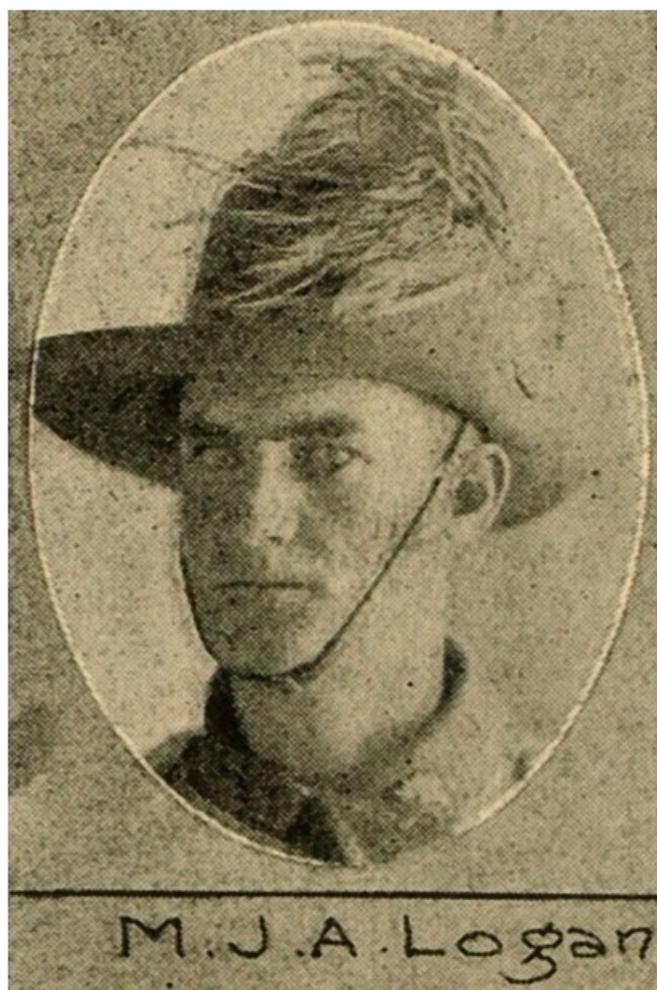


Stories from the Honour Boards

Stories of those who served and are remembered on the Honour Boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel at Saint Andrew's Uniting Church

Booklet Number 186

MALCOLM JAMES ALEXANDER LOGAN 1885–1964



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Corner Ann and Creek Streets
Brisbane QLD 4000
2017

Private Malcolm James Alexander Logan

As a young man, Brisbane-born Malcolm James Alexander Logan tried his hand as a journalist, a mill assistant and a timber salesman, before enlisting in Toowoomba in the 1st AIF in October 1915. He embarked from Australia among reinforcements for the 49th Infantry Battalion, but in France in August 1916 was placed with the 13th Machine Gun Company - serving with that unit for the duration of the War.

Malcolm was gassed near Villers-Bretonneux in April 1918, and had substantial health and employment problems in the post-war years. He lived in Sydney for the rest of his life where he worked for some periods as an upholsterer.

Early life and enlistment

Malcolm was born on 10 January 1885 in the Brisbane suburb of Toowong, the youngest child of John, then a grazier in the Warwick district, and Emily Caroline née Hart. John had been born in Warwick and Emily in Madras, India. The couple had married in Tenterfield, NSW in 1873 and had four surviving older children at the time of Malcolm's birth – two sons with the assertively Scottish names of Robert Bruce and William Wallace, and two daughters Jessie Mary and Evelyn Florence Lloyd.

The name Malcolm probably echoed the ancient Scottish Kings of that name (given the approach to the naming of his brothers), but his second and third given names seem to have been derived from his paternal grandparents – James Logan, a grazier and Marion née Alexander.

Both of his parents had died by the time Malcolm was 20 years old – Emily in 1898 and John in 1905 near Jondaryan (with his occupation given in the register of deaths as farm overseer). The electoral rolls for 1908 and 1909 list Malcolm as a journalist and living in Hume Street, Toowoomba, although by 1913 he was a mill assistant. On 2 October 1915 when he enlisted in Toowoomba he gave his occupation as salesman. He stood 170cms tall, weighed 60kg, and had a dark complexion, blue eyes and brown hair. His religion was Presbyterian and as next-of-kin he nominated his sister Jessie (at that point she too was living in Toowoomba, but moved to Sydney during the War).

