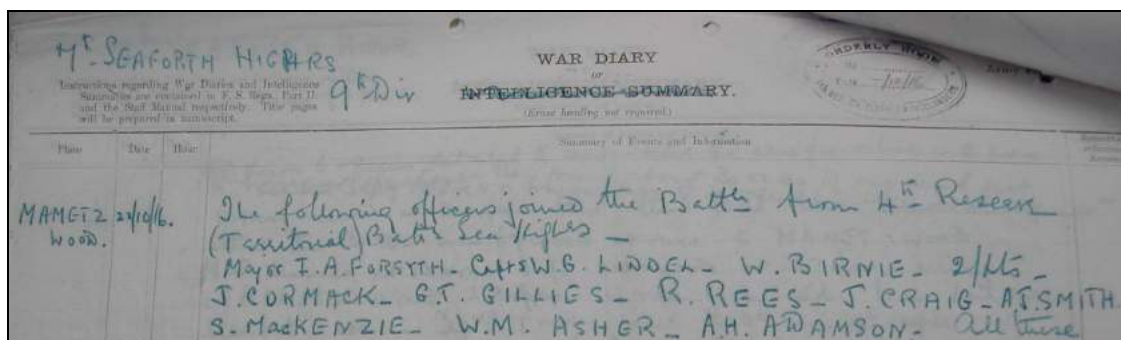
In 1891 the Mackenzie's were still resident at Achiltibuie, with Kenneth (63), Jane (40), Angus (62), George (10), Donald (8), Jessie (7), Alexina (5) and **Simon (2)**.

By 1901 the family had moved to live in Ullapool, at West Terrace, Simon then aged 12. Kenneth died on 10th September 1909 at Ullapool.

Simon was educated at Achiltibuie and at Ullapool Higher Grade School. He passed with Distinction the Examination for H.M. Customs and Excise. He became a Clerk and Auctioneer to Murdo Stewart, Kyle of Lochalsh. In 1910 he joined the firm of Thompson, Brown & Co., Buckie. In July 1914 he was offered a most lucrative position as Manager in South Africa of a Branch of Messrs. Richard Irvine & Sons. He accepted it, but relinquished it upon the outbreak of War. He subsequently worked for a few months for this same firm in their Peterhead branch in the position of auctioneer and fish salesman.

Simon enlisted in the 4th Seaforths in November 1914, his address given as Market Street, Ullapool. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on 11th December, and Corporal a month later in January 1915. Then in mid March he was promoted to Sergeant. At the end of June he transferred to the 3/6th Seaforth Highlanders, serving as Regimental Quartermaster No. 3186. He eventually received a Commission at Gales on 21st July 1916 with the 4th Reserve Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.

He was posted to the 7th Seaforths in the 26th Brigade, 9th Division, and joined them at Mametz Wood on 23rd October (see extract from War Diary below).

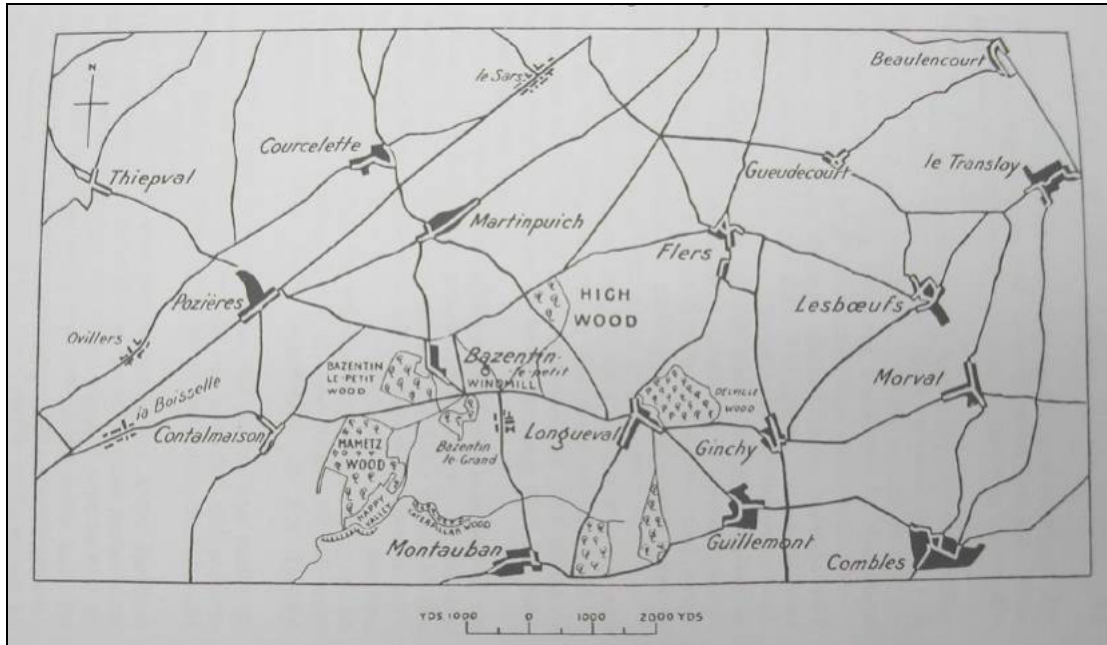


TNA (WO/95 1765)

The battle of the Somme had been lingering since July and carried on until November. The final act was played out between 13th and 18th November along the Ancre River, north of Thiepval. Haig's purpose for the attack was more political than military – with winter setting in, there was no longer any prospect of a breakthrough.

Orders were received that the Battalion would move to High Wood to take over from 5th Camerons, who were to go to the Flers Line. The Battalion left

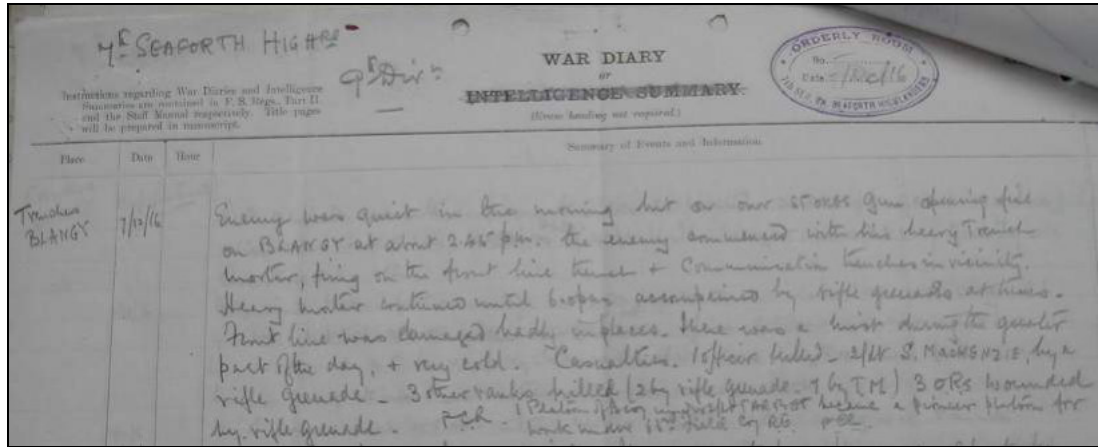
Mametz Wood after early dinners and arrived at High Wood at 3.30 p.m. Cookers were taken and the men had canvas bivouacs to lie in. Rain started in the evening. Blankets were brought up by the Quartermaster.



By the end of November the 7th Seaforths were at Manin. On 2nd December orders were received that the Battalion would proceed to Lattre St Quentin on the 3rd en route for the trenches. The Battalion left Manin at 2.45 p.m. and marched to Lattre St Quentin arriving at 4.00 p.m. The billets were quite good. On the 4th 28 officers and other ranks proceeded to the trenches in the morning to take over. They travelled by motor bus. They entered Arras by the St Pol gate, debussed, then marched via Rue Gambetta and the Station to the trenches.

The Battalion Headquarters was situated in Rue de Douai in a ‘very nice house.’ The left of the Battalion front was marked by the River Scarpe and the village of Blangy, the right was at Infantry Road. On 5th December the day passed quietly. “The next day, the 6th, the enemy trench mortared our front line by the railway at 10.30 a.m. and blew in part of the trench. After this the enemy was quiet until the afternoon when at 4.00 p.m. he opened fire again with heavy mortars and rifle grenades, doing further damage to our front line by the railway.”

The following day, the 7th December, **Simon** lost his life.



TNA (WO 95/1765)

The above reads:

Trenches Blangy: 7/12/16 Enemy was quiet in the morning but on our stokes gun opening fire on Blangy at about 2.45 p.m. the enemy commenced with his heavy trench mortar, firing on the front line trench & communication trenches in vicinity. Heavy mortar continued until 6.00 p.m. accompanied by rifle grenades at times. Front line was damaged badly in places. There was a mist during the quieter part of the day, and very cold. Casualties. 1 Officer killed – 2/Lt S. MacKENZIE, by a rifle grenade. 3 other ranks killed (2 by rifle grenade, 1 by T.M.) 3 ORs wounded by rifle grenade.

Further details regarding Simon’s army career are written in an obituary in the *Ross-shire Journal*.

Lieutenant-Colonel Horn [his commanding officer] referred to him as “one of the brightest and most promising young officers in the Battalion,” and many other similar tributes were paid to his memory.

Extract from Ross-shire Journal 12th January 1917

“He enlisted in the 4th Seaforths on 10th November 1914, and after training at Bedford was appointed regimental quartermaster sergeant when raising the 3/6th Seaforths at Elgin [formed in March 1915], and proceeded with that Battalion to Ripon. Subsequently he attended an officers cadet school at Gales [Ayrshire], and on passing his examinations, which he did brilliantly, he received his commission on 21st July 1916. He went to France on the 18th October, when he was posted to the Seaforths, and was then only about six weeks at the front when he met his death.

Lt Mackenzie was a Lochbroom boy, educated at the Ullapool Higher Grade School, where he was a brilliant pupil, and exceedingly popular with his class fellows. Before enlistment he was employed as an auctioneer and fish salesman with the firm of Messrs. Richard Irvine & sons, Ltd., Peterhead, by whom he was greatly respected both for his ability and integrity. He was a great favourite with his fellow employees”.

Simon is buried at

**Faubourg D’Amiens Cemetery, Arras
in Grave II.A.8.**



CWGC



Nick Saunders

He is remembered on the **Ullapool War Memorial**, but not Coigach. He is also commemorated on **Dundonnell War Memorial**.



Ullapool War Memorial

Clare Church

There is a gravestone at **Argyle Street Cemetery, Ullapool** in memory of the **Mackenzie family**, the wording thereon inscribed:

“In loving memory of **KENNETH MACKENZIE** mason Achiltibuie, Coigach who died at Ullapool 10th September 1909 aged 83 years and his wife **JANE MACLEAN** died at Scotsburn Kildary 16th April 1939 aged 90 years their son **GEORGE MACKENZIE** beloved husband of **ANNIE ROSS** died Scotsburn 27th August 1936 aged 49 years also **Lieut SIMON MACKENZIE** who fell in action at Arras 7th Dec 1916 aged 27 years Interred at Faubourg D’Amiens Cemetery, Plot 2, row A, grave B.

Ach a crioch nan uile nithe am fagus: deanaibh faire chum urnuith.

Also **ANGUS MACKENZIE** Achiltibuie who died at Scotsburn, Kildary 12th Nov. 1920 aged 96 years and interred Badenscally, Coigach and their daughter **JESSIE MACKENZIE** died 24th Sept 1963 aged 79 years also of their younger daughter **ALEXINA EMILY MACKENZIE** who died 12th May 1977 aged 91 years.”

The CWGC memorial states that the home address for the Mackenzie family after WW1 was Scotsburn Schoolhouse, Kildary, Rossshire.



**Mackenzie Family Grave
West Argyle Steet, Ullapool**

DUNCAN CAMPBELL

Private

4072

“E” Company 2nd Squadron Lovat’s Scouts

transferred to Seaforth Highlanders

died on 8th December 1916

aged 23



Duncan was the son of Mr and Mrs Duncan Campbell of West Achiniver, Achiltibuie. They had married prior to 1891. Duncan was born 1892/3.

1891 census: at Polglass

Christy (mother) aged 36, Fisherman’s wife, born Uist, Inverness-shire
Donald 11; John 10; Flora 6; Jessie 5; Kenneth 2; Alexina 6 months

1901 census: at Gamekeeper’s House, House Schedule No. 17

Christy 42, Crofter’s wife; Donald 23; John 21; Flora 18; Kenneth 14;
Alexina 12; **Duncan 9**; Bella McLeod, Visitor 35;
Kenneth McLeod Visitor, 9; Murdo McLeod, Visitor 4

It appears that father Duncan was elsewhere (probably fishing) when the censuses were taken, and wife Christy was shy about her age.

Duncan junior joined the Lovat's Scouts on 22nd March 1910. The 2nd Lovat's Scouts' Headquarters were at Beauly, with E squadron at Kyle of Lochalsh. He then transferred to the Seaforth Highlanders and was mobilized on 4th August 1914. It is not known whether he served on the Western Front. He is not recorded in SDGW. He was taken ill while serving at Linton, 11 miles south-east of Cambridge.

Duncan died on 8th December 1916. This must have taken place in Scotland because he is not recorded on the England BMD list.

He is buried at **Badenscallie Burial Ground** and note that his original regiment is inscribed.



Clare Church

A brother **Kenneth Campbell, Lovat's Scouts** survived the War and his records are available on www.ancestry.co.uk
He had served in the 1st Seaforths from 17.2.04 to 8.4.10, then Lovat's Scouts from 3.5.10 to 2.9.10.
He rejoined the 2nd Lovat's Scouts on 7th May 1912, at Ullapool.
In 1919 on discharge his rank was **Lance Corporal, 223246** Cameron Highlanders. He had served in France.
Left for France from Folkestone on 5th December 1916.
Transferred to Gordon Highlanders 22nd February 1917 and posted to 2nd Battalion. No. 40396
Transferred to Corps of Dragoons for posting to Lovat's Scouts (Sharpshooters) on 1st November 1917.
Entrained Le Havre 12th January 1918
Detained Italy 25th January.
Leave to UK 2.1.19 to 13.2.19
Demobilized 18th February 1919. Kinross.
His address on demobilization was c/o Forsyth, 33 Hill Street, Dingwall.

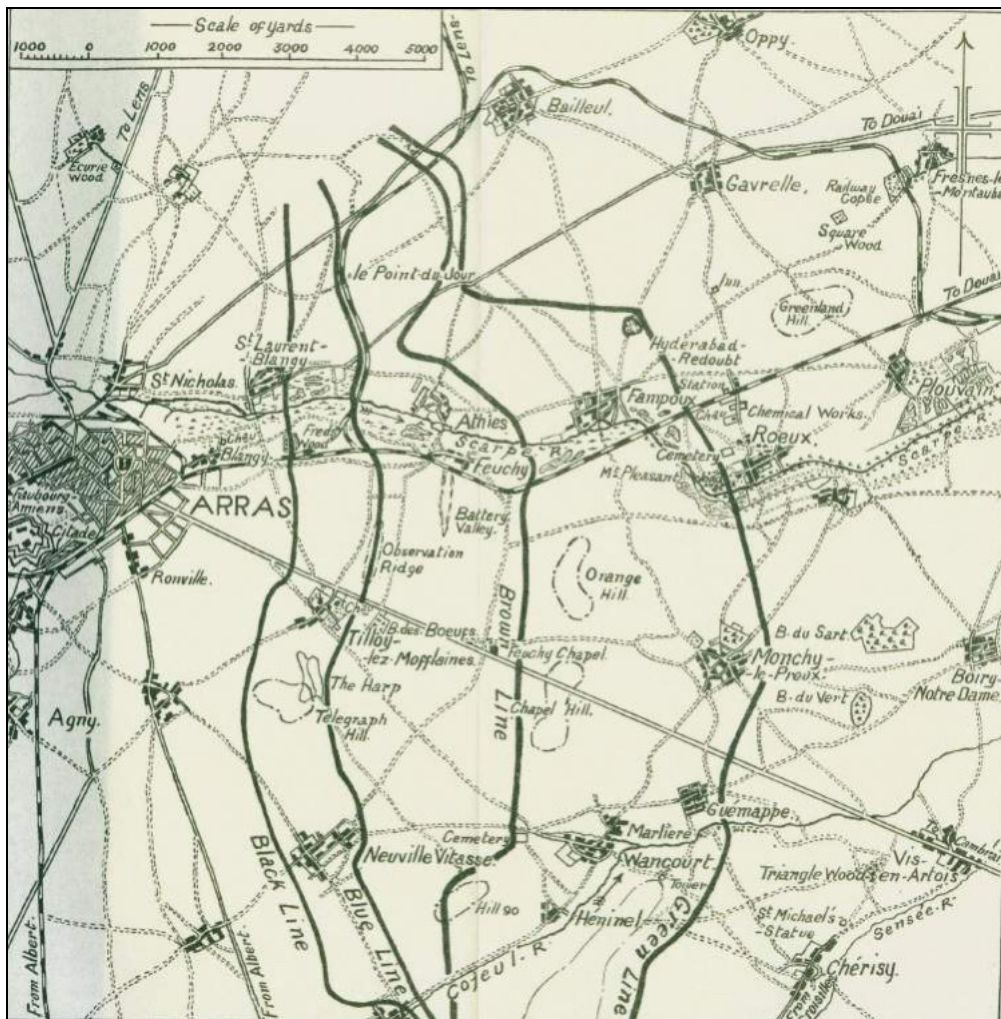
RML states that another brother **Donald Campbell, RNR**, served in Mine Sweepers, and was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland. He presumably survived this catastrophe because he is not listed as a casualty in CWGC.

