

A Soldier of the Great War

Gordon John Mackenzie



William Gordon MACKENZIE

Regimental number	2370
Place of birth	Dumfries, Scotland
Religion	Presbyterian
Occupation	Labourer
Address	Cooroy, North Coast Line, Queensland
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	19
Next of kin	Mother, Mrs Mary Gordon Mackenzie, Cooroy, North Coast Line, Queensland
Enlistment date	30 July 1915
Date of enlistment from Nominal Roll	27 July 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	26th Battalion, 5th Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/43/2

Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Brisbane, Queensland, on board HMAT A69 <i>Warilda</i> on 5 October 1915
Rank from Nominal Roll	Corporal
Unit from Nominal Roll	12th Battalion
Fate	Returned to Australia 21 April 1918
Other details	Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Date of death	7 March 1963
Place of burial	Mt Thompson Crematorium

The 12th Battalion AIF

William and his brother John initially enlisted in the 26th Battalion but upon arriving in Egypt in March 1916 was reassigned to the 12th Battalion in preparation for movement to the Western Front.

The 12th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Half of the battalion was recruited in Tasmania, a quarter was recruited in South Australia, and a quarter from Western Australia. With the 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions it formed the 3rd Brigade.

The battalion was raised within three weeks of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked just two months later. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving in early December. The 3rd Brigade was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 and so was the first ashore at around 4:30 am. Lieutenant Colonel L. F. Clarke, commander of the 12th Battalion, was killed by a sniper within hours of the landing. The battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line of the ANZAC position, and in August contributed two companies to the attack on Lone Pine. It was the only battalion in the brigade to do so. The 12th served at ANZAC until the evacuation in December.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the 12th Battalion returned to Egypt and, in March 1916, sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion took part in bitter trench warfare. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in the Somme valley in July 1916. After Pozieres, the battalion fought at Ypres in Flanders and then returned to the Somme for winter.

In 1917 the battalion took part in the brief advance that followed the German Army's retreat to the Hindenburg Line. For their valorous actions near Boursies during this advance, Captain J. E. 'Jim' Newland, commanding A Company, and Sergeant J. W. Whittle were each awarded the Victoria Cross. The battalion subsequently returned to Belgium to participate in the offensive that became known as the Third Battle of Ypres.

In March and April 1918 the battalion helped to stop the German spring offensive, and later participated in the great allied offensive of 1918, fighting near Amiens on 8 August 1918. This advance by British and empire troops was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as "the black day of the German Army in this war".

The battalion continued operations until late September 1918. At 11 am on 11 November 1918, the guns fell silent. Soon after, the members of the AIF began to return to Australia for demobilisation and discharged.

A Soldiers Story

William Gordon Mackenzie was born on 7 March 1897 at Dumfries Scotland to William Gordon Mackenzie and Mary Malveen (Cameron). The family migrated to Australia on board the 'Duke of Portland' in 1900. They first settled at Howard and later at Palmwoods before coming to Cooroy about 1912.

On 26 July 1915, aged 18 Years and 4 months, William, known as Bill, applied to enlist in the AIF at the Noosa Shire Council Office, Pomona. He carried a signed statement from his mother, Mary Gordon Mackenzie, to certify that she would not prevent him from going to the 'Present War' as she was his only Guardian and Executive.

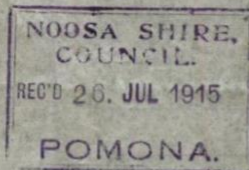
This is to Certify that I Mary Gordon
Mackenzie the Mother of William Gordon
Mackenzie do not intend to Stop the bearer
from going to the Present war as I am his
ny guardian in Coexistence.

Signed Mary Gordon Mackenzie

Witness to Signature Mr. J. King.

Father Deceased.

Father Deceased



5th REINF,
8th BATTN.

