



In Memory of  
**Lieutenant**  
**ERIC DOUGLAS DOYLE, M.C.**

190<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery  
who died age 23  
on 29 July 1917

Son of Andrew A. Doyle, F.R.C.S.I., and Mary Douglas Doyle,  
of Queensland. Australia.

Remembered with honour  
BUS HOUSE CEMETERY, NEAR YPRES, BELGIUM



LIEUTENANT  
**ERIC DOUGLAS DOYLE**

190<sup>TH</sup> BRIGADE, ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY



**Eric Douglas Doyle MC** was born at St George in December 1893. He was the son of Dr Andrew A. Doyle (FRCSI) and Mary Douglas Doyle (nee Henry) of St George and later Port Stephens, NSW. Eric attended The Armidale School (TAS, to 1907) and Toowoomba Grammar School (1908-1909). He excelled in athletics and drama at both schools; he played Alice in *Alice in Wonderland* at TAS as a nine-year-old. Before the Great War, Eric travelled to England and enlisted there upon the outbreak of war. He was posted to the artillery. He is one of three men on the Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial who died while serving in the British Army in the Great War.

Eric Doyle had a distinguished military career and was commissioned in June 1915. He fought firstly in France, then in the Mesopotamian campaign hoping in vain to reach Baghdad, before returning to the Western Front after a stint in hospital in India, and an interesting voyage across the Mediterranean via Malta.

In May 1917 he received Division congratulations and the Military Cross (MC). His general wrote: *'I wish to place on record my appreciation of your courage and initiative on May 9<sup>th</sup> when, your battery-position being under heavy fire, you gallantly rescued the wounded and extricated the dead and by your gallantry, courage and indifference to danger, restored order among the men of your battery.'*

Eric Doyle was a conscientious letter-writer and kept his parents informed of his doings. On 16 January 1916 he wrote from Egypt, Cairo is just reeking with Australians back from Gallipoli & useless Generals. There are without exaggeration, fifty generals and their staffs at present in Egypt. Nor did he spare them an insight into the risks of a front-line artilleryman. In June 1917 he reported from Belgium on some recent experiences in the fighting near Messines: *'On June 7<sup>th</sup> we had advanced on a front of 9 miles. I had the job (especially picked) of F.O.O. i.e. Forward Observing Officer, to go with the infantry "over the top", as representative of the whole brigade of guns. It was what might be called a dangerous job and one in which you must keep very cool. We went behind the most wonderful barrage I have ever seen – it was perfect. I really had the most exciting time. The infantry thought I was a Hun, too, and opened fire on us with machine guns and rifles. They missed me so I went back to the dugout and thought things over. You must know I was by this time in the midst of our barrage, and nine inch shells and smaller were falling like autumn leaves all around so I decided to chance the infantry and once more walked towards them. By good luck they recognised me and stopped firing. So that was how a FOO and a Bombardier beat their own infantry, and took 16 prisoners. We were the first to see over the ridge, now ours forever and a day.'*

The lottery of war, however, implacably moved to the Ypres salient in July where the British (and Australian) artillery came under the most direct attack of the war. Eric's risky life came to an end on 29 July when a German shell landed on a dugout he had just entered. He was taken out unconscious and died on the way to a dressing station. He is buried at Bus House Cemetery, Belgium (grave G.5). Eric Doyle was just 23 when he died. His younger brother Ellis was too young to serve in the war.

Toowoomba Grammar School Archive Records state that he started school on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1908 and finished on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1909. He was in the Tennis 1<sup>st</sup> IV in 1908.

#### **External Links**

[TROVE - The Sydney Morning Herald \(NSW: THU 11 OCT 1917 P8\)](#)

[CWGC](#)

[War Memorial Honour Roll](#)

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