1917

The first local man to die in 1917 was **James Stewart** on 1st January. He had been suffering from pneumonia and died at Abbeville.

In the spring, Germany pulled back to its pre-prepared Hindenburg Line to shorten its line and save men. It was not to go on the offensive again until the spring of 1918, when it was heavily reinforced by trained and battle-hardened divisions from the Eastern Front.

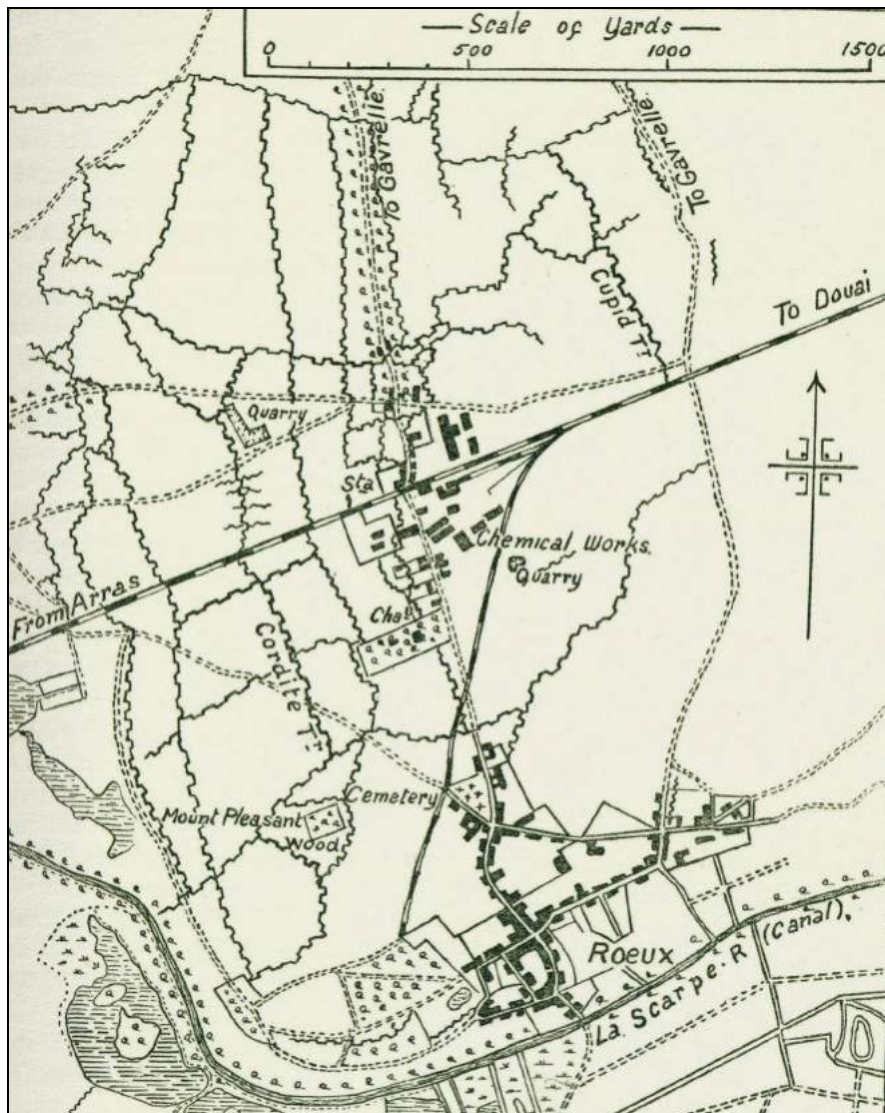
An Allied co-ordinated spring offensive began in April at Arras, with the capture of Vimy. **Roderick McLeod** of the 7th Seaforth Highlanders was killed on 9th April at Athies as part of the Battle of Arras.



Thomas Mackenzie survived the attack on Vimy Ridge on 9th April, but was killed four months later at Lens.

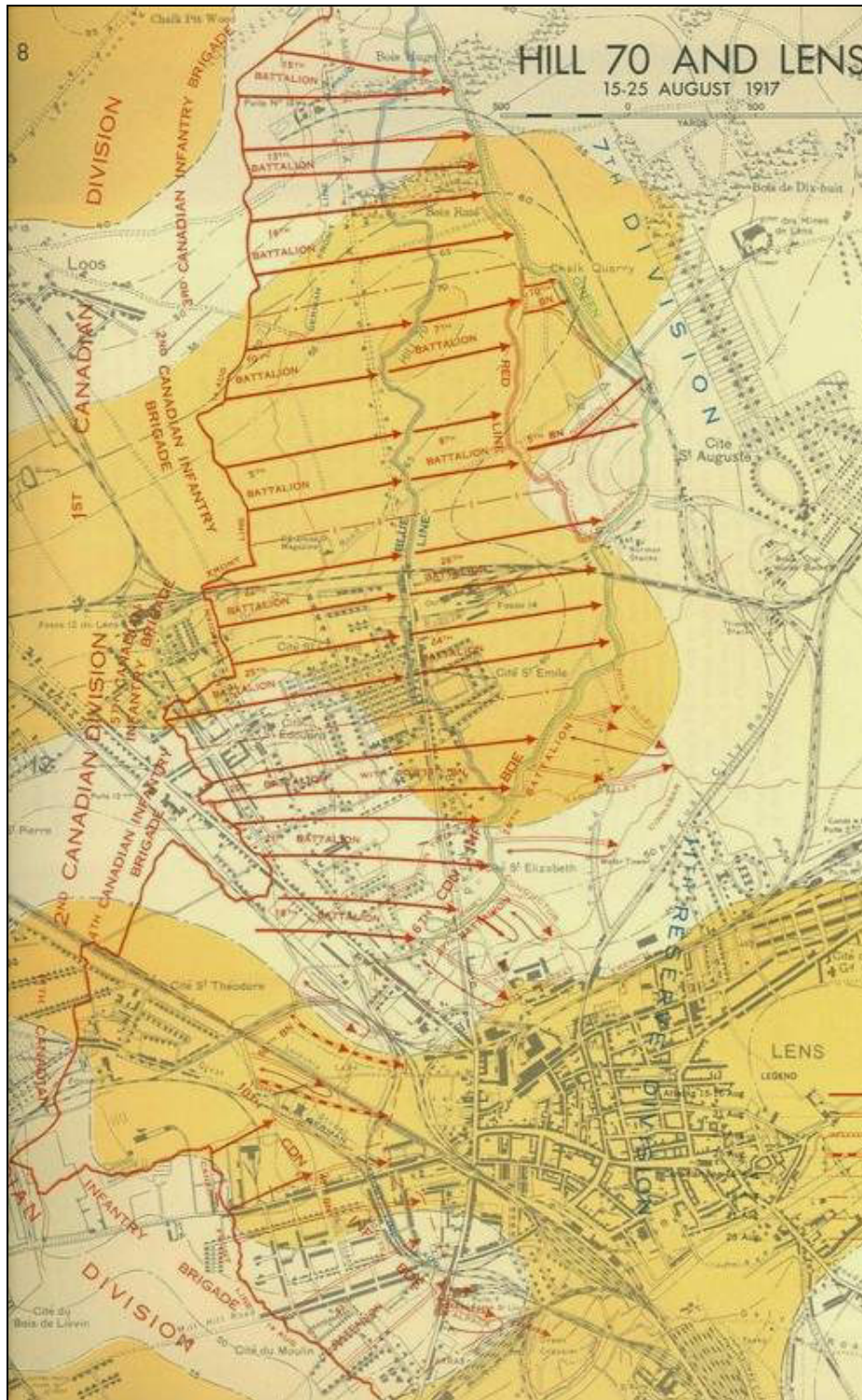
Alexander MacGregor of the 4th Seaforth Highlanders, died of pneumonia on 18th April.

Norman MacLean, also of the 4th Seaforths, was killed in action on 17th May near Roeux.



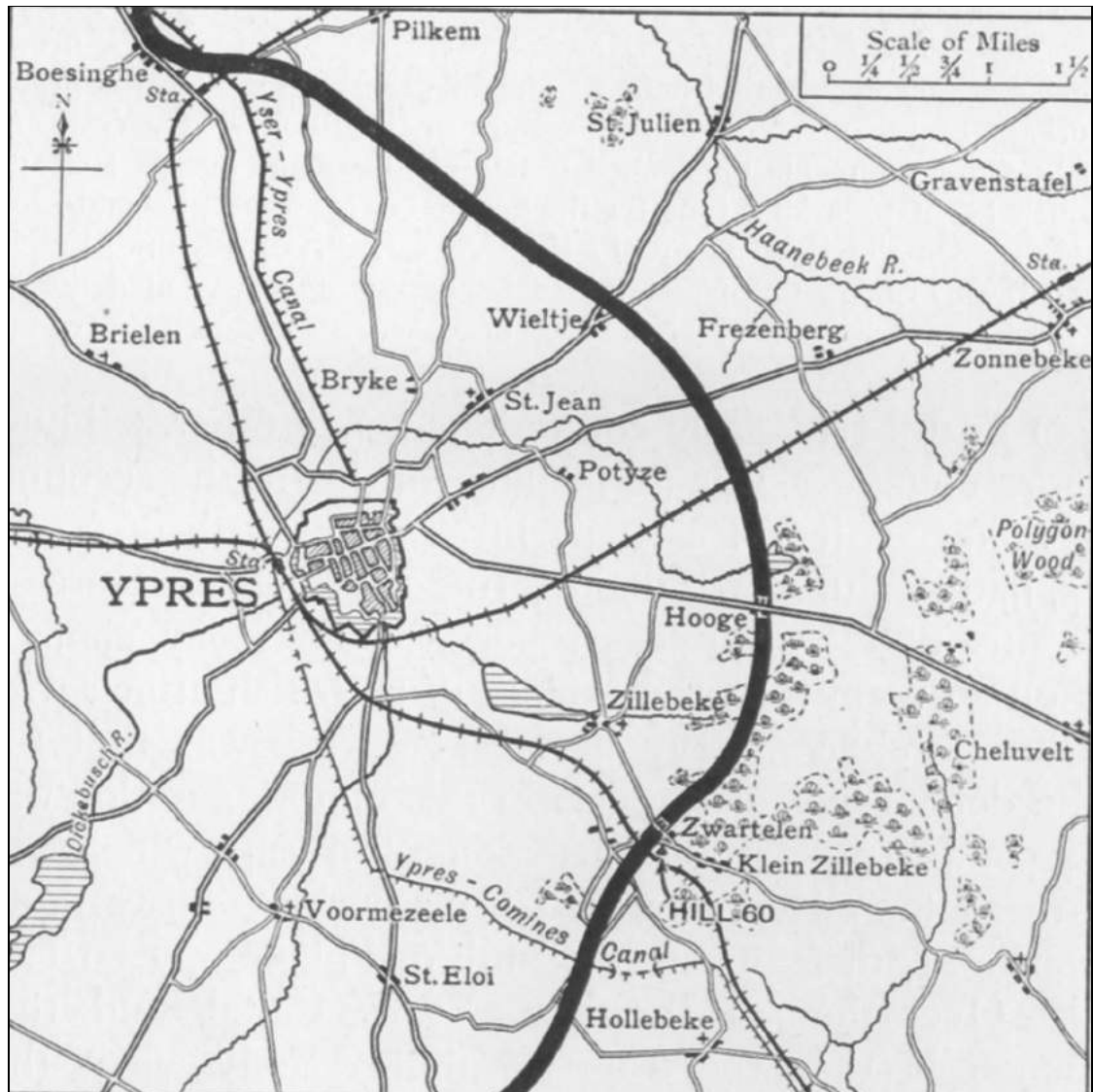
The first phase of Third Ypres began in July with the successful capture of Messines Ridge.

Alexander McLeod serving with the 13th Canadians was fatally wounded at Hill 70 on 15th August.



The 3rd Battle of Ypres continued in the autumn with Passchendaele, until the rains halted all movement on the battlefield. The British offensive effort then switched to Cambrai at the end of November.

Roderick Ross of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force was injured on 4th October at **Gravenstafel**. He died in England on 20th December.



Meanwhile, at sea two men from Coigach lost their lives. **Simon McLeod**, serving on *HMS Ghurka*, drowned when his ship sank off Dungeness, Kent on 8th February. **Murdo MacLean**, died on 18th/19th October when the ship on which he was serving, *ss Hazelwood*, was sunk by a German submarine off Anvil Point, Dorset.

JAMES STEWART

Private

60805

Seaforth Highlanders

then 27th Company, Machine Gun Corps

died on 1st January 1917

aged 22



James was the eldest son of Roderick and Annie Stewart (née Macleod) of Badenscallie, Achiltibuie. His parents married sometime after 1891.

In **1901** the family was living at Achbraburn Tent, Coigach - James Stewart (67) Crofter (grandfather); Roderick Stewart (40) Fisherman; Annie (33); Roderick (27) Uncle; **James (6)**; Mary (4); Catherine (2); Angus (1).

A headstone in Badenscallie Burial Ground reveals that the family was a large one and included the following names:

Roderick (1859-1936) – father, Anne (1867-1937) – mother,
James (1894-1917), Mary (1897-1955), Catherine (1898-1961),
Angus (1900-1965), Donald (1902-1918), Duncan (1903-1914),
Roderick (1907-1908), John Alick (1909-1910), Roderick (1912-1975)

Prior to enlisting, James was employed as a School Teacher and had taught in the Badralloch, Achduart and Inverlael Schools. In the 1870s a school was opened in Achduart and the school board built a path from Coulnacraig to Achduart for the children.

James enlisted in the Seaforth Highlanders in March 1916, then transferred to the 27th Company of the Machine Gun Corps in October. A depot was established at Belton Park in Grantham, Lincolnshire, and a base depot at Camiens in France.



Shortly after the formation of the Machine Gun Corps in October 1915 Maxim guns were replaced by the Vickers, which became a standard gun for the next five decades. The Vickers gun is fired from a tripod and is cooled by water held in a jacket around the barrel. The gun weighed 28.5 lbs, the

water another 10 and the tripod weighed 20 lbs. Bullets were assembled into a canvas belt, which held 250 rounds and would last 30 seconds at the maximum rate of fire of 500 rounds per minute. Two men were required to carry the equipment and two the ammunition. A Vickers machine gun team also had two spare men.

James could not have been long at the Front, because he died of pneumonia at Abbeville on 1st January 1917.

He is buried in **Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension**

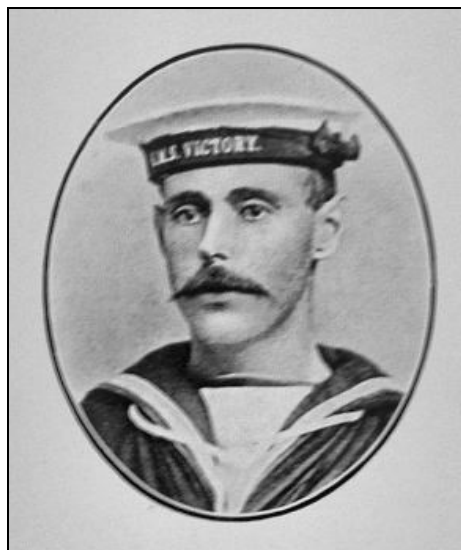
in Grave II.A.33.



CWGC

SIMON McLEOD

**Seaman
9003A
Royal Naval Reserve
H.M.S. Ghurka
died on 8th February 1917
aged 39**



Simon, born on 23rd July 1878, was the second son of Roderick McLeod and Isabella (née Mackenzie) of Achduart, Achiltibuie. They married in 1867.

In 1871 Roderick and Isabella were living at Achduart with their eldest son John, aged 1. This John must have died prior to 1881 because another John is listed then, aged 7.

