



29<sup>th</sup> July

My dear Hel

Your letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> has been  
 so far so good I was surprised to hear that I was a  
 name on your list but then I have  
 for 27 days. And only by a stroke of  
 bad luck on I have now for my father  
 was in a position of a fight had not  
 and some of my affairs not in the  
 Mademoiselle hospital suffering from wounds  
 and I was very worried to be here  
 and had my other slightly too a few  
 places. You want to be that.

Well to me I am just as pleased in  
 a word here when I have been for a week.  
 Remember, but in all this I cannot see  
 getting out and whilst you have finished  
 up and getting the rest in a little  
 while long over to the general hospital and  
 the others here all night and not all  
 of a hour. And the great and that!

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I should like you to go and see some of  
 my officers. but if it is not convenient  
 to go I must be happy. If it is to  
 be that way it. off it is otherwise  
 the and you can refer to his then see  
 Reg. Colonel. I hope to see you  
 later when they have been and  
 finishing and I think they will be  
 obliged to me for I will be an  
 additional pleasure who they have you are  
 a bit of the so. Well that people have  
 then and you are. I have then if  
 any of my men are also then but if  
 they are just sick in the then but they  
 will be pleased to see you and you are  
 dear and and you will be on my way and they  
 will welcome you too.

I wish I could take you to see the  
 the other side of the place but I can  
 see to go to England but the flying  
 and so. but I have to go back to work  
 I had not to let you see

Top left: Unknown photographer, Brigadier Walter Cass and Helena Cass, c. 1920.

Top right: World War I nurses' uniform belonging to Helena Cass, wife of Walter Cass.

Above: Letter dated 29 July 1916 to Helena Holmes (later Cass), from Walter Cass who, from a rest home in France, writes to ask Helena if she would visit some of his men in hospital.

Brigadier Walter Cass Collection, 1890–2002, Australian Manuscripts Collection, MS 15488

# Brigadier Walter Cass Collection, 1890–2002

Australian Manuscripts Collection MS 15488

Acquired 2013

Walter Cass (1876–1931)<sup>1</sup> served with the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles in the Boer War from 1901 to 1902. Appointed brigade major of the 2nd Brigade in 1914, he fought during the Gallipoli landing and was severely wounded while leading the 7th Battalion during the Second Battle of Krithia. For his service at Gallipoli, Cass was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George. In 1916 in France, Cass led the 54th Battalion at the Battle of Fromelles with distinction. After returning to England that year suffering shell shock, Brigadier Cass married Helena Holmes (1886–1965), a Canadian wartime nurse and later a journalist, whom he had met pre-war in Australia.

This superb collection, purchased with the assistance of the State Library Foundation, tells the story of an outstanding soldier. Spanning the period 1890–2002, it includes correspondence; photographs (some rare); maps (including trench maps used by Cass); certificates; publications; military papers; ephemera; and realia, including Cass's horse-hair whip, boots, a wooden boot cleaner, cylindrical leather sewing kit, fold-up seat and typewriter. Other interesting items are a wonderful diorama of the famous Delhi Durbar, held in 1911, and a number of Helena's possessions, including her nurse's uniform worn while she was nursing at a Canadian hospital in London during World War I.

A feature of the collection is the correspondence, particularly letters from Walter to Helena written between 1914 and 1916. These eloquent letters give an insight into a man with a keen sense of duty, great concern for his men, and love and respect for Helena. In a letter dated 29 July 1916, Walter writes of being in a rest home in France being treated for rheumatism, and requests that Helena visit some of his wounded officers in hospital: '... I should like you to go and see some of my officers – that is if it is not unprofessional to go to another hospital ... and I know they will be delighted to see you ... All these people have done well by me.'

Cass was a keen photographer, so another interesting aspect of the collection are the photographs he took in India, when stationed on the Pakistan–Afghanistan border while on a military exchange during 1911–12. They include panoramic photographs of the Khyber Pass, portraits of people, temples, military encampments, statues, royal elephants and the Taj Mahal.

Material from the collection was used in an exhibition at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance in 2012 and in the Library's *Changing Face of Victoria* exhibition.