

## Donald MacQueen MM



Private (Pte) 4470 Donald MacQueen enlisted in the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division in Melbourne on 10 January 1916. He embarked overseas on 21 March and disembarked in England around seven weeks later.

He left England on 16 September and landed in France the next day, where he was subsequently taken on strength of the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion, in the field near Poperinghe, Belgium, on 29 September.

Pte MacQueen was detached for duty with the 6<sup>th</sup> (Brigade) Light Trench Mortar Battery (LTMB) from 1 March 1917, which coincided with the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. Following an unsuccessful attack on the new defences at Bullecourt by the 4<sup>th</sup> Division in April, a subsequent attack was undertaken by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division at 3.45 am on 3 May, in which the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade breached and captured part of the German defences, then held them against several strong counterattacks, until relieved early on 5 May.

For his performance at what became known as the Second Battle of Bullecourt, Pte MacQueen was recommended for, and later awarded, the Military Medal. His citation read:

*"The above men (among them Donald MacQueen 4470) distinguished themselves in action in the captured trenches near BULLECOURT on 3rd May 1917, by the gallantry and determination with which they continued to serve their mortars throughout the day and night until relieved at dawn on the 5th. On no occasion was a request for fire not complied with, though the battery suffered severe losses (over half its numbers). No chance of observing fire or getting targets was thrown away and the casualties the Battery inflicted on the enemy were certainly very heavy. On one occasion a hostile party was barraged first in front, then in rear, and when brought to halt blown out without a survivor. In this the above N.C.O.s and men played a prominent part."*

Following the battle, Pte MacQueen was formally taken on strength of the 6<sup>th</sup> LTMB on 11 May and promoted to Lance Corporal on 14 June, then to Corporal (Cpl) on 1 August.

Light Trench Mortar Batteries used the Stokes Mortar at the time, a simple but effective short range, light artillery piece, which required a three-man crew to operate. Given the short range, they usually operated very close to the infantry.

The battery moved north to Belgium in mid-September and was on duty around the Ypres ramparts on 4 October when German artillery caught them in the open. The 6<sup>th</sup> LTMB lost four men killed and 15 wounded, one of whom was Cpl MacQueen who sustained multiple shrapnel wounds to his back, right arm and right foot.

He was initially evacuated to the 10<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station and from there to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian General Hospital at Le Treport from 8 October, where he subsequently died of his wounds on 16 November 1917.

Corporal 4470 Donald MacQueen MM was buried in the Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, France later the same day.



*Cpl Donald MacQueen's medal set (Military Medal on left)*

Name: MacQueen, Donald (enlisted as McQueen)	
Service Number	4470
Date enlisted	10 January 1916
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	24 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	21 March 1916 RMS <i>Malwa</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	32 years 6 months
Place of birth	Romsey, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Seaman
Religion	Presbyterian
Next of kin and address	MacQueen, Mr Archibald, father, Western Australia
Permanent address	72 Donald Street, Brunswick, Victoria
Appearance	Fresh complexion, dark grey hair, brown eyes, height – 5 feet 7 ½ inches, weight – 12 stone, chest measurement – 39/43 inches
Final Rank	Corporal
Final Unit	6 <sup>th</sup> Light Trench Mortar Battery
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Died of wounds
Date and place wounded	4 October 1917 Ypres, Belgium
Nature of wounds	Shrapnel wounds to back, right arm and right foot
Date and place died	16 November 1917 2 <sup>nd</sup> Canadian General Hospital, Le Treport, France
Cemetery details	Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, France. Plot VI, Row B, Grave 10A
Honours/medals	Military Medal, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Listed on the Romsey War Memorial, City of Brunswick Honor Roll and the Newham State School Honor Roll. Brother of Malcolm MacQueen (SN 2622).