



29th July

My dear Hel

Your letter of the 20th has been
 so far so good and I have had some
 time now for the last three or four
 for 24 days. Last night by a stroke of
 bad luck on I have run for my bed
 was in a position of a fight had not
 and some of my affairs not in the
 Mademoiselle hospital suffering from
 and I was very worried to be here
 and had my other slight too a few
 places. You want to be sure.

Well to me - I am just as pleased in
 a rest home when I have been for a week.
 Pleasant, but in all this - I cannot see
 getting out and whilst from time thinking
 up and getting the best in a little
 while long over to the ground towards and
 the things here all night and not all
 of a hour. And she goes on 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 to another hospital. If it is to
 be the best way is, off it is otherwise
 the best you can afford to be here in
 King William (18th Street) and just
 back where King Street (18th Street) and
 Stanley and I think they will be
 obliged to see you. I will be an
 additional pleasure to see you and
 a bit of the 100. Well that's all for
 the rest of you. I have time of
 any of my men in the hospital
 here we just think in the best way
 will be pleased to see you and
 then and when you will be on my way and they
 will welcome you too.

I wish I could take you to see the
 the 100th at the 100 of the place. And now
 I am to go to England but the flying
 and so, but I am to go back to work
 I had not had many letters

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)¹ 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.