

**LOCHBROOM'S SACRIFICE  
IN THE  
SECOND WORLD WAR**



**Compiled by Clare Church**

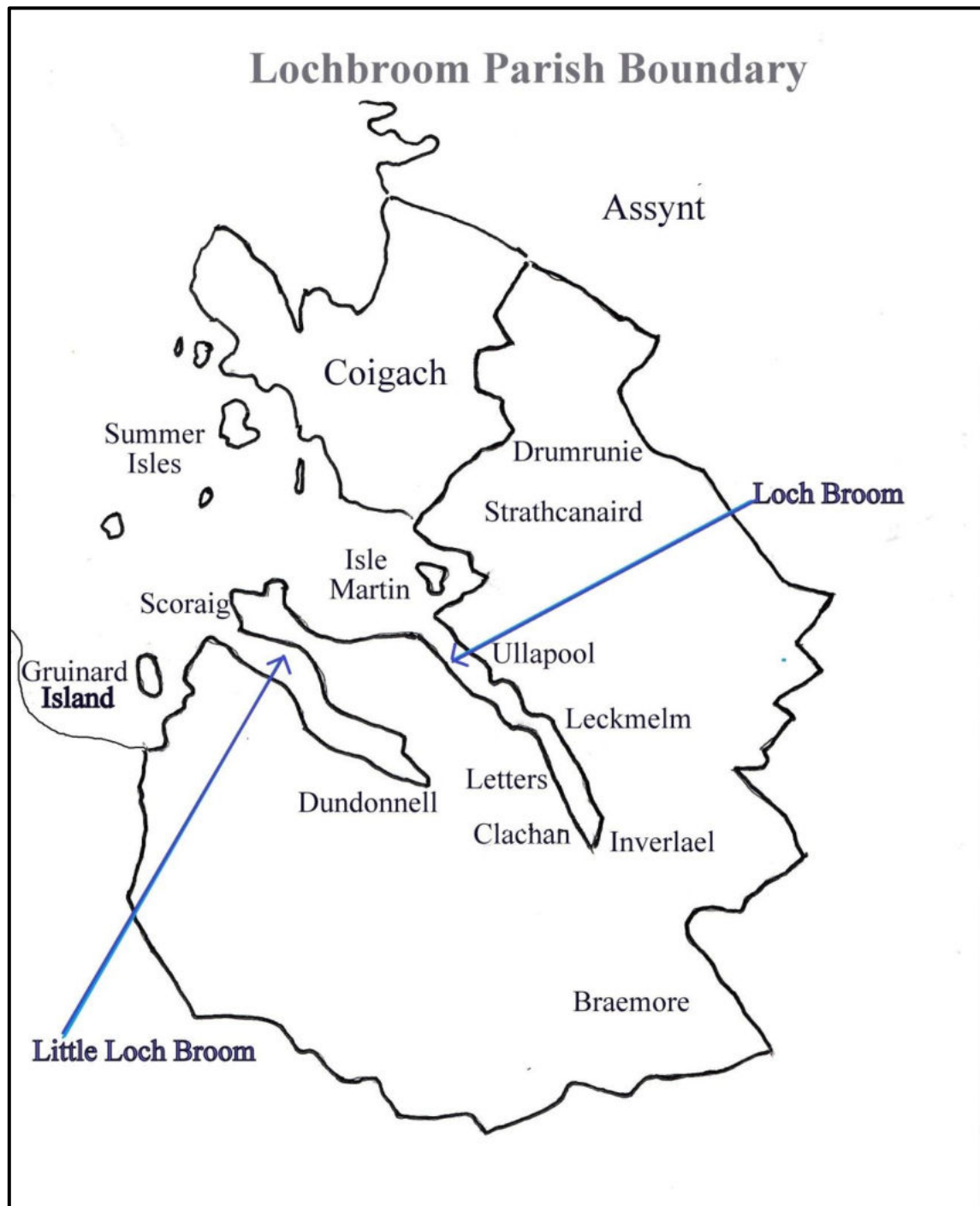
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# **LOCHBROOM'S SACRIFICE IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This project concentrates on those who served their country, lived and worked in the Parish of Lochbroom. The Coigach Peninsula has not been included because this area has already been covered in my document *Coigach's Sacrifice in the Second World War*.





Information is given on those military service personnel who are commemorated on the Ullapool War Memorial, and the one man on the Dundonnell War Memorial.



**Ullapool War Memorial**



**Dundonnell War Memorial**

Three men who are not listed on the war memorials also died as a result of the War and are included owing to their connection with Lochbroom, namely:

**Sergeant Douglas Macdonald, RAFVR**  
**Colour Sergeant Angus McBeath Mackay, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Tyneside Scottish**  
**Private Duncan Maclean, Royal Army Service Corps**

The majority of men from Lochbroom served with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, but in addition, men and women took their place in all branches of the services, the 5<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders, the Tyneside Scottish, the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the Merchant Navy, and the Royal Air Force.

Also included in this document are the names of 20 prisoners of war from the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders who were captured on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1940 at St Valery-en-Caux by the Germans, and also 4 men who were captured in other locations who served with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, the Royal Corps of Signals, the Royal Artillery and the Merchant Navy. Some questionnaires survive which prisoners of war completed on release in 1945. These are stored at the National Archives, Kew, and have been quoted where available.

The research has been aided by reading the War Diary of the **4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Seaforth Highlanders** up until the end of March 1940, and additionally, of particular value is the personal diary of **Captain Patrick Munro of Foulis** of '**C**' **Company** which can be viewed on the **Ross and Cromarty Heritage Society** website, which covers the period from September 1939 until the time of his capture at St Valery-en-Caux on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1940.

It has been possible to include some individual photographs of 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders which were published in the *People's Journal* during WW2. These are of those men who were known to be wounded or missing.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Thanks are due to

Helen Avenell, curatorial advisor at Ullapool Museum for providing relevant photographs from the collection, and volunteers Robbie Mackenzie and Pauline Wood, for their encouragement and assistance with this project.

Michelle Almer for information on her father Private Angus Macleod.

Jackie Boa for his article *Recollections of Isle Martin* written in 1998.

Donnie and Mary Mackenzie for their participation in the Oral History Project *Voices from their Past* conducted by Ullapool Museum and children from Ullapool Primary School in 2005.

Mhairi Mackenzie from the Ross and Cromarty Heritage Society (RCHS) for information regarding casualties listed on the website.

Mary Macleod, the daughter, of a 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlander survivor from Ullapool, whose article gives vivid detail regarding his experiences and those of his friends at, and following the Battle of Abbeville on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940.

Morag McIver Henriksen for her article on John Maciver.

Ronnie Mitchell and his relatives who have provided detailed information regarding his wife's family, the Macdonalds from Ardmair.

Peter Newling, for allowing me to include photographs from his collection.

My research is an ongoing project and I welcome input of additional material and corrections. I accept full responsibility for any errors, and omissions in acknowledgement of contributors.

Finally, I am indebted to my husband Tony for his corrections, suggestions and proof-reading.

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**September 2019**

## TRAINING FOR WAR

Men from the Lochbroom area were allotted to the 4th/5th (The Ross, Sutherland and Caithness) Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, which, after WW1 was an amalgamation of the 4th and 5th Battalions.

In the 1930s, members of the Territorial Army, regularly attended the annual camp, often held at Dingwall or Aberdeen.

### **No. 7 Platoon, B Company Seaforth Highlanders, 4/5 Battalion at Territorial Army Camp in 1937**



Photo: Courtesy of Mary MacLeod

Names which have been identified by Mary's father, James MacLeod are:

#### **From the left standing:**

Sammy Grant (Coigach), Donnie Frazer (Coigach), Grant (Garve), Johnnie MacLeod  
Willie MacLeod (Coigach), Hector Munro (Archarnich), Angie MacLeod (Ullapool)  
K. Mackenzie (Braes)- kneeling, Duncan MacLeod (Doungie), Johnnie MacMillan (Ullapool)

#### **Seated from right to left:**

Willie MacRae, James MacLeod, Sergeant MacLeod (Stornoway), Donnie MacLeod

Volunteers would train during several weekends and one night a week, attending drill halls. The attraction of joining the “Terriers” was a paid annual holiday, a new pair of boots and a chance to get away from home and croft work.

The drill hall in Ullapool still stands in Custom House Street.



In 1938 the decision was taken to double the strength of Territorial Army. This required the raising of a "mirror" division which, in the case of the 51st (Highland) Division was the 9th (Highland) Division.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 at the beginning of WW2 the Territorial Army was "called out"; i.e., notice was sent out to all reservists mobilising them.



## LOCHBROOM DURING WW2

Extracts from *A Hundred Years in Wester Ross* by Donald Shaw, pub. 2002

### 1939:

Britain declared war on Germany on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Local territorials were mobilised. The 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths, as part of 152 (Highland) Brigade of the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division, were sent to Saarland to guard the Maginot Line.

Ullapool Charities Entertainment and Linen League sent Christmas boxes to 94 servicemen in December. Each box contained one iced Christmas cake with regimental badge, a large box of mixed biscuits, a box of sweets, a pair of socks or helmet, a pocket testament, and 50 cigarettes. Non-smokers received (instead of cigarettes) a box of cheese, a packet of dates, a half-pound of chocolate, and a packet of stamped letter-cards. The pocket testament was inscribed with an "encouraging message" from Mrs Fraser, Leckmelm.

### 1940:

Rationing and other restrictions began to affect daily life at home. From January, sugar, bacon and butter were rationed. Meat was not rationed until March, but housewives were still required to register with a nominated butcher in January. The *Ross-shire Journal* reported that the county had survived the first week of rationing without problems. Supplies had been plentiful.

The War Secretary announced that the kilt would no longer be worn by troops, and would be replaced by battledress. *For walking out, all ranks in possession of kilts will wear them until they are worn out. There will be no further issue during the war except to pipers and drummers.*

Severe storms caused damage in February. The wooden pier at the head of Loch Broom, built by German prisoners during the last war, was wrecked, floating down the loch in two pieces, which were caught by locals and used for firewood.

**Protected area established:** From Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March a new Government Order, *the Defence of the Realm Act, Protected Area order*, designated much of Scotland as a prohibited area, including Wester Ross. Public concern over possible effects of this order on travel and tourism prompted the War Minister to respond: *There is no reason why the new Order should discourage visitors to the Highlands and Islands, either for holiday or business purposes, by persons of satisfactory credentials.*

Military pickets were on duty in protected areas from that Monday. Soldiers examined permits at road and rail junctions, and travellers by rail and bus from Inverness had to produce their pass or, if living within the protected area, a certificate of residence or identity card. It was reported there was heavy demand for the new Certificate of Residence and Identity Cards throughout Ross-shire.

Men born in 1914, or between 10<sup>th</sup> March and 6<sup>th</sup> April 1920, were called up in April. Already those born in 1915-1919 had been conscripted. The new enlistment affected 972 Highland men. On seven successive Saturdays from 15<sup>th</sup> June to the end of July, men born between 1906 and 1912 (aged 28-33) were required to enlist. By the end of 1940 all men aged 18-36 had been called up. Fishing ceased to be designated as a reserved occupation, so fishermen were now liable for conscription.

Boy Scouts in Ullapool began a weekly collection of scrap paper. At a meeting of Lochbroom District Council, Mr Vyner of Lochbroom Trading Company offered to convey waste-paper and other scrap to appropriate markets in his boat *Penola* free of charge. Scrap iron and waste paper collected in Ullapool was sent south by boat and fetched the sum of £24 for the Ross & Cromarty POW Fund. Additionally, Penny-a-week collections were made on behalf of the Red Cross.

Due to a shortage of men, the minimum age for tractor-drivers on public roads was reduced from 21 to 17. Farmworkers aged 21 or over were declared to be in a reserved occupation, and therefore no longer liable to call-up. Later in the year the age at which farm-work became a reserved occupation was lowered to 18. Any farmworkers presently in another job were required to return to agricultural work if they left that job. The Caledonian Park football pitch in Ullapool was ploughed up and planted.

#### **Defence Volunteers for Ross-shire: May 1940**

Ex-officers and members of the British Legion and others aged 17 to 65 who had a knowledge of firearms, were asked to enrol at the nearest police station. At this stage the main requirement for the force was to keep watch for enemy parachutists. Later in the month, it was reported that 1,356 men had joined up in Ross-shire. In August the Local Defence Volunteers were re-named the Home Guard at Winston Churchill's request.

From the summer of 1940 everyone was required to carry a National Identity Card and urged to carry a gas-mask.

A good start to the herring-fishing season was report at Ullapool in October.

A whist drive and a dance were held in the Masonic Hall, Ullapool to raise money for black-out curtains for the village hall.

#### **1941:**

Gruinard Island was used to conduct experiments in biological weapons. Canisters of anthrax were fired from the mainland onto the island, killing its population of sheep.

#### **1944:**

Strathcanaird School closed. The children transferred to Ullapool School.

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**Extract** from an Oral History project **“Voices from their Past”** which was undertaken by pupils of Ullapool Primary School in 2005 with elderly residents **Mary** and **Donnie Mackenzie**..

**Mary** said:

*“There were troops, actually - part-time soldiers - stationed in Ullapool. You'll recognise that; that's the drill hall. That's where they did their training. And in the house, in my day until the war started, there was always a sergeant living there. And they trained there once or twice a week with the sergeant, and these are the buses come to take them away.*



**Seeing off buses with Territorials 1939**

**Photo courtesy of Peter Newling**

*They were in the front line, going across to France. And you see that girl there, that pram? Well, I'm a hundred percent sure that's me. See? Now, most of these boys went across to France and they were taken prisoner at St. Valery - that's how you've got St. Valery Place along there nowadays - and some of them walked hundreds of miles to prisoner of war camps in Poland.*

**Interviewer:** *Did evacuees come to Ullapool?*

**Mary:** *Not really. Some of the fishermen brought their families from the east coast and that was dreadful because we couldn't understand them; they had a language all of their own. A girl was a quinie and a boy was a loonie, and I can remember going home and talking about quinies and loonies and my mother giving me what for.*

**Interviewer:** *What did you do to help in the war?*

**Mary:** *Well, I'll tell you one thing, the Girl Guides went out and gathered stuff called sphagnum moss. Well, that was used to make dressings in the First World War - wound dressings. And we went up the hill, just at Moss Bridge there, up the hill up that way; that's where the best sphagnum moss was. And then we took it to a house out at Corrie which then belonged to our commissioner, and on a Saturday we spent the whole day cleaning all that - getting all the little twigs and little beasties and everything out of it - and then it was stitched into muslin bags and used for dressings.*

**Donnie:** *And made into little packs about that size. On the soldiers' uniforms there's a wee pocket there, and you had that in there. Every soldier had to have one.*



## Extracts from Recollections of Isle Martin by Jackie Boa, April 1998

*Our family went to Isle Martin from the Beaulieu area in April of 1940. My father took on the tenancy of the island from the then owner Commander C G Vyner. He was also assured of part-time work in the flour mill which operated on the island. There was a ferry service by a motor launch and the ferryman was Kenny Mackenzie and was employed by Commander Vyner.*



Flour mill workers crossing to Isle Martin

Photo: Courtesy of the Ullapool Museum Trust

*The flour mill which was taken over by the Ministry of Food at the early commencement of hostilities was closed down in 1942. This was quite a blow to us because apart from cheap feeding stuff for our animals we also had free electricity from a generator in the mill. On Sundays when the mill was idle we reverted to Tilly or Aladdin lamps. All the machinery in the mill was powered by a single cylinder Robson diesel engine.*

*The men who worked at the mill were all local – some from Ullapool, others from Morefield, Rhue, Strathcanaird, Letters and Loggie. Ian Campbell from Blughasary and his brother Donnie were there. Ian was called up to the army in 1939 and was captured in France and was a POW in Germany until the war ended (p.39). His brother Donnie left his job on the island to join the Merchant Navy. The men from Letters and Loggie stayed for the week in a bothy beside the mill.*

*The wheat for the mill was transported from Liverpool by a ship named “Penola”. She arrived at the island about once a month with a cargo of wheat which was discharged by derrick onto the pier in 2¼ cwt. Sacks. There was a light railway from the pier to the mill but the bogies were not powered and had to be pushed by the men. The “Penola” spent about 4 or 5 days at the island and took a return cargo of flour back to Liverpool.*

*The MacRae brothers would come to Loch Kanaird in the month of November to set drift nets for the Kanaird herring. These were small, plump herrings and were first class for salting. Various tradesmen from Ullapool would come to the island from time to time to carry out maintenance and repairs.*

*Our first teacher in the school on the island was Nan Mackenzie from Market Street, Ullapool. However, she only continued in the post for about six weeks and then left, I believe to join the WRNS. Then we were taught by Rebecca Ross from Ladysmith Street. She was there for quite a number of years cycling to and from Ullapool, quite often in atrocious weather, and then across by ferry to Isle Martin.*

*Although the flour mill had closed down Commander Vyner had guaranteed he would maintain the ferry service on a restricted basis – in other words twice daily for the conveyance of our teacher. There was another family on the island – the Murrays. Mr Murray was the mill foreman but when it closed they left.*

*The flour mill re-opened in 1945 at the end of the war when the Ministry of Food handed it back to Commander Vyner and he put it back into production. The mill survived two short years and was closed down in 1947.*

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### **Fishing:**

Over the years, when the herring failed to materialise in the waters around Loch Broom, the local fishing fleet went into decline and the villagers had to look elsewhere for their livelihoods. However, the industry received a boost during the Second World War when fishing on the east coast became too hazardous because of the mining of those coastal waters. Ullapool pier had to be almost doubled in size to cope with the increased activity. However, it was not long before the stocks became so depleted that a total ban was placed on the herring fishery.

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### **Forestry**

Britain's resources were being drained by the war and there was a lack of available labour to log and cut the wood in the forests. The timber was much needed for a range of uses including pit props in the coal mining industry, which in turn produced the fuel for large scale manufacturing in the war.

The British Honduran Forestry Unit played a vital role in maintaining timber supplies during World War Two. Almost 900 forestry workers arrived in Scotland at the end of 1941 and were billeted across the country. Some were sent to the Ullapool area and found the locals were not welcoming. *“They were nervous and confused because they had never seen people of colour before.”* In 1943, before the war was over, the forestry unit was disbanded and the loggers were given the choice between repatriation, or remaining in Britain.

## THE 4th BATTALION, SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS

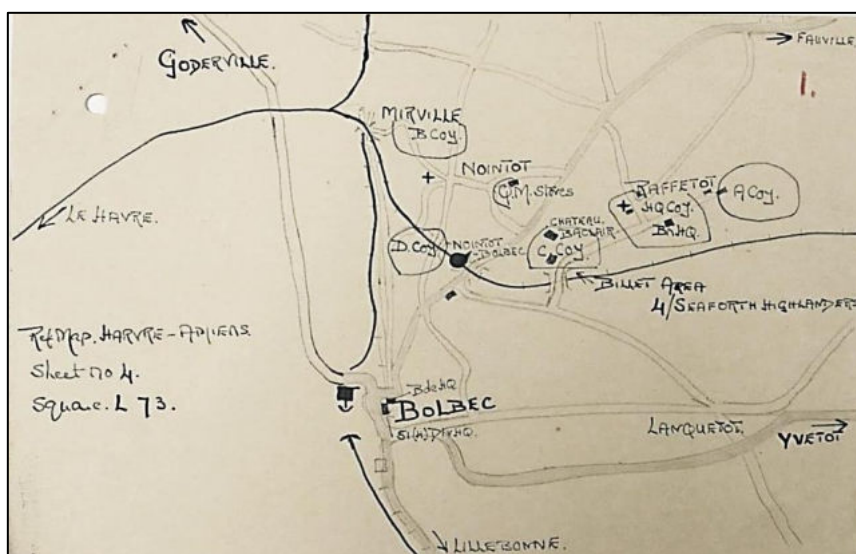
The majority of men from **Lochbroom** served in '**B**' Company, the **4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders**. Their Company Commander was **Major Simon Keith Fraser M.C.** under **Lieutenant Colonel H W, Houldsworth, D.S.O., M.C.** They formed part of the **51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division** with **Major General Victor M Fortune, C.B.** in overall command. There were nine infantry battalions in three brigades, the 152nd, 153rd and 154th. The infantry were drawn from the Territorial Army battalions of the five Highland Regiments; The Black Watch, **The Seaforth Highlanders**, The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, The Gordon Highlanders and The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. The Division had four regiments of artillery, a Royal Armoured Corps reconnaissance unit, and other supporting arms.



The 2nd and 4th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders formed part of the **152<sup>nd</sup> Brigade**. The Seaforths were hastily mobilised in September 1939. They left in buses from the Drill Hall in Custom House Street, Ullapool and spent the first month in Dingwall town hall in cold, rough conditions.

The Battalion then transferred to Inkerman Barracks, Woking in the first week of October, where it remained until early December when moved to Guadeloupe Barracks, Bordon, Hampshire. Embarkation leave was granted on 18<sup>th</sup> December (1<sup>st</sup> party) and 28<sup>th</sup> December (2<sup>nd</sup> party) when the first returned for duty. The Battalion left Bordon by train on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1940 for Southampton with 24 Officers and 602 Other Ranks, and embarked for service overseas. The ships had to anchor outside the port, the crossing having been delayed owing to fog. They eventually docked at Le Havre at 2100 on 27<sup>th</sup> January, with disembarkation commencing at 0730 the next day.

The troops left Le Havre by train for the Bolbec area, 25 km away. They were billeted in three villages of Raffetot, Nointot and Mirville in farmhouses and chateau stables. All areas were extremely wet and muddy. The roads and ground were frozen with ice hanging from the trees so all movement of road parties was temporarily cancelled.



TNA: WO 167/820



A ten hour train journey on 5<sup>th</sup> February transported the troops towards the Concentration Area at **Ecquedecques**, north-east of Bethune. '**B**' **Company** was billeted in Lières nearby.

**Extracts from the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders War Diary: 1940 – (TNA WO 167/820)**

**9<sup>th</sup> February:** *"Route Marches are the order of the day. This is a rural area but overshadowed by the great coal fields of the North-East France. The people in our villages have been very kind to us, and we are all the best of friends."*

**22<sup>nd</sup> February:** *"The Pipes and Drums played Retreat in Ecquedecques this afternoon on the road opposite the Mayor's House. The performance appeared to be much appreciated by the Mayor and the whole civil population of the village."*

**28<sup>th</sup> February:** *"The Battalion today moved out of the Ecquedecques area, and proceeded in troop carrying lorries to Wingles."*

**29<sup>th</sup> February:** *"Our billets here at Wingles are extremely good. "B" and "C" Companies are in a disused cotton factory where they have ample room to expand themselves."*

**7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> March:** *"The Battalion left Wingles for Lys-lez-Lannoy. "B" and "C" Companies are billeted to the North-East of Leers which is a semi-rural village."*

**11<sup>th</sup> March:** *"Battalion Headquarters is situated in a large and comfortable farm house, with Battalion Rear Headquarters at Le Briqueterie to the West."*

**12<sup>th</sup> March:** *"H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester honoured the Battalion with his presence at Battalion H.Q."*

**22<sup>nd</sup> March:** *"A" and "B" Companies conducted range practices today on the 2 inch Mortar Range at Bois Quatorze."*

**26<sup>th</sup> March:** *"Advanced party of 3 officers and 50 men moved to the Bailleul area to prepare for the arrival of the Battalion on 28.3.40."*

**28<sup>th</sup> March:** *"Arrived at Bailleul in severe snowstorm. Headquarters at Ferme Boddeart. "B" and "C" Companies are in farms in the Nouveau Monde area."*

During April training took place in the Nieppe Forest. Much of the time the weather was cold and rainy. Later in the month the Brigade took over a sector on the **Saar front** in the area of Hombourg-Budange on the Maginot Line. It was then that they were detached from the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.), and put under **French Command** in the **10<sup>th</sup> Army**.

Regrettably the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth War Diary from 1<sup>st</sup> April onwards no longer survives , but the **152 Infantry Brigade War Diary** exists for this month, including the following summary.

Summary of 152 Infantry Brigade War Diary.

April 1940

The beginning of the month found the Bde settling in to the BAILLEUL sector, thinking that they were to be there for at least six weeks. Everybody was very pleased as the sector consisted of broken hilly ground which included certain tactical features and was therefore much more interesting than the rest of the B.E.F. area. Work during the first few days was hampered by the perpetual stream of visitors.

On the 9th, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway and "Plan D" came very much to the fore. The Bde were at six hours notice, and some hard work was required to get all the necessary arrangements made. Bns were ordered to concentrate on route marching.

By the 14th "Plan D" after appearing to be a certainty, was gradually becoming more improbable, and the Bde were just preparing to resume their normal routine, when orders were received that the Div was to go to the SAAR, advance parties leaving on the 24th. At the same time Plan D remained in force, while a complete defence scheme for the BAILLEUL sector was also required for handing over to the incoming Brigade.

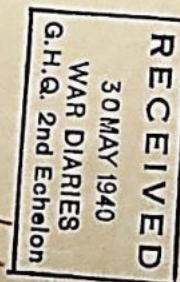
As a result conditions were fairly hectic, however everything was completed just in time. 132 Inf Bde who relieved us were very appreciative for what had been done.

The Bde moved out on the 25th, M.T. going by road and the remainder by train. All the billets were left in very good condition, and, in the same way as when the Brigade left WINGLES, the incoming Brigade expressed the opinion that they had never taken over better kept billets.

The move down to the SAAR was uneventful, at the same time, as far as the M.T. were concerned the chief lesson of the move was that full timings and intervals between cols must be allowed, otherwise there are bound to be delays. The train move was comfortable and well organised especially the arrangements at the two halts.

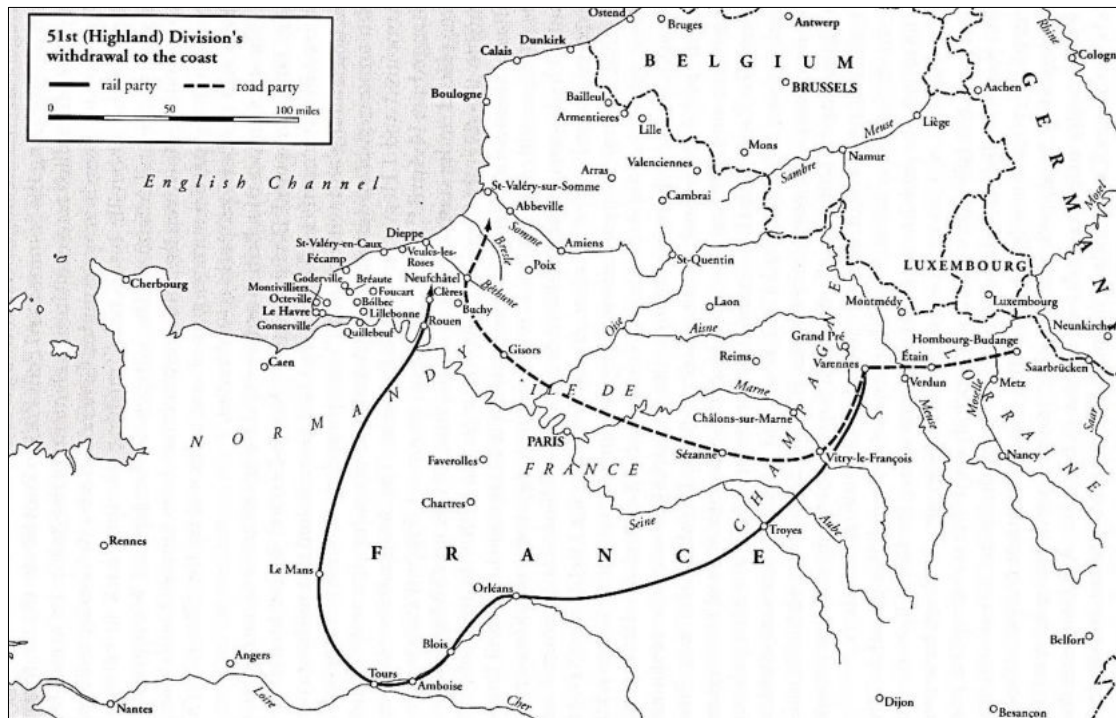
After arrival in the Metz district many difficulties were experienced. Billeting was bad and muddled. Orders from above were very brief and in many cases insufficient, and when the relief commenced on the night 29/30th April few units really understood their duties.

*W. H. Hall*  
Captain.  
Brigade Major 152 Infantry Brigade.



TNA WO 167/406

On 15<sup>th</sup> May the 51<sup>st</sup> Division withdrew from the Saar front owing to continued pressure from the enemy. They moved across France towards Rouen in an attempt to link up with the B.E.F. However, by this time the withdrawal of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk was already in progress and this was no longer possible. The troops were transported in buses towards the River Somme.



Spellmount Ltd

Extracts from Captain Patrick Munro of Foulis' diary - Company Commander of 'C' Company, are shown in *italics* with his initials PM at the beginning.

**27<sup>th</sup> May:** PM. *"Travelling very slowly through Rouen we saw the preparations the French were making to try and stop the German advance. The bridges over the river were being sandbagged and hastily prepared for demolition and there were many troops about. The subsequent speed of the German advance was so great that they didn't have time or neglected to blow these bridges and the Germans found them intact on reaching the town. We travelled some 30 miles by way of Neufchatel to a RV called "Starfish Cross Roads" in the Foret d'Eu."*

Captain Patrick Munro of Foulis.  
Photo Ross and Cromarty Heritage Society





It is more or less certain that the crossroads shown in this postcard, *Poteau Maitre-Jean*, south of Blangy, is the exact place where the troops rested (Starfish Crossroads.)



The signpost is one of 28 poles scattered in the forest, installed from 1876 to 1902 at the initiative of the Duke of Aumale, the Count of Paris and Count Baston d'Orléans, successive owners of the Forest of Eu. In other forests the poles are generally wooden; here they are unique, made of cast iron and each weighs several tons.

