

D190 William George Agate – World War 1 letters, postcards and artefacts

Creator: William 'Bill' George Agate, ?-1917

Historical Note: William George Agate was the eldest son of Moses and Minnie Agate. The Agate children included William (known as Bill), Beatrice Florence (known as Foddie or Florrie), Mary (known as Molly) and Richard, (known as Dick or Pud). The family migrated from England in the first decade of 1900 and initially lived in Marrickville, before finally settling at Rockdale or Brighton-le-Sands.

William Agate enlisted from Marrickville into the Australian Infantry Forces in December 1915. He completed his army training on 11 March and embarked from Sydney on 1 April 1916. Private Agate, No 5027, 1st Battalion A.I.F. died of wounds suffered during a German gas attack at Ypres in Belgium on 6 November 1917.

The records in this collection comprise both personal and official correspondence and other material relating to William Agate's military service during World War 1.

The collection was donated to the University Archives in 1995 by a descendant of the Agate family.

Record Summary: Personal records – Letters, postcards, photographs, artefacts & ephemera. Supplementary material held in Archives.

Date Range: 1915-1918

Quantity: 15cm. (1 box)

Access Conditions: Available for reference. Contact Archivist in advance to arrange access.

Inventory: Compiled 17 October 2001. Revised 20 June 2017.

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Item ListItems 1-16: 1915-1916

1. Biographical notes about William Agate by Joan Whiting [family member]
2. Photograph of William Agate in military uniform [1915?]
3. Wrist identity badge: inscribed 'No 5027/W.G. Agate C.E. / 1st Battn. / A.I.F.'
4. Letter from 'Bill' to 'Dear Mum', in camp at Warwick Farm, Sydney. YMCA letterhead. [? September 1915]
5. Letter from 'Bill' to 'Dear Mum' [complains of 'rotten' food in camp.] YMCA letterhead. 18 September 1915
6. Envelope. 20 September 1915
7. Lettercard from 'Bill' to 'Dear Mother'. Member of 'B Company, 9th Battalion, 7th Platoon.' 29 September 1915
8. Envelope. September 1915
9. Small notebook, Signature Album. Inscribed 'To Will. From your loving Sister Florrie. 1st/10/15'
10. Red Cross Knitting Book [1915?]
11. The Keystone – the Authorised Company Newspaper of the No. 1 Battalion, Liverpool, Saturday, 22 January 1916, Vol.1 no.6. [4pp.]
12. Souvenir . . . of Australia's Fighting Sons – Liverpool Camp. 8 Views
13. 'Syllabus of Training. B Coy. 1st Batt. 11th Week. 4th March 1916'
14. 'Notice of Allotment of Military Pay' to Mrs Minnie Agate. 7 April 1916
15. Money transfer form to the Commonwealth Bank, London [? April 1916]
16. Pass for Sydney. Private of C Company, No 1 Battalion, Liverpool. [? April 1916]

Items 17-22: On Board Ship 1916

17. Letter to 'Dear Mum' [re leaving harbour for overseas without saying goodbye. Speaks of friends 'Digger' and Gus Woods'] [? April 1916]
18. Postcard/letter 'T.S.S. [Makarini]. [? April 1916]
19. Letter to 'Dear Mum', on board ship. 11 April 1916
20. Newspaper photo cutting – fighting match on board S.S. Makarini. Bill in foreground. [? April 1916]

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21. Letter to 'Dear Mum', aboard S.S. Makarini. 27 April 1916. [tells his mother his 'doing bosker' and called in at 'Clombo' [Colombo?]]
22. Envelope. 3 May 1916

