

Vince Aitkin Family History Document

The Story of Frank Keith Aitkin (1895 - 1915) AIF Reg. Number 1869 - 3rd Division Reinforcements - Signaller

a revised report first compiled by Vince Aitkin in
June 2013.

Revised Jan 2024



Frank Keith Aitkin 4.1.1895 - 7.8.1915

This report describes what is known about my first cousin, Frank Keith Aitkin, who died as the result of wounds suffered in action at Gallipoli, Turkey on August 1915 during the battle for Lone Pine. Frank was a 20-year-old Signaller. Facts have been discovered from original historic documents, publications and interviews obtained over more than ten years of research and are current at the time this document was first compiled in June 2013 and with later amendments. The investigation into this relative is ongoing as time permits and the writer expects there will be more information to share later. This report should be read in conjunction with and addendums that may be included as final pages.

This story has been compiled for Vincent Frances Aitkin, Samuel West and Joshua West. This revised edition (December 2022) was updated and published for Cody West.

The birth of Frank Keith Aitkin:

The birth details of Frank Keith Aitkin (described in hereafter simply as Frank) was registered with the Registrar of NSW Births Deaths and Marriages in Sydney and he is described as Francis McNamara (McNamara was his mother's family name and later Frank assumed the surname of his father Morehead George AITKIN). Frank was born on 4th January 1895 at The Benevolent Asylum in Paddington, Sydney. This was an institution providing for the care of the poor and often unwed mothers as well as destitute citizens approaching the end of life. It was located in Devonshire Street Sydney on land that was repurposed in the early 1900's for the construction of the Central Railway Station complex. The Asylum and adjacent large cemetery were dismantled as part of the works programme. Frank's birth certificate describes him as illegitimate and his father's name is not listed. At some early stage during his short life Francis became known as Frank Keith Aitkin.

About his mother: Gertrude Hannah McNamara

Gertrude Hannah McNamara was a spinster, born in Adelaide in 1875 and came from a large South Australian farming family. Her parents emigrated from Ireland and were farmers in South Australia.

Gertrude's father, Stephen, died in 1877 and her mother, Honoria, died 20 years later in 1897. They were farmers at Gumeracha, a small hillside village some 100 kilometres north of Adelaide. In 2022 there are no surviving family members in that district.

In 1893 Gertrude gave birth to a daughter called Elsie Aitkin. The birth occurred at 23 Windsor Street Paddington which was the residence of George Cruikshank Aitkin and his wife Mary. They are the parents of their son Morehead George Aitkin who was Frank's father. Whilst the birth certificate for Elsie states the mother is Louisa Aitkin (the wife of Morehead George Aitkin) there is documentary evidence to dispute this recorded detail and in fact her mother was Gertrude. Elsie's birth certificate records her father as Morehead George Aitkin. Elsie had a turbulent life and became a world traveller and celebrated opera singer. But her life is really another story and too distracting to go into in depth in this work. She died aged 38, survived by a husband and son. She is buried in Toowoomba cemetery, Queensland.

Gertrude had 3 brothers and 6 sisters and by the turn of the century they were scattered across Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales.

In 1895 Gertrude's only son Frank was born. Frank's mother, Gertrude Hannah McNamara, (described previously and in future as Gertrude) is also listed as the informant and mother for the birth registration, and she was aged 20 at the time Frank was born at the Sydney Benevolent Institute.

The Benevolent Society was often described as being in Paddington (an inner eastern suburb of Sydney) but was in better understood today if we think of it as being in Railway Square near the

Central Railway Station site. The Society maintained quite detailed meticulous handwritten records and the admissions register notes that Gertrude was admitted on Fri 28 December 1894 and that she:

- Was 20 years of age
- Native of Adelaide
- Had been in Sydney for 18 months
- Both her parents had died
- Gertrude lived with a Mrs Aitkin at 19 Cascade St Paddington and the notation on the record says that Mrs Aitkin did not want her back after the birth.
- Was made pregnant by a George Aitkin (a married man with family) who had left Sydney 4 months earlier.

Gertrude was discharged back to the care of the same Mrs Aitkin in Paddington on 23 January 1895. It is assumed that Gertrude was a housekeeper at the Cascade Street property where several of the Aitkin family lived, including Mrs Aitkin's husband George Morehead Aitkin.

The Morehead George Aitkin family later relocated from Paddington to a nearby double storied substantial brick dwelling at 6 Watson St Bondi and both Gertrude and Frank moved with them where she acted as a housekeeper. This stately home was provided with servant quarters at the rear. It was owned by Morehead George Aitkin and his wife Louisa. In 1908 the wife of Morehead George Aitkin (Louisa) died and on 16th January 1915 Morehead George Aitkin married Gertrude. Frank was a witness to the marriage and his signature appears on the formal wedding certificate. In 1917 the Watson Street home was sold for £800 and 18 months later was again sold for £1400 to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese and became a residence for priests and senior clergy. Today (2022) it is privately owned by a former hotel proprietor.

