

Extract from Personnel file of
Alexander Patrick McKay, 4058, AIF

After enquiry and confirmation of his death, and communication with his next-of-kin, the name of J. McKay was amended to A. P. McKay,

Funds Represented:
CITIZENS' "WAR CHEST" FUND,
NEW SOUTH WALES.
LADY MAYOR'S PATRIOTIC LEAGUE,
VICTORIA.
QUEENSLAND PATRIOTIC FUND,
QUEENSLAND.
LEAGUE OF LOYAL WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA,
SOUTH AUSTRALIA.
"ON ACTIVE SERVICE" FUND,
TASMANIA.
VICTORIA LEAGUE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA,
PERTH, W.A.

Hon. General Secretary:
CHAS. A. LE M. WALKER, F.C.P.A.,
113 FITT STREET, SYDNEY.
CABLES: "WAR CHEST," SYDNEY.

London Headquarters:
66 VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.

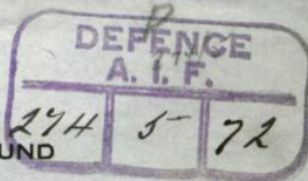
A. I. F.

AUSTRALIAN COMFORTS' FUND

(BY AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE).

SYDNEY, 11th April, 1917.

N.S.W.



Dear Sir,

On the 3rd instant we received the following Cable
from LONDON:-

"MESSAGE GENERAL BIRDWOOD TO WOODBURN CANNOT TELL
"HOW EXTREMELY SORRY I AM TO INFORM YOU OF LOSS OF
"LIFE INCURRED YOUR MEN IN EXPLOSION OF WHICH HAVE
"JUST HEARD IN BAPAUME. HAVE NO DEFINITE DETAILS
"BUT FEAR IT IS POSSIBLE SOME SIX OR SEVEN OUR
"COMFORTS MEN HAVE BEEN KILLED. DO EXCEEDINGLY
"REGRET THIS AND NO ONE KNOWS BETTER THAN I THE
"REAL GOOD WORK THEY HAVE DONE FOR US SINCE THE
"START AND NO ONE MORE FULLY APPRECIATES SELF-
"SACRIFICE SHOWN THEIR WORK ON BEHALF OF MEN.
"WE DO INDEED OWE VERY DEEP DEBT GRATITUDE TO
"COMFORTS FUND AND ALL CONNECTED FOR TIME AFTER
"AFTER TIME IT HAS JUST MADE ALL DIFFERENCE TO
"MEN TO BE ABLE GET COMFORTS PROVIDED BY FUNDS.
"SHALL BE GLAD IF YOU WILL KINDLY LET ALL YOUR
"PEOPLE KNOW HOW DEEPLY I SYMPATHISE WITH YOU IN
"THIS LOSS AND FEAR YOU MAY HAVE GREATEST DIFFICULTY
"IN REPLACING THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES AS
"THEY HAVE DONE IN PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES.

SIGNED - W. R. BIRDWOOD."

"LATER - CAMPBELL ADVISES SEVEN COFFEE STALL
"ORDERLIES KILLED BAPAUME NAMES NOT YET AVAILABLE
"ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS SAFE."



to which we replied:-

"THANK GENERAL BIRDWOOD SYMPATHETIC MESSAGE SEND
"FULL DETAILS."

and are now in receipt of a further Cable reading:-

"OUR CASUALTIES ALL PRIVATES THREE NINE FOUR FOUR
"A. E. SCOTT FIFTH BATTALION, THREE SEVEN SEVEN FOUR
"A. GUNN, SIXTH, TWO SIX NINE ONE - W. LEWIS, SEVENTH,
"THREE TWO NOUGHT NINE - C. NIELD, EIGHTH, FOUR
"NOUGHT FIVE EIGHT - J. MCKAY, SIXTEENTH, SIX FIVE
"THREE - W. H. STURROCK - TWENTYTHIRD, ONE FIVE THREE
"TWO - A. MAY, TWENTYTHIRD. ARRANGEMENTS BEING MADE
"SUITABLE MEMORIAL."

We would be glad if you will advise us whether the
next-of-kin have been notified as it is necessary to publish
the fact, but we cannot of course do so until we are assured
that the relatives have been duly notified.

es, 18/4/17
BR

Herald Sun. 28 February 2011

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/ipad/black-white-the-games-afoot/news-story/db2d2312c975c2e5b967c36907fb8073?sv=3972533483608be01ef45d4124c1c225>

[Google search, 14/03/2018]

Lest they forget

THEY never forget the Aussies in the towns of the Western Front.

And Monsieur Philippe Drouin has just emailed us again from Bapaume, where he heads a committee honouring Australian Diggers killed while liberating the town from German occupation during World War I.

