

**Melcombe Regis Cemetery,
Weymouth, Dorset, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



7647 PRIVATE

A. MAC DONALD

AUST. ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

8TH AUGUST, 1917 Age 33

*Born At Balmartin,
Lochmaddy, Scotland*

Alexander MACDONALD

Alexander MacDonald was born at Balmartin, Lochmaddy, Inverness Shire, Scotland around 1889 to parents Norman & Annie MacDonald

The 1891 Scotland Census recorded Alexander MacDonald as a 2 year old living with his family at North Uist, Inverness, Scotland. His parents were listed as Norman MacDonald (Shoemaker, aged 36, born North Uist) & Ann MacDonald (Shoemaker's wife, aged 36, born North Uist). Also listed was Alexander's older brother – Donald Archy MacDonald (aged 4) & a Boarder – Malcolm MacCuish (Shoemaker's Apprentice, aged 18, born North Uist).

The 1901 Scotland Census recorded Alexander MacDonald as an 11 year old Scholar living with his family at Farm of Balmartin, North Uist, Inverness, Scotland. His parents were listed as Norman MacDonald (Shoemaker, aged 48) & Ann MacDonald (Wool Spinner, aged 47). Alexander was the youngest of four children listed on this Census – Alick MacDonald (Shoemaker Apprentice, aged 17), Donald A. MacDonald (Scholar, aged 14), James MacDonald (Scholar, aged 13) then Alexander.

According to information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour – Alexander MacDonald had “6 *Trainings in 3rd Cameron Highlanders, Inverness, Scotland.*” He came to Australia when he was 25 years old.

Alexander MacDonald was a 31 year old, single, Shoemaker when he enlisted on 4th June, 1915 at Liverpool, Sydney, New South Wales with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Presbyterian & his next of kin was listed as his father – Mr N. MacDonald, North Uist, Lock Maddy, Invernessshire, Scotland.

Private Alexander MacDonald was posted to Special Reinforcements of 1st Australian General Hospital.

Private Alexander MacDonald, Service number 7647, embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on HMAT *Argyllshire (A8)* on 30th September, 1915 with the First Australian General Hospital – Special Reinforcements.

Private Alexander MacDonald embarked on from Suez on H. T. *Demosthenes* on 19th March, 1916 for Australia – in charge of Insane. He returned to Australia on *Demosthenes* on 19th April, 1916 “*On Duty.*”

The 2nd Military District, Victoria Barracks, Sydney, NSW, Australian Military Forces wrote to Base Records, Melbourne, on 30th May, 1916 regarding “*No. 7647 Pte McDonald, A. J. 1st A.G.H.*” “*The above mentioned Returned Soldier was returned to duty on 9/5/1916 and allotted to 19th Rfts 1st Bn.*” The letter is marked in pencil on 7th June, 1916 “*Not a casualty.*”

Private Alexander MacDonald embarked from Sydney, New South Wales on *Orsova* on 29th July, 1916 & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 14th September, 1916 having returned from Australia with General Reinforcements, A.M.C. (Army Medical Corps). New Attestation Papers were completed on 12th September, 1916 recording that Private Alexander MacDonald had enlisted at Sea on HMT *Orsova*.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Alexander MacDonald was marched in to A.M.C. (Army Medical Corps) Details on 15th September, 1916 from Australia. He was marched out from Camp No. 2 Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 2nd October, 1916 & was detached for duty with Australian Section Command Depot at Woodcote Park, Epsom.

Private Alexander MacDonald was admitted to Horton County of London War Hospital, England on 11th November, 1916 with Pleurisy & pneumonia. The Hospital Admissions form recorded “*Pneumonia – from Woodcote Both Lungs. Crisis 7th day. Has done well. Chest now quite clear.*” He was discharged to Tidworth on 10th January, 1917.

Private Alexander MacDonald was marched in to No. 1 Command Depot on 11th January, 1917 then marched out to A.A.M.C. (Australian Army Medical Corps) training Depot at Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 17th January, 1917.

