

Off to War August 1914

This is from the Wakatipu Mail, 18th August 1914.

Farewelling Lieut. Walter Mackenzie of Walter Peak Station, Queenstown

A number of friends joined with Mr H. Mackenzie and his family in Eichardt's Hotel on Wednesday evening last for the purpose of bidding farewell to Lieut. Mackenzie, second lieutenant in B Coy, 10th regiment, prior to his departure from the district to join the NZ Expeditionary force. Captain Algie took the occasion to state the purpose of their assembling. He said that Lieut. W. Mackenzie was the youngest subaltern in his regiment and had just responded to the call to arms for the war in Europe. He (Captain Algie) had only received a telegram that day calling on Lieut. Mackenzie amongst others to proceed to the front. He sent a special launch over for him and he was tonight ready to take the first train to headquarters on the morrow. When he approached Lieut. Mackenzie he said "When can you get ready?" "Now" was the reply of Lieut. Mackenzie. There was no time for public presentations, but his friends would not like Lieut. Mackenzie to go away without giving him some little gift to remind him of Queenstown. Lieut. Mackenzie was going to the front to take part in the greatest history making war that had ever been known. His movements would be keenly watched by his friends as well as the members of his family and he was sure that his actions would be worthy of the name of Mackenzie. On behalf of his friends Captain Algie then presented Lieut. Mackenzie with a silver-mounted pipe and tobacco pouch, closing with the words "We wish you jolly good luck, and when you get to Berlin send us a wire".

Dr Stewart added a few words to those of Captain Algie.

He said that the whole district was looking towards Lieut. Mackenzie and expecting the answer of the kilts of olden time.. The speaker eulogised the Mackenzie family for the fine patriotic and military spirit shown by them. This spirit runs in the blood. They had present with them that evening the progenitor of that family and nobody could doubt for a minute his spirit or his ideals. He was not able bodily to take part in the war but he was sending forth part of his body. They were therefore very proud of him and of his worthy family. In conclusion the speaker wished Lieut. Mackenzie every success, a good time and they would gladly welcome him back.

Lieut. Mackenzie thanked his friends for the very useful present. He appreciated it all the more on account of the donors, and was especially pleased to know that he had such good friends in Queenstown. He had offered to go to the war because he considered it was his duty to serve his country and he thought it was the duty of every able-bodied single man to do.

Captain Algie said that he should give a good account of himself, and in reply he would say that he would do his best to uphold the honour of his regiment and his country. He had never seen warfare before and he was sure that it would prove a great lesson to him. He would do nothing, he hoped, that would disgrace his name, but rather what would uphold the honour of his family.

Lieut. P. Mackenzie then took the occasion to present their brother officer with a set of ivory-backed military hair brushes, as a slight but constant memento of the comradeship of his late fellow officer. These were also given in token of their wish that he (Lieut. W. Mackenzie) would ever remember them as they would surely think of him in actual service. They would look for mention of that service that they were confident Lieut. Mackenzie would render at the front. The speaker wished him God-speed and a safe and

honorable return.

Lieut. Mackenzie returned thanks for the gift feeling all the more grateful on account of its coming from his own brothers. He said that he was sorry that his brother, Lieut. J. Mackenzie, was not able to accompany him although he knew he would be with him in spirit. Their present would constantly remind him of his brother officers when he was at the front.

Lieut. P. Mackenzie thanked Dr. Stewart and Captain Algie for the kindly remarks made about his father, who was too deeply affected to reply in person.

Lieut. Walter Mackenzie, 8/80, embarked for Egypt on the 16th October, 1914, from Port Chalmers. He was killed at Gallipoli 9th August, 1915, aged 25 years.

Lieut. Peter Mackenzie, 8/2801, embarked for Egypt on the 9th October, 1915, from Wellington. He served in the European Front and due to illness returned to New Zealand in September, 1916.

Lieut. J. Mackenzie did not go to the war but was active in the Territorials.

Capt. Algie was the Commander of the Cadets in Queenstown and was also the Postmaster. He was transferred to Taihape shortly after Walter Mackenzie's farewell.