

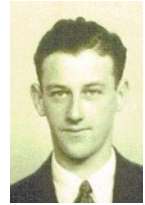
Ian Louden Macdonald

1946, 1949 Electoral roll Ponsonby, Auckland
Ian Louden Macdonald, 31 Hackett St, W1, mechanic
Jessie Macdonald, 31 Hackett St, W1, married
1954 Marlborough

Ian Louden MacDonald, 22 Cubitt St, Blenheim, aircraftsman
Jessie MacDonald, 22 Cubitt St, Blenheim, married
1957, 1963, 1969 Marlborough
Ian Louden Macdonald, 32 Dillon St,
Blenheim, engine inspector
Jessie Macdonald, 32 Dillon St, Blenheim,
married

Rod: Ian was a good uncle - quiet, friendly
and smiling. Jessie was nice too, as were
Rachel and Jan. Ian moved to Blenheim - he
was an aircraft fitter, servicing flying boats.
They later moved to Ashburton.

Woodbourne,
Blenheim in
the 1950s



Hugh McLennan Macdonald

Flight Sergeant, 99 Squadron

McNicholl file clipping from unnamed source: Raid on Genoa, Italy (by 41 aircraft - 4 lost). 99 Squadron, RAF (Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire - 3 Group). Wellington ICT2879 (a presentation machine named Ceylon I) took off at 1924 and apparently abandoned 10 or more hours later on the return journey. The Wellington crashed at 0740 near Landsmeer, a few kilometres north of Amsterdam. The bodies of three crew members later washed ashore onto the Dutch coast, including that of the front gunner, who is buried on the island of Texel at Den Burg. Their three comrades, including the captain, are commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial. Reflecting the increasing "United Nations" composition of the bomber crews, these six airmen included members of the RAF, RAAF, RCAF and RNZAF. Some records give Genoa as the target while "Bomber Command Losses" states it to be Frankfurt - raids were made on both places this night. Time in the air suggests Genoa but the crash site fits either. Captain: NZ401287 Flt Sgt Joseph Stewart Parry, RNZAF, age 26, 368hrs, 17th op. Front gunner NZ402524 Sgt Hugh McLennan Macdonald, RNZAF, age 22, 148hrs, 8th op

<http://www.nfla.nl/T2879.html>

**Salvage of Vickers Wellington Mk IC at Landsmeer,
crashed September 29, 1941 salvaged February / March 1995**

On the night of 28/29 September, 1941 the northern Italian port city of Genoa was the target of a bombing raid of the British 99th Squadron - 41 aircraft, including 39 Wellingtons and two Stirlings. According to the RAF operational record book the RAF's attack was a success. However, three Wellingtons crashed and two Wellingtons went missing. One of the missing aircraft was the Wellington Mk IC serial number T2879.





This unit had taken off 19:20. On board were six crew members, one Canadian, two New Zealanders, one Australian and two British.

On the way back to Waterbeach in England the aircraft was hit by flak or enemy aircraft. The left engine was hit and the propeller was put into the vane standing in order to reduce resistance as much as possible.

It seems the crew did not feel they could safely make it back to England on one engine.

They were in low cloud and assuming they were over land they put the plane on autopilot, left their inflatable behind, and bailed out.

The crew all landed in the North Sea and drowned. Of the six the bodies Sergeant Ian James Robertson and Sergeant Hugh McLennan Macdonald were washed up on the island of Texel. They were buried in the cemetery of Den Burg. The pilot, William Raymond Jones Brown, washed ashore at the Frisian Harlingen where he was buried. The other three, Sergeant Edward Fieldhouse, Sergeant Joseph Parry Stewart and Sergeant Alfred William Musgrave Chapman were never found. The bomber flew a few dozen kilometres on autopilot before it crashed at 7:42 in the remote Landsmeer Field, north of Amsterdam. Many residents from Landsmeer saw the incident.



Also a German post to Schellingwoude made mention of the crash. The Germans did launch a recovery attempt but the unit was too far sunk in the swampy meadow. Recovery did not take place until February 1995, undertaken by Foundation ARG '40-'45.