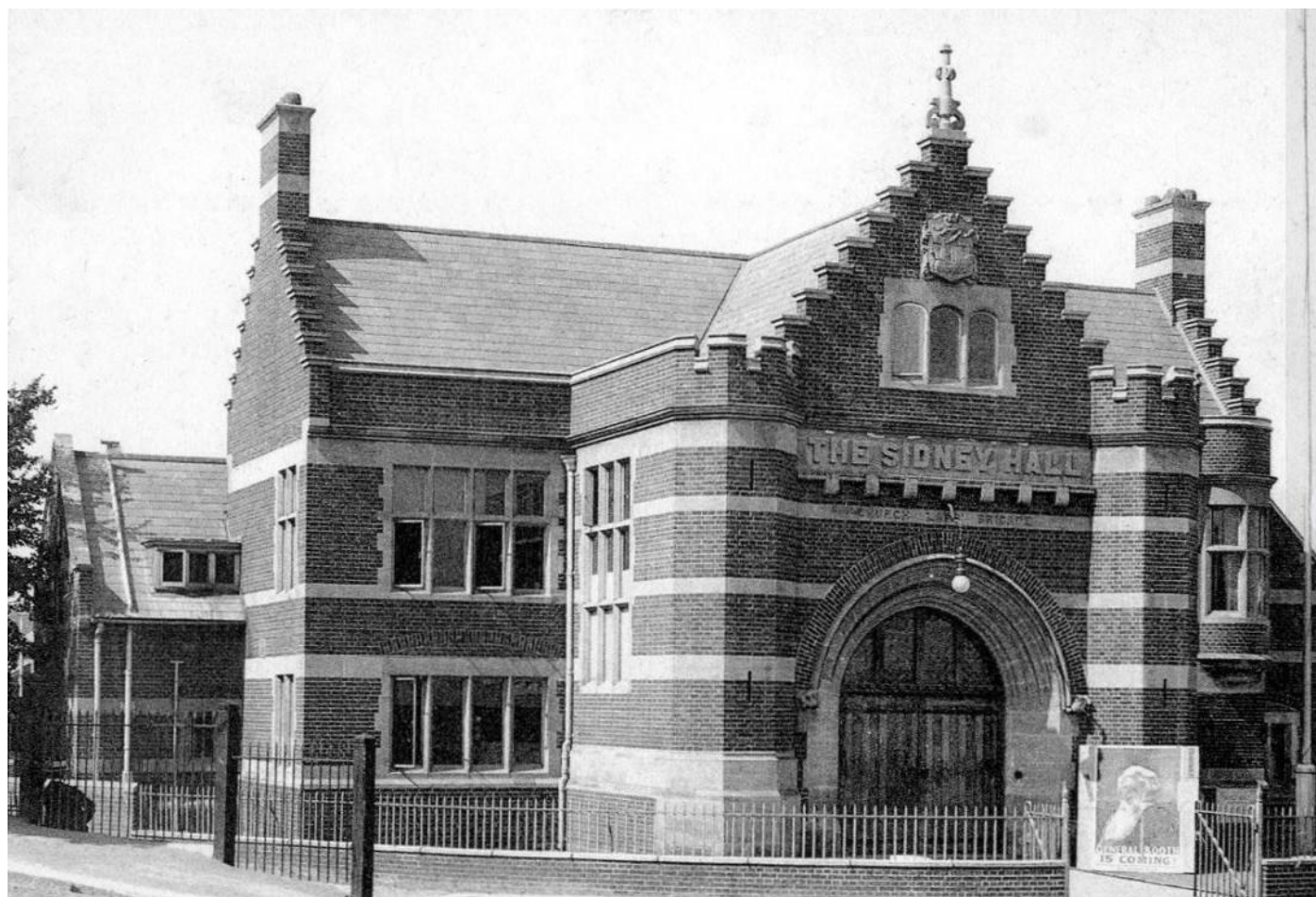
Private Alexander MacDonald was written up for a Crime on 3rd May, 1917 – Overstaying Leave from 12.00hrs on 1st May, 1917 to 13.00 hrs on 2nd May, 1917. He forfeited a total of 5 days pay (£1.5.0) orders of Captain S. T. Appleford.

Private Alexander MacDonald was admitted to Tidworth Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 13th May, 1917 – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined). The Hospital Admissions form recorded Influenza – “*To Convalescent Home 22/6/17.*” On 10th July, 1917 the Hospital Admissions form recorded Anaemia _____. He was discharged on 31st July, 1917 to Command Depot at Weymouth.

