

# World War 1

## The Story of One

### Family from Gairloch



Roderick Macintyre and his wife, Jessie, with sons, John, Alex and Heckie. (Maybe the girl on the right is daughter, Margaret.)

In his book *The Heroes of Gairloch Parish* Willie MacRobbie has listed 585 men and 2 women from the parish who served in the armed forces in WW1 and of these 118 were killed in action. The 1911 census lists the population of the parish as 3318 and almost all the able bodied young men between the ages of 18 and 35 must have been mobilised. Almost 1 in 5 did not return and many of the others were badly wounded.



Sgt. Hector Macintyre

Roy Macintyre's father, Sergeant Hector (Heckie) Macintyre, 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforth Highlanders, was badly wounded at the battle of Neuve Chapelle on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1915. Like many others he joined the Territorial Army before the war, having enlisted on February 17<sup>th</sup> 1911. They were mobilised when war was declared. They trained in Bedford and were drafted to France in November 1914. The postcard below shows soldiers from the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths in Bedford some time in 1914.

Heckie was probably fortunate to be wounded because six of his platoon were killed at Neuve Chapelle and a seventh died a few days later from his injuries. The Battle of Neuve Chapelle in the Artois region of France lasted from the 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> of March and from the battalion there were 41 killed and 131 wounded. 'D' Company (Gairloch), who led the advance, suffered greatly. Many men were wounded and twelve died.

John MacLennan known as 'Johnnie Scotty', from Kinlochewe whose brother Heckie was one of the casualties, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for rescuing Heckie from no-mans-land under heavy enemy fire. His photograph is below. Johnnie was later wounded in the battle of Aubers Ridge at Festuberg on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1915. He died in Kinlochewe 9<sup>th</sup> November 1921.



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Heckie was in hospital for several months and was discharged on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1916. From his brother John's letters it can be seen that it must have taken some time for him to have recovered and been able to travel.



This photograph shows Heckie on the right-hand side with his left foot heavily plastered.

Just before Heckie left for France when he was 28 years old he sent a postcard from Southampton to his sister, Maggie, in Strath.

*'En route for France. Destination there unknown.*

*Sorry have been so busy last few days could not write. Was overjoyed to have a visit from A. J. & Don yesterday. They stayed till today to see me off. J. promised to give you all the news. This is a picture of me and my section who*



*are nearly all here. Love to you all. Will write as often as they'll let me. H.*

(Presumably A and J were his brothers and Don was his cousin, Donald). This photo shows Heckie standing fifth from the left.

When Heckie was in France he wrote to his brother John, details of whom can be seen below. These proved to be most interesting and were published the Ross-shire Journal.

The first is dated November 16<sup>th</sup> 1914 and it is written in reply to the postcard which John wrote on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Heckie was *'somewhere in North-West France'*, having left Bedford on a

long railway journey to Southampton where they embarked.

*'There were a number of other regiments there waiting, whose names I may not divulge. That night we sailed, and had a fine, if somewhat long and tedious crossing to the port of -----, a place which I seemed to recognise from pictures I had previously seen of it. The sea was as calm as glass most of the time. We struck no mines, and no submarines disputed our right of passage. In the forenoon as we neared the coast two French destroyers passed close to us, one of which dipped her flag to us, while we raised a cheer, which they heartily reciprocated.'*

Heckie described the march to the rest camp where there were shops and that he managed to speak French which he had learned at school. They were then transported by train until their destination was reached. Heckie was billeted in a farmhouse and the farmer had two sons in the war. In this letter Heckie asked for long hose, gloves and pants because of the cold. He also suggested that matches, cigarettes and patent lighters which did not need petrol could be sent.

*'We see planes daily. They look like big dragon flies as they buzz overhead.'*

Although letters were censored Heckie mentioned that the Germans had not advanced since he had arrived except at Dixmude. This is a city and an area in the Flemish province of West Flanders in Belgium. Heckie concluded this first long letter with his thoughts on the war.

