

BALCKFRIARS PRIORY SCHOOL

2012 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize

Sergeant Arthur Sydney Hutton

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Introduction:

The ANZAC Spirit. I can bet my house (if I had one) on the fact that there may be no Aussies or Kiwis living on the so-called planet Earth that may not be aware of this term. However, I am a person who likes starting things from zero and gradually approaching the core. Therefore, the first thing I did after I chose to participate in this competition was to google 'Anzac Spirit'; and the response - About 1,240,000 results (0.20 seconds). Sigh. Mate, I reckon I'd rather count the stars. Dismissing the idea, I looked into other things – of course, people. I received an overwhelming response, but I gradually filtered out to this:

'The ANZAC Spirit is a legendary concept firmly held among several generations of Australians and New Zealanders referring to the typical qualities and behavioral aspects exhibited by the soldiers of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps in the battles during the Great War; or, as we call it today, the First World War. The distinctive ANZAC characteristics include bravery, mateship, fidelity, sardonic sense of humor, larrikinism, indecency, denial towards unnecessary rules, authority and pressure, frankness, and outgoing attitude at the worst of places and towards the most irksome of the folk, including the British.'

So WHAT?

Yeh; so what? That's the definition of the Anzac Spirit, and is that that? No. The Anzac Spirit is Australia's identity, its legacy; because the Great War or precisely, the Gallipoli Campaign was the first of international events taking place after Australia's Federation that saw Australians participating *as people from Australia* rather than as people from a faraway British colony. It is what established our stereotype, the features of what we call today the typical Aussie classification. The Anzac Spirit is what typifies our culture – our habits, our practices; our attitude towards various things; our speaking style, and our slang – Cobber, Digger, Fair Dinkum, True Blue and mate. That's exactly why, as far as my personal understanding goes, is that we celebrate the ANZAC Day with such zeal.

Lest We Forget...

Let me be direct and honest (a bit like the ANZAC soldiers). For me to be able to go to Europe for two weeks is too good a chance to miss. For that I have to '*... describe the journey of a South Australian man or woman who served on the Western Front during World War 1.*' It was hard researching South Australian ANZACs with a very well-recorded biography in the books or on the net.

However, here I am coming up with the life story of a South Australia-born soldier. He has served at Gallipoli as well as in the Western Front. Not much of his personal attributes are known to us, nor do we have any photograph of him; however, he lives in our memories and our books because he has written an up-to-date war diary about all he did away from home. Using his war diary, we have a glimpse of the battles through his eyes. Let us look at the life of Sergeant Arthur Sydney Hutton...

NB: Well, to be honest, I ain't any Aussie – neither Oz-bred nor an Oz-fella through genes or by behavior. Nevertheless, my two-year-long observation of typical Australian behavior extensively identifies the '*rebellious*' nature of Australians just about everywhere if you know what I mean. That is the sole reason of my informal writing style above. No offence, but *that's* the spirit!

Sergeant Arthur Sydney Hutton

Arthur Sydney Hutton was born on 7th August, 1891 to father Walter Andrew Hutton and mother Margaret Bertina (*nee* Cameron) in Norwood, South Australia. At the time Arthur was born, he had two siblings – Myra Blanche Hutton (b. 1888) as sister and Walter Vivian Hutton (b. 1890) as a brother; and later, Reginald Alexander Hutton (b. 1893), Australia. His family believed in the Church of England. There is no information available to us related to Arthur's childhood days, due to which his relationship with his parents and his siblings, and his school life is hidden deep in the past. Before he enlisted to join the AIF to go to the Dardanelles, he worked as a collector.