Gertrude died on 30th October 1941 at a Rest Home in Summer Hill (Sydney). Whilst Frank is believed to be her only son, in 1893 a daughter named Elsie was born to Gertrude and the father was George Morehead Aitkin. Elsie died in 1931.

About Frank's father Morehead George Aitkin

Research concludes that Frank's father was Morehead George Aitkin (actually Morehead was christened George Morehead Aitkin but along the way rearranged his Christian names slightly, probably to avoid confusion with his father who was named George Cruikshank Aitkin). We will refer to him in future as Morehead. Much can be written about this man but what follows is an abbreviation of his known life and times and provides some important background for the story about Frank.

Morehead was born in Hobart Tasmania in 1846. He and his parents migrated to Sydney sometime in the 1850's and his father George established himself in the wholesale/retail grocery business. Morehead had six brothers and sisters. One of his brothers was my Great-Great Grandfather named John Cruikshank Aitkin.

Morehead followed his father George into the grocery and general merchant business. He owned businesses in Shell Harbour NSW, Brisbane, Broken Hill and in Sydney. Bankruptcy and controversy shadowed him wherever he went, and his businesses collapsed. Sometime around 1892 he, and several of his brothers, moved to Broken Hill during the early times of the booming BHP silver, lead and zinc mining operations. One of Moorhead's brothers was named Frank and he died of TB in 1891 soon after returning from the war in the Sudan, where he served as a volunteer and ambulance orderly.

In 1868 Morehead worked in his father's Grocery business and Post Office in the small coastal Port Town of Shellharbour, some 100 kilometres south of Sydney. He publicly assumed responsibility for fathering a child named George Haddin Aitkin with a local Shellharbour young lass named Haddin. The matter of child support went before the courts and there was much to say about the matter in the local newspapers. The fate of George Aitkin Haddin is unknown and is presently lost to history.

In 1870 Morehead married his first wife, Louisa Sarah Ann Mann, in Morphett (in the Hunter Valley region) NSW. In that year, Morehead was financed by his father into the grocery store and Post Office business in Shell Harbour, however in 1871 he was convicted of fraud charges and spent 12 months in Darlinghurst Goal until he was freed by the Colonial Governor following a petition signed by many South Coast residents who were convinced of his innocence. He then moved to and commenced a grocery business in Sydney and later Brisbane and Broken Hill.

In 1891 Morehead fathered a child to a Jane Bailey in Sydney, however the illegitimate child died at an early age following injuries sustained in a house fire. Nothing further is known about Jane Bailey.

Morehead spent a lot of time in the law courts resulting from fraud related matters and situations arising from several bankruptcies and trade disputes with suppliers and others. He and Louise had five children. Theirs is another story for another time.

Morehead died on 26 March 1938 at Sydney Hospital aged 94 years following a fall in the toilet at the St James Railway station in the heart of Sydney CBD. For many years he had been living with one of his sons at Kogarah (Sydney). He is buried at Waverley Cemetery next to his father and other relatives.

The life of Frank Aitkin

Frank's birth circumstances are explained on pages two and three.

Nothing is yet known of his primary school education but he enrolled as a student at Sydney High School in 1909 and graduated in 1914. Unfortunately, school records for this period have been destroyed. During those years the school was in Regent Street, not far from Railway Square in Sydney. Today the school is located on a large acreage in Moore Park near the Sydney Show Grounds. It was mostly a school for male high-level achievers where the sons of wealthy families were educated. Keith left after year 12 level (today) and went on to join the Old Boys Union. Records indicate he was into football and surfing and for a time, like so many other young men, he was a member of the army cadets and in his case a member of the 21st Infantry Signallers. After leaving School he joined the wool broking firm of Wright Heaton & Co as a trainee Accountant. His name, together with that of many former students, appears on the WW1 honour board in the main school assembly hall.

During his younger years in Sydney, he became great mates with James Stanger, a fellow his own age who lived with his family at a residence at the corner of Dudley and Fletcher Streets Bondi, some 100 meters or so away from where Keith lived at 6 Watson Street. James's family ran a grocery shop at that corner location. It seems the Stanger family took Frank in, so to speak, and nicked-named him "Kee". This abbreviation of his name came from the fact that one of the Stanger's younger children had difficulty in pronouncing "Keith" and abbreviated it as "Kee". The name stuck and was used by the Stanger family.

Keith spent a lot of time with this family and the Stanger's residence became his second home. Keith was an only child in the nearby Watson Street home which, apart from his mother and father, was also occupied by older members of the Aitkin family. Keith and James roamed the nearby sand hills, which in those days ran behind Bondi Beach, and practiced the signalling skills they learned when attending Army cadets. They surfed and swam the local beaches and coves along the coastline around Bondi.

