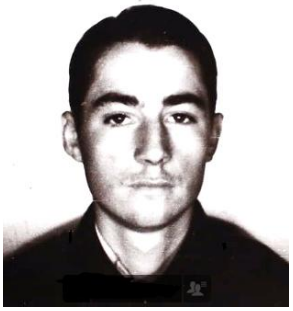
MacDonald, Arthur Edison Private 5-F-6

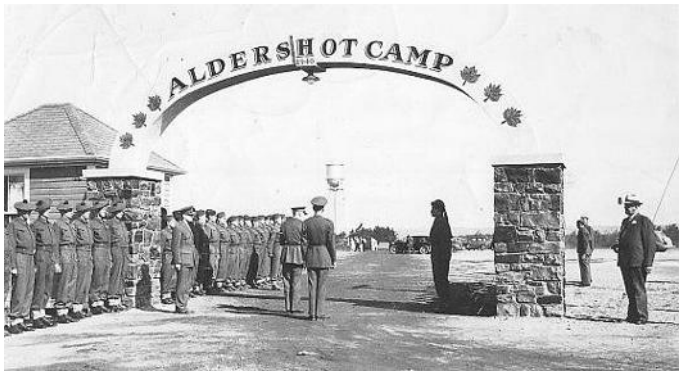


Arthur Edison Mac Donald is born on May 13, 1925, in Pictou, Nova Scotia.
He is the son of Austin Young MacDonald and Margaret Melinda MacDonald (née Getson).
Arthur is the third son in the family; the family would later grow to include two more sons and three daughters.
English is the language spoken at home, and the family is Presbyterian.

Arthur's parents own a farm. By this time, the agricultural sector has moved past the Great Depression, and during the war years, it becomes the driving force behind food production—not only for Canada, but also for large-scale exports to the United Kingdom (UK).

Arthur completes his primary education up to grade 7, leaving school at the age of 13 to help on the farm.
Nevertheless, on June 29, 1944, he decides to enlist in Halifax for active service in the Canadian Army. The invasion of Normandy has begun on June 6, 1944, and Canadian forces are in urgent need of reinforcements.

Arthur can not be enlisted without a prior medical examination. The medical report records his physical details: 5'5" tall; 121 lbs; black hair, and brown eyes. A scar on his left index finger is also noted—a detail included for potential identification purposes.



The district depot in Halifax is Arthur's posting for the first month. Following this, he enters the army's training cycle.
He absolves two months of basic infantry training in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, followed by further training in Camp Aldershot, Nova Scotia.

Arthur remains in Aldershot until the end of 1944. In early December, he is granted a few weeks of leave, combined with embarkation leave.
By this time, his crossing to the United Kingdom (UK) has already been scheduled.
On December 30, 1944, he reports to Camp Debert, Nova Scotia.
This is a vast military camp where troops destined to cross the Atlantic from the port of Halifax are assembled.

On New Year's Day 1945, Arthur and thousands of others board a troopship bound for the UK, arriving there on January 10, 1945.
He is assigned to a reinforcement battalion while awaiting his crossing to the European mainland.
That day is for Arthur on February 23, 1945; he disembarks in Antwerp, and the harsh reality of war quickly draws near.

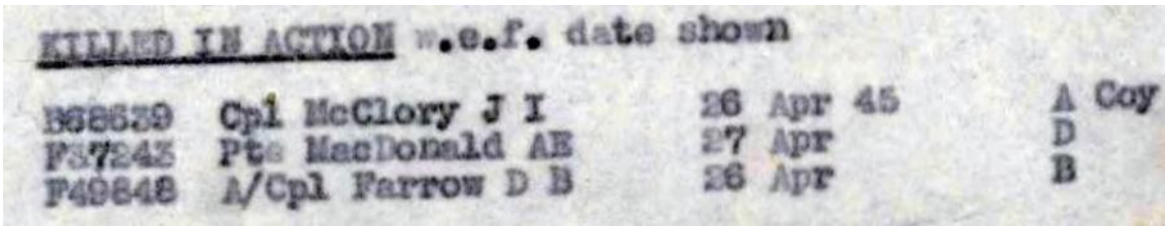
On April 6, 1945, he is transferred from the reinforcement unit to the Algonquin Regiment.
After that, there is only one more entry in his file: 'Killed in Action' on April 27, 1945.

To gain some insight into what Arthur experienced during those few remaining weeks, one must look to the war diary of the Algonquin Regiment.

Following the crossing of the Rhine on March 31, 1945, the Algonquins move into Dutch territory. Passing through places such as Millingen and Lochem, they head toward Bornerbroek (April 4, 1945).
The battle for the liberation of Wierden is intense; here, it seems, luck is still on Arthur's side.

The advance continues into German territory. Esterwegen is reached on April 11, 1945. The Küstenkanal (Coastal Canal) is reconnoitered, and the regiment's next task—following the crossing of the canal—is to secure the route toward Edewecht and Friesoythe.

In the early hours of April 17, 1945, the north bank of the canal is reached and a bridgehead established. By the afternoon, the troops face counterattacks.
Once the engineers had constructed a bridge across the canal on April 18, 1945, the advance continues.
The resistance encountered is fierce. The flat, marshy terrain and dense forests near Edewecht provide the Germans with an ideal defensive line.
It is during these battles near Edewecht that Private Arthur Edison MacDonald is killed in action.



KILLED IN ACTION w.e.f. date shown

B38639	Cpl McClory J I	26 Apr 45	A Coy
F37243	Pte MacDonald AE	27 Apr	D
F49848	A/Cpl Farrow D B	26 Apr	B

He is initially laid to rest in a temporary grave near Osterscheps. On March 8, 1946, he gets his final resting place: the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten.
Grave reference: Plot 5, Row F, Grave 6.

He is awarded:
the 1939–1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, the War Medal 1939–1945, and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.



Sources:
www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com;
www.canada.ca/library-archives; wikipedia, wartimesproject.com; War Diary Algonquin Regiment, project '44.