

## Lloyd MacDonald

Service No. F89855 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft, Canadian Army

### Lloyd's Story:

My name is Lloyd MacDonald. I was born on 13 June 1919 in Gabarus, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. I was the oldest of Two boys and three girls. At the age of 14 I quit school after completing grade eight. I went to work for my Dad who was a self employed fisherman. In 1941 I went to Sydney and joined the Army as a Radar Operator.



I took my Basic Training in Yarmouth and was sent to Petawawa for my Advanced Training. My unit was being sent overseas but I got sick on the train and ended up in **Debert** with the mumps, and in quarantine. By the time I got out my unit was gone overseas to form up a Radar Unit. I was given papers to go overseas on my own, and they didn't even give me embarkation leave. I was put onboard the SS ANDES out of Halifax. At that time the Germans were bombing the hell out of Liverpool England. I was shipped by rail to some camp in England that I can't remember the name of it. I went by rail in Yovall in South England, Kent and met up with my unit. Canada had no radar unit so I spent a year in the British Army getting acquainted with radar. This was around April 1942 at Portsmouth England, at the entrance to the harbor. Then I was sick again, in the hospital for 3-4 months. When I got out I gladly went back to the Canadian Army. Grub and pay was bad, but it was worse in the British Army.

Now we were in a mixed Battery with approximately 200 females. We worked together at a rocket site in Portsmouth. We set up a war museum and sometimes the German planes would be over us before we heard them. We were the 2nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft with 1,600 members. There were three Batteries -PET, Western Canada and Montreal. Each Battery had two troops with four guns. There was one radar site to each four guns. We sent out the bearings, angles and range. It was pretty much the same principle as used today. Information is from the radar to the guns.

We were in action pretty much all the time. There were German planes over us almost every night and sometimes throughout the day. I was scared. In France I lost buddies. Three in my outfit were killed outright. My unit used to send balloons with radar reflectors up in the air to follow the weather. Information was passed on to the Air Force. Some of the balloons went up as high as 60,000 feet and when they were that high, they enlarged as big as a five-story building.

Once we took up position 1-1/2 miles from *Cap Gris Nez*, near Calais. By noon we were dug in an open field and the Sergeant and I thought we would walk to lunch. We were halfway across the field when the Germans fired on us. I tell you when a 2,000-pound shell lands 50 feet in front of you, you just lay and pray. In that battle the Germans destroyed four of our guns, killed four and injured many. We were shelled for 1-1/2 hours. Our cook was shaving against a tree and the top of his head was cut off. Our Commander ordered us to leave the guns and get into nearby caves until dark. That's how we got out.

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After that, my unit sent me to Belgium where I guided planes and did weather reports for about 1-1/2 months. Then we were setup in Dunkirk part of the winter building a border. There were Germans there and at meal time the gunner would shoot a few rounds to keep them active. I met a guy from Saint John, N.B. 44-46 years later that had been taken prisoner of war at Dunkirk. He recalled to me how the Canadians would send in airbursts when they were being marched for their meals.

I was then sent to Holland and up to Germany doing the same job. That year on the 1st of April they were going to let one man go on leave to England. Out of 1,600 men, my name got picked. I spent two weeks on leave in England. It took me almost a week to get there. I went to see the girlfriends. I still hear from one yet. I stood with her and her husband when they got married.

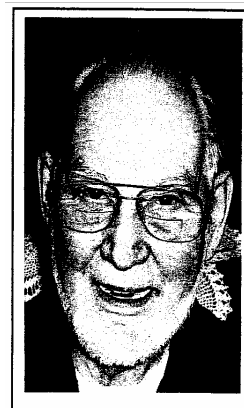
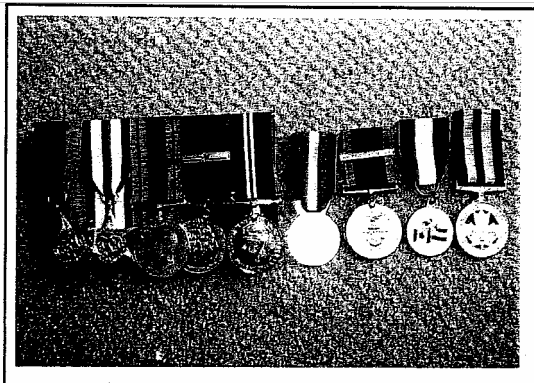
On the 5th of May we overran a civilian camp where the SS were trying to burn down the barracks. There were lots of kids with swollen bellies. We were left guarding 15-20,000 German prisoners who were wired in tents. These were mostly young men officers. A lot of them hung themselves. We never abused any of them. There were about 200 horses. I remember we marched the prisoners to Holland to return the stolen horses to the farmers. There were trucks ahead, on the sides and in back of the prisoners. But coming back we put the prisoners in trucks. You couldn't trust the young guys; some as young as 14.

I left Scotland on the 8th of May and landed in Halifax on the 13th of July. I took the first train out to Sydney arriving that night. There were two girls who met me first and my father and a sister. I didn't even know my own sister. I was on leave for 30 days and went fishing with my Dad every day and chased girls all night. I was discharged on 10 October end of demobilization. For two years I fished with my father and then I got a job with the Department of Fisheries. I worked for them for 30 years.

I married Daisy Latham on 20 July 1948 and we had two children, a boy and a girl. That union lasted 11 years. On 25 Nov 1960 I married Bethena Stubbert. She passed away 18 January 2002. I have three grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

I've been a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 12 in Sydney for 41 years. I'm also a member of Normandy Veterans Association No. 58 N.S. Branch No. 1. I reside at Parkland Estates, Truro and for hobbies I play darts and bowl.

NOTE: Lloyd died in Colchester Regional Hospital on April 28, 2006 and is buried in Little Hill Cemetery Fourchu Cape Breton.



**Lloyd MacDonald**