

TROOPER ALEXANDER WILLIAM NICHOLAS – LYNDOCH

Boer War

Alexander William Nicholas was born in Lyndoch on 15 March 1880. Alexander commenced service on 1 October 1899 in the Australian and Colonial Military Forces – Boer War Contingents as a Trooper. He served with the 4th Imperial Bushmen's Unit during the Boer War.

Trooper Nicholas was killed in action on 24 July 1900, near Vredefort, South Africa while gallantly succouring a wounded comrade, aged 20 years.

'A great shock has been caused here by the announcement of the death of Trooper A W Nicholas in South Africa. He was a son of Mr Nicholas of Lyndoch, and was a very promising young fellow. He was an ex-student of the Agricultural college, and won the silver medal last year. He was a tall, well-developed young man, and of remarkably steady and gentlemanly habits. He and others were given a farewell here at a social prior to their departure.'

THE DEATH OF TROOPER NICHOLAS - the following is the copy of a letter from Lieutenant E. T. Leane, South Australian Imperial Bushmen's Contingent, to Mr. D. Nicholas, of Lyndoch:

"Vredefort, Orange River Colony, July 25.— My dear Sir — I regret sincerely the occasion for this letter, but as the officer commanding the troop to which your late son (A. W. Nicholas) belonged, I feel it to be my duty to write you the particulars of his death.

Yesterday morning our squadron was sent with Kitchener's Horse at a gallop hot on the track of the tail-end of the Boer convoy which we had been pursuing for the last ten days, and we were successful in capturing five wagons and 18 prisoners. The Boers, however, made a determined attempt to cut us off and outflanked us so that my troop was told off to hold them in check until the wagons, &c., had retired to a safe distance. This we accomplished, but in our retirement, amidst a tornado of bullets, Trooper Tothill was shot, and your boy with three others endeavoured to carry him to shelter behind a mud hut about 200 yards away, but in doing so your brave boy lost his life, and two of the other three were seriously wounded, while Tothill received two more wounds, one of which caused his death.

Your boy has been under my notice ever since he joined, and in all the fighting we have gone through he was one of the bravest of a brave lot of lads, and never flinched in the hottest fire, while his conduct under ordinary discipline was exemplary in every way. His body was brought in by the ambulance, and Dr. Gibson handed me his watch and chain, field-glass, photo, wallet, and housewife, and if I am spared to

return to South Australia I will bring them with me, or, if I meet a similar fate, I will leave directions so that they may be forwarded to you. He is buried in the cemetery at Vredefort, with the comrade for whom he gave his life and two others who were killed on the same occasion. I hope and trust it will be some consolation to his family to know that your boy was loved by all of us, and we mourn him, but our grief is mingled with pride, for he died the death of a hero. Please receive my most sincere sympathy, and believe me, yours faithfully, F. T. Leane, Lieutenant B Squadron, I.B.C."

Lest We Forget.



TPR. ALEXANDER NICHOLAS
Lyndoch
BOER WAR