Mackay, Alexander Leslie Gordon
ASC 1904-5

Photo from Sydney Univ. Book of Remembrance

Service Number: 3519

Rank: Private

Roll title: 55 Infantry Battalion - 6 to 9 Reinforcements (October 1916 - January 1917)

Date of embarkation: 24 January 1917

Ship embarked on: HMAT Anchises A68, from Sydney
ALEXANDER LESLIE GORDON MACKAY,
D.C.M., M.A., M.Econ.

(Britten period)

Born at Sydney, 1892. After leaving school in 1905 Mackay taught for some years at Ashfield Preparatory School. Having returned for a year (1912) to All Saints’ as a master, he went to Sydney University, where he had a brilliant career (B.A. 1917, M.A. 1924, B.Ec. 1923, M.Ec. 1926).

During the Great War he served in the ranks of the 55th Battalion, A.I.F., 1916-19. As a sergeant in the final fighting on the Hindenburg Line he four times went scouting under heavy fire, bringing precious information, and then ran the gauntlet of machine-gun fire to carry a message to headquarters. He was awarded the D.C.M. and later promoted to warrant officer.

After a period of teaching at the Church of England Grammar School, North Sydney, he became lecturer in Economics at Adelaide University, and, in 1931, Professor of Economics at the University of Rangoon. In 1936 he was appointed tutor and lecturer in Economics and International Affairs, Department of Extra-Mural Studies, Oxford University, and still holds that post. He has published the following works: The Australian Banking and Credit System (1931); Economics: The Study of Wealth (1932); Business Organization and Commerce with special reference to Burma (1936); Experiments in Educational Self-Government (1939).

D.C.M., M.A., M.Econ., Diploma in Education: Warrant Officer I, 55th Bn., A.I.F., France. Enlisting in December, 1916, and sailing 24th January, 1917, served with Bn. continuously until the Armistice. Arriving in France 2nd November, fought through Messines, Villers-Bretonneux, Morlancourt and Peronne, and later was detailed to Bn. Intelligence Staff. Promoted sergeant in November, 1918, and temporary warrant officer I, in May, 1919, under A.I.F. Education Scheme. Awarded D.C.M.* Professor of Economics, University of Rangoon, and previously of Adelaide. Early education at All Saints’ College, Bathurst. * North of Bellicourt, on 30th September (1918), he four times made personal reconnaissance in company with another man, under heavy fire, and obtained valuable information. Later in the day when no runners were available, he ran the gauntlet of machine-gun fire with a message to battalion headquarters.

Sydney University, Book of Remembrance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your Name?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In or near what Parish or Town were you born?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your age?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your trade or calling?</td>
<td>School teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you married?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated)</td>
<td>...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We publish extracts from letters by Alexander Leslie Gordon MacKay from the Western Front. He was a student here in Mr. Britten’s time. He obtained his B.A. degree and then returned as a master in 1912, and in that year he played in the winning match against St. Stanislaus' when Alan Blacket was captain. He went to France in 1917, and his letters should prove of great interest.
1st July, 1920

No. 3519 T/Warrant Officer Alexander Leslie Gordon MACKAY, "D.C.M.", 28th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, :

24/1/17. Embarked for Active Service Abroad.
24/10/18. Proceeded to England on Leave.
10/11/18. Rejoined Unit, ex Leave.
10/4/19. Transferred to England for return to Australia.
2/6/19. Left England for return to Australia per H.T. "Beltana".
19/7/19. Reached Melbourne. --- Demobilization.
19/9/19. Discharged from the Australian Imperial Force.

The Secretary,
Australian Mutual Provident Society,
87 Pitt Street,
SYDNEY,

Dear Madam,

I have much pleasure in forwarding hereunder copy of extract from Supplement No. 3179 to the "London Gazette" dated 3rd June, 1919, relating to the conspicuous services rendered by the undermentioned member of the Australian Imperial Force.

AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

"HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the above award for distinguished service in connexion with military operations with the Armies in France and Flanders:

No. 3519 Private (temporary Sergeant) A.L.G. MACKAY.

The above has been promulgated in "Commonwealth of Australia Gazette." No. 109 dated 15th September, 1919.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. M. K. Mackay,
22 Roslynvale Avenue,
Woollahra,
Sydney, N.S.W.
Dear Madam,

I have much pleasure in forwarding hereunder copy of extract from the Thirteenth Supplement, No. 31619 to the "London Gazette," dated 11th March, 1920, relating to the conspicuous services rendered by the undermentioned member whilst serving with the Australian Imperial Force.

AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

With reference to the announcement of the above award, which appeared in the "London Gazette" of the 3rd June, 1919, the following is the act of gallantry for which the award was made:

No. 351, Private (temporary Sergeant) A. L. G. MacKay, D.C.M.

For marked gallantry and devotion to duty during the period 16th-17th September to 31st December, 1918. North of Bellicourt, on the 30th September, he four times made personal reconnaissances with one man under very heavy fire, obtaining valuable information. Later in the day, when no runners were available, he volunteered and took a message back to Battalion Head-quarters under heavy machine-gun fire.

The above has been promulgated in "Commonwealth of Australia Gazette," No. 51, dated 10th June, 1920.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

31 York Street,
Chra, Sydney,
New South Wales.
An interesting snippet in the following correspondence. In 1920 it was determined that a DCM award, carried with it a 20 pound gratuity.
The Officer-in-Charge,
Base Records,
MELBOURNE, VICTORIA.

Re: No. 3519, MACKAY, A.I.G. — 55th Battalion.

I shall be glad if you will please advise if the abovenamed soldier is entitled to gratuity of £20/-/- for D.C.M., decoration - vide Accountancy Instructions No. 55, paragraph 4; also please quote Gazette Number.

LIEUT.-COLONEL,
DISTRICT FINANCE OFFICER,
2nd Military District.

7th January, 1920.

D.F.O.,
2nd M.D.

With reference to your communication, No. 66, dated 2nd January - according to the records held here, No. 3519 T/Warrant Officer A.L.G. MacKay, D.C.M., 55th Battalion, is entitled to gratuity in connection with the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal, notification of which appeared in 5th Supplement No. 31370 to the London Gazette, dated 3rd June, 1919.
Note on right hand edge, the “recommendation was originally for a Military Medal. Signed: J.C. Stewart Brig.-Gen. Commanding 14th Aust. Infantry Brigade.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during the period 15/17th Sept., to 11th Nov., 1918. During this period L/Cpl Mackay was the N.C.O. in charge of the Battalion Intelligence Section and his devotion to duty and coolness in action have at all times been a stirring example to those who have come in contact with him. During the action north of BAILICOURT on the morning of Sept 30th 1918 this N.C.O. four times made personal recces mances ahead of our line, in company with only one man, under heavy fire of all descriptions, with absolute disregard to his personal safety. The information which he gathered during these patrols was very valuable and enabled the Officer in charge of the Firing Line to continue the action with slight loss and bring it to a very successful conclusion. Later in the day L/Cpl Mackay, when no runners were available and all telephone lines had been cut, volunteered to take a message back to Enlfield across open country which was being swept by H.G. fire. This he did, bringing back the message safely. His cheerful attitude and good soldierly qualities at all times have inspired the men of his section and won for him the praise of his Officers.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES SECOND MILITARY DISTRICT.

25 NOV 1920

I acknowledge having received the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal inscribed for 3519 Name - Gordon Mackay

Unit - 55th Aust. Inf. Date - 27.11.20 Place - University College, University of

Kindly complete this receipt, taking care to strike out any medal not received by you and return same to the O.C., Medal Branch, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, N.S.W.

Signature - Gordon MacKay

Professor of Economics

It took till 1931 to complete this administration for the medals. Note he signed off as Professor of Economics.

Interesting Wedding.

A military marriage of interest was solemnized by the Rev. A. J. Wade, assisted by the Rev. J. E. Moulton, at the Presbyterian Church Lindfield. On Thursday, between Alexander Leslie Gordon Mackay, D.C.M., warrant officer, late A.I.F., and Jean Margaret Owen Harris, granddaughter of the late Edwin Whitfield, of Stanmore. Tea was served in the garden at the residence of Mrs. Moulton, grandmother of the bride groom, and widow of the late Rev. J. E. Moulton, formerly of Tonga, and later Principal of Newington College. The bride is the daughter of Mrs. Owen Harris, well known as J. M. Whitfield, author of The Spirit of the Bush Fire and other stories.

Sunday Times (Syd.) 1/2/1920 P.13
Dear Sir,

In reply to your JEC. REG. of 27th June, 1933, I have attached herewith citations from official records referring to the award of the D.S.O. to

ex No. 3519 Pte. Alexander Leslie MACKAY, 55th Battalion

" Lieut. Keith Newlands WARK, 54th Battalion,

and the award of the D.S.O. to Major Blair A. WARK, V.C.

Yours faithfully,
Officer i/c Base Records

The Editor,
"Reveille",
"Angel House",
Angel Place,
SYDNEY N.S.W.