



Sydney Mines, Cape Breton, played a key role in Nova Scotia's mining and industrial history.

Richard MacLean was born there on March 25, 1919. He was the son of Malcolm and Annie MacLean, both of British descent.

When he enlisted in the Canadian Army on June 9, 1941, he did not list any other family members, but later reports indicate that he had at least one sister.

Richard was English-speaking, unmarried, and Roman Catholic. He had started working in the mines at the age of 16. His schooling was minimal, but he could read and write to some extent.

Before Richard enlisted, he had already served voluntarily with the 2nd Battalion Pictou Highlanders from early October 1940. At the time, he had also indicated that he was willing to transfer to the Canadian Active Service Force (CASF).

Via the basic training depot in Halifax No. 62, Richard was transferred to the infantry training center Camp Aldershot, Nova Scotia, at the end of August 1941.

After two months, he took a course at the Light Aid Detachment of an armored division. In November, Richard was assigned to the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps (RCOC).

On November 13, 1941, he sailed to the United Kingdom, where he would serve until the end of September 1944. His assignments in 1942 changed quite often.

In any case, his poor education may have played a role in his ability to maintain contact with the home front. His sister, Mrs. Pius Hennessey, wrote a letter to the Minister of Defense stating that since her brother's departure "overseas," they had only received a telegram confirming that had arrived safely. There had been one letter, and that was all.

Her letter was answered; the correct address was provided and it was confirmed that he was in the United Kingdom and that he was in good health, according to the available information.

Other information showed that he had also taken a training course and was considered capable of writing letters home. The short report also indicated what Richard's time in service had been up to that point.

SELECTION OF PERSONNEL REPORT
(CONFIDENTIAL)

TO: COMMANDING OFFICER #1 COMERU TYPE OF REFERRAL SPECIAL REFERRAL

F-SS42 Pte. MACLEAN, R. #1 COMERU

Regt'l No. Rank Name (Surname First) Unit

7 Sub-tests Subtotals 7 Form

Total "M" Lang

Age 25 Med. Cat. (where applic.) "A" YCB FVILH RIMS DATE 19

2. Educational, occupational, Military background, and other relevant information and appraisal.

EDUCATION No schooling in civil life.

OCCUPATION Coal miner from age 16 in Nova Scotia. Doing this when he enlisted. No car driving experience.

MIL. HIST. Enlisted 9 June 41 - Basic Training # 62 B.T.C. Then to A-14 for 1 mo. then Debert, then O'sess. Oct. 41. In field with #1 C.A.S. 1 1/2 yrs, General Duties, helper in Wesp. Then sent on Special Course 3 months. Then to #1 GRAN - employed on assembly line, liked the work. Has done some driving there also.

OTHER INFO. Can write letters home. Can read and write OK now since having army training. Likes General Duty work and wishes to remain at it. Good attitude & manner. Excellent general duty man.

RECOMM. Best suited for static unit on general duty due to lack of education.

he

like

It became clear that "working with his hands" was his strongest point and that he also enjoyed it.

He would have liked to continue his assembly work at the CEAU (Canadian Equipment Assembly Unit).

He had granted himself "leave" three times. He was reported "unlawfully absent," which cost him several days' pay and "CB" (confined to barracks).

In June 1944, he incurred seven days of CB. He had only partially completed a detailed assignment.

At the end of September 1944, Richard left for Italy, now on the list of the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He was admitted to the Cape Breton Highlanders regiment in early December 1944. In Italy, he was punished for drunkenness; seven days of CB and three days' pay was the price he paid for it.

Richard's stay in Italy lasted only a few months. On February 26, 1945, he arrived by ship in Marseille. He then headed north to reinforce Canadian troops in northwestern Europe.


Richard's service records mention only one line after the landing in France: "Killed in Action May 1, 1945."

The Battle Honors of the Cape Breton Highlanders mention only "IJsselmeer" and the "Delfzijl Pocket."

Only reports of the fighting at Delfzijl, which ultimately proved fatal for Richard MacLean, can be found.

It is clear that the final days of the war were fierce in this last stronghold occupied by the Germans.

A note from the War Diary of the Cape Breton Highlanders:
14 killed on May 1, 1945, including Richard MacLean.



| (n) | S.O.S. | Killed in | Action 1 MAY 45 | |
|-----|---------|-----------|-----------------|----|
| | F95380 | Pte | BROWN | EM |
| | H18559 | Pte | BUTT | K |
| | F54663 | Cpl | MacINNIS | JB |
| | F88442 | Pte | MacLEAN | R |
| | F78585 | Sgt | MacLELLAN | HD |
| | F54788 | Cpl | McLEAN | G |
| | F9276 | Pte | MARSHALL | OB |
| | F35562 | Pte | MOMBOURQUETTE | F |
| | F33487 | Pte | O'HANLEY | AJ |
| | F55038 | Pte | PEARO | D |
| | F78396 | Pte | PENNY | V |
| | F78711 | Pte | SPIDLE | FH |
| | B143948 | Pte | SZARKA | A |
| | G23550 | Pte | VOTOUR | EJ |

He was given a temporary grave in Wirdum near Appingedam and a permanent one at the CWGC Canadian Cemetery in Holten, reference 5-C-9.

In the church of Holwierde, his name is on a plaque commemorating the Canadian soldiers who fell in the battles there.

He was awarded:

1939-1945 Star; Italy Star; France-Germany Star; Defense Medal; War Medal 1939-1945 and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp.