**27<sup>th</sup> May:** PM. *"The Battalion debussed and Companies went off to various 'hides' in the forest. A perimeter was formed with all-round defence and all the roads were blocked and covered by anti-tank rifles and guns. In the afternoon the CO took the Company Commanders in his car eight miles further north, through the small town of Blangy to a village called Le Translay which we were to occupy next day. At 9 p.m. we marched in darkness and silence to Le Translay. It had been completely evacuated in a hurry from what I saw when I went into some of the cottages. In one I found a half-eaten meal still on the table; in another a kettle boiling on the fire. Many animals had been left behind and birds in cages. Whenever I got a chance I spent my time letting out caged rabbits and birds, and loosing chained dogs, all of which would otherwise have starved."*

**28<sup>th</sup> May:** At Le Translay

**29<sup>th</sup> May:** To Grebault-Mesnil: PM. *"While walking along the road a French Army lorry passed us and then stopped. They had four or five German prisoners in the back. They were the first Germans I had seen. They were all wounded and looked very dirty and exhausted and rather frightened."*

**30<sup>th</sup> May:** PM. *"Some of us went to a nearby village called Huppy with the CO for a conference. The French Commander was General de Gaulle who no one then attached much importance to. He was wearing a very tattered uniform and looked extremely tired. All this time we were under command of a French Corps and the Division took its orders from the French."*

Various sources say that installed in the attic of the highest house of Les Croisettes, De Gaulle follows the progress of his tanks in combat. This was confirmed by a local resident.



Photo: Clare Church

**30<sup>th</sup> May:** PM. *"We then went on to the village Behen which the Battalion was to occupy that afternoon. Just as we were completing our reconnaissances the Germans began shelling the village outskirts. My Company position was in a small wood in the grounds of a large chateau on the edge of the village. The Germans had occupied this village some days before. Just outside the front door two Germans had been buried and small wooden crosses put over their graves on which their tin hats were sitting. Because of this I didn't think it was a very healthy place to have my Company HQ. So I decided to steer clear of it and dug my headquarters position in the wood not far from the platoons."*



Photo: Clare Church



**31<sup>st</sup> May:** PM. *“At 10 a.m. orders came for us to relieve the 2<sup>nd</sup> Seaforths in Moyenneville. The village was being shelled sporadically as we arrived. I chose a small orchard on the north (enemy) side of the village for my Company HQ. We dug two trenches, a ‘V’ shaped one large enough to hold ten men comfortably, and another smaller one fifteen yards away for the cooks. In my ignorance I had chosen a most unfortunate spot for my HQ. Mortar shells were coming over and bursting on impact with the top branches of the apple trees. I went off to find another site for my Company HQ in another orchard but at the south end of the village.*

**1<sup>st</sup> June:** At Moyenneville

**2<sup>nd</sup> June:** PM. *“The day was fairly quiet until midday when the Germans began shelling Moyenneville. They made a mess of the middle of the village and knocked the church steeple down. Battalion HQ rang up in the afternoon to say that we were to withdraw that night. Shortly before midnight we set off across country, parallel to, but away from the road leading out of the village. The Germans must have known some kind of relief was taking place as they were shelling this road the whole time. Our progress was slow and we seemed to come across enormous hedges and ditches every ten yards.”*

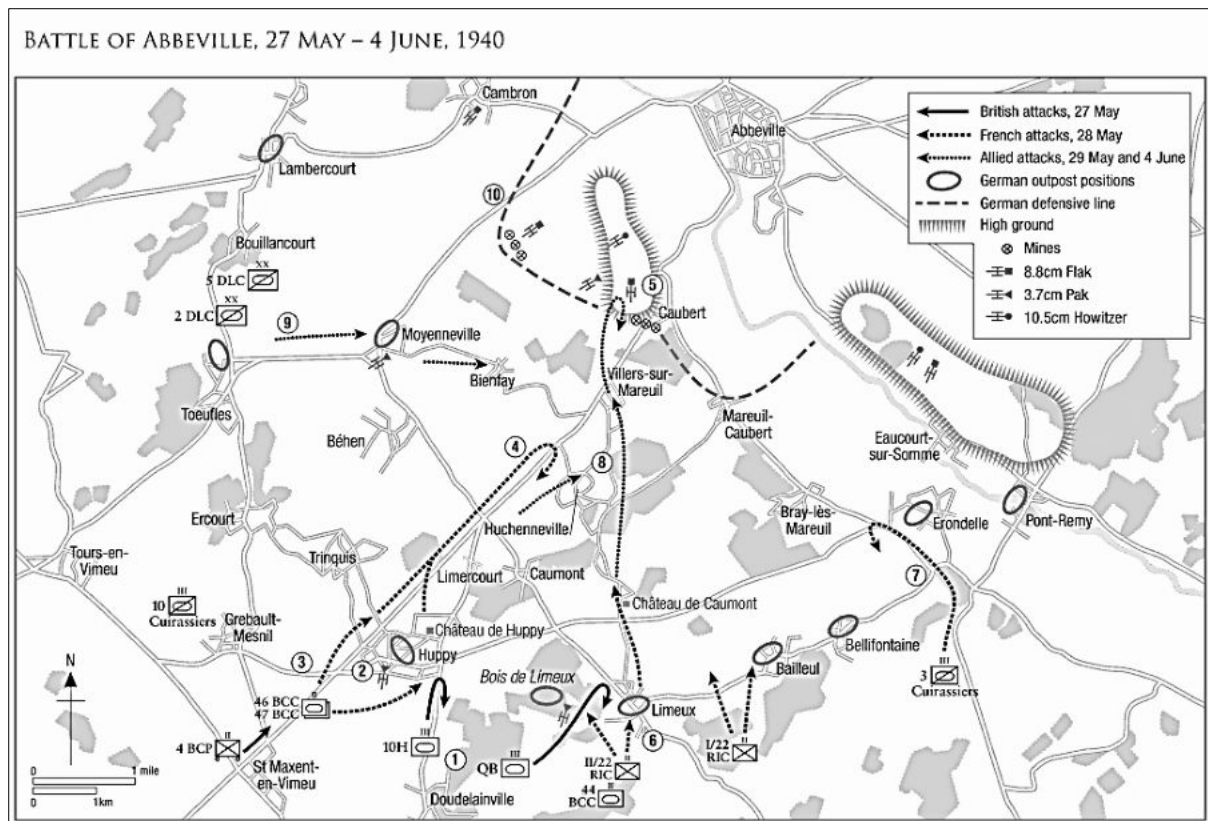


**Moyenneville Church**

**3<sup>rd</sup> June:** PM. *“About 4.00 a.m. we arrived at a place called Les Alleux, the Battalion. RV.”*

# THE BATTLE OF ABBEVILLE

The **Battle of Abbeville** commenced on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 1940. German troops had crossed the Somme and established bridgeheads at Abbeville and St Valéry-sur-Somme. The 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division was not involved until the last day of the battle, the 4<sup>th</sup> June. Details of the previous days are well documented in the several books listed in the Sources (pp 120-121)



Map: Robert Forczyk

**4<sup>th</sup> June: Combined dawn plan of attack** – from the Adjutant's War Diary which was compiled in captivity.

Zero 0330 hours

1. 2-10 artillery barrage to open on Bois de Villers (about a mile from the start line) to cover the noise of tanks coming forward.
2. French heavy tanks to follow the barrage and capture the high ground of **Mont. de Caubert** and **Caesar's Camp** – a Roman Fort - (2½ - 3 miles).
3. 2nd Seaforths to attack Bois de Villers and clear it of enemy, this being their final objective.
4. French light tanks, followed by 4th Seaforths to advance on a two Company front ('B' on right, and 'C' on left) on each side of the Bois de Villers, to attack the Mont de Caubert and consolidate this objective.
5. French Dragon Porte (mechanised infantry) to advance through 4th Seaforths and follow the heavy tanks to Mont. de Caubert and Caesar's Camp and hold this ground until the arrival of the slower moving infantry.

There was the difficulty of arranging effective co-operation between British and French infantry, guns and tanks at such short notice. Advancing from the wooded slopes east of Bienfay, the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths approached the rise of the **Mont de Caubert** but the tanks were blown up by mines, or gun-fire hit and they were disabled. The Seaforths went on without them but ran into machine-gun fire. Some survivors reached their first objective, about six hundred yards up the slope but were few in number.

**Captain Patrick Munro** (PM) of 'C Company later stated that:

*"Maps were very scarce and all I had was a 1912 Michelin road map which I had to share with Simon Fraser" [Company Commander of 'B' Company].*

*The CO came along and said he was sorry but we should just have to start with the one tank instead of 18. We all stood up and started the advance at a steady pace with bayonets fixed, preceded by a solitary tank!*

*We advanced in open order through open country, covered mostly by corn crops which came up to just below our knees. There was a very heavy dew and our legs were soaking wet in five minutes. Our first half hour went entirely according to plan and there seemed to be no opposition for some hundreds of yards. I heard the occasional bullet whistling over our heads but the noise of the barrage was so terrific we could hear little else. As we proceeded, light automatic and rifle fire became more apparent, and I began to see men being hit and spinning round like shot rabbits. Meanwhile, my solitary tank was rumbling along in front of us, doing quite good work and knocking out isolated Bosch [sic] posts here and there."*

*Opposition began to get stiffer and stiffer and soon the advance began to slow down and finally halted. I could see no signs of the Companies on our right or left and so went to investigate. Our right boundary was a small ridge about five feet high and I crawled up to this and had a look over. As soon as I put my head over, a hail of fire came from in front and rear. The Jocks by now were all lying down in any small fold in the ground they could find, and firing from that position. Casualties were becoming heavier every minute and there seemed to be no hope of advancing further, under what was now very heavy fire. Shelling had now increased considerably. I decided to withdraw the Company back to where the 2nd Seaforths were in the Bois de Villers.*

*The whole attack had failed, and the CO [Lt Col H W Houldsworth] had been wounded ..... Soon, after it got dark, orders came through to the effect that the Battalion would withdraw that night to the village of Zailleux." [Les Alleux].*

'B' Company was virtually wiped out. Simon Fraser and all his officers who had taken part in the attack had been killed and only about 40 men survived, so they were attached to 'C' Company.





**Photo: Clare Church**

This scene (looking northwards) shows a calvary erected in 1918, destroyed by the Germans in 1944 and reconstructed in 1953. The French soldier's helmet, made of concrete, stands alongside. On Caesar's camp beyond, there is evidence of dugouts for German machine guns.



**German defences on Mont de Caubert**

## BATTLE OF ABBEVILLE CASUALTIES

### 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Seaforth Highlanders

Twenty four 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders are buried in **Mareuil-Caubert Communal Cemetery**, situated 6 kilometres south of Abbeville along the D503 (Rue de Général Leclerc).



Photo: Clare Church

The Battalion suffered heavy casualties including seven men from the Ullapool and surrounding area. Those whose bodies were not recovered nor identified are commemorated on the Dunkirk Memorial.

Those killed on 4<sup>th</sup> June are:

Major Simon Keith Fraser, MC, 30436  
Private Kenneth Angus Macdonald, 2822663  
Private Kenneth Charles Mackenzie, 2822670  
Private William Mackenzie, 2820637  
Private Colin Charles Macleod, 29822655  
Corporal John Macmillan, 2822379

Private John Macaulay, 2822847 died of injuries on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1940

**SIMON KEITH FRASER, MC**  
**Major 30436**  
**Killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 aged 42**

**Simon** was born on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1897 at Thorpville, Old Rayne, Aberdeenshire, son of James Wilson Fraser, landed proprietor and Army Captain, and Edith (née Knowles). They had married on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1891 at St Peter's Church, Swinton, Manchester.

In 1901 the family was living at Errogie, Dores, near Inverness with Edith aged 31 as Head of House, Army Major's wife, with children Andrew K (8), John (6), Isobel M (5) **Simon K (3)** Elizabeth (1) and 4 servants. Simon is not with his family in 1911 but at Cargilfield Preparatory School at Cramond, Midlothian.

In WW1 Simon served with the 9th Battalion, the Seaforth Highlanders (B Company), which was raised at Fort George in October 1914. After initial training in Scotland the Battalion moved to Aldershot in November. The *London Gazette* records that he was promoted to Temporary 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1914. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December the Battalion joined the 9<sup>th</sup> (Scottish) Division. It became a Pioneer Battalion in early 1915 and proceeded to France, landing at Boulogne on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1915 with 27 officers and 859 other ranks. The Medal Index Roll (below) confirms that Simon's first Theatre of War was in France, commencing on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1915.



Name	Corps	Rank	Regtl. No.
FRASER, SIMON KEITH	Sea Highlrs. SEAFORTH HLDR.	2/Lieut Capt	
Medal	Roll	Page	Remarks
VICTORY	04/1/148	34	1.V.2436/W.2/3. 5.2.(NW/6/24/5 1914-15 8th Div 2836/0 7-6-20 Auth NW/6/24/5
BRITISH	04/1/148	16	
15 STAR			
Theatre of War first served in	France		
Date of entry therein	11.5.15		

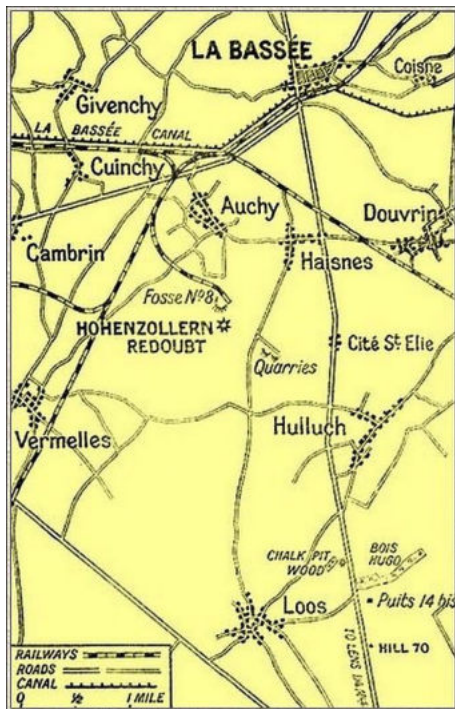
NW/6/24/5  
35541/3 K. 1380.

In September 1915 the Battalion was preparing trenches near Vermelles prior to the Battle of Loos. On the 24<sup>th</sup> orders were received for an attack on German trenches before FOSSE 8 on the morning of the **25<sup>th</sup> September**.

The War diary reads:

*The attack commenced at 6.30 a.m. and took up our position in RESERVE TRENCH. We made our way in two parties to saps K & L respectively, and immediately began to connect these two saps with **HOHENZOLLERN REDOUBT**. I [Lt John Cook] with Lieutenants Graham and **Fraser** took K. Some difficulty was experienced just at first as I did not consider it safe for the men to go down the covered sap L owing to the prevalence of gas. We had to scramble up the side of the trench which was very high and some of the men got left.*



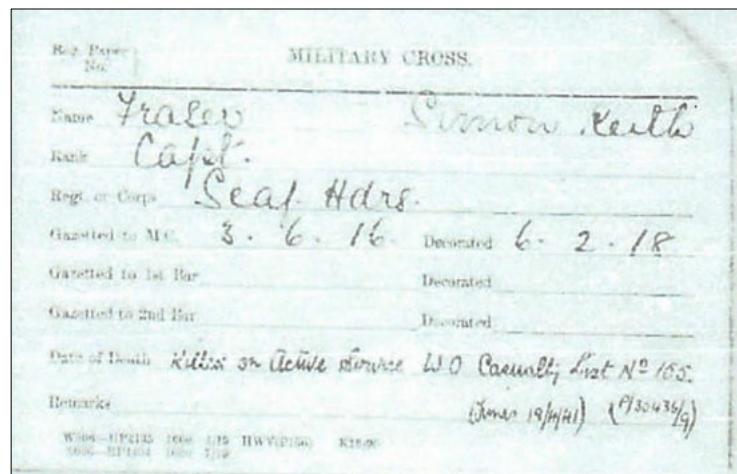


These however were soon recovered and the party were lined across to the REDOUBT and digging was commenced in exceedingly quick time, every man working his very best. At times we were exposed to considerable shell and rifle fire and considering this I think we were very lucky to get off with so few casualties.

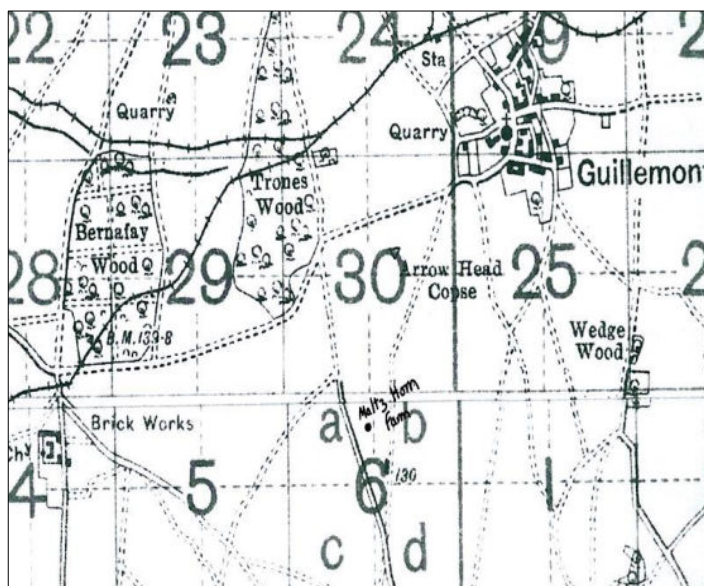
**27<sup>th</sup> September:** Orders were given to carry SAA [small arms ammunition] from Brigade HQ (26<sup>th</sup>) to the Quarry under **2 Lt Fraser**. He was sent up after this to "LITTLE WILLIE" with bombs and he succeeded in delivering them, much I believe to the satisfaction of General Ritchie.

It is suggested that these actions prompted consideration for the award of the MILITARY CROSS on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1916 in George V Birthday Honours list.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September the Battalion withdrew from the trenches and marched to Bethune for rest and recuperation. Promotion for Simon to Temporary Captain took place on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1916.



The next time he is mentioned in the War Diary is in **July 1916** during the Battle of the Somme.



**9<sup>th</sup> July:** At Battle Street

Platoon under **Captain Fraser** was detailed to dig shelter trenches for 2<sup>nd</sup> South African Infantry at NW corner of **Bernafay Wood**. He reported to the Commanding Officer who said it was out of the question to dig shelter trenches at position given and that they would be untenable if dug. **Captain Fraser** offered to do any other useful work required and was sent on to Captain Clifford, OC Company at NE corner of wood and there made a communication trench, under considerable shell fire.

**16<sup>th</sup> July:** at Oxford Copse.

*The company detailed to wire east side of **Delville Wood** from Princes Street Northward – to work in reliefs of 2 platoons. Captain Furneaux was moved by MO to Dressing Station and handed over the Coy to **Capt. Fraser**.*

and again in 1917 -

**1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> April 1917:** At Arras – B Company completing heavy trench mortar emplacements in SPRING and SUMMER Tramways, also clearing rear loop trench. Clearing and relaying duckboards in AUGUST AVENUE.

**9<sup>th</sup> April 1917:** At Arras - B Company Right half left billets at 1.45 a.m. and took up their assembly position at top of AUGUST AVENUE. At zero the half company followed up the first wave “moppers up” of 12<sup>th</sup> Royal Scots to dig a communication trench MAXWELL AVENUE between CUTHBERT SAP and German Sap V.13. About 8 a.m. a party of the enemy which had been overlooked by the “moppers up” opened rifle fire on the half company. **Captain S K FRASER** who was in command and two other Officers were immediately wounded; all invalided to England.

According to his obituary in the *Times* (see below), Simon was severely injured and lost an eye.

What did he do before WW2? He served with the Territorial Army in the Ross-shire Battalion and retired in 1937. He played golf at Ullapool Golf Course and was Captain in 1929. The family lived at Leckmelm and his mother cultivated the gardens which are now open to the public.

Simon married Margaret Moubray at St Ann’s Church, Catterick in the summer of 1937, daughter of the late John J Moubray of Naemoor, Scotland and Killerby, Yorkshire. John Moubray was noted in his obituary as "a distinguished agriculturalist, and generous benefactor," He became a member of Kinross County Council in 1889 and retired 1925. He was also Lord Lieutenant of Kinross-shire.

In 1939 Simon rejoined the army as a Major in the position of Commanding Officer of ‘B’ Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders.



**Simon c.1921**  
**Photo Courtesy of Peter Newling**

Simon was killed in action at the Battle of Abbeville on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 and lies buried in Mareuil-Caubert Communal Cemetery alongside other members of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths, in

**Plot 2, Row C, Grave 1**





DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. THANKS BE TO GOD. I CORINTHIANS XV. 54-57  
Photo Courtesy of M & S Templin

He was Mentioned in Despatches posthumously on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1940.

WL 42882/122. 300m. 2/40. W.S. Ltd. 61-6128. Forms/W-3121/6.		Army Form W. 3121	
152 Infantry Brigade Division Corps		Date recommendation passed forward 390	
Sched. No. (to be left blank) Unit 4th Bn. The Seaforth Highlanders		Received Passed	
Army No. and Rank Major		Brigade	
Name Simon Keith FRASER, M.C. (Christian names must be stated)		Division	
		Corps 10689	
		Army	
Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
<p>This officer showed the highest example of courage, determination, and calm leadership when in command of his Company.</p> <p>On May 15th when sudden and unexpected orders were received at a late hour to withdraw his Company from the forward line on the SAAR Front and when each one of his posts was under constant pressure from the enemy, Major Fraser took personal command of the rearmost elements as they fell back in accordance with a timed programme, and accomplished his task without loss.</p> <p>Again on June 4th he led his Company with conspicuous dash and determination in the attack on the ABBEVILLE BRIDGEHEAD. When the supporting tanks were all out of action and his Company were casualties almost to a man, Major Fraser (since reported missing) was last seen on a forward reconnaissance in his firm endeavour to get on and gain his objective. A most gallant officer whose</p>		D.S.O. MID 20/12/40	
resolute action and refusal to admit defeat was beyond all praise.			
(Signed) H.W.V. Stewart Brig. Comd. 152 Inf. Bde.			

**Probate details:**

**FRASER** Simon Keith of Wood Cottage Leckmelin Garve **Ross-shire** died 4 June 1940 on war service Confirmation of John Fraser commander R.M. Sealed **Llandudno** 15 August.

**Obituary in *The Times* on 7 May 1941**

**PERSONAL TRIBUTES**

**MAJOR S. K. FRASER**

His commanding officer writes:—

Major Simon K. Fraser, M.C., served in the Seaforths in the last War, got a M.C., was severely wounded and lost an eye. Later he became a Territorial, served for several years in the Ross-shire Battalion, and retired in 1937. When in the summer of 1939 he felt the certainty of war he applied to rejoin. He might well have stood aside, but not so Simon Fraser. He had a great love for that West Coast, with its lochs and forests and glens, but above all he loved the men belonging there, and he wanted once more to go where they went. And so he joined up again in September, 1939, at the head of the men from Loch Broom, Ullapool, Achiltibuie, and Gairloch, and in due time, after those few weeks of fighting in the Saar and on the Somme, he led them forward into the battle for Abbeville on June 4, 1940. I talked to him on the starting line at zero hour that morning. Always erect, imperturbable, and with a grand sense of humour, Simon Fraser seemed to stand straighter, look less anxious, and move slower as the strain of battle grew. It was well-nigh impossible not to follow him, and I am sure those were the feelings of his men. There were heavy losses that morning, and when the supporting tanks were all out of action and his company were casualties almost to a man he refused to admit defeat, and was last seen on a forward reconnaissance in his firm endeavour to get on and gain his objective. He has been missing ever since, and is now presumed killed. I shall never see a better or a more gallant leader of men.

## KENNETH ANGUS MACDONALD

Private 2822663

Killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 aged 22

Son of Kenneth and Catherine E Macdonald of Ullapool



Kenneth (senior) was born in Ullapool in 1871 and married Catherine (née Cumming) a restaurant waitress, in 1899 at Chalmers Street Hall, Glasgow. Catherine was born in 1882 in Dennistoun, Glasgow. In 1901 the couple were living at 229 Kuneaton Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow, Kenneth employed as a gas work stoker. By 1911 they had relocated to Market Street, Ullapool, Kenneth, a fisherman listed as aged 40; Catherine was 29.

Kenneth Angus lies buried in Mareuil-Caubert Communal Cemetery in  
**Plot 1, Row C, Grave 18.**

The wording translated on his gravestone is:

*You will never be out of my mind for the rest of my life*

He is commemorated on the family gravestone in West Argyle Street Cemetery, Ullapool.



Photo: Clare Church



Photo: Roddie Macpherson



## KENNETH CHARLES MACKENZIE

Private 2822670

Killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 aged 22

Roderick (Rory) Mackenzie, Kenneth's father was aged 38 and employed as a shepherd at Drumrunie (north of Strathcanaird) when he married Annie Maclean on 28<sup>th</sup> January 1913 at Mrs Fraser's Restaurant, High Street, Dingwall. Annie (born 1889) was aged 23 from Strathcanaird.

Several children were born into this family:

Catherine Isabella (b. 6<sup>th</sup> November 1913)

Martha (1916-1920)

**Kenneth Charles (b. 18<sup>th</sup> May 1918 at Drumrunie)**

Simon Peter (Simmie) (1920-2001)

Murdi (1923-1991)

Nana (Anne) 1925-2007

Kenneth was killed in action at the Battle of Abbeville on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940. His body was never recovered so he is commemorated on **Dunkirk Memorial on Column 125**



CWGC

His father Roderick died on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1950 aged 76, listed as a crofter, living at Blughasary, Strathcanaird. His son Simon registered the death. Annie died on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1959 at Invergordon Hospital.

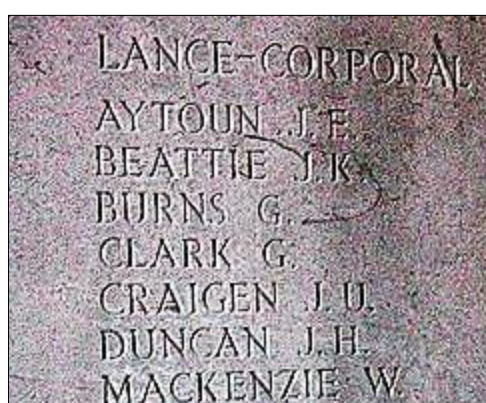
**WILLIAM MACKENZIE**  
**Lance Corporal 2820637**  
**Killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 aged 20**

William's parents, Herbert and Helen Ann (née Cameron) married on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1914 at The Royal Hotel, Dingwall. He was a gardener aged 30 living at Braemore, Lochbroom. Helen Ann aged 22 was a laundry maid also living at Braemore.

William was born in 1920 in the parish of Lochbroom.

He is commemorated on

**Dunkirk Memorial on Column 124**



A family gravestone stands in Lochbroom Churchyard which is too unclear to display here. The inscription reads:

**Erected/in/loving memory/of/WILLIAM MACKENZIE/  
L/Cpl 4th Seaforth Highlanders 51st Highland Division/  
killed in action near Abbeville/4th June 1940, aged 20/  
also his brother/ALASDAIR/died 7th September 1937/aged 9 years/and their  
parents/HELEN ANN CAMERON/died 4th October 1955/aged 64 years  
/and HERBERT MACKENZIE/died 13th July 1971/aged 90 years.  
*"Till the day break/and the shadows flee away."***



## COLIN CHARLES MACLEOD

Private 2822655

Died on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 aged 21

Colin's parents, John and Jessie (née Campbell) came from the Ullapool area, but married at 11 Apsley Street, Partick, Scotland on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1911. John at that time was a Seaman (Merchant Service), bachelor, listed as aged 39, usual residence 20 Main Street, Glasgow. Jessie, born in 1882, was a domestic servant, spinster, usual residence Craigmore, Rothesay. The *Ross-shire Journal* dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1940 gives the Macleod's home address as Point Street, Ullapool. Handwritten notes later say "*Missing, reported killed in action. Was at sea before joining the Seaforths and at one time was employed by Colonel Mitford.*"



Colin's death registration implies that he was born in 1918/19. He was killed in the Battle of Abbeville (not at St Valery – see below) and is buried in the Communal Cemetery at Mareuil-Caubert in **Plot 2, Row C, Grave 2**.



Grave inscription:  
THESE ARE THE SOULS WHO THROUGH  
HIGH VALOUR GAINED GLORY UNDYING

Photo Clare Church

A family grave is situated in West Argyle Street Cemetery, Ullapool.



Photo: Roddie Macpherson

See pp 116-119 for information provided by Mary MacLeod, Colin's cousin.

## JOHN MACMILLAN

Corporal 2822379

Killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 aged 28

Son of Donald Kenneth and Annie Macmillan

Donald Kenneth Macmillan was born in South Uist in 1883. He married Annie Maclean on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1910 at St Margaret's Church, Pollokshields, Glasgow. Donald was a bonded storeman aged 27 living at 100 McLean Street. Annie was employed as a Clerk, aged 20, living at 43 Plantation Street, Govan. **John Macmillan** was born on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1912 in Glasgow at his mother's home.

Donald died on 9<sup>th</sup> June 1916 at his home aged 32. At the time of his death John was 3½ years old, so Annie sought another husband and she found **William Mackenzie** (bachelor), a tailor. They married on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1921 and were both living at her home address, 43 Plantation Street, Govan. Annie was 31 and William 34.

During WW2 John lived at Point Street, Ullapool and he was great friends Kenny Macdonald (Kenny Deet) and Colin Macleod – See pages 24 and 27.

John lies in **Dunkirk Town Cemetery in Plot 2, Row 11, Grave 7**. This is unusual because his companions are buried in Mareuil-Caubert Communal Cemetery near to the battlefield.



Photo: Courtesy of Michael McCann

**JOHN MACAULAY**  
**Private 2822847**  
**Died of wounds on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1940 aged 26**

**John's** parents, Norman Macaulay and Christina Mackay were married on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1912 at Fraserburgh. John had an older brother Norman, born in 1909 at Uig (Ross and Cromarty). John was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1913 at 12 Upper Barvas, Barvas. His father Norman was a fisherman (domiciled at 7 Crossbost, Lochs). His parents must have moved to Ullapool in the early 1930s.

John fought in the Battle of Abbeville on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940. On 7<sup>th</sup> June, the day he died, the Seaforths had retreated to the Starfish Crossroads in the Forêt d'Eu. There is no mention in Captain Munro of Foulis' diary that anyone was killed on this day, as -

*"The day was uneventful and most of it was spent reorganising the very depleted Companies."*

It is suggested John was injured on 4<sup>th</sup> June and died in a hospital at Rouen, possibly the 13<sup>th</sup> British General Hospital, which functioned between 21<sup>st</sup> January and 17<sup>th</sup> June 1940. His death certificate gives the Cause of Death as "Died of Wounds". Unfortunately the details are brief so no location of actual death is given apart from "France/Belgium".

He was buried at **St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen** in  
**Block "S", Plot 4, Row S, Grave 14.**



**Photo courtesy of laurinlaurin espie**

Norman died on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1956, aged 72, retired crofter, and widower of Christina Mackay, address 11 Braes, Ullapool. She died in 1952 aged 74.