On 19/1/1908 Morehead's wife Louise died. On 16th January 1915 Frank's father, Morehead, married his mother, Gertrude, in St Matthews Church (C of E) in Bondi. Frank was one of the witnesses to the wedding.

On 30th January 1915 Frank, like so many other young men answering the call to defend the Empire, enlisted into the AIF (Australian Imperial Force - an army of volunteers) at the Bondi recruitment centre. At the same time his mate, James Stanger, enlisted and as a result they were issued concurrent enlistment numbers. They were both allocated to the 3rd Battalion 4th Reinforcements Regiment as Signallers. They carried out their basic training at Liverpool Army Camp and on 17th March 1915 they embarked on the HMS Shropshire (A-9) bound for Egypt.

The vessel arrived in Melbourne on 21/3/1915 and departed 22/3/1915. Next stop was Colombo on 5/4/1915 (departing the same day), then Aden on 12/4/1915 (departing the same day) and arriving at its destination at Suez on 17/4/1915.

On board were 797 soldiers and officers, 14 female nurses from the 1st Australian General Hospital, 7 Officers, children and 424 horses (of whom 24 died of various horse related diseases during the journey). An outbreak of measles occurred during the voyage with an undisclosed number of sufferers. It was reported that the journey was otherwise uneventful and sufficient freshwater was carried without the need to resort to using the onboard distillation process. The vessel was captained by B.G.Hayward and owned by the Federal Steam and Navigation Co. Ltd. of London.

Their training continued on board the vessel and during their short stay whilst camped in Egypt. Both Keith and James were amongst the early reinforcement troops to land on Anzac Cove at Gallipoli on or about the 31st May 1915. Keith's war records do not indicate that he suffered any injuries or illnesses up until the battle of Lone Pine four months later.

Unfortunately, no known war diaries or letters have survived Keith and apart from the fact that he performed signalling duties, nothing is known of his involvement in war activities on the Peninsular. No Images of him (apart from a newspaper report about soldiers killed in action, which is included with this report) have been located to date.

On 6th August 1915 at 5.30pm a large military diversionary campaign was launched involving thousands of Australian and New Zealand troops storming the narrow ridge top summit named "Lone Pine". This was a heavily fortified elevated position occupied by the Turks. This battle raged on for 3 days and was to have been a diversionary battle on the Peninsular. It was a bloody affair for both combatants and defenders. Some 2,000 Australian troops and an estimated 6,930 Turks were killed or wounded during this conflict. Eventually the Australians gained a toe hole on the hill but the military administration later ordered a withdrawal rendering the whole battle a failed exercise. This campaign became known as the "Battle of Lone Pine". When troops first landed at Gallipoli a lone pine tree grew on the peak top but after frequent artillery bombardments upon the Turkish occupied summit the tree was destroyed.

In the late afternoon of the 6th August an assault commenced to remove the Turks from their entrenched positions at Lone Pine. Frank's 3rd Division played a lead role in the attack and early in the affray Frank suffered gunshot wounds to the abdomen. In all probability his mate James Stanger, also a signaller, was part of the action. After being wounded, Frank was one of the lucky ones to be evacuated from the battlefield quickly. This first involved being transported by a man carried stretcher downhill through trenches and steep tracks to the beach holding area, all the while exposed to sniper and enemy attack. He would have spent some time at the beach based hospital facility and then, along with hundreds of other injured, was loaded onto open top

barges and transported to Hospital ships waiting offshore. Medical treatment was poor at best and the number of casualties soon overwhelmed the inadequate facilities provided by the Army.

Frank was hoisted aboard the hospital ship "Dunluce Castle" which was loaded to capacity with wounded from the Lone Pine campaign. The ship set sail for the nearby island of Lemnos where the military had an extensive hospital facility and rehabilitation camp. He never made it there. On 7th August 1915 Frank died of his wounds. As was the custom he and other deceased soldiers were buried at sea that same day. As was the military custom all recovered personal effects of deceased soldiers were returned to their nominated next of kin. This often took years to finalise. His personal effects comprised letters, coin, nail clippers, badges, a key and his testament (will) were delivered to and signed for by his parents on 3rd June 1916 in Bondi. These items may still exist somewhere but have not yet been discovered despite an extensive search by the author. Like so many soldiers who paid the ultimate price they have been forgotten over time.