1881 census: at Achduart

Roderick 40

Isabella 38

John 7

Bella 5

Simon 2

Margaret 11 months

1891 census: at Achduart

Roderick 51

Isabella 49

Simon 13

George 9

Catherine 6

Donald 4

1901 census: At Gamekeeper's House, Coigach

Isabella 59 (Head) Crofter

John 26 Shepherd

Simon 22 Crofter's son

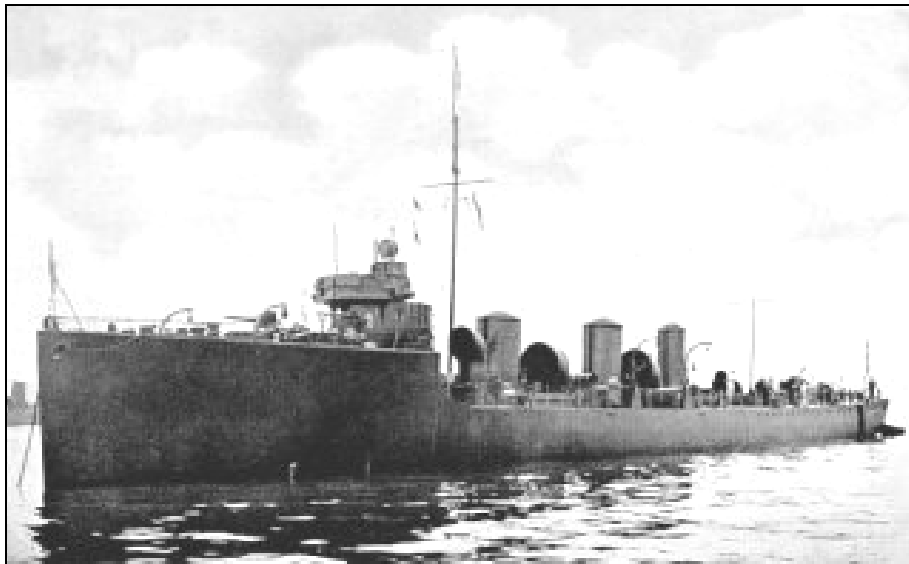
Caty 16

Donald 14

Simon enrolled in the Royal Navy on 17th May 1916. His records indicated that his height was 5'7", dark complexion, eyes grey. He was serving at Inverness on 5th June 1916 on *Myrmidon*, a B Class (30-knot "Turtle –Back" with 4 funnels. This ship had been built by Palmers ship on the Tyne, and launched on 26th May 1900.

He transferred to *HMS Victory* on 7th July, then the following day embarked on *HMS Ghurka*. This ship had also been built on the Tyne, by Hawthorne Leslie, 880 ton, 255 ft. with steam turbine engines.

HMS Ghurka was mined or torpedoed in the English Channel off Dungeness, Kent and sank on 8th February 1917. Only five men were rescued, 75 lost their lives. She sank at 50.50.80N, 00.53.17.E. in a depth of 30 metres.



HMS Ghurka

Simon is remembered on **Portsmouth Naval Memorial** on **Panel 27**



Nick Saunders

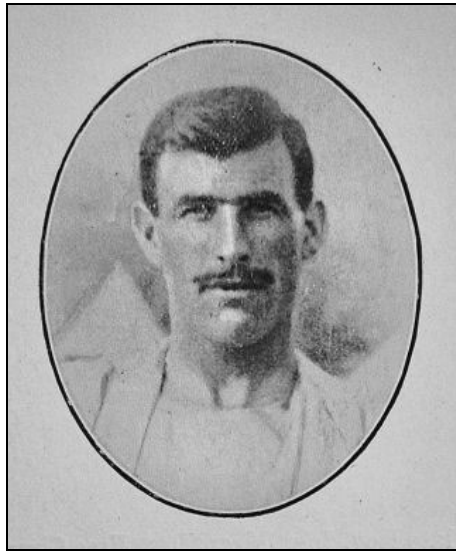


Nick Saunders

According to RML Simon had one brother serving in WW1 – **Donald McLeod, Lovat's Scouts.**

RODERICK MacLEOD

**Lance Corporal
S/40280
7th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
died on 9th April 1917
aged 28**



Roderick was the youngest son of Alexander and Jessie (née Ross) Macleod of Blairbuie, Reiff, Coigach. Alexander had married Janet Ross on 4th February 1873. She was born in 1847 in Lochbroom Civil Parish.

1881 census: at Reiff

Alexander (40) – Fisherman; Jessie (34); Anne dau (6); Janet dau (5); Alexander son (2); Hugh son (3 months)

1891 census: at Reiff, Household schedule No. 34

Jessie 44, Alexander 12, Hugh 10, Roderick W[illiam] 7, **Roderick 2**
Father Alexander is not present so maybe out on his boat?

1901: at Alaster Sandy's Cottage, Household Schedule No. 29

Alexander 60, Jessie 50, Alexander 22, Roderick William 17,
Roderick 14, Christina (85) (Alexander's sister)

Roderick joined the 4th Seaforths in 1910. His movements are not known until 1916 when RBL states that he proceeded to France in May where he was transferred to the 7th Seaforths, which formed part of the 26th Brigade, 9th (Scottish) Division.

The main thrust of the Allied spring offensive of 1917 was to be launched on the Aisne on 16th April by the French. A week earlier, Commonwealth forces were to begin a diversionary attack at Arras with the aim of drawing German forces north. The offensive began on 9th April on a 22.5 km front following a five-day artillery bombardment from 2,800 guns. The 14 Commonwealth divisions outnumbered the opposition, but having withdrawn to the heavily fortified Hindenburg Line in the spring of 1917, the German defensive position was strong.

Athies, 4 km east of Arras, was captured by the 9th (Scottish) Division on 9th April with Major-General Lukin in command. There were many casualties, and **Roderick** was one of 368 other ranks killed in this attack.

Extract from War diary of 7th Seaforth Highlanders
9th April 1917 (WO 95/1765)

***5.00 a.m.** Reported to Brigade that Battalion with attached troops in assembly trenches and ready, including Pioneer Platoon which had got lost on way up from Arras & had apparently been walking for 5 hours! Rest of the Battalion was in position by 4.15 a.m.*

The morning was unusually dark & it was hardly light at zero hour (5.30 a.m.) with a light rain falling. For the first time for several nights the enemy put no barrage at all on our assembly trenches during the night. Consequently there were no casualties before zero. The enemy therefore had no inkling of an impending attack.

***5.30 a.m.** Our artillery barrage came down with a crash & the attack went forward. The going was very heavy & the left leading company just reached the enemy front line as the barrage lifted from it. The right leading company had to wait 1 ½ minutes in no mans land. On this flash the barrage appeared to dwell on enemy front line for 3.5 seconds too long.*

General: Battalion HQ was cut off from Brigade on the telephone before zero & never obtained touch by phone whilst in this position. The result of this being that all communication with Brigade was by runner & very slow. One pigeon was allotted to the Battalion & this bird escaped from its basket! The enemy trenches & wire very badly smashed up, & the enemy evidently

taken by surprise by the rapid advance which followed. A captured officer said they were expecting an attack on the 8th but never expected one on 9th owing to a raid carried out by us on same night.

6.10 a.m. Reported to Brigade “that prisoners coming in & wounded state they are getting on well, but no reports from companies actually received”.

6.42 to Brigade “that A Company (left support) had reached their 1st objective up to line & close to barrage with few casualties & that wounded report right leading coy checked by enemy bombing in houses”.

7 a.m. to Brigade “that D company (left front) reported at 6.17 a.m. that they had reached Black Line with Black Watch well up to the cemetery 20 obstacle: that Battalion HQ moving up to Black Line.

7.30 a.m. To Brigade “that right leading company (C) have reported their objective gained & cleared trench down to river”.

8.19 a.m. To Brigade “that leading company reports at zero + 2 hours 33 minutes they are held up by hostile barrage W of embankment.”

8.22 a.m. to A & B Companies asking for situation & numbers left with companies.

8.35 a.m. to Brigade “that leading company reports at 8.15 a.m., they require reinforcements to attack position having only 15 men in hand.”

8.51 a.m. To Brigade “estimated casualties, one captain four subalterns & 150 OR.”

8.50 a.m. to Brigade”2 platoons leading company reported on Blue Line & others advancing.

9.22 a.m. to Brigade “that leading company reports at 8.50 a.m. they have reached Blue Line with 50 men.

10.04 a.m. To Brigade “leading company reports position of “B” (support) Company also on Blue Line: but enemy with machine gun between them & river, also snipers – have no more men to assist with”

Note. The machine gun was south of river, it was discovered later.

10.10 a.m. To “A & B” Companies asking whether they have sufficient men to repel counter attacks & clear embankment to river & promising support whenever men available.

Note: Sent to “C” Company for all available men to support leading companies.

10.15 a.m. To Brigade “that two leading Companies consolidating from H to G & in touch with 8th Black Watch on their left. Numerous prisoners still being taken from embankment.

10.15 a.m. From Brigade timed 7.20 a.m. “saying 2 stokes guns being sent to assist in clearing village of **St Laurent Blangy**” which was captured at 6 a.m.! Shows use of runners when HQ far apart.

10.15 from Brigade “telling us to dig out a “tank” stuck north of cemetery. This evidently intended for 8th Black Watch & passed to them. It had as a matter of fact already been dug out.

10.42 a.m. To Brigade “that position on Blue Line satisfactory but still unable to reach river owing snipers & machine gun to south of it: over 100 prisoners taken on Blue Line; that a “tank” stuck near railway bridge, Point H with NCO who cannot or will not work it, his officer having been killed.”

10.50 from Brigade “timed 9.25 that 45 Brigade & 10 A & SH [Argyll & Southern Highlanders] asked to help us.”

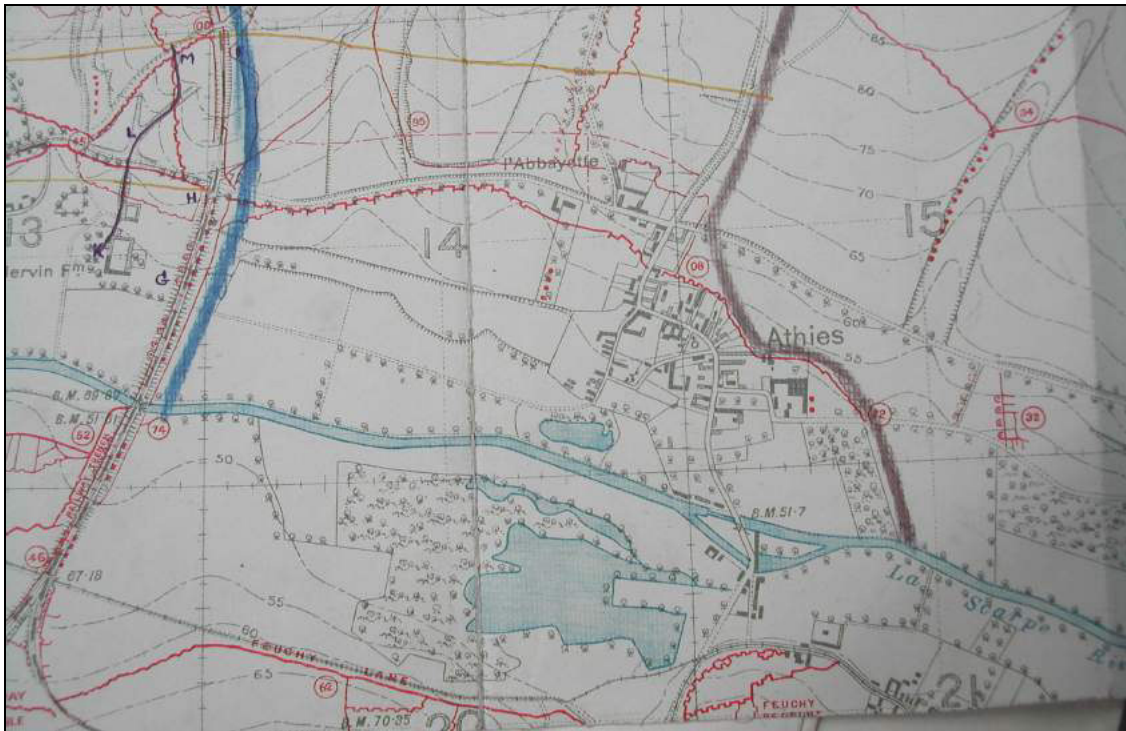
10.50 to Brigade “that no assistance now required.”

11.17 from A & B Companies “timed 10.55 a.m. that they are patrolling down to river, but have not yet located all the snipers – that approximately 90 men on Blue Line.”

1 p.m. Battalion on Blue Line collected as 12th Brigade, 4th Division had passed through.

2.45 from Brigade “that Battalions would not withdraw from present positions until further orders.”

5 p.m. No further orders received & Battalion now assembled in & about the Oil Factory. It was very cold waiting & therefore it was decided to billet here.



TNA (WO95/1765)

Roderick is buried in

Mindel Trench British Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blangy

in Grave B.10.

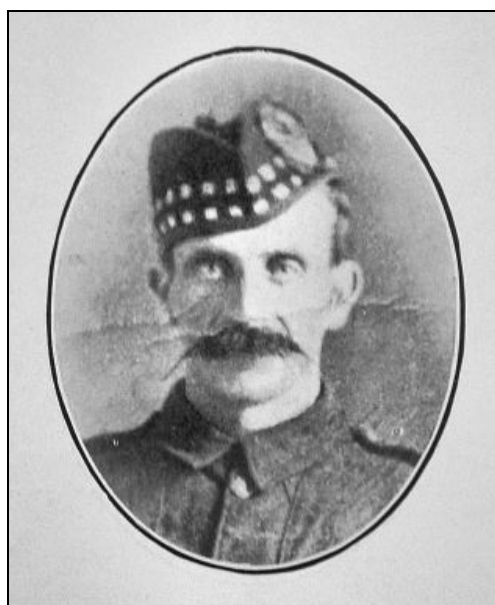


Nick Saunders

His brother **Alexander** also served in WW1, in the Seaforth Highlanders.

ALEXANDER MacGREGOR

Private
4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
200129
died on 18th April 1917
aged 37



According to RML and the 1881 census, **Alexander** was born 1879/80 at Inverness, the son of Alexander Macgregor and Catherine (née Mackenzie). His parents had married after 1871, because in that year Catherine was aged 18, a General Servant, unmarried at the family home at Reiff (71-58). However the marriage was short-lived because by 1881 she was a widow, still living with her parents and young son Alexander.

1881: At Reiff (81-2)

Murdo Mackenzie (62) Crofter

Ann wife (64)

Catherine MacGregor dau Widow (29)

Mary Mackenzie dau (26)

Alexander MacGregor, Grandson, (1) born Inverness

1891

Alexander aged 11. He could be the person listed as resident at the home of his uncle Duncan G MacDonald (a farmer) and wife Isabella, at Beachan, Daviot, Invernessshire. His mother's circumstances have not been ascertained.

Ann, Catherine's mother died aged 84 in 1900.

Alexander was employed as a shepherd prior to enlisting into the 4th Seaforth Highlanders in 1912. He was mobilized on 4th August 1914 at the outbreak of WW1 and proceeded to France on 5th November. He would have followed the same course as other men in the 4th Seaforths, previously described.

Alexander died of Pneumonia in a Canadian Hospital in France on 18th April 1917. He is buried in

**Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension
in Grave II.B.6**



CWGC

NORMAN MacLEAN

Private

202160

4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders

died on 17th May 1917

aged 27



Norman was the son of Norman and Mary Maclean of Camuscoille, Achiltibuie. Camuscoille means “Bay of the Woods”. It is on the north shore of Coigach, close by Achnahaird. Just three families lived in this settlement.

Father Norman born about 1837, was a fisherman. He married Mary in the 1870s and took over the family home at Camuscoille.

Their children were: Duncan b January 1881, Murdo b c 1882, John b c 1884, Donald b c 1886, Alexander b c 1890, **Norman b c 1892**, Maggie b c 1894, Isabella b c 1898, and Alexanderina b c 1900.



Crofts at Camuscoille

Peter Gamble

The **1881** Census states that Norman was 43 and Mary 24 at Camuscoille 81-3. They had married between 1871 and 81. Their eldest child Duncan was two months old.

1891: at Camuscoille

Norman 53, Mary 34, Duncan 10, Murdo 8, John 6, Donald 4, Alexander 1.

