

WATKINS, Harold Thomas



University Archives Ref. AI-11007 Portrait - Harold Thomas Watkins in army service uniform

Harold was born in Sydney in 1894 to parents Thomas, an accountant, and Amelia. He had been a student at Hurlstone Agricultural High School which enabled him to enter the second year of the Diploma at HAC in 1912. He took equal third place in that year and also 2nd place in the ploughing championship. He gained his HDA at the end of 1913, placing 9th in a class of 25. He was then employed at HAC as Assistant Experimentalist in January 1914. Harold applied for a Commission with the AIF in November and served as Lieutenant in the 13th Battalion. Like many ex-students he wrote to the College and whilst in the AIF he wrote from Egypt describing time spent with fellow students such as William Douglas and Duncan Maxwell. Harold had been a member of the 41st Infantry (Richmond) and his then Commanding Officer had been Douglas. Harold was killed on 25th April 1915, the day of the Gallipoli Landing and was buried near Gaba Tepe, between Quinn's Post and Courtney's Post during an armistice in the fighting. His father notified the College by telegram on 5th May of Harold's death and Principal Potts read it out to all gathered at lunch. The College sent their condolences and lowered the flags to half-mast. He was just 21. His father wrote to Potts;

"I should like to express my thanks and appreciation of your care and invariably kind consideration for my son, both as a student and afterwards as an officer of the College; and your interest in his welfare, and to assure you of the kindly feelings he had for you and the high regard in which he held you. His life at the College was a happy one, and he never had other than the kindest words for all his tutors."

He lies today in Courtney's and Steele's Post Cemetery, Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. Harold's younger brother Wallace was also a HAC student and served in WWI.