On 1 March 1919 an interview was conducted with a Surgeon, C.S.Ryan, who was on the staff of Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood who was in charge of Australian military operations at Gallipoli at that time. Ryan was present on the "Dunluce Castle" on the day our wounded Frank was transported and may have even attended to his injuries. This is part of what Ryan describes of his of his impressions onboard of the "Dunluce Castle": -

Officers were only a scratch lot. For example - the next boat I went on was the "Dunluce Castle", her medical personnel consisted of a Major and 2 doctors, all general practitioners, who did not profess to have any previous knowledge of surgery. There was an old doctor who was obviously not equal to the work and gave it up. The "Dunluce Castle" was so full of cases that the C.O. asked me to accompany the boat to Alexandria, and having received permission from General Birdwood, I did so. A lot of them died on the way over. Every morning about 9 o'clock a mine sweeper came alongside and took off our dead, and then went out to sea and buried them. It averaged from 4, 5 to a dozen every day, of course we had some awful cases. We had a very inadequate staff on the "Dunluce Castle" but the ship's officers were exceptionally good in assisting them. None of these vessels were protected by a Red Cross. I remember on the "Dunluce Castle" an officer painted a large Red Cross on her to protect her. As a matter of fact she was fired at in spite of this. When we were taking on the wounded about half past 10 next morning, word came that we were to keep moving about, as there was a German submarine about which we proceeded to do. We saw the "Triumph" blown up when we were within a mile of her. We were then ordered to Imbros and lay inside the boom. During the night two torpedoes were fired at us but we were not hit; we picked up one on the beach next morning. I then went on the "Gascon" which was a perfectly equipped hospital ship belonging to the Indian Government. The C.O., Colonel Hugo, Professor of Surgery at Lahore, had a most excellent staff of 4 Surgeons and the nurses were all

Australian newspapers of that time were full of filtered information about the various military campaigns being waged in many parts of the world. Rolls of Honour, death notices, commemorations and Obituaries abounded in print in remembrance of loved ones lost. Frank had many such media listings and here are just a few by way of example.

Sydney Morning Herald 4th September 1915, page12:-

Aitkin, killed in action at the Dardanelles August 8, Signaller Frank Aitkin of Watson Street Bondi aged 20. Beloved cousin of Muriel and Lorna Downs. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

And in the Adelaide Press 7th September 1915, page 9 :-

THE LATE SIGNALLER F. K. *AITKN*.

Miss A. McNamara. (ed..sister of his mother Gertrude) of John Street Eastwood, has been notified of the death in Gallipoli from wounds of her nephew, Signaller Frank K. Aitkin. He was 20 years of age and was the fourth and youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. M. Aitkin Watson Street, Bondi, New South Wales. He enlisted in that State and was one of the 1st Brigade. Educated at the Sydney High School he entered the office of Messrs Wright, Heaton, & Co., and was in their employ when he offered his services to the Empire. He was a prominent surfer and had gained the Royal Life-saving Society Certificate. Also had many trophies won in swimming competitions, he was a popular young man, who led an athletic life, and was of excellent physique.

The Sydney Morning Herald 6 August 1917 page 6 and entry by the Stanger Family: -

Aitkin – A tribute to the memory of our dear friend Signaller Frank Aitkin who gave his life nobly at Lone Pine, August 1915. Inserted by Mr. and Mrs. Stanger and family.

His Attestation Paper, completed at the time of his intention to enlist into the AIF shows:-

D 1888
DECLASED X
 5th ✓ AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.
AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 1869 48
 Name AITKIN Frank Keith
 Unit Signaller 11th Res 3rd Bat ✓
 Joined on 30 January 1915

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name?	1. <u>Frank Keith Aitkin</u>
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born?	2. In the Parish of <u>Paddington</u> in or near the Town of <u>Paddington N.S.W.</u> in the County of <u>Cumberland</u>
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.)	3. <u>Natural Born</u>
4. What is your age?	4. <u>20 years 1 month</u>
5. What is your trade or calling?	5. <u>clerk</u>
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period?	6. <u>No</u>
7. Are you married?	7. <u>No</u>
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated)	8. <u>Next of Kin: Mr. G. Aitkin, Hamilton, Walsby St. Bondi</u>
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power?	9. <u>No</u>
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy?	10. <u>No</u>
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge	11. <u>21st Infantry, 18 months</u>
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service?	12. <u>Yes</u>
13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds?	13. <u>No</u>
14. (For Married Men and Widowers with children)—Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be granted to you either before or after embarkation during your term of service?	14.

I, Frank Keith Aitkin, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

*And I further agree to allot not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children three-fifths

Date 2 February 1915, Frank K Aitkin
 Signature of person enlisted.

* This clause to be amended where necessary and should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.

