Macdonald was a student on the Experimental Plots at HAC during 1913. As a 20 year old salesman born in Newcastle, NSW, he joined the AIF’s 2nd Battalion in August 1914 with the rank of Sergeant. At his own request in May 1915 he reverted to the rank of Corporal. He landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 as a member of the 2nd Battalion but was later killed in the Battle for Lone Pine on 6 August. While his Service Record records that his body was recovered, the gravesite could not be later located. He is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey.