

James Mackie, M.A., M.C.

Lieutenant and Acting Captain 10 (Service) Battalion (Princess Louise's) Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders

Born 17 October 1892, Govan, Glasgow.

Died 14 May 1969, Kinross & Cleish, Kinross-shire, Scotland.

- ▶ **Minister of Arngask Church, Glenfarg, Perthshire, Scotland, from 5 August 1943 until his retirement on 31 October 1958.**
- ▶ **Author of *Annals of Arngask: The Story of a Parish in the South Eastern Corner of Perthshire* (Privately Published 1958).**

James Mackie was born on 17 October 1892 at 31 McLean Street, Govan, Glasgow, the eldest of the five children of Hugh Mackie, a brass moulder, and Euphemia Weir Mackie (née Howden), who had married on 27 June 1890 at Milton, Glasgow.

At the 1911 census the family was living at 8 Blochairn Road: his father Hugh, aged 46, now described as a 'Mechanic Electrical Telegraph Department (Railway)'. His mother Euphemia was 42, James, 18, was an 'Insurance Accountant'; brother Thomas, 16, an 'Apprentice Dental Mechanic', whilst siblings Hugh (14), Agnes (12) and William (7) were still at school.

The 1914 – 1918 War

James Mackie was educated at Glasgow St Georges Road school, Glasgow High School and the University of Glasgow, whence in December 1914, having joined the Officer Training Corps in October, he applied for a temporary commission in the regular army for the duration of the war which had been declared in August 1914. On his application form he asked to join any infantry regiment "preferably Scottish (and kilted)". The address he gave on the form was 448 St George's Road, Glasgow, which was by then the family home (the 1915 valuation roll shows his father Hugh Mackie as one of eleven tenants in the building).

The London Gazette of 15 October 1915 (p. 10161) announced certain temporary Second Lieutenants, James Mackie being one, to be Lieutenants with effect from 1 September 1915. The Gazette of 24 December 1915 goes on to confirm the Army's arcane hierarchy in that, 'the undermentioned temporary Lieutenants, from a service battalion, to be temporary Lieutenants' – James Mackie being one, dated 12 November, but with seniority from 1 September.

Apart from officer training, it is not clear where, or on what duties, Mackie might have been employed, and his Medals Index Card shows that did not enter the theatre of war in France until 7 July 1916. The 10 battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders war diary from 1 May 1916 to 31 December 1917 (WO95/1768/1) confirms in the entry dated 22 July 1916 at 'Sandpit (nr. Meaulte, close to Albert)' that 2nd Lt. McNab and 2nd Lt. J. Mackie reported from base for duty.'

No further mention is made of Mackie until the entry for 30 November 1916 at Ambrines (northern France) noting certain officers reporting for duty, one of whom was 'Lieut. J. Mackie 29.11.16 from hospital.'

Mackie says in a later source that he had been wounded twice: this hospital stay may have been the first occasion (but there is no note of it in the war diary). Or it may have been when he had P.U.O. (Pyrexia – fever – of Unknown Origin?) – mentioned in the letter quoted below.

The war diary notes on 3 December 1916, again at Ambrines, that 'The following Honours and Award are bestowed for services in October for operations on the Somme' – Lt. J. Mackie is one of five officers awarded the Military Cross. The Supplement to The Edinburgh Gazette of 12 January 1917 (p.124) cites Mackie's award:

Temp. Lt. James Mackie, Arg. & Suth'd Highrs.

For conspicuous gallantry in action. He assumed command of and handled his company with great courage and initiative, making excellent dispositions for defence and assisting to repel a strong enemy counterattack.

Mackie is next mentioned in the war diary on 9 April 1917 at the battle of Arras: Zero hour had been 5:30a.m. and at ' 7:20 a.m. – Message received from B Coy that Lt. Mackie was wounded and that he [the message sender] was taking command and moving in support of BLACK WATCH.'

Mackie was wounded, in the right lumbar region, at St Laurent Blangy, near Arras, on Easter Monday (9 April) 1917. He left his unit on 9 April, and via 24 General Hospital and hospital ship 'Brighton', arrived at Dover from Calais on 11 April 1917. On 12 April he was operated on at Fishmongers' Hall Hospital, London Bridge.

On 10 December 1917 he wrote to The War Office from Lochiel Auxiliary Hospital, Banavie, Fort William, appealing against the decision to refuse his application for a wound gratuity, for which he had applied on 18 June whilst still in Fishmongers' Hall Hospital in London:

Permit me to mention the following facts which surely justify my claim that my wound was of a very severe nature.

I was hit on the right lumbar region by a piece of shell casing on 9th April of this year. I was operated on at Fishmongers' Hall Hospital, on 12th April, when the casing fragment, a piece of my kilt, and part of the crest of the ilium were extracted. I was operated on again in May, when more of the ilium had to be taken, and in June there was a third operation to clear away some further foreign matters. As a result of the wound and the three operations there is a four inch scar on my right stomach, and a great valley on my back almost from the spine to my right side.

For four months I was absolutely confined to bed, for the following two I could walk only with the aid of a stick, and for the last two months I have been walking about fairly freely. The wound is at present slightly open, and discharges a little.

My weight before the 9th April was just on 10 stones, but when I was weighed on getting out of bed in August I was only 7 stones. In October I weighed 8 stones 1lb, and at present weigh just over eight stones and a half.

I understand that my last Medical Board did not anticipate my being fit for general service for quite some time.

