

IS THE SPIRIT OF THE ANZAC RELEVANT TO THE ADF TODAY

The spirit of the ANZACs is something that is renowned worldwide. Since the day that the Australians and New Zealanders landed on the beaches of Gallipoli, their outstanding qualities of leadership, initiative, and mateship, have remained ingrained in the Australian Defence Force today. The ANZAC spirit is a very important part of the culture of the Australian Defence Force and sets it apart from other nations around the world. It is these values and qualities that give Australians today the edge in battle. The ANZAC spirit however is not just displayed on the battlefield; there are many instances in day to day life where the spirit of our ANZACs are important.

The ANZAC spirit cannot be taught to someone. A person can experience it from others around them, and it can motivate people and fill them with the same values. The ANZAC spirit consists of reckless valour, initiative, endurance, and most notably mateship. Mateship is something that embodies equality, loyalty, and friendship. It was the ANZACs' mateship that drove them to commit extraordinary feats of courage for their comrades. British war correspondent for World War One, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, provided the first reports of the landing at ANZAC Cove. In his reports, he comments:

"They waited neither for orders nor for the boats to reach the beach, but, springing out into the sea, they waded ashore, and, forming some sort of rough line, rushed straight on the flashes of the enemy's rifles."

"There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights... General Birdwood told the writer that he couldn't sufficiently praise the courage, endurance and the soldierly qualities of the Colonials (The Australians) were happy because they had been tried for the first time and not found wanting."

This report shows that this was the first time that Australians had been on an international stage since the Federation of Australia in 1901. The ANZACs were forging Australia and New Zealand's national identity and enabled them to earn great respect from their allies and enemies alike.



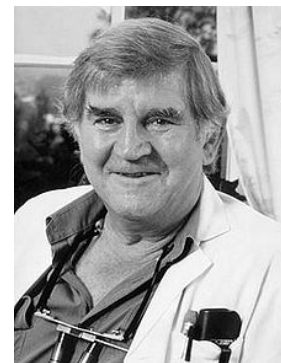
The qualities of the ANZACs' are still with us today. Corporal Mark Donaldson of the Special Air Service Regiment was awarded the Victoria Cross in 2009 for his act of gallantry. His patrol was ambushed by a much larger and better prepared Taliban force. The ambush began with heavy machine gun fire and rocket propelled grenade fire which injured many people. Donaldson deliberately exposed himself to enemy fire in a bid to draw the fire from his injured comrades. The patrol withdrew, and with the casualty rate so high, uninjured people, including Donaldson, had to make their way on foot. When they set off, Donaldson realised that they were missing their interpreter. Without a second's thought Donaldson crossed just under one hundred metres of ground under heavy fire to reach the injured interpreter and carried him back to cover where he administered first aid. The automatic selflessness that Donaldson displayed were qualities iconic of the ANZACs' fighting spirit. Donaldson's action of risking his life for his comrades is a perfect representation of what mateship truly is.

Arguably the greatest show of ANZAC spirit has to go to the Chocolate Soldiers. In 1942, Japan was on Australia's doorstep. Japan had landed in Papua New Guinea, and was trekking down to Port Moresby where they could launch a military offensive on Australia. Australia was left defenceless. A four hundred strong militia force was sent to halt the Japanese invasion, numbering around thirteen thousand hardened veterans. The band of men from the 39th Battalion were outnumbered over thirty to one, under trained, poorly equipped, and saw action in some of the most horrendous conditions. They earned their title of the Chocolate Soldiers as people thought they would melt in the heat of battle. They resisted the Japanese for eight weeks before trained soldiers arrived from Africa to relieve them of their job. The resilience and determination of the untrained Australian Soldiers is an inspiration to us all today.



The Australian Militia from the 39th Battalion

Today many of us can use these same values and principles and apply them to everyday life. On a sporting field, that never give up attitude along with mateship are important qualities for any sportsman. Courage comes in all different forms, but even at places such as school, courage is often required to do the right thing whether it be standing up for someone who is being bullied, or owning up for something you did. Fred Hollows is another perfect example of the ANZAC spirit. He devoted his life to restoring sight to those that were blind. He demonstrated extreme selflessness. He treated over twenty-seven thousand Aborigines, and performed over one thousand operations. However, perhaps some of the greatest unsung heroes in our community are the CFA. Their actions during Black Saturday were heroic to say the least. They risked their lives to battle some of the most horrific fires Australia has ever seen.



Fred Hollows

The ANZAC spirit is very much with us today. It is no myth and gives our soldiers in the Australian Defence Force a unique advantage against their adversaries. Australians today are proud of the ANZACs at Gallipoli for their display of fortitude and courage, and I am pleased to say that it has been a tradition passed down through generations and makes every single one of us proud to be Australian.

By Samuel Carl