Items 23-91: Overseas 1916-1917

23. Letter to 'Dear Mum'. 6 May 1916. [informs her he 'will be leaving for the Front']
- 24 – 28. Postcards of Egypt [x6] [colour] [n.d.]
29. Postcard 'Mowther' 6 June 1917
30. Postcard 'Dad' 6 June 1917
31. Postcard 'Good old Dick' 6 June 1917
32. Postcard 'Molly' 6 June 1917
33. Postcard 'Uncle Jim' 6 June 1917
34. Postcard 'Ginger' 6 June 1917
35. Envelope 23 June 1916
36. Postcard of Ypres, to 'Dear Mum' 24 June 1916
37. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 27 June 1916
38. Silk postcard 'Remember' plus letter to 'Dear Mum' 2 July 1916
39. Silk postcard 'Remember' plus letter to 'Dear Dad' 2 July 1916
40. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate 27 July 1916
41. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate 28 July 1916
42. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate 29 July 1916
43. Letter to 'Dear Mum' 1 September 1916. [talks of not writing as they have 'been on the move and in the firing line'] Encloses postcards and silks
44. YMCA envelope 4 September 1916
45. YMCA envelope [? September 1916]
46. Silk postcard 'To My Dear Mother' plus letter to 'Dear Mum' 28 September 1916
47. Silk postcard 'United for Liberty' addressed to 'Dear Dad' [? September 1916]
48. Letter to 'Dear Mum' [? October 1916] [speaks of a week in Egypt then off to France. Digger is in hospital] Gives Address as '16th Run, 1st Batt., 1st Dpt. Batt., 1st A.D.B.F., Sec. 17 B.E.F., France.'
49. Letter from mother to 'My dear Son' 15 October 1916 [2pp.]
50. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate 4 November 1916

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51. Envelope 'Return to Sender' 9 November 1916
52. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate 13 November 1916
53. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate 20 November 1916
54. Field Service Post Card to J. Agate 20 November 1916
55. Envelope 1916
56. Letter to 'Dear Mother' France, 29 November 1916. [speaks of life on the Front in France] [2pp.]
57. Envelope. 29 November 1916
58. – 62. Postcards of 'Guerre 1914 – 1916' series [x5] [b&w] plus letter to 'Dear Mother'. 11 December 1916
63. Letter to 'Dear Mum' France, 16 December 1916 [erroneously dated '16.12.19'] [2pp.]
64. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 19 December 1916
65. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 29 December 1916
66. Silk postcard 'A Kiss from France' plus letter to 'Dear Mum'. Part 1 [? December 1916]
67. Silk postcard 'A Happy Christmas' plus letter. Part 2 [n.d.]
68. Silk postcard 'A Kiss from France' plus letter. Part 3 [n.d.]
69. Silk postcard 'Christmas Greetings' plus letter. Part 4 [n.d.]
70. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 14 January 1917
71. Letter to 'Dear Mum' France, 26 March 1917. [2pp.] [after 11 months in France, speaks of an imminent leave in England]
72. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 1 April 1917
73. Partial letter to 'Dear Mum' France, 6 June 1917 [2pp.] [speaks of resting by the sea, after six weeks of hard fighting]
74. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 14 June 1917
75. Envelope, to Mrs J Holder. 16 June 1917
76. 'Unveiling the memorial' Poziers, 8 July 1917
77. Letter from Bill's sister 'Foddie' 22 July 1917 [4pp.]
78. Letter from Bill's sister 'Foddie' 5 August 1917 [3pp.]
79. Envelope. 7 August 1917, Envelope [n.d.]
80. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 8 August 1917
81. Letter from mother 12 August 1917 [4pp.]
82. Letter to 'Dear Mum'. On leave in France. 21 August 1917 [1p.]