1901: at Norman Duncan's Cottage

Norman 64, Mary 45, Duncan 20, Murdo 18, John 16, Donald 14,
Norman 8, Maggie 6, Bella 3, Alexanderina 6 months

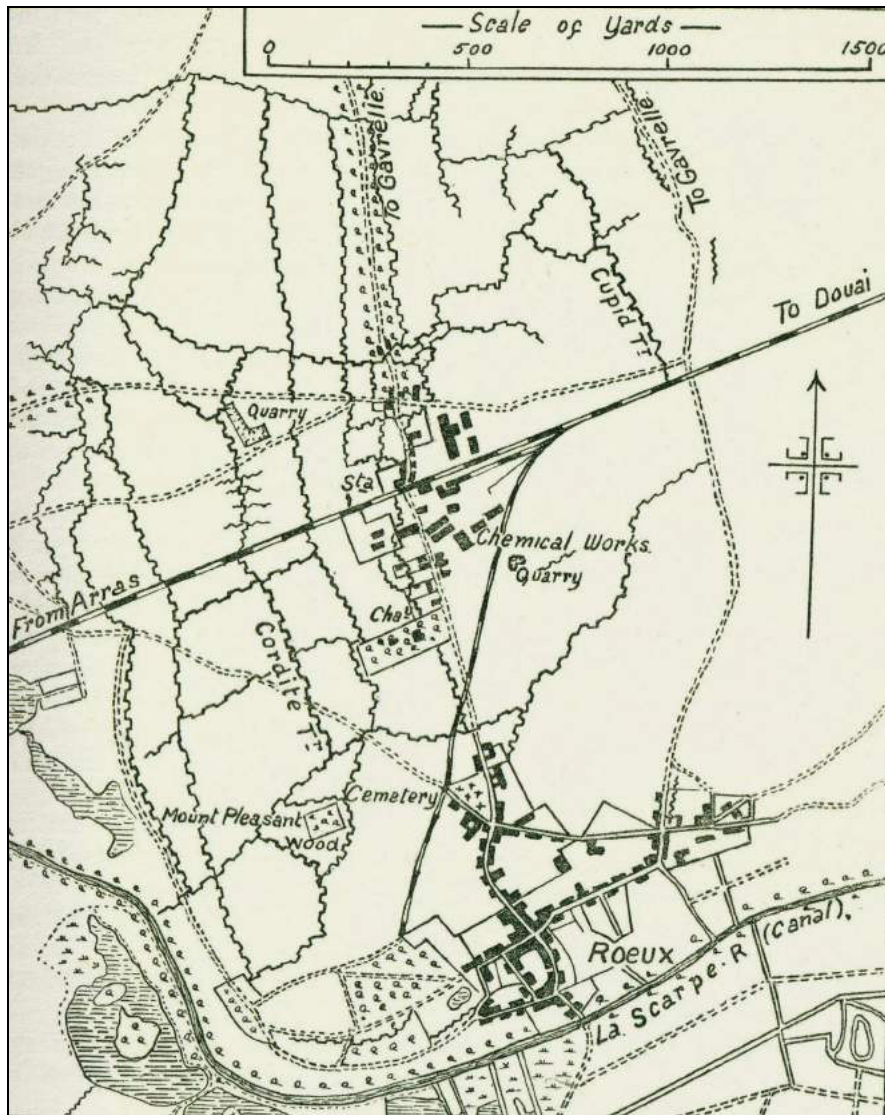
Norman junior joined the 4th Seaforths in July 1916. He also had service number 5482 prior to number 202160.

**Extract from War Diary 4th Bn Seaforth Highlanders
(WO95/2888)**

May 1917

14th: *Very warm. Moved into billets in Arras. Headquarters at Rue de Jerusalem, Battalion billeted in Hospice de Vieillards.*

15th: *At Arras. Dull day. Musketry practice. Company returned from leave. Enemy shelled Arras during night 15th/16th.*



16th: Heavy German counter attack early morning of 16th against 152 Brigade.

*8. a.m. Reported enemy holding **Chemical works Roeux**. Battalion ordered to move up at once to Arras-Lens Railway embankment north of River Scarpe.*

8.30 a.m. Moved off by platoons to Railway Embankment.

2 p.m. Nos. 2 & 4 Companies moved up to railway cutting south of Fampoux. During the day the 152 Brigade had regained all the ground lost.

7.30 p.m. Nos. 2 and 4 companies advanced to Colombo trench E of Roeux in relief of 8th Argyle and South Highlanders. No. 4 Company in Colombo

trench. No. 2 Company in Corona trench NE of Roeux and occupying posts in Roeux.

11 p.m. HQ and Nos. 1 & 3 companies moved up in support. No. 3 company into Roeux wood; No. 1 Company into Cusp trench W of Roeux. HQ in Crump trench along the sunken road W of Roeux and Chemical works and E of River Scarpe. On our left 6th Black Watch; on our right river Scarpe with 29th Division on the other side of Scarpe. It rained heavily at night and ground became very muddy. The night was pitch black. By night time the shelling had subsided. Bn HQ took over from 5th Bn Seaforth Highlanders.

17th: Front Line E of Roeux. Dull day. Our trenches [were] shelled at intervals. Many German wounded who had been lying in shell holes for some days were brought in. Building new posts; improving, repairing and consolidating position.

At some point on the 17th May **Norman** was killed in action. He is believed to be buried, one of 33 casualties at

Crump Trench British Cemetery, Fampoux.



Nick Saunders

He is remembered on **Special Memorial A.2.**



Nick Saunders

Norman had three brothers serving –

Donald Maclean R.N.R.

John Maclean R.N.R.

Murdo Maclean, R.N.R. – lost whilst patrolling off the Coast of England in October 1917 (see page 102).

THOMAS McKENZIE

Private
102nd Battalion Canadian Infantry
252743
died on 9th August 1917
aged 27



Thomas was born on 1st May 1890 at Inverness, the son of Alexander and Isabella of 132 Polglass.

For further details regarding this family see pages 19 and 29.

He enlisted on 8th April 1916 in Canada. His address was Shaunavon, Saskatchewan, occupation farmer. His attestation sheet stated that he “Did not belong to any active militia. He had never served in any military force beforehand.”

Extracts from

The 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion CEF
by Sergeant Leonard McLeod Gould

12th August 1916:

Arrived Havre. Disembarked from *H.M.T.S. Connaught*. Marched to Rest Camp No. 1. 10.00 p.m. Marched to entraining station.

13th: Left Havre by rail for Godewaersvelde. Marched to campsite ½ mile N.E. of Abele. Troops were permitted to walk to Abele and witness passage of His Majesty the King.

15th: At noon the Canadian Corps Commander, Lieutenant-General Sir Julian H. C. Byng KCB KCG MVO, visited the camp. No. 2 Company proceeded to St Eloi trenches.

3rd October:

The Battalion set out for the Somme. Arrived Audruicq at 5.30 p.m. where train was taken for Doullens, reached 12 hours later. Billeted at Gezaincourt. Then on 5th to Val de Maison. Following day's march to Vadincourt above Contay where Canadian Corps Headquarters had been established.

10th: Left Vadincourt and marched into Albert.

Albert was the base for the next six weeks. The Front line was situated between Death Valley and Regina Trench. Next day the men took up quarters on Tara Hill, west of Albert on the Bapaume Road and camped under bivouacs. They remained at Rara Hill until the 18th, which was to mark the first step in the series of operations which culminated in the capture of Regina Trench, the first great achievement of the 102nd Battalion. On the night of the 23rd the Battalion was relieved by the 54th and the men marched to the Chalk Pits, half a mile south of Pozieres, where they went into dug-outs for rest and reorganization. The Battalion remained at Chalk Pits for 12 days, a muddy depression honeycombed with inadequate shelters, lying between Headquarters at Bailey Woods and Pozieres. The weather was wet and the chalky soil was quickly reduced to a deep stickiness which made every movement a labour.

4th November:

Marched back to Albert where remained for 4 days, returning to Chalk Pits for one night, preparatory to second tour in the line which commenced on **9th November**. The tour of Somme was completed on **23rd November** and the Division was to move and take up its position with the other three Divisions of the Canadian Corps on the slopes of **Vimy**, and on **26th November** the battalion paraded for the last time in Albert and set out on a long six days' march to the new area.

The 102nd CEF undertook five tours of trenches with six days' interval between each, lasting from **21st December 1916** to the end of **March 1917**.

9th April 1917:

On the morning of **9th April** the Canadian Corps attacked the German stronghold position at Vimy Ridge. The ridge, located about 10 kilometres to the north of Arras and just south of the mines and factories of Lens and Lille, was a high ground that commanded the entire sector. The taking of Vimy Ridge was very important offensively as it was a key position of the German line in Northern France. But it was even more important for the Germans not to lose Vimy Ridge. Their position in the entire region would be destabilized should the ridge fall into allied hands. The Ridge held a commanding view of the entire Douai Plain and its loss would expose vast territory of German held positions to allied sight and allied guns. Vimy Ridge was the "hinge" of the German line as it protected the newly constructed Hindenburg line and also the length of the western front as it travelled north-west into Flanders and on to the sea. Commanded by Lt. General Sir Julian Byng and Major-General Arthur Currie, the Canadians were united into a single Corps.

9th April, Easter Monday at 5.28 a.m. the battle was engaged. The weather was a combination of snow and sleet. Underground mines were exploded, gas shells fell onto German positions and transportation route, artillery began to hit German positions and machine-gun fire swept the enemy's positions. By 6.00 a.m. the second line of trenches had been gained, and forty minutes later the Hun had lost his third line of trenches. The 102nd had already captured its three objectives, but it remained for the positions to be consolidated and held against the fierce counter-attacks. However, all officers had become casualties. Nevertheless the Battle of Vimy Ridge had been won by the Allies.



Brian Isfeld

July 26th moved out to a camp which had been constructed at the Souchez end of Zouave Valley, known as Cobourg Street.

Here is a copy of the War Diary for the final days of Thomas's life.

War Diary: 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion (WO 95/3903)

1st August:

A very dull wet morning, but the weather cleared in the afternoon. Orders were received to go forward and establish Headquarters in LIEVIN, the battalion taking over the front line from the 87th Battalion. "C" and "D" Companies occupied the left and right sectors respectively in the front line, and "A" and "B" the left and right supports. The trenches were in bad condition, knee-deep in mud. Company Headquarters were in cellars lying badly exposed to enemy trench mortar fire. Battalion Headquarters were in a Chateau in LIEVIN which was constantly under fire.



2nd August:

The day was uneventful, but early in the night the Hun put over a number of gas shells with the result that an entire Lewis gun crew of "C" Coy was put out of action. "A" Coy was ordered to replace same.

3rd August:

Situation normal throughout the day; 1 O.R. wounded. "D" Coy under Major E. J. Ryan pushed forward outposts about 150 yards and established a line in front of railway track.

4th August:

Enemy shelling very heavy all day, a large number of High Explosives dropping round H.Q. Two Brigade observers in an observation post in the chateau were killed and the Brigadier had a narrow escape from shrapnel. Our own casualties were nil. "D" Coy pushed forward 3 posts on right platoon front about 125 yards in face of considerable rifle and machine gun fire.

5th August:

"D" Coy undertook a daylight raid on the crater at junction of Bell St. and Lens-Lievin Road. Fighting patrols were sent forward to Bell St. where they established posts. The crater was entered and dugouts and tunnels

6th August:

Very quiet. A few shells came over Bn. Headquarters and the Dressing Station was hit, but the Medical Staff had a miraculous escape. A patrol was sent forward to inspect an enemy machine gun emplacement at 5.30 a.m. and found same destroyed. "B" Coy relieved "D" Coy in the front line. Casualties: Lieut. Cresswell wounded; 1 O.R. killed and 3 wounded.

Date		Hour	Summary of Events and Information
1917			
7	Aug. 7		During the day the enemy in force attacked our block at N. 13. C. 65. 25. driving our men back 50 yards. We counter-attacked with Lewis guns and recaptured the position, later successfully repulsing a second attack and inflicting heavy casualties. Lieut V. Z. Manning and 4 O.R. wounded.
	Aug. 8		Situation quiet all day. Two hits were scored by one of our snipers. In the evening a very heavy thunderstorm broke over the area. At 11.45 p.m. a Stokes gun bomb dump at N. 14. b. was blown up, killing two O.R. but the bombs were not exploded; the explosion was attributed to a German trap mine. Our Casualties: 2 O.R. wounded.
	Aug. 9	1.30 a.m.	Gas shells landed round Bn. H.Q. but a fresh wind was blowing which soon dissipated the fumes.
		4.15 a.m.	A successful raid was carried out by "B" Co. One party under Sgt. O. Massey, M.M. attacked an enemy strong point at N. 19. b. 3.3. and established a block at N. 19. b. 05. 85. A second party under 703561. Cpl. C. V. Brewer raided the crater inflicting heavy casualties and subjecting the tunnels and dug-outs to a second thorough bombing. The Hun fled
	Aug. 9	7.00 a.m.	overland and came directly under the fire of our Lewis guns posted strategically for that very purpose. No prisoners or identifications were obtained. Our casualties: 10 O.R. killed; 9 wounded. The Hun then retaliated on our support lines and Lieut E. P. Gleason was killed in the trench while observing their flares; 4 more O.R. were wounded. Gas shells were incessant round our lines and H.Q. from 10 p.m. till 2.30 the following morning.

On 9th August Thomas was one of the 31 other ranks killed. He has no known grave so is remembered on the **Vimy Memorial**.



CWGC



Nick Saunders

ALEXANDER McLEOD

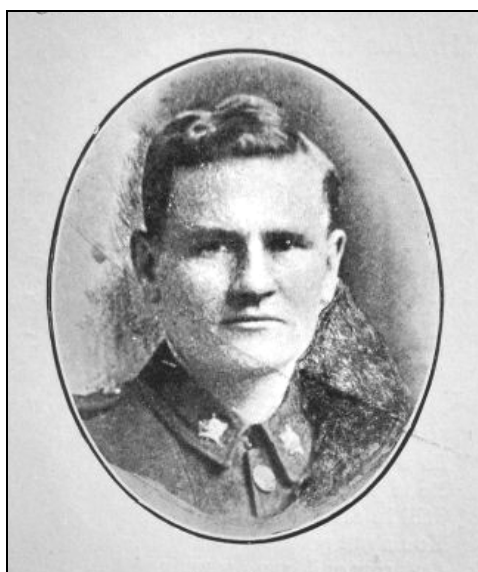
Sergeant

24743

13th Battalion 1st Canadian Contingent

died on 15th August 1917

aged 28



Alexander's parents were Alexander and Margaret (née McKenzie). They had married on 10th February 1870. Alexander was born on 20th April 1892, the youngest son of a large family.

In the **1881 census** the family home was at Achnahaird (81-6), with members being:

Alexander (40) Crofter, born Old Dornie, Margaret (37), Murdo (10), Henrietta (8), Roderick (6), Barbara (3), Mary (6 months)

Ten years later on **5th April 1891**, father was not present.

Those resident at Achnahaird were:

Maggie (47), Murdo (20), Roderick (16), Mary (10), Hughina (8), Duncan (7), Maggie (2), Alexander (2 months) – (he must have died before 1901), Kenneth McLeod (80) – servant

In **1901** those family members at Ally Buier Cottage were:
Alexander (57), Margaret (56), Duncan (16), Hughina (15), Maggie (12)
Alexander (10)

Alexander joined the Canadian Army on September 1914. He initially joined the 8th Regiment Royal Highlanders of Canada. His Attestation Paper reveals that his previous employment was that of Assistant Blacksmith. His height was 5'7", Complexion fair, Eyes blue, and Hair brown.

Much of the information below was given to the **Ross & Cromarty Heritage Society** (donor unknown).

Alexander Macleod, DCM, Cross of St. George – Hero from Loch Broom

“The red light from the blazing oil, flashing and glittering on the long line of bayonets, was a sight to fire the imagination.”

So recorded a historian as he witnessed the sight of the 13th Battalion of The Royal Highlanders of Canada on the dawn of the 15th August, 1917, as they stormed their way into the ruins of coal mining villages immediately in front of Hill 70, near Lens in France.

Leading his men in this assault was Sergeant Alexander Macleod, the son of Alex and Margaret Macleod of Achiltibuie. Alexander had grown up as a boy and youth in this wild and beautiful part of Wester Ross. However, the life, though tough, did not present the kind of challenge and excitement sought by young Alexander. Prior to emigrating to Montreal in 1911, he had been employed as an assistant blacksmith, although much more important to him had been the two years he had served with the Lovat Scouts.

*Alexander, after emigrating to Montreal at the age of 20, enlisted in the country's Non-permanent Active Militia, organised by the astute Colonel Sam Hughes, who had already anticipated the inevitability of The Great War. Alexander then joined the Expeditionary Force – the 5th Battalion of the Royal Highlanders which was affiliated to the oldest Scottish Regiment, The Black Watch. At Valcartier, in Canada, he was transferred to the **13th Battalion of the Royal Highlanders**, which was later to earn the reputation*

of being the most revered and famous fighting force in the country's military history.

*By September 30th they had embarked on the **RMS Alaunia** and by October 13th they arrived at Plymouth. After travelling up country to Salisbury, they then marched 10 miles to Salisbury Plain where they underwent intensive training. This was carried out in extremely rainy and muddy conditions which, ironically, must have proved to have been very valuable experience considering what they were about to endure in France in the months ahead.*



13th Battalion, Royal Highlanders of Canada, Salisbury Plain 1915

On arriving in France in February 1915 they were first billeted in Armentières, quickly finding themselves being taken on short “tours” of duty in trenches as close as 100 yards from the Germans!

There they had their first taste of what trench warfare was to be all about. Inevitably, casualties and fatalities were soon incurred and it was as early in the war as this that the following prophetic war song became popular:

*I want to go home, I want to go home,
The Germans shoot dum-dums, I don't like their roar,
I don't want to go to the front any more,
Oh my! I don't want to die
I want to go home.*

By July, Alexander was now entrenched at the infamous Ypres Salient, where the exploits of The Royal Highlanders were to fill new pages in Canada's history.

