



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF N.S.W.

PAPER NO:- 8

PREPARED & DELIVERED BY:- K. Newman

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POLICE COMMISSIONER BRO. WILLIAM JOHN MACKAY

William John MACKAY was born in Glasgow, Scotland on the 28th November, 1885, the son of Murdock MACKAY, A Police Officer<sup>1</sup> in GLASGOW ( since 1874) His father was a harsh diciplinarian.

This was the same year Khartoum was captured and British Imperialism was at its height with Queen Victoria in her 48th year of reign.

Mackay was raised in poor circumstances being low wages and low living conditions and a low standard of education. As a small child, Mackay was sickly contracting diphtheria as well a string of other ailments. To recuperate he was sent by stage coach to his aunties home in the township of TOUNGE in the County of Sutherland. On arriva~~l~~ there he was clad in a tattered shirt stuffed with cotton wool and brown paper and was not wearing shoes. His aunty bathed him and dressed him in an old course shirt and a kilt and sent him out to play. Mackay's feet were so sre that he could not walk across the road.

Mackay spent some three years in Tonge before he was sent back to Glasgow. Mackay did not like school life and he was often truant. Mackay and a school friend ran away to sea on an Onion Boat travelling back and forwards to Europe for a period of about three months. He returned to Liverpool England poor and penniless. He went to an Uncle, a Policeman in Liverpool for assistance, After being scrubbed, his hair cut and lice being removed from his head, he was fed and dressed and put on a train back to Glasgow. He was met by his father, taken home and was subjected to a sound thrashing and sent back to school. Because of his reluctance to learn and his past truancy he was forced to spent many extra hours at school under close tutoring and strict supervision.

Mackay left school after topping his class at the age of 14 years. He obtained a junior Clerical position until he attained the age of 19 years. He then joined the Glasgow Police on the 5th January 1905. He was no longer a sickly youth but now a strapping six footer. He commenced duty as traffic Policeman. He became involved in two murder investigations and his abilities were recognised. After two years service he was designated as a 'Detective'.

In 1908, Mackay became involved in the investigation of a brutal murder. This investigation came under adverse notice as Mackay had received part of the 'reward money'. He became discusted with certain aspects of the inquiry and he resigned from the Glasgow Police.

Mackay became married and with his new bride sailed for the great south land of Australia in 1910. On arrival in Australia he undertook labouring work and shortly after became a Clerk.

In April, 1910 Mackay was at the intersection of Pitt and Market Streets Sydney where he observed two pick pockets at work. Instinct took over and he grabbed one of the offenders, a brawl ensued and a nearby traffic Policeman came over and assisted Mackay in making an arrest. A Passing Plain Clothes Police Officer also witnessed the incident and assisted. Both Pick pocketers were marched off to the Central Police Station. The two offenders were placed before the Police Magistrate and when Mackay gave his evidence, several experienced Police present were impressed with the capable manner displayed by Mackay. Mackay was then invited to join the New South Wales Police Force.

On the 28th June, 1910 after training, Mackay was sworn into the N S W Police Force as a foot Constable and attached to the Clarence Street Police Station. Mackay quickly displayed his excellent ability in written Dictation, arithmetic and clerical skills. He was soon assigned to Plain Clothes duty. Within a short period of time he was transferred to clerical duties at the Metropolitan Superintendants Office. From this position he gained a good insight into the Police administration and regularly rubbed shoulders with the States senior Police. In this position he was able to view all important documents and reports.

Military Intelligence had been keeping a close eye on Mackay's expertise. In 1914 the army involved his duties in the field of intelligence gathering on Subversive individuals. Most of these persons were involved in speech making in the Sydney Domain. Mackay arranged to have these persons photographed. During the first World War 12 persons were convicted of Subversive activities.

In reward for his devotion to duty, Mackay received advanced promotion in 1918. This sparked calls of favoritism from within Police ranks and a Judicial inquiry resulted. In 1925 Mackay was promoted to Inspector and was tasked with investigating members of the City Council of graft allegations. He was also tasked with preparing plans for the Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of York (1927) This Royal Tour proved a great success and Police control was publicly lauded.

Mackay was then appointed chief of the C.I.B. Within a couple of years with street violences increasing, Mackay formed the 'Special Squad' later known as the No 21 Division. This Squad later became very active in controlling the activities of the RAZOR GANG, SLY GROG SELLING, STREET BETTING and control of Prostitute activities. Noted persons such as BUMPER FARRELL joined this squad.

In 1932 Mackay was present at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge when Captain de GROOT cut the 'ribbon'. This caused Mackay considerable embarrassment. However that didn't last too long, as several days later he was promoted to Metropolitan Police Superintendent. At this time a new group call the ,NEW GUARD' emerged, causing some disquiet among the people. Mackay in a show of strength parade 1500 Police Officers through the Street of Sydney with direct order to "BELT THEIR BLOODY HEADS OFF" and to disperse them. This was apparently done. From that time on the force of New Guardsmen became a spent force.

In March of 1935 the then Commisioner CHILDS retired and he was succeeded by MACKAY. Mackay set about revolutionising the Police Force by introducing proper training schools for uniform and Detectives. He also introduced a promotion by merit system. He demanded better efficiency and results.

At the outbreak of World War 2 Mackay was seconded to Canberra to be an advisor on intelligence and subversive activities. He was also on the committee deciding on the internment of foreign nationals. During this period he initially prevented any serving Police Officer from Voulenteering for active duty. In the Latter part of the was he did permit a few officers to enlist.

At the completion of hostilities he introduced 'Parking Patrol Police' who were all returned veterans with slight disabilities. Thinking about his own childhood and the needs of young persons he established the Police Boys Clubs. Mackay had the theme then of, 'A POLICEMAN IS AT HIS TALLEST WHEN HE STOOPS TO HELP A BOY'

Mackay became ill and on the 22 January 1948 died in Office.

# WILLIAM JOHN MCKAY

## MASTER MASON

Certificate No. 71513

William John MCKAY was initiated Maroubra Lodge No 422 on the 19-7-1922 He was passed to the second degree on the 13-9-1922. He was raised on the 11-10-1922.

On 7-12-1925 He Joined Lodge Randwick No 388

13-9-1922 Joined Lodge Royal Empire No. 613

9.8.1945 Joined Lodge Kensington No. 270

AFTER HIS DEATH IN 1948 a Police Lodge was formed, being LODGE MCKAY No 761 which was established at the Royal Arch Temple in College Street, Sydney on 30-6-1948.

The Warrant for this Lodge was signed by

F S McDOWELL Deputy Grand Master

J S MILLER Grand Secretary

The Lodge was consecrated on the 2nd September, 1948.

The Foundation Officers were:-

Wor Master : Norman Devine James

Sen Warden : George Laing Smith

Jun Warden : Murdock John MCKAY (Father)

Secretary : John Tarbert

On the 17-9-69 Lodge McKay moved to Willoughby.

On the 18-4-84 Lodge McKay moved to Kensington