

Kater, Norman William

ASC 1887-8



Photo University of Sydney

Sir Norman William Kater

Kt., Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, M.B., Ch.M., M.L.C. : Medecin aide-Major, Service de Sante de l'Armee Frangaise, France. Served as Surgeon, Hopital Complementaire, St. Rome, near Toulouse, 6th June, 1916, till June, 1917. Awarded Croix de Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur and Medaille de la Reconnaissance Francaise. A.M.F.: Adjutant, A.A.M.C., 2nd Military District (N.S.W.), 1918; also at Randwick Military Hospital. Renwick Scholar and Haswell Prizeman. Early education at Sydney Grammar School and All Saints' College, Bathurst. Later at St. Paul's College.

Sydney University Book of Remembrance.

Original Rank	Commissioner
Full name	K A T E R, Dr. Norman William
Original Unit	Red Cross Commissioners in Egypt
Highest Rank	
Latest Unit	
Embarked :	
(a) From	Sydney
(b) Date	6/10/15
(c) Transport	"Moldavia"
Disembarked :	
(a) Place	Port Said, Egypt
(b) Date	About November 1st. 1915
Unit to which attached	Red Cross Commission
Record of service	Served as searcher in Cairo till Dec. 27, 1915, and then obtained permission from Mr Adrian Knox to proceed to France to take up a hospital appointment. Proceeded to Hopital Complementaire 64, a French Hospital Unit, and worked there as Asst. Surgeon to Dr Reginald Davies of Sydney till June 1916 when he left; filled his place till July, 1917; then obtained permission from French Govt. to return to Sydney for business reasons. June, 1916, obtain commission in the French Service de Sante' (Army Medical Service) with the rank of Medicin Aide Major.

Kater, Sir Norman William (1874-1965)

By Martha Rutledge

Sir Norman William Kater (1874-1965), medical practitioner, grazier and politician, was born on 18 November 1874 at Brush Farm, Ryde, New South Wales, second son of native-born parents Henry Edward Kater and his wife Mary Eliza, daughter of William Forster. He was educated at **All Saints' College**, Bathurst, in 1886-88 and Sydney Grammar School in 1889-91, where he excelled at rifle-shooting.

Resident in St Paul's College while he studied medicine at the University of Sydney (M.B., Ch.M., 1898), he won the Haswell prize (1893) and **Renwick** scholarship (1894), and rowed for the university. He was resident medical officer at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in 1898, then worked his way to Britain as ship's surgeon. He spent three months studying midwifery at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, and his spare time hunting. Later he attended courses at specialist hospitals in London.

On his return to Sydney, Kater bought a practice at College Street. He married Jean Gaerloch Mackenzie on 25 February 1901 at St James' Church. After the death of his elder brother in 1902 he reluctantly abandoned his practice and bought Nyrang near Molong. He was a member of the Boree Shire Council in 1906-11.

When his father and uncle divided the Mumblebone stud in 1906 he joined his father in H. E. Kater & Son and supervised the Egelabra merino stud, near Warren. By 1911 he had virtually exterminated rabbits there and at Nyrang.

Late in 1915, Kater went to Egypt to assist the Australian Red Cross commissioner (Sir) Adrian Knox. He soon departed for France and joined the French Service de Santé Militaire, working at the St Rome base hospital near Toulouse. Unable to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force in London, he returned to Sydney in 1917 and in October joined the Australian Army Medical Corps. He worked at the Military Hospital, Randwick, and, promoted captain and temporary major, from January 1918 to February 1919 as A.A.M.C. adjutant at Victoria Barracks. For his services in France he was appointed chevalier of the Légion d'honneur and awarded the Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française.

After the war Kater returned to pastoral pursuits. He sold Nyrang in 1920 and bought a house in Sydney; in 1924 he inherited Mount Broughton near Moss Vale, where he spent most weekends. In 1915-64 he was a council-member of the Graziers' Association of New South Wales. As president in 1922-24, he successfully opposed Sir John Higgins's attempt to turn the British Australian Wool Realisation Association Ltd into a permanent central organization for the stabilization of the wool industry. In 1923 he had to contend with a long and bitter strike by shearers for shorter hours. In the summer of 1927-28 he was chairman of the Federal Pastoral Advisory Committee. Knighted in 1929, he was appointed to the State committee of the Commonwealth Council for Scientific and Industrial Research that year.

With the aid of his expert classer E. H. Wass, Kater kept the Egelabra flock pure, despite the popularity of 'wrinkly' sheep in the early twentieth century. At the Sydney Sheep Show he won the Stonehaven cup for pens of five in 1933, 1938, 1939 and 1940 and bred the grand champion merino ram in 1938 and 1940. About 1939 he took his sons into partnership and later formed H. E. Kater & Son Pty Ltd, with himself as governing director. He was president of the N S W Sheep Breeders' Association in 1940-44. From the 1920s Kater had developed important business interests — he was chairman of the Co-operative Wool and Produce Co. Ltd, and a director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. (1924-49), the Graziers' Co-operative Shearing Co. Ltd (Grazcos) (from 1919), Globe Worsted Mills Ltd (from 1927), Newcastle-Wallsend Coal Co. (from 1933) and a local director of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Co. Ltd.

A member of the central council of the Progressive Party, Kater was nominated to the Legislative Council in 1923. Elected to the reconstituted council in 1933 and 1942, he did not seek re-election in 1954. In the council he spoke briefly and to the point and strongly opposed J. T. Lang's governments.