## INJURED SOLDIERS

It is most probable that many more men from Lochbroom serving with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders were injured at the Battle of Abbeville on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940 who are not mentioned. If any more come to light please contact the author (address given on page v) so that they can be included.

### JAMES MACLEOD

#### Lance Corporal, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders



This photograph included with others from the Lochbroom area in the *People's Journal* dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 1940, mentions that Lance Corporal James, son of the late Mr Alex. and Mrs Macleod, of Ullapool was wounded. James is the father of Mary MacLeod who has written a very interesting article about his experiences during WW2 on pages 116-119.

James's father, Alexander Macleod, a retired Seaman died aged 72 on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1940 [shortly before the article in the *People's Journal*] at 17 Ladysmith Street. James was born on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1911 at Shore Street, his mother was Isabella Macleod (née McLeod). After return to Scotland on recovery from his injuries, James married Effie Campbell (1914-2006) on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1941 at the Free Church of Scotland, Ullapool. He was listed as a postman (30), resident at 66 High Street, Invergordon. Effie (26) lived at the Caledonian Hotel, Ullapool where she was employed as a housemaid.

Mary writes: *"Before the war, he worked in the yachts, hence the uniform. He moved home [to Ullapool] from Invergordon in 1948. He was lucky. He was wounded in the action at Abbeville. The casing of the bullet that went through his thigh was lodged in the bone and could not be moved. But it remained stable and once healed did not prevent him from cycling the postal round of over 15 miles daily up and down Braes and Morefield to Rhue and Blughasary until the post office gave him a van. His hands and arm were full of shrapnel as a result of a bullet hitting the magazine of his rifle. His arm was painted up to be amputated but a young surgeon arrived in the hospital from Edinburgh and said he would try to save it, which he did. Nevertheless both hands were disabled and he was discharged and had a war disability pension until his death."*

### HUGH MACLEOD

#### Private, 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders

Mary MacLeod mentions that her father James Macleod (Jimmy) was in the same ward in hospital as Hugh, and when Hugh woke up one day Jimmy was not there so he thought he was dead and only found out years later that he was still alive. Hugh emigrated to Australia but came back to the UK to visit from time to time.

### RODERICK MACPHERSON

#### Private, 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders

Home address: Corry, Ullapool

Information from the *Ross-shire Journal* dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1940 – wounded.

His father, Alistair was a shepherd employed by Charles Morrison Rose, junior.



## RETREAT FROM ABBEVILLE

### 5<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 1940

**5<sup>th</sup> June:** The 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths withdrew to Limeaux, south-east of Limercourt.

PM. *"We reached Limeaux just as it was getting light. It was a small, tumbledown village, completely deserted, and for some reason had obviously been rather badly dive-bombed. There were enormous craters all round it and one or two actually in the village."*

2300 withdrew to Battalion Headquarters at Ramburelles.

**6<sup>th</sup> June:** Arrived Ramburelles 0500.

2100 Withdrew across the River Bresle. Arrived Blangy at midnight.

**7<sup>th</sup> June:** Reached 'Star Fish Crossroads', Forest d'Eu. At night, no transport arrived for journey to Le Treport, so the troops started marching to Cuverville-sur-Yeres.

**8<sup>th</sup> June:** 0600 Arrived Cuverville.

p.m. Moved to Bois Robert, a village south of Dieppe

2100 Orders to move immediately to Arques la Bataille.

**9<sup>th</sup> June:** Early a.m. arrived Arques la Bataille.

PM. *"The Company was holding a line running parallel with a railway and a river; however the ground we were occupying was low and inclined to be marshy with the river Bethune running along our front. The platoons found that on digging down to a depth of two feet, they struck water."*

*"The village was still occupied but at 11 a.m. the Mayor issued a very belated evacuation order. I was immediately besieged by weeping women and children, all saying what were they to do, where were they to go etc.?"*

**10<sup>th</sup> June:** During the night of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> June the bridges across the River Bethune were destroyed by allied forces.

The Adjutant's official diary quotes: *"1300 hours. 'D' Company reported that the enemy were attacking and trying to cross the Bethune River by the destroyed [main] bridge. It was also reported that German lorries were debussing troops the other side of the Bethune at a crossroads. This information was passed back to the Royal Horse Gunners who immediately concentrated fire on the crossroads. However, enemy troops managed to cross the river and establish a post in an old factory near the railway"*.

*"The RHA shelled the bridge and scored a direct hit on the ruin, which blew it to pieces. The Mortar Pl[atoon] shelled the factory post and drove the enemy out of it.*

*1400 hours. BN. HQ was heavily shelled, causing several casualties."*



Bethune River with railway line in foreground and CWGC WW1 cemetery in distance

Photo: Clare Church

Eight 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Seaforth Highlanders are buried in the **Communal Cemetery**.



Photo: Clare Church

**10<sup>th</sup> June:** PM. *“At 6.15 p.m. I received a message from Bn. HQ to the effect that the Battalion would hold on at all costs till 11 p.m. and then withdraw to a pre-arranged RV about two miles further back.”*

2300 The troops marched westwards then were transported towards Battalion Headquarters at Yelon [Iclon on present day map].

**11<sup>th</sup> June:** In the early hours of the morning the Battalion came up against close range German gunfire. Shots were being fired from windows of the houses in a village. Much mayhem ensued, with an ammunition truck on fire and vehicles facing the wrong way in the narrow streets. Eventually Captain Munro found the Divisional Headquarters at Cailleville and reported the incident, much to the officers' surprise that the Germans were so close.

1130 The Battalion arrived at Yelon.

**12<sup>th</sup> June:** 0500 Battalion reached St Valéry en Caux  
 0800 **General Ihler** [CO French 9<sup>th</sup> Army Corps] gave the order to surrender, but **General Fortune** was determined to fight on but surrendered at 1000.

More than 8,000 members of the 51st (Highland) Division were taken prisoner.

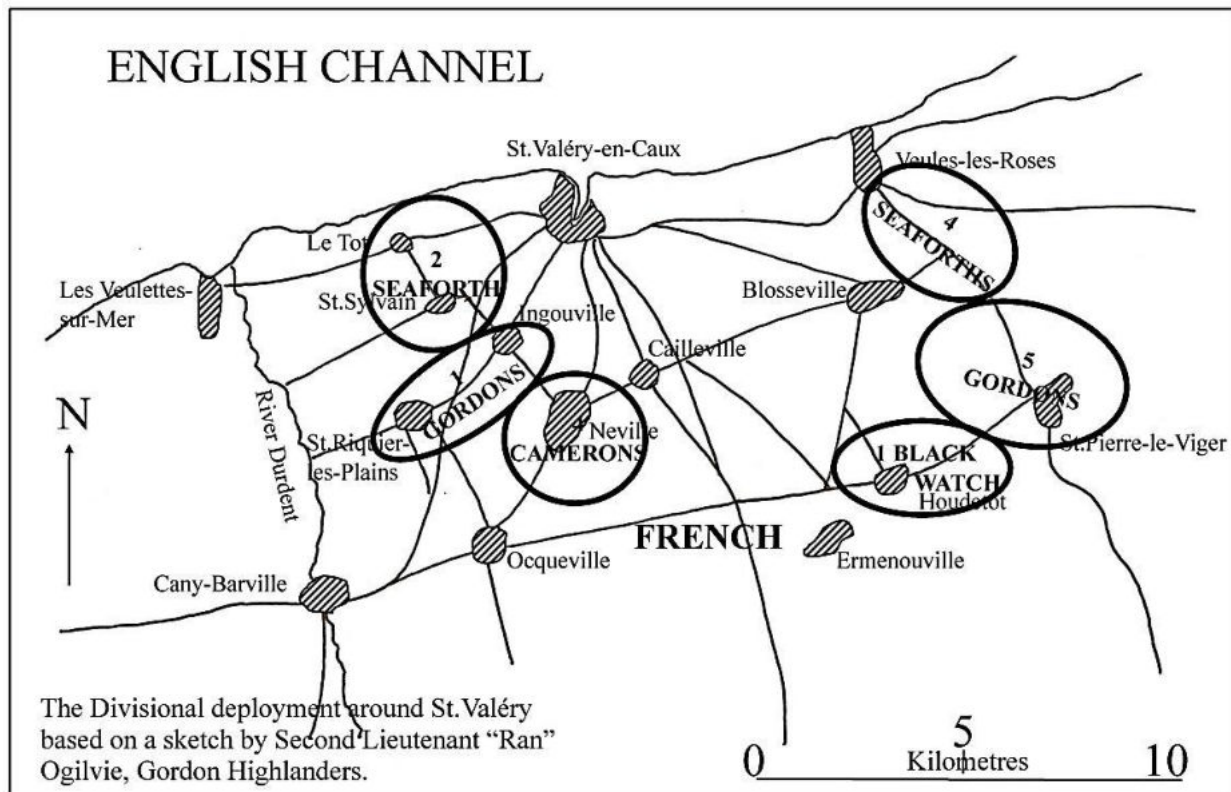






Photo: IWM RM4 342

**Major General V M Fortune, GOC [General Officer Commanding] 51st Highland Division (right), with General Major Erwin Rommel at St. Valéry after the surrender of the 51st Division to Rommel's 7th Panzer Division (12th June 1940)**



**Seaforth and Cameron Highlanders buttons found at St Valéry  
Photo: Dunkirk Veterans**

## CAPTURE AT ST VALERY-EN-CAUX

Following the Battle of Abbeville and during their retreat to the coast in an attempt to evacuate to England, the 4th Seaforth Highlanders fought determinedly at Arques-la-Bataille and a few days later at St Valéry-en-Caux. But they were completely surrounded, out of ammunition and supplies,



and were overwhelmed by the 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division under the command of General Erwin Rommel and ordered to surrender on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1940.

The surrender was the start of five years of captivity. The men were required to march at least 16 miles a day and it took 16 days to reach the railhead at Hulst in Holland. Food was in short supply and the prisoners relied on hand-outs from French and Belgian villagers. The men slept in fields with no cover. From Hulst, the troops were transported in open railway wagons to Valsoorden, where they embarked onto barges for a journey up the Rhine into Germany. They disembarked at Wesel and were sent by train to the prison camps.

Despite the harsh circumstances in which the men were living, the regimental spirit of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths helped maintain morale. Music played a strong part in this. The well-known Scottish country dance, 'The reel of the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division' was created by Highland officers held as Prisoners of War.



Approximate route of march from St Valéry en Caux to the Rhine, June 1940

The majority of men serving with the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders were imprisoned in **Stalag XX-B at Marienburg**.

**Extract from an article in 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division website by Henry Owens –  
Gunner Artificer, Royal Artillery**

*“Stalag XX-B was a bleak, forbidding camp on the outskirts of Marienburg, with the usual double wire fencing, lookout towers, and floodlighting. It housed many prisoners of all nationalities, in different compounds, and had a look of despair about it. We were allocated to a long hut with three tiers of bunks and an earth floor. We soon realised it was overrun with rats.”* 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1945 – Evacuation began on this date.

#### **Other camps which accommodated 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders from Lochbroom**

**Stalag XX-A at Torun**

**Stalag XXI-D at Posen (Poznan)**

**Stalag VIII-B (later called 344) at Lamsdorf (Labinowice)**

**Stalag VIII-B was located at Teschen from 1943 to 1945.**

**Stalag 383 at Hohenfels**

**Stalag IX-C at Mulhausen**

**Oflag VII-B at Erchstatt – for officers**

**Stalag XX-A** contained as many as 20,000 men at its peak. The main camp was located in a complex of fifteen forts that surrounded the city of Torun. The camp was liberated on 1 February 1945 by the Soviet Army.

**Stalag XXI-D** : In Posen, three forts were used - Rauch, IIIA and VIII.

The Prisoners of War were moved out before the advancing Russian Army eventually took the town, which took place between 24<sup>th</sup> January and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1945.

**Stalag VIIIB at Lamsdorf** (later called Stalag 344)

**Extract from *The Prisoner of War, September 1942*** – published from 1942 until 1945 for families in Britain.

*“This camp, in Silesia, is the largest prisoner of war camp in Germany. About 270 work detachments are administered from it. There are some 20,000 British prisoners of war in the whole camp area, of whom 5,700 are in the base camp. The base camp is composed of rows of one-storeyed barracks, each with a wash room and running water. The barracks are of stone, built directly on the ground, which makes them rather cold in winter. There are large playing fields and room for vegetable and gardens. The men sleep on 3-tiered wooden bunks, with wool stuffed palliasses and have two blankets each. Lighting has improved since the last visit, and bathing facilities are quite in order. Except for the Medical Officers there are no officers in the camp. Eleven British doctors and 39 medical orderlies work in the infirmary.”* 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1945 Stalag 344 was evacuated.



### **Stalag 383 at Hohenfels –**

#### **Extract from the "Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War"**

*"The Germans had never ceased their pressure on NCOs to go out on working parties, but by September 1942 they were finally resigned to allowing those who claimed exemption to go to a special camp at **Hohenfels - Stalag 383**.*

*Between September and the end of 1942 over 3000 NCOs were collected there from camps all over Germany, and by April 1943 their numbers had increased to over 4000. The camp, formerly for officers, was built on a gentle slope in the middle of a piece of heavily wooded country, some miles from the nearest town. Instead of being crammed by the hundreds into un-partitioned barracks, the NCOs found themselves allocated small dormitory huts holding fourteen or less, described by one of them as "snug billets". The camp had plenty of room for sports fields and walking space besides, and some larger barracks for theatrical shows and indoor recreation. When Red Cross food arrived in October to supplement the ordinary German prisoner-of-war ration, there was little to complain of at Hohenfels"*

After various delaying tactics, **Stalag 383** was finally evacuated on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1945. The PoWs were forced to leave the camp and march south via Regensburg to Frontenhausen where they were liberated by advancing American troops.

### **Stalag IX-C at Mulhausen**

On 29<sup>th</sup> March 1945 this camp was evacuated

### **Oflag VIIB at Erchstatt – for officers**

On 14<sup>th</sup> April 1945, as the US Army approached, the officers were marched out of the camp. Unfortunately, only a short distance from the camp the column was attacked by American aircraft, who mistook it for a formation of German troops. Fourteen British officers were killed and 46 were wounded. The camp was liberated by the U.S. Army on 16 April 1945.

## **THE LONG MARCH**

In January 1945, as the Soviet armies resumed their offensive and advanced into Germany, the Nazis made the decision to evacuate the PoW camps to prevent the liberation of the prisoners by the Russians. About 30,000 prisoners were force-marched westward across Poland and Germany in appalling winter conditions, lasting about four months. The first two months of 1945 were among the coldest winter months of the twentieth century, with blizzards and temperatures as low as –25 °C.

Most of the PoWs were ill-prepared for the evacuation, having suffered years of poor rations and wearing clothing ill-suited to the appalling winter conditions. Each Stalag was responsible for co-ordinating the movement of PoWs at the outlying Arbeitkommandos (work camps) as well as those at the main camp. They marched in small columns following side roads to villages where they could find accommodation at the end of each day.

In most camps, the PoWs were actually broken up in groups of 250 to 300 men and because of the inadequate roads and the flow of battle, not all the prisoners followed the same route. The groups would march 20 to 40 kilometres a day - resting in factories, churches, barns and even in the open. Soon long columns of PoWs were wandering over the northern part of Germany with little or nothing in the way of food, clothing, shelter or medical care. With so little food they were reduced to scavenging to survive. Some were reduced to eating dogs and cats - and even rats and grass - anything they could lay their hands on. Already underweight from years of prison rations, some were at half their pre-war body weight by the end.

Because of the unsanitary conditions and a near starvation diet, hundreds of PoWs died along the way from exhaustion as well as pneumonia, diphtheria, and other diseases. Typhus was spread by body lice. Sleeping outside on frozen ground resulted in frostbite that in many cases required the amputation of extremities. In addition to these conditions were the dangers from air attack by Allied forces mistaking the PoWs for retreating columns of German troops.

As winter drew to a close, suffering from the cold abated and some of the German guards became less harsh in their treatment of PoWs. As the columns reached the western side of Germany they ran into the advancing British and American armies. For some, this brought liberation. Others were not so lucky. They were marched towards the Baltic Sea where Nazis were said to be using PoWs as human shields and hostages. It was later estimated that a large number of men had marched over five hundred miles by the time they were liberated, and some had walked nearly a thousand miles.

# IDENTIFIED PRISONERS OF WAR FROM LOCHBROOM

## 4<sup>th</sup> BATTALION, SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS

Name	Rank	Service No.	POW No.	POW Camp	Address
Campbell, Ian Roderick	Private	2820291	15460	Stalag XX-B	Blugshasary, nr Ullapool
Clune, Arthur Ernest	Private	2822666	15463	Stalag XX-B	Ardcharnich
Finlayson, James	Private	2822664	15447	Stalag XX-B	14 Ladysmith St, Ullapool
Fraser, William A	L/Cpl	2815382	15459	Stalag XX-B	Argyle St, Ullapool
Macdonald, Hector John	Private	2822211	17771	Stalag 344	Ardmair
Mackenzie, John	Private	?	?	?	Mill House, Ullapool
Mackenzie, Kenneth	Driver	2812874	14020	Stalag XX-B	Royal Hotel, Ullapool
Mackenzie, Kenneth J	Private	2822109	15462	Stalag XX-B	13 Ladysmith St
Mackenzie, Murdo	Private	2822123	14018	Stalag XX-B	Crofton, Ullapool
MacIennan, Donald	Private	2820996	6934	Stalag XXI-D,	2 West Terrace, Ullapool
MacIennan, Duncan	CSM	2816336	13951	Stalag XX-B	Holly Grove, Ardindrean
Macleod, Alexander	Corporal	2818520	6935	383 Hohenfels	19 Ladysmith St, Ullapool
Macleod, Angus	Private	2820988	6955	Stalag VIII-B	8 Ladysmith St, Ullapool
Macleod, Donald	Private	?2823362	?20611	?Stalag XX-A	29 Ladysmith St, Ullapool
Macleod, Hugh	Private	2817114	15828	Stalag XX-B	29 Ladysmith St, Ullapool
Macrae, Donald Alexr	Private	2822827	236	Stalag IX-C	No. 2 Braes, Ullapool
Munro, Hector	Private	2815856	15602	Stalag XX-B	Ardcharnich
Rae, Roderick Scott	L/Cpl	2820106	6759	Stalag XX-B	Benwell House, Ullapool
Ross, George Alexander	Private	2822654	6761	Stalag VIII-B	Brae House, Argyle St
Wallace, Alan D	Captain	93863	1386	Oflag VII-B	8 Belmont Place, Ayr



## IAN RODERICK CAMPBELL

Private 2820291, POW No. 15460

Stalag XX-B, Marienburg

**Ian** was born on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1916 at Abersky, Stratherrick in the Parish of Dores, on the East shore of Loch Ness. His parents John, and Hannah (née McKenzie) had married on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1914 at Achiltibuie, Coigach; John (35) a shepherd was living at Polglass and Hannah (27) domestic servant lived at Blughasary, near Ullapool.



**Prisoners of War in their prison camp, Stalag XXB, at Marienburg in Poland.**

**Ian Campbell is seated third from left in the front row.**

**He had sent the original picture to his sister in 1941 and donated it to the collection.**

**Photograph courtesy of Ullapool Museum Trust**

Prior to WW2 Ian and his brother Donald worked at the flour mill on Isle Martin

### **Extract from article in *The Herald* dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1999**

*Two of the mill workers returned yesterday. Mr Ian Campbell, 83, and his brother Donald, 77, from Strathcanaird, had never been back after leaving the mill to fight in the Second World War.*

*"I often thought I would like to come back but this is the first chance I have had, I have been looking forward to it so much. I have a lot of memories of the place. There was a lot of hard work done here. We had to load the flour on our backs down there and then over at Ardair, on the mainland, we had to carry it up the shore through the big stones", said Mr Ian Campbell.*

## ARTHUR ERNEST THOMAS CLUNE

Private 2822666, POW No. 15463

Stalag XX-B, Marienburg

Died on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945 aged 25

The gravestone below which stands in Lochbroom Churchyard reads:

*In loving memory of **Arthur Clune**, only son of Mr & Mrs Clune, Ardcharnich served with the 4th Seaforth Highlanders 1939. Prisoner of War in Germany, died 7th May 1945 aged 25.*



Photo: Roddie Macpherson

**Arthur Anthony Clune** (Arthur Ernest's father), a cook, enlisted on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1916 at Sudbury, Ontario, into the 227<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, Sergeant, Service No 1003108. He was born at Fort Frances, Ontario, Canada on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1885. After sailing to England in April 1917, the 227<sup>th</sup> Battalion was absorbed into the Canadian 8<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalion. Anthony transferred to the Canadian Forestry Corps, No. 138 Company which was employed in the Lael Forest, Braemore from July 1918 until March 1919. It is suggested that it is here he met his future wife.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March 1919 at Lochbroom.

**Arthur Anthony Cloon**, Cook – Sergeant, Canadian Forestry Corps

Bachelor age 32, usual residence Inverlael, Lochbroom

Married **Isabella McLean**, 25 of Ardcharnich, Lochbroom

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1919, Arthur and Isabella departed from Liverpool on board *ss Scotian*, bound for Quebec, Canada. Prior to the voyage they had been based at the Canadian Discharge Depot at Buxton, Derbyshire, England. Arthur was demobbed in Canada on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1919.

Two children were born in Canada, **Arthur Ernest** in 1920, and **Euphemia Rose** in 1923.

Their father died of Hodgkins Disease on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1924 at Christie Street Hospital, Toronto. He is buried in Hamilton Cemetery, Ontario in Soldiers Row No. 83.



In 1926 Isabella and her two young children, sailed on the *Cameronia*, and arrived Glasgow on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, from New York, destination Ardcharnich. They also sailed in 1927 on the *Athenia*, Anchor Line from Montreal to Glasgow, arriving 21<sup>st</sup> August. It is not known why they returned to Canada for just a few months, maybe to complete arrangements?

Arthur Ernest died on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945 at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, of tuberculosis of the spine, from which he had been suffering for 1 year 6 months. His sister Effie (Euphemia) was present at his death: He could have been one of those repatriated in October 1943 (see pages 114-115).

Euphemia qualified as a Nurse at Gray's Hospital, Elgin in June 1944. She married Geoffrey James Jennings in 1946 in Inverness. In 1948-50 she was resident at 5 Heath Cottages, Little Heath, Potters Bar, near London. Then in the 1950s, the couple lived at North Mimms, Hertfordshire.

Arthur Ernest's mother, Isabella, died in the winter of 1976 aged 83, Registration District Hatfield, Hertfordshire, in the area where her daughter and husband lived.



**JAMES FINLAYSON**  
**Private 2822664, POW No. 15447**  
**Stalag XX-B Marienburg**



James and his family lived at 14 Ladysmith Street, Ullapool. His father Alexander, a fisherman, married Margaret Watson in Cromarty in 1907. James was born on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1918 at 4 Braehead, Cromarty, which indicates that the family did not relocate to Ullapool until after WW1. Known siblings were Alexander (1913-1934) and David (1926-1978).

Margaret died at 14 Ladysmith Street, on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1964, with son James as informant, and Alexander died at the same address in December 1966. The family grave however is at Cromarty Gaelic West Cemetery. James died at Dingwall in 1982, aged 63.

**WILLIAM ALEXANDER FRASER**  
**Lance Corporal 2815382, POW No. 15459**  
**Stalag XX-B Marienburg**

William's parents William Fraser and Euphemia Bathgate Macrae were married on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1899 at 16 Fantallon Place, Edinburgh, William, a joiner (23) resided at 19 Watson Street, Edinburgh, whereas Euphemia (26) domestic servant, lived at Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.

Euphemia gave birth to four children: John (1900) in Edinburgh, Katie (1902) in Elgin, Euphemia (1904) and **William Alexander** (1906). The youngest two were born in Cape Town, South Africa. Passenger shipping records have not been available to establish why the family moved to South Africa and for how long they stayed there. However, it is known that in 1911 Euphemia and her four children were residing at Argyle Street, Ullapool, her birthplace, with her widowed father James Macrae in a house with three rooms.



The marriage was not successful and Euphemia was granted a divorce on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1919. She remarried to Murdo Urquhart, a tailor, widower, on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1922. She was living at Argyle Street, Ullapool, whilst Murdo, aged 63 lived at Mill Street, Ullapool. Murdo died on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1934 (aged 76) at home in Argyle Street. Euphemia died on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1947 (aged 74) also at home in Ullapool. William (known by the family as Alick) died on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1974 aged 68 at Inverness.

The inscription on the family gravestone at Ullapool Mill Street/Garve Street cemetery is too faint to reproduce but the wording is:

**James & Catherine (Matheson) Macrae**

Erected/by/JAMES MACRAE/in loving memory of/his beloved wife/CATHERINE MATHESON/who died 8th August 1909/aged 56 years/JAMES MACRAE/died 1915/EUPHEMIA MACRAE/died 9 April 1947/KATIE FRASER/died 10th February 1959/ALICK FRASER/died 26th December 1974/JOHN FRASER/born 7.2.1900 - died 4.9.1979.

## **HECTOR JOHN MACDONALD**

**Private 2822211, POW No. 17771**

**Stalag 344, Lamsdorf**

The following information has been provided by Ronnie Mitchell, Hector's nephew.

*Iain (Hector John) the eldest son was taken prisoner after being badly wounded and later medically repatriated from POW camp in Poland via Sweden.*

Details of the family can be found in the chapter **The Macdonald Family from Ardair** on pages 105-108.

## **JOHN MACKENZIE**

**Private, Service No. and POW No. unknown**

Liberated 11<sup>th</sup> May 1945

Lived at Mill House, Ullapool.

A John Mackenzie was born on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1914, at Mill Street, Ullapool. Is this the correct man?

Father = John, crofter

Mother = Catherine née MacInnes

Married 10<sup>th</sup> December 1908 Glasgow.

John = Spirit Merchants storeman age 31, bachelor married at Cambridge Halls, Cambridge Street, Glasgow. Resident at 155 Berkeley Street, Glasgow.

Catherine MacInnes 27, domestic servant resident North Street, Glasgow.

John Mackenzie (junior) could have married Abigail Macleod 1946 Ref. 075/1 3

## **KENNETH MACKENZIE**

**Driver 2812874, POW No. 14020**

**Stalag XX-B Marienburg**

**Address: Royal Hotel, Ullapool**

Liberated 5<sup>th</sup> June 1945

Kenneth's father, John Angus, a marine engineer (36), married Jean Noble Taylor (34) on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1919 at Bellahouston Parish Church, Govan. Both were living at 472 Paisley Road West, Govan, Glasgow.

Kenneth was born in about 1920. His mother died before 1937 when his father, widower of Ardene, Shore Street, Ullapool, married for the second time to Catherine Margaret Mackenzie on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1937 at the Free Presbyterian Church Ullapool. She was a spinster and Hotel proprietor aged 39, at the Royal Hotel Ullapool,

## **KENNETH JOHN MACKENZIE**

**Private 2822109, POW No. 15462**

**Stalag XX-B Marienburg**

Kenneth's parents, Kenneth Donald MacKenzie and Duncanina MacAskil1 were married on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1918 at 54 Grant Street, Glasgow. Kenneth (32) worked as a tailor journeyman and was also a Drummer with the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Seaforth Highlanders, presently on active service. His home address was Mill Street, Ullapool. Duncanina (22) a domestic servant, lived at 28 Smith Street, South Glasgow.

Kenneth John was born in Ullapool in 1919, Ref. Lochbroom 075/1/21. During WW2 his home address was 13 Ladysmith Street, Ullapool.

He married Jean B Wastell at Bethnal Green, London in Mar Q 1952, Ref. 5c 329. Jean was born in Mar Q 1931 in Bethnal Green (Ref.1c 167). It is known that they had at least one child.



Morefield Cemetery:

Photo: Clare Church

**MURDO MACKENZIE**  
**Private 2822123, POW No. 14018**  
**Stalag XX-B Marienburg**

The questionnaire survives for Murdo Mackenzie which was completed on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1945.

He was born on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1919. Address: Crofton, Lochbroom , Enlisted 10.4.39  
 Civilian Trade: Forestry Commission Agricultural

<b>Camps:</b>	Stalag XX-B Marienburg	12.8.40 to 23.1.45	
<b>Working Camps:</b>	Nenstadt, Poland	15.7.40 to 12.8.40	Draining Work
	Willenberg	12.8.40 to 25.11.40	Draining Work
	Elbing 2	5.11.40 to 6.6.42	Farm Work
	Marienburg	6.6.42 to 23.1.45	Laundry

It is suggested that Murdo was the son of Thomas Eddie Mackenzie, rabbit trapper of Crofton and Annabella Sutherland of Inverbroom, Lochbroom who were married on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1919 at The National Hotel, Dingwall, Thomas aged 30 and Annabella aged 27. Thomas's father was called Murdo, the same name as his son.

**DONALD MACLELLAN**  
**Private, 2820996, POW 6934**  
**Stalag XXI-D, Posen**



This biography is included because Donald, a gardener, is listed as living at 2 West Terrace, Ullapool in 1940, tenant of Lochbroom Trading Company. His rent of £9 was paid by Lady Doris Vyner. In reality he was a prisoner of war in Germany. Five years previously, in 1935, he was living at Little Scatwell, Strathpeffer.

Donald married Elizabeth Young Manson on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1935 at the Parish Church, Kilmuir Easter. Donald was an Estate Labourer at Rhives Farm, Delny, Ross and Cromarty and Elizabeth was aged 21, resident at Rolls, Delny.

On 7<sup>th</sup> June 1944 "*A Decree of Divorce was pronounced by Lord Russell Ordinary, in an action at the instance of Donald Maclellan, presently a prisoner of war in Germany, against Elizabeth Young Manson or Maclellan, Rhives Farm, Delny, Ross and Cromarty*", reason unknown. However, after his release in 1945 they remarried in 1946 at Inverness.

Donald died on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1971 aged 64. The wording on his gravestone states "*a devoted father and beloved husband of Elizabeth Y Manson*". Elizabeth died in 1988 aged 74 at Rosskeen.



**DUNCAN MACLENNAN**  
**Company Sergeant Major**  
**2816336, POW 13951**  
**Stalag XX-B, Marienburg**

Duncan was born on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1907 at Firnbeg, Applecross, the son of Alexander and Christy née Mackenzie. Alexander (36) a seaman, had married Christina (35) on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1906 at their home in Glasgow. They were both living at 149 Govan Road, Govan. In time, the family relocated to "Holly Grove", Ardindrean, Lochbroom

Duncan enlisted into the Territorial Army on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1928.



