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September 8, 1939

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

My nephew, Harry Lay, Jr., of Barrie, Ontario, is, I understand, very anxious to get into the Air Service on a short service commission. I also understand that any application must be supported by character references.

I, of course, know my nephew intimately. I have followed his development from year to year with the closest interest and attention. I have had only the highest admiration for his character year after year as it has developed and revealed itself. His habits are all that could be desired in any young man. He neither drinks nor smokes, and his moral character is exemplary. In the community in which he lives he is generally recognised as outstanding among the younger men.

For some time, his heart has been very much in the national service, in one of the defence forces of Canada, particularly the Air Force. This, I believe, is an inherited desire and aptitude. His father, Mr. H. M. Lay, comes of a family which has a long and honourable record in the defence forces of the United Kingdom. His grandfather, on his mother's side, (my father) was a member of the volunteer forces of Canada at the time of the Fenian Raid. His father before him came to Canada with a detachment of the Royal Horse Artillery from Scotland, in the thirties, and served in the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-38. Lay's maternal grandfather, W. L. Mackenzie, also came of a family which had a long and highly honourable record of military service. Mackenzie's readiness to defend the cause of freedom, as he saw it, with his life, was also evident in his part in the Rebellion of 1837-38.

If given a commission, I believe young Lay would do honour to any service of which he might become a member.

King, Rt. Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie (MG  
26 J 7 volume 19) Lay family -  
Correspondence 1934-1942

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