

Edgar Thomas Towner letters

Accession number 30576

Date 1915-1957

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Abstract Papers of Edgar Thomas Towner, VC MC

Scope and content Letters and correspondence from Edgar Towner to his family in Queensland and England, during the First World War. Also included is a pocket book of a deceased German soldier which contains photographs, postcards and letters relating to two soldiers George Augeleit and Hermann Schoenfeld.

System of arrangement Arranged into 10 series

Description 82 letters ; 7 postcards ; 3 greeting cards ; 3 newspaper clippings ; 1 German soldier's pocket book

Additional format Digital copies available

Guides A series and item list is available

Administrative / Biographical history Born in Blackall, Lieutenant Edgar Thomas Towner, VC, MC, enlisted in the AIF in 1915, and was posted to the transport section of 25th Infantry Battalion. He served in Egypt, France and Belgium. In 1916 he was transferred to the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion, 7th Brigade's Machine Gun Company and was commissioned. Towner was awarded the Victoria Cross for "most conspicuous bravery, initiative and devotion to duty" on 1 September 1918 at Mont St. Quentin. During an advance, he single-handedly located and captured a German machine gun, turned it on the enemy causing severe losses, and captured twenty-five prisoners. Although wounded and under heavy attack, he maintained his machine gun fire. He was also awarded the Military Cross in 1918, and Mentioned in Despatches twice. After the war he was appointed a director of the Russleigh Pastoral Company, and briefly re-enlisted during World War 2, promoted to major. A keen geographer, he received the Dr Thomson Foundation Gold Medal in 1956 for his geographical work.

Access restrictions Unrestricted access.

Copyright status In copyright.

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

Notes This collection is one of 100 Regional Collections digitised for the QANZAC100: Memories for a New Generation project.

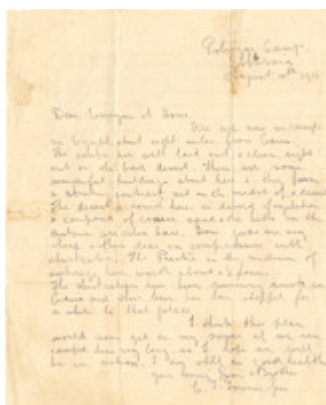
Preferred citation

30576, Edgar Thomas Towner letters, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

[View full catalogue record](#)

[Go to One Search, the library catalogue](#)

Series 1: Correspondence (1915)



Series number 1

Series title Correspondence

Date 1915

Scope and content

This collection of correspondence relates to the departure of Edgar Towner with the 25th Infantry Battalion for service overseas during the First World War. It includes an account of his voyage aboard HMAS *Aeneas* which left Brisbane in June 1915; their camp outside Cairo; casualties arriving from Gallipoli and exploring historic and famous sites including the Pyramids, and the Barrage at the River Nile Delta. His sister Greta Towner, a nurse with the AANS is serving on Lemnos Island. [Items 30576/1 - 30576/9]

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Description

Description 8 letters ; 1 telegram

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

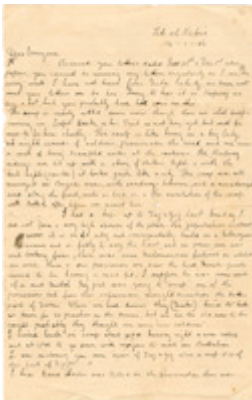
Other guides Transcripts available

View the items

[View the items](#)

(1 digital)

Series 2: Correspondence (1916)



Series number 2

Series title Correspondence

Date 1916

Scope and content

This collection of correspondence relates to the service of Edgar Towner after the withdrawal of troops from Gallipoli. Towner departed for France in March 1916 and was transferred to the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion and allotted to 7th Brigade Machine Gun Company. He was then promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and put in charge of the battalion's transport section. Included is a letter from Greta (Margarite) Robinson, to her cousin Edgar Towner whose husband of 3 months Lieutenant Ernest Robinson, RN (1890-1914) was killed while serving as an officer on HMS

Hawke which was sunk in the North Sea, 1914. [Items 30576/10 - 30576/18]

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Robinson, Margarite

Description

Description 8 letters ; 1 telegram

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

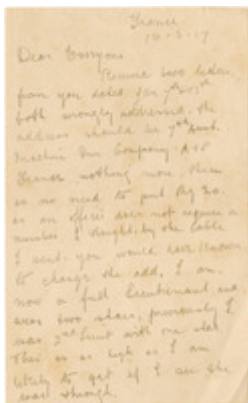
Other guides Transcripts available

View the items

View the item

(1 digital)

Series 3: Correspondence (1917)



Series number 3

Series title Correspondence

Date 1917

Scope and content

This collection of letters from Edgar Towner, now a full Lieutenant relate to his service in France with the 7th Brigade Machine Gun Company. Towner was 'Mentioned in despatches' in June 1917 for 'devotion to duty and consistent good work' and he describes in detail the conditions they experienced in the front lines. Also included are several items from his sister Greta Towner, a nurse with the AANS serving near the front, and one from his uncle John Herley of Brixton, England describing a recent air raid. [Items 30576/19 - 30576/31]

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Towner, Greta Norman, 1891-1961 ; and
Herley, John H.

