

PRIVATE Major Baird MacCULLOCH

1273 – 6th Australian Light Horse Regiment,
2nd Light Horse Brigade.

Born: 1896, Yeoval, NSW.

Parents: Kennedy and Fenelon SC MacCulloch

Occupation: Farmer

District Connection: Yeoval

Enlistment Date: 6 Jun 1915, Liverpool, Sydney.

Enlistment Age: 19yrs

Embarkation: 30 Sep 1915, Sydney, *HMAT Argyllshire A8*.

Served: Egypt.

Fate: RTA 17 Aug 1919, *HT Oxfordshire*.

Honour Boards: Yeoval WW1 Memorial Board; & Cumnock War Memorial Gates.



Biography:

Major Baird (known as Sam) MacCulloch was one of six children born to Kennedy McIntosh (nee Baird) and Fenelon Selwyn MS MacCulloch. Fenelon (known as Selwyn) MacCulloch was the son of Thomas MacCulloch who purchased Yeoval, along with 14,114 sheep and 180 head of cattle, for £5,549 in 1869 from Andrew Bogle Paterson (Banjo Paterson's father).

Selwyn married Kennedy MacIntosh Baird (daughter of David Donald Baird of "The Springs", Toongi, NSW) at "The Springs" on 22 July 1891. They had six sons: Alister B 1891; Ian B 1893; Major (Sam) B 1896; Malcolm B 1897; Kennedy B 1899; and Ronald Keith B 1900.

Selwyn became overseer of "Buckinbah Station," around 1889. He died, aged 52 years, at Yeoval on 12 Mar 1906. In October 1906, an advertisement was placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for a "competent tutor for 5 boys". In 1908, Buckinbah (20,399 acres or 8,255 hectares) was offered for sale and attracted an offer of £60,000 which was not accepted. Buckinbah was subsequently subdivided into 55 freehold farms and offered for sale in blocks of 40 acres (16 hectares) to 880 acres (350 hectares). All the blocks were sold by 1913, with the last six blocks (2,195 acres - 888 hectares) being sold to the NSW Government for closer settlement. A remaining part of Buckinbah Station around the homestead (reportedly 4,494 acres - 1,819 hectares) was sold to Mr. Robert Bruce, of Myrangle, Cumnock, at "a highly satisfactory price" in August 1913, after 44 years in family ownership.

Five of the MacCulloch brothers enlisted in WW1. The youngest brother, Ronald, was too young to enlist. All were born and raised at 'Buckinbah' and attended Yeoval Public School. Malcolm and Keith also attended a Grammar School in Sydney, according to the *Wellington Times* – 4 Feb 1915, p6.



Three of the brothers enlisted from Apr – Jun 1915 and all served with the 6th Light Horse Regiment (LHR): 1269 Pte Ian Hamilton MacCulloch, 1273 Pte Major MacCulloch and 1272 Pte Malcolm MacCulloch. The 6th Light Horse Regiment distinguished itself from all other Light Horse Regiments with the use of the wallaby fur puggaree around the slouch hat. (**Photo L to R: Ian, Malcolm & Major MacCulloch**)

Second Lieut. Alister MacCulloch – 18701, 7 Field Artillery Brigade, enlisted on 31 Dec 1915. He embarked at Sydney on 11 May 1916 on *HMAT Argyllshire A8* for England. Pte Kennedy MacCulloch - 66755, did not enlist until 12 Aug 1918 but only served a month and was demobilised on November 1918, with the end of WW1.

When Major (Sam) enlisted at Liverpool, he was 19 years old, a farmer, and his mother was his next of kin. Major's WW1 records at the National Archives of Australia are incomplete so his profile is limited to what is available.

The three brothers had leave in August 1915. *The Dubbo Liberal & Macquarie Advocate* - 31 Aug 1915, p2, stated: "They were met by their mother at Cumnock, and three finer stamps of Australian manhood one couldn't wish to see. The brothers were cheered all along the streets of Cumnock [on their way to Yeoval]."