Returning from Ullapool to Ardindrean shop in the launch, 1934.  
 John MacKay, Gibson, Duncan Maclellan and Donald Maciver.

Photo courtesy of Peter Newling

In May 1940 whilst the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths were stationed in the Saar area, Duncan excelled himself and was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

[NAME] WYNDHAMER 5000a 901a rpt G & S E.1738. Form W.1111C				Date Recommendation passed forward.		Army Form	
				Received	Passed	W. 3121.	
152 Infantry Brigade. 51st (Highland) Division. III Corps.							
Schedule No. (to be left blank)	Unit	Regt. No.	Rank and Name (Christian names must be stated)	Action for which recommended (Date and place of action must be stated)	Recommended by	Honour or Reward	(To be left blank)
	4th Seaforth Highlanders	2816336	C.S.M. Duncan MACLENNAN	On 15th/16th May this W.O. showed great initiative and daring in getting withdrawal orders out to the several posts in different parts of a village. Enemy elements were in the village at the time and bombing and sniping made movement in the darkness very difficult. C.S.M. Maclellan showed most commendable initiative and complete disregard of all danger. It is largely due to him that the withdrawal of his company was successfully effected.	Mr. J.-Gen. V.M. Fortune, D.S.O.	D.C.M.	1609

TNA WO 373/15

**Extract** from the Chapter *Disaster Strikes* from *None Bolder* by **Richard Doherty**

*“By 15 May it had become clear that the forward positions of the Division could not be held against the increasing German pressure and General Fortune, following consultation with General Conde, ordered withdrawal to the ligne de recueil. This was a difficult manoeuvre to execute, but the forward battalions made their way back to a line the defences of which had yet to be completed. It lay about three miles in front of the Maginot Line, on a forward slope. The field of fire was good, but the wire was thin, communication trenches were poor, and an anti-tank ditch had been only half-dug.”*

Duncan stated on the Questionnaire completed on release from captivity in 1945 that his civilian profession was that of Male Nurse (Mental). Signed on 16.4.45

**Main camps in which imprisoned:**

Stalag XX-A Thorn -	11.7.40 to 19.4.41
Stalag XX-B Marienburg -	20.4.41 to 4.3.42
Working Camp: 519 Stalag XX-B Fischerbabke	5.3.42 to 23.1.45

Lectures on how to behave in the event of capture were given in France, periodically by Major Nason. Duncan attempted to escape twice; the first time in France during the last week of June 1940, travelling by night along with Sgt Douglas, Seaforth Highlanders. He was recaptured at Crevecourt by German military and railway officials. The second time, he escaped from the Germans on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1945, in Poland while on the line of March into Germany. He joined Gunner King of the Royal Horse Artillery and remained hidden on a Polish farm until freed by the Russians.

Additional information on his form revealed that

*“Frau L Möller Grosechkenkampe bei Fischerbabke Kreis Gross Werder, West Prussia had hid[den] and fed seven men of the Working Kdo at Fischerbabke from 23.1.45 until these men were freed by the Russians. This was done over a period of 2 months at great personal risk and if it was previously possible for her to do anything for our men she always did so. Anything that can be done to lighten her lot under existing conditions should be attempted.”*

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APPENDIX "A" GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE TOP SECRET

PART III

M.I.9/Gen/

Number 2816336 Rank C.S.M. Surname MACLENNAN  
 and Initials D.  
 Unit SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS.

Give such names and addresses as you can remember of those persons who helped you during your escape journey(s), with the approximate dates of their help, a very brief summary of service rendered, amount of money or approximate value of clothing supplied, and degree of risk incurred. A specimen of what is required is given below.

Dates and period of help.	Name and address of Helper. (Put Christian name FIRST, and give Province if possible)	Type of Help given.
10 Sep 43 - 16 Mar 44	Mario BATTI, MONTE VICINO, Prov. FIRENZE.	Sheltered and fed me and 3 others, at great risk. Gave me civilian clothes (approx. value 2,000 lire) and 200 lire in cash.
23 JAN 45 5	FRAU LIESCHEN MÖLLER. GROSCHKEN KAMPE FISCHERBABKE.	Sheltered, & fed 7 British escapees from Stg xx B working Party 519. (FISCHERBABKE)
26 FEB 45.	GROSS-WERDER W. PRUSSIA.	

[The escapees referred to were still with this woman on 26 Feb 45 & would remain there till liberation of KONIGSBERG)

POW No.	Name
RASC. 8492	BECK. R.D.
GORDONS. 16492	CUSHNIE. J.
HAMPSHIRE 13847	MARSHALL-DEANE H.T.
GLASGOW HOS. 15304	AIRLIE. H.J.
RASC. 10468	BROWN. G.
R.W. KENTS. 11042	SMITH S.A.H.
SEAFORTH 7210	WILSON E.

Previous to this - she had provided comforts for our men on many occasions.

Extract  
 J.I. Co - old & ~~new~~ (C.M.)

TNA WO 344/202/2 - POW form

**ALEXANDER (Alister) MACLEOD**  
**Corporal 2818520, POW No. 6935**  
**Stalag 383, Hohenfels (majority of time)**

Born 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914  
Address: 19 Ladysmith Street, Ullapool  
Enlisted September 1930  
Civilian Trade: Mason's labourer



**Main Camps in which imprisoned:**

XX-IB Poland	1940
XX-A Poland	22.6.41 to 10.11.42
383 Poland	14.11.42 to 16.4.45
VIIA Bavaria	24.4.45

In a working camp in Poland from 1940 to 1942, Farming  
Signed Questionnaire 11.5.45

Alexander's parents, Hugh, a farm servant, and Flora née Mackenzie were married on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1911 at Dundonnell Hotel. He was aged 28 a Coachman, resident Ullapool. She was aged 25, resident Durnamuck, domestic servant.

Hugh died on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1947 and Flora died on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1970.

Alexander relocated to Dunfermline and married Charlotte Robertson (1917-1987) in 1948 (Ref 424/257.) She was born on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1917 at 11 Damside Street, Dunfermline, the daughter of Peter, a coalminer and Helen née Combe. She had a brother Charles (1902-1967).

In 1960 and 1965 the Electoral Register lists Alexander and Charlotte living at 41 Robertson Road, Dunfermline. He was employed as a bricklayer.



**ANGUS MACLEOD**  
**Private 2820988, POW No. 6955**  
**XXI-D Posen (majority of time)**



Murdo Angus Macleod (27) of Pulteney Street, Ullapool, married Ena (Thomasena) Maclean (34) of Mill Street, Ullapool on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1918. Murdo's occupation was that of a Motor Hirer/Motor Engineer. **Angus**, born on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1920 in Ullapool was the eldest son, with a brother Murdoch arriving in 1923.

Murdo died on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1929 aged 39, at 19 Great King Street, Edinburgh following an operation, and his wife Ena continued to live in Ullapool at Benwell House, Argyle Street. During WW2 she was a Council tenant at 8 Ladysmith Street, Ullapool.

**Camps in which imprisoned:**

XX-B Warthlager (Poland)	August 1940 to November 1941
XX-ID Posen-Litsmanstadt	November 1941 to April 1944
VIIIB Konigshutte – work camp	April 1944 to January 1945
VIIA Landhut (Bavaria)	April 1945 to 1 <sup>st</sup> May 1945

He signed the Questionnaire on release on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1945

**The following was written by Michelle Almer:**

*My grandparents were Murdo Angus MacLeod and Ena (short for Thomasena) MacLeod. They had two sons Murdoch Maclean Macleod born around 1923 and **Angus Macleod (1920-1984)**. Angus Macleod was my father. He was a POW in Germany and Poland for 5 years during WWII. He was a policeman in Paisley where he met and married Isabella MacDonald Hall in 1952. Angus and Isabel moved to New York then to Gulf Breeze, Florida where they raised my brother Derek Macleod and myself. Murdoch Maclean Macleod (Mac Macleod) and his wife moved to Delaware, USA where they raised 3 daughters.*

Angus died on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1984 at Escambia, Florida. Last residence: 32514 Pensacola, Escambia.

**HUGH MACLEOD**  
**Private 2817114, POW No. 15828**  
**Stalag XX-B Marienburg**

The *Ross-Shire Journal* dated July 1941 revealed the following information.

*Mr Murdo Macleod, third son of Mrs Macleod and the late Murdo Macleod, 29 Ladysmith Street, Ullapool, is at home on a short holiday before joining his unit, the RAF, somewhere in England. Mr Macleod's other five brothers are already in the army. Four of them were in the Seaforths at the outbreak of war; two of them, **Hugh** and Allan, went out to France with the 51st (Highland Division). **Hugh** is a prisoner of war in Germany. Allan came home wounded but is now with his unit. To have six sons doing their best must almost be a record. Handwritten notes re **Hugh**: "Missing. **Hugh** liberated 11 May 1945."*

Murdo Macleod (21), a Tailor (journeyman) married Catherine Urquhart (21) a domestic servant on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1902 at Comisky Place, High Street, Dingwall. Murdo lived at 1 Warden Street, Dingwall, and Catherine at Carnaby Lodge, Dingwall.

Murdo and Catherine reared many children. These have been identified:

- Hector, born 16<sup>th</sup> January 1903 at Grant Street, Dingwall
- Donald, born 8<sup>th</sup> March 1905 at 10 Burn Place, Dingwall
- Ellen Anne, born 1907 at Ullapool
- Murdo, born 26<sup>th</sup> December 1908 at Pulteney Street, Ullapool
- Elizabeth, born 1910, Ullapool. Died 1951.
- John, born 21<sup>st</sup> February 1912 at Market Street, Ullapool
- Hugh**, born 12<sup>th</sup> April 1913, Ullapool [most probably Market Street]
- Allan, born 16<sup>th</sup> May 1917 at Market Street, Ullapool

Father Murdo died at home on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1939, aged 69. His second son, **Donald** was the informant of his death, currently resident at Inkerman Barracks, Woking, Surrey – serving with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders. He could be Private D Mcleod, Service No. 2823362, POW No. 20611, imprisoned at Stalag XX-A, Torun .

**DONALD ALEXANDER MACRAE**  
**Private 2822827, POW No. 236**  
**Stalag IX-C, Mulhausen, Hesse**

A Private D Macrae from Ullapool has been identified as one of the soldiers from the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders who signed his name in Dingwall on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1939. The original document was on display in St Clements Church Hall, Tulloch Street, Dingwall.

This could be Donald Alexander Macrae who was born on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1914 at Braes, Lochbroom, son of Alexander, a crofter and Catherine née Mackenzie. They had married on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1908 at Macraes Restaurant, Church Street, Dingwall. Alexander was aged 47, living at Braes, Ullapool and Catherine (Kate) was aged 37, living at the same address. Catherine died on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1944 aged 73, at No. 2 Braes, widow of Alexander.

# **HECTOR MUNRO** **Private 2815856, POW No. 15602** **Stalag XX-B, Marienburg**

Hector was born on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1907 at Ardcharnich, his parents' home. Kenneth Munro and Johan (née Fraser) had married on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1895 at Cedar Villa (now a Guest House), Kenneth Street, Inverness. They were both aged 26, Kenneth was a road contractor, living at Ardcharnich, and Johan worked as a domestic servant, her address being Pulteney Street, Ullapool. Witnesses to their marriage were Hector and Bella Fraser.

Hector had older siblings: Maggie, Alexander, Isabell, Murdo and Kenneth John.

The 1911 census states that the family was living at Inverlael Hamlet, Ardcharnich, a house with 4 rooms. Kenneth is a crofter and road maker employed by the County Council.

14	Ardcharnich	1	4	Kenneth Munro	8	Head	42	42	42	16	6	6
	Hamlet			Johan do		wife	42	42	42	16	6	6
	Inverlael			Maggie do		Daughter	15	15	15			
				Alexander do		Son	13	13	13			
				Isabella do		Daughter	11	11	11			
				Murdo do		Son	10	10	10			
				Kenneth John do		Son	6	6	6			
				Hector do		Son	3	3	3			

Hector died on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1945 aged 37 and is buried in **Lochbroom Parish Churchyard in Grave 174**



Photo: Clare Church

**RODERICK SCOTT RAE**  
**Lance Corporal 2820106, POW No 6759**  
**Stalag XX-B, Marienburg**



Roderick (nickname Tottie) was the son of Christopher Rae, a gamekeeper, who was working on the Isle of Mull at the time of his birth on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1916. He was born at 57 Main Street, Tobermoray. His mother Annie née Munro was born in Letters on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1882.

The 1891 census lists Christopher living as a boarder at Glastulloch Farm, Rhidorroch, an estate east of Ullapool

Annie married Christopher on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1909 at Rhidorroch, where they were both living. Annie stated she was a housekeeper. The ceremony was conducted by Angus Macdonald, Minister of Ullapool.

Roderick signed on with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Seaforth Highlanders at the beginning of the War. His address was Benwell House, Ullapool. After release in 1945 he sought a wife and married Rachel (nickname Rita) Mackenzie in 1947, registered in Lochbroom, (Ref. 1a 184.)

Rachel was born on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915 at Achiltibuie, the daughter of John (a crofter) and Jessie, and sister of another prisoner of war **L/Cpl Roderick (Roddie) Mackenzie (2818540), POW No. 20564** from **Achiltibuie**.

Roderick served for many years with the Northern Area Fire Brigade as a retained (part-time) fireman at Ullapool. He died in 1991 aged 75



## GEORGE ALEXANDER ROSS

Private 2822654, POW No. 6761

Stalag VIII-B, Teschen



**George** was the eldest boy in the family, born 5<sup>th</sup> December 1915, Registered Wigtown, Wigtownshire, Ref. 10b 1064.

Alexander Ross (1886-1956) a tailor's cutter married Sarah Mackenzie (1886-1956) on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1913 at Liverpool St. Philip Church, Lancashire. They were both living at 204 Molyneaux Road, Liverpool.

Other children in the family:

Joan Mathieson	(1913-1998)
Alexander Mackenzie Ross	(1918-2006)
Donald "Danny"	(1923-2004)
John Basil	(1927-1986).

George enlisted into the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1939. His civilian trade was that of a Haulage Contractor

### Main camps in which imprisoned:

XX-IB Posen Poland	1940 to 1941
XX-ID Warthe Lager Poland	1941 to 1942
VIIIB Teschen	1944-1945

### Working Camps

Warthe Lager D10	1940 to 1942 Filling Shell holes
Truppenfeltd	1942-1943 Road Making
Pakosch D3	1943 to 1944 Stacking Hemp
Klausberg E51	1944-1945 Coal Mines
Krotoschin D13	1943 to 1943 Railway Work

He stated on his form: *"During the months of May 1944 to December 1944 while working on the railway I filled the Axle Bores of the wagons with sand at Krotoschin."*

He signed his questionnaire on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1945 and was liberated on 25<sup>th</sup> May.

George married Rose Annabella Steel in 1948 in Inverness. 9Ref. 098/A 36.)

Alexander died on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1956. Sarah died a few months later on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1956, at Brae House, Argyle Street. Informant George Ross – son present. His address at the time was 2 West Terrace, Ullapool.

A Donald William Ross served as Aircraftsman with the Royal Air Force in WW2. Prior to this time he was employed at the National Bank of Scotland branch at Ullapool. Is this George's brother?

**ALAN DIARMID WALLACE**  
**Captain 93863, POW No. 1386**  
**Oflag VII-B Erchstatt**



Alan standing in the middle at the back with his family  
Photo: Courtesy of Ullapool Museum Trust

Alan was the brother of Agnes Harris Wallace and John Douglas Douglas who died in WW2.

Alan Diarmid Wallace, born 25<sup>th</sup> May 1913 at Ullapool, the eldest child in a family of 5, siblings being: Agnes Harris (b.1915), Mary Catherine (b.1917), James (b.1920), John Douglas (b.1921). Their father was the local Doctor for many years.

Enlisted June 1939

Previous occupation: Transport Manager

Lived at 8 Belmont Place, Ayr

22<sup>nd</sup> August 1939 in the *London Gazette*, Alan was promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant, then full Lieutenant on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1940.

A POW questionnaire (TNA WO 344/331/1) was completed on release from his prisoner of war camp on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1945. His time was spent at:

Oflag VII C/H Laufen Bavaria	July 1940 to September 1941
Oflag VI B Warburg Westphalia	Sept 1941 to August 1942
Oflag VII B Erchstatt Bavaria	Aug 1942 to April 1944
Stalag VIIA Moosberg Bavaria	April 1944

**Oflag VII-B**, was located in Erchstatt, Bavaria., about 62 miles north of Munich. The camp was built in September 1939 to house prisoners from the German invasion of Poland. The first prisoners arrived there on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1939. On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1940 all Polish prisoners were transferred to Oflag VIIA and were replaced with officers taken prisoner during the Battle of France and Belgium.

Alan died on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1986, Cirencester Registration District.

## ADDITIONAL PRISONERS OF WAR

Unit	Rank	Service No.	POW No.	POW Camp	Address
<b>4th QO Cameron H</b>					
Hill, Stanley H	Major	30031	1437	Oflag IX A/H	2 Argyle St, Ullapool
<b>Royal Signals</b>					
Macleod, Alexander C	Driver	2334919	259525	Stalag IV-C	"Moss" Ullapool
<b>40th LAA RA</b>					
Macleod, Duncan	Gunner	2817354	225626	Stalag IV-C	West Shore St, Ullapool
<b>Merchant Navy</b>					
MacLennan, Duncan	Mess Rm Boy		7524	Milag Nord	Leckmelm

### 4<sup>th</sup> BATTALION, QUEEN'S OWN CAMERON HIGHLANDERS

#### STANLEY HERBERT HILL

**Major 30031, POW No. 1437**

**Stanley Herbert Hill** was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1895 at Portsmouth, Hampshire, the son of Robert William Hill, and Jessie, née Drew. In 1901 the family was resident at 13 Constitution Square, Portsmouth, with Robert occupied as a clerk to an accountant. In 1911 Stanley was boarding at Oakfield House, 8 Old Oak Road, Acton Vale, London, aged 15, a boy clerk in the Civil Service. A Stanley Herbert Hill served as a Sergeant in WW1 with the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, London Regiment on the Western Front, in Macedonia and in Egypt, prior to demobilisation in March 1919.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1921 Stanley (26) married Jessie Fowler (30) at 39 Lauder Road, Edinburgh. They were both living at Inverness at the time, Stanley at 6 Glenurquhart Road, and Jessie at 13 Kenneth Street. Stanley was an Inland Revenue Officer, and Jessie employed as a shorthand-typist, daughter of Alexander and Jessie. In 1925 they lived at 1 Victoria Park Road, Inverness. By 1935 they were resident at 2 Argyle Street, Ullapool.

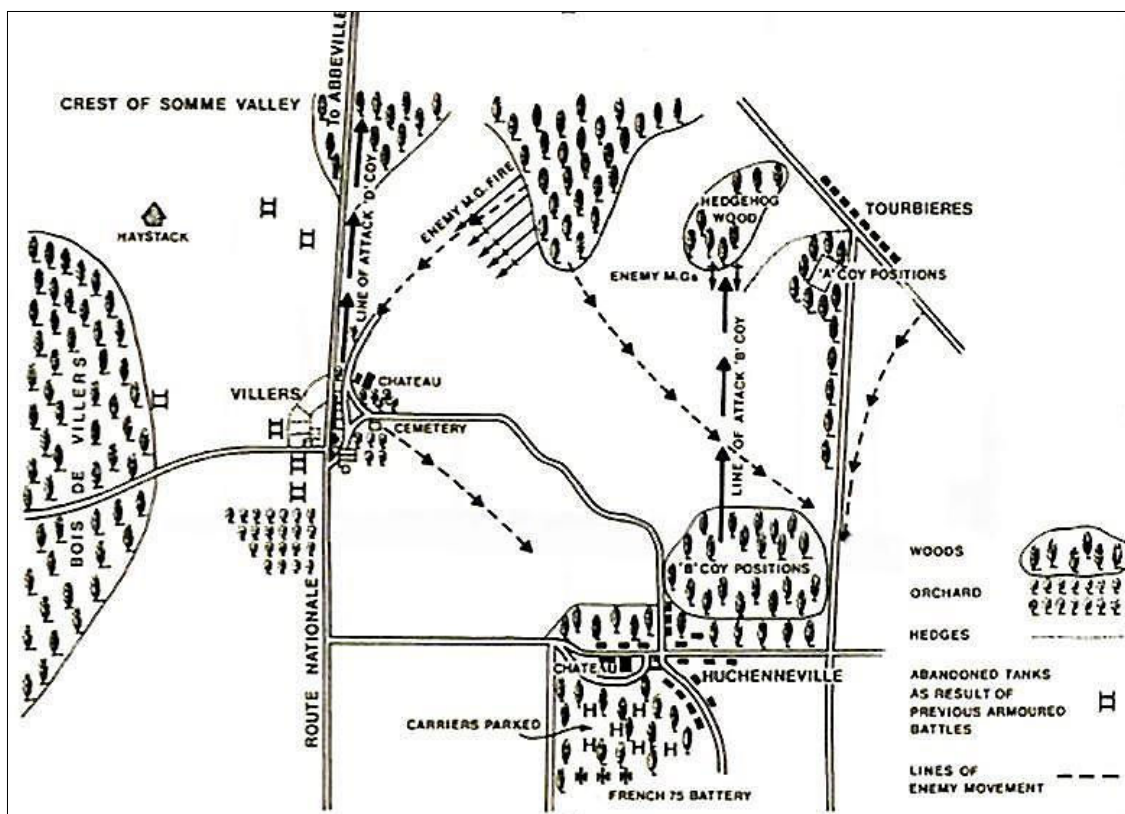
Stanley became the first Secretary of the Tennis Club, which was founded in 1936.



Stanley is on the right

Photo courtesy of Peter Newling

At the outbreak of WW2 Stanley signed on with the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, which fought in the Battle of Abbeville on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1940, just east of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders. Stanley was second in command of the Battalion. Much information can be found on the **51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division** website.



The 4<sup>th</sup> Camerons were based at the Chateau de Huchenneville and the Battalion's mission was to take the village of Mareuil-sur-Somme, to the north-east, and from there to prevent any enemy attempts to cross the river Somme to reinforce the bridgehead. The Germans out fought the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division and by the end of the day both the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths and the 4<sup>th</sup> Camerons were down to 50 per cent of their fighting strengths so they retreated towards St Valery en Caux where they eventually surrendered.

Stanley was sent to prisoner of war camp Oflag IX at Hesse. He was one of the men who were marched eastwards by the Germans on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1945. The Americans liberated the camp's inmates at Lengenfeld unterm Stein on 4<sup>th</sup> April. It is recorded that General Victor Fortune, commanding officer of the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division was also imprisoned in the same camp

In 1945 Stanley was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and the Territorial decoration in recognition of his service with the Army Cadet Force at Inverness. He retired from the army on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1945, retaining the rank of Major.

Joan Smith writing on the *Facebook Page Ullapool Remember....* states that "Stanley was a customs officer who lived in Cuchullin [House, 10-11 West Argyle Street] with his wife Jay (Jessie). They had two sons, Martin and Evan." Jay died in 1977 at Inverness. Stanley died in 1988 at Mauchline, Ayrshire.



## ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS

### ALEXANDER CHRISTOPHER MACLEOD

Driver 2334919, POW No. 25925

HQ Signals 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-Aircraft Brigade

Alexander was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1917 at Drumbeg, Assynt, son of Alexander a Free Church Missionary and Christina née Smith. They had married on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1896 at Barvas, on the Island of Lewis, Ross-shire.

Alexander's home address was Mossford, Ullapool.

Civilian Trade: Motor Driver. He enlisted 15<sup>th</sup> February 1940.

According to the questionnaire which he completed on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1945, he received lectures on escape and evasion in Egypt in December 1940 from Major Gray.

Captured **Tobruk** 21<sup>st</sup> June 1942

#### ***EXTRACT FROM Ross-shire Journal: 21<sup>st</sup> August 1942***

*Signaller Alexander Macleod, RCOS, son of Mrs Macleod and the late Rev Mr Macleod, Mossford, Ullapool, posted missing on 17 June 1942, has written to his mother that he is a prisoner of war in Italy. He states that he is in good health, is being well treated and has received a Red Cross parcel. Handwritten note: "Liberated 25 May 1945"*

The first camp in which Alexander was imprisoned was -

**Italy, Port San Georgio July 5 1942 to September 15 1943.**

A fellow inhabitant of such camp has written a very interesting report on his time there.

#### **Extract from a report given by Philip Green, RAF:**

*Camp No.70 Monturano, a mile or two from the sea and Porto San Georgio, proved to be a collection of hangar-like buildings which we learnt later had been constructed to contain wine making facilities. When we arrived, it was a thriving and bustling camp, housing a few thousand, mostly 'desert rats'. The Italians had no separate camps solely for airmen as in Germany, NCOs and other ranks shared sleeping quarters and in most of the buildings two or three hundred men occupied one of the three-tiered bunks with requisite straw palliasses and sole blanket! Fortunately, the construction of the buildings provided very high ceilings, ensuring at least, plenty of fresh air.*

*Our main preoccupation and topic was FOOD! The rations supplied by the Italians were disgraceful, and but for the Red Cross, starvation would have ensued. There was one other supplier of sustenance and that, strangely enough came from home. Families in the U.K. were able to send articles of clothing to their kin in Italy and Germany. Known as Personal Parcels weighing no more than ten pounds were specified but they did not have to be all clothing or articles thereof, curiously one other item was allowed - chocolate, and so, I remember receiving in the only personal parcel that ever got to me in Italy, that contained two pairs of socks and NINE POUNDS OF CADBURY's Milk Chocolate!*

*Money had NO value in POW camps, in its place cigarettes became the standard currency, against which everything was reckoned. Cigarettes were not included in Red Cross parcels but came separately, and rationed out accordingly. So life went on, and as in most camps people settled down to various activities, including classes for languages, accountancy, painting, play reading, and so on. .*

*While these events were taking place there was far more drama in the outside world. Following the exclusion of all German and Italian forces from North Africa, plans to invade Sicily and Italy began and it was in September 1943 that a landing was made at Salerno just below the Bay of Naples. However, it seemed as though Italy was going to surrender, and indeed on a glorious day, we awoke to find that the Italian guards had vanished! News too of the advance by the Eighth Army from the toe of Italy who were, we were told, advancing rapidly up our coast! With the landings at Salerno, orders were given for POWS to remain in their camps until we were liberated. Alas, all these rumours and false hopes came to nothing. A week passed, during which we had been free to roam the countryside, scrounging what we could from the local peasantry, eggs and picking lovely fresh apricots and peaches, not seen for a very long time, returning to the camp at night.*

*Then the blow fell, waking one morning to see grey-green uniforms surmounted by the horrid steel helmets of the Wehrmacht, and the realisation that the Germans had no intention of allowing the Allies an easy take-over of Italy. We were marched down to the railway station at Porto San Giorgio and in the time-honoured manner, herded into cattle trucks, (40 men or 8 horses). More like 50 or sixty were packed into these and for three days endured a melancholy journey that ended after crossing the Italian border into Austria, then Germany, our destination **Stalag IVB, Mulberg -am -Elbe** our abode for the next eighteen months.*

Alexander also went to **Stalag IV-B Mulberg**: October 5<sup>th</sup> 1943-November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1943.  
He was transferred to **Stalag IV-C Topplitz**: November 8<sup>th</sup> 1943-December 28<sup>th</sup> 1943 – Bystrice, Czech Republic  
He was then in a Working Camp at **Brux** January 5<sup>th</sup> 1944 -May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945 - General Labourer.

Following demobilisation, Alexander was employed as a Motor Hirer, living at the family home, “Moss”, Ullapool. He died of pneumonia on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1954 at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness aged 31. His father was deceased but his mother was still alive. He is buried at Morefield Cemetery, Ullapool. His mother, Christina died on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1964.



Photo: Bill Fraser

## ROYAL ARTILLERY

### DUNCAN MACLEOD

**Gunner 2817354, POW No. 225626**  
**40<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery**

Duncan (nickname Doungie) was born on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1910 at Point Street, Ullapool, the son of Murdo a fisherman and Alexina née McKenzie. They had married on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1897 in Lochbroom Parish. Duncan enlisted on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1939, his occupation Fisherman. He lived at West Shore, Ullapool. The Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment was raised on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1939 at Inverness. He was captured near Gabes, Tunisia and was not wounded when captured.

#### **Extract from War Diary of 40<sup>th</sup> Light AA. RA (TNA WO 169/9985)**

**30<sup>th</sup> March 1943** at Gabes. *Enemy aircraft over Gabes engaged by heavy and light A.A.*

**1<sup>st</sup> April:** *R.H.Q. moved with Main 51 Division to MELAH OASIS, 10 miles north of Gabes. Total distance travelled 11 miles.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> April.** *Considerable activity by own fighters and bombers. Digging party sent to dig gun pits in area to be occupied by the troop tonight. All three trucks ran into the enemy lines and were subjected to heavy machine gun and mortar fire and called upon by 3 Italians with tommy guns to surrender. Two O.Rs [other ranks] were seen to surrender and seven were unaccounted for. The 7 O.Rs were still unaccounted for at the end of the month and therefore the whole 9 must be presumed to be prisoners of war.*

Duncan suffered imprisonment in the following camps:

#### **P.G. 66 Capua, Italy 12<sup>th</sup> April to 4<sup>th</sup> September 1943**

The official Red Cross Report on this camp in May 1943 revealed the following:

*"Capua is a very large camp used as a quarantine and transit camp and the strength varies from day to day. At the time of the visit there were 127 officers and 5,000 other ranks. It is situated in flat ground in a mild climate. A new officers' section is almost complete. It will consist of stone bungalows, with washroom, showers dining room and common room. At present the officers are housed in wooden huts.*

*Six out of eight sections for other ranks are complete. The remaining two sections are still under canvas, but they should all be in huts by now. Sanitary installations are well constructed and there is an ample supply of water. Electricity is now satisfactory. Each section has its own kitchen and the POWs prepare their own food.*

*Three Italian doctors and six Prisoner of War doctors work in the camp infirmary. There is an excellent de-lousing plant. There are two C of E chaplains and an Italian priest in the camp. Kitchen gardens extend between the barracks and also outside the camp. Pigs and rabbits are kept in the camp. A football ground and tennis courts are being made. Some clothing has been distributed by the Detaining Power, but stocks are needed as Prisoners of War arriving at the camp must be fitted out. There is a good stock of Red Cross parcels".*

Duncan then spent the rest of the war at:

<b>P.G. 73 Carpi Italy</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> September 11 <sup>th</sup> September 1943
<b>Spittal Austria</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> September to 19 <sup>th</sup> September 1943
<b>Stalag IV-B Mullberg</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> September to 24 <sup>th</sup> September 1943
<b>Stalag IV-C Teplitz,</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1943 to 16 <sup>th</sup> May 1945
<b>Working Camps: Columbus:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> October 1943 to 20 <sup>th</sup> December 1943 Labouring
<b>Brux:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> December 1943 to 16 <sup>th</sup> May 1945 Labouring.