I may mention that preliminary to be [sic] wounded, I have never had a day's illness all my life with the exception of a month last year when I was down with P.U.O.
(WO339/4810 Officer's file in National Archive, Kew, London)

Mackie's appeal was refused, on the grounds that his wound, whilst severe, was not permanent. On 16 March 1918 Mackie wrote again, requesting a review of the decision but again it was disallowed on the grounds that, whilst he claimed that the crest of his ilium (the top of the pelvis, generally called the hip bone) had been damaged, medical records stated that X-rays taken on 4 June 1917 did not show any bone injury.

It is not known whether Mackie returned to the war front on his recovery (there is no mention of him in the war diary for the period 1 February 1918 – 28 February 1919), but on 17 August 1918 he married Alison Mitchell Scoular Young in Glasgow. They went on to have two children, Hugh (28 August 1919-2006), and William Stewart Young (26 November 1920-1977).

The Z3 Officers' Protection Certificate issued to Mackie on his release from military duty as from 1 January 1919, gives his theatre of war as 'Irish' serving with '1/1st H.C. Bn', so it seems that he may have been assigned to duties on the home front.

Post 1914 -1918

Released from his war commission from 1 January 1919, Mackie returned to Glasgow, living at 448 St George's Road (where the 1920 valuation roll names him as a tenant), and in 1919 gained his M.A. from Glasgow University. He was student assistant at the churches Glasgow Lyon Street and Glasgow Wellington and he was licensed by the (United Free Church) Presbytery of Glasgow on 21 April 1921. (The United Free Church had resulted from the union in 1900 of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland).

On 9 June 1921 he was ordained and inducted as minister in the United Free Church of Scotland at Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire, whence, on 15 March 1923, he was translated to Paisley Wallneuk – a handsome, well appointed red sandstone building gifted by Peter Coats of Paisley, which had been dedicated in October 1915.

On 19 December 1929 Mackie was translated to Banff Trinity; then on 10 September 1936 to Glasgow Cowcaddens until, on 5 August 1943 he was translated to Arngask, Glenfarg, Perthshire, the first minister of the united charge (United Free Church and Church of Scotland).

The history of the church in Scotland is as convoluted as any, and the history of the churches in Glenfarg reflects this. At one time, Arngask had two churches: the historically established Arngask Parish Church on Arngask hill (Church of Scotland)

and Glenfarg United Free Church on Church Brae in the village. This, latter, had been established and built in 1843-44 (renovated 1906-7) as a Free Church of Scotland but, at the union of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1900, it became known as the United Free Church.

At the time Mackie arrived in Glenfarg in 1943, both these churches actually had been Church of Scotland since 1929, when the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church had (re-)united (having separated at the Disruption in 1843).

So the situation in Glenfarg was that there were two churches, both Church of Scotland, but each with its own congregation and minister: one worshipping in the Arngask hill church and one worshipping in the Church Brae church! There were prolonged negotiations about uniting the two congregations but, human nature being as it is, these always failed.

However, the wider effects of the 1939-45 war and the death in 1942 of Rev. James Jack, minister of the Glenfarg (previously United Free) church, forced a resolution:

The Presbytery of Perth had no easy task when faced with the situation created by the death of Dr. Jack. In the face of acute shortage of ministers, it could not reasonably allow two full ministries in a parish of the small size of Arngask. After lengthy negotiations, and many strong words, a basis of union was finally accepted by both congregations, and in March [7th] 1943 the union was consummated, the name of the united congregation being Arngask-Glenfarg.

(Annals of Arngask, Rev J. Mackie (1958) p.217)

The Glenfarg church on Church Brae became the main centre for worship and the manse in Greenbank Road the minister's sole residence. Arngask old parish manse at the eastern foot of Arngask hill was sold, and whilst for a number of years the parish church on Arngask hill – site of a chapel and church for at least 600 years – continued in use for summer services, and the Glenfarg church was used for winter services, the arrangement ceased in 1951. The old parish church was allowed to fall into ruin and the parish reverted to its ancient name: Arngask.

Not long after coming to Glenfarg in August 1943, Mackie's wife Alison died in Perth Royal Infirmary on 13 January 1944; but on 12 October 1945 Mackie married for a second time, to Margaret Wilson Wilkie, in Milton, Glasgow.

Mackie remained at Arngask until his retirement on 31 October 1958, during which time he wrote and published *The Annals of Arngask: The Story of a Parish in the South East Corner of Perthshire*, a comprehensive and invaluable social history of the parish and its surrounding lands. In 1950 he had written the entry for Arngask (revised in 1962 by his successor Rev. Murdo McLeod) for the Perthshire & Kinross-shire volume of *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland*, edited by D. B. Taylor and not published until 1980. The first and second statistical accounts, of 1741 and 1845, had been written by his historic predecessors Rev. William Lang and Rev. Alexander Burt, both of which were invaluable social, historic accounts of Arngask and its lands, and his immediate predecessor Rev. James Jack had published *Glenfarg and District – Past and Present* in 1902; but Mackie's *Annals of Arngask* remains the most

authoritative and comprehensive account of the parish to date. Unfortunately, there has been no sequel.

James Mackie died, aged 76, on 14 May 1969, his death registered as resident of Kinross and Cleish, to which area he had presumably retired, not far from Glenfarg. His wife, Margaret, outlived him, dying aged 88 in 1982.

Jen Lindsay, London
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