



KETT FAMILY

Family History

William Woodhouse Kett, born in 1833, arrived in the Swan River Colony as a convict aboard the *Lincelles* in 1862. A warehouse clerk, William was convicted of larceny as a servant and received a ten-year sentence.

He received his Ticket of Leave in September 1863 and, in 1865, married Ann Connel/Connell/McConnell in Fremantle. The couple had five children: Henry born 1866, William Patrick born 1868, Andrew born 1871, Mary Josephine born 1874 and Ellen Anne born 1876.

William worked as a pork butcher in Perth, then a green grocer in Fremantle. He ran a General Store between 1867 and 1874 and, at some point, also worked as a tutor and schoolmaster. Between 1865 and 1880, he employed up to twenty-five Ticket of Leave men in his business.

By 1871, William had moved his family to York where all but two of his children were born.

William Woodhouse Kett died in York in 1888.



KETT

Henry

Service No: 13169

Basic Information:

Name: Henry Kett

Service Number: 13169

Date of Enlistment: 26/1/1916

Age at Enlistment: 43 yrs. 3 mths

Civil Occupation: Clerk

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal

Height: 5 feet 9 inches

Weight: 140 Lbs.

Chest Measurement: 33 ½ inches

Complexion:

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Brown

Father: William Woodhouse Kett

Mother: Ann Connel/Connell/McConnell

Married: Brigid Kerrick

Children: Lavinia Brigid (1889) William Patrick (1891) Mary Blanche (1893)
Lilian Grace (1895) Arthur Henry (1898)

Life Story

Henry Kett, the oldest son of William and Ann, was born in 1866.

Little is known of Henry's early childhood at Fremantle and York, but he married Brigid Kerrick at York in 1888. They went on to have five children, all born in York.

In 1903, Henry was living and working in Boulder as a miner. In 1904, disaster struck the family when the house they were renting caught fire. Luckily, no one was injured.

By 1912, the family had moved to Kalgoorlie and Henry was earning his living as a clerk.

In 1914, Henry and Brigid were living at Kurrawang, a small Goldfields community and Henry was working for the Kurrawang Woodline Company.

On the 26th January 1916, Henry enlisted in the 3rd Field Ambulance, reducing his age by seven years. He was Taken on Strength at Serapeum, in Egypt, on the 20th April and embarked for France on the 6th June.

On the 9th October 1916, Henry spent four days in hospital before returning to his unit.

Two years' later, on the 9th December 1918, he was accidentally injured and transferred to the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley, in England, with burns to his face and hands.

FIRES AT BOULDER.

Shortly after midnight on Monday a four-roomed weatherboard house in Dwyer-street, Boulder, occupied by Mr. Henry Kett and his family, was found to be on fire, and in a few minutes the place was a mass of flames, which gave off intense heat, to the great danger of the adjoining premises. So quickly did the flames spread that nothing was saved, the children not even having time to get their clothes. Mrs. Kett says that she left some embers in the stove after preparing a meal for her husband, who was on night shift, and it is supposed that in some way this occasioned the outbreak. The house was owned by Mr. J. Job, who had it insured for £50 in the Commercial Union Company, but this amount does not even approximate its value. The furniture and effects were not insured.

Henry was discharged from medical care on the 3rd February. After a short period of furlough, he reported to Dartford Command Depot to convalesce before reporting to the Australian Army Medical Corps Training Depot at Fovant, in Wiltshire. On the 4th March 1919, Henry was attached to the 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Southall, where he remained for a month before returning to Fovant.

On the 1st June, Henry embarked aboard the *Somali* for his return to Australia

After the War, Henry returned to the Goldfields, where he continued to work as a clerk.

Family memories state that Henry suffered from the effects of his War service for years afterwards. Like many, he was said to have "nerves" and found it difficult to cope. Henry suffered memory loss, became irritated and often went into rages. Arthur, his remaining son, built his father a corrugated iron shed in the backyard, and family memories tell that he would go there and beat the walls so hard it would flatten the corrugations.

Henry Kett died in Kalgoorlie in 1940.

KETT

William Patrick

Service No: 797



Basic Information

Name: William Patrick Kett

Service Number: 797

Date of Enlistment: 10/9/1914

Age at Enlistment: 23 yrs. 6 mths.

Civil Occupation: labourer

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal, 1914/15 Star

Height: 5 feet 9 ½ inches

Weight: 107 Lbs.

Chest Measurement: 35 inches

Complexion: Fair

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Fair

Father: Henry Kett

Mother: Brigid Merrick



PTE. W. P. KETT.

Died in hospital. Son of Mr. and Mrs.
Kett, of Kurrawang.

