

*Read Johan's story when he met Ms Woodward the daughter of  
Captain Oliver Holmes Woodward MC & Bar (2) 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Tunnelling Company*

On Sunday 02 November 2008 Johan was fortunate to meet Ms Woodward, the daughter of Capt Oliver Holmes Woodward AIF MC & bar (2), he was so overwhelmed by emotions during the meeting, knowing that what he and The Association for Battlefield Archaeology and Conservation team are doing is on the same lines of those brave tunnellers during WW1.

Johan describes Ms Woodward as wonderful person, who shared so many of her fathers memories during her visit and also she showed Johan an original copy the book her father had published in 1933: My Story of THE GREAT WAR

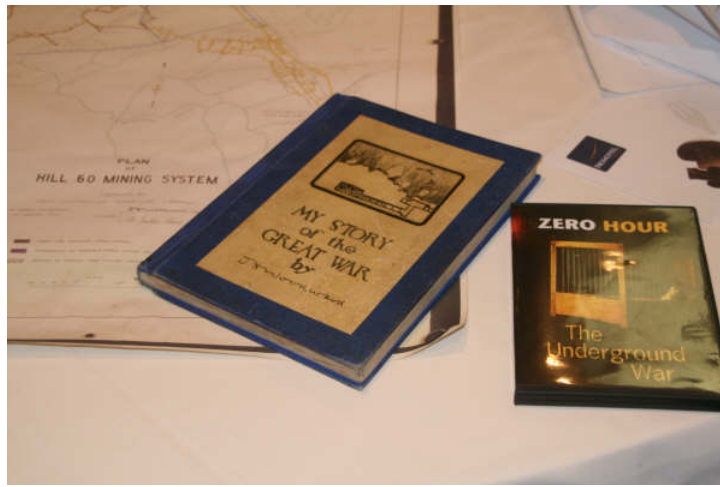


Johan and Ms Woodward



Ms Woodward – with 3 publications

Beneath Flanders Fields - My Story of THE GREAT WAR & The Underground War on DVD



My Story of THE GREAT WAR with Johan's DVD, *The Underground War*



*Johan and Ms Woodward holding a copy of the DVD  
THE UNDERGROUND WAR – ZERO HOUR*

## **Captain Oliver Holmes WOODWARD MC & Bar (2) 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Tunnelling Company**

WOODWARD, OLIVER HOLMES (1885-1966), mining engineer, metallurgist and soldier, was born on 8 October 1885 at Tenterfield, New South Wales, son of native-born parents Sydney Arthur Woodward, storekeeper, and his wife Jemima Johnstone, née Reid. He was educated at public schools and for two years at Newington College, Sydney. Early practical mining experience at Irvinebank, North Queensland, was followed by three years at Charters Towers where he worked underground and studied part time at the School of Mines. In 1909 he was awarded the [W. H. Browne](#) medal for mining and in 1910 the medal for metallurgy. Further experience underground qualified him as a mine-manager. As such he went in 1913 to Mount Morgan and then to Papua where he assisted the geologist [\(Sir\) Colin Fraser](#) at the Laloki and other mines. Late in 1914 Woodward returned to Mount Morgan to recover from malaria.

In August 1915 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force; he was commissioned and posted to No.1 Company of the newly raised Mining Battalion. He sailed for France in March 1916. On its arrival in Flanders the battalion was broken up and the 1st Tunneling Company became an independent engineer unit. Deployed in the Armentières sector, France, the company fought on the surface as well as underground and in June 1916 Woodward won the Military Cross for blowing up a snipers' post in no man's land.

Early in 1917 the company took over mining operations in a sector south-east of Ypres, Belgium, which included deep galleries under the German lines; these led to two mines, one charged with 53,000 lb. (24,041 kg) of explosives and the other with 70,000 lb. (31,752 kg). For months the company protected these mines, using listening posts and counter-mines, until the opening of the battle of Messines when they were fired with devastating effect. Woodward, by this time a captain, headed the team in charge and personally fired the mines.

From August 1918 the tunneling companies were employed on the surface as field engineers. On 29 September at Bony, east of Amiens, France, Woodward was in charge of three sections of the 1st Tunneling Company which were employed on road maintenance and came under enemy fire; he once more distinguished himself by his courage and resourcefulness, and was awarded a Bar to his Military Cross. In the last weeks of the war his section was attached to the 1st British Division for its advance to the Rhine. For the crossing of the Sambre-Oise Canal east of Le Cateau, his men—under heavy fire—built a tank bridge spanning the walls of a lock; Woodward received a second Bar to his Military Cross, an extremely rare distinction.

Returning to Australia in May 1919, he went to the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Co. before taking up an appointment at Port Pirie, South Australia, as a general metallurgist with Broken Hill Associated Smelters, of which Fraser was joint managing director. On 3 September 1920 Woodward married Marjorie Moffat Waddell at St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane. Soon afterwards he became plant superintendent at Port Pirie. In 1926 he was promoted to general superintendent. Over the nine years he held this position there was extensive rebuilding to accommodate metallurgical developments such

as the continuous process for refining lead bullion. There was also a steady improvement in living and working conditions for employees.

With the support of Fraser and [W. S. Robinson](#), in November 1934 Woodward became general manager of North Broken Hill Ltd. His thirteen years at Broken Hill witnessed an active rebuilding and a modernizing of surface plant: the British Broken Hill mine, idle since 1930, was re-opened; a new mill using gravity concentration followed by flotation was built and commissioned; ore haulage and hoisting practices were improved.

In 1940 Woodward became president of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. He joined the board of directors of North Broken Hill Ltd in December 1944 and remained on the board after retiring from general manager ship at the North Mine on 8 October 1947. He had also been a director of Broken Hill Associated Smelters and the associated Electrolytic Refining & Smelting Co. President of the Australian Mining and Metals Association (1952-54), he was appointed C.M.G. in 1956.

Woodward had written an autobiography and accounts of his wartime experiences and of the Broken Hill mining industry. From his small country property near Adelaide, in 1952 he moved to Hobart. Survived by his wife, a daughter and two sons, he died there on 24 August 1966 and was cremated.

The Photos below I had taken of the Hill 60 memorial to the  
**1<sup>st</sup> Australian Tunnelling Company**