The largest detachment, of 8,000 men, was at Brūx working on the construction of the Sudetenländische Treibstoffwerke ("Sudetenland Fuel Works"), part of the state-owned industrial conglomerate. This plant was designed to process oil from coal, and as part of the Allied campaign to attack German oil production it was bombed several times between July 1944 and April 1945.



## MERCHANT NAVY

### DUNCAN DONALD MACLENNAN

Mess Room Boy, Merchant Navy

Served on *British Petrol*

POW No. 7524

**Duncan** was born on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1923, in the parish of Lochbroom, the eldest son of Alexander MacleNNan (1882-1954) and Isabella Maclean (1886-1974) who had married on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1922 at Ardcharnich. The family swiftly increased by the birth of Gregor Ewan MacleNNan who was born on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1923, and another boy, Roderick (1925-1961).

During WW2 Duncan was serving on board the tanker *British Petrol*, a 6,906 ton vessel, built in 1925 by Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd of Newcastle.



Ship *British Petrol* –

Photo:courtesy of Photoship

Information obtained from the National Archives (BT 389/5/129) reveals that *British Petrol* arrived at Greenock on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1940, from Suez with a cargo of Fuel Oil. It is suggested that Duncan joined this ship around this time in Scotland.

Repairs were undertaken on the Clyde on 4<sup>th</sup> April. The ship sailed for Abadan on 20<sup>th</sup> April but was in collision with the motor vessel *Larchbank* in fog in the Irish Sea so returned to the Clyde for further repairs. She eventually set off for Trinidad from Greenock on 30<sup>th</sup> May, but her voyage was abruptly ended mid-June. The record of ship movements states “Presumed lost – overdue 15/7/40. Sunk by surface raider 14/6, 20 degrees N, 50 degrees W (approx.).

Duncan’s Prisoner of War questionnaire states that he was captured on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1940 by the German Armed Merchant Raider *Widder* in the Atlantic Ocean, 1,000 nautical miles off Trinidad. *British Petrol* had a loss of two of her 46 crew. The 44 survivors were taken as Prisoners of War and the tanker was scuttled the next day. Duncan states that on arrival in France he was imprisoned in a camp at **Brest**, followed by **Quimper**. It is known that the *Widder* arrived at Brest on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1940, so it is assumed that he remained on board for all those months since 13<sup>th</sup> June.

Here are some details regarding the *Widder* obtained from an article “*Marauders of the Sea, German Armed Merchant Ships During WW2*”

**Widder** : This vessel originally the "Neumark," from the stable of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, was a sister ship to "Orion." For her role as a Raider, she was christened "Widder" which means Ram. She was equipped and armed in a similar manner as "Orion." However, she had but a limited sphere of operation, spending all her life in the central Atlantic. Due to be converted to "Raider status" by the end of November 1939, this ship had so many problems during trials - it was almost another 6 months, later in May 1940 before she finally became ready to go to work. The zone set out for "Widder" in which to operate was roughly halfway between the West Indies and Dakar in West Africa, 40 degrees North latitude and West of a longitude of 30 degrees West. Given command was Helmuth von Ruckteschell, a Naval Reserve Captain, who had very strict orders not to violate the pan-American neutrality zone that separated the West Indies and the South American coast.

When sailing from the Elbe on the 6<sup>th</sup> May in 1940, the "Widder" was immediately set upon by a British Submarine, but she avoided the 2 torpedoes fired at her. Ruckteschell eventually managed to meet up with a supply ship, the "Konisburg" and took aboard sufficient oil for a 4 months stint on his station.

By early June, the 'Widder' was between the Azores and Trinidad, and for 3 days she patrolled towards Panama, then on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, lookouts sighted smoke. In time, it transformed into the tanker **British Petrol** 6,891 tons and making for Trinidad in ballast. On arrival, she would fill her huge tanks with much needed oil for transport back to Britain.

"Widder" opened fire at a range of 6,000 yards, hitting with her first salvo and the tanker was abandoned. All the crew were rescued, except for two members killed by gunfire during the attack. Shortly afterwards Widder encountered a Norwegian tanker "Krossfonn" of 9,000 tons, and in ballast. This ship was boarded and despatched to Brest, recently having fallen into German hands. [It could be that Duncan was transferred to this vessel, but there is no evidence to say so.]

It is recorded that *Widder*'s engines were constantly breaking down. That is why it took so long for her to arrive back at Brest.

After his temporary stay at camps in France, Duncan spent the rest of the war in **Stalag XXB at Marienburg, Stalag XXA at Thorne, and Stalag XB at Bremen**. He suffered from diphtheria whilst a POW but stated that he received adequate treatment. He signed the Questionnaire on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1945 on release.

In 1952, at the age of 29 at Fodderty, Ross and Cromarty Duncan married Grace Margaret MacIennan. His father died two years later on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1954, at which time Duncan was resident at Muir Cottage, Kellas, Elgin. His mother died on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1974.

His brother **Gregor Ewan MacIennan**, Royal Navy Seaman, was killed on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1943, (see page 82).

## CASUALTIES FROM OTHER REGIMENTS

**ANGUS MCBEATH MACKAY, M.A. (Hons)**

**Colour Sergeant 3060962**

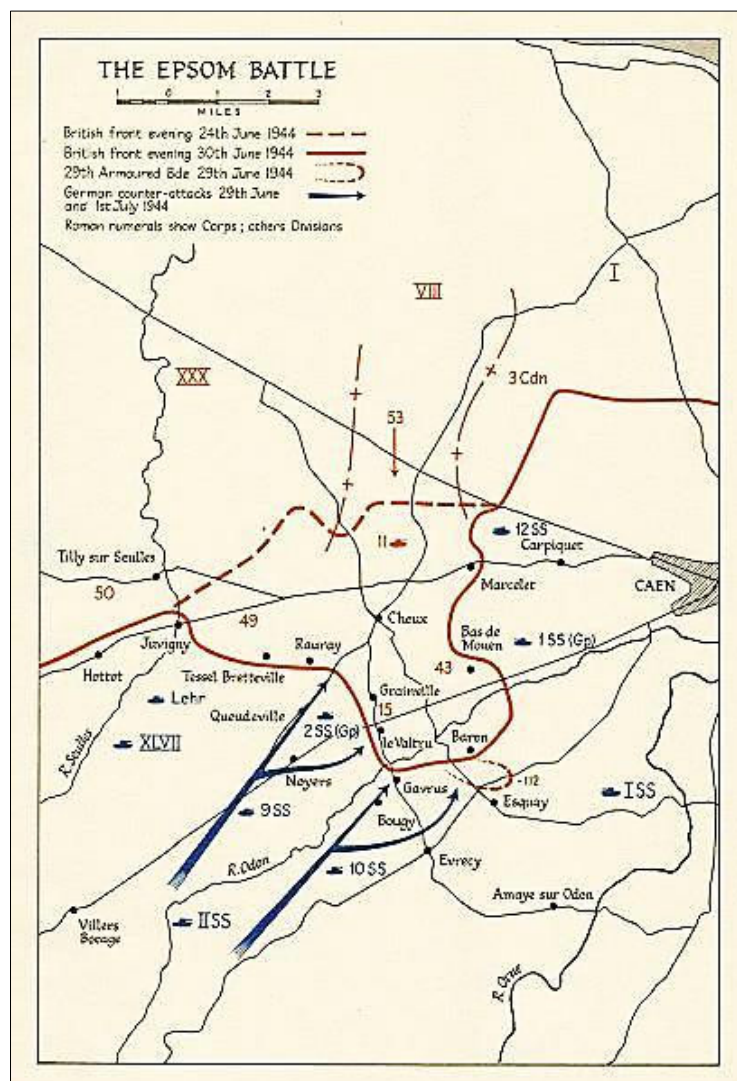
**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Tyneside Scottish, the Black Watch**

**Killed in action on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1944 aged 28**

Angus Mackay has been included in this document because he was the teacher at Ullapool School for several years during the 1930s. He sometimes hired the mail bus on a Saturday and would take the pupils on school outings round Lochbroom.

He was born in 1915 at St George, Edinburgh, the son of Donald McBeath Mackay and Mary. He married Violet Mary Tynan in 1940, at Morningside, Edinburgh.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Tyneside Scottish, part of the 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, embarked at Newhaven for France on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1944 and on arrival between Riviere and Le Hamel 'Gold Beach' proceeded to the concentration area at Esquay-sur-Seulles, east of Bayeux.



As part of Operation Epsom, which aimed to pierce the front to the west of Caen on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1944, the British prepared a flank offensive in the direction of Rauray. It began at dawn on 25<sup>th</sup> June and for two days the Germans managed to contain this attack.

On 27<sup>th</sup> June the 70th Infantry Brigade (49th Infantry Division), was ordered to renew the offensive in the direction of Rauray. The 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish managed to reach the village but they suffered heavy losses. On 1<sup>st</sup> July at 6.00 am the Germans attacked the British positions defending Rauray and managed to break the line of defence, thus isolating the 1st Battalion Tyneside Scottish. The British held onto Rauray during the day and at 6.00 p.m. the Germans retreated.

Angus was one of 2 officers and 31 'other ranks' from the 1<sup>st</sup> Tyneside Scottish Battalion who were killed on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

He was buried at **TILLY-SUR-SEULLES WAR CEMETERY** in  
**Grave IV.A.8.**



**Photo: Len**



## DONALD HUGH (HUGHIE) MACLEOD, MM

Sergeant 2820987

5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Seaforth Highlanders

Died of wounds on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1945, aged 22

The 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders was mobilised on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 but did not begin active service until August 1942 in the Middle East. It formed part of the 152<sup>nd</sup> Brigade in a reconstituted 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division. The actions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Seaforths are well explained on the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division website and also in Alastair Borthwick's book *Battalion*.



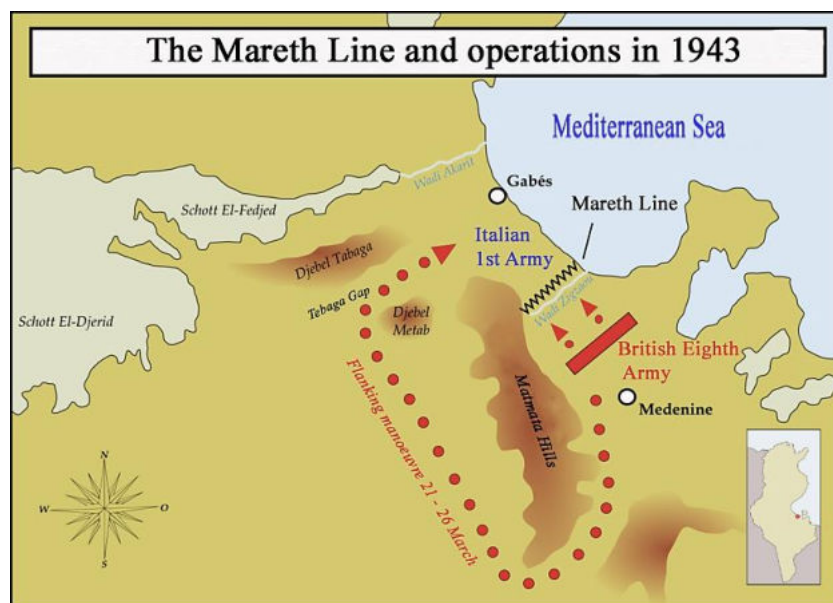
**Sergeant Donald Hugh (Hughie) Macleod** was too young in 1939 to enlist with the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths, so joined the 5<sup>th</sup> Seaforths sometime after the 1940 Battle of Abbeville. He participated in the following campaigns:

### North Africa:

Capture of Tripoli January 1943

Tunisia : Medenine March 1943 - over 50 enemy tanks were destroyed

Mareth Line March 1943.



MarethMap1943.png

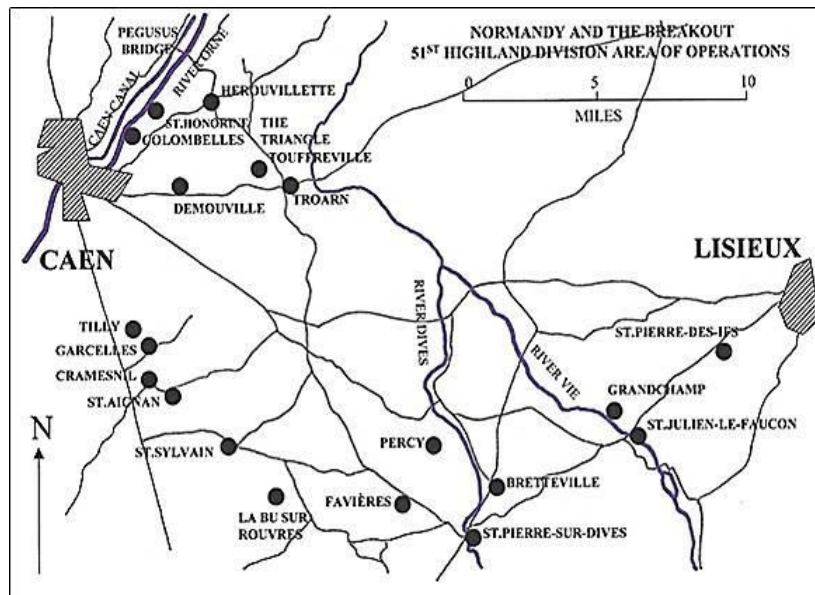
**Sicily:** Operation Husky June-November 1943 in which Hugh was awarded the Military Medal.

The 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division returned to Britain in November 1943 and after leave settled down to training for the invasion of mainland Europe.

### Normandy: Operation Overlord June 1944

152 Brigade commanded by Brigadier A J H Cassels consisted of 2nd and 5th Seaforths and the 5th Camerons. The operation was to invade the Normandy coast from the Carentan estuary to just east of the mouth of the River Orne.

The role of the 51st Highland Division in the landing was to support and fill in behind the first wave. After the landings the operations in the following weeks were some of the worst the Division had experienced. On 13th June 1944, 152 Brigade ran into stiff opposition in the area of **St. Honorine** and **Demouville**. Their attacks were driven off and they went into a defensive position north of St. Honorine.



### **Operation Totalise: The Breakout**

The 51st Highland Division was placed under command of the Canadian Corps and on 6<sup>th</sup> August moved forward. The attack began on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup>, and when the operation ended on the 10<sup>th</sup> August the 51st Highland Division had secured all its objectives. With the "Breakout" battle complete the 51st Highland Division had several days to recover before the advance continued. From Lisieux they advanced east, crossing the Seine and dealing with the enemy rear guard. The intention was to isolate the port of Le Havre.

### **Return to St Valéry 1 September 1944**

It should be remembered that in June 1940 the original 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division under General Victor Fortune had been required to surrender at St Valéry to General Rommel and its soldiers were still languishing in prisoner of war camps in Germany and Poland. Now General Montgomery was keen to see their successors recapture the town. They arrived at St Valéry on 1<sup>st</sup> September where the 5<sup>th</sup> Seaforths and 5<sup>th</sup> Camerons met each other in Station Square (below)



**Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge:** Ronchamps 10 January 1945

**Rhine Crossing:** Late March 1945 –

**Sergeant Donald Hugh MacLeod, MM** and his great friend **Lieutenant Donald Macleod, DCM** from Achiltibuie were killed within days of each other after crossing the River Rhine. This article appeared in the press a fortnight later.

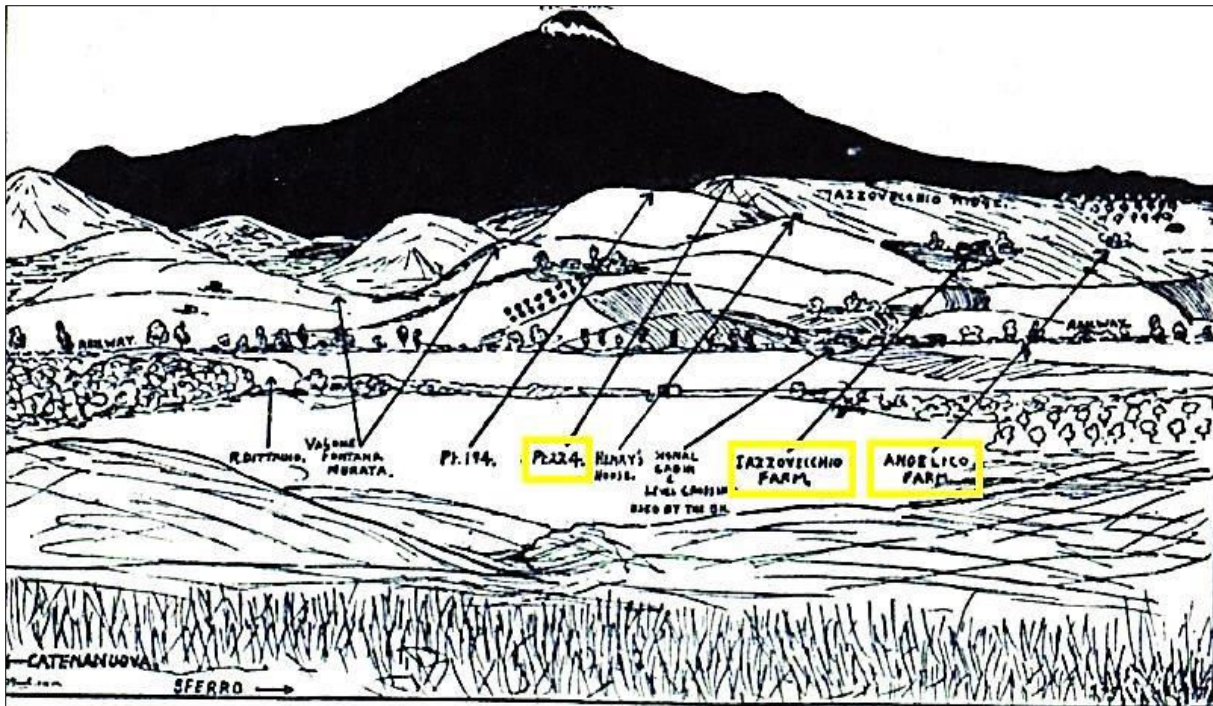


Prior to enlisting, **Donald Hugh** (Hughie) worked as a plumber and originally came from Croft 157 Achlochan in Achiltibuie. He was the son of Jean (Jane) Macleod who later lived at 25 Ladysmith Street, Ullapool. He was born in 1921 – Reference: Coigach 075/2 1.

The two most significant moments in Hughie's military life are highlighted:

On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1943 in the Battle of the **Sferro Hills** he was acting as Intelligence Sergeant. The Division was tasked to take the road from Sferro to Catenanuova but to achieve this it was necessary to clear the enemy of the Sferro hills who were positioned on a line of hills running north-west to south-east. At the north-west end was **point 224**. To the right in a fold in the ground was **Iazzovechio farm** and further right **Angelico farm**, with Mount Etna in the background.





As a result of his conduct, Hughie was awarded the Military Medal.

152 Infantry... Brigade... 51 Highland... Division... 30... Corps Scheduled to... Unit... 5th Bn The Seaforth Highlanders... (To be left blank) Army No. and Rank... 2820987... WS/Sergeant... Name... McLEOD, DONALD Hugh... (1. Surname to be in CAPITALS. 2. Christian names must be shown (in small letters.))		In lieu of Army Form W 3121. Date recommendation passed forward. Received... Passed... Brigade... 9 Aug 43... 10 Aug 43... Division... 13/1... 13/1... Corps... 14/1... 14/1... Army... 19 Aug 43... 23 Aug 43... Army Group... 25 Aug 43... 7.15.43	
Action for which commended (Date and place of action must be stated)		Recommended by Honour or Award. (To be left blank)	
<p>In the battle of the Sferro Hills on the 1st August 1943 Sgt Hugh McLeod was acting as Intelligence Sgt. Although it was a very dark night he rode his M/G up and down the columns over the roughest ground to ensure that no elements of the Bn missed their way. His special responsibility was to guide up the vehicle columns in which were included the carriers and A/Tk guns of the Bn whose early arrival on the objective was vital to the success of the operation. The route was continually under enemy small arms fire particularly at a point where the vehicles had to disperse. Early on Sgt McLeod was wounded in one hand but he made light of it and carried on. It was due to his ceaseless vigil, and energy that all vehicles were successfully directed to their respective locations. When he had completed this task he then went forward on foot to contact the forward Coys. from where he sent back early and accurate reports at a time when the situation was confused and when it was imperative that the Commanding Officer receive immediate information. Finally he was of the greatest assistance in helping the I.O. to establish a Bn O.P. in the area of The Angelico feature, where hand to hand fighting still continued in the adjacent wood well after first light.</p> <p>This NCOs conduct and devotion to duty was of the highest order, his example was an inspiration to all around him and his efficiency and resource throughout a difficult period of over 9 hours contributed in no small manner to the success of the operation.</p>		<p><i>James Ford</i> Lt-Col., Commanding, 5 Seaforth <i>Frederick Miller</i> Brigadier Commander, 152 Infantry Brigade. <i>W. J. M. M. M.</i> Maj-Gen. Commander, 51 (H) Division <i>W. J. M. M. M.</i> Lieut-Gen. Commander, 30 Corps. <i>B. L. N. N. N.</i> General Commander, 8th Army.</p> <p>Granted an Immediate MM</p> <p><i>H. R. Alexander</i> General, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, 15 Army Group.</p> <p>LG 18.11.43</p> <p>16236</p>	

TNA WO 373/3



The second most significant and tragic event was a few days after the 5<sup>th</sup> Seaforths crossed the Rhine at dawn on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1945.

**'The Primrose Path Battle'** - night of 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> March 1945. The 5<sup>th</sup> Seaforth supported by a company of the 5<sup>th</sup> Camerons were instructed to advance and seize the crossings on the Aastrang River and the small tributary the Holtwicker Bach, codenamed Primrose I and Primrose II respectively. The thrust north would place the Battalion between the German defenders that were still holding Anholt and the Dutch village of Dinxperlo. From the start, the Battalion Commanding Officer, **Lieutenant Colonel J M Sym**, *"did not like the look of the operation"*. In the early hours of the 29<sup>th</sup> March his fears came true. The battalion, straddled across the River Aastrang and by now far forward of the other troops, was attacked from two sides and part of it, including his own Battalion Headquarters was overrun.

#### **Extract from: *Battalion* by Alastair Borthwick**

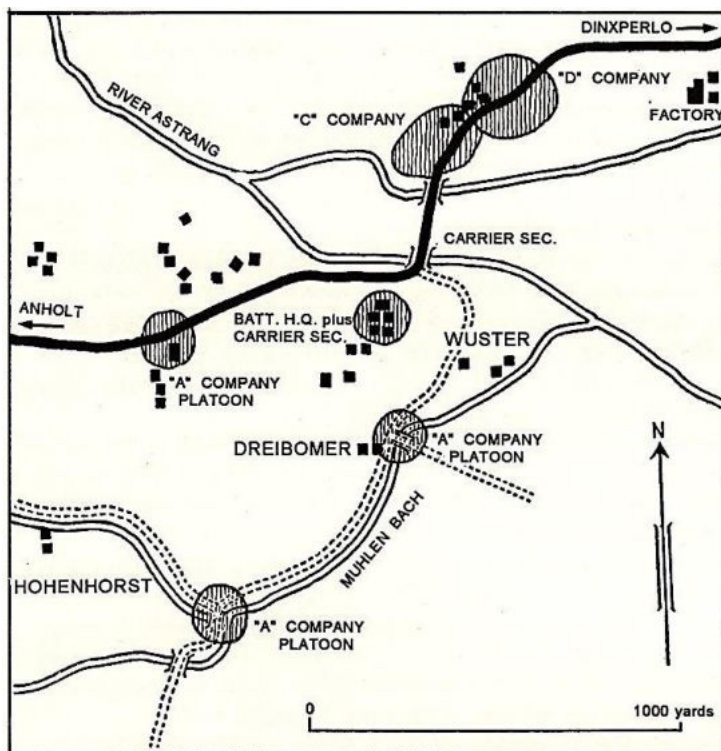
*"I got the wireless sets in, and then went upstairs to see how Sergeant Macleod was getting on with the lay-out of Battalion H.Q.," said Jack Latta, the Signal Officer. "Just as I reached the top of the stairs, shooting started all over the place. Hughie Macleod was firing a sten round the edge of the front door; and when I got to the hall window there were Germans within a hundred yards, dodging about among the buildings. I started shooting too. Then the hall was full of grey smoke with sparks all through it, and the door came flying off its hinges, and I was lying against the wall. Hughie was groaning at the door. It's funny, but I don't remember a bang at all – just the smoke and the sparks. It was a bazooka. Hughie was dying, and I didn't know that. I dragged him downstairs. There were four other wounded there too. I turned back, and at the top was a German pointing a gun at me and shouting down into the cellar."*

*Well... what could we do? We could hear more Boche outside, scraping away at the earth and sandbags over the cellar windows. We were helpless, and one grenade would have been the end of us. We put our hands up.*

*The Colonel and the part of Battalion H.Q. that most mattered were marched off to a house a short distance away.*

*The Battalion's casualties were fourteen killed and forty wounded. We recovered all our prisoners. Colonel Sym walked in under his own power, after escaping for the third time in two years; when our mortars stonked the area and the Germans fled to the cellars, he had hidden behind a stove and escaped in the confusion.*

*Early next day our armour was pouring over the bridges. The Germans had cracked, and the hunt was up."*



Hughie is commemorated on the Ullapool and Achiltibuie War Memorials and listed on a memorial at the village church of Dinxperlo commemorating the 'fallen for the liberation of Dinxperlo on 29, 30 and 31 March 1945.'

He is also included on the family headstone in Badenscallie Burial Ground.



Photo: Roddie Macpherson

Frederick Bain and Christina Macleod were Donald Hugh's grandparents and Hugh Macleod who died in France in September 1916 was his uncle

Hughie is buried in **Venray War Cemetery, Netherlands** in **Plot IV.B.10.**



Photo: Fred

**DUNCAN MACLEAN**  
**Private, Royal Army Service Corps**  
**Died of sickness on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1950, aged 22**

Duncan was born in 1928, the son of Alexander (1884-1964), a building contractor, and Rach(a)el née Mackenzie (1887-1974).

Alexander and Rachel were married on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1920 at Queen Street United Free Church, Inverness. The marriage certificate reads:

Alexander, farmer, bachelor age 36. Usual residence Achlochan, Coigach.

Rachel, domestic servant, spinster age 33. Usual Residence Altandhu.

Witnesses: Dn Maclean and Catherine Black.

In 1940 the family moved to Crofton House, Market Street, Ullapool and Duncan attended the local school. Duncan was called up in 1945 and fell ill when he was training. He died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in the County Hospital Invergordon. At the time of his death he was serving in the Royal Army Service Corps.

1950. DEATHS in the District of Rosskeen in the County of Ross and Cromarty.

(1.)	(2.)	(3.)	(4.)	(5.)	(6.)	(7.)	(8.)	
No.	Name and Surname. Rank or Profession, and whether Single, Married, or Widowed.	When and Where Died.	Sex.	Age.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant by whom certified.	Signature and Qualification of Informant, and Residence, if out of the House in which the Death occurred.	When and where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
13	Duncan	1950.	M.	22	Alexander Maclean	Pulmonary	Maclean	1950
	Maclean	April		years	Building Contractor	Tuberculosis		April 13 <sup>th</sup>
		Thirteenth					Brother	At Invergordon
	Private, Royal	14. 15th. 22.			Rachael Maclean	as cert. by		
	Army Service	County Hospital,			M. S. MacKenzie	Agnes Hood	Crofton House,	J. S. Andrews
	Corps.	(Usual Residence: Crofton House,				M. B. Ch. B.	Market Street, Ullapool.	Registrar.
	(Single)	Market Street, Ullapool						

Duncan was buried in Badenscallie Burial Ground, Achiltibuie. The headstone reads:

**Alexander & Rachel (Mackenzie) Maclean, & s.Duncan;** Erected/in/loving memory of/our dearly beloved son/DUNCAN MACLEAN/died 13th April 1950/a 22 years/also his parents/ALEXANDER MACLEAN/died 23rd April 1964/aged 81 years/RACHEL MACKENZIE/died 27th Sept 1974/aged 87 years.

## INJURED SOLDIER

**KENNETH MACLEOD**  
**Private, 5<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders**

The *Ross-shire Journal* dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1942 stated that Kenneth was wounded in the Middle East, a son of Mr Alex[ander] Macleod, mason contractor of West Terrace Ullapool. Alexander and Margaret Urquhart married on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1920 in Dingwall, but their home addresses were in Ullapool. Kenneth was born in 1922 in Lochbroom Registration District. He was the informant of his father's death in 1963 and still living at West Terrace, Ullapool.



# ROYAL MARINES DEATH

## ALEXANDER MACLEAN

Private PO/X116565

No. 43 R.M. Commando, Royal Marines,

Killed in action on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1945 aged 28

Alexander's parents, Alexander and Dolina (née Mackenzie), both came from Ullapool, but they were married on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1912 at the Station Hotel, Muir of Ord, Urray

Alexander (senior) had been employed as a shepherd in Chile prior to his marriage and the couple sailed to South America soon afterwards. As can be seen below, both Alexander (junior), and his older sister Annie were born overseas, in the Territory of Santa Cruz, Argentine. His father had progressed to the position of manager of a sheep farm, and the family's residence whilst they were away from Scotland was Hotel Victoria, Punta Arenas, Chile.

S  
234

Certified Extract from the Returns of **BIRTHS** made to the Registrar-General for England from the undermentioned *British Consulate* for the year ended *31<sup>st</sup> December 1924*.