Text on the plaque:

TO COMMEMORATE THE CREW OF VICKERS WELLINGTON T2879, 99 SQUADRON

**J.S. PARRY
I.J. ROBERTSON
W.R.J. BROWN
H. MCL. MACDONALD
A.W.M. CHAPMAN
E. FIELD HOUSE**

SEPTEMBER 29TH 1941

They did not die in vain

by Jan Thomas of Rangiora

ON 29 September 1941 a Wellington bomber was shot down over Amsterdam and sunk into the boggy ground. Of the six crewmen aboard only three were ever accounted for - one of whom was my father's twin brother who is buried on the island of Texel just off the coast of Holland. The crew from No.99 Squadron, Royal Air Force were, my uncle Flight Sergeant Hugh Macdonald RNZAF, Sergeant Joseph Parry RNZAF, Sergeant Alfred Chapman RAAF, William Brown RCAF, Ian Robertson RAF and Sergeant Edward Fieldhouse RAF.

Last year the Dutch Aircraft Recovery Group, supported by the local village of Landsmeer where the aircraft was buried, finally gained permission from the Netherlands government to dig up the aircraft and erect a memorial, using a propeller from the wreck, to honour the men who lost their lives defending their countries.

The Aircraft Recovery Group and the people of Landsmeer found sponsors for the 150,000 guilders the task would cost. The excavation was carried out in February 1997 amid the worst winter conditions possible.

It was amazing to think that after 56 years the aircraft was to be recovered. I soon learned that this was not an isolated incident for the Aircraft Recovery Group. The people of Holland are still very actively involved in locating missing servicemen from World War 2 - they are still very conscious of the fact that they owe their freedom to young men who came from so far away to fight their fight. It is surprising the number of younger men who give of their time researching missing aircraft and ensuring everything is done to

recover any bodies not yet accounted for.

We were met in Amsterdam by Aad Neeven, representing the Aircraft Recovery Group and who was responsible for trying to locate the families of the missing Australian and New Zealand crew members. We had morning tea and lunch at the Group's Museum located in a 36 room concrete fort constructed for defence in the early 1900s. It was sold to the group by the Dutch Government for \$1.00 with the proviso that it be kept to local body standards and preserved for the future.

We departed for Landsmeer where we parked the car adjacent to the crash-site and walked the last mile and a half to the monument on one of Holland's many cycle paths - and, yes, I was wearing the least comfortable pair of high heels in my possession!

It was amazing to be passed by so many of the locals cycling to the unveiling - one gentleman had cycled 25km to be present and to collect the names of the deceased for records being kept by another group who wished to honour those who had died over the Netherlands and whose bodies had never been recovered.

The monument was erected on a tri-pod of steel poles topped with the propeller which had one blade removed with the remaining two blades reaching skywards representing the V for Victory. On the centre of the monument was a plaque with the names of the deceased airmen.

The unveiling was timed for 2.30pm when 3 Royal Netherlands Air Force aircraft flew over and although they were a couple of minutes late it was an emotional time as the flypast coincided with children from the primary

school of Landsmeer singing the National Anthem. It was awesome to see their faces looking skywards and leaning backwards to track the aircraft as they sang *God Save the Queen*.

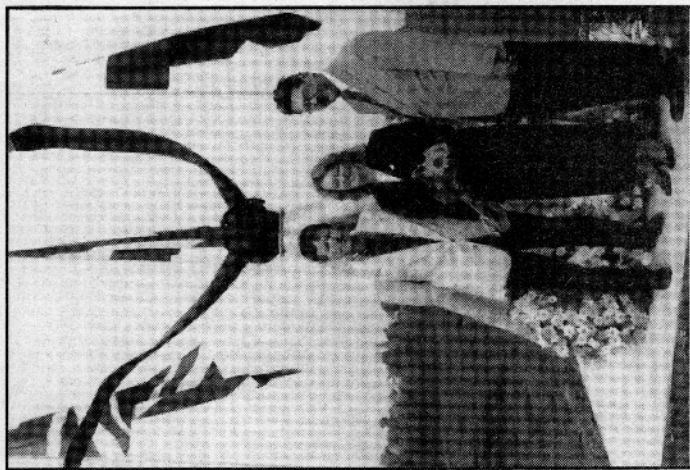
The official programme, hosted by the Town Council of Landsmeer, started with a welcoming speech by a Councillor who was also active within the Aircraft Recovery Group. He outlined the history of the crash, the long excavation struggle and the planning of the monument. I was presented with a souvenir of the crash which had been collected by Jan Horstman the day after the crash.

