

AN EXCEPTIONAL NEW ZEALAND WW1 RFC/RAF PILOTS GROUP TO A PIONEER OF EARLY NEW ZEALAND AVIATION AND SQUADRON COMMANDER 1917-18 AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS, 5 X M.I.D AND THE BELGIUM CROIX DE GUERRE, LATER A FAMED ART DECO CERAMICS ARTIST



MILITARY CROSS GV, 1914-15 STAR '2.LIEUT. K.D.P MURRAY R.F.C.', BRITISH WAR AND VICTORY MEDALS 'MAJOR K. D. P. MURRAY. R.A.F.', BELGIAN CROIX DE GUERRE

M.C. *London Gazette* 26 September 1917. The original recommendation published in January 1918, states: Lt. (T./Capt.) Keith Day Pearce Murray, R.F.C., Spec. Res.

"For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty on numerous occasions. He has displayed the utmost skill and fearlessness in ranging our batteries on hostile battery positions. Most of this work he had to carry out at a very low altitude and under very heavy fire, owing to the fact that the target was very well camouflaged, but, in spite of being repeatedly attacked and his machine several times damaged by anti-aircraft and machine gun fire, he was invariably successful."

M.I.D. *London Gazette* (for service in France) 30 April 1916, 15 June 1916, 15 May 1917, 20 May 1918 and 8 November 1918 (Sir D Haig's despatch)

Croix de Guerre (Belgium) *London Gazette* 15 July 1919

Keith Day Pearce Murray, one of the pioneers of New Zealand aviation, was born in Auckland, New Zealand on 5 July 1892. Educated at Prince Albert College, Auckland and King's College in Remuera, by 1910 he was working as an architect's draughtsman. The same year, having a keen interest in aviation, he took on the office of secretary for the newly formed Aero Club of New Zealand, also designing the logo for the club, the famed aviation pioneer, Leo Walsh, as the clubs President. Initially with just 25 members, the club gained financial support to build and fly their own aircraft, something that had at this point, not been achieved in New Zealand.

<https://teara.govt.nz/mi/biographies/6w12/walsh-austin-leonard>

Plans, an engine and materials were purchased for a Howard Wright 1910 biplane and after nearly 6 months of building, the biplane, named Manurewa No. 1 was ready for its first flight. Thus, at Glenora Park, Papakura on 5 February 1911, with Vivian Walsh at the controls, Manurewa No. 1 made a short 400 yard flight which was the first recognised powered flight made in New Zealand history. Keith Murray was present at this flight, indeed the best-known photograph of Manurewa No.1 prior to take off has Murray and several other members of the Aero Club, holding the tail of the biplane.



MANUREWA NO. 1, AT GLENORA PARK FEB 1911 MURRAY ONE OF THE MEN HOLDING THE TAIL

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Murray_\(ceramic_artist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Murray_(ceramic_artist))

THE GREAT WAR

Having left his job to enlist in the Royal Flying Corps, Keith Murray arrived in London from Brisbane as a civilian passenger aboard R.M.S. 'Orsova' in mid-April 1915. As New Zealand did not issue flying licences/certificates until 1916, Murray was sent to the Military School, Brooklands, gaining his flying certificate on 1 June 1915. He was subsequently Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps, his service papers showing posting to Joyce Green on 16 June and then No 15 Dover on 2 August 1915. Having been posted to 2 Squadron, Murray entered the French Theatre of War on 25 August 1915.

Piloting BE2c's, Murray was involved in information gathering flights in preparation for the battle of Loos and was noted as being in combat with an enemy aircraft on 22 September 1915. A letter from Murray describing his duties was published in the New Zealand Herald, 18 November 1915:

*WORK OF AN AIRMAN PHOTOGRAPHING TRENCHES.
GERMANS WHO RUN AWAY.*

An interesting glimpse of the life of an airman at the front is given in a letter received by relatives in Auckland from Lieutenant Keith Murray, of the Royal Flying Corps. He wrote from "somewhere in France," on September 11

"I'm rarely actually in the air for more than three hours a day," he says, "but there is a lot to do. I was up for four hours yesterday, and will be again today, but it is 'too much, and is not done often, as nerves give way under the strain. Even the interest attached to archies' begins to pall after the first dozen or so, especially when they begin to get one's range, and when blended tastefully with an occasional black smoke lyddite, it jars considerably. Both sides are" working up for a 'push,' and there is a lot of preparatory gunning going on night and day. When it does come, we are going to get a deuce of a lot to do.

As I write I can see a long trail of shrapnel following one of our machines away over the lines. They have wasted over 80 shells on the machine and haven't hit it yet but the Hun 'archies' are beastly accurate, and can range as well at 12,000 ft as at 5000 ft, and they're following him very closely. He 'get back all right, they rarely score a direct hit and bring a machine down, though they often come back well holed.

We spotted a Hun aeroplane a few days ago, and set off after it, but he was 100 ft higher, and, like most machines, slightly faster than ours so I lost him. The Germans so persistently exchange shots and then run away that it looks almost as though—like their navy—they have had orders not to engage us. They do their artillery observation from so far behind their own lines that we rarely see them.

You would be greatly interested to see the photographs we take of their trenches. The network is simply extraordinary: all our maps are prepared from photos, and thus every new map they make can be recorded. I'm off to take some photographs this afternoon."

On 11 November, Murray was noted in combat, this time with an LVG but returned ok and on 2 December 1915, he was noted as having been in combat with 2 Albatros's, tracers being seen to hit one of the enemy aircraft. Having been promoted Captain and appointed Flight Commander on 1 March 1916, he was mentioned in despatches on 30 April 1916 and 15 June 1916, the previous day; 14 June 1916, Murray was posted to 15 (reserve) Squadron back in England.