BIRTH within the District of the British <i>Vice Consul</i> at <i>Punta Arenas, Chile</i> .								
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
No. When and Where Born.	Name.	Sex.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Consular Officer.
Seventeenth 266 February 1917. Islandia, La Primavera, Territory of Santa Cruz, Argentine	Alexander	Boy.	Alexander MacLean.	Dolina MacLean. formerly MacKenzie.	Manager of Sheep Farm. born Lockbroom, Ross-shire, N.B. Eighth April 1880.	Alexander MacLean, Father, Hotel Victoria Punta Arenas, Chile.	Tenth November 1924, by Special Permission of Secretary of State F.O. dispatch N° 5 (7847/1847) 315 of 25/8/24.	T.B. Willman, British Vice -Consul.
BIRTH within the District of the British <i>Vice Consul</i> at <i>Punta Arenas, Chile</i> .								
Twenty Sixth 367 June 1913. Rio, Gallegos, Territory of Santa Cruz, Argentine.	Annie.	Girl.	Alexander MacLean.	Dolina MacLean. formerly MacKenzie.	Manager of Sheep Farm. born Lockbroom, Ross-shire, N.B. Eighth April 1880.	Alexander MacLean, Father, Hotel Victoria Punta Arenas, Chile.	Tenth November 1924, by Special Permission of Secretary of State F.O. dispatch N° 5 (7847/1847) 315 of 25/8/24.	T.B. Willman, British Vice -Consul.

Certified to be a true Extract from the Consular Returns of Births.

M. D. Neil

In 1924 the family set sail for the UK and travelled 1<sup>st</sup> class on board the ship *Romanstar* from the River Plate, and disembarked at Liverpool on 15<sup>th</sup> July. There were now five children: Annie 11, Alexander 9, Kenina 5, Murdo 3 and Maggie 1. Their proposed address was Seaside House, Point Street, Ullapool.



Father and mother returned to Chile on board the *Oropesa* on 9<sup>th</sup> October that year. They left their three eldest children, Annie, Alexander and Kenina behind in Scotland. Who looked after them? Possibly their grandparents?

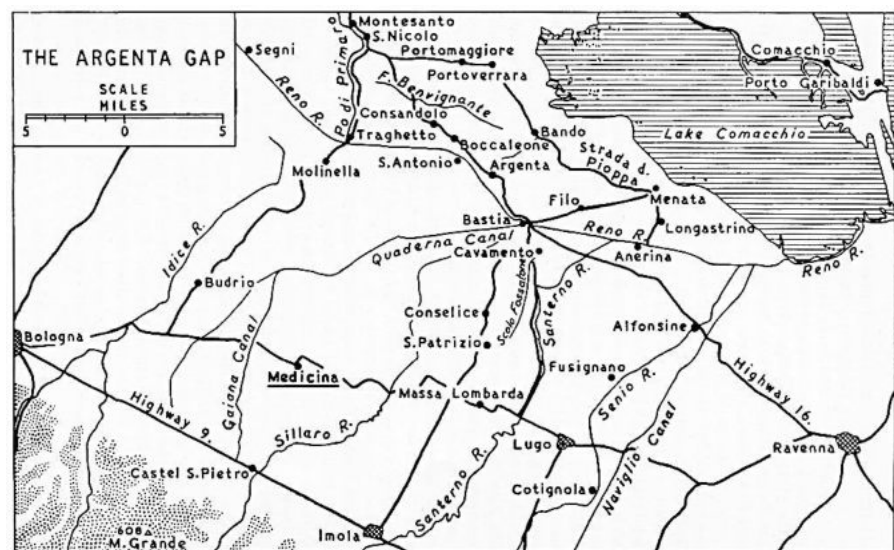
Father died on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1932 and is buried in Punta Arenas Municipal Cemetery, Chile.

**The inscription reads**  
**In**  
**Loving Memory**  
**Of**  
**Our beloved Husband and Father**  
**ALEXANDER MACLEAN**  
**Age 52 Died 31 December 1932**  
**Though out of Sight to memory dear**  
**Inserted by his sorrowing widow and family**

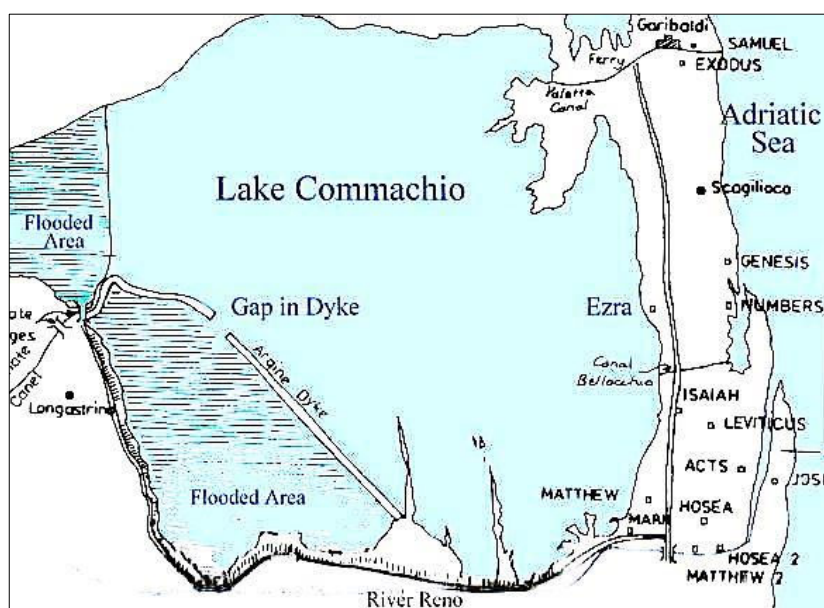


At some stage Dolina and her young family returned to the Ullapool area. In 1935 and 1940 the home address was “La Primavera”, West Terrace.

In WW2 son **Alexander** enlisted into the 43<sup>rd</sup> Commandos, the Royal Marines. He was serving in Italy at the time of his death. This was the first major action in 1945 to push the German Army back to and across the River Po and out of Italy. The breakthrough on the Eighth Army front was to be made



through the Argenta Gap, crossing the Senio River. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 1945 the whole of the brigade was engaged in the operation which comprised No. 2 Commando, No. 9 Commando and No. 40 under the command of Brigadier Ronnie Rod. The Comacchio lagoon is a vast area of shallow brackish water separated from the Adriatic Sea to the east by a narrow strip of land. The Germans had approximately 1,200 men entrenched there. The Commandos were to clear the narrow strip of land, securing the flank of the Eighth Army.



No. 43 Commando (RM) was to attack up a tongue of land to the extreme east, which forms the south bank of the Reno estuary, and when secured, cross the mouth of the Reno and turn back south west and clear the Reno's north bank. The operation started on the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> April with engagement to begin shortly after midnight. The lagoon crossing took far longer than planned due to the exceptionally low water level and muddy lagoon

bottom, which was as deep as chest high. The Commandos eventually reached the Spit at first light, over 4 hours behind schedule. Exhausted and covered in glutinous slime they pressed home their attacks. Nos. 2, 40 and 43 Commandos all made their objectives relatively as expected although the Germans succeeded in blowing-up one bridge before it was captured by No.2 Commando. That evening No. 9 and No. 43 Commandos moved up to the bridges on the Bellocchio Canal, held by No.2 Commando. This was known as **Operation Roast** and Alexander was killed in action along with 5 of his comrades from No. 43 RM Commandos.

Alexander is buried in Ravenna War Cemetery in **Plot I, Row A, Grave 26**

A family grave stands in Morefield Cemetery, Ullapool, on which Alexander (junior) is commemorated.



Photo: Bill Fraser

## ROYAL NAVY DEATHS

**Able Seaman Roderick Maclean Macarthur C/JX259870**

**Trimmer John Maciver, Naval Auxiliary Patrol 197164**

**Able Seaman Roderick Mackenzie R238782**

**Able Seaman Finlay Mackenzie**

**Able Seaman Gregor Ewan Maclellan LT/KX 160101**

**Wren Elizabeth de Grey Vyner 34446**

**Sub-Lieutenant Charles de Grey Vyner**

### **RODERICK MACLEAN MACARTHUR**

**Able Seaman C/JX259870**

**Died on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1942 aged 27**

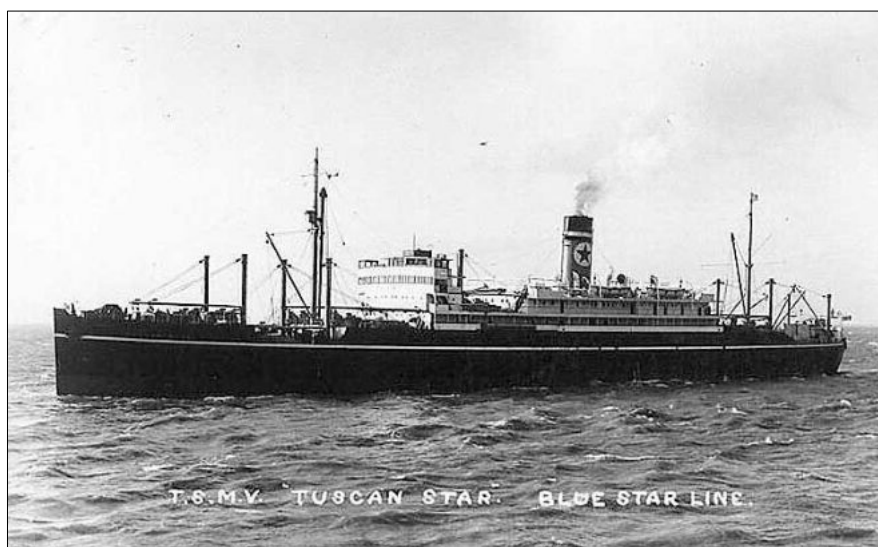
**Assigned to *HMS President III***

**but on passage on *MV Tuscan Star* (London) RN**

On 16<sup>th</sup> April 1909 Malcolm McArthur of the Free Church Missionary (bachelor) married Mary Ann Maclean (spinster), Schoolmistress at the Free Church Manse, Gairloch. Malcolm was aged 34 living at Durnamuck, Little Loch Broom, Parish of Lochbroom, and Mary was aged 27 living in the same community.

Roderick, their son, was born on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1915, at Clachan, Stenscholl. Apart from **Roderick**, Malcolm and Mary Ann had at least one other child, Mary, also born in Stenscholl, in 1917. Malcolm died of cancer at the age of 43 on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1917 at the Western Infirmary Glasgow. His usual residence at the time was the Mission House, Staffin, Skye.

Roderick died whilst on passage on the *Tuscan Star*, a refrigerated cargo ship. On the 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1942, she was just north of the equator, off the Gulf of Guinea, homeward bound from Buenos Aires, via Santos in Brazil, and Freetown, with a full cargo, including 7,300 tons of frozen meat. The ship was carrying 25 passengers and had a crew of 88, and was sighted by *U-Boat 109*, crossing her bows, and steaming at about 13.5 knots; it was close to 2100. At a range of only 800 yards, two torpedoes were fired, both hit the starboard side, one in Number 5 hold, the second in the Engine Room.





Ten minutes after these torpedoes struck *Tuscan Star*, *U-109*, reported reading her emergency message "SSS SSS 01 degrees 34 minutes North, 11 degrees 40 minutes West, *Tuscan Star* torpedoed, sinking quickly, SSS SSS." [During WW2 the signal SSS indicated an attack by submarine.] The ship immediately started to settle rapidly by the stern and listed heavily over to starboard. Orders were at once given to abandon ship, and all boats except the motor-boat, which had been badly damaged by the explosion, were lowered, manned, and away from the ship in about 10 minutes. The ship took the final plunge and disappeared about four minutes later.

Soon afterwards the *U-109* surfaced, put a small searchlight on the lifeboats, and an English-speaking officer interrogated the survivors, asking the usual questions, as to the name of the ship, what cargo she carried, where from and whither bound. The submarine came back later, her officer saying that they had rescued Mr Gill, the Second Radio Officer, from the water and intended retaining him as a prisoner. The Germans, noticing women and children among the survivors, ordered the Third Officer's boat alongside, and passed down some tinned provisions. "I am sorry", he said, "but I have to do my duty". The U-boat then gathered way and disappeared into the darkness.

A little later the Third Officer reported his boat was leaking badly and that he had no room to bale her out, whereupon he was ordered to transfer the women and children to the Captain's boat. The boats lay round the scene of the wreck during the night in good weather, but with a fairly heavy southerly well. The Captain's boat gradually lost touch with the two other boats, and at 1500 on the 7<sup>th</sup> September it sighted the Orient Line's *Otranto* who took them on board, dropping these survivors at Freetown the next afternoon. They were all home in Liverpool by the 25<sup>th</sup> of September. The other two boats also made it to safety, but 40 crew members, eight gunners and three passengers were lost when the ship sank.

Roderick is commemorated on **Chatham Naval Memorial on Panel 55.1.** and **Dundonnell War Memorial.** He is also remembered on his parents' grave at **Gruinard Burial Ground, Lochbroom.** Note the wrong year for Roderick's death.



Photo: Roddie Macpherson



**JOHN MACIVER**  
**Trimmer 197164**  
***HMS Forfar (F30)***  
**Died on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1940 aged 31**  
**Son of Simon McIver (1860-1943) and Mary Tullo (1875-1919)**



**Simon**



**Mary**

**Photos Morag Henriksen**

Simon hailed from Scoraig. Mary was born in Elgin. The letter, shown below confirms that she had been appointed as Teacher of the Scoraig Public School in October 1894, with a free house and a croft.

*School Board House, Ullapool, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1894*

*Madam,*

*I beg to confirm your appointment as Teacher of the Scoraig Public School under my Board. The Salary, to begin with, to be at the rate of £50 per annum with a Free House and a Croft. Two monthly notice to be given on either side to terminate the engagement. The House is partly furnished and I enclose herewith a list of the furniture.*

*The School is due to reopen on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant and it would be desirable that you should be here by that date or as soon as possible thereafter. The route is by Rail to Garve Station on the Highland Railway hence Mail Coach to here where you stop over-night going on to Scoraig the following day. Arrangements will be made for conveying you from here to Scoraig.*

*Yours truly, Ken Jameson*

Simon and Mary were married on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1900 at Scoraig Schoolhouse. In 1901 the family was resident at No. 4 Scoraig, Simon aged 41, a boat builder. At some stage before 1907 the family moved to the schoolhouse at Achduart, Coigach, where Mary was Headteacher. They then moved to Altandhu where **John** was born on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1909. He was one of 4 boys and 3 girls. Mary is listed in Souter's Ross-shire Directory as the teacher in 1915. They then moved to 21 Ladysmith Street, Ullapool.

An obituary for John's older brother Thomas reveals that when the boys were beachcombing in childhood they came across a box that had come from the troopship *ss Laurentic*, which had been sunk by two mines, north of Ireland in 1917. The box contained the ship's logbook.

The ship on which John was serving was previously called the **Montrose**. Sailors' superstitions are that it is unlucky to change the name of a vessel as was proved in this case. On 4 September 1939, **Montrose** was requisitioned by the British Admiralty for World War II service with the Royal Navy and converted to an armed merchant cruiser. Her conversion was completed on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1939 and she was commissioned into Royal Navy service as **HMS Forfar (F30)**. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1940 **Forfar**, operating on the Northern Patrol, was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine **U-99** under the command of Otto Kretschmer. **Forfar** was en route to join convoy OB 251 and about 500 nautical miles west of Ireland. Forty one officers, including her commanding officer, Norman Hardy, and 143 men lost their lives. The survivors were rescued by the Royal Canadian Navy destroyer **HMCS St. Laurent**, the British destroyer **HMS Viscount**, and the British cargo steamer **Dursley**.

Memorial to **HMS Forfar** in the East and Old Parish Church, Forfar



This article has been included on the **Wartime Memories Project** website by Morag McIver Henriksen.

*Trimmer. John "Jocky" MacIver, Royal Navy HMS Forfar from Ullapool, Rossshire) (d.2nd Dec 1940) Uncle John MacIver was lost in the Atlantic when HMS Forfar was torpedoed on 2nd December 1940 a few months before I was born. I never knew him, but my father took me to see his name in the War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle when I was ten. He had been on the Iceland run in HMS Forfar and got two weeks' leave to go home to Ullapool while the ship was being refitted to go to Canada in a convoy, which, under the Lease Lend scheme would be met halfway. The family were relieved at this. It seemed safer than the perilous Iceland runs - but it wasn't.*

The headstone of the family grave at Badenscallie Burial ground, Coigach, reads:

*Mary (Tullo) & Simon McIver, sons John & George.  
Erected by her family in loving memory of  
MARY TULLO  
beloved wife of  
SIMON McIVER Ullapool  
died 14 August 1919  
also the above SIMON McIVER  
died 9 December 1943  
and their youngest son JOHN  
lost on HMS Forfar 2 December 1940  
GEORGE died 22 May 1977*

John is also commemorated on the **Liverpool Naval Memorial on Panel 24**.

**RODERICK MACKENZIE**

**Able Seaman R238782**

***HM Tug Samsonia***

**Died on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1943 aged 20**



Details regarding Roderick can be found in the biography **“THE MACKENZIE FAMILY FROM LETTERS, LOCHBROOM”** on pages 101-104.

**FINLAY MACKENZIE**

**Able Seaman**

***H.M. Rescue Tug Director***

**Died on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1945 aged 21**



Details regarding Finlay can be found in the biography **“THE MACKENZIE FAMILY FROM LETTERS, LOCHBROOM”** on pages 101-104.

## GREGOR EWAN MACLENNAN

Seaman

*HMBY Minesweeper 69*

Stoker 1st Class LT/KX 160101

Died on 18th October 1943 aged 19

Gregor's parents were married at Ardcharnich, on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1922. Alexander (39), a Seaman lived at Loggie, Lochbroom, whereas Isabella (née Maclean), from Ardcharnich was aged 35. **Gregor Ewan**, born on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1923, was named after his grandfather, Gregor Maclean. His older brother Duncan Donald, born 10<sup>th</sup> January 1923 was later a prisoner of war (see pages 63-64). Another brother Roderick was born in 1925.

The ship on which Gregor was serving was laid down on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1942 as **BYMS-69** by Wheeler Shipbuilding Corp., Whitestone, New York, USA. It was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1943, completed 30<sup>th</sup> March 1943, transferred to Great Britain and reclassified **J-869**.

According to the Admiralty War Diary, the minesweeper arrived in Halifax from Boston on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1943 to "*retain at Halifax for minesweeping duties owing to present emergency expected duration three weeks.*" It is apparent that this vessel was based in Halifax for several months. Gregor's death certificate states that he fell from the jetty at Halifax Harbour Dockyard and drowned.

2.	MacLENNAN, Gregor Ewen	LT/KX, 160191	R.N.P.S.	Sto, 1.	H.M. B.Y.M.S. 69	8.12.1923	Lochbroom, Garve, Ross-shire	18.10.1943	5. Accidental Drowning	Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
----	------------------------	---------------	----------	---------	------------------------	-----------	---------------------------------	------------	---------------------------	------------------------------------

Gregor is buried in **Halifax (Fort Massey) Cemetery in Grave 85 in Section E.**





## ELIZABETH DE GREY VYNER

Wren 34446

*HMS Beehive, WRNS*

Died on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1942 aged 18

## CHARLES DE GREY VYNER

Sub-Lieutenant

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve

*HMS Hunter*

Died on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1945 aged 19

Both Elizabeth and Charles were born in London, Elizabeth in early 1924, and Charles on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1926. Their parents, Commander Clare George Vyner, J.P. D.L. R.N., and the Lady Doris Hilda Vyner lived at Fountains Hall, Studley Royal, Yorkshire, but also owned Keanchulish Lodge, southwest of Strathcanaird, and associated land near Ullapool

During the Second World War Fountains Hall and other estate buildings were used to house evacuees. Studley Royal became the wartime home of Queen Ethelburga's School from Harrogate and the school's sanatorium was at Fountains Hall. The stable block and courtyard was used for dormitories while one corner became the school chapel, at which Sunday Evensong was regularly said by the Archdeacon of Ripon.

Commander Vyner bought Isle Martin in the 1930s. He decided to rebuild the ruins of the curing house into a flour mill. The workforce commuted from Ullapool. Wheat was shipped in from Liverpool via Vyner's own ship the *Penola*. The flour was then shipped down to the central belt of Scotland. Unfortunately the *Penola* sank off the Island of Bute as a result of a collision on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1941. Thereafter the flour was sold via Vyner's own chain of grocery stores, under the name Lochbroom Trading Co. Ltd. The mill closed down in 1948.

It is not known when **Elizabeth Vyner** enlisted into the Women's Royal Naval Service. *HMS Beehive* was a Royal Naval Coastal Forces Base commissioned on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1940 and headquartered at Felixstowe Dock in what was the Little Ships Hotel. Throughout the war the base was host to Motor Torpedo Boats, Motor Gun Boats and Motor Launches.

Elizabeth died of sleeping sickness at the East Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital and was cremated at Ipswich Crematorium. She is commemorated on the crematorium screen wall.



A memorial to those who served on *HMS Beehive* is located at Landguard Fort, Felixstowe.

**Charles** was appointed Temporary Midshipman on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1943 when aged 17. This letter, found quite by chance when researching his name on the internet, was sent (undated) to his mother from the Royal Naval Air Station at Yeovilton, Somerset:

*“Today I flew a Spitfire. All I can say is that it is the most thrilling thing I’ve ever done in my life. It is an experience which I’m convinced is unequalled in flying as it is the first aircraft I’ve ever flown without having an instructor in the back seat for the first two hours or so. It is beautiful to fly and very small..... Comparing it to training aircraft is like comparing a racehorse to a cart horse. It is a little tricky to land but I imagine one gets used to it. It has been my ambition to fly a spitfire since the Battle of Britain and it is a thing I shall never forget.*

*So much for that. This is quite a nice station, comfortable, good food, don’t get up too early etc.! We are here for 6 weeks. Then we have two weeks in Cornwall. I think I shall enjoy this course quite a bit as it [is] very interesting – lots of dog fighting and things like that. All the instructors are ex-operational pilots who really know their stuff.”*

By 1945 Charles was serving with 807 squadron flying sorties from the aircraft carrier *HMS Hunter* which had arrived off Ceylon on 20<sup>th</sup> March. She spent the next month in preparation for ‘Operation Dracula’, the reoccupation of Rangoon, which began on 30<sup>th</sup> April. *HMS Hunter* and other aircraft carriers, *Emperor*, *Kheville* and *Stalker* provided the facilitation of air strikes and support for invasion troops until 4<sup>th</sup> May. Unfortunately Charles never survived to complete this mission.

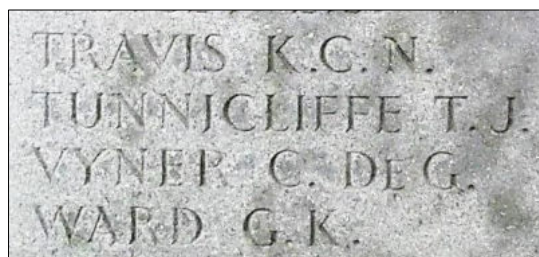
The war diary for *HMS Hunter* reveals:

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 20 Beach Cover low sorties were flown. Whilst proceeding to take up beach cover, Serial 10 ran into a very heavy squall and at 0931, whilst descending to below cloud base Temporary Sub Lieutenant (A) Charles de Grey VYNER, RNVR, passed through the leader’s slipstream and during the subsequent brief period of regaining control, he flew into the sea from 500 feet.”

Charles was flying a Seafire 111. His body was never found so

He is commemorated on

**Lee on the Solent Memorial  
on Bay 6, Panel 5.**



A memorial to Elizabeth and Charles was unveiled by HRH the Queen Mother on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1953 at Fountains Hall. A stained glass window with a stone cross in the centre has two stone figures representing the fallen brother and sister in uniform. The cross has two wreaths intertwined at its head with the regimental badges of the fallen at its base.

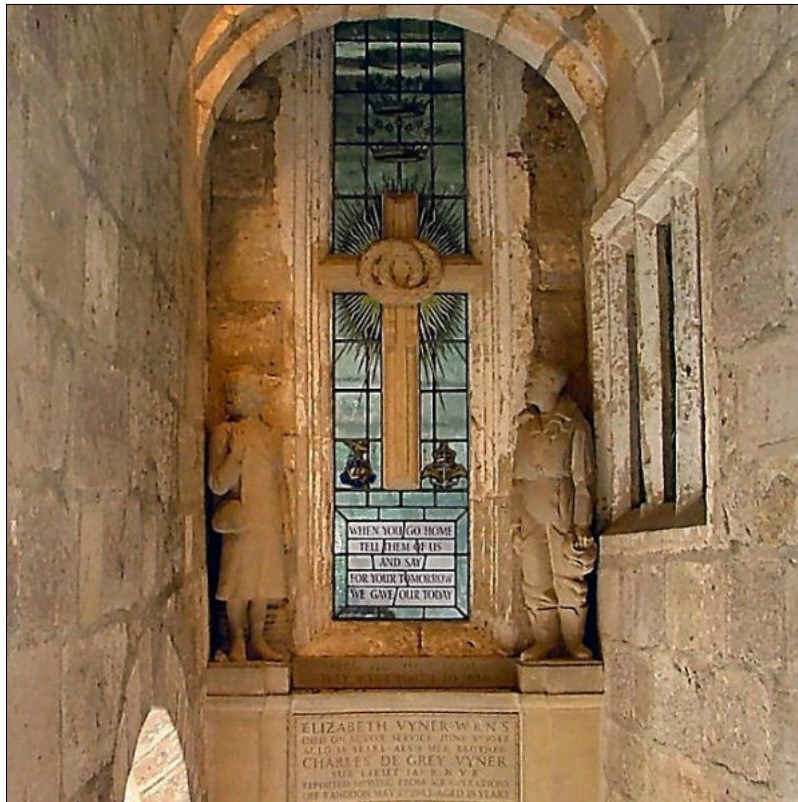


Photo: Graham Roberts

The wording underneath reads:

**WHEN YOU GO HOME TELL THEM OF US AND SAY  
FOR YOUR TOMORROW WE GAVE OUR TODAY**



## MERCHANT NAVY DEATHS

Nurse Stewardess Agnes Harris Wallace, ss *City of Benares* (Glasgow)

Able Seaman Roderick Mackenzie, ss *Romsey* (Liverpool)

Fireman Roderick Thompson Mackenzie, ss *Romsey* (Liverpool)

2<sup>nd</sup> Officer James Macnab, ss *Moidart* (Cardiff)

### AGNES HARRIS WALLACE

Nurse Stewardess

ss. *City of Benares*

Died on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1940

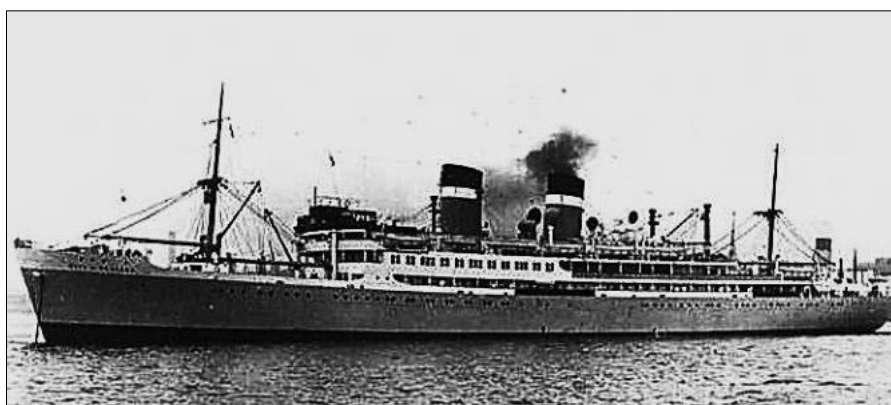


Photo courtesy of Ullapool  
Museum Trust

C O D E	246	548	659	B	25	40 9	373	14	14
I N G	Nat.	Rank or Rating	Cause of Death	Ship	Age Group	Date of Death	Res	R. of H List Number	
<p><b>M</b> Record of Death of Merchant Seaman</p> <p>Surname: <u>WALLACE,</u> Ship: <u>City of Benares</u></p> <p>Other Names: <u>Agnes</u> <u>H</u> Official No: <u>164096</u></p> <p>Address: <u>West Terrace, Ullapool, Ross-shire</u> Port of Registry: <u>Glasgow</u>  <u>aka Father David</u> <u>aka</u> British/Fishing/Foreign</p> <p>Birthplace: <u>Liverpool</u> Country: <u>England</u> Rank or Rating: <u>Nurse Stewardess</u></p> <p>Date of Death: <u>17-9-40</u> Place of Death: <u>At Sea</u> Age at Death: <u>25</u></p> <p>Cause of Death: <u>Enemy action presumed killed or drowned</u>  <u>(Landed 17 9 40)</u></p> <p>Fpd by: <u>466</u> Register Entry: <u>KA</u> Reg. Gen. <u>-</u>          Ukd by: <u>601</u> Year: <u>1941</u> Month: <u>January</u> Page: <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>F</u></p>									

The above form states that Agnes was born in Liverpool, which is inaccurate. She was born on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1915 in Ullapool Ross-shire the daughter of the local Doctor, David Wallace (1871-1947) and his wife Mary Johnstone Harris née Stalker (1884-1973). David and Mary married on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1912 at Whitechapel, London.

Three other children were born to this family, Mary Kate, Alan and John. John was killed in action during WW2 (see page 98) and Alan was a prisoner of war (see page 56).



