

Pte Neil Roderick MacLean

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Neil was born June 5, 1917 in Thorburn, Pictou County, Nova Scotia, son of Neil A. and Kate MacLean (died 1918), of Lourdes, Nova Scotia. They were married in Lourdes in 1902. His brother was Bernard MacLean and his sisters were Mrs. Annie Fierfield, Mrs. Cecilia McDonald and Isabell MacLean. Neil went to school until he was 18 and achieved "grade 8".

He was an electrician at a coal mine and a member of the Roman Catholic Church and he enjoyed many sports and was good at rifle shooting.

On February 5, 1941, Neil enlisted in Halifax Nova Scotia and went overseas to the United Kingdom on December 10, 1942. On July 11, 1943, he arrived in Sicily with his regiment, the Carleton & York Regiment, and later took part in the fierce fighting on mainland Italy. Neil was wounded on May 23, 1944, and after a few weeks he was able to be deployed again. When the Nazis had largely been driven out of Italy, Neil embarked in Italy on March 17, 1945 for the crossing to Marseille (Fr). From there he was sent with his regiment to the Netherlands to be deployed in the liberation of Eastern Netherlands.

After the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade had liberated Deventer, they crossed the IJssel on April 12, 1945 to liberate Apeldoorn and later the entire Veluwe. At the time of the German capitulation, Neil was with his regiment near Amersfoort. In the period immediately after the liberation, his unit stayed in the area around The Hague. On May 12, 1945, Neil, at the age of 27, fell overboard while on watch on a barge. An extensive but unsuccessful search was made for him: he was found drowned. Neil was temporarily buried in the Allied section of the cemetery in Loosduinen, municipality of The Hague. On April 11, 1946, Neil was reburied at the Canadian Cemetery in Holten

On his gravestone: HE DIED AS HE FOUGHT, A BRAVE SOLDIER; MAY HIS SOUL REST IN PEACE. FATHER AND FAMILY

His grave was adopted after the war by A. Bouwhuis from Enschede.

His medals were: 1939-45 Star, Italy Star, France Germany Star, Defense Medal, War Medal 1939-45, CVSM & Clasp.

His father was later awarded the Memorial Bar.

