

WANLISS, Harold Boyd



Studio portrait Second Lieutenant Harold Boyd Wanliss
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Harold Boyd Wanliss was born on 11 December 1891 at Ballarat, Victoria to parents John Newton Wellesley and Margaret (nee Boyd). Harold had one sister, Marion Boyd, born 28 December 1896.

Educated at Ballarat College, Victoria, Wanliss was Dux in 1908.

Harold was 20 years old when he commenced the Full Diploma at HAC. He was a member of the College life-saving class, and, at the end of First Year, Wanliss, D.I.O. Macauley and Reginald Threlfall celebrated by walking from HAC (Richmond, NSW) to Melbourne. A trip that was chronicled in the Sydney Morning Herald 8 Feb 1913, took roughly five weeks to complete and was approximately 700 miles (c.1126 kms) long [HAC Journal Feb 1913 p.32-35].

Harold left HAC after gaining the First Year Certificate and finished Dux of his year in 1912 to work at orcharding. In 1913 he purchased 295 acres of land near Lorne, Victoria, planted an orchard and nearby found the falls on the Erskine River which were later named after him (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wanliss-harold-boyd-8978>).

Prior to enlistment on 17 April 1915, Harold had served in the Cadets as a Naval Volunteer. The College Journal reported Harold would have enlisted earlier but his horse fell on him and broke his leg.

Whilst in training, Harold received his commission and embarked as a Second Lieutenant with the 29th Battalion, 2nd Reinforcement from Melbourne aboard HMAT Demosthenes A64 on 29 October 1915.

Whilst in Egypt he transferred to the 14th Battalion and was then sent to France.

Awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO), 15 July 1916 (and Mentioned in Despatches), 'For conspicuous gallantry and determination when leading an attacking party during a raid. He forced the wire which was uncut, entered the trench, inflicted heavy loss on the enemy, and supervised the withdrawal. While forcing the wire [at Armentieres] he was wounded in the face; later was wounded by a bullet in the neck; and finally, when withdrawing, he was again wounded, and had to be carried in. He set a fine example to all with him.' (Commonwealth Gazette No. 176, 30 November 1916)

While recovering in England he was promoted to Captain. On re-joining his unit he was again Mentioned in Despatches and, on 26th September 1917, aged 25, he was Killed in Action at Polygon Wood and buried where he fell. Harold is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Flanders, Belgium.

Two of Harold's uncles also served during World War One. Lieutenant-Colonel D.S. Wanliss was Officer in Command of the 5th Battalion AIF which took a prominent part at Gallipoli, and Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Wanliss commander of the South Lancashires.

'Charles Bean reported the opinion of Monash and others that Wanliss was 'possibly destined, if he lived, to lead Australia'. Wanliss had spent his A.I.F. leaves studying new industries which might benefit post-war Australia, and searching for various kinds of work for disabled ex-servicemen. His death demonstrates that Australia's World War I losses cannot be measured simply by numbers' <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wanliss-harold-boyd-8978>