Description

Description 13 letters

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

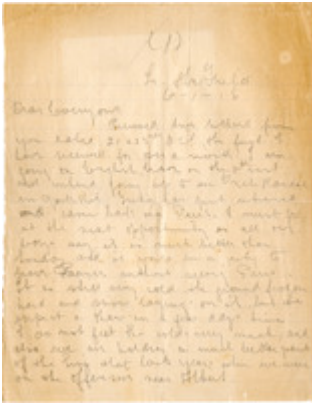
Other guides Transcripts available

View the items

View the item

(1 digital)

Series 4: Correspondence (1918)



Series number 4

Series title Correspondence

Date 1918

Scope and content

This series of letters and telegrams describe Edgar Towner's service with the 7th Machine Gun Company operating close to the front lines in France. In June, Towner was in command during an attack to the south of Morlancourt, and for his actions he was awarded the Military Cross. In September, Towner was wounded but remained on duty under intense fire for more than thirty hours, until he could be evacuated. 'For most conspicuous bravery, initiative and devotion to duty' he was also awarded the Victoria Cross. Included are a number of telegrams between family and friends advising of his awards, and his admittance to hospital. Following the armistice declaration, Towner is billeted with his battalion in Yves Gomezee, Belgium. [Items 30576/32 - 30576/57]

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Towner, Greta Norman, 1891-1961 ; and

Towner, Gresly Lewkin, 1904-1979

Description

Description 18 letters ; 8 telegrams

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

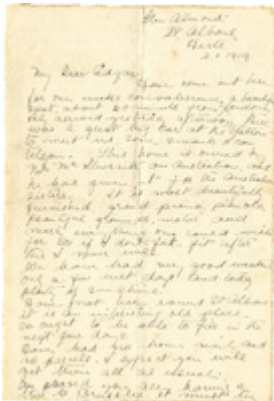
Other guides Transcripts available

View the items

[View the item](#)

(1 digital)

Series 5: Correspondence (1919)



Series number 5

Series title Correspondence

Date 1919

Scope and content

In this series of letters from Nurse Greta Towner and her brother Edgar, we can follow their experiences in England and Belgium after the armistice was declared in November 1918. Edgar Towner was billeted in Belgium while his battalion waited for their turn to be repatriated, which was delayed by strikes in London. Greta Towner was granted leave to stay at 'Glen Almond' a convalescence home, in St Albans, Hertfordshire. 'Glen Almond' was the country home of Harold McIlwraith who, in July 1916, lent his home to the Australian government for use as a convalescent home for Australian nurses. [Items 30576/58 - 30576/82]

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Towner, Greta Norman, 1891-1961 ; and

Harte, Albert Edward, 1857-1939

Description

Description 23 letters ; 2 telegrams

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

Other guides Transcripts available

View the items

[View the item](#)

(1 digital)

Series 6: Postcards (1915-1919)

Series number 6

Series title Postcards

Date 1915-1919

Scope and content

Postcards sent by Edgar Towner to his family in Queensland while serving overseas with the 25th Infantry Battalion and the 2nd Machine Gun Brigade during the First World War.

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Description

Description 7 postcards

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

Items in this series:

Postcard (12 July 1915)



Unit ID 30576/83

Date 12 July 1915

Scope and content

Postcard from Edgar Towner, in Perth, WA to his sister Crissie (Christiana) in Blackall. He advises that they leave Fremantle tomorrow for Colombo.

Description

Description 1 postcard

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Postcard (21 October 1915)



Unit ID 30576/84

Date 21 October 1915

Scope and content

Postcard from Edgar Towner, in Heliopolis, Egypt to his sister Crissie (Christiana), in Blackall. Their sister Greta a nurse with the AANS is encamped on the Island of Lemnos.

Description

Description 1 postcard

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Postcard (8 July 1917)



Unit ID 30576/85

Date 8 July 1917

Scope and content

Postcard from Edgar Towner, in France to his family in Blackall. He has received their letters,

and wishes them prosperity.

