

Louis George Keys

Private (Pte) 1640 Louis George Keys enlisted in the 12th Infantry Battalion in the 3rd Infantry Brigade of the 1st Australian Division in Melbourne on 11 November 1914. He embarked overseas on 19 February 1915 and landed in Egypt about four weeks later.

He embarked for Gallipoli in early May, where he was taken on strength of the 12th Battalion, serving in the front line, on 6 May 1915 – one of 12 reinforcements received that day.

In early August, in an attempt to break the stalemate at Gallipoli, the allies undertook their last offensive of the campaign. The 12th Battalion was in reserve for the initial assault on the Turkish trenches at Lone Pine late on 6 August but was soon fully committed to the battle. They saw off several vigorous counter attacks on 7 – 8 August, for the loss of 168 casualties, one of whom was Pte Keys who sustained a bomb (grenade) wound to his head on 8 August.

He was admitted to the 16th Stationary Hospital at Mudros from 9 August – 28 October, then returned to Gallipoli and rejoined the 12th Battalion on 6 November, where he was also promoted to Corporal (Cpl) on 1 December 1915.

The troops were evacuated from Gallipoli in late December and Cpl Keys disembarked in Egypt on 6 January 1916, where he was later promoted to Sergeant (Sgt) on 9 March. The battalion embarked for France on 29 March and landed at Marseilles on 5 April, then headed north to the Fleurbaix sector.

On 20 July, Sgt Keys was admitted to the 5th General Hospital at Rouen suffering from severe diarrhoea. On 29 July, he was transferred to England and admitted to the Graylingwell War Hospital at Chichester from 30 July – 11 August.

He then joined the 3rd (Brigade) Training Battalion at Perham Downs Camp on 28 October, where he remained for the next six months. While there, Sgt Keys became seriously ill with pneumonia and was hospitalised at the Fargo Military Hospital between 10 May – 8 June 1917, after which he rejoined the training battalion for another four months.

On 6 October, he was detached for three months duty with the 20th Company, Royal Army Medical Corps at Tidworth Military Hospital until 24 January 1918, then transferred to the AIF Depot at Tidworth until 8 March. Sgt Keys had obviously not fully recovered from his earlier bout of pneumonia though, and he embarked for return to Australia on 21 April 1918.

Sergeant 1640 Louis George Keys disembarked in Melbourne on 7 June, where he was medically discharged from the AIF on 9 August 1918.

Name: Keys, Louis George	
Service Number	1640
Date enlisted	11 November 1914
Place enlisted	Melbourne, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	12 th Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	19 February 1915 HMAT A54 <i>Runic</i>
Previous military service	2 years Victorian Naval service
Stated age/DOB (if known)	34 years 10 months
Place of birth	Queenscliff, Victoria
Marital status	Married
Occupation	Labourer
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Keys, Mrs Louisa, wife, 34 Nelson Street, Newport, Victoria
Permanent address	34 Nelson Street, Newport, Victoria
Appearance	Ruddy complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 8 inches, weight – 11 stone, chest measurement – 34/36 inches
Final Rank	Sergeant
Final Unit	12 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, Gallipoli, France
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and place wounded	8 August 1915 Lone Pine, Gallipoli
Nature of wounds	Bomb wound to head
Date and ship embarked for Australia	21 April 1918 HT <i>Suevic</i>
Date discharged	9 August 1918
Nature of discharge	Medically Unfit (illness)
Honours/medals	1914/15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	