*'In this war both sides are so equally balanced, however, and the Germans have taken such precautions to prepare for possible retreat that they can only be beaten by a grinding process of exhausting them. I do not anticipate that Russia will be able to make such a rapid advance to Berlin as everybody seems to expect. At the same time I think the Germans are now beginning to realise they are defeated. We don't get much news here, and know less of what is going on than you do at home.'*

Unfortunately Germany's defeat was not going to happen for some years!

Heckie's next letter, dated December 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, was also very long. He praised the men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and thought that they were then *'finest .... in the British Army'*.

*'Except for a thick plastering of clay on their clothing, and faces which are unshaven, they present little appearance of having fought desperate battles night and day in flooded trenches – often having to remain in the trench for six to seven days before relief came – for the last three months.'*

Heckie wrote this letter on a rest period and he was in an empty house that had been commandeered. Although he was not able to say where he had been he mentioned that

*'... we began to see more and more frequent indications of the fighting that had taken place in the greater number of wooden crosses which were to be seen by the roadside, in ploughed fields, everywhere and anywhere. Arrived at a certain place, which I suppose I may not name,*

*we found the church in ruins. The Germans had fixed a couple of machine guns in the tower, and the British artillery had destroyed the building with a well placed shell.'*

He continued by describing his week in this place where he occupied a barn near the church as well as the reserve trenches behind those in which were housed the 1<sup>st</sup>. Although the Germans shelled the trenches Heckie thought that these were not as superior as those which belonged to the British.

Some of Heckie's prose is quite poetic.

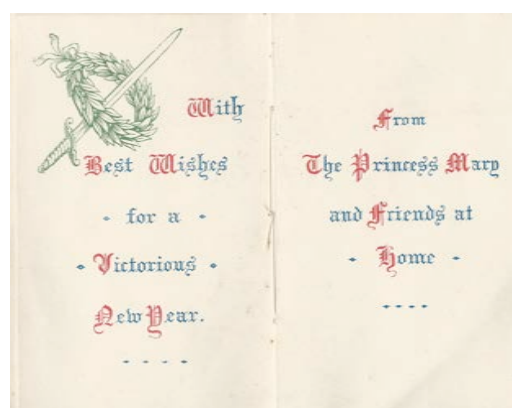
*'... and shells clove the air with a sound as of a moaning wind through a forest on a stormy night. Musketry rattled, shrapnel exploded far in front, machine guns now and then interposed with a rat-a-tat. German star shells floated and sank gracefully down, shedding a brilliant light which turned night into day for miles around.'*

And then he writes about an 'awful battle'.

*'Imagine the worst thunderstorm you have ever heard. It was as if some trap door in hell had opened and let loose ten thousand demons, who traversed the air in roaring chariots of destruction. Cannon belched flame, shells moaned like lost souls, and rifles sputtered death and destruction wholesale, while the sky was filled with a baleful cold flickering light, which gave the whole an atmosphere as of the pit that is bottomless.'*

Heckie went on to explain that most of the casualties came from hand grenades, thrown from trench to trench, sometimes as close as ten yards or less. He also stated that the Germans didn't use dum-dum bullets. What they did was to extract the bullet before firing it and replace it flat end outwards. This meant that on impact it somersaulted or tore holes in people.

He finished by saying that they had been issued with fur coats to wear in the trenches which made them look like Eskimos. They had also received Princess Mary's Gift which he was going to send home. In November of that year people in Britain were asked to send money to a 'Sailors & Soldiers Christmas Fund' which has been created by Princess Mary, the seventeen year old daughter of King George V and Queen Mary. This was a 'gift from the nation' to those serving overseas on Christmas Day 1914 and took the form of a brass box with a pipe, a lighter, an ounce of tobacco and twenty cigarettes. The words in the card inside said 'Victorious New Year' 1915.



The third letter to be published was dated February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 1915. Heckie writes about an encounter with the enemy. He and his men were in waterlogged trenches and they were waist deep in icy cold water. There was also snow on the ground. They were continually fired at by German

snipers. The Battalion suffered few casualties. Heckie praises the British gunners but it is interesting to read about the progress made on the front line.

