



Major General D.R. KERR CBE, ED

[1910 – 1985]



General Kerr was President of the Club 1960 – 62

Donald Ross Kerr was born in Charleville on 23 February 1910 to James and Olive Kerr.

No records of his early life have been located however, In 1936 he was living in the Dalby area and a local newspaper article described that he was playing hockey and had instigated the formation of a hockey association in that town.

We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.

Please do not reproduce them or distribute them outside of the Club membership.

The engagement of Donald Ross Kerr to Veronica Collins was announced on 29 April 1935. They were married on 7 June 1936 in the All Saints Church at Wickham Terrace, Brisbane. They had a son (still born) on 28 June 1934, twin daughters, on 25 August 1941 and a son, on 16 March 1948.

On his enlistment application Donald described his civilian occupation as a bank officer and later he is recorded as being a bank manager.

Donald was appointed as a Lieutenant (Probationary) in the Australian Field Artillery on 1 October 1931. He served in the 5th and 11th Field Brigades, was promoted to Captain on 4 October 1935 and to Temporary Major 20 December 1939. He transferred to the 2nd AIF and was appointed to the 2/10 Field Regiment, as a Major, on 21 July 1940.

On 2nd February 1941 Major Kerr embarked, with his regiment, for Malaya and on 18 February 1941 he disembarked in Singapore. He was engaged in action against the Japanese forces until 8 April 1942 when he was recorded as missing in action.

On 17 May 1943 Major Kerr was located and reported as being a prisoner-of-war in a camp in Thailand. On 20 August 1945 he was repatriated to Australia and he arrived in Sydney on 1 November 1945.

On 21 January 1946 he terminated his AIF appointment. On 1 August 1946 Major Kerr was Mentioned in Dispatches "for gallant and distinguished service in Malaya in 1942". On 27 September 1946 he was awarded the Efficiency Decoration.

On 29 April 1952 Donald Kerr was appointed from the Reserve of Officers, as a Major. He was, subsequently promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and appointed as the Commanding Officer of 30th Medium Artillery Regiment. On 11 February 1954 he was promoted to temporary Brigadier and on 31 October 1957 he was appointed a Brigadier. He subsequently served as the Commander of 5th Army Group Royal Artillery until 10 April 1958.

On 23 April 1959 he was appointed an ADC to the Queen and served in that position until 1961. In 1962 he is recorded as being the Commander of the Command and Staff Training Unit in North Queensland.

On 1 December 1962 Brigadier Kerr was promoted to Major General and was appointed as the CMF Member of the Military Board. He served in that position until 15 October 1964. He was awarded the CBE in the 1963 New Year's Honours list. On 16 October 1965 he was appointed Colonel Commandant of the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery.

On 24 February 1967 Major General Kerr was transferred to the Retired List with the rank of Major General.

An article in the Rainbow Beach Community News Letter describes: *"Camp Kerr (Wide Bay) was named in honour of Major General Donald Ross Kerr CBE ED who played an integral role in the formation of the Wide Bay Training Area in the period following World War 2"*

General Kerr was a long-time member of the United Service Club and served on the committee many times. He was a Vice President from 1954 to 1960 and the President from 1960 to 1962. He was recorded in a club bulletin as stating *'from the time of my assuming duties as your President, most business has felt the effect of the credit squeeze..... however, it is pleasing to report.....there has been a very satisfactory improvement in the club's financial position.'*

Major General Donald Ross Kerr CBE ED died on 22 October 1984 and is buried in the Dayboro Cemetery.

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports, and sundry documents