

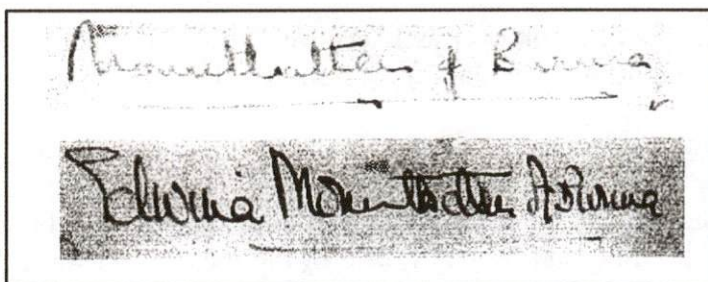
The following article was published in The Newsletter of the Clarence River Historical Society (Established 1931) on Captain Ivan E. Layton M.B.E. Some of the Legatees will remember Ivan Layton in the role of Executive Officer at Melbourne Legacy (1949 - 1979). We thank the Clarence River Historical Society Inc. for permission to use this material.

Captain Ivan E. Layton M.B.E

The Army uniforms of the late Captain Ivan Layton, together with two interesting photographs were purchased recently by the society. Both photos have autographed signatures on them. Captain Ivan Layton was the recipient of the photos having served part of his army career with Blamey.



Lord and Lady Mountbatten of Burma



His service, to the Army and also the community, is not well known.

Field Marshall Sir Thomas Blamey



Born in Grafton to Henry Edward and Essie Edna Layton on 16th May, 1914, he was a brother to Lexie Paine (nee Layton). They resided in Alice St.

Educated at both Grafton Public and High Schools his name appears in the 1929 Graftonian as author (Ivan Layton 4A) to an article extolling the virtues of a teacher, Mr G. A. Thompson, the maths master for fourteen years who was being promoted as headmaster to Gunnedah.

On leaving school Ivan took a position with Mr Strauss the Jeweller, in Prince Street as Shop Assistant. He formed the Ivan Layton Quartet featuring L. Bondfield, Noel Lovell, Flora Ford and himself. Ivan was an accomplished pianist and performed also with a group who called themselves 'The Golliwogs'.

He became secretary of the Grafton High School Old Student's Union, Scoutmaster of the 2nd Grafton Scout Troop and in his association with other public organisations, Ivan was always involved with the annual Jacaranda festival.

It is believed he was on duty at 2GF when word came from the BBC that Australia was at war. Early in 1939 he enlisted as a Signaller in the Australia Corps of Signals, 2nd A.I.F. He was quickly commissioned and saw active service in the South West Pacific area.

He found himself in the Islands and when General Sir Thomas Blamey arrived at his unit it was decided that an important press conference be held. Captain Layton was given the job of organising it. How well he accomplished a strange duty can be judged by the fact that General Blamey within a short time had him appointed as his personal Staff Captain, which appointment he continued to occupy until General Blamey's retirement. He then became Personal Staff Captain to Major General C. H. Simpson and was still in that job when he was finally discharged.

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Captain Ivan E. Layton M.B.E Continued...



At various times during his Army career, Mr Layton was adjutant of the 41st N.S.W. Battalion, Battalion and Brigade Catering Officer and Secretary to General Blamey's Mess.

In a letter written to Ivan from Field-Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey on 13th November, 1945-the Field-Marshal's last day in the army - he wrote:

"As I am leaving the Army today, I should like to express to you my very great appreciation of the excellent services you have rendered whilst serving on my personal staff...I am more grateful than I can say to you for the high quality of the service you rendered."

When war ended he took over as Executive Officer of Melbourne Legacy, a position he held for 30 years. He did return to Grafton for the Jacaranda festival in 1946.

Wendy Faulkner, his private secretary for fourteen of those years, spoke highly of him as a man devoted to his task of overseeing the work of Legacy and seeing it grow not only in Victoria but Australia wide. She said he had a love of the theatre and was a very great friend of Gracie Fields. Not ever marrying he was the fond escort of many of Melbourne's matrons to functions. Counted among his many friends were Nurse Vivian Bullwinkle and Weary Dunlop.

Recently in a letter to this society she wrote "Ivan was on first name terms with so many of the Who's Who of famous Australian citizens it would be impossible to list. His Christmas Card list was never ending. I know, I had to type the envelopes, stacks of them."



*Ivan Layton Quartet
Ivan at microphone*

In June, 1965, he was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his services to Legacy. His general interest in public activities can be judged from the facts that two organisations, the N.S.W. Ambulance Transport Service Board and the Grafton High School Old Student's Union made him an Honorary Life Member.

After his retirement in June, 1979, he was nominated to become a member of the Legacy Club of Melbourne. It was not long after this that his health deteriorated and he passed away on 16th September of that year. He was cremated and his ashes were interred in the Grafton cemetery.

GOLD CARD ELIGIBILITY



At recent meetings of Legatees, it has been revealed that many widows are quite unclear as to those who are and those who are not eligible for the Gold Card. Some even have the mistaken idea that the Gold Card is an automatic entitlement on the death of their husband.

Steps have been and are still being taken by Legacy in an endeavour to have a Gold Card, which has been granted to an ex-serviceman transferred on his death, to his widow, but so far these efforts have been unsuccessful.

To help clarify the position, currently **the Gold Card is only issued to a deceased ex-serviceman's widow, if she is granted a War Widow's Pension.**

The War Widow's Pension is granted to the widow of an ex-serviceman when the cause of death is determined to have been related in some way to operational service or eligible service. Applications for this pension must be submitted to the Department of Veteran Affairs.

Widows requiring further advice on this matter are advised to seek assistance from their contact Legatee, or from Legacy House on 9663 3564.