At the age of twenty-six, Arthur enlisted to join the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) from Adelaide, South Australia. He was recruited in the 3rd Light Horse Regiment at the rank of Private on 24th August 1914. Like his comrades of the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, he sailed out of Outer Harbor on 20nd October 1914 aboard Transport A17 *Port Lincoln* to Alexandria, Egypt via Albany, Colombo, Aden, Suez Canal and Port Said. He and his colleagues were disembarked in Egypt for about six months. His likes and dislikes of the place, the type of experiences he had around the renowned pyramids, can be assumed the same as all the others – he has not written any diary entries between his arrival in Alexandria and his arrival at the entrance of the Dardanelles.

Arthur and the other Australian soldiers arrived at the entrance of Dardanelles on 12th May 1915. In the evening of the same day, they arrived at Fisherman's Hut landing under '*heavy bombardment going at the sea and heavy firing on the land*'. He and his comrades dug their trenches the next couple of days and nights near the Quinn's Post before engaging in *real* battle. The third day he set a foot on Gallipoli, his Regiment faced 16 casualties, two dead. By this time, it seems that he had got accustomed to gory injuries like of P.E.C. Bell in his trench who had '*Both legs and one arm blown off*'. He writes, '*I am quite used to the sickening sight of seeing fellows with half their head blown off*'. However, the first mention of a death that seemed to move him was of his '*mate*' Paddy Carliss during a Turk offense on 20th May.

Around this time, he witnessed the destruction of HMS *Triumph* by torpedoes released by German U-boat and the paranoia following it. He and his fellow soldiers frequently received bayonet charge. In his diary entry on 25th May, he mentions that he and some of his comrades were to be in reserve for about a week. He seems quite glad at this as he writes, '*We are getting relieved from these trenches...*' Arthur contracted fever around 27th May, possibly due to poor living conditions as well as lack of personal hygiene. This can be assumed as he earlier mentions that he smelled bad and had not bathed in about ten days. He thinks of his survival as sheer luck when '*...bullets whim past, but don't hit me.*' On 29th May, he and others had a ball, when the Turks crept up to attack places including his post but were repulse badly by bayonets and '*...by sheer Pluck & daring.*' In the end of May, he and his colleagues were posted at Shrapnel Gully.

In the coming days, Arthur and his fellow soldiers were repeatedly attacked by Turks and the enemies were rendered unsuccessful with only minor losses. He and his '*boys*' attacked Achi Baba on 6th June targeting to seize the hill. Though they didn't take the hill, they took *hundreds* of prisoners with *thousands* of casualties among Turks. In his diary entry of Sunday June 13th, he notes down that they had three-day stale bread issued to them and were quite pleased as this was their first one since their arrival. Arthur mentions brief but interesting accounts of various things until their evacuation from Gallipoli.

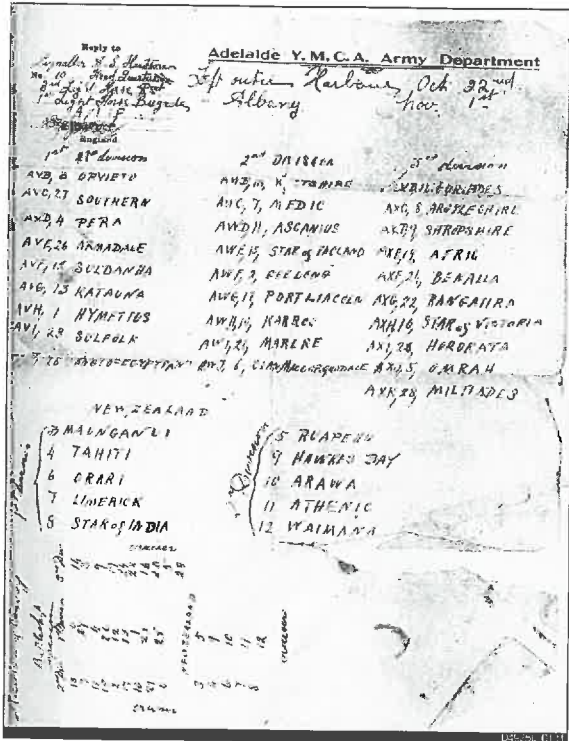
After the end of his Gallipoli service, Hutton has not written any diary entries, so we will follow him along the recorded history. After returning to Egypt, he apparently a sergeant now, was sent to France to serve at the Western Front in mid-1916. Assuming him part of I ANZAC Corps 2nd Division, we can say that he took part in the First Battle of the Somme, Battle of Pozières, and the Battle of Mouquet Farm during 1916. In 1917, the Corps took up fighting during the Third Battle of Ypres more specifically, the Battle of Menin Road and the Battle of Broodseinde in the Battle of Passchendaele. Rather than just shooting from the trenches like he did in Gallipoli, he had to both fight in trenches, as well as involve himself in various rigorous formations and techniques to defeat the enemy on the Western Front.

