

Leading Aircraftman Keith Thomas AUSTIN RAAF 132590 - 1 Transport & Movements



Brief Biography:

Keith Thomas (known as Bob) Austin was born in Cumnock on 1 Feb 1920, the youngest son of George and Annie (nee Fairclough) Austin. George and Annie married in Molong in 1898 and had 14 children: Leslie, Olive (Sparkes), Harold George, William, Edward Roy, Lillian (Plowman), Doris (McVicar), Annie (Johnson), Norman Claude, Kenneth, Myee (Parkinson), Marjorie (Davis), Bessie (Durr), and Keith.

The Crossroads by Joan Marriott, 1993, P161, states:
"George Austin grew up and worked on Burrawong Station for many years until around 1922, when he bought a block of land on the Baldry Road and established a successful orchard."

George died, aged 68 years, on 19 Apr 1941, at Cumnock. Annie died on 24 Feb 1947, aged 70 years. They are buried in the Church of England portion of the Cumnock Cemetery.

Keith, known as Bob, attended Cumnock Public School for his education from 1926. Keith is reported in the *Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* in 1936 and 1937 as playing tennis and golf in Cumnock.

Keith was 23 years old when he enlisted in the RAAF on 30 Mar 1943, he was single, and his locality at that time was Stanmore, Sydney. His occupation was listed as an Assistant Cleaner with Lysaght Bros. Chiswick. He was 5 feet 9 inches tall, had hazel eyes, brown hair and a medium complexion. He was of the Church of England religious denomination and his mother Annie was listed as his next of kin.

Keith was classed as Aircraftman 1, and was stationed at 2 Recruit Depot, Tocumwal NSW, on the banks of the Murray River on enlistment. His duties were that of a General Hand. He was transferred to 8 Squadron RAAF Station, Fairbairn, Canberra ACT, on 2 May 1943 to the 9 Jun 1943. From Canberra, Keith moved with 8 Sqn to Bohle River, Townsville QLD.

The 8 Sqn moved to Goodenough Island, Papua New Guinea on 29 Aug 1943. On 30 Sep 1943 he was classified as a Leading Aircraftman (LAC). LAC Austin was transferred to No. 33 Sqn at Milne Bay on 4 May 1944. No. 33 squadron provided transport to Australian forces and used Douglas C-47 Dakotas aircraft. LAC Austin returned to Australia on leave early December 1944.

The *Molong Express & Western District Advertiser* (WDA) - 8 Dec 1944, p6, stated that:

"L.A.C. Bob Austin, who has returned from an operational base in the Pacific, is spending leave with his mother in Cumnock."

On 30 December 1944 he was stationed at the Personnel Depot, Bradfield Park, NSW. LAC Austin was charged with being Absent Without Leave from 31 Dec 1944 to 2 Jan 1945 and admonished for same and forfeited 2 days pay. On 20 Apr 1945 he was transferred to 17 Rep Cen, Bowral. He was promoted to Acting Corporal on 23 Jun 1945.

The *Molong Express & WDA* - 3 Aug 1945, p3, stated that *"Corporal Bob Austin, RAAF, is spending leave with his mother in Cumnock."*

From 8 Aug 1945, Keith reverted back to the rank of LAC and moved to RAAF Com, Brisbane, and then moved to 1 Transport and Movements Office (TMO) Sydney on 16 Oct 1945. From Sydney, LAC Austin moved to 2 Personnel Depot, Bradfield Park, NSW, on 5 Nov 1945.

LAC Austin was discharged from the RAAF on 6 Nov 1945 to take up civil employment with Lysaght Bros. Ltd., Chiswick, Sydney. He received the 1939-43 Star Ribbon, the 1939-45 Pacific Star Medal, the War Medal and the Active Service Medal. He is honoured on the WW2 Honour Plaque, Cumnock War Memorial Gates.

Leading Aircraftman Keith Austin was discharged from the RAAF on 6 Nov 1945. He is honoured on the WW2 Honour Plaque, Cumnock Memorial Gates.

Keith married Edith Marjory Crocker, daughter of Mr and Mrs Charles V Cocker, of Strathfield, at St Anne's Church, Ryde in early January 1947. They had two children, Keith and Beverley.

According to the Australia Electoral Rolls 1954 - 1972, Keith and Edith lived at 21 Wentworth Road, Strathfield, and Keith's occupation was a textile worker.

Keith died suddenly, aged 56 years, on 7 Sep 1976, at Concord Hospital, Sydney. He is interred at the Rookwood Crematorium, Sydney.

Edith died, aged 79 years, on 22 Aug 2004, at Sydney.

© *Dianne and Val McKenzie, April 2023, updated October 2023. www.cumnocknswmemorials.com*