William proceeded to Brisbane where he joined the 5th Reinforcements 26th Battalion. He was described as being 5 feet 5 inches tall, 139 pounds weight with fair complexion, brown eyes, brown hair and of the Presbyterian faith. His mother, Mrs MG Mackenzie of Cooroy is named as his next of kin. After initial training, William embarked with his unit on HMAT 'Warilda' A69 from Brisbane on 5 October 1915. The Chronicle 15 October 1915 p5, reports that Wm Mackenzie has finally farewelled, he leaving with the last expeditionary forces.

There is very little written in his Dossier of the time spent training in Egypt but it is noted that on 1 March 1916 at Zeitoun, William was transferred from the 26th to 12th Battalion. The 26th had returned from Gallipoli in January 1916. Awaiting in camp at Tel El Kebir were 156 reinforcements, of

which, we assume, would have been William Gordon Mackenzie and his elder brother, John Cameron Mackenzie SN 2374, who enlisted in the same Unit a month earlier than William. For the remainder of the month the troops were occupied in training.

On 3 February, the 26th Battalion left Te El Kebir by train to Moascar from where they marched through Ismailia to the Canal, which was crossed by pontoon to the east of the Canal Staging Camp. More reinforcements joined the Battalion; training continued and trench digging for Canal defences. William and John, then with 12 Battalion, continued training in Egypt during March 1916. At Tel El Kebir more reinforcements joined and reorganisation was carried out in readiness for embarkation to join BEF in France. Battalion strength was then 30 Officers and 989 Other Ranks. From Serapeum Staging Camp they marched to the rail siding and then by train to Alexandria to embark on HMT 'Corsican' on 29 March 1916.

On 4 April, the Unit disembarked at Marseilles from where they travelled by train to St Omer and the next day, on to Strazale where additional training was undertaken. On 20 April the Battalion moved to Saily-Sur-la-Lys where training continued for the remainder of April. The 12th Battalion moved into support billets on Petillon Sector on 19 May 1916. They took over the front line trenches Petillon Sector from 11th Battalion on 7 June. William Mackenzie was taken ill on 14 June and admitted to 9th Casualty Clearing Station, his condition diagnosed as Scabies. This would undoubtedly have been Trench Fever, as it was later known, having been caused by body lice in the trenches. William re-joined the Battalion on 12 June. By the end June, the Battalion had returned to Saily-Sur-La-Lys.

During July, the Battalion moved to several locations, arriving at Albert on the 19th on the way to their first major action in France. The following day they reached the trenches of Sausage Valley (which the Australians referred to as Sausage Gully) where the artillery was very active. On the 22 July orders were received for an attack on Pozieres. The 12th Battalion secured their objective on the outskirts of Pozieres but suffered heavy casualties. On 26 July the Battalion marched to Warloy and on to Berteaucourt for rest and some training.

On 9 August, the Battalion moved to Bonneville for additional training and then back to Sausage Valley via Vadencourt Wood and the Brickfields area. On 19 August, B and C companies moved to the Front Line near Mouquet Farm to relieve 4th Battalion while A and D companies took up a position in Wire Trenches. Enemy artillery was active on 21 August resulting in further casualties. The following day, after consolidating the new position and improving trenches, the Battalion travelled to Ontario Camp in Reserve area to arrive on 29 August. On 1 September William Mackenzie was promoted to Lance Corporal.

September 1916 was a relatively quiet time for 12 Battalion. As well as training and lectures, the men enjoyed concerts and sporting activities. On 20 September they moved to Chataeu Belge. Four days later to Railway Dugouts where they improved dugouts and carried out working parties at night in Hill 60 sector. On leaving Hill 60, the Battalion left by train for Ypres on 9 October. The remainder of the month was spent moving about until arriving at Fricourt camp on the 24th where they were clearing the road between Mametz and Montauban and training. On the 30th they left for Burnafay Wood camp where the weather was fine and very cold.