'Austere in his speech and in his dress', Sir Norman was tall, handsome, clean shaven, with smooth silver hair and 'very piercing blue eyes'. Shy and unable 'to stand fools lightly', he sometimes gave the impression of arrogance. He played polo as a young man, enjoyed tennis, golf, bowls and bridge, and loved the theatre and ballet. His first wife died in London in 1931. At St Mark's, Darling Point, on 14 January 1938 he married Mary (d.1969), daughter of L. A. B. Wade, but they later separated. He was president of the Australian Club in 1945-49 and belonged to the Union Club, Sydney, the Queensland Club and the Junior Carlton in London. Appointed to the State advisory committee of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in 1949, he was chairman of the Institute of Public Affairs in 1951.

Sir Norman died in St Luke's Hospital, Darlinghurst, and on 18 August 1965, and was cremated with Anglican rites. He was survived by four sons and two daughters of his first marriage, who inherited his estate, valued for probate at £238,801. Fluent in French and widely read, Sir Norman gave outstanding service to the pastoral industry and to the wider community

Select Bibliography

- New South Wales Sheep breeders' Association, *The Australian Merino* (Syd, 1955)
- D. S. Macmillan, *The Kater Family 1750-1965* (Syd, 1966)
- *Pastoral Review*, 18 May 1962
- *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 Sept 1915, 8 July, 31 Dec 1918, 8 Dec 1920, 3 June 1922, 1 Mar 1929, 19 Mar 1941, 19 Aug 1965
- *Australian National Review*, 20 Aug 1923
- *Land* (Sydney), 29 Apr 1955
- *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 29 May 1956
- Kater family papers (National Library of Australia)
- Private information.

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SIR NORMAN KATER

Sir Norman William Kater, M.B. Ch.M. M.L.C., Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, represents the third generation of one of the pioneering families of Australia. His grand father, Mr. H. H. Kater, who was the second son of Captain Henry Kater, of the 12th Regiment, a renowned physicist, and one of the leading scientific men of his time, chartered a ship called the Euphrates and sailed for Australia about the year 1835. He brought with him a number of stud Shorthorn cattle, which formed the nucleus of the well-known Bylong stud, and also a number of blood horses, including Cap-a-ple, Tros, Paraquay, Georgiana, The Giggler, etc. A famous horse, Sir Hercules, was the progeny of Cap-a-ple and Paraquay, and he in turn sired Yattendon, the father of Chester.

Sir Norman Kater's father, the late Mr. Henry Edward Kater, M.L.C., was one of the early settlers, first on the Castlereagh and afterwards on the lower Macquarie, where he and his brother, Edward Harvey Kater, entered into partnership in the joint ownership of Mumblebone Station in the year 1879, and by purchases from the Hon. John Smith laid the foundation of the Mumblebone Stud. The stud was divided in the year 1906. Mr. H. E. Kater took his share to Egelabra, Warren, and entered into partnership with his son (now Sir Norman Kater), forming the firm of H. E. Kater and Son, which has carried on the Egelabra stud up to the present day.

Sir Norman Kater was born at Pennant Hills in 1871, and was educated at **All Saints' College**, Bathurst, and at the Sydney Grammar School, and took his degree in medicine at the University of Sydney. During his course he gained the Renwick Scholarship for general proficiency in the first year, and the Haswell prize for biology; and in 1898 he graduated M.B., Ch.M. with Honours. He stroked the St. Paul's College crew in 1894 and 1895; rowed No. 2 in University crew in 1896; and stroked a crew which won the maiden and junior fours at the Rowing Association Regatta in 1895. He was appointed resident medical officer at Prince Alfred Hospital in 1897. In addition to his medical practice he acted as honorary demonstrator in anatomy at the Sydney University. Two years later Dr. Kater actively engaged in pastoral pursuits.

In the European war Sir Norman served with distinction. In 1915 he went to Egypt with the Red Cross, and early in the following year he joined the French medical service, and remained with them for almost two years.

During the latter half of his service he was chief surgeon of a French military hospital of 200 beds. For his services he received the Legion of Honour and Medaille de la Reconnaissance Française*. On his return to Australia he was appointed adjutant to the principal medical officer in the N S W military district with the rank of major. Later he returned to the land, to follow up his pastoral pursuits, and in 1921 was appointed president of the Graziers' Association of NSW, which position he held for three years. He was appointed to the Legislative Council in August, 1922.

Sir Norman Kater holds important positions in the commercial world. He is chairman of directors of the Commonwealth Wool and Produce Co. Ltd. and a director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co. Ltd. the Graziers' Co-operative Shearing Co. Ltd. and the Globe Worsted Mills Ltd. He is also a member of the board of reference of The Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Co. Ltd. He married in 1901 Miss Jean Gaerloch Mackenzie, daughter of the late William Henry MacKenzie, of Canley Vale, and has four sons and two daughters.

SMH 1/3/29 p.13

*The medal was created to express gratitude by the French government to all those who, without legal or military obligation, had come to the aid of the injured, disabled, refugees, or who had performed an act of exceptional dedication in the presence of the enemy during the First World War.

Wikipedia



National library of Aust.

1. Name **KATER. N. W. Dr.**

2. No. & Unit at embarkation **A. R. C.**

3. Eligible British War Medal **YES**

4. Eligible Victory Medal **issued by French Govt**

5. **Red** Unit in theatre of war

6. **WAR** High War in theatre of war

7. **Red** First unit served in overseas

8. **Red** High War overseas

9. **Red** High War disposal

10. **Red** No. of days in theatre **YES**

11. **Red** **NO**

BRITISH WAR

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES—3RD MILITARY DISTRICT.

Received One Star MEDAL for No. —
 Rank Dr. Name Kater N.W.
 Unit A.R.C.S.
 Schedule No. 8/R.X. (Signature) N.W. Kater
 (Witness) James G. Kater
 Place Registered Post History Card completed on
15 JUN 1923

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