Other AIF documents provide the following detail about Frank:-

- 1 Age on 30/1/ 1915 was 20 yrs 1 month
- 2 Status Single
- 3 Height 5ft 4 and 3/4 inches
- 4 Weight 128 lbs
- 5 Chest 32-34 inches
- 6 Complexion Dark

7	Eyes	Brown
8	Hair	Brown
9	Religion	C of E
10	Address	Havilah, 7 Watson St Bondi
11	Occupation	Clerk - Wool Company
12	School	Sydney Boys High
13	Mother	Gertrude McNamara
14	Father	Morehead George Aitkin
15	Military prior to joining AIF	- 21st Infantry 18 months
16	Joined AIF	30/1/1915 at Liverpool
17	Assigned unit	3rd Battalion 4th Reinforcement Regiment Signallers
18	Left Australia	Shropshire 17/3/15

Unfortunately, none of Frank's personal effects including medals etc are known to have survived through family members and the years that have passed since. If ever there was a diary kept by Keith (it was unlawful for combatants to keep diaries) it has not surfaced to date. No family photographs of Keith have survived or been discovered to date except for the image on page 2 which was sourced from Sydney papers published during the war. His name is listed on Memorial 6 at Lone Pine Turkey, the Cenotaph at Bondi and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

James Stanger

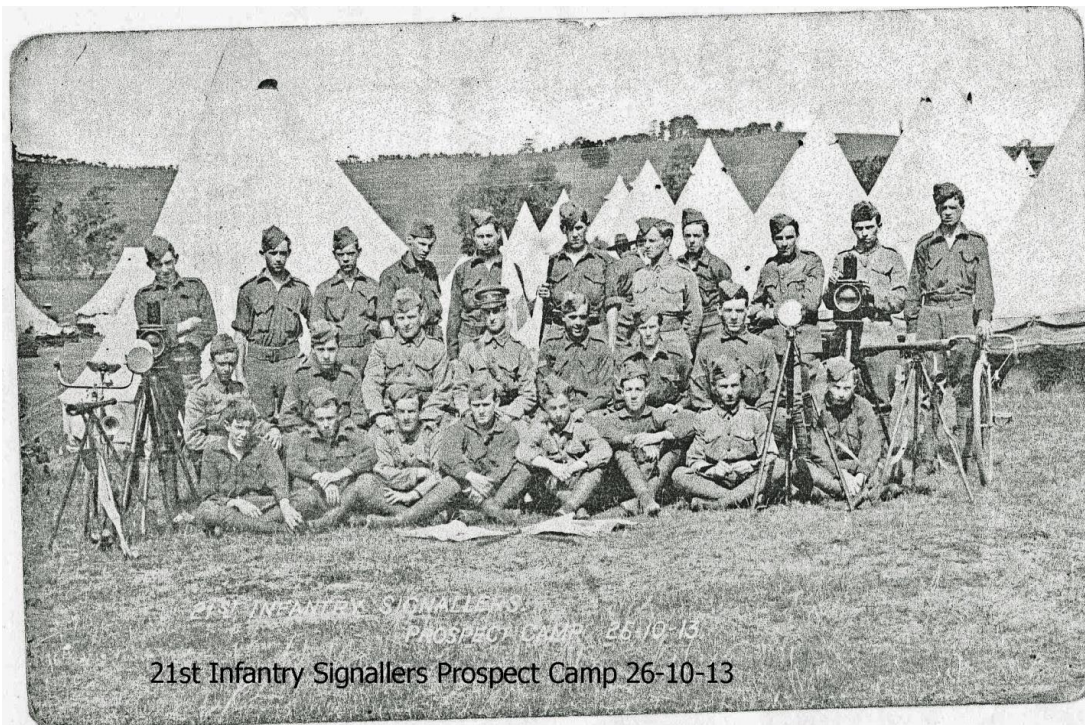
Keith's lifelong mate, James Stanger, survived Gallipoli and went on with the unit as a signaller to serve in the Western Front. He was wounded but survived the ordeals and eventually went on to become a lieutenant. He returned to Australia in 1919 together with his English wife whom he married in the UK during the war. They raised a large family in Sydney.

For many years I had attempted to discover the identity of any living relatives of James Stanger. In April 2010 I located a Stanger relative living in Sydney who referred me to John Stanger (now deceased) who resided in Kingsford. John was the grandson of James Stanger and had taken a lifetime interest in the WW1 exploits of his grandfather. Before James Stanger died in the 1900's John had talked with his grandfather about the war but he was reluctant to speak of those times. He did speak of Keith Aitkin and their activities whilst young men in Sydney but would not speak

of his death or any related World War 1 events. There were no War diaries of, or photos kept by his grandfather.

John Stanger, who passed away in May 2011, searched tirelessly for any information about his grandfather. Amongst other things he discovered a photograph taken in 1913 at a 21st Infantry Signallers Cadet Camp in Prospect (near Liverpool) in which his grandfather appears. Whilst his grandfather cannot be identified in the image it is known he appears amongst the participants. It is most likely that Frank, who was also in the same Signallers Brigade, is also one of the participants but he too cannot be identified.

