

## **Skye Webb, Ascham School, New South Wales**

---

*Courage, mateship, determination, resourcefulness and a sense of humour are identified as characteristics of the ANZAC tradition and spirit.*

*Select any one or more of these characteristics and explore its/their significance to Gallipoli and in more recent times.*

The Anzac traditions of mateship and resourcefulness are characteristics of the soldiers that played a central role both in Gallipoli and are also evident in Australia today. Mateship is a special bond that one shares with friends, that implies equality and goodwill, and resourcefulness is the ability to deal with a difficult situation, both practically and mentally. The mateship and resourcefulness that the Anzac soldiers displayed was significant during the war for three main reasons. Firstly, the mateship that the soldiers shared heightened the morale of the soldiers, and was a factor in their larrikin behaviour. Secondly, the resourcefulness of the soldiers allowed them to cope with shortages in medical supplies, and weaponry. Lastly, the bonds between soldiers led to many of the brave and heroic acts that occurred during the war. These acts were often accompanied by resourcefulness in helping and treating injured comrades. The legacy carried into the future, and now encompasses many aspects of life, not simply Australia's military ventures. The characteristics of the Anzacs have not been forgotten in Australian society, and the memory of their mateship and resourcefulness continues to inspire and influence many Australians today.

Firstly, the characteristics of mateship and resourcefulness were significant in Gallipoli because it raised the morale of soldiers, and contributed to their larrikin behaviour. The bond that the Australians shared meant that, while in the trenches, they were able to try and cope with the war by spending time with their mates. The attitude of equality and goodwill that encompasses mateship was a general attitude of all of the soldiers, not merely an attitude shared among a few friends. This developed into the larrikin behaviour that is also a trait of the Anzac soldiers. The men would play cricket on the beach, and go swimming in the sea. These were both risky activities, as the soldiers were exposed to the Turkish hand grenades and shells while swimming. But this did not deter them, an indication of the daring and larrikin behaviour that the soldiers engaged in while with their mates. This behaviour demonstrates that the soldiers were resourceful, in

that they responded to the pressure of war with humour; they did not succumb negatively to the pressure placed on them by British officers. This was significant, as it provided light relief for the soldiers, and enabled them to cope better with the war, and what was happening all around them.

Secondly, the soldiers were able to cope with shortages in medical supplies and weaponry through and resourcefulness. Faced with the difficulty of weaponry shortages, the Anzac soldiers made their own hand grenades using jam tins, metal and fuses and explosives. This enabled them to deal with the weaponry shortages through their own initiative, using the materials that they had. The soldiers were also faced with shortages in medical supplies, meaning that they were forced to make their own bandages and splints. Splints for damaged and broken limbs were often made from rifles, or anything solid that could be found. This also displays the soldiers' mateship, and their desire to help injured comrades. Mateship and resourcefulness were significant in Gallipoli, as they allowed the soldiers to cope effectively with shortages in supplies.

Lastly, mateship was an important attribute during the war because it provided the soldiers with inspiration to use whatever was available to them to save their mates. The bonds forged between the soldiers often motivated them to put themselves at risk to save others. The soldiers would put all of their energies and knowledge into saving their injured comrades, thus meaning that their mateship forced the soldiers to use their resourcefulness to save and treat their comrades. An important example of this is John Simpson Kirkpatrick, who saved hundreds of other soldiers during his twenty-four days at Gallipoli. Due to the large number of casualties, and limited number of stretchers, many wounded soldiers were unable to be taken to receive medical treatment. Simpson found two donkeys in a paddock, and started to use them to transport wounded soldiers.<sup>1</sup> Each day, Simpson and his donkey would travel into Shrapnel Gully to collect wounded soldiers, and bring them back to the beach so that they could receive medical attention. This act of Simpson's clearly displays the mateship and resourcefulness of the soldiers; Simpson used the resources available to him; the donkey's headstall and lead were made from bandages; Simpson placed himself in a dangerous position in order to save his

---

<sup>1</sup> Simpson had experience with donkeys, after working with donkeys at Murphy's fair, in his hometown in England.

comrades. In Shrapnel Gully, Simpson was under constant artillery fire, but still endeavoured to save as many men as he could. The soldiers' mateship and resourcefulness were not separate qualities, but rather their resourcefulness allowed them to fulfil their sense of mateship and friendship, and were significant in Gallipoli as these qualities inspired soldiers to save their comrades.

