

Frank Keith OFFICER



Frank Keith Officer was born in Toorak in 1889; he attended Melbourne Grammar and Ormond College. He attained his law degree in 1912 and became Associate to Henry Bourne Higgins of the High Court.

Commissioned in the AIF in December 1914, Officer departed aboard the *Chilka* in February 1915, for the Middle East. He was a staff captain in Gallipoli from June to October 1915. He proceeded to the Western Front and was promoted to Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General of the 2nd Australian Division.

In December of 1916 his “conspicuous services rendered” saw him awarded the Military Cross. He was transferred to the 1st Anzac Corps in July as Deputy Assistant Adjutant General and became a Major in November. He remained in service after the war and again, in January 1919, his “conspicuous services rendered” were recognised, this time with an OBE from the King. He was also thrice mentioned in despatches.

After the war, Officer joined the British Colonial Services and was posted to Nigeria. He returned to Melbourne in 1923 but he was to become a lifelong diplomat. Throughout his extra-ordinary career, Officer held diplomatic posts in London, Washington,

Tokyo, the Soviet Union, China, the Netherlands and France. He was knighted whilst in France. He was a member of Australian delegations to the League of Nations, various trade conferences, peace and disarmament conferences.

Officer retired to England in 1954, and died in 1969. Officer always sought to advance Australia’s interests and he was considered Australia’s first diplomat; ‘trusty and well beloved’.