The Wellington Times - 9 Sep 1915, p5, reported that, on Wednesday evening 25 August 1915, a large crowd of friends assembled in Yeoval Hall to bid farewell to Corporal Ian and Troopers Major and Malcolm MacCulloch. "At 8 p.m. the soldier lads (or, as they are styled at Liverpool, 'The inseparable triplets') in complete uniform entered the hall with their mother amidst shouts and cheers and singing of 'They Are Jolly Good Fellows.' During the evening Mr. J. Whittaker, on behalf of their Yeoval friends, presented each departing soldier with a set of pipes in case, and expressed the wish that they would be spared to return with honor and glory".



HMAS Argyllshire A8

The three brothers embarked together on *HMAS Argyllshire A8* on 30 Sep 1915 (coincidentally the same ship their older brother Alister sailed on in May 1916), along with Cumnock soldiers, 2165 Lance Corp Arthur Johnston and 2212 Pte Percy Reilly, both serving with the 20th Btn. The soldiers were given a big send-off by a large crowd, with flags and banners waving, and streamers attached from shore to ship.

The soldiers slept in hammocks which were put up each evening at 6pm and taken down each morning at 6am by designated soldiers. The

troops were required to take part in daily physical exercise to keep fit. One form of popular entertainment throughout the journey was boxing competitions. The journey had a number of deaths and burials at sea, mostly from illness, including an outbreak of mumps.

Soon after the farewell for the 3 brothers, their mother Kennedy also bid farewell to the Yeoval district after more than 25 years. *The Wellington Times* - 21 Oct 1915, p5, reported that "A public farewell was tendered the departing lady in the Yeoval Hall on 4th October when, on behalf of her many friends, she was presented with a purse of sovereigns and a handsome dressing case suitably inscribed. The loss of such a valuable citizen is deeply regretted by the whole of the community, whose one united wish is that her future life may be crowned with health, happiness, and prosperity." She departed to Sydney, living for a time at Lilli Pilli Point, near Sutherland. Kennedy MacCulloch died, aged 81yrs, on 22 July 1951 at Randwick, and was buried at Wellington General Cemetery.

The *Argyllshire* arrived at Suez, Egypt, on 30 Oct 1915 and disembarked a day later.

The three brothers served with 'A' squadron with the 6th LHR.

"The main 6th LHB and were part of the 2nd Light Horse Brigade were serving on Gallipoli until 20 Dec 1915. Back in Egypt, the 2nd Light Horse Brigade became part of the ANZAC Mounted Division and, in April 1916, joined the forces defending the Suez Canal from a Turkish advance across the Sinai Desert. It fought at the battle of Romani on 4 August, at Katia the following day, and participated in the pursuit that followed the Turks' retreat back across the desert.

The regiment spent late 1916 and early 1917 engaged on patrol work until the British advance into Palestine stalled before the Turkish bastion of Gaza. It was involved in the two abortive battles to capture Gaza directly (27 March and 19 April) and then the operation that ultimately led to its fall - the wide outflanking move via Beersheba that began on 31 October.

With the fall of Gaza on 7 November 1917, the Turkish position in southern Palestine collapsed. The 6th participated in the pursuit that followed and led to the capture of Jerusalem in December. The focus of British operations then moved to the Jordan Valley. In early 1918 the 6th was involved in the Amman (24-27 February) and Es Salt (30 April-4 May) raids, both of which were tactical failures but helped to convince the Turks that the next offensive would be launched across the Jordan.

Instead, the offensive was launched along the coast in September 1918, with the 6th taking part in a subsidiary effort east of the Jordan. It was part of the force that captured Amman on 25 September, which proved to be its last major engagement of the war; Turkey surrendered on 30 October 1918. The 6th Light Horse was employed one last time to assist in putting down the Egyptian revolt of early 1919." (www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51040)



**Drivers - AASC Damascus, Nov 1918. AWM PO1531.031
Back L to R: MB MacCulloch, Jock Don, R McLeod, CE Bell,
GAG Herbert ; Front: H Bellamy, AE Tom, MR MacCulloch**

On 3 Aug 1918, Major took a trade test at Solomon's Pools (three ancient reservoirs located about 3.5 km southwest of Bethlehem, with the Motorised Transport Section of the Service Corps. He was transferred as a Transport Driver to the Australian Service Corps (ASC), 35th ASC, on 11 Sep 1918.