*'We have now been out here for more than three months, during which time there has not been 100 yards progress made along the greater part of the front.'*



There are several photographs showing Heckie in war-time, probably most of these, if not all, were taken in England. This one shows him leaning against the back of the car.

Heckie's younger brother, John, wrote to him after he had been sent back to England to

recuperate. The first letter is dated April 13<sup>th</sup> 1915 and was written from Strath. John's letters were quite long and were chatty, telling his brother much about life back in the Gairloch area.

*'Alex was home for the weekend. He arrived Saturday night and left early this (Tuesday) morning by Colin Gunn's car. Maggie and I went up to Achnasheen along with him. We left at 5.30 a.m. and caught the 8.05 train at Achnasheen.....The morning was delightful : one of the old-fashioned Spring mornings : a freshness in the air, a clear sky with a few stars still trying hard to shine through, a fresh coating of snow on Ben Alligin, and the bluer than it can be even in Devon. The drive both ways was glorious.....'*

*'...The other Neuve Chapelle wounded of D company are getting on well I believe, though none of them have got home yet....'*

*'I am all but 'fed up' at doing nothing. Could get into Kitcheners or Regulars right off, also into navy...'*

John mentioned that the B company from Dingwall had sustained losses with many seriously wounded by shrapnel. 'Kitcheners' refers to the New Army or Kitchener's Army which, at first was an all-volunteer army set up after the outbreak of the war in 1914. The 'Regulars' were units of professional soldiers who formed the regular army by joining for a fixed term.

John's second letter to Heckie was dated May 20<sup>th</sup> and again he wrote about what he knew about the casualties of war.

*'...Jimmie Bain sent an excellent letter home describing the fruitless attacks. The men fell in heaps he said. He himself had to take shelter in a shell hole in front of the trench and who*

*should he find in it but his cousin Kennie, Achnashellach, quite unhurt. They lay there for hours with wounded lying on top of them and were finally rescued by the men in the trench digging a tunnel, through which they passed...'*

Letter number three was dated May 27<sup>th</sup>.

*'... There is no further news of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths. They are said to be again in the trenches. Some letters came last night but they were very strictly censored, unusually so....'*

*'...The road from here to Poolewe is in a scandalous condition. You can't cycle on it : you can walk on it only with difficulty. They have a roller, a motor one, but it is lying idle at the foot of the Glen and consequently benefitting the road little...'*

The next letter was still from Strath and was dated June 3<sup>rd</sup>. John often mentioned how he felt about those who made excuses for not going to war. He wrote of the recruiting officers who found it difficult to drum up support for the war.

*'....we are glad you are getting on well, and have so far recovered as to wobble about with the aid of crutches. Perhaps you'll be home soon : I wish you could come very soon as I am now too long at home...'*

*'I had a recruitment sergeant visiting me today.... His brother was wounded at Neuve Chapelle and he said he knew you well...'*

*'...I have papers partly signed for the navy. Do you think that it is as good as the army? You are left entirely on your own responsibility in charge of 70-80 men, get in all about 10/6 a day, and the rank and uniform of a sublieutenant...'*

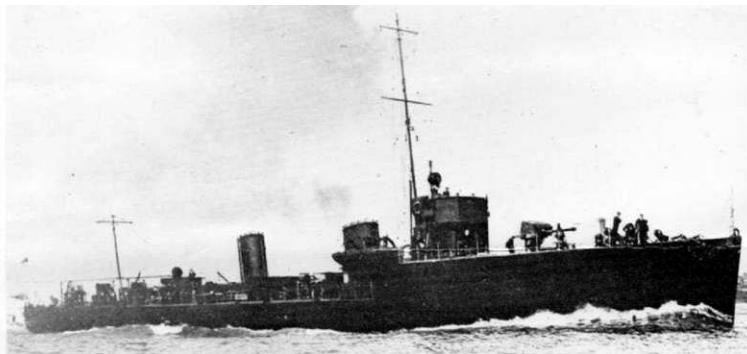
At last John is able to serve his country. His letter written on June 17<sup>th</sup> was from Glasgow. John was in his final year as a medical student when he went to war.