War service

As one of the 2nd group of reinforcements for the 49th Infantry Battalion, Malcolm embarked from Sydney on the *SS Hawkes Bay* on 20 April 1916, and the group arrived in France in June 1916.

In August at the 4th Division Base, Malcolm was placed with the 13th Machine Gun Company (13th MGC) – at that stage it was a unit within the 13th Infantry Brigade of the 4th Australian Division. Malcolm soon had front line experience as the 13th MGC moved into trenches in the Pozières sector and supported an attack near Mouquet

Farm on 3 September 1916. Defensive firing was involved in periods the 13th MGC spent in the line near Voormezeele and Flers in October and November, before billeting at Vignacourt over Christmas and returning to Flers in the new year.



*Colour patch
13th Machine Gun
Company*

RELAWM1 3307.171

Health issues (mumps and dental) dogged Malcolm in March and for much of April and into May of 1917. However, he was back with the 13th MGC when it took part in the attack on Messines Ridge in June 1917. He was hospitalised again in September with tonsillitis and returned to his unit late in November 1917.



Australians of the 13th Brigade studying a large contour map especially made to give the troops a knowledge of the Messines battlefield. The operation that started the next morning was completely successful.

Australian War Memorial EOO 632



*'The Battle of Messines'.
A painting by Charles Wheeler (1923)*

Australian War Memorial
ART 03557

The following year Malcolm took part in the desperate defence of Dernancourt on 5 April 1918, which stopped a strenuous effort by the German Army to smash through the Allied lines at that point. Later in the same month the 13th MGC supported a successful attack to retake Villers-Bretonneux – but Malcolm was one of the many Australian casualties from gassing on 24 April 1918.

He was transferred to England and discharged from hospital in July – however, it was only in early October that he was able to re-join the 13th MGC in France. The Armistice came into effect on 11 November 1918.

Malcolm sailed on the HMAT *Commonwealth A73*, arriving back in Australia in June 1919, and after a period of hospitalisation he was formally discharged in NSW at the end of that calendar year.

Post war

From 1920 Malcolm had a traineeship as an upholsterer with O.K. Elliott's Ltd. until a shortage of work in 1922 brought that to an end. Thereafter he struggled to find work and had significant health problems, and only seems to have managed some casual upholstery jobs.

Today in all likelihood he would have a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – the Repatriation Commission did accept as caused by his war service 'effects of gassing' (later also expressed as 'disordered action of the heart' and 'neurosis'). Although this acceptance by the Repatriation Commission meant some financial assistance was provided (varying in his case between 15 and 25% of a pension), the files show frequent requests by Malcolm for an increase in that amount. He also made at various times claims for acceptance of arterial degeneration (arteriosclerosis with calcification), inguinal hernia and astigmatism, but all of these were rejected.

Electoral rolls for the 1920s and early 1930s give Malcolm's address as 20 Orlando Avenue in the Sydney suburb of Neutral Bay, a residence shared by his sisters Jessie (home duties) and Evelyn (working as a clerk). One imagines that the financial situation of the household must have been challenging when

the three siblings had to subsist on one clerical wage, some casual earnings from upholstery, and modest Repatriation assistance.

In 1937 Malcolm is listed in the electoral rolls as an upholsterer, whereas previous entries had 'no occupation' – perhaps this meant that he found and could sustain more work. The 1937 roll also shows that the three siblings had shifted to 11 Fifth Avenue, Neutral Bay - remaining at that address throughout the 1940s.

Jessie died in 1951 and Evelyn in 1957, and from 1956 Malcolm was unemployed (having been laid off by Latex Products of Annandale). A few years later Malcolm moved to Kyogle Street, Wahroonga.

At the age of 79 Malcolm passed away on 30 July 1964, and was buried next to his sisters in the Presbyterian Cemetery, Northern Suburbs with Presbyterian rites.

Select bibliography

Australian electoral rolls – SLQ and Ancestry.

Australian War Memorial – embarkation roll, 13th MG Company war diary.

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Lest we forget