

# Summer of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

## Major General Francis Plumley DERHAM, CB, DSO, VD (1885-1957)

Francis Derham, was born on 15 May 1885 at Camberwell, Melbourne. Francis was educated at Scotch College and completed the articled clerks' course at the University of Melbourne. On 1 August 1906, he was admitted as a solicitor. In 1907, he was commissioned in the Australian Field Artillery.

Promoted major in January 1915, he transferred to the AIF in October, embarked for Egypt next month and by March 1916 was on the Western Front. For his service as a battery commander in the 4th Australian Field Artillery Brigade (FAB) he was awarded the DSO and mentioned in dispatches. He commanded several artillery brigades and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division Ammunition Column at various times and for his command of the 14th FAB, 5th Division, as lieutenant colonel in 1917-19 he was awarded the French Croix de Guerre and thrice more mentioned in dispatches. He was repatriated in July 1919.

Francis returned to civilian life practicing as a solicitor with Moule, Hamilton & Derham, of which he was co-founder. After the war he commanded the 8th and 2nd FAB 1920-23 and was the first commander of 2nd Medium Artillery Brigade 1925-27. He was CRA 3rd Division 1927-33 and then commanded 2nd Infantry Brigade 1933-37. He appears, as well, to have been involved in the leadership of the 'White Army', a clandestine, right-wing organization. He was ADC to the Governor General from 1936 to 1942.

During WWII he was promoted to temporary major general on 2 May 1940 to command the 4th Division 1940-42, and the Melbourne and Queenscliff Area and the Victorian Covering Force 1942. He then commanded the 1st Division 1942-43 which functioned purely in a training role in New South Wales before taking command of 2nd Australian Army for 5 months in early 1943. He transferred to the Reserve of Officers on 7 November 1943 and was appointed CB in 1944. This was his terminal posting.

After the war he returned to his legal practice and charitable work. Survived by his wife, he died on 22 October 1957 in East Melbourne and was cremated with Anglican rites.

Sources: C.E.W. Bean, *The Story of Anzac*, Vol.1. Sydney. 1921; A.P. Derham papers (University of Melbourne Archives).

For more information follow the link below.

<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/derham-francis-plumley-9954>