Major and Malcolm left Kantara, Egypt, on the Hospital Transport SS *Oxfordshire* on 10 July 1919, disembarking at Sydney on 17 Aug 1919. Major MacCulloch was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War and the Victory medals for his service.



The Wellington Times - 27 Oct 1919, p4, reported that the four MacCulloch soldiers were welcomed back to Yeoval at a social held on 22 Oct 1919. They all received gold medals (as pictured, which reads on the back: **"Pres. to Pte Major MacCulloch by his Yeoval & District Friends on his Return from Active Service"**).

The Land, Sydney - 10 Aug 1923, p20, published the results of "Successful Students - Sheep and Wool - in conjunction with the sheep and wool department of the Technical College, Second (Final) Year, with MB MacCulloch passing with Honors. He was also listed as passing Sheep Judging and Classing."

Like Ian and Malcolm, Sam moved to Queensland after the war. He worked on "Allandale" Morven (a small town 91km east of Charleville, QLD) in 1928 as an overseer according to the 1928 Australia Electoral Roll (AER) for Maranoa/Augathella. In the 1932 & 1934 AER for Parramatta/Werriwa/Sutherland, Major is listed as a station hand, living at Lilli Pilli Point with his mother Kennedy, and his brother Ronald and Ronald's wife, Nora.

The 1936 Queensland PO Directory list Major as an overseer at Nonda Downs Station, 570 km west of Townsville between Julia Creek and Richmond. The 1937 AER for Maranoa/Bollon has Major listed as residing at Black Bank via Cunnamulla, QLD, and working as an overseer.

Major became a technical college teacher specialising in sheep and wool courses. He is listed in the 1943 AER for New England/Armidale as residing at the New England Hotel and his occupation as a teacher. The same year he moved to Tamworth to teach.

Major married Doris (Dot) Irene McWilliams, youngest daughter of Elizabeth and Robert John McWilliams, at Tamworth on 4 Nov 1943. Robert McWilliams had been a prominent grazier at "Matoppo" Turravan (near Narrabri, NSW). They had 2 sons, Ian and Donald, and a daughter Elisabeth Nea.

The 1949 AER for New England/Tamworth lists Major and Doris as living at 22 Raglan Street, Tamworth and Major's occupation a teacher. *The Land, Sydney* - 11 Sep 1953, p39, has an article about a student, Mr PJ Moloney who topped the State final examinations of the Sheep and Wool Department of the Tamworth Technical Education College and who was instructed by Major MacCulloch.

The 1953, 1958 & 1968 AERs for Gwydir/Quirindi lists Major and Doris as living at "Coomooroo," Wallabadah, south of Tamworth.

By 1972 the couple and their daughter, Elisabeth Nea, are listed in the Eden-Monaro/Berridale AER and living at "Matoppo" Cooma. Also living at "Matoppo" were Mr Robert Colin and Mabel McWilliams. Robert Colin McWilliams had previously lived at "Matoppo," Turravan, in 1930, along with Doris's father, Robert John McWilliams. The 1977 AER for Parramatta, list them as living at 34/5 The Park, Parramatta.

Major MacCulloch died, aged 84yrs, at a nursing home on 26 May 1980 at Berala near Lidcombe. Doris MacCulloch died on 8 May 1992, aged 81yrs, at Lidcombe.

Major MacCulloch features in the WW1 book, "Wellington's Finest" by Trevor Munro & Graeme Hoskin, 2005.

By Peter Tremain, Dianne Strahan & Val McKenzie, July 2020.