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DONALD McLEOD: Was jailed for three months "without hard labour".

A life less ordinary from war to prison

Kent Acott

The story of Donald McLeod may never have been told but for the recent discovery of his police photographs in old Fremantle Jail records.

For his was a truly extraordinary life.

It featured some astonishing acts of war bravery after his arm was blown off at Gallipoli.

And it was a life that ended tragically at the bottom of a Pilbara mine shaft, less than a year after he served a three-month jail term for running down a 20-year-old woman as she alighted from a city tram car.

McLeod was born in Dornoch, Scotland, in 1888. He migrated to WA with his family and began work as a miner in the State's far north.

With the outbreak of World War I, he was among the first West Australians to enlist and, as a member of the 12th Battalion, took part in the inaugural landing and later operations at Gallipoli.

His comrades said his "courage and cheerfulness were outstanding" and he was promoted to lieutenant within four months of the Gallipoli landing.

But within three days of his promotion, his right hand was blown off at Lone Pine.

His arm was later amputated and he was sent to a London hospital to recover.

But this was not the end of his war service.

With an artificial arm attached, he managed to "get past" the authorities and return to his unit, now fighting in France, in June 1916. He attained the rank of captain.

While on patrol, he was shot in the leg and his artificial limb was shattered by another bomb.

This time, his service was over and he returned to Australia in

GEORGE ROWLANDS: Convicted of about 35 drink-related offences between 1906 and 1946, with a maximum sentence of three months jail.

JOSEPH FRIEND HAYNES: A Melbourne-born salesman who was jailed for two weeks for stowing away on the RMS Britannia in 1907. Convicted of more than 40 other offences, including vagrancy and stealing up until 1944.

ALEXANDER MAYGER: A Victorian who escaped legal custody (an "inebriate home") in December 1925 and was jailed for six months.

FREDERICK EDGAR TAYLOR: Was jailed in 1908 for refusing to pay maintenance, followed by about 20 other offences until 1939, including unlawful assault and stealing.

1918. He was awarded a Military Cross.

McLeod went back to mining in the Marble Bar district and, as *The West Australian* reported in April 1920, "literally single-handed, and without the aid of any artificial appliances, he raised 61 tons of ore which, on treatment at the Lalla Rookh battery, yielded over 64 ounces of gold".

This gold strike became known as McLeod's Reward. He later sold the claim and returned to Perth to pursue business interests. But on the evening of July 14, 1927, he ran over and killed Mildred Ruby Walters at the corner of Oxford and Richmond streets in Leederville.

The prosecution said the woman had been knocked down because of the "careless manner in which the accused had handled his car. Having regard to the time and place, he had driven at excessive speed and had given no warning when he passed the stationary vehicle from which the deceased alighted". A jury found McLeod had been negligent and he was convicted of manslaughter.

In finding him guilty, the jury urged the judge to be lenient in his sentencing.

He was jailed for three months "without hard labour". Justice Draper said he agreed with the jury's strong recommendation for mercy "but the public had to be protected".

According to a newspaper report, the incident "unsettled him to such an extent that he returned to the north to take up mining again".

But on December 6, 1928, he fell down a 25m asbestos mine shaft at Soansville in Marble Bar.

He was only 40 when he died.

In a letter published in the Western Mail in 1938, a former friend remembered McLeod as "a fine specimen of the man" who "worked hard, never neglected to jog a few miles, have a bath and a rub down".

"Some of the Barites (people from Marble Bar) will remember the night the Indian expert decided to try this 'white feller'," the letter read.

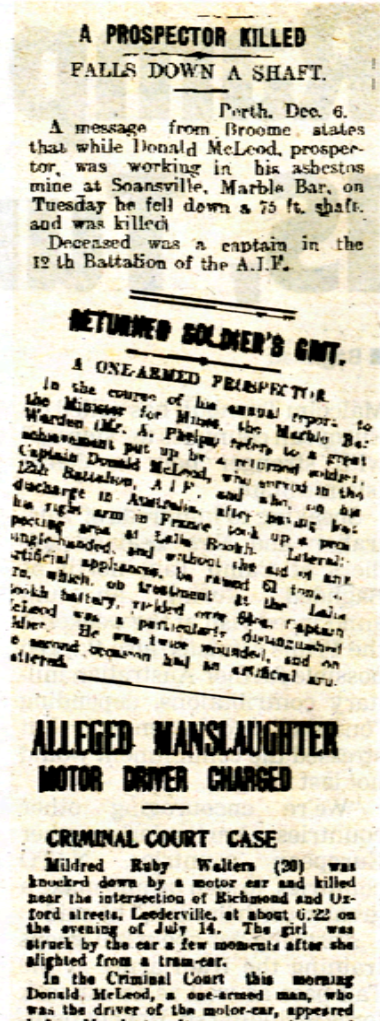
"He kept annoying Donald in the billiard room of the only hotel, until at last Donald gathered him up, carried him over to the middle of the street, stood him on his head, and let him drop, at the same time warning him that, if he came back in the billiard room, he would hurt him.

"The Indian took the gentle hint, and left.

"The loss of an arm during the war was a great tragedy for Donald.

"Quautum mutatus at illo." (How changed from what he was!)

TOMORROW
Father and son's bitter feud



A PROSPECTOR KILLED

FALLS DOWN A SHAFT.

Perth, Dec. 6.

A message from Broome states that while Donald McLeod, prospector, was working in his asbestos mine at Soansville, Marble Bar, on Tuesday he fell down a 75 ft. shaft, and was killed.

Deceased was a captain in the 12 th Battalion of the A.I.F.

RETURNED SOLDIER'S GIFT.

A ONE-ARMED PROSPECTOR.

In the course of his annual report to the Minister for Mines, the Marble Bar Warden (Mr. A. Phelps) refers to a great achievement put up by a returned soldier, Captain Donald McLeod, who served in the 12th Battalion, A.I.F., and who, on his discharge in Australia, after having lost his right arm in France took up a prospecting area at Lalla Rookh. Literally single-handed, and without the aid of any artificial appliances, he raised 61 tons of ore, which, on treatment at the Lalla Rookh battery, yielded over 64 ounces of gold, which was a particularly distinguished effort. He was twice wounded, and on a second occasion had an artificial arm altered.

ALLEGED MANSLAUGHTER

MOTOR DRIVER CHARGED

CRIMINAL COURT CASE

Mildred Ruby Walters (20) was knocked down by a motor car and killed near the intersection of Richmond and Oxford streets, Leederville, at about 6.22 on the evening of July 14. The girl was struck by the car a few moments after she alighted from a tram-car.

In the Criminal Court this morning Donald McLeod, a one-armed man, who was the driver of the motor-car, appeared before Mr. Justice Draper on a charge of manslaughter.

The Crown Prosecutor (Mr. L. A. Wolff) conducted the case for the Crown. Mr. M. G. Lavan, with him Mr. C. Ewing, appeared for the accused.

See the gallery and visual editor Sandra Jackson's video at **thewest.com.au**