Description

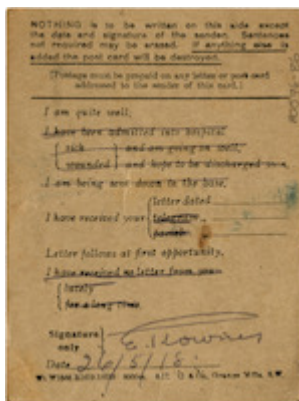
Description 1 postcard

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Postcard (27 May 1918)



Unit ID 30576/86

Date 27 May 1918

Scope and content

Field Service Postcard from Edgar Towner to his mother Greta Towner, in Blackall.

Description

Description 1 postcard

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Postcard (1918)



Unit ID 30576/87

Date 1918

Scope and content

Photographic postcard showing a group portrait of a Machine Gun Battalion, Lieutenant Edgar Towner standing far right. The group are most likely to be men of the 7th Brigade Machine Gun Company.

Description

Description 1 photographic postcard

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Postcard (14 February 1919)



Unit ID 30576/88

Date 14 February 1919

Scope and content

Postcard from Edgar Towner of the Hotel Metropole, Brussels, to his family in Blackall. He is on leave in Brussels with two other officers.

Description

Description 1 postcard

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Postcard (21 March 1919)



Unit ID 30576/89

Date 21 March 1919

Scope and content

Postcard from Edgar Towner in Montigny-le-Tilleul, to his family in Blackall. He writes that his return home will be delayed as demobilization is proceeding slowly.

Description

Description 1 postcard

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

(7 digital)

Series 7: Greeting cards (1918-1957)

Series number 7

Series title Greeting cards

Date 1918-1957

Scope and content

Miscellaneous greeting cards & an envelope retained by the Towner family relating to the service of Edgar Towner during the First World War.

Author / Creator

Towner, Edgar Thomas, 1890-1972

Slabczynski, Wacław, 1904-1994

Description

Description 3 cards ; 1 envelope

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

Items in this series:

Greeting card (22 March 1918)



Unit ID 30576/90

Date 22 March 1918

Scope and content

Inside page of greeting card sent by Edgar Towner to his family in Blackall.

Description

Description 1 greeting card

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Greeting card (25 January 1919)



Unit ID 30576/91

Date 25 January 1919

Scope and content

Australian Comforts Fund greeting card from Edgar Towner in Yves Gomezee, Belgium.

Description

Description 1 greeting card

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Greeting card (1918-1919)



Unit ID 30576/92

Date 1918-1919

Scope and content

Greeting card featuring a coloured sketch of Abbeville, France, from Edgar Towner.

Description

Description 1 greeting card

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Envelope (1957)



Unit ID 30576/93

Date 1957

Scope and content

Envelope addressed to Major E T Towner, Kaloola, Longreach from Waclaw Slabczynski, Poland.

Description

Description 1 envelope

Additional format Digital copies available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

(4 digital)

Series 8: Clippings (1918-1921)

Series number 8

Series title Clippings

Date 1918-1921

Scope and content

Newspaper items relating to the service of Lieutenant Edgar Towner during the First World War, and the sale of his property 'Valparaiso' east of Blackall in 1921.

Description

Description 3 newspaper clippings

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

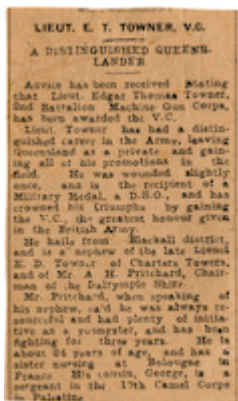
Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

Items in this series:

Newspaper clipping (17 December 1918)



Unit ID 30576/94

Date 17 December 1918

Scope and content

Newspaper article published in the *Brisbane Daily Mail*, 17 December 1918, p5. It lists 10 Australians who have recently been awarded the Victoria Cross, including Lieutenant Edgar Towner.

Description

Description 1 newspaper clipping

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Newspaper clipping (1918)



Unit ID 30576/95

Date 1918

Scope and content

Unsources newspaper clipping advising Lieutenant Edgar Towner had been awarded the Victoria Cross.

Description

Description 1 newspaper clipping

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Advertisement (March 1921)



Unit ID 30576/96

Date March 1921

Scope and content

Notice advertising the sale by auction of "Valparaiso" the property owned by Edgar Towner, east of Blackall.

Description

Description 1 advertisement

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

(3 digital)

Series 9: Certificates (1918-1922)

Series number 9

Series title Certificates

Date 1918-1922

Scope and content

Certificates of commission relating to the service of Edgar Towner during the First World War.