MURRAY IN COCKPIT OF AN RE8

Joining the newly formed 52 Squadron on 22 October 1916, the Squadron moved to France in November that year and was the first squadron to be equipped with the new RE8's. Serving as a Flight Commander, amongst other duties, 52 flew in support of the allied offensive at Ypres and it seems likely that his subsequent award of the Military Cross was at least in part for his gallantry at this time. He had additionally received another mentioned in despatches on 15 May 1917.

SQUADRON COMMANDER

Murray was appointed Major and Squadron Commander on 21 September 1917 and transferred to command of 10 Squadron on 25 September; 10 Squadron's previous commander having been killed in action 4 days earlier.

At this time, 10 Squadron was equipped with the Armstrong Whitworth FK8 (The Big Ak), a robust reconnaissance aircraft and an aircraft the pilots generally liked. Indeed Murray said of the aircraft in relation to the reconnaissance work: *"The big A-W was slow, but my pilots liked it for the particular job they had to do, and never regarded themselves as 'cold meat'. Owing to the nature of their work, they were rarely in a position to attack, but when attacked, as they were frequently enough, they gave a good enough account of themselves."*



Murray would lead 10 Squadron throughout the last year of the Great War, his squadron taking part in the battle of Cambrai in November 1917 and the German Spring Offensive in March 1918. Murray was again mentioned in despatches on 20 May 1918, his squadron shortly after being re-equipped with Bristol Fighters. Taking part in the second battle of the Somme during August and September 1918, the following description of Murray circa April 1918 by 37 victory Ace Ira Jones, later Wing Commander, Ira Jones (from 'Tiger Squadron'):

"Skeddon and I went over to Abeele Aerodrome nearby to see my old Squadron, No10. They are equipped with Armstrong Whitworth two-seaters (commonly known as Ack W's). The C.O. is Keith Murray, a New Zealander from Auckland and like Grid, he is a corker. I have never met a fellow with personality more prominently written all over him. When you look at him you cannot resist saying 'There goes a man'. Like Grid, he is worshipped by his squadron. No 10 has indeed been lucky in its station commanders. Mitchell, Ward and Murray are names to conjure with.."

Mentioned in despatches for a final time on 8 November 1918, Major Murray was finally transferred to the unemployment list on 16 February 1919; permitted to retain the rank of Major

POST WAR FAME AS ART DECO ARTIST

Returning to New Zealand in May 1919, soon after, Murray embarked England to continue his studies in architecture at the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London. Graduating in 1921, he was elected an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects but a lack of work forced him to make a living as an illustrator for magazines.

“..However, visits to the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris in 1925 and to the Exhibition of Swedish Industrial Arts held in London in 1931 seem to have decided him on a career in the decorative arts. He produced some experimental glass designs for Whitefriars Glassworks, but the shapes were not suited to the production processes used by the company. In 1932 he obtained work as a freelance designer with Stevens & Williams at their glassworks at Brierley Hill in Dudley. He subsequently produced some 1,200 designs for the company between 1932-39.

Having seen his designs for Stevens & Williams, Josiah Wedgwood & Sons approached Murray with a request for him to design some ‘modern’ shapes for their company. His response was the ‘3765’ vase. Introduced in 1933, the vase is recognised as a modern classic and remained in production until the 1960s. In addition to further work for Wedgwood, Murray also designed silverware for Mappin & Webb in the 1930s.

By 1936 Murray’s reputation as a designer was sufficiently established for him to be appointed one of the first ten Designers for Industry (DI) [In 1937 renamed Royal Designer for Industry (RDI)] by the Royal Society of Arts.



MURRAY PRESENTING OFFICERS OF HIS SQUADRON TO THE KING

In 1936 Murray opened an architectural office in London with Charles Stanley White (1893-1966) as Keith Murray & C.S. White (Murray & White), and in the late 1930s Murray was employed in his capacity as an architect by Wedgwood for whom he drew up plans for their new factory at Barlaston.

The Murray & White partnership was probably dissolved in 1939 following the outbreak of World War Two. During the war Murray served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1942.

In 1945 he set up the architectural practice Murray, Ward & Partners with Basil Ward (1902-1976). The same year, he was made a Master of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry.

From the late 1940s Murray concentrated on his architectural work. By 1950 he and White had formed a partnership with Stanley Churchill Ramsey (1882-1968) which operated as Ramsey, Murray & White [Ward's name did not appear in the title of the practice]. The firm had an office at 32 Wigmore Street, London. In 1955 Ward became a partner in the practice which was renamed Ramsey, Murray, White & Ward. The firm designed numerous industrial and office buildings, including the Hong Kong air terminal and the British European Airways engineering base in London airport. Murray died on 20 May 1981.

Examples of Murray's work are in the permanent collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London; the Wedgwood Museum in Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, England; Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, New York; Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, New Zealand."

The above section extracted from 'The AHRnet Biographical Dictionary of British and Irish Architects' website

More details can be found here:

<https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/royal designers/2016/06/06/keith-murray/>



Given how well known he was, a great deal can be found on Keith Murray online



Condition generally GVF, Star with light toning where once taped, BWM, lightly cleaned around naming, both this and Victory named in same machine. Replacement ribbons. Sold with copy service records (digital) and various other research, both copied and digital



LOGO DESIGNED BY MURRAY

An exceptional group to a pioneer of an early New Zealand aviation and a later famed artist