The following week, 7 November, the Battalion moved to Switch Trench and Gap Trench. The following day, B Company moved into the front line trenches as support. After five days, they returned to Fricourt Camp and thence via Bernancourt and Buire to reach Raineville by motor bus on 19th. While not at the front line, the men were rested and additional training undertaken. On 29th November, an attack was carried out on trenches near Cardonette. On December 4, the Battalion moved via Franvillers, Dernancourt and Fricourt to reached Bazentin where they relieved at trenches. Some casualties occurred in this operation. The remainder of the month was spent in the trenches during which the men received Christmas parcels from AIF Comforts Fund.

In early January 1917, 12 Battalion relieved at Flers after which they travelled to billets at Dernancourt. By mid-January, the weather was bitterly cold with heavy snow. The battalion spent most of the month in training at Bresle and Fricourt before moving to Bazentin-Le-Petit on 28 January. Some time was spent in cleaning and improving the camp. On 12 February, 12th Battalion relieved the 4th Battalion in the line Eaucourt L'Abbaye Sector where they were heavily bombarded by pineapple bombs resulting in further casualties. From 19 to 27 February they were occupied at Flers and Bazentin-Le-Petit and making progress having surrounded Le Barque and Ligny. Ligny and Thillois were captured resulting heavy casualties.

The month of March was mostly spent in rest and training at Dernancourt and Baizieux. In early April, the battalion moved to Montauban from where they marched to Fremicourt. They relieved the 29th in the line at Boursies from 7 to 11 April in a successful campaign but again with heavy casualties. The battalion then saw action in the vicinity of Lagnicourt from 14 to 17 April, with heavy casualties on both sides. They returned to Fremicourt for the remainder of the month. On 30 April, William Mackenzie was on command to 5th Army Musketry Camp at Warloy.

Heavy fighting was encountered in the line near Buegny 3rd to 9th May. The battalion then proceeded to Norieul to relieve 2nd Battalion in line. The enemy attacked with bombing and artillery fire. Although driven off, both sides suffered heavy casualties. During June 1917, the men were rested at Ribemont where they enjoyed sporting contests, concerts and the like as well as training.

On 7 June 1917 William Mackenzie was promoted to Corporal. The following week he was taken ill and reported to 3rd Field Ambulance and admitted to 9th Casualty Clearing Station where he was again diagnosed with Scabies. On 17 June he was transferred to a Scabies Station for treatment and re-joined the battalion on 26 June. The battalion left Baussant for Ribemont on 6 July. While there the battalion was inspected by the King. Most of July was occupied with training at several locations in the Somme area.

On 10 August 1917 William Mackenzie was again taken ill and presented to 3rd Field Ambulance and to 1 Australian Casualty Clearing Station, suffering from Trench Fever. The following day, he was admitted to hospital at Abbeyville. A week later he embarked on HS 'Carisbrook Castle' for England to be admitted to Temporary Hospital at Exeter on 19 August. Having spent six weeks in hospital at Exeter, William was transferred, to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford. On 3 October, he was discharged to Convalescence Depot, Weymouth and three weeks later, to No. 1 Convalescence Depot at Sutton Veny. On 14 March 1918 he 'marched out' to No 2 Convalescence Depot at Weymouth to await his return to Australia. On 21 April 1918, he embarked on HMAT A29 Suevic to disembark in Australia on 7 June. He was discharged medically unfit on 30 July 1918.

William Gordon Mackenzie was recommended for an award, noted on AWM 'Honours and Awards' (no details shown). He was awarded the 1914-1918 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. John Cameron Mackenzie was killed in action in France on 1 May 1918.

Gympie Times 24 Nov 1917

Cpl WG Mackenzie in hospital at Exeter – toes amputated – attached to C Co 12 Batt in his third year of fighting.

