

**McClellan, Delmar James Robert**

**Private / 'L/3016'**

**Black Watch of Canada**

**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**



Delmar (Del) James Robert McClellan was born on September 14, 1924 in Watrous, Saskatchewan, as the son of Ellen (Nellie) Victoria and John Stanley (Stan) McClellan. In 1932 the family moved to a farm on land belonging to the British government. This is to the north, near Robinhood Saskatchewan. There Delmar spent the rest of his childhood. Delmar is the eldest of nine children. His brothers and sisters are Viola, Leslie, Dorothy, Lorraine, Harvey, Lawrence, Edward and Margaret.

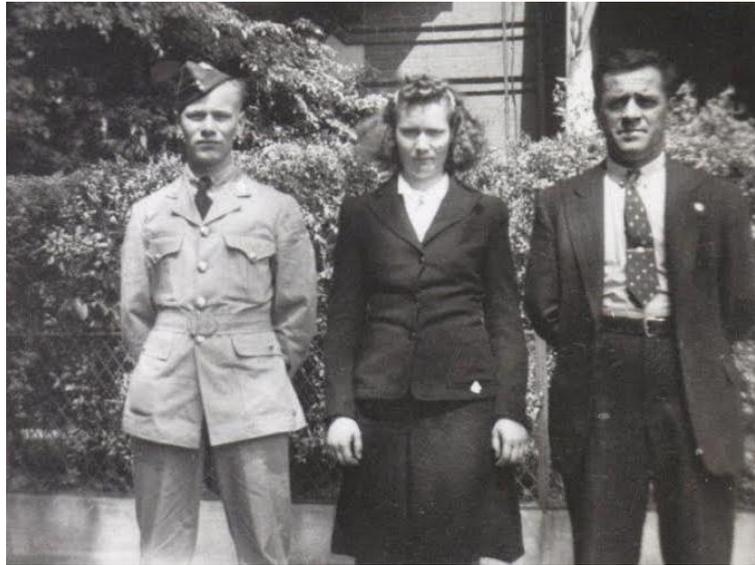


*Circa 1932 L-R staring at back – Delmat & Viola McClellan, Dorothy Brown, Les, Lorraine & Dorothy McClellan, baby at front is Harvey McClellan – taken in Saskatchewan.*

His younger years were quite rough because of many responsibilities, the oldest child usually had to help with chores and taking care of the younger

children. Like many Canadian farm boys he didn't get much of an education and has little time for relaxation.

In 1940 his father enlisted for the army with the 16/22 Saskatchewan Horse, C.A.S.F. and he was sent to Ontario (he remains in Canada).



1942 - Delmar, Viola, and their father John Stanley McClean - probably taken in Saskatchewan

One year later, at age 17, Delmar left for Saskatoon and on November 18, 1941, he enlisted. He was accepted because he lied about his age. He stated he was born in 1923 instead of 1924. His sister Viola tried to stop him, but he was determined and after he enlisted, his family stopped trying to interfere.