As a representative of the family of my uncle, I was honoured to be asked to unveil the monument. Following this I jointly laid a wreath with Christine Anderson, first secretary to the New Zealand Ambassador to the Netherlands on behalf of the New Zealand and Australian Governments. Wreaths were also laid from 99 Squadron and the Aircraft Recovery Group, the Mayor of Landsmeer on behalf of the village and finally a spray of flowers was laid by the wonderful elderly gentleman who had cycled 25km to be there.

The Landsmeer Council hosted a civic function at the Council Offices where I was presented with a memento of the village. A nice touch was when the headmistress from the school announced that they would undertake to keep the monument in good condition and would lay a wreath at its base each year. The day concluded the Council hosting a delightful 6 course evening meal at a local restaurant.

I will have an everlasting memory of these

wonderful people who still remember the Allied contribution to the last World War and of the gratitude they still express for their ongoing freedom - and as for my beloved uncle and all the other men who left their country to fight in other lands - they did not die in vain for they are honoured still.



Above Mr and Mrs Thomas and Johan Graan Voorzitter, president of the Aircraft Recovery Group (right), two crumpled propeller blades salute the memory of the 99 Squadron aircrew who died at Landsmeer in 1941.

VISITING TOMMY - 2016

Hugh McLennan Macdonald, known to his family as Tommy, was born in Fairlie in 1918 to Rachel and Hugh Macdonald. Hugh was a blacksmith and coach builder in Fairlie at the time of the First World War – he moved there about 1914 but by 1928 the family had moved to Auckland.

Tommy joined the air force at the outbreak of the Second World War and trained in Canada before moving on to operational duties in the United Kingdom. He was appointed flight sergeant attached to 99th Squadron at Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire, operating as a wireless operator/air gunner on a Vickers Wellington bomber. On the night of 28/29 September 1941 Tommy and his crew joined a raid including 39 Wellingtons and two Stirling bombers in a raid over Genoa. The raid was deemed a success but on the return flight Tommy's Wellington was hit by defensive fire.

The left engine was out and the navigational equipment was compromised so the crew did not think they could safely make it back to England and, putting the plane into auto pilot, bailed out. They were in low cloud and, assuming they were over land, left their inflatable dinghy behind, but they were over the North Sea and all drowned. Of the six crew members the bodies of Sergeant Ian James Robertson (RAF) and Sergeant Hugh McLennan Macdonald were washed up on the Dutch island of Texel. They were buried in the cemetery of Den Burg. The pilot, William Raymond Jones-Brown (RCAF), washed ashore at the Dutch Frisian city of Harlingen where he was buried. The other three, Sergeant Edward Fieldhouse (RAF), Sergeant Joseph Stewart Parry (RNZAF) and Sergeant Alfred William Musgrave Chapman (RAAF) were never found.

The bomber flew on about 100km on autopilot before it crashed in the remote Landsmeer Field, north of Amsterdam. Many residents from Landsmeer allegedly saw the incident and a German post to headquarters made mention of the crash. The Germans did launch a recovery attempt at the time, but the unit was sunk too far in the swampy meadow. Recovery did not take place until February 1997, undertaken by Dutch organisation Aircraft Recovery Group 1940-1945.

Care was taken during the retrieval in case the missing airmen were still with their plane, but no bodies were found. The three airmen will be forever lost. Two of the Wellington's propeller blades were erected on a tripod of steel poles as a memorial at the site of the recovery, reaching skywards in the classic V for Victory salute and on 29 September 1997, 56 years after the crash, the memorial was unveiled by Tommy Macdonald's niece Jan Thomas of Ashburton, daughter of Tommy's twin brother Ian.