The battalion was now to encounter at first hand the enemy's newest weapon – chlorine gas. It was here at Ypres that a historian present recorded the following, after some particularly fierce trench warfare: “The 13th Battalion of The Royal Highlanders were inspired by gallant leadership and fought a dauntless fight, but even that sublime courage could not withstand fire and steel.!”

During desperate fighting the Canadian-made Ross rifles were to prove most unreliable, letting the battalion down in its hour of need. There were many casualties but Alexander survived – though he was wounded in the leg. This was later on followed by an attack of measles, which had swept through the battalion.

A goat, found at Ypres, now named “Flora Macdonald”, accompanied the troops as their mascot. With the advent of Spring, fighting continued on the battlefields of Festubert, Ploegstreet and Messines.

By June 1916, the Ypres Salient conflict had resurged with vengeance. Conditions deteriorated rapidly with death ever present amidst deep mud-filled craters. Alexander was now fighting in some of the bitterest battles of the war, as the Germans continued to make significant gains and his battalion sought to prevent the Germans advancing further in an area between Sanctuary Wood and Mount Sorrel. The following is recorded in the Battalion's official historical war accounts. “15 Germans advanced and succeeded in getting close to a forward post now garrisoned only by Sergeant Macleod and one other man. The doughty pair, viewing with dislike the possibility of being surrounded and captured, organised a counter-attack, which was principally a bombing affair, fell upon the astonished Germans and drove them in confusion back to their own wire. The counter-attack then re-formed and returned in safety.!” The London Gazette of 27th July, 1916 published the following report regarding his heroic action at Ypres Salient:

“24743 Sjt A. Macleod 13th Can. Infy. Bn.

For Conspicuous Bravery. After a heavy bombardment, the enemy sent over some reconnoitring parties, but Sergeant Macleod jumped the parapet and bombed them back to their wire, 160 yards. He set a fine example.”

Such actions were unlikely to be sustained without death or serious injury, and on June 23rd [see war diary for 27th June] at the now devastated Sanctuary Wood, two pieces of shrapnel pierced his helmet whilst in action. The entry in his actual medical record at this time recorded: “two pieces of shrapnel in mid-parietal line, not taken out. Well healed. To duty.”

The War Diary of 27th June 1916 indicates that Alexander was wounded at **Halifax Trench.**

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.			WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE - SUM
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events
	June 27th		CASUALTIES. Continued.
Halifax Trench.			Lieut. A.H. Follett - Wounded (head)
		No. 52835	Sgt W.C. Neil - Killed
		" 414259	Pte A.P. McDougall - "
		" 65585	" J.R. Maguire - "
		" 47009	" R. Hind - "
		" 42698	" D.G. Martin - "
		" 27275	" S.L. Thompson - "
		" 427455	" M.F. White - "
		" 24105	" C. Boxer - wounded
		" 126274	" A.J. Clarke - "
		Lieut. C.J. Roche	- Killed. buried in Military Cem.
		No. 24362	Sgt B.H. Jarrett - Killed
		" 65522	Pte C.P. Leuener - "
		" 427176	" R. Studwicke - "
		" 602218	" A.L. McGarter - "
		" 460926	L/C H.A. Tompkins - Shell shock
		" 426928	L/C G. Erickson - Killed
		Lieut. I.P. Falkner	- Killed.
		No. 427467	Pte W. Green - "
		" 427490	" G. Clarke - "
		" 426980	" J. Ford - Wounded
		" 24743	" A. McCloed - "
		" 488864	" W.C. Bantillon - "

On 23rd July it was announced that decorations had been awarded and that the Distinguished Conduct Medal had been awarded to (newly promoted) **Sergeant A Macleod.**

At Devonshire Lines

Weather. Dull and inclined to be showery in the morning, but fine in the afternoon and eve evening.
Reveille at 7.00 a.m. - **Sick Parade** at 7.50 a.m.
Church Parade The Battalion paraded for Divine Service at 9.45 a.m. on the Battalion Parade Ground, Major Greegan officiated. Roman Catholics paraded under Lieut J.D.Gunn, and proceeded to the Y.M.C.A.Hut, opposite Scottish Lines, for Mass. Major O'Gorman officiated.

The following decorations have been awarded:- The Military Cross - Lieut A.W.Aitchison.
The Distinguished Conduct Medal :- No.24745 Sergt A.MoLeod.
The Military Medal :- No.24286 Sergt A.Petrie.
No.24889 Cpl F.J.Walker.
No.24890 L/Cpl J.E.Westerman.
No.214787 Pte G.Gill.

During July 1916, the 13th Battalion was under heavy trench bombardment as the Germans strove to advance. During one of their attacks a small party of soldiers entered a trench quite near to the position that Alexander and a few others, including a Lance Corporal Johnson – a Russian in the 13th ranks – were occupying. A flare suddenly revealed that they were wearing flat caps with Red Cross brassards. Challenged by Johnson they made a guttural unconvincing reply. Johnson, suspecting a trick, replied with a bomb. The Germans duly returned the compliment. However, they under-estimated the courage and spirit of this tiny bunch of men of the 13th, who duly drove the Germans back towards their lines, although they then found themselves under machine gun fire as they retreated to safety and the welcome support of a rapidly re-manned line of Canadians.

The 13th Canadians were relieved by the 8th Canadians on the night of 19th/20th July.

The following month Alexander was awarded The Cross of St. George (Russian 3rd Class). He was one of only 200 awarded this decoration who were not Russian by birth, and it was awarded “in recognition of an extreme act of bravery in the face of the enemy.” The decoration meant that a number of benefits were automatically awarded to the recipient, such as “freedom from taxes upon retirement from Military Service”.



Sadly, Alexander was to receive none of them. After fighting at the Somme he returned to Ardgay, in Ross-shire, where he stayed with his brother Murdoch, a shoe-

maker, and enjoyed a brief period of rest and tranquillity before returning once again to the battlefields of France. After the winter of 1916 Alexander was entrenched at the bloody and deadly Vimy Ridge, where it was “decreed”, that “the Canadian Corps would succeed in capturing it” (where others before them had failed). The regiment did indeed play a huge part in its eventual capture, but not without severe losses, suffering over 10,000 casualties. Once again Alexander survived, although only to fight one more battle. No one had managed to capture Hill 70, to the north of Lens, and once again the Canadians, under Lieutenant General Sir Arthur Currie, were asked to take it.

The following is an extract from: *The 13th Battalion Royal Highlanders of Canada, 1914-1919* by R. C. Fetherstonhaugh

Hill 70

“On the night of August 14th the Royal Highlanders moved up into trenches whence the assault on Hill 70 was to be launched. Battalion Headquarters was in Meath Trench, slightly in rear of the left front, and here gathered the various infantry and artillery liaison officers and all the connecting links so vital in the conduct of a great battle. Assembly was complete by 2.40 o’clock on the morning of the 15th, an hour and three quarters before the attack was due. For the next half hour silence reigned over the whole area. Thousands of men were packed in the front line.

About 3.55 a.m. Lt. Col McCuaig and several other officers moved out into No Man’s Land and lay down to await the zero hour. Thus, at 4.20 a.m. two double red signal lights blazed suddenly in the German lines, followed a minute or two later by a rocket. With “D” Coy on the right, “B” on the left and “A” in close support, the waves of the Royal Highlanders started for their first objective. On reaching the German front line system, the Royal Highlanders picked up some 25 prisoners and swept forward without serious opposition, reaching their first objective, the Blue Line, on scheduled time and just as the grey light of early dawn changed to the full white light of day.

At this point the Battalion halted, in accordance with the Operation Order. Lt. Col. McCuaig arrived up and established his Headquarters in the dugout which aerial photographs had enabled him to select in advance. Meanwhile, the position of the Battalion had become decidedly uncomfortable. The Blue

Line at this point ran along the top of the hill and the men could be seen by the German snipers in Hugo Trench down the forward slope, also by various observers who controlled the fire of the enemy guns. Between the Blue Line and the Green Line, which was their final objective, the men of the 13th encountered stiff opposition. 'A' Company, under Major Sinclair, pushed forward across fairly open country and reached the Green Line at 6.05 a.m.

It is not known what part Alexander played in this battle for **Hill 70**, but it is known that he was fatally wounded and died on 15th August.

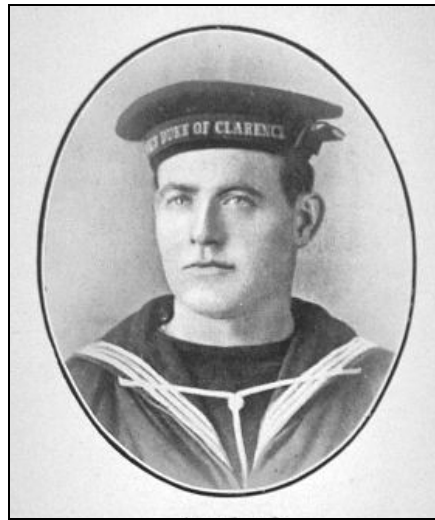
He is buried in **Loos British Cemetery**

in **Grave IX.A.4.**

His brother **Duncan** joined the American Army and survived the War.

MURDO MacLEAN

**Seaman
8309A
Royal Naval Reserve
ss *Hazelwood*
died on 18th/19th October 1917
aged 37**



Murdo's parents were Norman and Mary MacLean of Camascoille. He was born in 1883, and was the brother of **Norman Maclean** of the 1/4th Seaforths (see page 80).

At the time of joining the Royal Naval Reserve, Murdo's height was 5'5", with fresh complexion, chest 37", eyes: blue.

1915

6th May: Enrolled
18th May: At Inverness
20th November: From *Victory* to *Excellent* in position of Seaman
27th December: Posted to *Duke of Clarence*

1916

22nd December: Discharged from *Duke of Clarence*

1917

2nd January: At Royal Naval Hospital, Stonehouse
28th February: Transferred from *Victory* to *Excellent*
16th May: Discharged from *Excellent*
30th June: Posted to *ss Hazelwood*

ss. Hazelwood (below) was 3,120 gross tonnage, defensively-armed and built by Ropner & Son, of Stockton-on-Tees.



On 18th/19th October 1917, 8 miles south by E½E from Anvil Point, *Hazelwood* was torpedoed without warning and sunk by a German submarine. This was *U-boat UC 62 (Max Schmitz)*. She was sailing from the Tyne with a cargo of coal. 32 lives were lost including the Master.

Murdo is remembered on **Portsmouth Naval Memorial** on **Panel 27**.



Nick Saunders



Nick Saunders

His brother **Norman** of 1/4th Seaforths was also killed.

Two brothers survived : **Donald** RNR, and **John** RNR.

RODERICK ROSS

Private

27140

1st Battalion Wellington Regiment, 'B' Company

died on 20th December 1917

aged 31



Roderick was born on the 23rd June 1886 the youngest son of of a family of four boys and one girl. His parents were Margaret (née MacDonald) and Roderick Ross of Reiff who had married c.1877.

1881 census: at Reiff

Roderick (34) Fisherman, Maggie (29) Hugh (3), Donald (1)

At 8.00 p.m. on the night of 24th March 1887 a fishing boat was swamped, drowning Maggie's husband Roderick, his cousin (another Roderick Ross) and two of Maggie's brothers, George and Hugh MacDonald. Only George's body was recovered.

According to Iba MacPherson Ross, after Roderick's death Maggie took her young children home to her parents, but was told by her father to return to her own home "Burnside" on the point above Reiff. He says (in gaelic); "*Roderick built that house for you, so that's where you will stay!*"

1891 census: at Reiff

Maggie (39) Widow, Crofter, Hugh (13), Murdo (10), **Roderick (6)**, Rodina (4)

Donald Ross (11) is with his aunt Ann Stewart, a sister of Roderick at the village of Badinscallie

1901 census: at Widow Ross Cottage, Reiff

Margaret (50), Murdo (20), **Roderick (16)**, Rodina (14)

Roderick emigrated to New Zealand before WW1 and initially lived in Dunedin on South Island. His occupation before enlistment was that of a Labourer working for J. D. Dennison. His address at the time was c/o P.O. Taihape, North Island. His brother Hugh also went to New Zealand, his address being P.O., Longford, Murchison, New Zealand.

Roderick enlisted in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force on 3rd June 1916 and was posted to 'B' Company, 17th Reinforcements, Wellington Infantry Battalion. The next month on 7th July he transferred to Trentham Camp for basic training. After a fortnight there he transferred to Featherston Camp where specialist training in musketry took place. Here the men were issued with their uniforms and then sent on embarkation leave.

He embarked on 23rd September 1916 from Wellington on *HMNZT 65 Pakeha* owned by Shaw, Savill and Albion Company and commandeered to carry troops during WW1. The ship's name is the Maori word for a white New Zealander.

Master: Captain R Lewis

Ports of Call: Cape of Good Hope

Arrived Devonport on 19th November

OC Troops: Captain Columb

Units on Board: 17th Reinforcements, 8th Reinforcements Maori Contingent, 11th Reinforcements NZ Rifle Brigade 1st and 2nd Battalions

8th Reinforcements NZ Rifle Brigade 3rd and 4th Battalions

The embarkation of two ships totalled 2181 men.



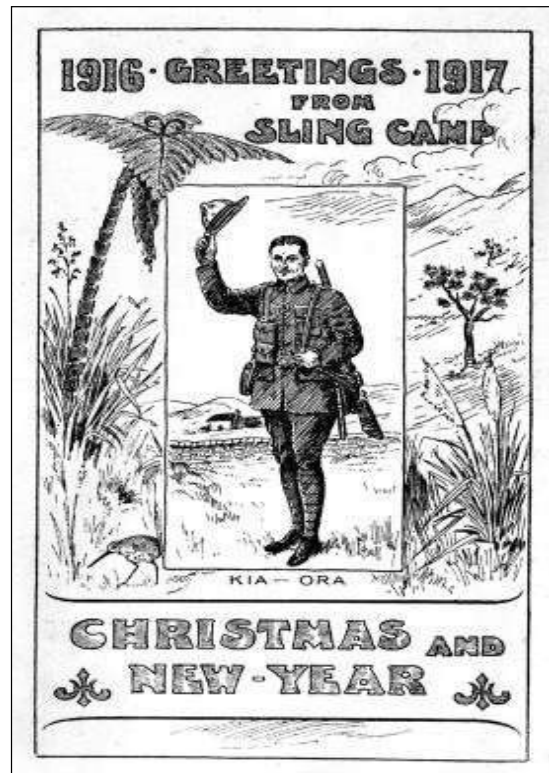
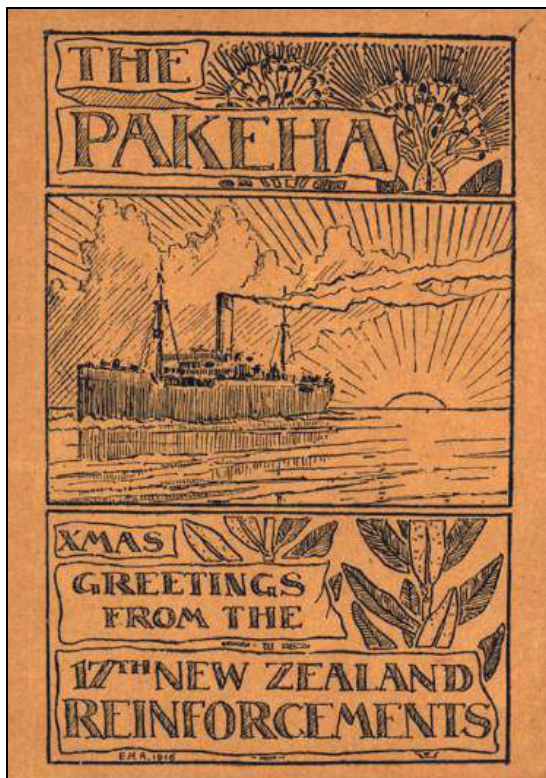
Sling Camp

After disembarking at Devonport on 18th November Roderick arrived at Sling Camp by train that same day. Sling on Salisbury Plain was a hutted camp, situated on rising ground close to the permanent military camp above Bulford village. Reinforcements arrived from New Zealand at the rate of about 1,000 per month and after a brief period of recovery from their sea voyage they undertook rigorous training. The New Zealanders resented having to remove their Reinforcement badges, which were regarded as the privilege of those who had already seen active service. Non-commissioned officers straight from New Zealand lost a stripe and had to pass an examination at the end of their training to retain their reduced rank. They had to put up with the fact that there were many Privates with more experience serving in France and still awaiting promotion.

The training was severe, lasting from 6.30 a.m. to 9.00 p.m., often seven days per week, but this soon improved the health of the trainees. The reinforcements were put through an intensive three weeks' training under pressure: squad and section drill, musketry, physical training, bayonet fighting, wiring, bombing, anti-gas measures and the Lewis gun. Here the men had to suffer the shouting and harshness of the New Zealand and British instructors. The parade ground at Sling was nicknamed "The Piccadilly

Trot” with the marching taking place on “Piccadilly Circus”, a name no doubt adopted after some of the men had returned from a leave period in London!

