

AN IMPORTANT AND EXTREMELY RARELY NAMED GREAT WAR 12TH BATTALION AUSTRALIAN INFANTRY D.C.M. TO A PRIVATE WHO LANDED WITH THE FIRST WAVE ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE GALLIPOLI LANDINGS, HIS RECOMMENDATION FOR SHOOTING FIVE SNIPERS AND CAPTURING A GERMAN OFFICER ALSO FOR THE FIRST DAY AT KABA TEPE ON 25 APRIL 1915. ADDITIONALLY, M.I.D. FOR GALLIPOLI HIS D.C.M WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TWENTY ONE AUSTRALIAN D.C.M.S AWARDED DURING THE GREAT WAR



DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL, G.V.R. '918 PTE F. C. GODFREY. 12/AUST: I.B. – W.A.'

D.C.M. *London Gazette* 3 June 1915. Recommended in Sir Ian Hamilton's Despatch, 20 May 1915. The original recommendation states:

"On 25 April, 1915, during operations near Kaba Tepe, for exceptionally gallant conduct in personally capturing an enemy Officer and going out single handed and shooting five enemy snipers"

A further and similar worded recommendation, reported by Major E. H. Smith, notes it was a German Officer that Godfrey captured.

M.I.D. *London Gazette* 5 August 1915. Sir Ian Hamilton's Despatch

918 Private Frederick Charles Godfrey, a 25 year old Horse Driver from Roebourne, Western Australia, enlisted onto the 12th Battalion, Australian Infantry on 10 September 1914. 12th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the A.I.F. during the Great War and formed part of the 3rd Brigade and embarked from Australia on 2 November 1914. Landing in Egypt in early December, 3rd Brigade was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 and as such they were part of the first wave of troops so ashore at around 4:30 am., just north of Gaba Tepe. Sustaining heavy casualties, the Battalion attempted to move inland, fighting their way towards 'Baby 700' and the 'Nek', during which time, 12th Battalions commander; Lieutenant Colonel L. F. Clarke, was shot by a sniper. The fighting on the forward slopes of the former continued throughout the morning and as the afternoon drew on, fighting became confused and casualties mounted as the Turks counter attacked. As the afternoon moved into evening, companies and platoons became mixed up with those of other battalions and under heavy rifle and machinegun fire, the Australians began to dig in, though one participant would state that 'it was almost an act of suicide even to get on ones knees'

It was for his gallantry at Gaba Tepe during the 25 April that Private Godfrey was awarded the D.C.M., among the first to be awarded to an Australian soldier during the Great War. Major E. H. Smith, who brought the recommendation, became temporary Commanding Officer of 12th Battalion on 26 April 1915. Godfrey's papers state that he was serving with 'H' Company 12th Battalion at this time. Presumably this was Headquarters Company.



SOLDIER OF THE 12TH BATTALION AT GALLIPOLI

Total casualties for the 12th Battalion between April 25 and 30, were 484 killed, wounded and missing and over the coming days and weeks, the battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line of the ANZAC position. During this time Private Godfrey was again recommended for his gallantry, this time receiving a Mentioned in Despatches.

A series of photographs from Major Elliot's family, includes a large number of the 12th Battalion taken at Gallipoli:

[https://libraries.tas.ent.sirsi.dynix.net.au/client/en_AU/tas/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fARCHIVES_SERIES\\$002f\\$002fARCHIVES_SER_DIX:NS669-12/one](https://libraries.tas.ent.sirsi.dynix.net.au/client/en_AU/tas/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fARCHIVES_SERIES$002f$002fARCHIVES_SER_DIX:NS669-12/one)

On 21 July 1915, he was admitted to hospital at Gallipoli (debility) and two days later was transferred to No1 Australian Hospital at Murdos. From there he embarked for hospital in Malta with jaundice and Rheumatism on 23 October 1915, embarked for England. After a long stay in hospital, Godfrey was taken on strength of No 2 Command Depot, Weymouth (England). Classified as Private P.B., he was promoted Acting Lance Corporal on 17 February 1917 and would be permanently attached to the Depot for the duration of his service. Suffering from the effects of malaria, he was returned to Australia to be discharged on 10 March 1918. He was finally discharged from the Army on 5 May 1918.

In 1937, Godfrey contacted the Base Records at Melbourne to request a duplicate of his discharge, claiming his original had been lost in a fire that burned down his home, in which all the contents were destroyed. In later life, Godfrey became Mayor of Riebourne. He died on 15 April 1952

Private Godfrey was additionally issued with the 1914/15 Star, British War and Victory medals, his M.I.D. emblem and Certificate were resent to him on 24 September 1921. Whether these medals survived the fire at his home is unknown.

THE MEDAL

Private Godfrey's D.C.M. is one of 21 Australian 'Gallipoli' D.C.M.s announced in the London Gazette of 3 June 1915. These being the first Australian D.C.M.s of the Great War. Of these 21 Gallipoli Awards, three, including Godfrey's have appeared at auction in the past 6 years; each with the unusual addition of both Battalion and State at the end of the naming:

D.C.M. '75 L.CPL T.KENNEDY. 1/AUST: I.B.-N.S.W.' Noble Numismatics Nov 2019

D.C.M. '1293 PTE. R. HUMBERSTON. 3/AUST: I.B. - N.S.W.' – DNW 15 Oct 2020

D.C.M. '918 PTE F. C. GODFREY. 12/AUST: I.B. – W.A.'



It is believed the addition of 'I.B.' (Imperial Battalion) and the State, which were similarly used on Australian Boer War medals, was only used in the very first D.C.M.s issued to Australian troops during the Great War. Post this, Australian D.C.M.s were named 'AUST: INF.'. It is likely that with the rapid expansion of the A.I.F., the use of the former naming type was discontinued. So far, only the above three very rare D.C.M.s from the 3 June 1915 Gazette have been noted with this naming style but none from later Gazettes, including later Awards for Gallipoli.

Condition NVF. Some contact marks and a couple of edge bruises. two letters of surname double stamped. Sold with a great deal of copied digital research.

A extremely rarely named and important D.C.M. for the first day of the Gallipoli landings, with an outstanding recommendation and an additional Gallipoli M.I.D. to boot.