

3rd Aust. Infantry

1st Australian

1st Anzac

24th April 1917.

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12th Battalion A.I.F. 2902 Sergeant John Woods WHITTLE.

For conspicuous gallantry, heroism and devotion to duty on two occasions. G.O. 12th Victoria Battalion, Cross.

On 9th April 1917 near BOURSIES Sgt. WHITTLE was in command of a platoon when the enemy, under cover of an intense barrage of artillery smoke and bombs, attacked the small trench he was holding. Owing to weight of numbers the enemy succeeded in entering the trench and it was only by Sgt. WHITTLE'S personally collecting all available men and charging the enemy that the position was regained. This section of trench had only been captured the previous night and was in a commanding position for the defence of BOURSIES. & G.O.C. 1st Aust. Division.

On 15th April 1917, when the enemy broke through the left of our line to LAGNICOURT, Sgt. WHITTLE'S platoon had to retreat to the sunken road to the East of that village. Here again Sgt. WHITTLE'S own splendid example was the means of keeping the men well in hand. After his platoon was established in its new position, it began to suffer heavy casualties and the enemy endeavoured to bring up a machine gun to enfilade the road. As the enemy machine gunners were fixing the gun, Sgt. WHITTLE single-handed rushed across the bullet swept slope and attacked the gun crew with bombs. He succeeded in killing the whole crew and in bringing back the machine gun to our position.

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