Roderick was based at Sling during the Christmas of 1916/17 and one wonders whether he sent either of these cards to his family.



France

Roderick left Sling for France on 7th January 1917, and would have stayed for a night at a tented camp outside Boulogne. The story goes that the bell tents in which the men were billeted were rotten and leaked like a sieve. They were issued with just one blanket for bedding, hence the nickname “One Blanket Hill” camp.

Then there was a 20-mile march to Etaples, which was the Reinforcement Training Centre for the British Armies in France, where each Division had its reinforcement depot. At Etaples soldiers passed through another rigorous training course, covering all aspects of trench warfare before being sent

forward to the Division. Here the parade ground was nicknamed “The Bullring”.

Roderick remained at Etaples for nearly a month, from 9th January until 5th February when he joined the 1st Battalion Wellington Regiment ‘in the field’. The exact location is never named on service records so this has to be established by studying War Diaries and Regimental Histories. The Wellington Regimental History reveals that he joined at Fleurbaix billets.

Here are the basic movements for Roderick between **March and June 1917**:

1 st March:	1 st Wellington Battalion took over trenches at Le Touquet
9 th -15 th March:	In trenches
15 th -18 th March:	Working-Parties
18 th March:	Marched 3 miles to Bulford Camp (between Bailleul and Ploegsteert)
31 st March:	Moved into Ploegsteert – Messines area
31 st March-21 st April:	Occupied trenches taking turns
April to June:	Messines area

Extract from: *The Wellington Regiment NZEF 1914-19*
by W H Cunningham, C A L Treadwell and J S Hanna

Chapter XX – Le Bizet

On the 25th February 1917, the 1st Battalion marched to Le Bizet and took over billets in brigade support from 8th Border Regiment. The village of Le Bizet was uninhabited by civilians, and the houses had been badly damaged by shell fire.

On the 1st March, the 1st Battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion in the line. The 1st Battalion had its headquarters at Surrey House. The trenches in this sector (Right sector – Le Touquet) were in bad shape, for the upper hundred yards of Long Avenue and portions of other trenches were under water. The whole of the parapet in the front line was very low, and in a bad state of repair: many of the dug-outs had fallen in. There was an Engineer’s dump alongside Battalion headquarters; but stores were very limited, and timber and riveting material impossible to obtain. There was therefore much work

to be done. The battalion in line heightened and strengthened the parapet, cleared drains and built up traverses and paradoss.

On the 9th March, the 2nd Battalion relieved the 1st Battalion in the line, the latter moving to Point de Nieppe. There, training was carried on daily, and in the afternoons inter-platoon Rugby matches and inter-company Soccer matches were played on very rough grounds. On the 18th March, the 1st Battalion marched about three miles to Bulford Camp and relieved the 10th Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. A great many men were employed by day on railway constructional work at Connaught Road, Romarin and Quarry Road Sidings, while, at night, parties were digging the subsidiary line on the left brigade front and wiring the same with double apron. Towards the end of the month, the 1st Battalion was inspected at Bulford Camp by Brigadier-General C. H. J. Brown, D.S.O., Commanding First New Zealand Infantry Brigade.

The weather during March had been changeable with a fair amount of rain and occasional snow-storms, and there was a certain amount of sickness.

Chapter XXI – Ploegsteert

On 1st April the Battalion relieved the 4th Bn Rifle Bde in line in the Ploegsteert sector (St. Yves Hill). The whole of St Yves Hill was a maze of old, destroyed or abandoned trenches and saps which made systematic work very difficult. The Douve Sector was overlooked by the remnants of the village of Messines. It was not long before we learned that in the coming offensive the task allotted to the New Zealand Division was to capture that village.

Messines

(from www.pap-to-pas.org From Papanui to Passchendaele)

Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig had always believed that a breakthrough could be made in the Ypres Salient area. He planned an offensive for the summer of 1917. As a preliminary to a wider attempt to enlarge the Ypres Salient and create a breakthrough, it was proposed that the Messines Ridge south of Ypres be chosen as the starting point of this offensive. Haig

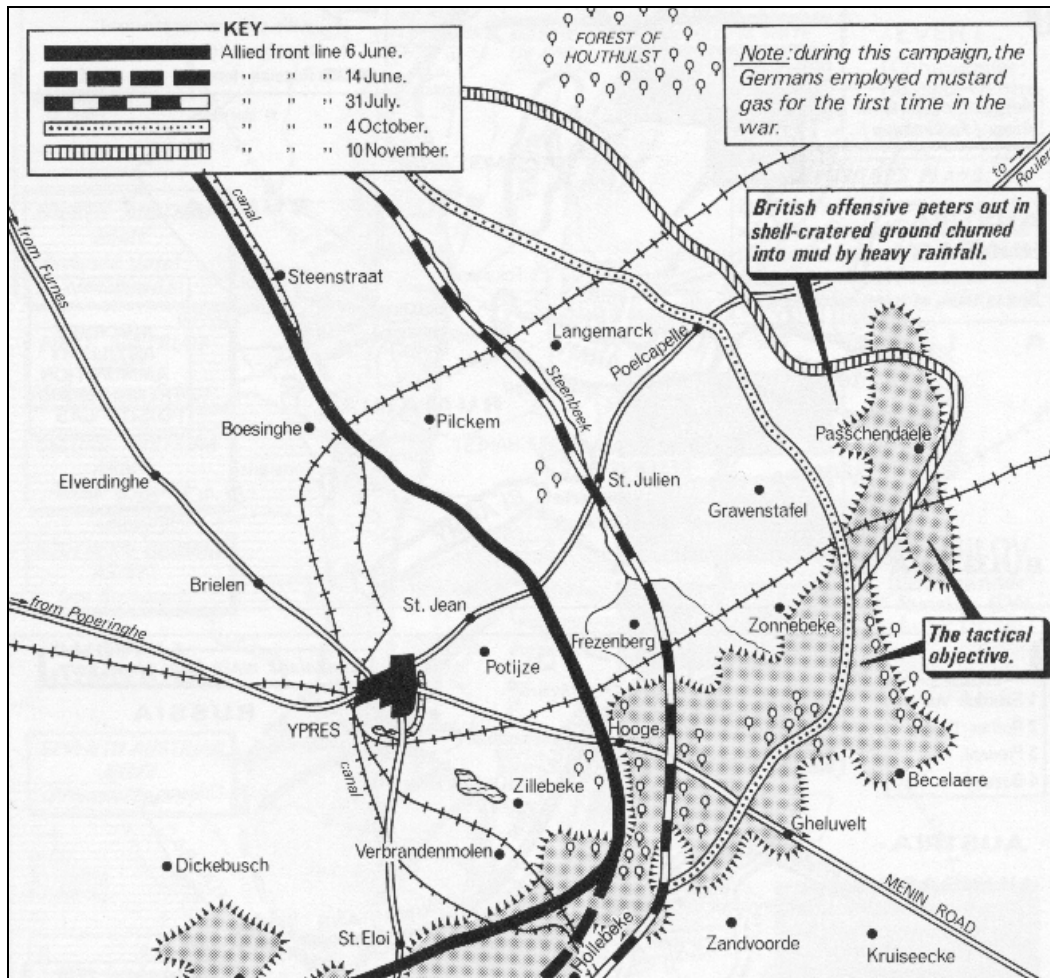
instructed Sir Herbert Plumer to prepare a plan for the capture of the Messines Ridge, and the New Zealand Division was one of the components of the forces Plumer assembled for this purpose.

The Messines offensive was preceded by an exceptional artillery barrage of 17 days, with a particular emphasis in the latter stages on destroying the German wire. Another part of the artillery plan was preparation for counter-battery fire against German artillery that might interfere with the infantry advance. These preparations were materially assisted by the fact that the Royal Flying Corps had aerial supremacy and could use this observation to assist in the development of a sophisticated artillery fire plan. This fire plan included not only the initial barrage, but also forward movement in support of British advances and to help blunt the inevitable German counter-attacks.

During April and May, training and preparations continued relentlessly. Detailed instructions were developed and allocated to specific companies. A large scale model of the Messines area was developed for officers to study. Platoon commanders and sergeants were called to conferences with battalion commanding officers to receive a detailed briefing on their specific role.

On 7th June 1917, at 3.10 a.m., 19 of the 21 mines exploded in a roar that it was claimed, could be heard in London. Simultaneously, the artillery began its fire plan that would provide covering fire for the assaulting infantry and suppress the German artillery. For once, everything seemed to go much as planned for the New Zealand Division. The initial assault on Messines was successful. The New Zealand Division handed over control of the areas captured on 9th June to the Australians and moved back into Divisional Reserve areas.

The **Battle of Broodseinde**, 4th October 1917, was the last of three successful “bite and hold” battles launched by General Herbert Plumer during the middle phase of the 3rd Battle of Ypres. Both sides were planning an attack on 4th October.



The Battle of Broodseinde

(from www.pap-to-pas.org From Papanui to Passchendaele)

By late September all hope of the decisive breakthrough for which Haig had optimistically hoped had gone. The final objective to be seized in his Flanders Offensive before the winter set in was the heights of the ridge overlooking Ypres. The highest point of this ridge contained the ruined village of Passchendaele. Haig ordered Plumer and Gough to prepare a plan for the seizure of this ridge, using the approach of "bite and hold". Haig proposed to use two armies for this final assault, the fifth Army in the northern part of the Salient commanded by Gough and the Second Army in the southern part commanded by Plumer. The spearhead of Plumer's attack would be the two Anzac Corps, fighting side by side for the first time – I

Anzac was commanded by General W. R. Birdwood, II Anzac by General Sir Alexander Godley. The New Zealand Division was part of Godley's II Anzac Corps.

The 23,000-man New Zealand Division marched to the Ypres area on 24th September 1917. It took six days, moving at a rate of 20 miles per day. They moved through the ruined town of Ypres and into the Salient to the area in which they would assemble for the assault. A number of spurs ran down from the Passchendaele Ridge. The New Zealanders were tasked to seize two of these spurs – the lower Gravenstafel Spur and the larger Bellevue Spur. Facing them was a quagmire, as incessant shelling had destroyed the stream beds that drained the ridge. Ruined farms had been replaced by pill boxes supported by tangled scrolls of barbed wire. The initial objective of the attack on Broodseinde, the section of the ridge opposite Ypres, was the seizure of the first low ridge in front of Passchendaele. This first “bite” would then be held, while the second “bite” would be the heights of Passchendaele itself.

The initial assaulting forces – 1st Auckland and 1st Wellington battalions from the 1st Brigade and 3rd Otago and 3rd Auckland battalions from the 4th Brigade – were in position by the evening of 2nd October and received a thorough briefing from their commanders about their role. This initial assault group would seize the area up to a designated Red Line. They would then be leapfrogged by a second group consisting of 2nd Wellington and 2nd Auckland battalions from the 1st Brigade and 3rd Canterbury and Wellington battalions from the 4th Brigade, who were to capture the area up to the Blue Line. On the evening of 3rd October, the weather changed, bringing gale-force winds and rain. The assault troops huddled uncomfortably in their assembly trenches and tried to sleep through this bleak night.

At 6.00 a.m. on 4th October, the British artillery barrage opened up across the whole of the front. The infantry moved onto attack, and for the first 200 yards, the advance was easy. Little resistance was experienced as a result of the artillery barrage. As they progressed, however, the New Zealand brigades ran straight into an intense German machine gun barrage. Using the “fire and manoeuvre” tactics, sections laid down suppressing fire on pill boxes and strongholds while other men moved forward with grenades to clear the obstacles. Both battalions reached the Red Line on timetable, dug in and waited to be leapfrogged by the succeeding battalions while the artillery barrage continued.

German counter-attacks continued throughout the morning and early afternoon. They made three further attempts at dislodging the New Zealanders from their new front line, but each counter-attack faltered before withering machine gun fire and accurate artillery support. The Division held its position while the stretcher-bearers began their exhaustingly grim task of locating and evacuating wounded men to regimental aid posts and casualty clearing stations.

From the perspective of the New Zealand Division, Broodseinde was a stunning victory. They had suffered 1853 casualties – one in four of the assaulting force, with 330 killed and 200 missing. They had advanced the line by nearly 2000 yards, taken over 1100 prisoners and killed a considerable number of the enemy – estimated at 800 in 1 Brigade’s sector alone.”

Roderick was wounded in action on 4th October and admitted to the 3rd Australian Field Ambulance the next day for a few hours before being transferred to 17th Casualty Clearing Station. After remaining there for a week he was admitted to 56th General Hospital at Etaples for a few days before being embarked on *H.S. Stad Antwerpen* for England on 15th November.

Eventually he arrived at Southwark Military Hospital, Dulwich Grove, London on 17th November. His injuries were severe gunshot wounds to his right hip and open abdomen. He survived a further month, but eventually there was no hope for him and he died of his wounds on 20th December 1917 at the hospital. It is estimated that 14,000-15,000 wounded soldiers were treated at Southwark during WW1.



Roderick was buried on 22nd December in Grave No. 180225 at Brookwood, near Woking. In 1917 this cemetery had the title of London Necropolis Cemetery, Brookwood.

The cemetery is now known as Brookwood Military Cemetery and Roderick lies in

Grave VIII. C. 9.



Clare Church

Extract from Ross-shire Journal dated 25th January 1918

Pte. Roderick Ross, New Zealander, son of Mrs Ross, Reef, Achiltibuie, Ross-shire, died of wounds in a London hospital on December 20, 1917. Deceased was 32 years of age. Six years ago he joined his brother in New Zealand, and farmed there. In May, 1916, Pte. Ross joined the New Zealand contingent, and came over to this country, proceeding later on to the Western front. He was wounded in action on October 4, and for a time hope was entertained that he might recover. Deceased was a fine, manly type of Highlander, who unselfishly answered his country's call, and gave to her the best he had in the field of battle. Deep sympathy is felt with the mother.

1918

In 1918 the Allies in France moved from defence, through defeat, to victory. For Britain, it began with the heritage of failure to break German resistance at Passchendaele and at Cambrai. The pool of manpower was becoming very shallow and Lloyd George (Prime Minister) refused to replace the losses in manpower of Third Ypres. Therefore, in February Haig reorganized divisional strength from twelve down to nine battalions. The collapse of Russia enabled Germany to reallocate divisions to France. An impending German offensive in France was both recognized and feared as American forces were not yet ready for action. The Germans' opening attack on the Somme, on 21st March was devastating.

Neil McLeod was killed between 21st and 26th March

Kenneth Stewart was killed in action on 28th March at the Battle of Arras.

Donald Campbell was killed in action on 2nd April at Wancourt, near Arras

Subsequent attacks on other parts of the line threatened the Channel ports. The attacks, however, were finally held. In July the Allies moved towards a counterstroke, which turned into an all-out offensive. It was clear that the Germans were running out of manpower. The newly unified Allied command structure under Foch, the arrival of the Americans into the Front line and the advent of well-handled tanks gave Haig the confidence to believe that the war could be won before the end of the year.

Norman McLeod of USA Army was involved in Chateau Thierry attack in early June, but was injured. RML says he died back in the USA in a military hospital in April 1918, but this was most probably 1919.

On 27th July **Neil Campbell** of the 5th Seaforth Highlanders was injured in the 2nd Battle of the Marne.

Hugh McLeod died on 20th December in Scotland. He fell ill in Macedonia and was repatriated and discharged from the Army as unfit in September.

NEIL MacLEOD

Lance Corporal

8/40665

'B' Company, 7th Battalion Gordon Highlanders

died between 21st and 26th March 1918

aged 20



Neil's parents were William and Catherine of West Achnahaird, Achiltibuie. They married after 1891. Neil was born in about 1898, and his younger brother John George in 1899/1900. Father's occupation is listed as a Crofter in the Censuses. William in **1901** was aged 47, Catherine aged 40. **Neil** was 3 and John George aged 1. Father died in 1905, leaving mother to bring up her two sons on her own.

Prior to enlisting in the Army, Neil's occupation was that of a shepherd. He joined the 2nd Lovat's Scouts (No. 4252) on 23rd February 1914 with his Primary Military Examination taking place at Achiltibuie. The Recruiting Officer was Capt. D. A. Mackenzie of the 4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. He signed the Attestation Form at Beauly on 6th March. His declared age was stated as 17 years, but in reality he was probably only 16. His height was 5 ft. 7 ½ inches.

Neil's army records survive on www.ancestry.co.uk, but they do not give any information prior to 1916. It can be assumed that he fought on the Gallipoli peninsula with the 2nd Lovat's Scouts. See details on page 47 (George Maclean).

He was granted agricultural leave from 16th May to 16th June 1916; also from 30th October to 27th November 1916. However he did not return to duty on time and was absent drunk from noon 27th November 1916 till 5.25 p.m. 29th November. Admonished – lost 2 days pay. Neil transferred to the 8th Cameron Highlanders on 4th December 1916, and later to the 1/7th Battalion Gordon Highlanders on 22nd February 1917.