This year marked 75 years since the crash and family members once again travelled to Holland – Tommy's nephew Rod Macdonald now based in England and his cousin Jim Macdonald from Timaru, along with their partners. The pilgrimage was twofold – the site of the plane's recovery in Landsmeer field near Amsterdam was visited on 28 September, and on 29 September the group travelled to Texel, an island off the north coast of the Netherlands, to visit Tommy's resting place.

The Landsmeer trip took place on a breezy, brilliantly sunny day and presented several problems. Getting to Landsmeer itself was easy enough – buses went there from Amsterdam Central station every 20 minutes – but finding and accessing the memorial, known to be outside the village on a cycle way, was another matter. In the event, the hospitality and gratitude of the Dutch people cleared the way. All we had to do was ask the bus driver for directions and explain our mission. He took us to the end of his run and gave us coffee at the small terminus while he talked about the appreciation and recognition still felt by the Dutch, then he took us to the walkway, leaving his bus in the middle of the road while he pointed out the way.

Over the bridge, straight ahead at the first junction, left at the T junction, over another bridge and follow your nose. It was a 5km walk and inevitably we asked others on the cycle way if we were still heading in the right direction. As we cleared the last bridge and rounded the last corner a walker much faster than us could be seen in the distance waving madly in front of the propeller blades. The sun was reflecting off the metal nameplate where the airmen's names were engraved – the memorial was calling us. And in an echo of the fly-past that took place the day the memorial was unveiled, the sky was criss-crossed with vapour trails for our lost airman.

It was an exciting and emotional moment. We'd come a long way. But we'd come bearing New Zealand Anzac poppies and crosses, so we had some quiet words of remembrance then decorated the memorial with poppies and took endless photos in various combinations. Passing cyclists stopped to chat and then obliged with group photos. There was a convenient seat for quiet contemplation, then we straggled on to the end of the walkway, somewhat over our enthusiasm for walking, only to find ourselves several kilometres away from civilisation, not knowing whether to turn left or right. We were saved by a passing community policeman, who stopped to give directions and ended up piling us all into his car and driving us the 7km back to Amsterdam Central, acknowledging our quest and entertaining us with tales of local criminals. We will be forever grateful.

The following day was a more sombre affair. It involved a one hour train trip from Amsterdam Central to Den Helder on the northernmost point of the North Holland peninsula, a bus to the ferry, a half hour ferry ride to the island of Texel then another bus to the town of Den Burg. Another obliging bus driver pointed the way to the cemetery and we found it just as the rain began – a solemn setting for the objective of our pilgrimage. No frivolous sunshine on this day. A prayer was read, remembrances made and poppies laid, then we stood under our umbrellas and surveyed the last resting place of this young man who had died in foreign seas aged only 22 in pursuit of freedom, justice and equality.

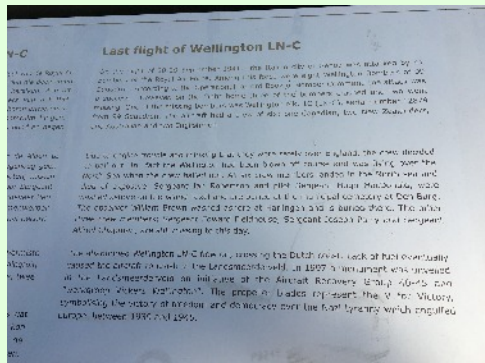
It is a sobering thought for those of us with precious loved ones safe at home. Born just one week before the end of the First World War and killed in his prime in the next. We who did not know him mourn his loss and his inability to properly fulfil life's promise. We who did not know him remember his passing and are forever changed by our pilgrimage to honour his life and his death.

Carol Bell

A VISIT TO THE NETHERLANDS

HONOURING TOMMY MACDONALD

BY ROD, ANGELA & JIM MACDONALD & CAROL BELL, 2016



28 September 2016: A visit to the site of the plane crash at Landsmeer near Amsterdam



29 September 2016: A visit to the grave site on the island of Texel off the northern coast of Holland, exactly 75 years after the crash