



## Obituary

**Born:** Tuesday, September 16, 1924

**Died:** Friday, March 6, 2020

Leo Joseph Donovan  
Ingonish

Leo Joseph Donovan died in Buchanan Memorial Hospital, Neil's Harbour on Friday, March 6, 2020, after a brief illness, with his loving family in attendance.

Born in Ingonish Centre on September 16, 1924, Leo was the son of the late Florence Doyle and Thomas James Donovan. The last surviving member of his immediate family, Leo had nine siblings, including step-siblings. Leo's mother Florence died in February, 1930 when he was only six years old. Between February and September, Leo's grandmother arrived to help out around the house, but come September, Duncan, his step-brother, and his wife Frances moved from Sydney to help raise the children. Like so many children of his era, Leo left school with a grade-six education but he eventually became a voracious reader, especially of pulp novels and mechanical magazines.

When he was 16, Leo walked to Sydney with Paddy Cook and got a job at the Point Edward Naval Base in Westmount. After he received his draft notice in August 1943, Leo enlisted in the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, Mechanical Division. He was sent overseas in May 1944 and he landed at Juno Beach in France as part of the Normandy Invasion in June 1944. Leo saw action throughout the war in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. After surviving the brutalities of war, he developed an independent spirit and character. He accepted life's challenges head on and he refused to be intimidated by anyone or circumstance.

After the war, Leo returned to Ingonish. In 1946 he met beautiful Sarah Ann MacLellan, a native of Sydney Mines, who had come to Ingonish to work in the fish plant. After a two-year courtship, they married in 1948 and they went on to have 11 children. Leo had started to work for the Nova Scotia Power Commission in 1945 as a diesel operator in their Ingonish generating station. When the generating station closed in 1964, Leo started to work as a lineman, travelling throughout Cape Breton. He usually hitchhiked home on the weekends to be with his family. After a few years, Leo was posted to Ingonish, retiring in 1989 after 44 years of working for the power company.

Leo was a kind, empathetic and generous man who was well liked throughout the community. He was proud of his Irish heritage and spoke with an Irish lilt, reminiscent of the old country. He loved children and was kind to neighbours, especially the elderly. He wired electricity to more than 50 homes in Ingonish for little or no money. He was a devout Roman Catholic and he was active in the church, the community and the Royal Canadian Legion. Remembrance

## Service Summary

### Memorial Service

Location: - *Not available* -

Day was always a special day in our house and Dad's death marks the end of an era, since he was the last living World War Two veteran North of Smokey. Special thanks to Paul, Lisa, Leo Gene and Meals on Wheels. Paul was Dad's dedicated, primary caregiver; Lisa provided home-cooked meals and Leo Gene looked after Dad's personal needs. Leo was the beloved husband of the late Sarah Ann and father of eleven children, eighteen grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Leo's children include: Ken (Barbara), Ingonish; Lila (Jeff), Moncton; Stewart (Wanda) Fredericton; Glenn (Sarah) Woodstock, On; Paul (Maureen) Ingonish Beach; John (Dana) Ottawa; Alvin (Olivia). Hampton, NB; Lisa (Francis) New Haven; Leo Gene (Janice), Ingonish Beach. Leo was predeceased by two infant daughters, Anne and Euphemia Irene, as well as his grandson, Jackson Phee-Donovan.

The eighteen grandchildren include: Susanne, Brad, Alison, Kieran, Hugh, Amanda, Paige, Sarah, Emma, Kate, Erin, Alex, Christopher, Patrick, Erica, Caitlyn, Nicholas and Connor. The eight great grandchildren are John, Silvia, Maria, Kian, Leo, Hudson, Maxim and Thomas. There will be a memorial service for Leo in August 2020. Words of comfort may be forwarded to his family at [www.jmjobesfuneralhome.com](http://www.jmjobesfuneralhome.com)