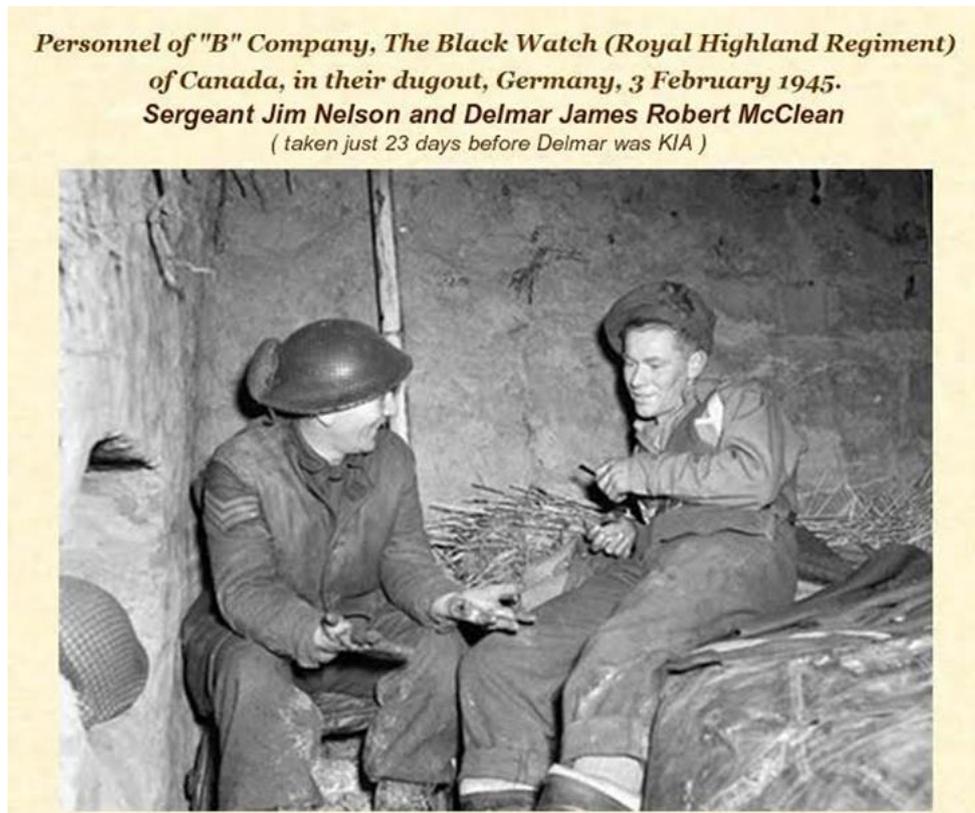
He served with the Black Watch of Canada, Royal Highland Regiment, B Company.

On December 25, 1943, his regiment left Canada for England, where they arrived on January 4, 1944. On July 3, 1944 (less than a month after D-Day) they left for France. From that time on it is unclear which battles they fought in during the winter. Apparently they got some rest in the winter months, right before Operation Blockbuster.

Sadly Delmar was killed on the first day of that battle, February 26, 1945. He was initially buried in Bedburg, Germany and later reburied at the Canadian War Cemetery in Groesbeek, grave **IX. F. 9**.

Medals:  
1939-1945 Star  
France & Germany Star  
Defence Medal  
War Medal 1939-1945  
Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with clasp

Only 23 days before he was killed a war photographer took a picture of Delmar with his sergeant. That photograph is now part of the Canadian Archives Faces of War collection.



Delmar's parents got divorced around the time of Del's death and his father got remarried and had another five children, Delmar's half-brothers and -sisters.

Life story: Marian Straatman, Research Team Faces To Graves.