*'It so happens that my note this week falls to be written in Glasgow and .... I am no longer plain J. E. MacIntyre but Surgeon Probationer J. E. M., R.N.V.R. I am down here being fitted with uniform, that of a sub-lieutenant of the R.N.V.R. with a red band denoting the medical branch. I expect to get home again ere I join a boat!'*

*'.....My carriage was full of men in uniform, Seaforths, marines, and blue jackets, and I was the only one not in uniform. It is a trying experience these days in a northern train for they are always crowded with soldiers and sailors, and you, being nothing, don't count!'*

On the Wednesday John is still writing from the same Glasgow address. Obviously Heckie is nearly well enough to travel and maybe there was a convalescent home at Conon Bridge.

*'When are you getting to Conan (sic) Bridge? You'll have whole battalions visiting you there.'*  
*'It is a year this week since the 4<sup>th</sup> Seaforths went to France and there was many a man who walked that road to the station that day who never walked a British road again but they have done magnificently.'*



John was assigned to the destroyer, *HMS Ardent* which was built in 1913 by William Denny and Brothers of Dumbarton. For some reason he returned to Strath and wrote

again to Heckie. This letter was dated September 15<sup>th</sup>. Whether he had been on the *Ardent* is not known. Scotstoun is on the River Clyde and is a part of Glasgow.

*'...The Ardent is still down in Scotstoun and I have heard nothing about her...'*

The next letter which is undated except for the day, Monday, was written from *H.M.S. Ardent*, 4<sup>th</sup> Flotilla. From this the reader can begin to understand what conditions were like at sea.

*'Early last week we had two days of the North Sea at its worst. I never thought there could be such enormous waves. They threw us about and played with us as the biggest Gairloch seas would do with Glisie's boat. Going against them they drenched the whole deck and we ran up and down them a la Scenic railway. Side we rolled till everything in the wardroom that was loose to do so struggled in a confused heap all over the place. Running with it was easier on the ship, and, standing in the hatchway, you could see the huge waves chasing you, and rising so high above the ship that it seemed certain they would fall away and the stern would be thirty feet or more above the nearest water. At times it left the stern completely and that was bad, for the propellers raced.....'*

and later in the letter he continues with this description :

*'The way a destroyer jumps about is simply awful. She is always rolling, but in a gale at sea like this she gives the most fearsome leaps into wave troughs and the fall makes the ship shudder all over most frightfully. Bigger ships than we were moved a bit these days I can tell you, and in one point we are better than the big boats, for every sea goes over them en masse as they do over the Glas eilean. 'Taking the seas green' they call this, as opposed to 'taking it white' which is when the spray flies over.'*

However, Heckie is still not at Conon.

On 26<sup>th</sup> September 1915 John wrote again to Heckie from *H.M.S. Ardent*, 4<sup>th</sup> Flotilla, c/o



Admiralty Mail Officer, Inverness. It appears that Heckie is still having problems with moving but he had been invited to stay at a hotel in Braemar and John thought that this was a good idea. It is not known where the ship was in harbour but the weather was still very poor.

*'We ran slap-dash into a gale here, after leaving in the south most glorious weather. The sun is gone and today and yesterday we have been straining at two anchors, and jumping and bobbing in a manner most disgraceful for a ship in harbour. We are lucky to be out of reach of a great sea which must run in the open today for even in here there is a sea which makes the work of small boats impossible and we are quite isolated....'*

John mentioned that brother Alick went off to Wales on the Thursday and that someone from the front was back in Gairloch and he had spoken of the great preparations there were for the British to break through, mentioning gas pipes, guns up in the firing line and asphyxiating shells.