On 6 June 1922, William married Lenore Bernadine Bateson daughter of Joseph Harold Bateson and Ellen Frances (O'Dea). Locals remember Bill Mackenzie as the order man for FA Row's Cooroy Store. He visited homes in the township and surrounding areas to take orders which he subsequently delivered by lorry. WG Mackenzie was active in the Cooroy RSL Sub-Branch and served as Secretary for a number of years. He was secretary of the Caledonian Society and Burns Club. In 1936 he was instrumental in forming the Cooroy Boy Scouts Troop of which he was Scout Master.

As World War Two intensified, William Gordon Mackenzie, aged 44 years and 6 months, again enlisted at Brisbane on 3 November 1941. His occupation is shown as Shop Assistant and Truck Driver. As No. Q119677, he was medically examined as fit for Class 1. As with other WWI veterans, he was assigned to the Home Front and classified as a Clerk. He was employed for a time at Redbank Reinforcement Depot.

William was appointed L/Cpl on 8 March 1943 and promoted to Corporal the following month. In August 1943, he was detached to Northern Command Australian Army Service Corps at Baronta, close to Hughenden just off the Flinders Highway. Baronta had a railway station and supply depot. Australian and American troops were stationed along the Great Northern Railway.

On 20 November 1945, William was transferred to Australian Personnel Staging Camp (Staff). On 26 January 1946, he transferred to 4th Base Supply Depot and with the 1st Military District Australian Army Service Corps, he was appointed Lance Sergeant on 15 April 1947. In July, he was granted 1st Good Conduct Increment and reclassified from Corporal to Lance Sergeant with one star.

It is noted that William Mackenzie had served full time war service in the CMF from 3 November 1941 until 30 June 1947 and the Interim Army 1 July 1947 until 8 June 1948. Discharged from Australian Military Forces on 9 June 1948, he enlisted in the Regular Army Special Reserve. There is no evidence to show that William Mackenzie returned to Cooroy. He is listed on Commonwealth Electoral 1954 as a Soldier at Clayfield.

An obituary published on 7 March 1963 reads: A pioneer of the Near North Coast district, Mr William Gordon Mackenzie, was cremated yesterday. Mr Mackenzie, 66, of Mains Road Sunnybank died in the Greenslopes Military Hospital on Thursday. Born in Scotland, he had come to Australia as a lad and settled in Cooroy about 1912 as a farmer. He was a founder member of Cooroy Show Society, a former member of Noosa LifeSavers 'committee and former secretary of Cooroy Rugby League Club. He was a past district Grand Master of MUIOOF, Cooroy, and a Past Master of Cooroy United Masonic Lodge. Mr Mackenzie, who served in both wars has left a widow, three sons and three daughters.

(Adopt a Digger -reference)

Army Form B. 130 2370

Casualty Form - Active Service.

1 MD 10th Battalion

Regimental No. 2340 Rank Cpl *12th Bn* Name Mr. Kenzie *William Gordon*

Enlisted (a) 20/7/15 Terms of Service (a) _____ Service reckons from (a) 20/4/15

Date of promotion to present rank _____ Date of appointment to lance rank _____ Numerical position on roll of N.C.Os. _____

Extended _____ Re-engaged Embarked from Australia Qualification (b) 510

Report Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
<u>1/3/16</u>	<u>C/O 12th Bn</u>	<u>Allotted & proceeded to join 10th Bn in</u>	<u>Malaya</u>	<u>1/3/16</u>	<u>A.P. 4592 439, 2739</u>
<u>4/3/16</u>	<u>C/O 12th Bn</u>	<u>Joined Battalion.</u>	<u>RAILHEAD.</u>	<u>1/3/16</u>	<u>A. F. B213 No. 44 20/8/16. AP 5455. 20 20/2739</u>
<u>29-3-16</u>	<u>C/O</u>	<u>proceeding to join B.E.F. Alexandria</u>	<u>Alexandria</u>	<u>29-3-16</u>	
		<u>Disembarked at</u>	<u>Marseilles.</u>	<u>5-4-16</u>	
<u>1.9.16</u>	<u>C/O</u>	<u>App'd. L/Cpl.</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>1.9.16</u>	<u>A.P. 4651</u>

Army Form B. 103. Regimental Number. 2340

Casualty Form - Active Service.