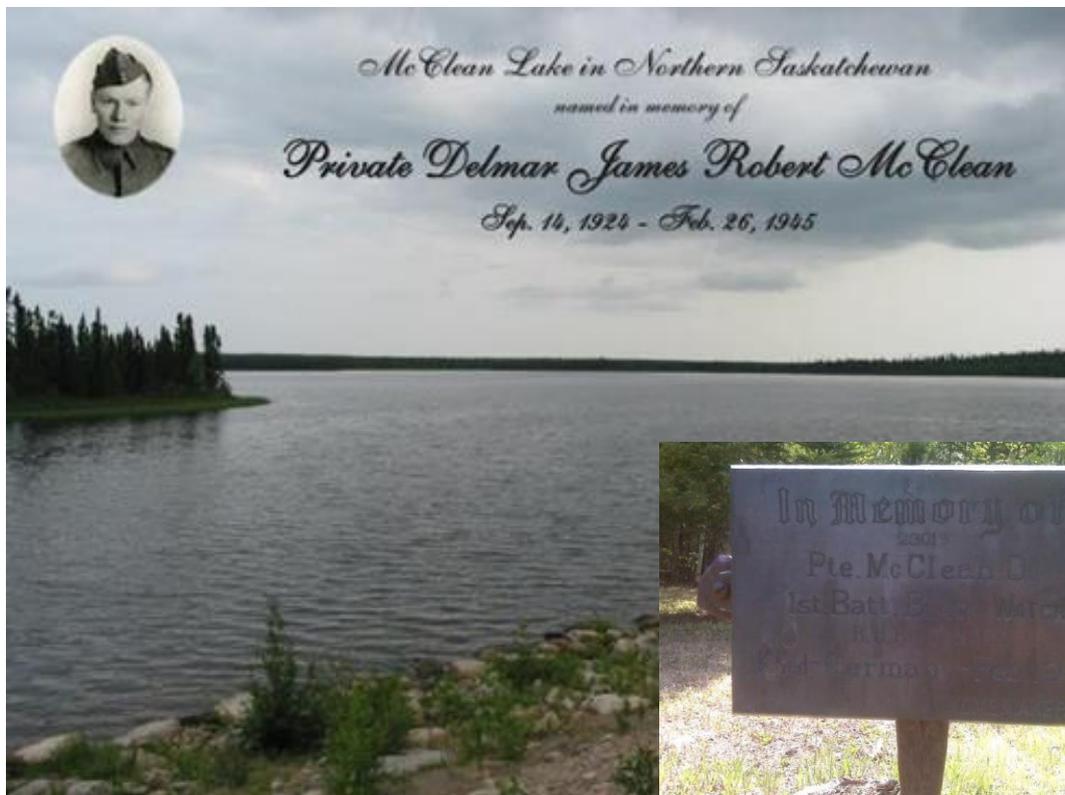
## FACES TO GRAVES

Stichting Faces to Canadian  
War Graves Groesbeek

Source:

With thanks to Margaret Rose Gaunt  
Commonwealth War Graves Commission  
Library and Archives Canada

In the '50s, the province of Saskatchewan starts a project to name a number of geographical sites after the many thousands of soldiers from that province who were killed in both world wars. One lake in the northern part of the province was named after Delmar: Lake McClean. In 2003 three of his brothers and a cousin attend the naming ceremony, where a plaque was placed by the lake.



## The Story Behind McClean Lake's Name



Private Delmar McClean, who gave his life in WWII, was the source of McClean Lake's name.

Ask a COGEMA Resources employee who McClean Lake is named after and most would probably say a trapper or early resident. In fact, it is one of several thousand geographic features in the province named after Saskatchewan servicemen who lost their lives in World War II.

Private Delmar J. R. McClean of the Royal Highland Regiment (the famous Black Watch) was killed in Holland on February 26, 1945. He was just 20 years old. The news devastated his family back in Robinhood, Saskatchewan. Delmar

was the oldest of four brothers: Harvey, Les and Ed; their father was also serving in the war, though not overseas. In the 1950s, the family was officially notified that a lake had been named in Delmar's honour.

"I remember when my mother got the letter," Harvey says today. "So we always knew there was a lake up north named after him, but we never knew where. Then just recently, a pilot out of La Ronge, Doug Chisholm, got in touch with us. He said he was taking photographs of northern lakes named after Saskatchewan veterans."

When Chisholm suggested the family travel north to dedicate a plaque at the lake, the McClean brothers agreed.

And so, almost 60 years after Delmar's death, Harvey, Les and Ed, along with Harvey's son Ron, made the long journey north. They arrived at McClean Lake on July 20 where general manager Jim Corman hosted them at the site. In a short memorial ceremony, a plaque and wreath were attached to a rock, which COGEMA Resources had prepared in advance, by the lake.

"The McClean clan was given a tour around the site, spent the night in camp and left Wednesday morning," Corman says. "They were nice guys, and seemed



(l-r) Jim Corman, Ed McClean, Les McClean, Harvey McClean and Ron McClean pay their respects at the memorial to Delmar on the shore of McClean Lake.

impressed by the size of McClean Lake and the mine site in general."

"It was a good trip," Harvey says. "I didn't expect that area to be the way it was. I thought it would be scrub brush, but it was beautiful."

Another commemorative plaque is at the camp so employees, contractors

and visitors can read the story of Private Delmar McClean. "The guys up there didn't know the lake was named after a veteran, and they seemed pleased to find that out," Harvey says. Asked whether it felt good to finally see the lake that commemorates his brother's life and sacrifice, he says simply, "you betcha."



*Diana V.K.*