

Neil Alistair McDONALD 4-2-1906 — & Kathleen McDONALD, nee MIRRIELEES

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Neil Alistair was the eighth child and fifth son of Alexander John and Jessie McDonald and was born at West Wail. He was the only grandchild born that year and was the last of Ewen and Rachel's grandchildren. His great-grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

In France that year Pierre Curie, the joint discoverer of radium, died. In England, John Galsworthy published the first volume of the *Forsyte Saga*. In Australia there was a record wool clip of over a million bales.

Young Neil's first school was at Lara, followed by Streatham in the Western District and Swanston Street school in Geelong.

He remembers: that the family had little furniture at *Wyn Wyn* and that his father, Jack, had driven stakes into the earth floor of the kitchen and had placed a door on them to form a table; that one day his father travelled to Horsham and purchased six pairs of boots for the family and still received change from a 1 note; that young Neil went for a walk in his new boots and was lost for some hours before being found by brother George on horseback. One of his most vivid recollections is of his father's steam tractor fuelled by coal and wood, the first in the district. It proved to be a little heavy for farming but was an ideal help for bridge building, for sawing the timber.

He remembered, as a lad, taking a keen interest in Arthur White when he came courting Neil's sister Jean at *Nerrin Nerrin*, and the hilarity caused by Arthur out riding with the family, astride his horse in full naval uniform. Uncle Angus McDonald also visited the family at *Nerrin Nerrin* and that was the only time Neil met him. Later, Uncle Angus sent George, Neil's older brother, a two-furrow plough. George was at a loss to know what to do with it because he was just back from the war and had no land of his own. Its fate is unknown.

In 1932, Neil was married to Kathleen Mirrielees at the Yan Yean Presbyterian Church by the Reverend Anderson. The groom's sister Raie was matron of honour, her husband Jock was best man, and the bride's niece, Jean Mirrielees, was flower girl. Kath was born on March 25, 1910, the daughter of William Ronald and Annie Mirrielees of Williambrook, Yan Yean, Victoria. Kath's father was a journalist in Invercargill, New Zealand, before coming to Australia and her mother lived in the Ballarat-Avoca district before her marriage.

In June 1940, Neil enlisted in the army at Geelong. He became Number VX 44975 Private N.A. McDonald, 2/4 Medium Artillery Regiment, and trained at camps on the Caulfield racecourse, at Mt Martha and Colac showgrounds, all in Victoria. Neil suffered a broken kneecap in a motor cycle accident during training and was discharged medically unfit on October 16, 1940.

Neil and Kath have spent all but the first three years of their married life in Geelong. He has retired from the International Harvester Company in Geelong where he was employed as an implement assembler. His hobbies are gardening and reading, particularly Australian history. Kath enjoys gardening and cooking. Their home is at 25 Tate Street, East Geelong. They have a son, Lindsay.

Child of Neil and Kath :-

1. Lindsay Neil McDonald Born 13-3-1934

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 212 of "History of Ewen & Rachel McDonald & Descendants" by Jill McDonald which was originally published in 1985. It was republished as part of "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" in 1995.
- COLONIALISTS : Christina and Donald McLean and their ten children migrated from Argyllshire to South Australia in 1837. This was in the earliest years of the colony. The McLeans initially settled near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop in SA. Then in about 1840 they pioneered the Strathalbyn area. There are now well over 20,000 descendants spread across Australia and elsewhere.
- CHANGES : Please contact us with additions, corrections or suggestions about any part of this family tree.
- CONTACT : Visit our website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family – and about privacy and copyright.