

Corporal David MacGregor Neilson

Regimental number: 1003190

"C" Company, 4th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles

born: 5 June 1893 - died: 18 September 1918

Corporal David MacGregor Neilson was born on 5 June 1893 in Chapelhall, Lanarkshire, Scotland.¹ He was the son of Robert and Grace Neilson.² His father, Robert, was born on 21 March 1859, the son of George Neilson and Isabella Moffat.³ His mother, Grace, the former Grace McMillan Stewart⁴ was born on 18 September 1860, the daughter of Robert Stewart and Euphemia Hislop.⁵ Robert and Grace probably had at least five children: George (in December 1882),⁶ Robert (in about 1885),⁷ Isabella Moffat (in about 1888),⁸ David, Grace McMillan (in about 1900)⁹ and Gilbert (in about 1901).¹⁰

In 1901, David's father, was a railway signal man and the family was living on Boness Road in Holytown, Lanarkshire. The family immigrated to Canada in 1913.¹¹

David enlisted on 15 May 1916 in Sudbury, Ontario, where he was working as a machinist. He was 5' 7½" tall, had a fair complexion, blue eyes and fair hair and was a Presbyterian. He served with the 4th Battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles.

On 16 September 1918, the 4th Battalion was stationed near Saudemont and "C" Company "had the ill-luck to be shelled resulting in 2 O.R.s [Other Ranks] killed, 12 wounded and 5 gassed."¹² David was probably one of those wounded.

Whilst with his Company in support in the vicinity of Ecourt St Quentin [two kilometres from Saudemont], on the night of 16th September 1918, an enemy shell exploded close to him and he was severely wounded in the legs and body by shrapnel. He was taken to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station where he died two days later.¹³

He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 17 September with gunshot wounds to his legs and body.¹⁴ He died the following day and was buried on 19 September in Duisans' British Military Cemetery (Grave 17, Plot 6, Row H). He died on 18 September, which was his mother's 58th birthday. She was notified of his death at 224 Eyre Street in Sudbury.

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Etrun, near Arras, in France. The first burials took place in the cemetery in March 1917.¹⁵ The 1st CCCS arrived at the beginning of September and was stationed near Duisans for two months in the autumn of 1918.¹⁶ A total of 75 patients died at the 1st CCCS in September 1918.

At least one of David's brothers – George – also served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force.¹⁷ George, a pipe fitter, enlisted at the age of 32, on 6 October 1915 in Sudbury. His attestation suggests that he had married a month earlier. However, marriage records indicate that he actually married Edna May McDonald on 16 October 1918.¹⁸ Edna May was born on 18 December 1890 in Nipissing, the daughter of James Arthur McDonald and Agnes McTiernah.¹⁹ In 1921, George and Edna were living in Sudbury with their two-year-old daughter, Margaret.²⁰

Nothing is known about the life of David's brother, Robert. Did he survive childhood? Did he immigrate with the family? Did he serve in the Great War?

David's sister, Isabella, married Arthur Figg, on 1 June 1922 in Sudbury.²¹ Arthur was born in February 1886 in Tring, Hertfordshire, England, the son of Thomas Figg and Eliza Collings.²² He probably came to Canada in the early 1900s²³ and served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the Great War, enlisting in Toronto in November 1914.²⁴ Isabelle and Arthur both died in the 1970s and are buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Simcoe, Ontario.²⁵

David's younger sister, Grace, married Archibald Paterson Macmillan on 24 June 1924 in Sudbury.²⁶ Archibald was born in about 1899 in Scotland, the son of Thomas Macmillan and Margaret Paterson. The Macmillan family appears to have immigrated to the United States in about 1910. After their marriage in Sudbury, Grace and Archibald probably moved to the United States. In 1930, they were living in Linden, New Jersey with their two sons – Alex (born in about 1925) and Robert (born in about 1928).²⁷

In 1921, David's youngest brother, Gilbert, was living with his parents and his sisters, Isabella and Grace, at 224 Eyre Street in Sudbury. David's father died on 28 January 1929 at 198 Oak Street, Sudbury at the age of 69.²⁸ He worked for the Canadian Pacific Railways. His mother died in Etobicoke, Ontario, probably in a nursing home, on 7 October 1937. She died of acute dysentery and senile psychosis.²⁹

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¹ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 November 2015), entry for David MacGregor Neilson

² "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 March 2015), entry for David Neilson, ED: 17, Household schedule number: 46, LINE: 14, Roll: CSSCT1901_249

³ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 November 2015), entry for Robert Neilson

⁴ "Millennium File," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 November 2015), entry for Robert Neilson

⁵ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 November 2015), entry for Grace Neilson

⁶ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2015), entry for George Neilson

⁷ "1901 Scotland Census," entry for David Neilson

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 November 2015), entry for Grace Neilson, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: Nipissing, District Number: 105, Sub-District: Sudbury (Town), Sub-District Number: 88, City, Town or Village: Sudbury Town

¹² "MIKAN [2006071](http://www.lac-bac.gc.ca): War diaries - 4th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles," Library and Archives Canada (www.lac-bac.gc.ca; accessed 23 November 2015)

¹³ "Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 21 November 2015), entry for David Mscgregor Neilson, Service number: 1003190

¹⁴ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," *Library and Archives Canada*, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 655

¹⁵ "Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun," Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)

¹⁶ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph->

[brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FIND&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G); accessed 17 June 2015)

¹⁷ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," entry for George Neilson

¹⁸ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for George Neilson, Marriage County or District: Nipissing

¹⁹ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869-19138," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Edna May McDonald

²⁰ "1921 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Grace Neilson, Province or Territory: Ontario, District: Nipissing, District Number: 105, Sub-District: Sudbury (Town), Sub-District Number: 88, City, Town or Village: Sudbury Town

²¹ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Isabella Moffatt Neilson, Marriage County or District: Sudbury

²² "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Arthur Figg, FHL Film Number: 91769, Reference ID: yr 1874-1945 p 129

²³ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Arthur Figg

²⁴ "Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Arthur Figg

²⁵ "Oakwood Cemetery," *Cemetery Project*, (<http://geneofun.on.ca/>; accessed 23 November 2015)

²⁶ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Grace Neilson, Marriage County or District: Sudbury

²⁷ 1930 US census "1930 United States Federal Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Archie Macmillan

²⁸ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Robert Neilson

²⁹ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869-1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939-1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 23 November 2015), entry for Grace Neilson