John's next letter from the ship was undated and sent c/o the G.P.O. Fog had delayed the mail but he was pleased to hear that Heckie had been operated upon successfully.

On November 11<sup>th</sup> the Ardent was at sea and had left Glasgow. Heckie was still not at Conon but Alick was mentioned as looking very well when John saw him in Glasgow and he wrote *'the training is stiffening him a good bit and he looks much healthier'*. Much of this letter describes life on board.

*'.....We had a nasty night after leaving dock, very nasty, but it was a picnic compared to yesterday and the day before. We were shaken almost to bits, we had seas right over us every thirty seconds, we had water swishing about in the wardroom and everywhere. It is on a day like this you want your reporters to come to see what the navy is doing. It was absolutely dangerous to show yourself on deck. I wasn't sick though I was that night leaving dock. The men on watch are of course, wet through with the North Sea and to make their discomfort greater there are continuous showers of hail, and a piercing wind, while in order to keep their feet they have to hold on like grim death to iron stanchions, or even tie themselves.*

*Considering too, that they, most of them, do their work almost 1000 miles nearer the North Pole than the trenches in Flanders are, I don't think the soldiers ever need to envy them...'*

*'.... It is now 3.30pm and so dark that the lamps are being lit. On deck it is still quite light, but the scuttles are so small that it soon gets dim down below. We have a good fire going and altogether are very cosy. The ward room is about the size of one of the rooms at home and quite a respectable place in harbour. On a settee I sleep at sea, in harbour I sleep in the charthouse, an iron structure under the bridge.'*

The scuttles are small openings or hatches with a movable lid in the deck or hull of a ship and

obviously are able to let in some light.

Clearly John was considering thinking about changing his job as the following sentences show.

*'Have been asked to volunteer for the minesweeping service and don't know whether I shall do so or not. We get 11. a day extra. I think it is a very unsatisfactory business. No fighting but always risk. They are fine big boats though new ones though.'*

A Trawler Section of the Royal Navy Reserve became the first mine sweepers.

The final letter sent to Heckie which has been kept was written on November 23<sup>rd</sup> c/o the Admiralty Mail Officer in Inverness. Heckie, it seems, is improving and might be able to get as far as Dingwall. Heckie was discharged because of the wounds sustained in both his legs on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1916. John had been ashore quite a bit and had been on route marches. He mentioned that there hadn't been many Derby recruits in the Gairloch area. By June 1915 this Derby Scheme was introduced which was a voluntary recruitment policy. If men voluntarily registered their names they would only be called up when necessary and married men would only be called for service when there were no more single men. But this scheme was not successful and was stopped in December. In this letter there is a sentence which indicates that even by 1915 John wanted the war to end.

*'... and I wonder how long this blooming war is going to last.'*

In a letter written from Gray's Hospital, Elgin, on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1916 Heckie writes to a Captain Smith. He is obviously concerned about his treatment. He mentions that he had been operated on at Oldmill (was this in Aberdeen?) and that when he was convalescent after that operation he had been led to believe that he would be sent to the country to recuperate. He believed that he would have been sent to West Cults but that didn't happen and he had half an hour's notice to *'draw his kit'* and go to Elgin. Heckie wrote :

*'I have no complaint whatever to make of our treatment here which is of the best but we have less liberty here and get less open air exercise which is what I require, than we did in Aberdeen.'*

Heckie had to stay in Elgin and have his plaster removed by a Captain Taylor. Heckie believed that this Captain Taylor knew nothing about his knee which *'continues to grow stronger and is now quite straight. It is still, however, very weak and a bit wobbly.'*

Heckie asked Captain Smith if he could explain the situation. Obviously Heckie was concerned that his treatment might be compromised. He ended his letter with :

*'Apologising for troubling you and thanking you for having given me a leg which promises to be of use to me.'*

Writing from the ship on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1916 to his sister, Maggie, John explained that he had been censoring letters and that he had done about 50. He asked that stamps could be sent to him as he found it difficult to get stamps. He also said that he was sent food parcels from many people.