Courtesy National Archives of
Australia

Life Story

William Patrick Kett (known as "Son") was born in York on March 16th 1891 to Henry and Bridget Kett. He was the second of seven children. William spent his early childhood years in York until, in 1898, the family moved to the Goldfields, where his father, Henry, worked as a teamster with his brother, Andrew, who ran a merchant business in the town.

Life was not always happy for young William. His parents' marriage was not always harmonious and, at one stage, a warrant was issued for Henry because he had deserted his wife and family. Despite the differences, the marriage endured until the death of Bridget in 1925.

In 1904, the family barely survived a house fire which started in the evening while they were sleeping in a house in Boulder. So fierce and quick was the spread of the fire that nothing could be saved.

William's working life started at the age of fifteen because, with little or no help from his father, he needed to support his mother and siblings.

By 1913, William had moved back to York and was living with an aunt while he worked as a labourer at Mercer Brothers, sending money home to help his mother. If work was scarce and William did not have enough money to send, he borrowed, in particular from his best mate Ernest McGlinn, with a promise to repay the debt when he could.

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The Call for Men...

By early 1914, when Britain declared war on Germany, William was back in the Goldfields working as a steward at the City Club. Like many young men, he was eager to join up and posters and leaflets promised opportunities to see England and Europe. Many men worried that the German army would be a pushover and the fighting might be over before they arrived.

William enlisted in York and, on the 17th August 1914, he was accepted into the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Forces. The local volunteer Light Horse Brigade, of which William was a member, were delighted that he, along with James M. McInnis and H. J. H. Woollett, had been taken to form part of the contingent. Why William went to York to enlist is uncertain, possibly at the urging of family and friends, but he returned to the Goldfields before leaving with his unit, the 11th Battalion G Company, to begin training at Blackboy Hill.

Soon after he enlisted, William's mother moved back to Kurrawang where his father was working for the Kurrawang Woodline Company. Even so, William felt he simply could not abandon his responsibilities to his mother and paid a deposit of ten pounds on a house in Kalgoorlie to help out. The last five pounds he gave her, borrowed from Ernest McGlenn, was shortly before going into camp. William also offered to allot twenty-one shillings of his pay to his mother on a weekly basis. Bridget refused, stating that "he should keep it and have a good time while he was away". A sad reflection of the naivety of war and the horrors that lay ahead of him.

Later records reveal that Bridget was unable to keep up the payments on the house and Henry "could not or would not". She had to let it go.

Setting sail...

On the 31st October, after a short period of training, William, along with the rest of the 11th Battalion, left Blackboy Hill and travelled to Fremantle. His company boarded the ship HMAT A11 *Ascanius* and, on the 2nd November, the ships joined a large convoy that had sailed from Albany.

Just over a month later, on the 12th December 1914, they arrived in Alexandria, Egypt. Further training followed at Mena Camp in the shadow of the Great Pyramid. It was a hard life with basic facilities and months of desert drills, but the men accepted that a soldier's life can be pretty tough. This is not to say they did not seek some relief from the monotony of camp life. A search of William's records shows a small misdemeanour: he briefly went Absent Without Leave after Christmas, as many soldiers did over the festive season. As a punishment, he was confined to barracks for five days and had two days' pay forfeited.

William boarded the *Suffolk* on the 2nd March 1915 and sailed to Lemnos, an island off Greece, to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. By now he was a part of the 11th Battalion 3rd Brigade who were chosen to be part of the initial assault. In Lemnos the men underwent further drills, training on the beaches and cliffs for another six weeks.

The Horrors of War...

It was the early hours of the 25th April 1915 when William set eyes on the Gallipoli Peninsula. He and others in his Battalion climbed into small landing boats and headed to shore, unaware of the carnage that was about to happen. The 3rd Brigade had the honour of being first to land at Anzac Cove, although at great expense.

On the first day of fighting, the fatalities were high and many were killed outright or died later of their wounds. William was one of the lucky ones. Either by skill or sheer luck, he had survived the landing.

Private William Patrick Kett's service records contain very little detail about his time on the Peninsula. Records are brief and concentrate solely on his illness and subsequent death, though it is known that, in June 1915, he was acting as a stretcher bearer.

A letter published in the Kalgoorlie Western Argus, from Private M. G. Carroll to his brother in Kurrawang, states that:

"Son Kett is alright at present. He is a stretcher bearer. He doesn't do any fighting, but has a very dangerous job, just as risky as ours."

Did he train as a stretcher bearer, or volunteer due to the casualty losses? We may never know.

The conditions in Gallipoli caused many men in the trenches, including William, to be hospitalised with illness. On the 6th September 1915, he was admitted to the 1st Casualty Clearing Station on the beach of Anzac Cove with influenza. Later that day it became clear that his health was deteriorating, and his illness was much worse than first thought. William was transferred to the hospital ship *Salta* which was sailing to Lemnos. He was eventually admitted to the 15th General Hospital at Alexandria.