Private Alexander MacDonald was marched in to No. 2 Command Depot at Weymouth, Dorset on 31st July, 1917 from Parkhouse. The Hospital Admission form recorded No. 2 Command Depot AMC Weymouth 1st August, 1917 to 4th August, 1917. “*Pneumonia & Pleurisy Nov 1916. 5 ½ months in Hospital...*”

Private Alexander MacDonald reported sick to Sydney Hall Hospital at Weymouth on 4th August, 1917. The Hospital Admissions form recorded his disease as Pernicious Anaemia – “*Examination of blood on admission....Patient became comatose shortly after admission & died from exhaustion – oxygen ____ etc given.*”

Private Alexander MacDonald, Hospital Attendant, died at 4.50 pm on 8th August, 1917 at Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth, Dorset, England from Pernicious Anaemia.



Sidney Hall Military Hospital, Weymouth

A death for Alexander Macdonald, aged 33, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Weymouth, Dorset, England.

Private Alexander MacDonald was buried on 11th August, 1917 in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England – Section C Grave 3172.

This is now recorded by CWGC as Plot number II. C. 3172 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

From the burial report of Private Alexander MacDonald - *Coffin was Elm and brass fittings. I saw the deceased soldier daily after his admission to hospital at Monte Video. He was resigned to his fate and expressed his faith in eternal salvation – Clergyman A. H. Mithcell, Monte Video Camp, Weymouth.*

The Public Trust Office, Sydney, NSW wrote to Base Records on 26th February, 1918 requesting a Certificate in duplicate to the death of No. 7647 Private A. MacDonald, A.A.M.C. Australian Imperial Force, deceased. They also requested the address of the deceased prior to enlistment & the name & address of the person nominated as his next of kin.

Base Records replied to The Public Trustee, Sydney, NSW on 4th March, 1918 enclosing, as requested, a certificate, in duplicate, of report of death of No. 7647 Private A. MacDonald. Base Records advised that the address of deceased prior to enlistment was not recorded & his next of kin was listed as his father – Norman MacDonald, Balmartin, North West, Loch Maddy, Invernesshire, Scotland.

Private Alexander MacDonald was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private MacDonald's father – Mr N. MacDonald, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in September, 1922).

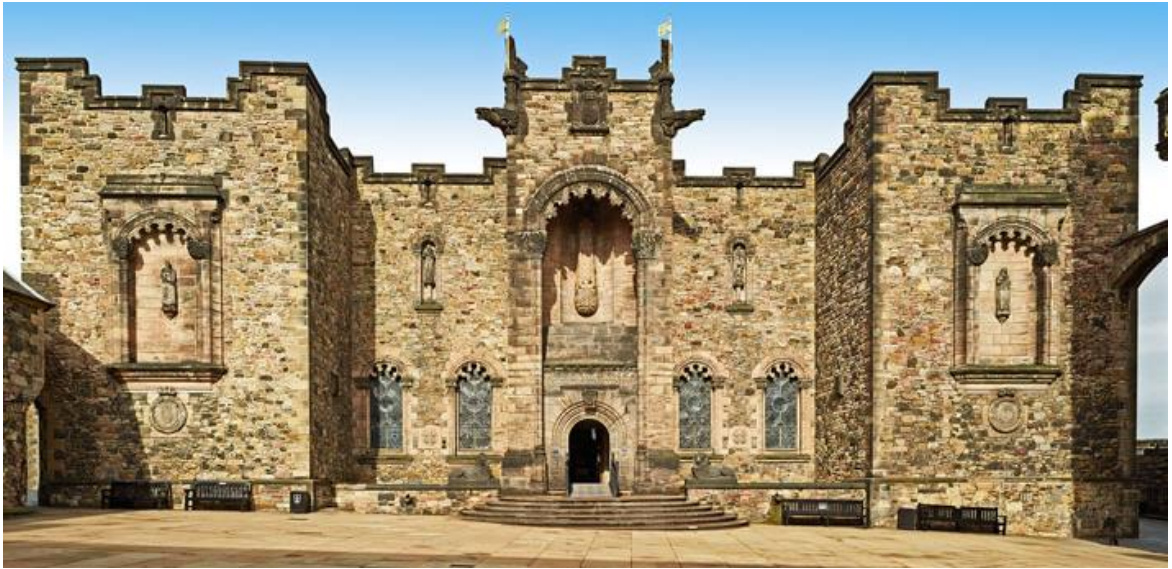
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Alexander MacDonald – service number 7647, aged 33, of Australian Army Medical Corps. He was the son of Norman & Annie MacDonald, of Balmartin, Lochmaddy, Scotland.