Brother Alex was obviously in France as John wrote :

*'Two days ago or so I had a long letter from Alick full of praise for the lovely country which the Spring has opened for them. Everything is divine, he stays in a chateau, and altogether it is more like a holiday, his sojourn in France, one would think, than anything else. The only thing he hates are the horses. He says awfully nasty things about them.'*

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May John wrote again to Maggie from Glasgow. He was quite disparaging about those who were studying medicine with him and he also wondered if Heckie had gone to Aberdeen because he thought that it wouldn't be good for him to travel too much. It appears that the *Ardent* was in dock for repair.

*'How long I shall be here I don't know : quite a long time unless the old ship gets paid off. I hope she won't as she has proved herself quite an unsinkable creation. She is in dock now and getting on, I'm sure, A.I.'*

John also seemed quite incensed about the Lowestoft Raid which took place on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1916. The German fleet sent a squadron of battlecruisers with other boats such as destroyers to bombard the coastal ports of Yarmouth and Lowestoft (Lowstaff) in East Anglia. Lowestoft was a base for minelaying and Yarmouth was a submarine base. The main aim of the raid was to entice out of the harbours any British ships and then these would be destroyed by the battlecruisers. The raid wasn't as successful as the German had hoped for. John wrote :

*'I shall tell you all the yarn again : it was all the fault of a rotten lot of German Battlecruisers, who would bombard Lowstaff. Have you ever wondered why they did that? Personally it absolutely beats me to make out why they should risk five or six ships, and as many thousand men, ships all of two million pound value at least, to drop some shells on Lowstaff. I don't know whether they are desperate or what it is: I only hope they'll try it again and that this time there won't be a fog.'*

John was then killed at the battle of Jutland on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1916, aged 22 years, and was buried at Tonsberg in Norway. Lieutenant Commander G. A. Marsden described the sinking of the *Ardent* (from *The Battle of Jutland* by Geoffrey Bennett, 1964).

*'The Ardent slowly sank from view and, as the smoke and steam cleared, I could see many heads in the water – about 40 or 50. There was no support beyond lifebuoys (etc.) so I was afraid that few of us could survive. I spoke to many and saw most of them die one by one. Not*

a man showed any fear or death and there was not a murmur, complaint or cry for help.

Their joy was, and they talked about it to the end, that they and the Ardent had 'done their bit.'

Marsden and only one of his crew survived.



Heckie's elder brother Dr Alex Macintyre served as a medical officer in France for two and a half years. There are two letters from Alex written to Heckie from France. The first is dated September 4<sup>th</sup> 1916. It is not known where Heckie was at this time.

Alex was somewhere in France 'not near any big town here.' He mentioned that he hadn't moved far from his last place. (Was he still in the previously mentioned chateau?) One of Alex's jobs was to officiate with the padre at funerals and he also let his brother know about the card game bridge which he had learnt. Alex explained this in detail.

His following letter was dated November 4<sup>th</sup> 1916 and was in reply to a letter from Heckie. There was rain and stormy weather in both France and Scotland and the rain was stopping Alex and his troop from 'getting a move on'. This letter was very descriptive.

*'Well, it is sunset. Dark night has come down so to speak to within a few feet of the western horizon. In the interval in the west between the night-black dense clouds, that overhang the world, the sky is of an intense bright salmon red.*

*The fringed lower margins of the cloud shines a beautiful lilac & woolly light clouds shining a bright silvery pink and away east in the blue sky things are happening.'*

These 'happenings' were *'fine points of sharp bright flame .... like small electric sparks'* and *'peculiar muffled popping explosions'*. Alex was describing the war in the distance and the

*'little black things moving among the clouds passing & re-passing each other, rising & diving like the insects & some of them coming nearer grow bigger & bigger till you hear the loud hum of them passing overhead, the aeroplane scouts on their way back to roost while others coming from their roosting place pass overhead towards the clouds...'*

