

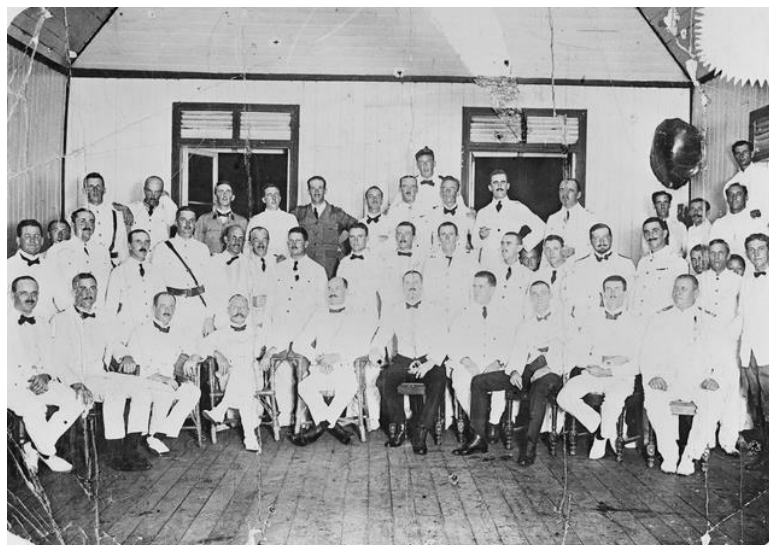
Lt

KEITH HERITAGE

Keith was born in Longford, Tasmania on 16th Sept 1882, the son of George Thomas Henry Heritage and his wife Eleanor Boyce, nee Hadfield. His father was an Inspector of Education, his father having been transported to Tasmania as a convict, convicted of stealing.

Keith spent 5 years in the Tasmanian Infantry Regiment and was colour sergeant in the Machine Gun Section. He was also a champion rower and was a member of the Australian crew that won the Grand Challenge Cup at the Royal Henley Regatta in 1912, before being selected as a reserve in the Australian eights for the 1912 Stockholm Olympics.

On 11th August 1914 he joined the AN&MEF as a Lieutenant and was appointed Transport Officer. In Rabaul on 4th October he was appointed Supply Officer to the garrison.



Officers of AN&MEF in Officers Mess, Rabaul. Keith is centre rear in dark uniform. His brother Maj Frances Bede Heritage is 3rd from left, front row.

In his diary, Capt Brian Pockley, the Medical Officer, noted on 19th August, "In evening had a chat with Keith Heritage and Maguire {Maj Frederick}. Find Heritage a very decent fellow." Capt Pockley was killed at Herbertshohe on 11th Sept and on 30th October, Keith noted "I have read some Sydney paper reports, in general, as to the operations hereabouts – much grossly inaccurate. I think my account of the 11th may be relied upon, as I made a special point of at once obtaining connective particulars."

Keith, who was part of the force that captured the Bita Paka Radio Station, had written an account of the action, death, and subsequent burial of Capt Pockley, to his widow on 17th September 1914

Keith returned to Australia on 17th Feb 1915 aboard the NAVUA and was discharged from the AN&MEF on 4th March 1915.

On 7th May 1915 he received a commission as Lt in the 19th Battalion and left with the battalion on 25th June aboard the CERAMIC, arriving in Alexandria on 23rd July. He arrived at ANZAC Cove on 19th August where he served until the evacuation in late December. He was promoted Captain on 6th Feb

1916 and went to Marseilles on 18th March. In June he was in command of a raiding party near Amentieres. On reaching the German Trenches, they blew up two bomb stores and took 4 prisoners. Heritage single handedly carried a wounded man back to the Australian trenches through intense bombardment. He was the last man of the party to leave the hostile trench and was awarded the Military Cross for his conspicuous gallantry, dash and leadership.



Lt Keith Heritage.

On the night of the 26th July 1916 Keith was in the trenches at Pozieres. While making his rounds he noticed two soldiers on guard looked very tired. He told them to get a few hours sleep, and took their watch. He also gave them some of his own food, which was in short supply owing to blocked supply routes. As the two men lay down to rest nearby, a large high-explosive shell landed killing Keith almost immediately.

Keith is commemorated at the Pozieres British Cemetery, Ovillers-La Boisselle, France and on Panel 88 at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.