On the 10th September, a telegram was sent to his father, notifying the family that William was dangerously ill. A cable was forwarded by his father, Henry, requesting more details about his son. Sadly, by the time the next communication was received, it was the news of William's death.

William Patrick Kett died on the 14th September 1915. He was buried at the Chatby Military Cemetery in Alexandria, along with many of his comrades, including his best mate, Private Ernest William McGlenn.

A Grieving Family....

Like many families at that time, William's family were heartbroken. His mother would have been devastated by the news. In a letter written some years after the War, she wrote:

".... If I was not depending on my son no mother ever was.... "

In a final gesture of William's good character, his Will requested that his wealth and possessions be given to his mother and, to honour his promise, that the five pounds he had borrowed from Ernest McGlinn be paid back. Unfortunately, the young man had followed William to War and had been killed a month earlier, on the 13th August 1915. The money was sent to Ernest's mother instead... his final debt repaid.





KETT

Arthur Henry

Service No: 22525

Basic Information

Name: Arthur Henry Kett

Service Number: 22525

Date of Enlistment: 26/1/1916

Age at Enlistment: 18 yrs. 1 mth.

Civil Occupation: labourer

Medals, Honours, Awards: British War Medal, Victory Medal

Height: 5 feet 8 inches

Weight: 128 Lbs.

Chest Measurement: 30 inches

Complexion: Fair

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Light Brown

Father: Henry Kett

Mother: Brigid Merrick

Marriage: 1. Alice Arron/Aaron Cutts 2. Marion Alice Baker nee Duncan

Children: Dorothy J, William M., Valerie A.

Life Story

Arthur Henry Kett was born at York in 1898, the youngest child of Henry and Brigid Kett. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to the Goldfields.

On the 26th January 1916, at the same time as his father, Henry Arthur enlisted in the A.I.F.

On the 1st February 1917, Arthur was appointed a Gunner with the 4th Reinforcements of the Field Artillery Brigade. On the 20th May 1916, he embarked from Melbourne, arriving in England on the 18th July.

Arthur was Taken on Strength with the 23rd Howitzer Brigade on the 2nd August and transferred to the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column (D.A.C.), a unit of the Royal Field Artillery, on the 23rd of the month.

On the 25th October, Arthur proceeded overseas to France and was Taken on Strength with the 3rd Division Ammunition Sub Park. With his division, he would have taken part in the Battle of Ypres which occurred between July and November 1917.

Returning to the United Kingdom, Arthur was detached from duty at Corps Reserve and, on the 12th March 1918, was Taken on Strength with the 3rd Australian Division of the Mechanical Transport Company.

In March, Arthur spent a week on leave in the U.K. While in London, he was charged with being Absent Without Leave between the 3rd and the 7th March 1918, and he had to forfeit twenty days' pay.

On the 5th October 1918, Arthur was appointed a Driver but reverted to Private on the 18th March 1919, when he was admitted to the 1st Australian Dermatological Hospital in Bulford to be treated for Venereal Disease, a common affliction among soldiers seeking comfort during furlough.

At the end of April, Arthur had to forfeit fourteen days' pay after being found to be Absent Without Leave for four days. On the 8th July 1919, he transferred to the Australian Army Service Corps Training Depot, where he was charged with being Absent from General Parade and fined five days' pay.

Soon after, Arthur returned to Australia aboard the *Ypiranga* and was discharged from the Army on the 7th February 1920.

He returned to the Goldfields and found work with Government Tramways (later known as Western Australian Government Railways) before being retrenched in 1921, probably to make room for married men who were given preference for jobs after the War.

Arthur applied for assistance from the Repatriation Board to help find him work and, by 1925, he was working as a railway guard.

In 1927, Arthur married Alice Aaron Cutts at Kalgoorlie. They had three children,

In 1932, Arthur was still working as a guard, apart from a period around 1928 when he worked as a labourer in Kalgoorlie.

Arthur served with the 29th Garrison Battalion during the Second World War (service number W49653). He was discharged in 1944.

In 1947, he was living in the Metropolitan area and working at the Swan Brewery. That same year, he was injured by an exploding bottle and had to be treated in hospital.



By 1949, Arthur had separated from Alice: she was listed in the Post Office Directory as living in Kalgoorlie, while Arthur was living in Osborne Park.

In 1955, Arthur remarried, to Marion Alice Baker.

Arthur remained at the Brewery until his retirement at some point after 1968 and, by 1977, he was living in Nollamara, a suburb of Perth, with his wife Marion.

Arthur's eyesight was deteriorating with age, and he ended his days at the Braille Hospital in 1982. Marian Alice died in 1987.

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