Neil suffered gunshot wounds to his scalp at Arras on 23rd April 1917. He was admitted to 24th Casualty Clearing Station, then Canadian General Hospital at Etaples. This could not have been too serious because he rejoined his battalion on 16th May. Promotion to Lance-Corporal (unpaid) took place on 19th August 1917. Lance-Corporal pay commenced on 30th October. He was granted leave from 22nd December to 6th January 1918.

Neil was killed in action during the Battle of Saint Quentin (21st-26th March) 1918 at the beginning of the German Spring Offensive (21st March to 5th April) when the Germans broke through the British front line and overwhelmed the defenders. This was codenamed *Operation Michael*.

At the beginning of this action the 7th Gordon Highlanders in the 51st Highland Division were in Brigade Reserve at London Camp, Beugny to the south east of Arras. At 5.10 a.m. on 21st March the enemy began to shell Beugny heavily and it was observed that the whole of the forward area was being very heavily bombarded. The men were ordered to "Stand To" as a hostile attack appeared imminent. At about 6.00 a.m. orders were received to be ready to move forward at a moment's notice. At 7.54 a.m. the battalion started to move, with few casualties, to the front line trench a mile further forward astride the Bapaume-Cambrai road between Morchies and Beaumetz. Enemy activity was observed all day and scouts seen close to the wire. It became quieter in the early evening and all companies were issued with rations. At 9.30 p.m. a pocket of the enemy was discovered and driven out. It was relatively quiet during the night.

Neil has no known grave so is remembered on the

Arras Memorial in Bay 8



Nick Saunders

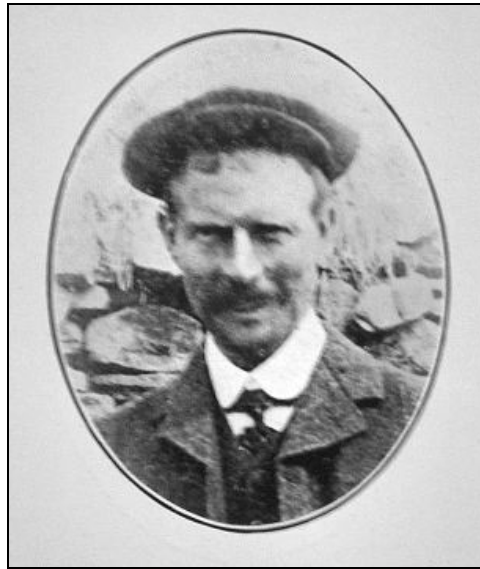
A family grave exists at **Badinscallie Burial Ground**. The headstone includes the following words.

**In loving memory of
William Macleod
Achnahaird
died 10 July 1905 aged 62 years
and his wife
Catherine Macleod died 1 November 1932 aged 72 years
also their two sons
Neil
killed in action 21 March 1918
aged 20 years
and John George
died 24 February 1929 aged 29 years.**

KENNETH STEWART

**Private
S/22891**

**2nd Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
died on 28th March 1918
aged 41**



Kenneth was born about 1877, the son of Duncan and Catherine (née McLeod). They had married on 27th February 1873.

1881 census: at Polglas 8

Duncan (48) Crofter, Catherine (35), Ann (6), Kenneth (4), James (2), Mary (2 months).

Also in the house: Donald McLeod (57) Visitor – Woolweaver; Jane McLeod (50) – wife; Isabella McLean (10) – visitor – scholar.

1891 census: at Polglass

Duncan (58), Catherine (45), Ann (16), Kenneth (14), James (12), Mary (9), Bella (7)

1901 census:

Kenneth was resident at Balig Farm, Rerrick, Kirkcudbrightshire, a shepherd aged 24.

RML says he was a shepherd for many years with Mr. Robertson, Fodderty. On enlistment his address was Nairn, Morayshire.

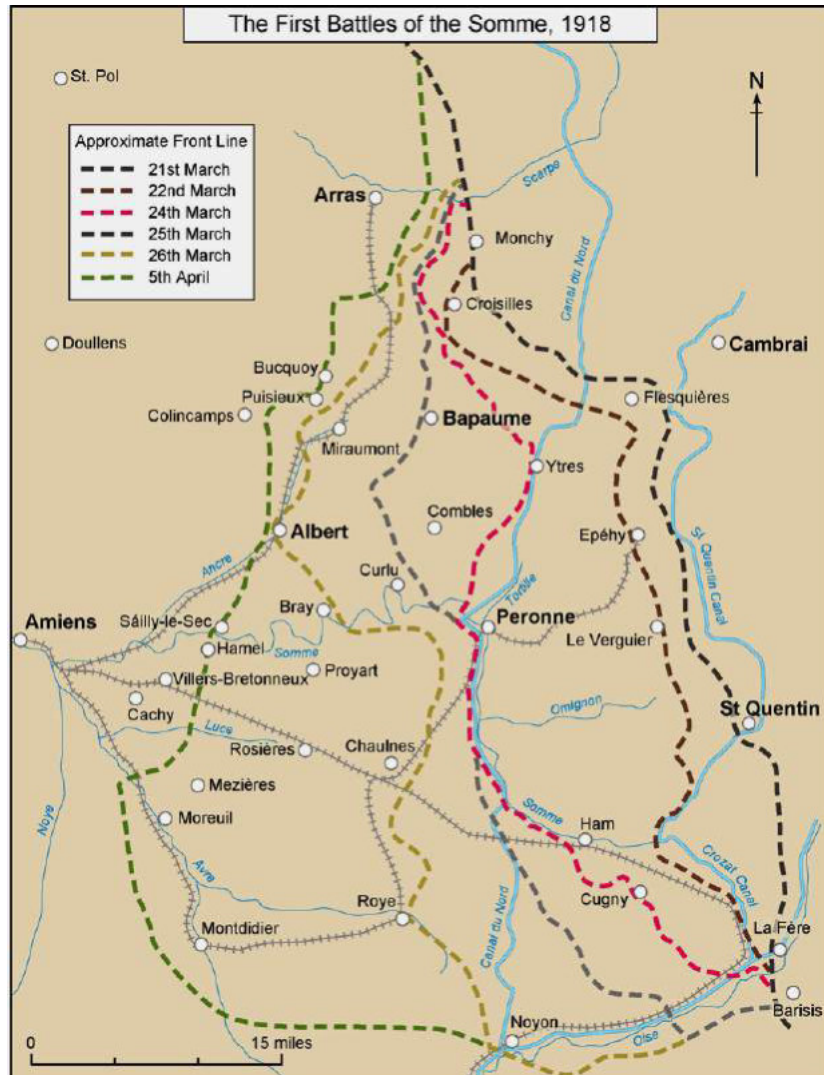
He joined the 2nd Seaforths in June 1917 and proceeded to France in October. In March 1918 the 2nd Seaforths were part of the Third Army under General Byng 15th (Scottish) Division. The Battle of Arras at the end of March began when German armies under the command of General Karl von Bulow attempted to break through the Allied front at Arras. The Allied armies were forced to retreat in a sector north of Arras, but the attack exhausted 15 German divisions.

Extract from CWGC website**First Battle of Arras, 1918; 28th March**

Shortly after 21st March, twenty-nine German Divisions were eventually assembled on a 33-mile front from the Somme to Arleux for a general attack on British Third Army positions; but with Arras as the principal objective, the major breakthrough assault was planned against British forces defending the city on a 10-mile front between Authuille and Oppy. Aware of an imminent attack all possible defensive preparations had been made.

At 3.00 a.m. on Thursday 28th March the early morning stillness was shattered by the chaotic din of a terrific German bombardment. Shortly after 7.00 a.m. German infantry attacked. Unaided by fog and, in places, going forward in mass formations, they met with devastating fire from British artillery and well-sited machine guns.

South of the Scarpe German infiltrations via communication trenches forced 3rd and 15th Divisions back from their front lines by 8.30 a.m.; gradual withdrawals were made to the rear of the Battle Zone; despite great pressure no effective breakthroughs were made. The greatest German efforts were made north of the Scarpe: attacking across difficult ground enemy infantry successfully progressed up the valley between 4th and 56th Division positions forcing British fighting withdrawals from the Battle Zone; despite repeated attacks the line held.



Kenneth was killed in action on 28th March.

He has no known grave and is remembered on the

Arras Memorial in Bay 8



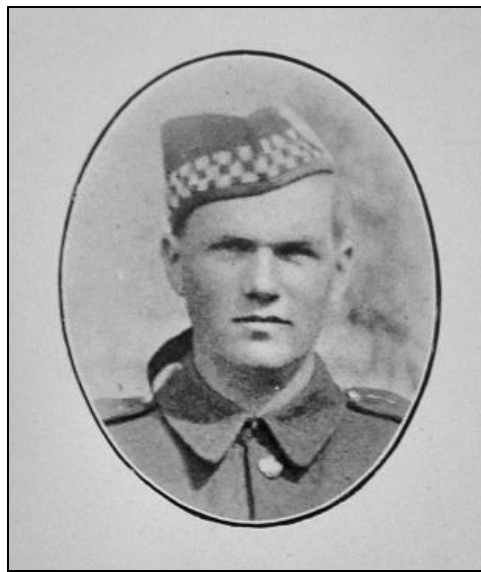
Nick Saunders

DONALD CAMPBELL

Private

204530

**8th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
died on 2nd April 1918
aged 21**



Donald's parents were Kenneth Campbell and Abigail of Polglass, Achiltibuie. He was born in 1896/7. Kenneth married his wife Abigail sometime before 1901, probably around 1894.

1901 census: at Hill, Polglass

Kenneth (50) – crofter, Abigail (36), Abigail (5), **Donald (4)**, Murdo (3), Anne (6 months), Bella McKenzie (17) - Nurse

RML says that Donald joined the 4th Seaforths in June 1917 – but a newspaper article (below) says it was 1916. SDGW states that his address was Lochinver, Sutherlandshire. The Western Front Association site says his address was Elphin.

It is not known when he transferred to the 8th Seaforths.

Extract from War diary 8th Bn Seaforth Highlanders (WO 95/1940)

1918: Wancourt, 5 miles SE of Arras

1st April: 12.25 a.m. Relief of 11th Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders by the Battalion was reported complete.

11 a.m. Enemy seen digging in about Feuchy Chapelle. Enemy aircraft were active during the day.

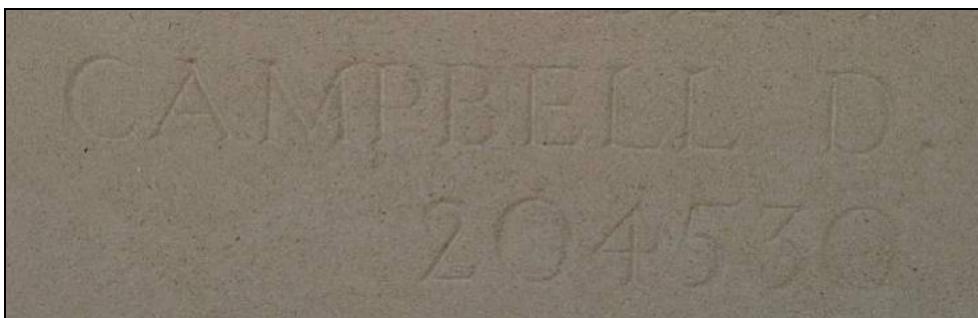
At night 2 posts S of Wancourt-Tilloy Road were taken over by Battalion on right (3rd Canadians). Outpost Line then ran approx as follows. Enemy was observed consolidating during the night and was fired on by our Lewis Guns. During the night enemy artillery was very active on Tilloy and difficulty was experienced in getting up meals to forward Companies. Casualties: 4 Other Ranks wounded. Weather fine.

2nd April. A quieter day. Enemy shelled the Battalion base intermittently all day, except the Outpost Line which was not touched. Our snipers claimed 5 hits. Enemy retaliated on snipers with aerial darts. Enemy aircraft activity less than on previous day. A patrol under 2/Lt Hawthorne came across a German carrying a sheet of iron. When challenged the German ran away & although fired on, was not hit. A NCO came by mistake, on an enemy post. The enemy fled before the NCO was able to use his rifle. An inter company relief was carried out in accordance with attached orders.

*Casualties: 2 **Other Ranks killed** – 6 Other Ranks wounded. Weather showery. Night very dark.*

Donald was one of the Other Ranks killed, on 2nd April 1918. He has no known grave so is remembered on the

**Arras Memorial
in Bay 8.**



He is also commemorated on the **Lochinver War Memorial**



Clare Church

Extract from Ross-shire Journal - 24th May 1918

“He joined the Colours in June, 1916, and went to France in October following. Deceased was only 21 years of age. He was well liked by all who knew him. The deepest sympathy is extended to his parents, sisters, and brother.”

According to RML Donald had one brother serving – **Murdo Campbell**, in the Seaforths

NORMAN McLEOD

**Sergeant
USA Army
died on 20th April 1919?
aged 28**

Norman was born in about 1891/2, the son of the Reverend Donald McLeod, Free Church Minister of Carloway, Lewis, formerly of Achiltibuie. His wife was Tina.

In **1891** the only people living at the Manse at Achiltibuie were Tina (33) born Islay and Christina McKenzie (33) – servant.

In that year, Donald, born at Lochs, Ross-Shire, aged 35, was a visitor at Reraig Cottage, Lochalsh, listed as Minister of the Free Church, Coigach. He was staying at the house of Simon W. C. Gauer, a Bank Agent for Ross.

In the **1901** census members of the family resident at the Achiltibuie Manse were:

Tina (43); Annie McLellan (26) sister of Tina; **Norman (9)**; Mary A (8); Chrissie M (2); Ann McGregor (18) Servant.

Donald was a boarder at No. 5 Church Street, Dingwall, a licensed preacher, at the house of Alexander McRae a restaurant keeper.

According to RML, while still almost a boy **Norman** emigrated to America, where he began by ranching, and afterwards became an Engineer. He lived at Billings, Montana. He was one of the first soldiers from Billings to enlist for overseas service, and went through seven of the nine big engagements in France, and was one of the first Americans “over the top” at Chateau Thierry, where he was severely wounded and gassed.” (Extracts from the Billings Gazette, U.S.A.)

1917:

The U.S. entered the war on 6th April and the fleet sailed for Europe.

On 5th June 10,000,000 Americans registered for the army.

The First U.S. Division landed in France on 27th June.

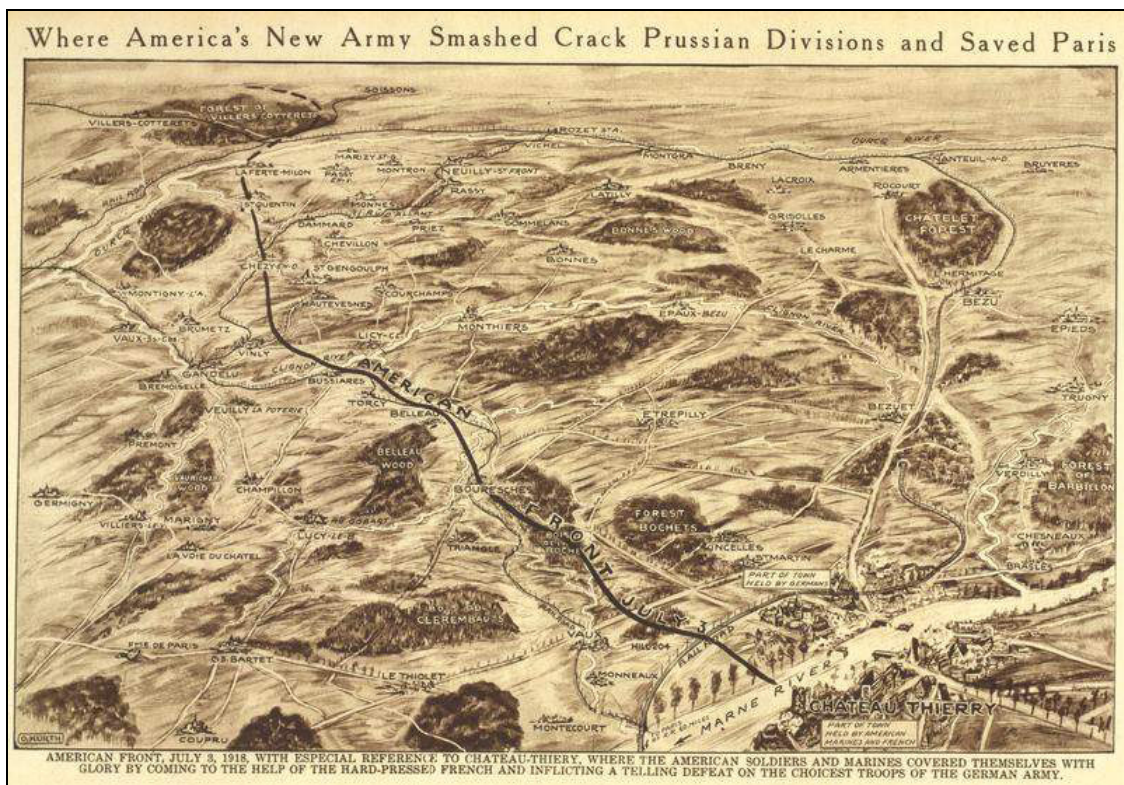
They entered the trenches on 23rd October, and took their first German prisoner two days later.