On the nights of March 25-26, 1917, at least 19 Australians were killed and others wounded in a booby-trap explosion in the town hall of Bapaume.

The bomb had been left behind by the Germans as they withdrew to the Hindenburg Line.

On this March 26, about 200 people, including representatives from the Australian embassy in Paris and relatives from Australia, will gather in Bapaume for the 94th anniversary and the unveiling of two plaques on the wall of the town hall -- a memorial scroll and a roll of honour.

Thanks to the help of local historian Andrew Currey, the names of the forgotten Diggers have been established.

The Bapaume committee is still appealing for the closest relatives to get in touch. There may be more.

The names found so far: Frederick James Adams, Herbert Gordon Akhurst, George Alexander, Albert Edward Beattie, Andrew Sloane Caldwell, Joseph Colmo, William Henry Osborne Greenland, Alexander Gunn, Rufus Charles Lansdown, William Lewis, Arthur May, John Dickson McCall, Alexander Patrick McKay, Charles Neild, Jules John Peter Schuller, Albert Edward Scott, Ralph Wilson Smith, William Henry James Sturrock and Phillip Edwin Taylor.

If you are related, write to Philippe at 1 Rue de Bapaume, 62121 Achiet-le-Grand, France, or email philippe.dr@aliceadsl.fr

New Zealand Times. 12 April 1917 (Papers Past) [14/03/2018]

The work behind the Australian lines is intensely interesting, because none know when streets and buildings will be blown up. An explosion at the Town Hall of Bapaume, wherein 28 were killed and seven were buried alive and later saved, is a typical case. Numerous dug-outs and two houses which had been occupied and vacated by a brigade headquarters, blew up days after the Australians' entry. These included Captain Bean's dug-out, which, happily, was empty, but the explosion wrecked all his belongings. The Germans use sulphur, which gradually establishes an electric connection. Just now none go near the German's magnificent dug-outs.

Poverty Bay Herald. 19 April 1917 (Papers Past) [14/03/2018]

CASUALTIES AT BAPAUME.

FATAL EXPLOSION.

The hon. secretary of the Australian Comforts Fund (of which the Citizens' War Chest Fund is the New South Wales Division) communicates the following message sent by General Birdwood to the London Commissioner of the fund:

"Cannot tell how extremely sorry I am to inform you of loss of life incurred by our men in an explosion, of which I have just heard, in Bapaume. Have no definite details but fear it is possible some six or seven of our comforts men have been killed. I exceedingly regret this, and no one knows better than I the real good work they have done for us since the start, and no one more fully appreciates the self-sacrifice shown in their work on behalf of the men. We do indeed owe a very deep debt of gratitude to Comforts Fund, and all connected, for time after time it has just made all difference to men to be able to get comforts provided by funds. I shall be glad if you will kindly let all your people know how deeply I sympathise with you in this loss, and [f]ear you may have greatest difficulty in replacing those who have given their lives, as they have done, in performance of duties."

A later cable from the London Commissioner of the Australian Comforts Fund states that there were seven casualties, and that arrangements are being made for a suitable memorial.

EXPLOSION IN BAPAUME.

COMFORTS FUND WORKERS KILLED.

SYDNEY, Wednesday.

A cable message published a few days ago stated that an explosion at Bapaume, soon after the Australians entered the town, killed 28 men and buried seven others. The buried men were rescued. The explosion was the result of a trap left by the Germans.

Cable messages which have now been received show that seven of the Australian Comforts Fund's workers were among the victims. Lieutenant-General Sir W. R. Birdwood telegraphed to the London Commissioner as follows:—

"I cannot tell you how extremely sorry I am to have to inform you of the loss of life incurred by your men in an explosion, of which I have just heard, in Bapaume. I have no definite details, but I fear that it is possible that some six or seven of our comforts men have been killed.

"I exceedingly regret this. No one knows better than I the real good work they have done for us since the start, and no one more fully appreciates the self-sacrifice shown in their work on behalf of the men. We do, indeed, owe a very deep debt of gratitude to the Comforts Fund and all connected with it for time after time it has just made all the difference to the men to be able to get the comforts provided by the funds.

"I shall be glad if you will let all your people know how deeply I sympathise with you in this loss. I fear that you may have the greatest difficulty in replacing those who have given their lives, as they have done, in the performance of their duties."

A later cable message from the London Commissioner states that there were seven casualties. They were:—Messrs. A. E. Scott (5th Battalion), A. Gunn (6th Battalion), W. Lewis (7th Battalion), C. Nield (8th Battalion), J. McKay (16th Battalion), W. H. Sturrock (23rd Battalion), and A. May (23rd Battalion). Arrangements are being made for a suitable memorial to them.