Sheet 2

Regiment or Corps 12th Bn Rank Cpl Surname Kenzie Christian Name William Gordon

Enlisted (a) 20.7.15 Terms of Service (a) _____ Service reckons from (a) _____

Date of promotion to present rank _____ Date of appointment to lance rank _____

Extended _____ Re-engaged _____ Qualification (b) _____

Occupation _____ Signature of Officer _____

Report Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, &c., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place of Casualty	Date of Casualty	Remarks Taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
<u>19</u>	<u>7.10.14 No 2 Com Bn</u>	<u>Went in from 3rd A.A. & Danford</u>		<u>3.10.14</u>	<u>LR 9154</u>
<u>20</u>	<u>28.10.14 No 2 Com Bn</u>	<u>Went out to 1st Com Bn Sutton</u>		<u>25.10.14</u>	<u>LR 9921</u>
<u>21</u>	<u>28.10.14 No 1 Com Bn</u>	<u>Went in from No 2 Com Bn</u>			
<u>22</u>	<u>18.11.17 do B.213</u>	<u>Went in from 1st Com Bn</u>		<u>14.11.17</u>	<u>LR 10730</u>
<u>23</u>	<u>16.12.17 do</u>	<u>Went in from 1st Com Bn</u>		<u>13.12.17</u>	<u>LR 11517</u>
<u>24</u>	<u>16.12.17 do</u>	<u>Went in from 1st Com Bn</u>		<u>11.12.17</u>	<u>LR 11517</u>
<u>25</u>	<u>1.3.18 No 1 Com Bn</u>	<u>Went in from 1st Com Bn</u>		<u>1.3.18</u>	<u>LR 1836</u>
<u>26</u>	<u>15.3.18 do</u>	<u>Went in from 1st Com Bn</u>		<u>14.3.18</u>	<u>LR 2279</u>
<u>27</u>	<u>23.4.18 from 1st Com Bn</u>	<u>Went in from 1st Com Bn</u>		<u>21.4.18</u>	<u>LR 3332</u>

P.T.O. **KENZIE W G**

National Archives of Australia NAA: B2455 MACKENZIE W G

A 62479

AUSTRALIAN  MILITARY FORCES.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 2370

Name MacKenzie William Gordon

Unit 5th Battalion

Joined on JUL 27 1915

5th Infantry
26th Battalion

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

- | | | |
|---|-----|---|
| 1. What is your Name? | ... | 1. <u>William Gordon Mackenzie</u> |
| 2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? | ... | 2. In the Parish of _____ in or near the Town of <u>Dumfries</u> in the County of <u>Scotland</u> |
| 3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) | ... | 3. <u>Yes</u> |
| 4. What is your age? | ... | 4. <u>13/4/12</u> |
| 5. What is your trade or calling? | ... | 5. <u>Labourer</u> |
| 6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? | ... | 6. <u>No</u> |
| 7. Are you married? | ... | 7. <u>No</u> |
| 8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) | ... | 8. <u>Mother Mrs M.G. Mackenzie</u>
<u>Cooroy Queensland</u> |
| 9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? | ... | 9. <u>No</u> |
| 10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incorrigible and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? | ... | 10. <u>No</u> |
| 11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge | ... | 11. <u>No</u> |
| 12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? | ... | 12. <u>Yes</u> |
| 13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? | ... | 13. <u>No</u> |
| 14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mother)—
Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued to you after embarkation during your term of service? | ... | 14. <u>Yes</u> |
| 15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against small pox and enteric fever? | ... | 15. <u>Yes</u> |

I, William Gordon Mackenzie do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allot not less than ~~two-fifths~~ three-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my ~~wife and children~~ wife + mother.

Date JUL 27 1915

W. G. Mackenzie
Signature of person enlisted.

* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.
† Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.