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83. Field Service Post Card to J. Holder. 23 August 1917
84. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 23 August 1917
85. Field Service Post Card to Mrs M. Agate. 24 August 1917
86. Field Service Post Card to J. Holder. 24 August 1917
87. Envelope, to Mrs M. Agate. 31 August 1917
88. Registered letter envelope to Mrs M. Agate. 21 October 1917
89. Letter to 'Dear Mum' 26 October 1917 [2pp] [speaks of being not happy about being a 'runner' carrying messages from 'the front line to supports']
90. Registered letter envelope to Mrs M. Agate. 27 October 1917
91. Envelope. 1917

Items 92-128: Death of William Agate 1917

92. Small cloth Kit Bag, with Bill's name and address: 'O.H.M.S. / Anzac Section / 3rd Eichelon / B.E.F. France.'
93. 'Inventory of effects of 5027, Agate, W.G., 1st Btn. A.I.F. Receipt No. 28936'. [n.d.]
94. Daily Telegraph obituary notice [in card insert] [n.d.]
- 95 – 96. Letter and envelope [item missing] to Mrs Agate from Lt. [?.]. France, 12 November 1917 [1p.]
97. Letter to Mr Agate re death of Bill, from Chaplain. [November 1917]
98. – 99. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Ivy Ferguson. [n.d. ? November 1917]
100. – 101. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Charles W. Coombe 21 November 1917
102. – 103. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Mr and Mrs Morrison and family 22 November 1917
104. – 105. Sympathy card plus envelope Mr And Mrs Wyer and family 23 November 1917
106. – 107. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Mrs J. Daines and family 25 November 1917
108. Envelope. 25 November 1917
109. – 110. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Mr and Mrs A.O. Daines 26 November 1917
111. Sympathy card plus Envelope, from Mrs Will Young and family 26 November 1917
112. - 113. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Mrs Alice McGarlock 26 November 1917

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114. – 115. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Mr and Mrs L Atlee and family 27 November 1917
116. – 117. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Sgt. J.D. McCredie 29 November 1917
118. Envelope, to Mr Agate 19 December 1917
119. – 120. Sympathy card plus envelope, from Ethel Ferguson 1 December 1917
121. Letter to Mrs Agate re the death of Private W.G. Agate, from Major Sherbon 5 December 1917
122. Envelope, to Mrs Agate. 19 December 1917 [item missing]
123. Letter re termination of allotment payments 8 January 1918
124. Registered letter envelope to Mrs M. Agate 14 January 1918
125. Letter of Condolence from the King: 'George R.J. Buckingham Palace' (2) [1918]
126. Scroll from King George, inscribed 'Pte. William George Agate. 1st Bn. A.I.F.' [1918]
127. Medals and Stripes [x2 on single bar] inscribed 'The Great War for Civilisation 1914-1919' and 'Georgeivs V Britt. Comn. Rex et Ind Imp'
128. Bronze medallion inscribed 'He Died for Freedom and Honour. William George Agate'. [in original cardboard case] [circa 1918]

Items 129-145: Undated Items

129. Envelope
130. Letter on envelope
131. Small photograph of a 'pin-up' girl (which 'Bill thought delightful and worth keeping')
132. Postcard – British Lion
133. Photograph - ? Bill's mate 'Digger'
134. Postcard of 'La Grand Guerre 1914–15–16', addressed to 'Dick'
135. Postcard of 'La Grand Guerre 1914–15–16', addressed to 'Molly'
136. Postcard of 'La Grand Guerre 1914–15-16', addressed to 'Big Jim'
137. Postcard of 'La Grand Guerre 1914–15-16 – Amiens'
138. 'War Honours for the A.I.F.', The ANZAC Bulletin, pp. 9–10
139. Postcard to 'Dear Billy' from 'Sister Foddie'
140. Postcard to 'Dear Billy' from 'Sister Foddie'
141. Postcard 'No More Bluff'

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- 142. Postcard 'At Our Camp'
- 143. Postcard 'Revised Battalion Orders'
- 144. Postcard 'The War Nap'
- 145. Bookmark – Flags

Items 146-150: German Material

Letters and a photograph found on a German soldier.

- 146. Photo/postcard 8 January 1917
- 147. Letter 12 September 1917 [4pp.]
- 148. Letter 14 September 1917 [2pp.]
- 149. Letter 28 September 1917 [4pp.]
- 150. Transcript of letter [attempted transcription by Mr Bert Flugelman in 1985]