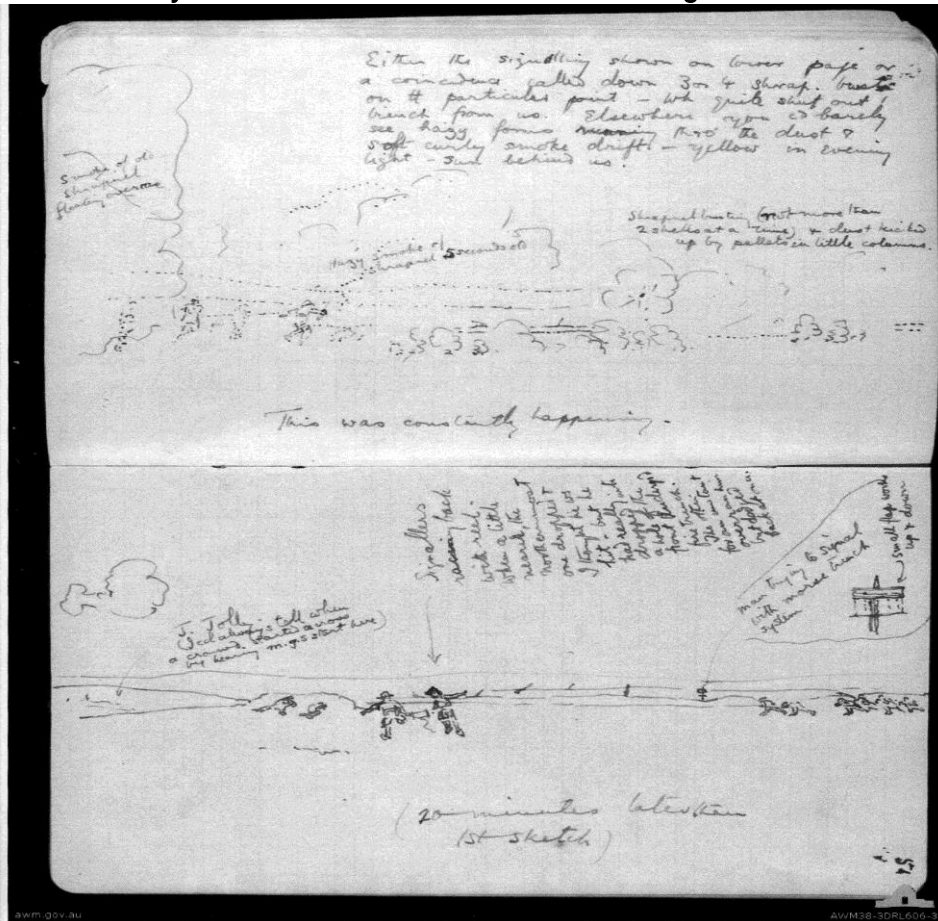
Image taken 26 October 1913 of 21st Infantry Signallers Cadets at Prospect :-