Description

Description 2 certificates

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMOSBOX Box 20357 O/S grey album

Access

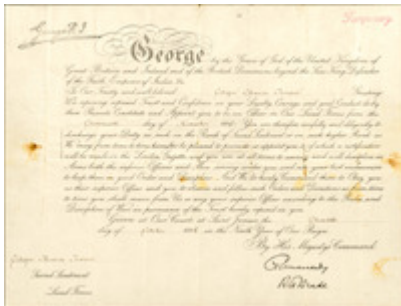
Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status In copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use for personal research and study. For other uses see <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/understanding-copyright>

Items in this series:

Certificate (11 October 1918)



Unit ID 30576/97

Date 11 October 1918

Scope and content

Certificate of Commission as Second Lieutenant presented to Edgar Thomas Towner, 1918.

Description

Description 1 certificate

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

Certificate (14 June 1922)



Unit ID 30576/98

Date 14 June 1922

Scope and content

Certificate of Commission as Honorary Lieutenant presented to Edgar Thomas Towner, 1922.

Description

Description 1 certificate

Additional format Digital copy available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

(2 digital)

Series 10: Pocket book (1914-1918)



Series number 10

Series title Pocket book

Date 1914-1918

Scope and content

German soldier's pocket book souvenired by Edgar Towner in 1917. The pocket book which belonged to Hermann Schoenfeld also contained postcards, photographs, a letter and a soldier's paybook that belonged to Julius Augeleit. [Item 30576/99, with items 30576/100 - 30576/127] All items enclosed in the item have been scanned together, they include the following:

- Studio portrait of a German soldier and a youth, taken in Berlin by A. Kulhanek, ca. 1914-1917
- Photographic postcard from Fritz ? post marked Perlswalde, Prussia, sent to Hermann Schoenfeld, in Osten, Germany. The card was sent via Feldpost, the German military mail service, it is written in German and depicts two German officers
- Photographic postcard to Reservist Hermann Schoenfeld, in Osten, Germany from his brother [unidentified] a soldier serving with the Landw. Fussaril Battalion 27, 2 Batterie
- Postcard from Gunner Pieper, 7th Machine Gun Company, Konigsberg, Prussia to Hermann Schoenfeld, in Osten Germany. The card is written in German, and depicts a large troop of German soldiers enjoying a meal
- Photographic postcard from Gunner Pieper, 7th Machine Gun Company, Konigsberg, Prussia to Gefreiter [Lance Corporal] Hermann Schoenfeld. The card depicts men of a machine gun company, in the snow; it is written in German
- Photographic postcard depicting a German soldier driving a pony cart
- Photographic postcard of German soldiers outside their lodgings
- Photographic postcard showing German soldiers and their horses
- Photographic postcard taken in a studio in Poland of a German soldier [unidentified]
- Photographic postcard of a German soldier [unidentified], standing in a snow-covered fortification
- Photographic postcard a German officer [unidentified], he is wearing an Iron Cross medal tucked into his coat
- Photographic postcard of a German soldier [unidentified], pictured in front of a fireplace and mantle
- Photographic postcard of German Reserve Infantry Company, inscribed Misdroy [Poland], 1916
- Postcard of Les Halles, Ypres, France
- Postcard of the reservoir, in front of Abbaye d'Aulne, France
- Postcard of the ruined Abbaye d'Aulne, France
- Soldbuch [German soldier's paybook] belonging to Grenadier Julius Augeleit, from Sobersken, Ragnitz
- Letter from Grethe Augeleit, in Tilsit to her husband Julius Augeleit. She has moved, it is further for their son to get to school; she is worried about having money to pay the rent

Postcard addressed to Grethe Augeleit, Tilsit

- Photographic postcard of German soldiers outside their headquarters, which appears to be part of a railway station
- Photograph of two German soldiers, it has been annotated with their names - Gehrmann and Augeleit
- Photograph of seven German soldiers. Standing at rear: Scknor, unknown, Siford, Kruse; seated: Stut, Klibofski, Augeleit
- Photograph of seven German soldiers, unidentified
- Postcard depicting The Siege of Maubeuge which took place from 24 August-7 September 1914, on the Western Front
- Photographic postcard of six German soldiers outside their wooden shelter built into an embankment
- Postcard of landscape and waterway, Hamburg; the card has not been sent
- Photographic postcard of eleven German soldiers outside their wooden lodgings; the card has not been sent
- Decorated postcard 'die besten wunsche' [best wishes]; the card has not been sent

Author / Creator

Schoenfeld, Hermann

Augeleit, George Julius ; and

Augeleit, Grethe

Description

Description 1 pocket book ; 1 soldiers paybook ; 24 postcards ; 3 photographs ; 1 letter

Additional format Digital copies available

System of arrangement Chronological

Locate OMBOX Box 13220

Access

Access restrictions Unrestricted access

Copyright status Out of copyright

Conditions of use You are free to use without permission. Please attribute the State Library of Queensland.

Other guides Transcripts available

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

(1 digital)