City of Benares



The following information has been obtained from **Wikipedia**:

*The **City of Benares** was part of convoy OB-213, and was being used as an evacuee ship in the overseas evacuation scheme organised by the Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB). She was carrying 90 child evacuee passengers who were being evacuated from wartime Britain to Canada. The ship left Liverpool on 13 September 1940, bound for the Canadian ports of Quebec and Montreal, under the command of her Master, Landles Nicoll. She was the flagship of the convoy commodore Rear Admiral E.J.G. Mackinnon DSO RN and the first ship in the centre column.*

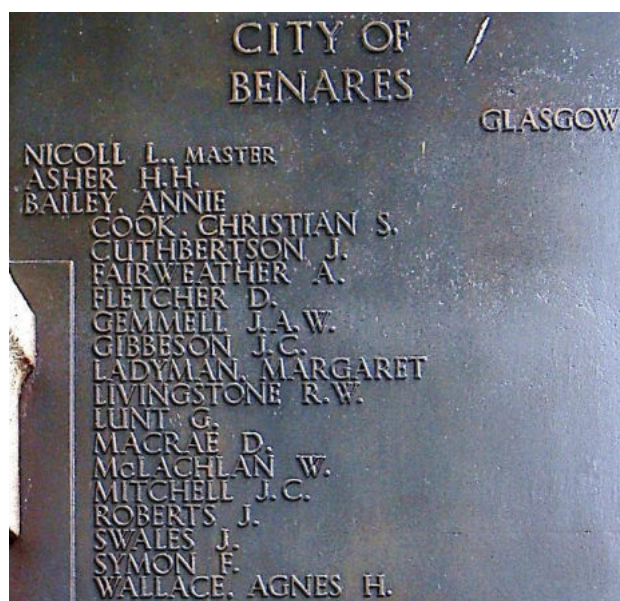
*Late in the evening of 17 September, the City of Benares was sighted by U-48, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Heinrich Bleichrodt, who fired two torpedoes at her at 23.45 hours. Both torpedoes missed, and at 00.01 hours on 18 September, the U-boat fired another torpedo at her. The torpedo struck her in the stern, causing her to sink within 30 minutes, 253 miles west-southwest of Rockall. Fifteen minutes after the torpedo hit, the vessel had been abandoned, though there were difficulties with lowering the lifeboats on the weather side of the ship. HMS Hurricane arrived on the scene 24 hours later, and picked up 105 survivors and landed them at Greenock. In total, 260 of the 407 people on board were lost. This included the master, the commodore, three staff members, 121 crew members and 134 passengers. Out of the 134 passengers, 77 were child evacuees. Only 13 of the 90 child evacuee passengers embarked survived the sinking.*

*The sinking was controversial, the Allied powers criticised the "barbaric" actions of the Germans, and there was an outpouring of sympathy and support for those who had lost children in the sinking. The Germans defended the attack as being on a legitimate military target, and insisted that the British government was to blame for allowing children to travel on such ships in war zones when the German government had issued repeated warnings. They claimed the City of Benares would be used to transport war material back to Britain on her return voyage.*

Agnes is commemorated in Ullapool, West Argyle Street Cemetery, with her brother John. She is also commemorated on **Tower Hill Memorial, London on Panel 29.**



Photo: Roddie Macpherson




**RODERICK MACKENZIE**  
**Able Seaman, R202449**  
**ss. Romsey (Liverpool)**  
**Died on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1942 aged 25**  
**Son of John and Isabella MacKenzie**

John Mackenzie, aged 41 (bachelor), a fisherman married Isabella Munro aged 38 (spinster) a domestic servant, on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1916 at Altnaharra, Ullapool, according to the forms of the United Free Church of Scotland. John lived at Letters and Isabella at Rhiroy, Lochbroom.

Roderick's Birth Certificate clearly states that he was born on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1917 at Letters.

He first served on *Baron Tweedmouth* in November 1939. This ship was built in 1927 by Lithgows Ltd., Glasgow for Hogarth Shipping Co. Ltd, Ardrossan. She was used for plying general cargo which included iron ore from West Africa and timber and pit props from Canada.

Roderick was discharged from the *Baron Tweedmouth* on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1940.

● C.R. 1.		No. of DIS. A issued. <b>R 202449</b>	
Surname <b>MACKENZIE</b>			
[BLOCK CAPITALS] Christian Names <b>Roderick</b>			
Birth : Date <b>29.1.1916</b>		Place <b>Letters, Ross-shire</b>	
Rating <b>Sailor</b>		Certificate : Grade & No. or P.R. No. (if any)	
Health	Society <b>S. N. I. S.</b> Branch		
Insce.	Membership No. <b>22488</b>		
Unemployment Insce. : — Local Office <b>Glasgow</b> No. <b>5152</b>			
Height <b>5' 8"</b>	Colour Eyes <b>Grey</b>	Hair <b>Black</b>	
Complexion <b>Fresh</b>	Distinguishing marks <b>none</b>		
TURN OVER			
Discharged from <b>Baron Tweedmouth</b>		Official Number <b>48990</b>	
<b>DECLARATION TO BE MADE IF OCCASION ARISES.</b>			
I hereby certify that I am not now in possession of an unfilled Continuous Certificate of Discharge (Board of Trade, Irish Free State, or Canadian) for the following reason :—			
<b>1st ship</b>			
		Signature of Seaman <b>Roderick Mackenzie</b>	
Dated Stamp of M.M.O. (6588) Wt.31365 50m (9) 12/37 Gp.697 C&SLtd			

TNA BT349

The following information has been sourced from the website **Inverclyde Now**.

*“The 75th anniversary [2017] of the sinking of a tug at Gourock has been marked by the nephew of one of the 16 crewmen who died in the tragedy, at the virtually unmarked grave in a local cemetery where his uncle and two other victims were buried. Finlay MacKenzie's uncle **Roddy**, who was 25 years old and engaged to be married, was one of 20 crew on board the Romsey when it was struck by a ship on the Clyde just before midnight on 4 September 1942.*

*The Romsey had been requisitioned by the Royal Navy as a rescue tug and was based at the old Admiralty Pier in Cardwell Bay. The vessel had been sitting just off Gourock Pier when she appears to have dragged her anchor, with a strong wind carrying her into the shipping channel. Being war-time, blackout regulations required her to carry minimal lighting and she was run down by a mail ship, the ss Lairdsburn, which was sailing from Glasgow to Belfast. The Romsey sank within minutes; there were only four survivors. The vessel was lifted a month later and the bodies recovered. Most of the crew hailed from the villages of Ullapool and Gairloch in Wester Ross with others from Southampton, Merseyside and Wales.*



**Finlay Mackenzie at Gourock Cemetery**

*Finlay, who lives in Gourock, said: "Three of the bodies could not be identified and their families decided to bury them together in Gourock Cemetery. "There is no headstone but a shrub was planted to mark lair number 40 in section F; one of those interred there was my uncle **Roddy** from Ullapool. "There was no-one from Inverclyde on board which is probably why so few people are now aware of the sinking."*

*Finlay's father, also from Ullapool served on the rescue tugs as well. He met a local woman while based on the Clyde and they moved to Ullapool where they married. However, when Finlay was 16 years old, his father died and his mother decided to move back to Gourock with Finlay. He has made a point of finding and visiting his uncle's grave and laid a wreath there to mark the 75th anniversary.*

*The Romsey, which was built by Ferguson Bros, Port Glasgow in 1930, was repaired and put back into service. After the war she was returned to her owners and continued working until she was broken up in 1962."*







# RODERICK THOMPSON MACKENZIE

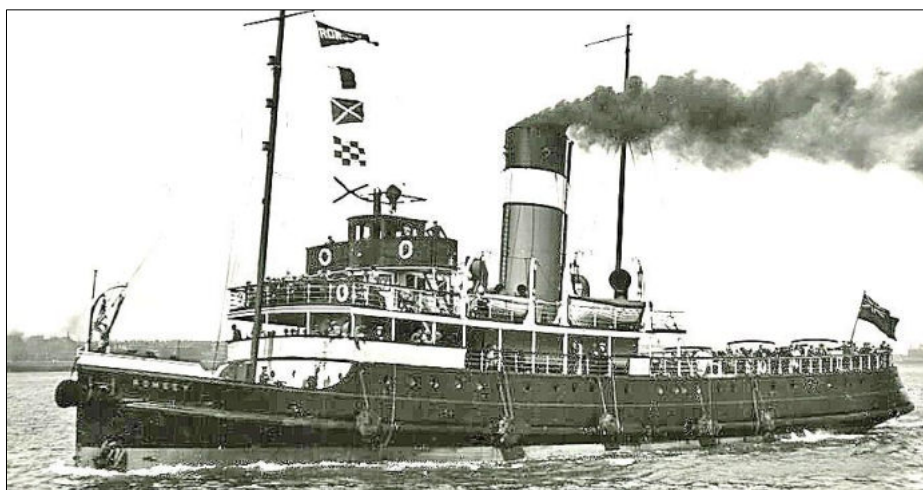
Fireman

ss Romsey (Liverpool)

Died on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1942 aged 29

**Roderick**, born on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1912 at Moir Street, Glasgow, was the only child of Roderick, a dairyman, and Mary Ann, née Thompson. Tragically, his mother died within a few days of his birth, on 27<sup>th</sup> September, of puerperal septicaemia, caused by childbirth.

Roderick Thompson was married on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1938 at St Andrew's Church of Scotland, Tongue to a local girl Jane Macleod Maciver, a shop assistant, aged 26 of Kirkiboll in the village. He was occupied as a vanman, aged 26 and living at 17 Pulteney Street, Ullapool. Jane's parents were Gordon Macleod Maciver, a Joiner, and Barbara (née Macleod). D Mclean of Point Street, Ullapool and Nancy Maciver from Tongue were witnesses to the marriage.



ss Romsey

C O D I N G	231.	544.	653	B.	29	42	373.		G.R. <b>FF</b>
	Nat.	Rank or Rating	Cause of Death	Ship	Age Group	Date of Death	Res.	R of H List Number	
Record of Death of Merchant Seaman									
Surname: <u>MACKENZIE.</u>					Ship: <u>S.S. ROMSEY.</u>				
Other Names: <u>Roderick Thompson</u>					Official No: <u>161140.</u>				
N/K Wife: <u>Jane.</u>					Port of Registry: <u>Liverpool</u>				
Address: <u>8. Mill Street</u> <u>Ullapool</u>					British/Fishing/Foreign				
Birthplace: <u>Glasgow</u>			Country: <u>Scotland</u>		Rank or Rating: <u>Fireman</u>				
Date of Death: <u>4.9.42</u>			Place of Death: <u>Clyde.</u>		Age at Death: <u>29.</u>				
Cause of Death: <u>Died after Rescue</u>					<u>Included in R.O. 7.</u> <u>10.2.56 - See correct no.</u> <u>R 9424/53</u>				
Ppd by: <u>DDA.</u>		Registry Entry:			1942 Act		Reg. Gen.		
Okd by: <u>2.8</u>		Year: <u>1943</u> Month: <u>March</u> Page: <u>47</u>							

The details regarding the sinking of *ss Romsey* are given in the biography for **Able Seaman Roderick Mackenzie** on pages 88-89.

Roderick is buried in Ullapool in **West Argyle Street Cemetery**.



Photo: Roddie Macpherson

**JAMES MACNAB**  
**Second Officer**  
***ss Moidart (Cardiff)***  
**Died on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1940 aged 38**

James was the son of Duncan Macnab and Mary (née Macrae). Duncan and Mary married on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1897 at The Caledonian Hotel Dingwall. He was aged 36 and Foreman of Road Labour. His address: Ardindrean. Mary worked as a domestic servant, aged 27. Her address 53 Octavia Terrace, Greenock.

James was born at Ardindrean on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1901, his father at that time employed as a general labourer. In 1911 the family was living in the same dwelling which contained four rooms. Duncan (50), Mary (42), **James (9)**, Annabella (4) and Flora (9 months).

In 1927 James received his Certificate of Discharge in respect of joining the *British Monarch*. Prior to this time he had been employed on coastal trading vessels.



**C.R. 1.**

Surname MACNAB  
[in CAPITALS]  
Christian Name James

Birth: Year 1901 Place Arundean

Dis. A. No. R. 19348 Rating Seaman R.V. 2 No. 1

Certificate (if any): Grade \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

Health Insee. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Unemployment Insee. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Height 5'9" Colour Eyes Blue Hair Light Brown

Complexion Fair Distinguishing marks Nil

[M4200] 11302/122 50m 9/24 1941 G & S 151 2 [TURN OVER.]

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**DECLARATION TO BE MADE IF OCCASION ARISES.**

BRITISH MONARCH

I hereby certify that I have not hitherto received a Continuous Certificate of Discharge for the following reason:—

1st foreign going ship.  
Previously in Gascony Lane

Signature of Seaman James MacNab

Dated Stamp of M.M.O. 

TNA BT349

*ss Moidart* was a British Cargo Steamer of 1,262 tons built in 1922 by Campbeltown Shipbuilding Co., Yard No 114 for the Portsmouth Steamship Co., (McNeil & Jones), Cardiff as the HILLGLEN. Its main cargo was coal.

The cargo ship struck a mine in the North Sea off Harwich, whilst sailing between London and Newcastle, with the loss of 11 of her crew. Her chief engineer and his engine room greaser were the only survivors; they were washed through the engine room skylight when the ship went down.

C O D E	373-504-659	B-38-	40	373-	3	H
Nat.	Rank or Rating	Cause of Death	Ship	Age Group	Date of Death	R. of H List Number
Record of Death of Merchant Seaman						
Type address as <u>Lochbroom</u>						
Surname: <u>MACNAB</u>		Ship: <u>"Moidart"</u>		S/o.		
Other Names: <u>James</u> Official No: <u>145403</u>						
Address: <u>Ordination, Loch Broom</u>				Port of Registry: <u>Cardiff</u>		
Birthplace: <u>Loch Broom</u> Country: <u>Scotland</u>				Rank or Rating: <u>2<sup>nd</sup> Officer</u>		
Date of Death: <u>29.7.40</u> Place of Death: <u>at Sea</u>				Age at Death: <u>38</u>		
Cause of Death: <u>Supposed drowned---(sunk by enemy action on 29.7.40)</u>						
Ppd by: <u>DC</u>		Registry Entry:		FA		Reg. Gen.
Ckd by: <u>LA</u>		Year: <u>1940</u> Month: <u>September</u> Page: <u>4</u>		1		—

The family gravestone in Lochbroom churchyard reveals the following words:

**In memory of/our beloved children/  
 DUNCAN/died 14 March 1900, aged 2 years/  
 and DUNCAN died 6 September 1910/aged 10 years  
 also of DUNCAN McNAB  
 died 27 April 1940/aged 83 years and of his son  
 JAMES who was lost at sea 29 July 1940 aged 39 years  
 also MARY MACRAE/wife of said DUNCAN McNAB  
 died 27th Dec, 1959, aged 91 years.**

James is also commemorated on **Tower Hill Memorial on Panel 70**





## ROYAL AIR FORCE DEATHS

**Leading Aircraftman Roderick George Lyall Mackenzie 1104259**  
**Sergeant Douglas Macdonald 1118837**  
**Aircraftman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Ian Mackenzie 1361427**  
**Flying Officer John Douglas Wallace 130163**  
**Sergeant Robert William Fraser 616009**

### **RODERICK GEORGE LYALL MACKENZIE**

**Leading Aircraftman (Pilot U/T) 1104259**  
**Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**  
**Died on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1940 aged nearly 18**

**Roderick** was the son of Kenneth and Mary Mackenzie (née McDonald), of Ullapool who had married at the Crown Hotel Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1922, Kenneth (21), Tailor, bachelor, usual residence Crown Hotel, Tillicoultry - hotel proprietor. Mary Jessie McDonald (24), domestic servant, spinster, of West Terrace, Ullapool. Roderick George Lyall was born in 1923 at Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire (Ref. 468/18).

The family lived in Custom House Street, Ullapool during WW2.

On 12 December 1940 Roderick was flying in **Audax I K7445** of No. 9 Flying Training School, based at RAF Hullavington, near Chippenham in Wiltshire. It crashed at Longbridge, Birmingham, and burnt out after hitting a balloon cable while lost.

The Pilot and crew were all killed:

**BALDRY, KENNETH ALDRED**, Sergeant, 741301, 23, RAFVR  
**CLATWORTHY, EDWARD ROBERT JOHN**, Leading Aircraftman, 923468, 21, RAFVR  
**COLLINS, GILBERT ALAN**, Sergeant, 742684, 23, RAFVR  
**MACKENZIE, Roderick George Lyall**, Leading Aircraftman, 1104259, 17, RAFVR  
**MARSTON, KENNETH JOHN**, Pilot Officer, 83715, 22, RAFVR  
**PHILLIPS, STANLEY RICHARD**, Leading Aircraftman, 1161590, 12/12/1940, RAFVR

Roderick is buried in Ullapool Parish Church in West Argyle Street



Photo: Roddie Macpherson

**DOUGLAS MACDONALD**  
**Sergeant 1118837**  
**No. 42 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**  
**Died on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1942 aged 28**

**Douglas's** parents married on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1901 at Oban, - Hugh a labourer, and Catherine née MacColl. Douglas was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1913 at 12 Nevis Road, Kinlochleven.

It is suggested that Hugh and Catherine were living in Ullapool during WW2 but moved away afterwards to Ardchattan.

Douglas is not commemorated on the Ullapool War Memorial but information below indicates that he was resident in this area, as is also confirmed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

A few notes regarding Douglas's death have been found on a website [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com) with the following messages.

*"I know one of the crew was a chap called Douglas MacDonald, 1118837, and in a letter he sent home a week before he died he stated one of his crew was Australian."*

*"I have a photo of MacDonald along with a letter home written a matter of days before he was killed. He talks about his crew and how great they are, and how he can't wait for his next leave to bring them all back. He was from the Ullapool area so not a million miles from home. He also talks about being stuck in Wick after engine problems after an op but not being able to go and see a family friend up there."*

Douglas was flying in a Beaufort when he was killed. Beaufort AW 366 was engaged on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1942, in a non-operational training day formation flight on light torpedo attacks, when it collided with AW310. AW366 crashed into the sea in flames after breaking in two in the Firth of Forth, Scotland. Two of the crew were killed and 2 were missing. The aircraft were formatting on a navex when they collided. AW310 'P' was badly damaged but returned to belly-land at Leuchars.

**Crew:**

RAF Sergeant B F J Page, Captain (Pilot)

RAAF 407899 Sergeant J L Jones, (Observer)

RAF Sergeant S Counsell, (Wireless Air Gunner)

**RAF Sergeant D MacDonald,(Wireless Air Gunner)**

Sergeant's Page and Jones are buried in the Leuchars Cemetery, Fifeshire, Scotland. Sergeant's Counsell and **MacDonald** have no known grave and their names are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing, Runnymede, Surrey, UK on Panel 88.

The family gravestone is situated at Ardchattan Churchyard Argyll and Bute. Hugh died on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1951 aged 77 and Catherine 25<sup>th</sup> June 1935 aged 55. There were three other children Robert, Mary and Catherine who died in infancy. Also mentioned on the gravestone is Douglas. He is not listed on Ardchattan War Memorial in the church.

**IAN MACKENZIE**  
**Aircraftman 2nd Class 1361427**  
**Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**  
**281 Squadron**  
**Died on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1942 aged 21**



No.281 Squadron was formed on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1942 at RAF Ouston as an air-sea rescue squadron that served all around the British coast in a large number of detachments. It was equipped with Boulton Paul Defiants, then being phased out as night fighters. The squadron was intended to provide short range cover for



fighter command aircraft operating close to the British coast, and as such was part of Fighter Command.

Ian died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and Tuberculous Meningitis in Bangour Hospital, Broxburn, West Lothian and is buried in **Lochbroom Churchyard** at Clachan.



**Lochbroom Church**

**Photo: Clare Church**



**JOHN DOUGLAS WALLACE**  
**Flying Officer 130163**  
**Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, No. 57 Squadron**  
**Died on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1943 aged 21**



**John** was the younger son of Dr and Mrs Wallace, Ullapool, and was educated at Ullapool HG School and Inverness Royal Academy, where he gained the Leaving Certificate in 1939. Always keen on flying, he applied at the age of 17½ years for enlistment in the RAF. He was passed by the Selection Board but failed in his medical test. On the outbreak of war he again volunteered for an air crew, was eventually passed in grade 2 and was accepted as a fitter, in which capacity he served for 9 months. Again volunteering for an air crew, he passed fit and went to Florida for training and became a navigator. On returning to the UK he received a commission and after a brief spell in the Coastal Command was transferred to a Lancaster Bomber.

**Photo courtesy of Ullapool Museum Trust**

No.57 Squadron began the Second World War as a Blenheim squadron, and in September 1939 was one of the first RAF squadrons to move to France, where it operated as a strategic reconnaissance unit. On 13 January 1941 the squadron flew its first night bombing mission, the role it would continue to perform for the rest of the war. The Lancasters arrived in September 1942, by which time the squadron was part of No.5 Group. The squadron operated as part of Bomber Command's main force from then until the end of the war.

John was flying in an Avro Lancaster Mk I REG ED3297 Target: Duisburg  
 Call Sign: DX- Departure airport RAF Scampton. Take-off time: 2359, Crashed 0244. at  
 Maasneil, behind the brickworks factory, at Limburg, Netherlands  
 7 occupants, 6 fatalities, one taken prisoner. Aircraft written off, damaged beyond repair.

**Crew:**

Pilot F/O. V.A. Wilson 126985 RAF

Flight engineer Sgt. S. Laughlin 980462 RAF

**Navigator F/O. J.D. Wallace 130163 RAF**

Bomb aimer W/O P.G. Kehl 1335521 RAF Survived pow

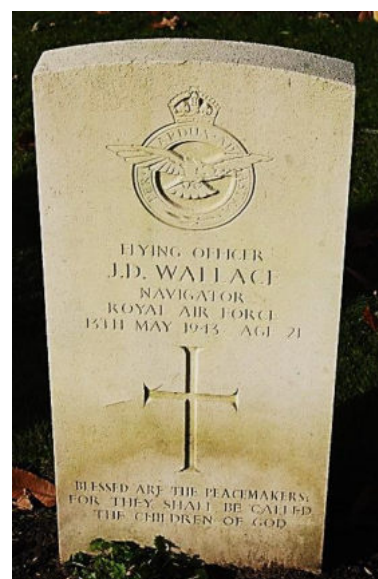
Wireless Op/Air Gunner Sgt. R.B. Loverseed 1198322 RAF

Air gunner F/Sgt. C.L. Gerding R/115979 RCAF

Air gunner Sgt. A. Steel 1409336 RAF

Shot down by night fighter pilot Major Walter Ehle of the  
 Stab II/NJG 1, flying a Bf 110 G-4 from St Trond airfield,  
 Belgium

John is buried in **Jonkerbos War Cemetery** in Grave 24 D 4.





## ROBERT WILLIAM FRASER

Sergeant 616009

159 Squadron, Royal Air Force

Died on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1944 aged 23

**Robert William Fraser** was the son of Robert and Margaret (née Hendry), and husband of Isabel Fraser, of Mennock, Dumfriesshire. Robert Fraser and Margaret Hendry married on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1919 at Ord Farm, Invergordon (his home). He was a chauffeur (bachelor) aged 23. Margaret Elizabeth was a munitions worker (spinster) living at the same address.

Robert William was born in 1920 at Ord Farm. During his early years the family relocated to the Croy area, southeast of Inverness. Robert senior died of pulmonary tuberculosis on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1925 aged 29 years at Easter Galcantray, Croy, Nairnshire. The movements of Margaret and her son Robert William are not known until 1934 when she re-married on 8<sup>th</sup> March in Lochbroom Registration District, to Alexander Cameron, a widower, aged 46. Both Alexander and Margaret are listed as resident at Leckmelm, Alexander worked as a forester and Margaret a dairymaid.

Robert joined the Royal Air Force and was posted to 159 Squadron which was formed at Molesworth in England on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942. The ground crew served in the Middle East from February. 12<sup>th</sup> 1942 (without aircraft) and were then posted to India on May 10<sup>th</sup>, (still without aircraft). The squadron's aircraft were flown to Palestine in July 1942, from whence they carried out raids on North Africa, Italy and Greece before leaving for India on September 30<sup>th</sup>, with their first operation taking place on November 17<sup>th</sup> 1942. The squadron operated in SEAC (South East Asia Command) for the remainder of the war, flying bombing, mining, and reconnaissance operations over Burma, Siam, Malaya, Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies. The squadron only flew Liberator aircraft; Mk's II, III, V, VI, VII.

Robert married **Isabel Turnbull** (1920-1977) at St Ninian's Manse, Sanquhar, Dumfries (right) on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1942. His marriage certificate states he was a motor mechanic, Corporal, serving with the Royal Air Force, with home address at Leckmelm, presently resident at RAF Acklington, Northumberland. Isabel, a domestic servant, Assistant in the Navy, Army and Air Force Institute (NAAFI) lived at Mennock, Sanquhar.



It is not known when Robert arrived in India and the details of his death are scant. His death certificate states that he died at Digri, an airbase in West Bengal.

FRASER Robert William	Sgt. 616009 159 Sqn.	23	Scotland.	3.2.44.	Digri, India.	Whilst on active service.
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He was buried at RANCHI WAR CEMETERY, India among 703 casualties, in plot 9.F.4. Ranchi is a town in the State of Jharkhand, 419 kilometres. north-west of Calcutta



**Headstones arranged in a perfect geometrical symmetry at Ranchi War Cemetery**



**Photo courtesy of Stephen Rogers**

Isabel, now a widow, remarried on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1946 to John Hiddleston (1920-1986) at St Bride's Manse, Sanquhar, Dumfries. She was a housekeeper.

Isabel died in 1977 at Glasgow and her husband died in 1986.



## THE MACKENZIE FAMILY FROM LETTERS, LOCHBROOM



John Mackenzie 1887-1959  
Robina Mackenzie 1889-1962



It was a catastrophic tragedy that three sons should die during WW2, hence the elaborate memorial to them in Lochbroom Churchyard where they are buried.



John Mackenzie (left) aged 33 (a skilled labourer) of Rose Cottage, Letters, Lochbroom, married Robina Mackenzie, 29, (a domestic servant) also of Letters, on 26<sup>th</sup> March 1919 at The Free Church, Dingwall.

**John Mackenzie (left), and the Mackenzie boys (below)**  
**Photos Courtesy of Ullapool Museum Trust**

On the right, in the back row, left to right, are Roddy and Finlay who were twins. In the front row are Ian and Duncan



The first to die was **Ian**.

**IAN MACKENZIE**  
**Aircraftman 2nd Class 1361427**  
**Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve**  
**281 Squadron**  
**Died on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1942 aged 21**



No.281 Squadron was formed on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1942 at RAF Ouston as an air-sea rescue squadron that served all around the British coast in a large number of detachments. It was equipped with Boulton Paul Defiants.

Ian died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and Tuberculous Meningitis in Bangour Hospital, Broxburn. West Lothian.

## RODERICK MACKENZIE

Able Seaman R238782

*HM Tug Samsonia*

Died on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1943 aged 20



Roderick was born on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1924.



*HM Tug Samsonia*

*HM Tug Samsonia*: 14<sup>th</sup> September 1942 - completed and commissioned  
6<sup>th</sup> October 1942 - sailed from Methil (Fife, Scotland) in Convoy EN 146/2,  
Arrived Loch Ewe 9<sup>th</sup> October 1942

1943 – the tug was based at Campbeltown as a Convoy Rescue Tug

24<sup>th</sup> February 1943 - taking over from *HM Tug NIMBLE* towed *ss ARIGUANI* from Gibraltar  
to Greenock and then to the Tyne arriving 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1943.

Roderick died at the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, Portsmouth of Status Epilepticus.

MackENZIE, Roderick	RTP/ R.238782	T.124T	A.B.	H.M.Tug SAMSONIA	1923 (Incomplete Record)	Lochbroom, Garve, Ross-shire	21.4.1943	3. Status Epilepticus	Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, Portsmouth, Hants.
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**FINLAY MACKENZIE**  
**Able Seaman, R238781**  
***H.M. Rescue Tug Director***  
**Died on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1945 aged 21**



**Tribute to Finlay at Lochbroom Churchyard –  
 Photo Clare Church**

Finlay was born on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1923.

***HM Tug Director*** (W137) (right) was launched on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1943.

The ***Director*** was towing a floating dock from the River Clyde round the north of Scotland to Invergordon. They ran into a storm in the Pentland Firth. The hawser snapped which struck Finlay on the head and he died immediately.



**Photo Courtesy of Imperial War Museum**

McKENZIE, Finlay	RFP/ R.238781	T.124T	A.B.	H.M.R.T. DIRECTOR	8.5.1925	Loch Broom, Ross-shire	16.1.1945	5. Fractured skull and shock accidentally sustained.	On board H.M.R.T. DIRECTOR
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## THE MACDONALD FAMILY FROM ARDMAIR

Ronnie Mitchell has provided much information and photographs regarding the Macdonald family from Ardmair, which is acknowledged with grateful thanks. Ronnie's wording is shown in *italics*.

John Macdonald (a gamekeeper) and Janet (Jessie) McGregor were married on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1910 at the Caledonian Hotel, Ullapool. John was aged 37 and Jessie 24.

Over the years Jessie gave birth to 9 children - 7 boys and 2 girls.



*Taken around 1928 at Ardmair, my mother **Isabella Macdonald** with her parents **John and Jessie Macdonald** (my Grannie and Grandpa) and her six brothers. Brother number seven, **Gregor**, would not come along until 1930. **Jessie** is seated behind the eldest of the family, **Iain** - b. 1911, and to her right standing is **Willie** - b. 1923. Seated in front of Willie is **Murdo** - b.1919. Standing at the rear is **Duncan** - b 1912, to Duncan's left is **Mum** - b. 1914 and seated in front of her is **Roddy**, - b.1916. Seated between **Roddy** and **Iain** is **Kenny** – b. 1920.*

*Six brothers went to war and four served with the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders.*



**Roddie and Iain standing,  
Seated, Kenny (in civvies) and Murdo**

**Iain (Hector John)** the eldest was taken prisoner after being badly wounded and later medically repatriated from POW camp in Poland via Sweden.

**Roddy**, also medically evacuated from the field (with TB) and was treated for some time at Harefield Sanatorium in London, later convalescing at home in Ardmair in a stand-alone wooden building which was erected specifically for the purpose by Commander and Lady Vyner of Kenachulish. It was always known to us thereafter as Roddy's Hut!

**Murdo**, escaped on the last transport out of St Malo.

**Duncan** (second born in 1912) , standing on the far right of the picture, served the duration at sea as Lt Cdr RNVR (Ship's Captain Merchant Marine prior to outbreak)



*Uncle Willie* was a pilot in the RAF and served throughout the Middle East flying unarmed DH Mosquito photo reconnaissance missions over enemy held territory and later in Malaya during the emergency there.



Kenny is one of the two **Kenneth Macdonalds** who are commemorated on the Ullapool War Memorial. He died on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1945, aged 24 years, of tuberculosis of the spine and bone at the County Hospital, Strathpeffer. His death certificate records that he was a general labourer. Regrettably, he does not have a Commonwealth War Grave headstone, but he is remembered on his parents' gravestone at Mill Street, Old Burial Ground, Ullapool.