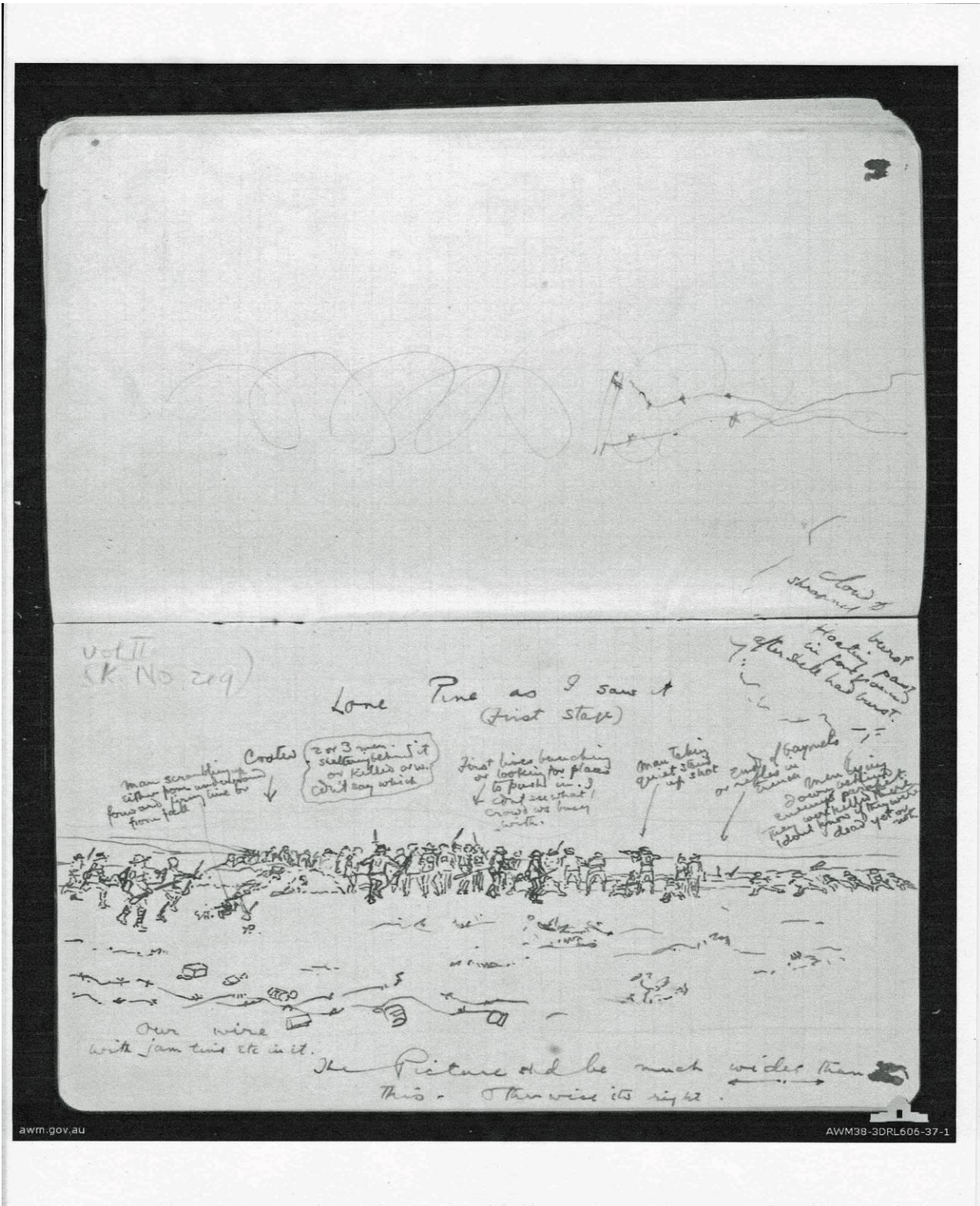


John Stanger travelled to the Canberra War Memorial and investigated the notebooks and journals of Charles Bean who was appointed official war correspondent with the AIF troops in WW1. He has written many publications about the various arenas of WW1 and its aftermath. He was present on the day at the battle for Lone Pine. Charles Bean was inseparable from his notebooks in which he often sketched activities and made notes of what was happening in front of him for later inclusion in his reports and correspondence. It was in one of those notebooks that John Stanger discovered two pages upon which Bean sketched and recorded events as he saw them occur at the Battle of Lone Pine.

The first of these pages comprised a sketch with notes in which Bean describes two signallers who are laying cable and notes that one of them appears to stumble but later recovers and proceeds. See reproduction below. The names of these signallers are not known but it raises the question were these signallers, Frank Aitkin and his friend James Stanger. Their third Division was the lead assault group at the battle and Frank did suffer a gunshot wound to the abdomen. Such a wounding would certainly cause him to stumble or fall. Of course, we cannot be sure one way or the other, but the sketch and notes provide good grounds for speculation about this event.

First sketch by Bean made in his field notebook during the Battle of Lone Pine





During our initial conversation John Stanger indicated that on same day we spoke (Anzac Day 2010) he had placed on the Cenotaph in Martin Place Sydney, a white cardboard card upon which he had printed a remembrance to Keith Aitkin and his grandfather. A reporter from The

Sydney Morning Herald noticed this card amongst the thousands of other messages and presented it as a news item on their web page on that day. The link is no longer current but below is a transcription of the entry.

The Sydney Morning Herald Web Site dated 26.4.2010 displays the following news item:

A solemn ritual that grows even as marchers dwindle

April 26, 2010

★ Read later



Anzacs honoured in Borneo

A group of war veterans have traveled to Borneo to pay their respects to those who fell in the infamous death marches.

Autoplay On | [Off](#) | [Video feedback](#) | [Video settings](#)

The turn-out for the march was in the thousands, writes John Huxley.

WITH prayer and scholarly pontification, music and football matches, dignity and too many drinks, two-up and occasional tears, Australians in their different ways yesterday honoured those who served the nation in war and peace.

Soldier-servants such as Frank Keith Aitken, nicknamed "Kwee", whose brief life story was scrawled on a piece of white cardboard placed among many more expensive wreaths on the Cenotaph in Martin Place.

"An only child," it read. "Grew up with his mate's family down the road in Bondi. Enlisted 19-years-old with mate in January 1915. Died of wounds Lone Pine, August 1915. Buried in sea near Anzac Cove. We will not forget Kwee."



