

A SOLDIER OF THE 2/15TH



GENERAL SIR ARTHUR MacDONALD KBE.CB.
Proposer to the Toast
2/15th Battalion.



Sir Arthur Leslie MacDonald KBE. CB. MID (30 January 1919 – 20 January 1995) was a senior officer in the Australian Army, who served in the positions of Chief Of the General Staff from 1975 to 1977, then Chief of the Defence Force Staff from 1977 to 1979; the professional head of the Australian Army and Australian Defence Force respectively

Arthur MacDonald was born in Rockhampton Queensland, on 30 January 1919. Entering the Royal Military College, Duntroon, he graduated as a Lieutenant in 1939, and was posted to the 2/15th Battalion the following year for active service during the Second World War. MacDonald remained with the unit until the end of the war, which included seeing action at Tobruk and El Alamein during the North African Campaign, and New Guinea in the South West Pacific.

In the 1953 New Years Eve Honours list, MacDonald was appointed an Order of the British Empire for his service with the Australian Army Staff Corps. On 14 March 1953, MacDonald was posted to Korea and assumed command of the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. During his command of the unit, MacDonald was Mentioned in Despatches for his "personal example and professional ability". He returned to Australia during February 1954, and was posted as Director of Military Operations.

In 1965, MacDonald was posted as Commander Papua New Guinea Command. He returned to Australia the following year, and was posted as Deputy Chief of the General Staff and later as Adjutant General to the Australian Army. On 26 January 1968, MacDonald arrived in Vietnam and assumed command of the army component of the Australian forces in the country. He served in this position until February 1969, at which time he was re-posted as Adjutant General. For his services in Vietnam, MacDonald was appointed a Companion of the Order of Bath.

During 1975, MacDonald was promoted to Lieutenant General and assumed the position of Chief of the General Staff; the professional head of the Australian Army. Only two years later he was promoted to General and appointed Chief of the Defence Force Staff on 21 April 1977. In the 1978 New Year's Honours List, MacDonald was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire. Arthur MacDonald retired from the Australian Army on 20 April 1979. You will notice in the photo above that he proposed the toast and this was at the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Battalion held at the Riverside Centre, New Farm, in Brisbane in 1990.

Aged 75, he died on 20 January 1995. A military funeral was held in St. John's Cathedral, Brisbane, on 2 February 1995. It is fitting then that we include a photo of his plaque at the Mt Thompson Memorial Gardens in Brisbane.