The first Yanks were killed on 2nd November.
 7th December: U.S. declares war on Austria-Hungary.
 31st December: 204,965 U.S. troops in France.

1918:

Yanks take over Toul sector. March 1st they beat off German attack at Toul.

- 28th March: Pershing puts U.S. army under orders of Foch.
- 17th April: First U.S. Division in battle line at Montdidier.
- 20th April: 26th Division beats off German attack at Seicheprey
- 28th May: First Yank offensive (First Division) takes Cantigny
- 1st June: 654,875 U.S. troops in France.
- 2nd June: U.S. Marines stop Prussian guards at Chateau Thierry.
- 2nd-7th June: U.S. Machine Guns hold Chateau Thierry bridge



RML states that Norman “was one of the first Americans “over the top” at Chateau Thierry, where he was severely wounded and gassed. He died of wounds and gas poisoning at Galin Military Hospital, U.S.A on 20th April 1918.” [probably not correct – likely to be 1919].

NEIL CAMPBELL

Private

S/24795

1st/5th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders

died on 30th July 1918

aged 19



Neil was the only son of Alexander and Mary Campbell (née Macleod) of Achiltibuie.

1901 census: at Loan, Achiltibuie

Alexander (43) Head – Road Contractor; Mary (40);
Hugh Campbell (20) – Servant, shepherd; Christina Campbell (50) Sister,
Kenneth Campbell (40) – brother, fisherman;
Flora (4) daughter; **Neil (2) son.**

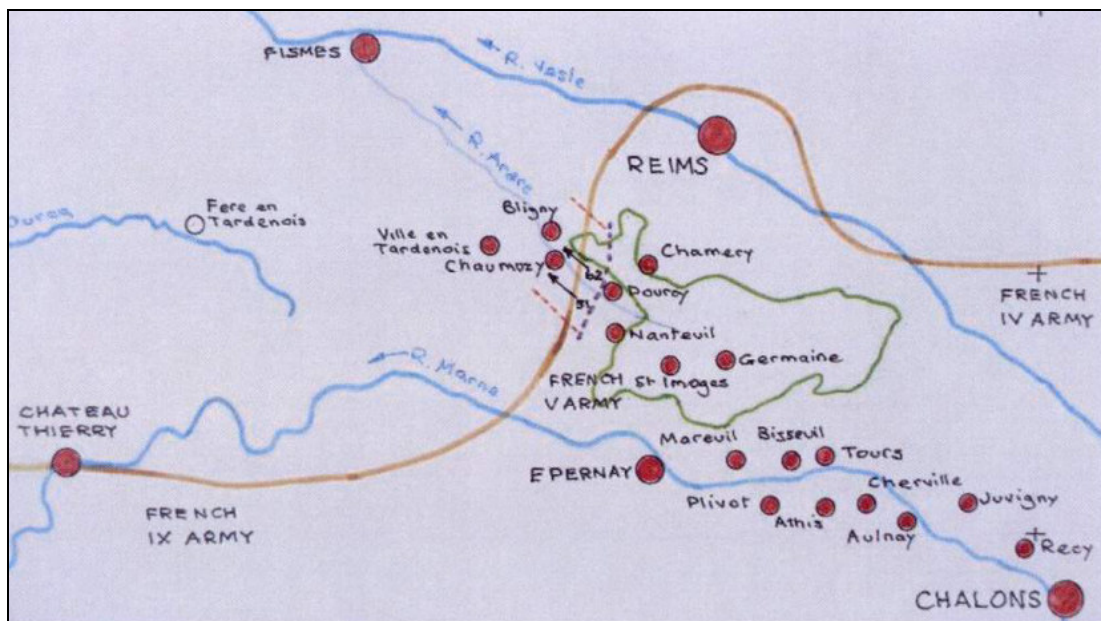
His residence was listed as Nairn by SDGW when Neil joined the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders at Cambusbarron, near Stirling on 3rd September 1917. He transferred to the 5th Seaforths at Cromarty in March 1918 and proceeded to France on 18th April.

War diary: 5th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders

2nd Battle of the Marne, July 1918:

In July the French were being hard pressed in the Rheims-Soissons area, and appealed to the British for help, with the result that, among other Divisions, the 51st was withdrawn from the line on 11th July and at once proceeded to entrain for the Epernay area.

(The brown line is the German Front Line. The area inside the green line is Rheims Forest.)



R J Penhey

After a long, wearisome train journey of over 27 hours, the battalion detrained at Romilly, and on the 19th they arrived at Chalons, and spent the night in the Bois de St. Quentin. Here the troops found a country vastly different from those other areas of France in which they had fought. They found a thickly-wooded country of hills and valleys, admirably suited for the machine gun and sniping tactics of the enemy, who had already burst through the French defences, and had firmly established themselves in the densely-wooded country behind the French line. The Division was at once moved up to attack in conjunction with the French. At 8.00 a.m. on the 21st the 152nd Brigade took part in the attack, the 6th Gordons, with the 5th Seaforths in support, advancing into the Bois de Courton, which was strongly held by the enemy.

Both battalions met with very stiff opposition, particularly from machine guns and trench mortars, with the result that, after advancing 400 yards, the attack was held up, and the line consolidated there. During the night this position was very heavily shelled, but was held until the following night, when the Brigade was relieved and moved further east to more open ground near Bullin Farm, with its right flank on the River Attire, a tributary of the Vesle. Here at 6.00 a.m. on the 23rd the Brigade again attacked, the 5th Seaforths on the right next to the Ardre, with the 6th Seaforths on their left. When 'B' and 'D' Companies moved forward, they were met with heavy enfilade machine-gun fire, but this was speedily overcome, six machine guns being captured and their crews either killed or made prisoners.

This advance continued successfully through a small wood, the Bois de l'Aulney, and the final objective was gained at 8.20 a.m. with comparatively few casualties, but at 10.30 a.m. a very heavy barrage, continuing for three hours, was put upon our positions, causing heavy losses. In the afternoon the surplus personnel from Champillon were brought up, and on the 24th 100 of the most exhausted men were sent back to Nanteuil to rest.

On the morning of the 27th, a further advance was begun, the Brigade attack being made by the battalion, now reduced to 8 officers and 250 other ranks. During this advance, all the officers of the leading Company became casualties, but perceiving this, Lt. W. W. Nicolson, in command of the support Company, at once went forward, took command, and led them on to their objective.

On the night of the 28th the battalion was relieved, and moved back to the vicinity of Bullin Farm where it remained until the 31st, collecting and burying its dead from the battlefield. Its losses in eight days of the heaviest fighting it had ever participated in were as follows: officer, 7 killed, 89 wounded; other ranks, 67 killed, 275 wounded.

Neil was one of those wounded, on the 27th July. He died at Epernay in the Casualty Clearing Station on 30th July.

Neil is buried in:

Terlinchthun British Cemetery, Wimille

in Grave XVII.A.9



CWGC

Neil is also remembered on a family grave at Badenscallie Burial Ground.

HUGH McLEOD

Private

225646

**10th Battalion Cameron Highlanders
died on 20th December 1918
aged 28**



Hugh's parents were Murdo and Barbara of Blairbuie, Reiff. Barbara was born at Lochinver. They married before 1881. Hugh was born about 1890.

1891 census: at Reiff

Murdo (40) – Crofter & Fisherman; Barbara (36) born Assynt, Sutherland; John (13); Mary (11); Isabella (9); Jane (7); Alexander (4); **Hugh (1)**

1901 census: at Murdo Cooper Cottage

Murdo (50), Barbara (43), Jane (17), Alexander (14), **Hugh (12)**, Jessie Ann (9), Dolina (4).

Hugh joined the Lovat's Scouts in August 1913 with service no. 4249. His first theatre of war was at Gallipoli and his movements would have been the same as **Private George Maclean** (see page 47).

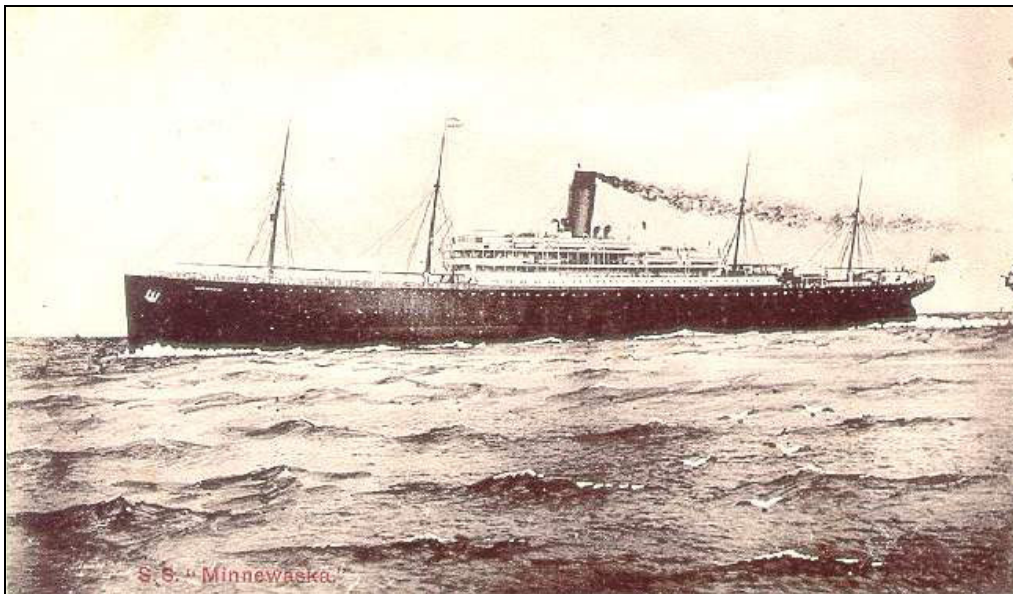
The 1st/1st and 1st/2nd Battalion Lovat's Scouts Yeomanry were amalgamated at Cairo on 27th September 1916 and became the 10th Battalion Cameron Highlanders (Lovat's Scouts). The Battalion reached **Salonika** on 20th October 1916 and joined the 82nd Brigade in the 27th Division on 1st November. It was transferred on 22nd June 1918 to the British Expeditionary Force (France) and joined Lines of Communication Troops on 6th July.

Macedonian Campaign

October 1915: a combined Franco-British force landed at Salonika at the request of the Greek Prime Minister. The objective was to help the Serbs in their fight against Bulgarian aggression. However, the expedition arrived too late, the Serbs having been beaten before they landed. It was decided to keep the force in place for future operations, even against Greek opposition. The campaign in Macedonia was considered by many to be a 'side-show'. However the British Salonika Force had to cope with extremes in temperature and also malaria.

1916:

The 10th Cameron Highlanders landed in Salonika on 20th October (sailed on the *Minnewaska*) and marched to Struma valley.



The campaign was successful with the capture of the Rupel Pass and the Highlanders advanced to within a few miles of Serres.



Area in which the 10th Cameron Highlanders were involved

7th November: Moved up to line near Nigrita, and then on to Kakaraska (also known as Ayia Elini, near Serres)

5th December: Conducted daylight attack on Tumbitsa, with heavy losses.

December 1916-May 1917: Held part of the line between Homodos and Jemimah; manned two night outposts near Ada.

End of May 1917: Encamped at Nigoslav.

24th October: attacked enemy-held villages of Salmah, Kispeki, Ada (on north-eastern shore of Lake Tahinos).

January to May 1918: Moved to part of the line between Lake Tahinos and the Aegean Sea.

Hugh was taken ill with Malaria in Salonica. It is not known when this took place. A 'Y' Scheme was established which identified men who were so seriously ill with Malaria that they should be returned home. But the introduction of submarine warfare in April 1917 prevented the scheme from operating. It was not until early 1918 the British were able to evacuate the worst cases so it is assumed that Hugh returned to Scotland that year.



Clare Church

He was discharged from the Army on 10th September and died at his home on 20th December 1918.

He is buried at **Badenscallie Burial Ground.**

JOHN MacLEAN

Private

1266

**E Company, 4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders
died 1919?
aged 36?**

John was the son of Hector and Ann (née McIntosh). Hector and Ann married on 5th September 1866 at Wick, Caithness.

In the **1881 census** the family was resident at No. 4 House, Coigach. Hector, 44, Fisherman; Ann (37), Betsy (14), Malcolm (12), Isabella (10), Annabella (8), Heughina (5) and John (under 1 month).

John's birth year has been calculated as being in 1882/3 if his age on his Attestation Form was correct. However, his age varies from one census to another.

The John of this biography was probably called **Johnnie** by his parents. In **1891** the family was living at Badentarbat. Hector (55) was listed as a Pauper. The only children still at home were: Malcolm (22), John (12) and **Johnnie (9)**.

RML says that John joined the Volunteers about 1900.

In **1901** the family consisted of Hector (65) Cottar; Ann (56); John (23) Mason Labourer; and Malcolm (30) Fisherman; living at Hector Malcolm Cottage. Johnnie was not there. As can be seen on his Attestation Form, John's occupation was that of Tailor when he enlisted into the 4th Battalion Seaforth Highlanders in 1911.

RML says that he died of Appendicitis in the Military Hospital, Inverness in April 1915, but this date is definitely not correct as his record below states that he was *“Discharged in consequence of being no longer physically fit for War Service”* on 9th January 1916.

Embodied Service. EMBODIED	58. 14	W. L. Col
<p>Total Service towards engagement in the Territorial Force to <u>9. 1. 16</u> (date of discharge) <u>11</u> years <u>236</u> days.</p>		
<p>Discharged in consequence of <u>being no longer physically fit for War Service</u> <u>Para 392 (XVI) R.R.</u></p>		
<p>The discharge of <u>the above named</u> is hereby approved.</p>		
Station <u>Abertree</u>	Signature <u>James Fitzmaurice</u> Lieut.-Col., Comdg. 1st SCOTTISH PROVISIONAL BATTN.	
Date <u>9th January</u> 19 <u>16</u>		

Leys Castle near Inverness was used as a Military Hospital during WW1. Was this where John died? If he died aged 36, this would be in 1919, but it is suggested that he died in 1916 shortly after being discharged from the Army.

RML says that John had one brother serving – **John Maclean RNR** who served in Mine Sweepers.

GEORGE McLEOD

**Sapper
WR/601801
Royal Engineers
died on 6th September 1919
aged 28**



George, born during 1891, was the son of Neil and Isabella (née Mackenzie), of Seaview House, Polbain, Achiltibuie.

1901 census: at McLeod's Cottage, Polbain

Neil McLeod (42) Bella (41) **George (10)**, Christina (9), Elizabeth (8), Donald (6), John (2), Annie (3 months)
Ann McKenzie (82) – mother in law of Neil

George emigrated to Canada and took up ranching in Montana. He joined the Royal Engineers at Montreal in April 1916. Apart from that there is no further information regarding his war service.

Here is a copy of his Medal Roll which reveals that he received the **Silver War Badge (SWB)**, which was awarded to those who had been ill or wounded. He was also awarded the British Medal, but not the Victory Medal. This indicated that he did not serve in a theatre of war. The British

War Medal, instituted on 29th July 1919, was awarded to men who had provided service during and immediately after the First War.

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
McLEOD		R.G.	Spr.	7th/601801
George.				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY				
BRITISH	R.G./104 A.	208.		
STAR				
S.W.B. RE/4411.				
Theatre of War first served in				

RML states that George crossed to Britain from Canada but was taken ill on the voyage and died in **Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow** (below) on 6th September 1919. Ruchill Hospital was opened in 1900 as a Glasgow Corporation infectious diseases hospital.



George is buried at Badenscallie Burial Ground.



Clare Church

George's brother **Donald** also served in WW1 in the Seaforth Highlanders. He was wounded and taken prisoner in 1918.

Extract from Ross-shire Journal dated 14th June 1918



Mr Neil Macleod, Sea View Cottage, Polbain, Achiltibuie, has received official information that his son, Lce-Cpl Donald Macleod, Seaforths, is a prisoner of war in Germany. Previous to the outbreak of war, L/Cpl Macleod was employed in the Columba Hotel, Oban. On 4th August, 1914, he was called up as a Territorial, and mobilised with the 5th Seaforths. He went to Bedford, where he took ill, and went through a serious operation, with the result that in November 1915 he was discharged being medically unfit. Returning home to Coigach, he resided with his parents. Recovering his health in his Highland home, he was called up on 20th June, 1917, and in December of same year was sent to France.

L/Cpl Macleod went through several engagements, including the offensive of the 21st March last, along with the famous 51st Division. Again in the thick of the fighting on the 9th April, on the 10th he was posted missing. The post card now received was posted in Germany on 11th April, and was received here by his father on 23rd May. L/Cpl. Macleod's safety has been a relief to his people, and his many friends in a district where he is very popular hope that under the proposals for exchange of prisoners he may not be long in returning. He is a fine type of Highland soldier.

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