John Mackay Fraser

John Mackay (Jock) Fraser was born in Portskerra, Scotland on the 18th August 1907 to Hugh and Johan Fraser (nee Mackay). John’s father was killed in action during World War 1 and sometime after, John and his two brothers immigrated to Australia.

John married Adelaide Esther Hawthorne Berry in Port Pirie on the 28th July 1931. John and his family were living at 28 Cottell Street, Pirie South when he enlisted into the 2nd Australian Infantry Force on the 25th June 1940 at Wayville, South Australia.

John sailed for the Middle East on Boxing Day 1940 with the 2nd/43rd Battalion and saw service in Palestine, Syria, Tobruk, El Alamein and subsequent advances of Montgomery's North African push. Returning to Australia with the Ninth Division he soon after was in the thick of it in New Guinea, Morotai and Borneo.

Lance Corporal John Mackay (Jock) Fraser, was home on leave enjoying Christmas on 1944 when he got news that he had been awarded the British Empire Medal. The honour was announced in the list of New Year awards.

The citation of the award stated: *“Lance Corporal Fraser has been storeman to a company in this battalion throughout all operations. His continuous efforts and unflagging devotion to duty have been outstanding. His untiring work in tending to the requirements of his company, both in and out of action, has been most marked at all times. His unswerving loyalty has won him the respect of all who know him."*

John was the recipient of a flood of telegrams of congratulation. He said laughingly *“I knew nothing about the award until Monday afternoon, when my wife came to me and asked “What was the meaning of a telegram she had received for him and opened”.* He later heard the announcement over the air. *“Just one of those things, you know.”* he said.

This was the first Christmas in four years that John had been with his family. Leave seemed to him a precious thing at that time of the year he remarked, particularly as, on the heels of his first telegram, came a message stating that he had won a "tenner" in an eastern State lottery. *"It all helps a chap with his leave."* he said.

Lance Corporal Fraser was a Furnace Attendant employed at the Smelters before enlistment. He was at present sharing the joys of his leave with his wife (formerly Miss Adelaide Berry, daughter of Mr. A. E. Berry, veteran football delegate, and Mrs. Berry, of Solomontown, and his three children Johan, Douglas, and Marian. The last named was six months old when her father enlisted.

Lance Corporal John Mackay Fraser SX6822 died on the19th January 1992 and lies in the Port Pirie Garden of Memory Cemetery.

Source: The Recorder, Port Pirie, SA; Wednesday 3 January 1945