

Athol Hood Holden



Private (Pte) 2869 Athol Hood Holden enlisted in the 1st Pioneer Battalion in Sydney on 20 July 1916. He embarked overseas on 17 October and disembarked in Plymouth on 9 January 1917, where he joined the Pioneer Training Battalion at Lark Hill Camp.

He spent the period 6 March – 11 April in the Fargo Military Hospital with an undiagnosed illness, after which he was transferred to the 5th (Brigade) Training Battalion on 11 July 1917.

After five months infantry training, he left England on 30 January 1918. He landed in France the next day, where he was transferred and taken on strength of the 18th Infantry Battalion in the 5th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Australian Division, resting at Senninghem, on 5 February.

Following the success of the German offensive on the Somme on 21 March, the 18th Battalion was moved south on 2 April but, by the time they arrived, the main enemy assault had already petered out. They remained in the Villers-Bretonneux area for several months, and it was here that Pte Holden sustained a gunshot wound to the head on 24 July 1918.

He was initially evacuated to the American Hospital at Le Treport from 26 July – 9 August, then admitted to the 10th General Hospital at Rouen between 10 August – 14 September, after which he rejoined the 18th Battalion at Frise on 24 September.

On 3 October, the 2nd Division attacked the German Beaufort trench system. Despite strong resistance the objectives were taken, together with 332 German prisoners, for the loss of 116 battalion casualties. They left the line on 6 October and, several weeks later, Pte Holden contracted influenza, for which he was treated locally between 25 November – 7 December. He then proceeded on leave in England from 5 – 21 January 1919.

He returned to England on 11 March and was granted paid leave to undertake employment with Renson Motor Engineering in Chisham between 14 March – 5 September. Shortly after this arrangement ceased, he embarked for return to Australia on 22 September.

Private 2869 Athol Hood Holden disembarked in Melbourne on 12 November, then made his way to Sydney where he was discharged from the AIF on 27 December 1919.

Name: Holden, Athol Hood	
Service Number	2869
Date enlisted	20 July 1916
Place enlisted	Sydney Showgrounds, NSW
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	1 st Pioneer Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	17 October 1916 HMAT A30 <i>Borda</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	18 years 3 months (14 March 1898)
Place of birth	Richmond, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Tent maker
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Holden, Mr William, father, "Acacia", St Leonards, Victoria
Permanent address	Stanmore, NSW
Appearance	Dark complexion, black hair, brown eyes, height – 6 feet, weight – 9 stone, 10 lbs, chest measurement – 34/36 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	18 th Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and place wounded	24 July 1918 Villers-Bretonneux, France
Nature of wounds	Gunshot wound to head
Date and ship embarked for Australia	22 September 1919 HT <i>Port Sydney</i>
Date discharged	27 December 1919
Nature of discharge	Termination of Period of Enlistment
Honours/medals	British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Brother of Fred Holden. Died 2 June 1967. Remembered on the St Leonards Honor Roll and St Paul's Anglican Church Honor Roll.