In 2014 the author visited and toured Gallipoli and in particular the former battleground at Lone Pine. The ground conditions have changed somewhat during the ensuing years with the erection of a massive commemorative memorial and ground beautification treatments. It is a sombre and

yet beautiful place and as far as the author is concerned has an atmosphere about it that can be felt both physically and in the mind.

Prior research of historic military maps and photographs resulted in me being able to locate the approximate positions of the Turkish entrenchments and the Australian trench lines and the position in which the Australian troops launched their raid. With this intelligence and using the sketch provided from the notes recorded by James Bean (the official War correspondent present at the battle) I was able to pinpoint the approximate position that Frank may have been fatally wounded.

At this point not far from a pine tree (planted sometime after the war) I paused and spread upon the ground the contents of a small plastic container which contained about a tablespoon of soil which I had collected from the front garden of his former home at 6 Watson Street Bondi and beach sand from Bondi in the eastern suburbs of Sydney.

I then collected a very small sample of ground soil from that former battleground. When I returned to Sydney sometime later, I called at his former home at 6 Watson Street and sprinkled half of the collected Gallipoli soil in front garden of the house that he once lived in at 6 Watson Street Bondi. I then travelled the small distance to nearby Bondi Beach where Frank would have surfed so many times during his young life. It was here at the water's edge facing east on a fine sunny morning that I spread the last of the fragments of the soil that I carried from Lone Pine at Gallipoli.



This image on the previous page, was captured in June 2014 and the author is pointing to the name of his relative as it appears on the commemorative honour memorial at Lone Pine Gallipoli.

In 2015 I was fortunate to meet a former Australian Defence Force Army soldier and we talked about Gallipoli which he planned to visit in a few weeks' time. He readily agreed to convey a small cross I had constructed from Huon Pine bearing Franks name and serial number which he later placed upon the pine tree now standing at Lone Pine, Gallipoli, Turkey.





This ends the story of what is presently known about Frank Aitkin. Hopefully more information will become available as research continues. No diaries, letters or photos are known to have survived either of his parents.

Frank was a cousin who had been forgotten by time and history and I never knew about until he was discovered during my investigations into my family history.

But he hasn't been forgotten by me.

Lest we forget.....

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Bibliography and references re Francis Aitkin and others

- NSW Birth Certificate for Francis Aitkin.
- Benevolent Society (Sydney) records evidencing the admission of Gertrude McNamara, birth of Francis McNamara and notes recorded by Asylum staff.
- S.A. Birth Certificate of Gertrude Hannah McNamara
- Tasmanian Birth Certificate (Hobart) for Morehead George Aitkin (1846)
- NSW Death Certificate for Morehead George Aitkin
- NSW Birth Certificate for John Cruikshank Aitkin
- QLD State Archives - Bankruptcy Documents George Cruikshank Aitkin (1878)
- NSW State Archives - Bankruptcy documents Morehead George Aitkin (1892)
- Illawarra Mercury (22/9/1871) newspaper reports dealing with Court case Aitkin/Larkins
- NSW Marriage Certificate of Morehead George Aitkin and Gertrude Hannah McNamara
- South Australians 1836-1885 Book 2 M-Z (Re McNamara's)
- NSW State Archives - Petition to Governor pleading release from goal Morehead George Aitkin, review of case including convicting Magistrate's opinion and Governor's approval to release from prison. (1872)
- NSW Death Certificate Frank Aitkin (1891)
- NSW Marriage Certificate Morehead George Aitkin and Louisa Mann (1870)
- NSW Birth Certificate Bambini Aitkin, father Morehead George Aitkin (1891)
- City of Sydney Archives - Rate Books for various years
- Sydney High School WWI Honour Board - listing Frank Aitken
- NSW Electoral Commission Electors Roll for many years verifying the residency of various people.
- Australian Archives War Service Records Frank Keith Aitkin
- Australian Archives War Service Records James Stanger
- John Stanger Archive Collection for copies of Photos of James Stanger and copies of sketches by Charles Bean
- Sydney Morning Herald and Adelaide Press for public notices re Frank Keith Aitkin - various years
- Sydney Morning Herald Web Site 26/4/2010 re report on "Kee" Aitkin
- Sydney High School Archivist and their Old Boys Union for information about Frank Keith Aitkin
- Discussions, notes taken and correspondence with John Stanger, Barbara Turner and others.
- Authors visit to Lone Pine (Gallipoli) war memorial and images collected at that time.
- Authors visit to Australian War Memorial Canberra
- Report by an AIF officer re the conduct of the voyage by HMS Shropshire (A-9) March 1915
- Images from Lone Pine by Greg Crumblin (June 2015)

V.E.Aitkin Computer file on Seagate Expansion Drive - Folder E/Aitkin Family History/Frank Keith Aitkin/Story of Frank Keith Aitkin

End.....

