

ARMY MUSEUM OF TASMANIA

Collection Guide – AMT 5

Major Augustus Oliver Woods Collection

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- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 CHRONOLOGY – Augustus Oliver Woods
- 3 PAPERS – Augustus Oliver Woods
- 4 PHOTOGRAPHS

1. INTRODUCTION

Augustus Woods was born in Oatlands in 1875, the only son of Mr Oliver and Mrs Fanny Woods. After his schooling he worked for Simpson Brothers, Scottsdale managing their ironmongery store. He was actively involved in the north-east community most notably with Boy Scout movement. In 1907 he married Edith Ward whose parents lived at "Toogooloowa" Holebrook Place (now Davey Street), Hobart.

Augustus Woods military service began as a Lieutenant with the Army Cadets for three years in Scottsdale. He then held a commission with the 26th Light Horse for 9 months. In August 1914 he passed the competitive examinations for appointment as 2nd Lieutenant with the Australian Imperial Force. In October 1914 he applied for a commission with the Australian Imperial Forces.

Woods was appointed as a Second Lieutenant with "C" Company, 26th Battalion in May 1915 and embarked for Queensland and then Egypt the following month. In Egypt he was promoted to Lieutenant before proceeding to Gallipoli in early September where he was to continue to serve until the final withdrawal in December.

Returning to Egypt in January he then embarked for Marseilles in March and returned to the 26th Battalion in April 1916. Subsequently until his death in action in September 1918 he was to spend time serving in a number of positions with both the 26th Battalion and 7th Brigade Headquarters. During this time, he was wounded on three different occasions and as a consequence spent time in hospitals and convalescence homes in Britain.

Augustus Woods was promoted to the rank of Captain in May 1916 and then in July 1918 to the rank of temporary Major.

In May 1918 he was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty.

Major Augustus Woods was killed in action on September 26th during the battle for Mont Saint Quentin and was finally buried at the Commonwealth cemetery Peronne.

2. CHRONOLOGY – Augustus Oliver Woods

1875 (24th September) Born, Oatlands

1909 (7th April) Married Edith Emily Ward in Hobart

1914 (August) passed examination for appointment as 2nd Lieutenant

1914 (October) applied for a commission with the Australian Imperial Force

1915 (15th May) appointed Second Lieutenant "C" Company 26th Battalion

1915 (29th June) embarked for Queensland and then Egypt

1915 (27th August) promoted to Lieutenant

1915 (4th September) embarked at Alexandria for Gallipoli

1915 (10th October) transferred from 26th Battalion to Brigade Headquarters as Orderly Officer

1916 (9th January) returned to Alexandria from Gallipoli via Mudros

1916 (3rd March) embarked for Europe, arriving at Marseilles March 19th

1916 (19th April) returned to 26th Battalion

1916 (30th July) wounded and admitted to 14th General Hospital, Wimereaux, France and then invalided to Britain

1916 (22nd August) promoted to Captain and transferred to 7th Infantry Brigade Staff

1916 (21st October) returned to 26th Battalion

1916 (19th November) wounded in action on two occasions

1916 (14th December) placed on Seconded list and served in a number of positions in France and Britain

1917 (24th February) rejoined 26th Battalion in France

1917 (4th March) wounded in action (3rd occasion) and evacuated to Britain

1917 (9th April) mentioned in despatches, published in London Gazette 15th May and Commonwealth of Australia Gazette 4th October.

1917 (1st May) awarded the Military Cross for Conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty

1917 (29th September) rejoined 26th Battalion in France

1918 (25th July) appointed temporary Major

1918 (2nd September) Killed in action near Mont St Quentin, France

3. PAPERS – Augustus Oliver Woods

3/1 Papers related service in France including: -

- Letter from Birdwood congratulating “Woods” on the award of the Military Cross 31/03/1917 (with envelope redirecting to Northumberland War Hospital, Gosford, Newcastle-on-Tyne)
- Telegram requesting presence at Buckingham Palace 12th June 1917 together with envelope
- Seat holder’s ticket Cathedral Church of S. Nicholas on occasion of Royal Visit by King George V, 17th June 1917
- Letter advising of Mentioned in Despatches with extract from London Gazette of 1st June, 1917, Department of Defence, Melbourne 8/11/1917
- Letter advising of Award of Military Cross with extract from London Gazette 24th April, 1917, Department of Defence 31 August 1917

3/2 Papers related to death in action including: -

- Letter advising of death of Major Woods from Governor-General’s Office 30/09/1918 with envelope
- Letter advising of details of Major Woods death and location of temporary grave
- Circular requesting particulars for Australian Roll of Honour, 15th November 1919, Department of Defence
- Letters advising Major Woods have been exhumed from temporary grave and re-interred in Peronne Cemetery 10/1/1920, 13/10/1920
- Death Certificate issued by Queensland Register-General 14/11/1922
- Newspaper report of In Memoriam Service, Scottsdale (cutting hand dated 6/10/1928)
- Pro-forma Imperial War Graves Commission advising permanent headstone erected at Peronne Commonwealth Cemetery Extension 18th Jan 1929
- Memorial Scroll
- Envelope for Memorial plaque
- Card acknowledging condolences “Mrs Woods sincerely thanks you for your kind expressions of sympathy”.

3/3 Papers related to Woods family including: -

- Hand written manuscript documenting aspects of Woods family history

4. PHOTOGRAPHS

4/1 Photographs including: -

- Oliver Woods in Light Horse uniform, Hobart, 1915 – photographer R M Guffie, Hobart (2 copies)

- Oliver Woods in uniform Captain – photographer Monteath and copy by – photographer Fred Brunton, Hobart
- Oliver Woods in civilian dress, taken 22/12/1905 and copy cut down to fit in watch copy
- Oliver Woods playing tennis “Hollington House”, (Mrs Kelly’s home) exercising after shrapnel wound in elbow
- Photograph of grave at Peronne with temporary wooden cross
- Interior of dugout in France showing personal possessions
- “Mrs Kelly’s “guards” (convalescents) at Hollington House, Britain
- Hollington House, Newbury
- Other photographs including: -
 - Moreton Old Hall, Cheshire