Photo: Peter Drysdale



*The Seaforth Sanatorium has been out of use as a hospital facility for many years now but it is where Kenny was treated for TB/Pneumonia after having been evacuated in 1940, while very ill in the back of a lorry on board a troop transport from, I think, the Port of Boulogne.*

*The family later learned that the Senior Medical Officer at the field hospital where he was being cared for amid all the pandemonium and bedlam that was the situation of the time, pulled rank with Kenny's own Company Commander and demanded that he be got onto the next available transport and shipped home on the basis that otherwise he would be dead within 48 hours! Within 48 hours he was being treated at the Seaforth TB Hospital at Maryburgh. Streptomycine would not be developed until three years later and the basic penicillin of the time was just not enough.*

*The youngest brother, **Gregor (born 1930)** was too young to see war service but completed (and extended) National Service with the RAF!*

*My father (**Ronald G Mitchell**) [married Isabella Macdonald in 1940] who was as warmly regarded by the family as all the brothers, spent the war years working with the R&D team at Rolls Royce on the continual and fast paced development of the RR Merlin aero engine."*

## DONNIE MACKENZIE'S WW2 MEMORIES

In 2005 Donnie and Mary Mackenzie took part in a WW2 Oral History Project carried out by Ullapool Museum and Ullapool Primary School

Donnie served with the 111<sup>th</sup> Indian Infantry Brigade (The Chindits) in India and Burma,

Information obtained from various sources listed in the biography regarding the Chindits is shown [in blue](#).

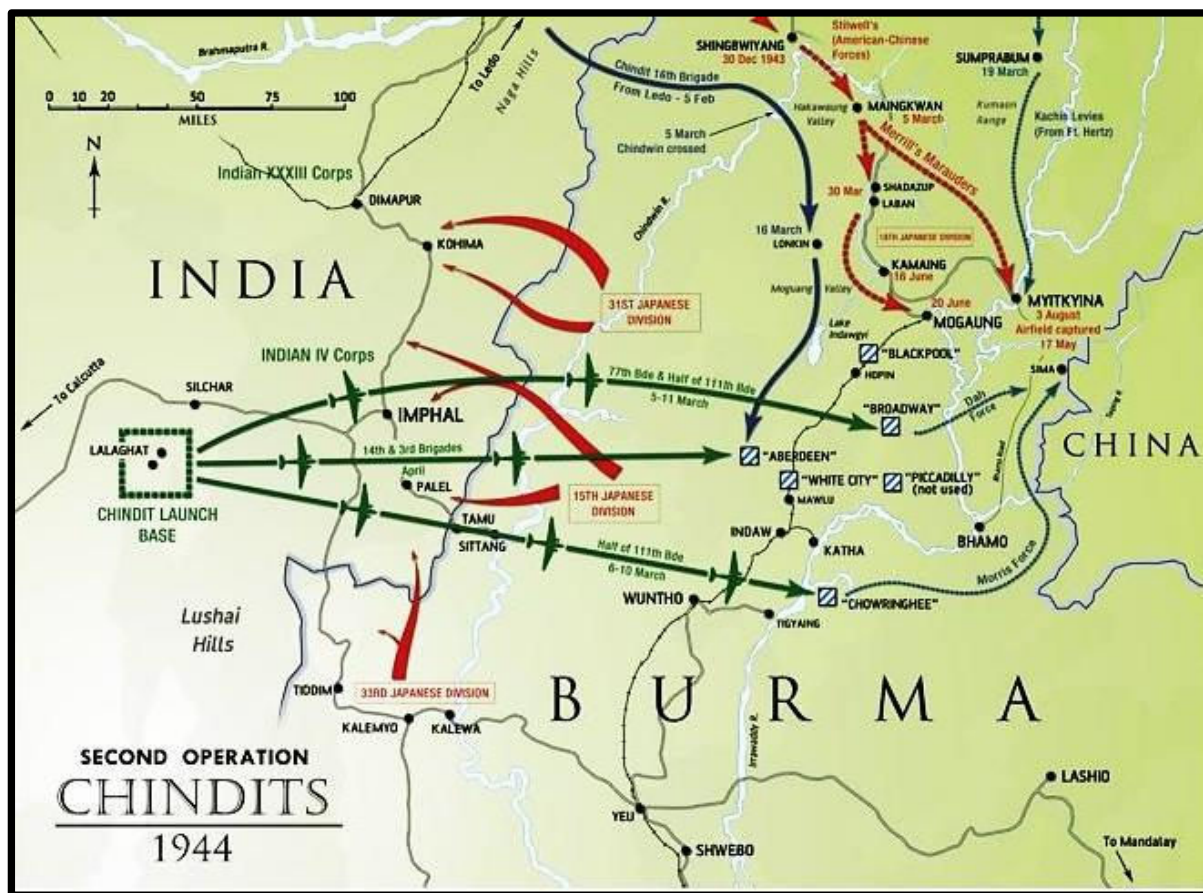
Donnie's experiences are shown in *italics*.

*When war broke out you had to go where you were told to go which we were transferred from Braemore down to Fort William - Torlundy was the name of the place - and they had decoys which looked like the factory buildings, on the hillside, on the side of Ben Nevis actually. They just looked like canvas, you know, and they were built - made to look like buildings to draw the enemy, when they came over, they thought that that was part of the factory. And, when they came to bomb the factory they bombed all these - there's bomb craters still I suppose there's still down there today, on the hillside - but there was only one bomb that actually hit the factory at Fort William and it's just the one I'm telling you about that's still standing, it never exploded. But they did get the imitation buildings. That was all - they were all blown off the hillside. You know? So anyway, that was that and I call my calling up papers then to go into the army.*

*I did my six weeks' training down in Ayrshire; I went from there down to Norwich; I did advanced training down there for about two months; and then I was sent out to India. So, we joined the 'Forgotten Fourteenth Army' as it was known as and we did advanced training down in the Indian jungle and we did about four months jungle training in a place - I'm sure you'd have heard the place said, a place called 'Doollally' [Deolali].*

[After arriving in India, it's likely that Donnie travelled by train to the Deolali Base Reinforcement Camp. This vast encampment was located roughly 100 miles north-east of Bombay and was formerly a Staff Training College. The Chindits were formed to put into effect Major General Orde Wingate's newly developed guerrilla warfare tactic of long-range penetration, and they were trained to operate deep behind Japanese lines.](#)

*Then we moved up to Imphal - The Japanese at that time were knocking on the Indian frontier ready to make their deep penetration into India which they were wanting to do - was to conquer India. And the first expedition of the Fourteenth Army went up here, and the first Chindit expedition came in, with the Chinese, into Burma down here, and that wasn't successful; they had to withdraw. Now, the Japanese had the whole of the Burmese border here like, here, this area here, and then Wingate, he went over to America, and he asked President Roosevelt for assistance to have another attempt at it. And this is the attempt that I happened to be involved with - the second attempt, to go into the battle of the Chindits, we were known as the Chindits and we went in behind - flown in by gliders, towed by Dakotas, two gliders to a Dakota, and I can't remember now exactly how many men and the mules were put into the gliders as well and the gliders were only constructed of cardboard, that's all they were constructed of.*



### Operation Thursday, March 1944

The objective of Operation Thursday would be to cut the supply lines of the Japanese forces facing British, American and Chinese forces in north Burma. As part of Operation Thursday, the initial Chindits' move centred on 16th, 77th and 111th Brigades. The aim was to fly in a force of 10,000 men, 1,000 mules, equipment and supplies into clearings in the heart of Burma, behind enemy lines, and from there attack road, rail and river traffic in the area. This type of operation had never been attempted before.

Three sites were selected for the initial landing grounds and were given the code names Piccadilly, Broadway and Chowringhee. These landing sites had been chosen in inaccessible areas to avoid contact with Japanese ground troops and all sorties were to be flown at night to avoid Japanese aircraft. The plan was for a first wave of gliders to land troops to secure the site. A second wave would land more troops and American engineers to construct an airstrip so that C47 Dakotas could bring in the remaining troops and equipment.

On the night of the **5th March** the first wave of gliders flew into Broadway. The initial glider landings did not go well. Aerial photographs had failed to show ditches and two trees on the landing area at Broadway and these had caused several of the gliders to crash on landing and were now blocking the path for further gliders; 30 men were killed in the landing and a further 28 wounded. However, on the first night, 35 gliders managed to land successfully and by dawn 400 men were ready for action in Broadway.



The next morning a runway was cleared for Dakotas to land, and over the next six nights, 579 Dakota sorties flew into Broadway, successfully bringing in 77th Brigade and two battalions from 111th Brigade. In all, some 18,000 troops with their animal transport "had been inserted into the enemies guts" (as Wingate described it), 200/150 miles behind the main Japanese front in Assam.

*We landed in at a place...they had three different areas - there was one area called White City; one area was called Aberdeen; and the other area was called Broadway. So we, our 111 Brigade - that was our brigade - we went into Broadway. The other brigades, there were five brigades altogether; they went into the other areas. The 111 Brigade was the biggest brigade, and as we were flown in all these gliders, they hadn't a clue where they were going, there was only a strip cut out of the jungle for the Dakotas to land on. Well, the gliders were let loose before the Dakotas came down. They were left - they were untied from the Dakotas and they just came down in the jungle and they just landed and they just broke up into pieces, so we had to find our way from there after we came out of the gliders. The Dakotas couldn't take off again. Once they landed they were finished. That was it. That's all they could do.*

Wingate now had three brigades in Burma, and Broadway was rapidly developed into a powerful air base with firmly constructed defences. Within days of landing, Chindit columns were marching off along jungle paths to establish themselves in the region. The columns would strike against the railway, road and river systems used by the Japanese army. 111th Brigade probed further into the jungle, setting up new strongholds including 'White City' and 'Aberdeen'.

*So we moved ourselves into the jungle then and made some sort of fortification for ourselves, and we took an area of the jungle, a little hillock, it was, not so big as Beinn Ghobhlach, that was sitting in the heart of the jungle, so we put the Dakotas in barbed wire. We got this round the perimeter of where we were and we waited. There was no sign of the Japs coming, no contact at all where we were landing, and we managed to get into this built up fortress that we'd made for ourselves in there with this barbed wire, and it was about a week after we went in there that the Japanese actually discovered where we were.*

*And once they discovered where we were they were sending out patrols the same as we were - deep, what they call deep penetration patrols - we used to go out at night, you know? Most of the walking was done by night and, it was right on the edge of the Burmese Railway Line, the Burmese road, and all their heavy equipment was going up that road, up to the Indian border and our job was to demolish them, destroy them, before they got up there. So we went out on patrols at night, laid booby traps on the railway lines, and as soon as the trains came they were just blown high sky. And they were - same with the roads. And then we used to disperse into the jungle, lie in over there again until the following night, and we just kept on doing that all the time'*

*We weren't allowed to light any fires of any description because if we lit any fires it was giving signals to the Japanese as where our positions were, so we couldn't cook anything for ourselves. So all our supplies was just dropped by parachute to us and what we got we got. What we didn't get, the Japs got it. So, our daily rations were a package containing - they were called K-rations and they were American made. And the package consisted of three tins - one of lun- (Oh, I don't know what you would call it) for breakfast and another one was cheese, and another one luncheon meat for evening. It was just the size of that cup, the tins, were about half the size of the cup there.*

*That was it. And there was - in the packet - five cigarettes, two packets of chewing gum. That was our daily rations and once we ran out of that then we had to find for ourselves - food. It was mostly bamboo shoots we lived on, and whatever we could scrape up, as we were going into the native villages and trying to get some eggs, or something like that. When I went in there I was eleven and a half stone, and I came out of there six and a half stone.*

*We kept moving all the time, and we were in touch with the others - what we called walkie-talkies - that was our only means of communication we had with the other, the other forts and we used to have to go and deliver messages from one fort to the other, through the jungle, following elephant tracks. And we had a map about that size - it was made of canvas - which the walking wouldn't destroy and each member was issued with a compass and one of these maps and we had to make our own way with the compass and the map from fort one to fort two. Sometimes we were ambushed on the elephant tracks and, it's very hard to say this, but I lost one of my best mates you know, doing that, conveying a message. There were two of us were sent out on a message to deliver to one fort from the other, from our commanding officer, and we went to deliver it and on our way back we lost our bearings on the elephant tracks in the jungle. We weren't sure whether it was this way, that way, or the other way. And we stood at the junction of the elephant track and we were debating which was the right track to get back to our own fort. And he said, 'Well, I'll tell you what we'll do.' He says, 'If you go so far up that track, I'll go up so far at this track; we might get our bearings that way.' Well, he never came back. So I was on the right track but he was on the wrong track, and he ran into a Japanese patrol. So, following that, when I went back and I told my commanding officers that my mate was missing, they sent out a recce in the morning and they found his body with his head off. He just ran into a Japanese patrol*

*They bombed us; they plastered us with everything they could plaster us with. There wasn't a tree left standing on that mountain - a jungle mind you? And we were under the ground, in foxholes. And as the commanding officer said to us, 'Now', he says, 'I'm afraid it's every man for himself from zero hour - whatever zero hour was - and it's up to yourselves to get off. If you don't get off, you don't get off. If you get off, you're lucky.' So there were three of us in this first foxhole and we debated, 'What are we going to do?' And, I know, if we came out and showed ourselves that was it, we were finished, because we could actually hear the Japanese - talking, and we were under the ground. And we just lay there until the darkness came in - we decided to do this - and then when daylight came out in the morning, we decided to creep out and we went - crawled on our bellies - I don't know how far we travelled on our bellies - this sort of, we wouldn't be seen, and we got into right into the jungle again and we hid ourselves in the jungle. And we were living on bamboo shoots and for say, three to four days - nothing else. And then we heard voices and we thought it was the Japanese and we just, more or less, 'This, is it. We've had it.' But it turned out to be Gurkhas and these Gurkhas were sent out to look out - to try and find out some sick or wounded that might be living and we were fortunate enough to be picked up by Gurkhas. After a while, the Gurkhas fed us on tea and they were really good at making tea, the Gurkhas. We enjoyed their tea.*

Operation Thursday was successfully over and Churchill sent Wingate a telegram congratulating him and the Chindits on their outstanding success. This was the largest Allied airborne operation ever conducted until D-Day. However, tragedy soon hit. On **24th March** a plane on which Wingate was travelling crashed. All on board were killed including a number of war correspondents.

By 30th May work was progressing to establish a flying boat based to evacuate the sick and wounded from Indawgyi Lake. Around 350 men required evacuation, and their numbers increased at an alarming rate following the two weeks of Monsoon rain (malaria cases spiralled) and with little or no food. The men were also short of arms and ammunition.

*They [the Gurkhas] took us to the rendezvous point where they were supposed to take us to - and then they decided they were going to get a Sunderland Flying Boat to come in from India to take out the sick and the wounded. So, the Sunderland Flying Boat came in and landed on a lake - the Indawgyi Lake it was called - and they hadn't a clue how deep that lake was but they came in and landed on it and the engineers, they made rafts, of bamboo, like boats - to take us out to the Sunderland Flying Boat. So we got onto the Sunderland Flying Boat and they took us to the Brahmaputra River in India. But when it landed on the Brahmaputra River the pilot said, 'Try and get them out as quick as possible - the sick and wounded - we are taking in water, we are taking in water.' And the water started coming in. What they did was, when they landed on the lake in Burma, they'd damaged the undercarriage of the flying boat. They didn't know it like, landed on the Brahmaputra so we - we just got off when the Sunderland Flying Boat sunk into the Brahmaputra River. So, were taken from there to a hospital and I think I was there in that hospital for seven weeks and then we went into a convalescent camp, up in Pakistan.*

*I got back on compassionate grounds. Mrs. Mitford, she was our representative here, was our Welfare Officer for the community, and my mother was on her death bed and Mrs. Mitford did her utmost to get me home, through the War Office. And after I came out of that convalescence we were sent to a place in India called Punah and we were reorganised, and the battalion was reorganising, rebuilding it, and our next step was the invasion of Singapore. That was to be our next move. But as it so happened the atom bomb came in and the invasion never came off. The regiment did go to Singapore but there was a lot of sabotage going on, you know, after the war had been more or less finished like, you know? The Japanese were still resisting in pockets, in Singapore. I was sent from the convalescence camp down to Bombay and I came home on the ship 'Strathnaver' and the sick and the wounded came back on the same ship.*



## REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR

The Geneva Convention made provision for the repatriation of all Prisoners of War, even during hostilities. It was only possible for the British and Germans to reach agreement over the seriously ill and disabled. For the majority of the 40,000 British servicemen who were taken prisoner in 1939 and 1940, the war was to be a very long and dispiriting experience. Negotiations, conducted through the Red Cross, over the repatriation of seriously wounded men, had begun in late 1940. They did not progress very far because there were far fewer German men in this category than British. It was only after substantial numbers of Germans were taken prisoner in the Desert campaign of 1942 that the talks resumed. The actual exchange of prisoners did not take place until October 1943:

**Extract from *The Times*, 20th October 1943**

### **HOMEWARD BOUND PRISONERS -A BUOYANT SPIRIT MEN WHO PUZZLED THEIR CAPTORS**

From our Special Correspondent, GOTHENBURG, OCT. 1943

*Trains bearing prisoners from Germany for repatriation to Britain began arriving here from the Trelleborg ferry in the early hours of Monday, and the transfer to the Swedish steamship **Drottningholm** was made during darkness. Before dawn more than 1,200, most of them men from Great Britain, but also 20 Canadians, 20 Australians, a few Palestinians, and some from other parts of the British Empire, were on board.*



*Meanwhile further trains with allied prisoners from Germany, France, and Holland were arriving, bringing besides the service men about 50 civilians, mostly aged or unfit men and women, and at least one infant, born in a camp 10 weeks ago. The civilians were mostly from Vittel camp, in the Vosges.*

*Apparently the actual departure of the ships depends on some signal that a similar exchange has reached the agreed stage also in Oran. This is expected to arrive in time for the German ships to sail at 8 a.m. on Thursday and the British ships at 10.30 a.m. to reach England during the week-end.*

*Three hours spent among the 1,200 new passengers in the **Drottningholm** on Monday morning furnished a stimulating and indeed an inspiring experience. Most of them had been prisoners for well over three years; all had endured long and severe hardships; some were maimed and many more had less obvious injuries, yet all of them displayed a buoyant spirit.*

*It became apparent, after one had talked with the men in different parts of the ship, that theirs was not merely the natural cheerfulness of men who were going home. These were men whose confident spirit had remained high and intact through the darkest period.*

**“THOUGHT US CRAZY”**

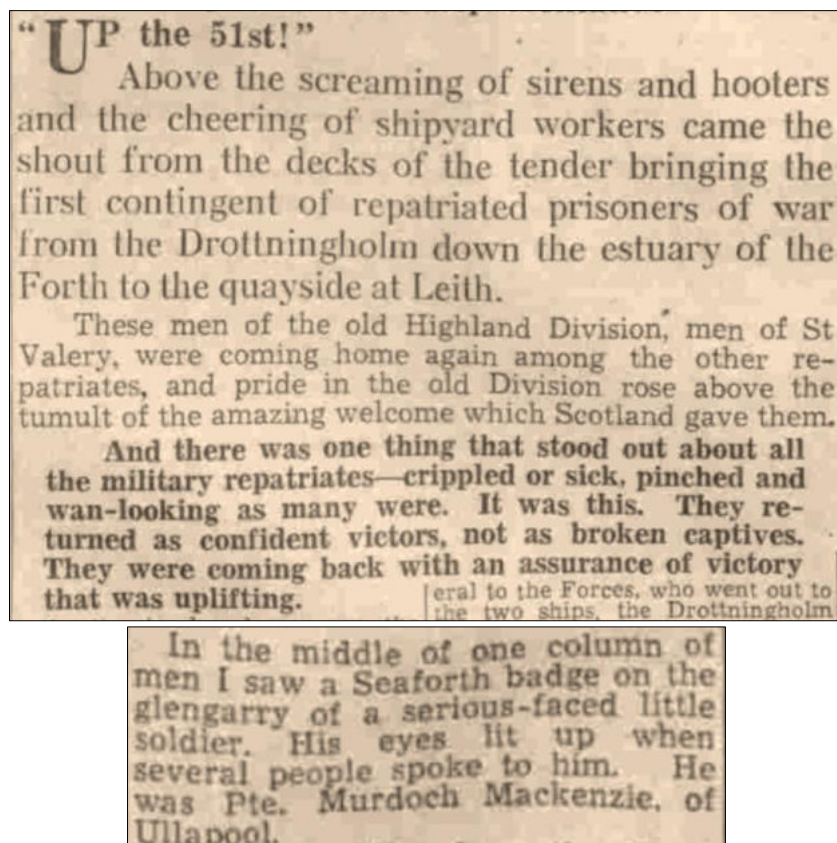
*“Jerry could not understand us,” said one man who had been selected for exchange under the abortive plan of two years ago. “When we were told the disappointing news that the exchange scheme had fallen through at the last moment a group of us struck up a tune, and in a few seconds all were singing lustily ‘Land of hope and glory.’ Our German attendants just threw up their hands. Clearly they thought we were crazy. They were unable to understand why we did not show any downheartedness.*

*The absence of self-pity among these men was one of the most striking features of their attitude. When they were asked what sort of general treatment they had experienced they usually answered, in varying terms: “Well, you see, I was fortunate.” Some, however, had grim incidents to relate, especially about the youngest members of Hitler’s armed forces, brutal fanatics with memories scarcely stretching back beyond the dawn of the Nazi period.*

*Some men had tiny replicas of the manacles used by the Germans which they had made in camp and had brought in matchboxes. None of those questioned by your Correspondent had been manacled. Fewer members of the fanatical S.S. youth are now on duty at the camps than formerly. They have been succeeded largely by more or less disabled guards, some indeed with artificial limbs”.*

Here is evidence that at least one man from Lochbroom was repatriated under this system. **Murdoch Mackenzie** from Ullapool arrived on the Swedish ship *Drottningholm* at Leith.

**Extract from the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* of 28<sup>th</sup> October 1943.**



## **JAMES MACLEOD'S MEMORIES**

### **By his daughter Mary MacLeod**

*The story as far as I remember it from my father James Macleod (Jimmy Cloudy) is that as war approached, all the Seaforth territorials knew they would be called up right away. I think they had formed very close bonds through drill and the summer camps. They gathered round the radio in the Morefield Hotel, Ullapool one of the few in the village at the time, and listened to Chamberlain's speech announcing the war. Dad sold his bike, assuming he would not be needing it and needing the money more. I don't know whether it was the next day, but they all collected at the Drill Hall for the transport: three buses and a car, according to Dad, and one of them said, 'The car is all they will need to bring us back'. And he was not far wrong, said my father. A recent post in Ullapool Remembers website of a photograph taken that day of the leaving shows that there were indeed three buses and a car. Dad did not say much about the 'send-off'; I imagine it was still painful to think about the folk saying goodbye who never saw their boys again.*

*They were billeted in a granary in Dingwall, which was a misery, apparently, it was cold and loads of them got the cold; they then were sent for training down to England and from there were sent to France by boat. As they approached the French coast, one of them, with a wonderful Gaelic voice (I have it in my head that he said Donnie Beag), at the prow of the ship sang Sine Bhan. It is hard to imagine anything more poignant.*

*At first in France, things were good. They helped with the farm work where they were billeted and got on very well with the local people. The French locals loved the kilts and bagpipes and the Seaforths were upset when they had to wear battle dress instead. The Seaforths were back in the same French village they had been billeted in 25 years before. Apparently Raigie, who had served in the First World War, was recognised with delight by a local family.*

*My father's great friends were Johnnie Macmillan, his first cousin, Colin Charlie Macleod, and Kenny Macdonald (Kenny Deet). Dad spoke of a lot of laughs: from killing and cooking hens (one of the sergeants was reduced to the ranks for stealing on one occasion, he had not hidden the feathers well enough), to drinking their way through wine cellars. On one occasion, after they had worked on the farm all day, a group of them were given supper, a pie, apparently chicken, which they all enjoyed. Johnnie Macmillan, who was friendly with the farmer's daughter and whose French was more fluent, told them to their dismay, that they had been eating frog leg and pigeon pie.*

*In the North when they were sent up – near Metz – they began to encounter the Germans through brief skirmishes. A story was of one such foray, when the officer in charge was completely confused about where they were and was leading them in the wrong direction and Johnnie Macmillan (who was corporal of their platoon) had an altercation with the officer and threatened to shoot him if he didn't go where Johnnie knew was the right direction. The officer capitulated and Johnnie was correct. All these boys had been poaching on the hills – good practice for that kind of war.*



*They had enormous confidence in Major Fraser, who had been in the Great War, too, in the very area where they were now fighting again. He would join the boys round the fires, said Dad, and ask his batman for his billycan when he had finished with it and eat with them, the same food – a great officer.*

*They were then transported back through North France to south of the Somme at Abbeville where the June 4th attack took place, with the B company of the 4th Seaforths leading the direct assault on the German positions, up through fields of June grain. The night before, they were billeted at the hamlet and chateau of Les Alleux. (The chateau is still there, now a Gite. I stayed there a few years ago and the same family still own it though not born at the time.)*

*Dad said that all the boys were reading their Bibles the night before the battle. I imagine that with the fear of hell drummed into them in church, death and meeting their maker was perhaps even more terrifying than the battle ahead.*

*It is clear from a fellow officer's account, reported in Eric Linklater's book on the campaign, that Major Fraser knew it was a forlorn hope and that his company would take the brunt of it. They were told by Major Fraser to shoot low – disable not kill – at least that is how Dad understood it.*

*They were also told they had to carry on even when any of them went down. All these lads were close. They were advancing under punishing fire and when Dad was wounded, shot in the thigh, his cousin, Colin Charlie, bent down and said, 'Sorry, Jimmy'. As he stood up he was shot in the head in front of Dad. My father told me this when we visited the graves in the cemetery at Mareuil-Caubert where many of the casualties from of the Battle of Abbeville are buried. A bitterly painful memory.*

*There were a number of the lads wounded in the corn field. Dad began to crawl back but was shot again, the magazine of his rifle exploding in his hand. They all lay still for an hour or so until bullets stopped coming over then crawled backwards again. Dad was taken off in a stretcher and told the medics, as he had promised he would, that another lad, Kenny Mackenzie, was still out there. He did not ever know until we visited France that Kenny had been picked up. We found his grave in a cemetery further South. (I subsequently searched for his grave on another trip there but did not find it.) Dad had known that Kenny was dying because he had been shot in the stomach and was in a very bad way. He just wanted to know he had died with his own people and not out in a field and that Kenny would have known he kept his promise.*

*As is reported in the Linklater account, of a 100 men in B company, only 17 were not killed or wounded in that action. The wounded were taken to Huchenville Chateau, the field hospital, and from there by train to a hospital at La Baule. I feel very lucky that my Father was one of the wounded and that he was lucky enough to have a skilled surgeon treating him in Coventry who saved his arm, which was on the point of being amputated.*



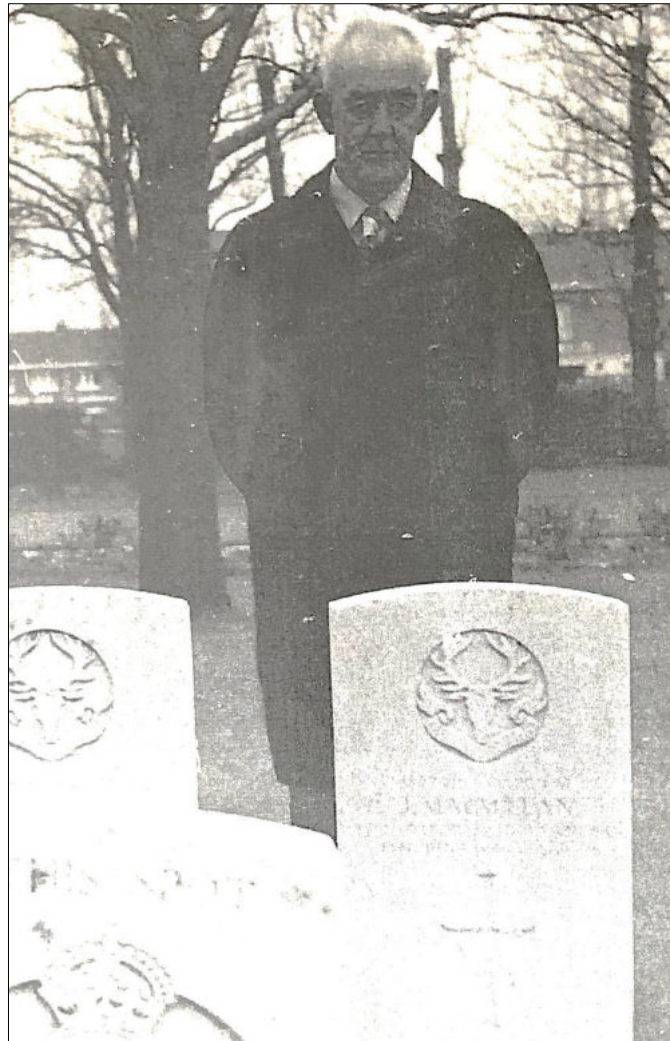
**My father recovering from surgery, second from the right back row:**

*He was also lucky to have reached home, being one of the casualties on the last hospital ship (HMS Somersetshire) to leave France from St Nazaire, in the major evacuation of over 150,000 soldiers from the Channel ports, known as Operation Aerial, much less famous than the Dunkirk Evacuation, but also vital. My father had said that the trip was terrifying because he was on a stretcher below decks and would have had no chance if the ship had been torpedoed. It was only recently, from an account in the book *Sisters in Arms*, about the British Army Nurses (author Nicola Tyler) that I understood just how terrifying it must have been.*

*It seems that the train taking casualties from the hospital at La Baule to St Nazaire was attacked by German planes several times. Loading casualties on ship from the train was also very difficult. The docks at St Nazaire were under pretty constant attack. The stretcher cases had to be carried over in between bursts of firing. When the HMS Somersetshire set off, it was fully lit and clearly marked a hospital ship. Despite the war conventions, it was attacked; one bomb fell in front and the other on their port side, missing the ship. The captain doused the lights and sailed in circles then headed for home, the last part accompanied by RAF planes. The courage of the nurses was absolutely heroic. That same day, the HMS Lancastria was torpedoed as it set off from St Nazaire, with the loss of thousands of lives.*

*My father mourned Colin Charlie and Johnnie all his life. I was so glad that I was able to take him and my Mother to France to visit their graves.*

*They never ever knew what had happened to Johnnie Macmillan. There were stories that he had died, having been shot while trying to escape – that would have been in Johnnie's nature, said Dad. He would not have wanted to be a prisoner. His grave is in Dunkirk cemetery, to the North, which bears out that theory.*



**My father visiting the grave of Johnnie Macmillan in Spring 1980.**



**The graves of Major Fraser and Colin Charlie from my last visit to the cemetery in Mareuil-Caubert.**



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