The qualities of mateship and resourcefulness have also been significant in Australian life more recently. Firstly, in conflicts around the world, Australians have displayed the qualities the first Australian soldiers did. In World War II, the combination of the qualities encompassed in Simpson was also evident in Edward "Weary" Dunlop. Dunlop was an Australian surgeon working in the prisoner of war camps in Asia, and saved many prisoners life while working at the Burma Railway. Dunlop displayed resourcefulness in his surgical techniques, as he had very limited access to instruments. He also displayed the Australian mateship, as he defended many men who were to be killed. One such man is Bill Griffiths, whom Dunlop saved from being killed by the Japanese soldiers; he refused to move out of the Japanese soldiers' way unless they spared the man's life, displaying the mateship and courage that the Anzacs were known for. Weary Dunlop embodies the characteristics of the Anzacs because of his life saving resourcefulness and mateship.

The qualities of mateship and resourcefulness have been significant not only in Australia's military life, but also in different areas of society. An example of this is Fred Hollows, and the Fred Hollows Foundation. Fred Hollows was born in New Zealand, but worked with Australian Aboriginals for many years. He was an ophthalmologist, and was horrified by the many avoidable eye diseases that the Aboriginal Australians had. He travelled all around Australia and performed the necessary surgeries to give the people back their eyesight. After this, he travelled to Africa, and taught the African people how to perform the cataract surgeries that would prevent the people's eyesight from diminishing. He taught the people how to do this, by using the limited materials available to them. His belief that everyone is equal, and is entitled to the same medical care, embodies the original Anzac traditions of mateship and the equality that defines it. His resourcefulness in remote areas that allowed him to perform the surgery, and teach others to perform is parallel to the resourcefulness that the Anzac soldiers possessed; the ability

to use what is available to one, and deal with difficult situations. Fred Hollows is a contemporary Anzac because of his beliefs and actions.

Lastly, the Anzac legend is significant in modern Australia because of the way the legend has changed over time. Weary Dunlop and Fred Hollows represent two different generations that were influenced by the Australian traditions in different ways. Over time, the Anzac legend has encompassed Australia and Australian life as a whole, rather than being applied strictly to military life. The Anzac legend has become a way in which to unite Australia. Although we march, and partake in dawn services on Anzac day, the annual Anzac test is also played and it is “a true reflection of the Australian of the Australian spirit, a reminder of the good things in our society which make it worth defending.”<sup>2</sup>The Anzac spirit now represents Australia as a unified country, and the resourcefulness and mateship of the Anzacs is now a national identity, and represents “unity and common purpose.”<sup>3</sup> Brendan Nelson, Government Minister for Education, Science and Training, emphasises the importance of the Anzac characteristics in relation to the Australian values, and the importance of teaching these values to children. “Simpson and his donkey [are] an example of what's at the heart of our national sense of emerging identity.”<sup>4</sup> The characteristics of the Anzacs are significant in more recent times because they define and unite Australia as a nation.

---

<sup>2</sup> Lindsay Tanner, *Hype hurts Anzac spirit*, Herald Sun (Melbourne), 26/4/2005

<sup>3</sup> John Howard, *Battles come and go but the legend soldiers on*, The Age (Melbourne), 25/4/2005

<sup>4</sup> Brendan Nelson, *Brendan Nelson addresses Islamic schools on Australian values*, Interview with Eleanor Hall on World Today, ABC Radio National 24/08/2005

## Bibliography:

### Books:

- Maureen Anderson, Anne Low, Jeffrey Conroy, Ian Keese (2005) *Retro Active 2: Stage 5 Australian History*, John Wiley & Sons Australia, Queensland

### Websites:

- Anzac House, *John Simpson Kirkpatrick*, Retrieved 11/09/05, <URL> <http://www.anzachouse.com/simpson.shtml>, last updated on 10/05/05
- Digger history: an unofficial history of the Australian and New Zealand Armed Forces, “*Weary*” *Dunlop*, Retrieved 11/09/05, <URL> <http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-heroes/weary-dunlop.htm>,
- The Age, Howard says Anzac legend defines nation, Retrieved 11/09/05, <URL> <http://www.theage.com.au/news/National/Howard-says-Anzac-legend-defines-nation/2005/04/24/1114281441799.html?oneclick=true>
- Australian Broadcasting Company (ABC), Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop, Retrieved 11/09/05, <URL> <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/dunlop.htm>
- ABC, Brendan Nelson addresses Islamic schools on Australian values, Retrieved 12/09/05, <URL> <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2005/s1445094.htm>

### Other Sources:

- *Hype hurts Anzac spirit*, Lindsay Tanner, Herald Sun (Melbourne), 26/04/05, Page 18
- *Battles come and go but the legend soldiers on*, Sushi Das, The Age (Melbourne), 25/04/05, page 3