Alex continued by describing the tents which were *'all shades of muddy colours'* and *'the smoke of a thousand camp fires'*. As he looked to the west he could see men on horseback, *'silhouetted against the sky'*. As the evening fell all seemed peaceful until there was a bright flash from the ground, then four more in quick succession and then another four. These sounds were followed by more bangs and

*'the shrieks and moans of the great guns firing & the big shells passing over to the east while a few seconds afterwards came the peculiar sound of the shells exploding in the enemy lines like someone in the distance dropping heavy loads on to the bottom of a great empty tank.'*

It is from letters like this that people back in Great Britain learnt about the horrors of the war.

Alex continued this long letter by asking questions about the meaning of war. He describes man as an actor.

*'Here on this terrible stage he seems to enact over again all the terrible things mankind has had to come through in the past against all the forces of nature & the wild.....What does it all mean?'*

He ponders on the reasons for war.

*'All the reasons our learning can bring forward are not sufficient for man acts through an instinct that lies deeper than reason.'*

Unfortunately some of his words cannot be read due to damage with the original letter. Alex obviously was disturbed by the reasons men went to war. As he attempts explanations about why there had to be war he also describes the absurdity of his situation. The scene is 'weird' as he can see the lights from the guns and the fire and he can hear the big guns in the distance.

*'In the midst of the thunder of guns you hear all around you the crunching wheels and the tramping feet of invisible motors & men & you have to develop senses like the cat to feel your way through and you begin to feel yourself a wild beast among wild beasts in the wild.'*

Alex was obviously trying to make some sense of the war.

*'Ambitious soldiers have planned & produced vast & perfect war machines, the admiration of the whole world & have gone forth in confidence seeking great gains, only, in spite of all, to be swept away at the height of their glory & all their evil influences & institutions eliminated.'*

Before finishing with a mundane closing paragraph Alex wrote

*'Among the dark clouds they have called up over the world, over the battlefield which they have manured with corpses expecting a harvest of great power & wealth the finger of God shall point a way to those whose motives are only justice and right and there shall be a victory which let us hope shall prove to mankind once & for all the vanity of wall. Who is there nowadays who will take a gun & lay himself in ambush to kill his neighbour? Men have learned the folly of such proceedings. Let the fate of those who started this awful war be such as will teach nations the lesson that individuals have learned long ago.'*

It would be interesting to have known how Heckie and other members of the family read and understood Alex's sentiments.

In this photograph Dr. Alex Macintyre is on the left, as a Captain in the R.A.M.C. which is the Royal Army Medical Corps. John is seated on the right. After the war Alexander was a doctor in Airdrie, Lanarkshire, and was very well thought of.



In the publication *Call the Middle Watch* by P.F.R. Corson there are references to the Macintyres. The writer and his companions arrived in Gairloch and went to what they believed was the Macintyre's house. They found that the parents had died and that a son had been killed at Jutland. However, they were taken to the shop and found Heckie, who had been wounded at the Front, working in the shop. They mentioned that Heckie's sister was a schoolteacher. However, *'these two were so lugubrious over their family affairs that we thought we had had enough for one evening and wandered back to the hotel.'* Later it was discovered that *'They've had a lot of bad luck in that family. Mistress Macintyre is ... gone... an' Mister Macintyre ....an' the son too ... ye heard he was in the Navy no doubt... He was killed in the Arrdent... that was hiss boat.'*

The family had lost their mother, Jessie, in a tragic road accident at Loch Rosque in May 1912 and their father Roderick died just weeks before Johnnie was drowned. Two sisters and two brothers were left with Heckie recuperating from his injuries. Heckie married Isabella Mackenzie in

August 1918. Over the next 15 years they had a family of five boys and one girl of whom Roy Macintyre is the youngest.

Although many of the young men from the parish sent home letters describing the terrible conditions in the trenches and the carnage there was in the encounters with the German army who had superior firepower in the early months of the war, after the war not many of them wanted to talk about their experiences.

With thanks to Roy Macintyre for his information