Private A. MacDonald is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 183.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Alexander MacDonald is remembered in the Roll of Honour books held in the Hall of Honour inside The Scottish National War Memorial. The north side of the Hall of Honour is divided by columns into bays, each dedicated to a different regiment and enhanced with battle honours and consecrated colours. On the broad shelf in front of each of the bays, the names of the dead are listed in leather-bound books.



The Scottish National War Memorial & the Hall of Honour & the Roll of Honour books.

(Photos from The Scottish National War Memorial)



Alex. MacDonald is remembered on the Isle of North Uist War Memorial, located at Locheport, Isle of North Uist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland.



Isle of North Uist War Memorial (Photo above by JM Briscoe; below by Steve Houldsworth)



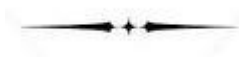


(Photos by J M Briscoe)



(54 pages of Private Alexander MacDonald's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

Australian Casualties

List No. 329

New South Wales

Seriously Ill

Pte A. MACDONALD (Scotland)

(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 15 August, 1917)

Late War News

CASUALTIES

335th LIST

NEW SOUTH WALES

Died of Illness

Pte A. Macdonald, Scotland (previously reported seriously ill).

(The Land, Sydney, NSW – 7 September, 1917)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Private A. MacDonald does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Born at Balmartin, Lochmaddy, Scotland

Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England

Weymouth became a depot for Australian forces in 1916 and 83 of the 147 First World War burials in Melcombe Regis Cemetery are of Australian servicemen; most of these graves are scattered in the old part. The 36 Second World War burials are in the extension. The cemetery also contains seven war graves of other nationalities and one non-war burial.

(Information from CWGC)



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00333

Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, front row, left to right: unidentified; Butler; 5917 Private Edgar Allan Thornell, 22nd Battalion (Bn), died 9 August 1918; 1207 Corporal Jesse Adams Davis, 12th Bn, died 15 November 1918.

Back row: 5329 Private Frederick Albert Archer, Anzac Provost Company, died 6 November 1918; 5990 Private Albert Robert Blackmore, 12th Bn, died 2 November 1918; 11099 Driver Matthew Charles Percival Nettle, 6th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, died 22 October 1918; 3942 Private Walter Alick Weckman, 51st Bn, died 9 November 1918.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00332

Some of the Australian graves in the cemetery at Melcombe Regis. March 1919

Identified, left to right: Captain Francis Arthur Deravin, Australian Army Medical Corps, died 8 July 1917 aged 41 years (large headstone); 138 Private Louis Nelson Matthews, 27th Battalion, 4 July 1917; 5082 Private Victor George Smith, 21st Battalion, died 13 November 1918.



(Photo courtesy of Steve Stewart)



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)





(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

What was life like for the Australians?

The Camp

Within the camp, there were educational facilities as well as medical rooms which helped to recover and re-educate the soldiers. There was help provided for soldiers suffering with physical or emotional impairments, such as massage rooms, psychotherapy training rooms and a remedial gymnasium. This strengthened the men to help them recover from their injuries. The educational aspects were diverse, allowing soldiers to pick a completely different profession for when they went back home. This included architecture, motor engineering, electrical and carpentry classes. Another option allowed the soldiers to be retrained in their previous professions which may have become more difficult, due to loss of limbs or new techniques that may have been created whilst they were at war.

The Town

Weymouth benefited hugely from the influx of Australian and New Zealand soldiers. One shop that still exists today is the Acutt's clothing store, which used to sell everything a soldier could possibly need for his uniform, from the whole jacket to just the buttons and epaulettes. As well as Acutt's, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia also opened up their own branch in Weymouth, for the soldiers to use during their time over here, which highlighted the permanence of their stay. There was also a monthly newsletter that circulated amongst the men, which was produced by local company Sherrens, which still operates on the Granby Industrial estate.

