

Biography written and researched by Dr Philip Creagh, from 'In Galant Company' Honouring Old Sydneians who died in the Great War, Watermark Press, March 2019.

Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Dudley Weedon OATLEY, 56th Battalion, AIF.

Died of disease, a result of chronic gas-poisoning, on the 28th March 1919, age 35, at Sydney, NSW. Waverley General Cemetery, Waverley, NSW. C of E section. Plot # 14 6636-7.

The headstone also has an inscription to Carl Kaeppel, his brother-in-law, who died in 1946 aged 58.

Born 1884, Sydney to Frederick and Emily Oatley. Enrolled at Sydney Grammar School 1897 to 1898. Frederick had one sister, Elsie. Frederick's father was an Old Sydneian (1871–75).

The Sydneian (Feb 1897) records that Frederick was the Vice Captain of 1B in Lower School form cricket. In 1898 Dudley left the School and enrolled at Shore until 1900, then to the King's School until 1902.

After School Frederick enrolled at Sydney University, studying Arts until 1906.

In 1907 he married Adelaide Kaeppel who was the sister of Carl Kaeppel (1887 & 1901–05), who was Captain of the School in 1905, a Prefect and later on became a master at Shore School. He would enlist, be awarded the Military Cross at 2nd Bullecourt and survive the War.

Frederick and Adelaide had a son Peter in 1912 and a daughter Rachel in 1914.

Frederick enlisted in November 1914 as a grazier, from Numeralla east of Cooma, NSW. He was 30 years and very tall at 6' 1" (186 cm) and 81 kgs. He had served as a captain for 9 years with the 11th Light Horse in the NSW Militia.

Frederick was appointed a Captain with the 6th Australian Light Horse, and then promoted to Major in December before embarking for Egypt on 21st December 1914.

The 6th Light Horse was sent to Gallipoli on 15th May 1915. He was with the Regiment for all the major Battles in May and August. Almost continuously in the front line, Frederick developed acute dysentery at Gallipoli on 4th September 1915, which sent him to Cairo, then to England for treatment.

On 27th January 1916 Frederick returned to Australia for six weeks but didn't fully recover until April. In July 1916 he was back in Egypt and transferred to the 2nd Australian Light Horse on 12th August. He was appointed as Commander of the 3rd Camel Regiment in September 1916 and stayed with it until March 1917, when he was transferred to the 25th Battalion AIF in France on 14th April 1917.

He was transferred again, this time to the 54th Battalion on 21st June then in October for a two months course in officer training where he was marked as:

An officer of determination with a cheerful disposition. He has plenty of energy and tact. His appearance is smart and soldierly ... His military knowledge is above the average and he handles troops well both in the Field and on Parade. A very capable officer who should do well in command of a Battalion.

Frederick returned to France in December 1917 with the 54th Battalion, but was then transferred to the 56th Battalion as its Commander with the rank of Temporary Lieutenant Colonel.

He was severely gassed at Villers-Bretonneux on 25th April 1918 and by 4th May 1918 he was back in England at London Hospital. He returned to Australia for convalescence on 31st July 1918, arriving in September 1918. He had severe pleurisy and asthma, which responded slowly to his enforced rest.

Frederick's symptoms of pleurisy returned in November 1918.

The St. Kilda Private Hospital, Darlinghurst report:

On admission he was dangerously ill with paroxysmal coughing accompanied after a few days by offensive expectoration. An Xray on 12th December 1918 showed a hydatid cyst in the right lung, which was drained, he is now making a slow recovery.

Following a 2nd operation on 25th March 1919, the report said '.. his condition is very grave and it is doubtful if he will recover.' Frederick died on 28th March 1919.