

Albert (Bert) William Keown



Private (Pte) 571 Albert William Keown enlisted in the 5th Infantry Battalion in the 2nd Infantry Brigade of the 1st Australian Division in Prahran on 17 August 1914. The 2nd Brigade was recruited from men from Victoria.

He embarked overseas on 21 October and disembarked in Alexandria, Egypt on 1 December. The men boarded troop trains to Cairo and then travelled by electric tram to the AIF camp at Mena, beneath the pyramids, where they undertook all manner of physical fitness and military training for the new few months.

On 5 April 1915, the 5th Battalion embarked for the island of Lemnos, where they practiced disembarking from the ship and climbing the local hills each day. On the night of 24 April, the troopships departed Mudros Harbour and sailed for Gallipoli.

From 5.30 am on 25 April 1915 the battalion disembarked from their transports into smaller boats and were towed toward the beaches. The 5th Battalion landed as part of the second wave and found the beach crowded with troops and wounded men. Between 25 – 29 April, the 5th Battalion sustained 660 casualties.

On 6 May 1915, the 2nd Brigade was moved 20 km south by boat to Cape Helles, where they participated in a poorly planned, British led attack on Krithia between 8 – 11 May. In three days, the 2nd Brigade sustained 1,056 casualties, 41% of the number they started with. One of those wounded was Pte Keown, who sustained shrapnel wounds to his chest and hand on 8 May.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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The scene at Krithia after the attack by the 2nd Infantry Brigade

Pte Keown was evacuated via HS *Royal George* to Malta, where he was admitted to the St Andrews Military Hospital between 18 May – 7 June.

He sailed for England via HS *Rewa* on 7 June and was admitted to a hospital in Plymouth (unfortunately his service record is silent as to which one and for how long) then embarked for return to Australia on 8 October 1915.

Private 571 Albert William Keown disembarked in Melbourne on 19 November, where he was medically discharged from the AIF on 24 May 1916.



Name: Keown, Albert (Bert) William	
Service Number	571
Date enlisted	17 August 1914
Place enlisted	Prahran, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	5 th Infantry Battalion
Previous military service	Senior cadets
Date and ship embarked for overseas	21 October 1914 HMAT A3 <i>Orvieto</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	22 years 8 months
Place of birth	Brunswick, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Architectural student
Next of kin and address	Keown, Mr William, father, 4 Donald Street, Prahran, Victoria
Permanent address	4 Donald Street, Prahran, Victoria
Appearance	Fair complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 6 ½ inches, weight – 9 stone, 7 lbs, chest measurement – 35 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	5 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	Egypt, Gallipoli
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and place wounded	8 May 1915 Krithia, Gallipoli, Turkey
Nature of wounds	Shrapnel wound to chest and hand
Date and ship embarked for Australia	8 October 1915 HT <i>Suevic</i>
Date discharged	24 May 1916
Nature of discharge	Medically Unfit (wounds)
Honours/medals	1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Died 30 August 1964. Author of the Official History of the 5 th Battalion, AIF, published in 1921.