Special Events

The Australian recovery camps took special occasions very seriously, such as Christmas and Easter, to try and reduce the ache of home sickness and being away from their family and friends. Most camps tried to make their soldiers feel at home, with large celebrations with Christmas dinners and special guest performances at Easter. However, there were also other special events that gained press attention, such as the opening of the YMCA building, which used to be on Abbotshay Road. This provided help and welfare to the Australian soldiers, such as free food and blankets. There were fundraising days for the prisoner-of-war soldiers that had been captured during the fall of the Kut, who were mainly Dorset soldiers. From these fundraising days in Weymouth, Dorchester and Bridport, the towns managed to raise £3,600 to help comfort the prisoners.

Entertainment

Entertainment was a highly important aspect of the soldiers' lives whilst they were in Weymouth. It kept the soldiers motivated and in high spirits whilst they were ill or injured, in hopes of helping to speed up their recovery. Throughout the camps in Weymouth, there was always something to watch or listen to, whether it was singing and acting companies who toured round the camps or at the Pavilion Theatre on the Esplanade. Sometimes, the soldiers even made their own entertainment, with marching bands and choirs being set up by the YMCA building in Westham. There were also balls and dances at the camps themselves and even a small trip to the Alexandra Garden along the Esplanade. Dating also became a significant part of the soldiers' lives, with many Weymouth women losing husbands and boyfriends at war. Finding comfort with the new soldiers at the camps, this led to many marriages between the two groups, and some migrating back to Australia with their new families, or staying here and leaving their families.

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THESE BOYS BEARING ACUTT BROTHERS

THE AUSTRALIAN RECOVERY CAMP AT THE AIR EDUCATION SERVICE AT BRISTOL MILITARY CAMP

Commanded and general subject only, under the Air Education Service at Bristol Military Camp

REIN JUBILEE HALL

ROYAL PALM COURT

THE ROYAL PALM COURT

THE AUSTRALIAN RECOVERY CAMP AT THE AIR EDUCATION SERVICE AT BRISTOL MILITARY CAMP

Weymouth, England, The Australian Band at No. 4 Australian Command Depot, Weymouth Camp

Weymouth, England, 1945. Australian soldiers before leaving for home, in a YMCA canteen.

#weyforward

The National Lottery

Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial, Newsletter originals published by Sherrens, Ltd. Weymouth



(Photos courtesy of Steve Stewart)

Australians in Weymouth

From Weymouth to Auswey - A Soldier's Récovery



During the First World War between 1914 and 1918, many injured soldiers who were mostly from Australia and New Zealand, were brought to Weymouth. They were known as ANZACS (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). They were placed in Repatriation and Recuperation camps in Westham, Littlehampton, Chichester and Portland. This was in the hope of sending them back to the line of action in France or back home to Australia due to lack of fitness. Weymouth was picked as the place to set up camp, as it was seen as a relaxing seaside location. This would help to heal the sick and injured Australians who had been fighting in major battles of the war or on the Western Front between France and Belgium.



Although thousands of ANZACS passed through Weymouth during the First World War, there are some soldiers who unfortunately did not make it home. These soldiers are proudly buried in the Melcombe Regis cemetery. This is only 100 metres away from one of the major camps in Westham, with 142 soldiers buried in the cemetery, 83 from Australia and 59 from New Zealand. These graves are similar to some of the war memorials and graves placed around Europe, much like the Somme in France. Unfortunately, there are too many grave names to be displayed on this board, but they can be found on the website link at the bottom of this board.



Past and Present Westham

As you can see on the map of the Westham camp, many of the street names have an Australian connection, highlighting the history of the area. Residents of the housing estates, which are now built where the camp once stood, are still digging up remains of the camp, such as bullets or cooking equipment.



Modern Day Street Names	Westham Camp - December 1916
Cheset Close	Soldiers Huts
Sussex Road	Company Officers
Queensland Road	Regimental Institute
Kitchener Road	Minutemen Rifle Range
Corporation Road	Officers' Mess
Shorn Road	Shower Block
Longcroft Road	Vehicle Shed, Mob Store
Wessex Road	Home Shelter
Parth Street	Cool Yard
Melbourne Street	Cook House
Adelaide Crescent	YMCA
Abbotsbury Road	Dung Pit
Sydney Street	Fire Hydrant
Shirecroft Road	



www.westhamcommunitygroup.co.uk



Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial



Photo of Private A. MacDonald's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Melcombe Regis Cemetery, Weymouth, Dorset, England.



(Photo from Find a Grave – Janice Dennis)



(Photo courtesy of Allan Wood)