Now, as a soldier in the Australian Corps, Arthur and his comrades spearheaded the attack during the highly successful Battle of Montdidier along with Canadians and British to push the Germans creating a fifteen miles' gap in the Hindenburg Line near Somme in 1918. He and other valiant members of the Australian Corps crossed the Somme River on the night of 31st August, 1918, breaking the German lines during the Battle of Mont St. Quentin. Hutton and his colleagues led the British Third Army during the Battle of St. Quentin Canal, finally driving the nail through the coffin which led to the crossing of the Hindenburg Line and eventually, influenced by other factors as well, the fall of the German Empire. Hutton was wounded in action twice, gassed during the Battle of Passchendaele on 12th October 1917 and received a gunshot wound on 22nd August 1918 during the Second Battle of Somme. He returned to Australia on 3rd December 1918.

Arthur Sydney Hutton and his life are not very well known; however, he still deserves the homage all ANZACs, well known or unknown, should receive. All through the Great War, he had shown great courage and bravery while fighting at Gallipoli as well as at the Western Front. His writings give us a clue to us how much he cared for his mates and grieved their deaths. On the humorous side of it, his journals have also shown us how he disrespected people in the typical rude Aussie slang and hard-swearing style; and how he never really grew overanxious of all the manslaughter rampaging around him. His memory – his diary, like his life, shines brightly with the Anzac Spirit, we remember them for. Hutton is also one of the few ANZACs to serve Australia during the Second World War as well.

How can we forget the life of such an inspirational person who served our dear country? A person who lived and breathed what we call today the Anzac Spirit. No appropriate homage exists in this world to honor such a soul.

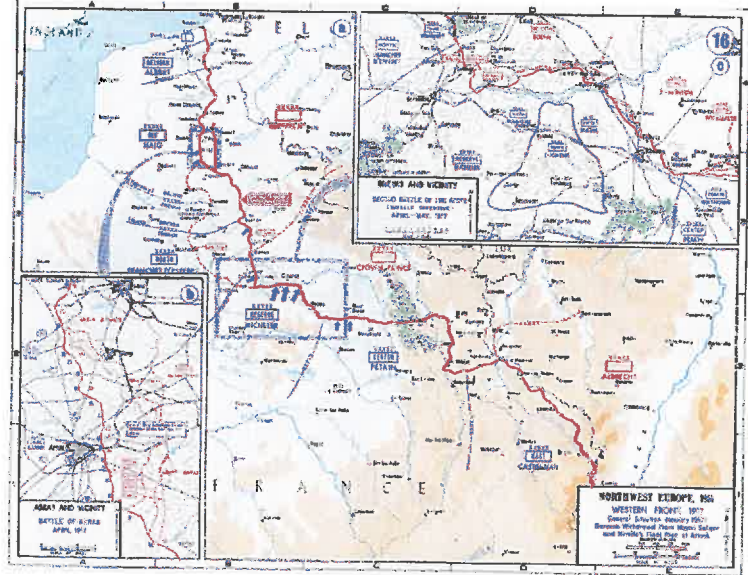
Gallery



The very first Page of Sergeant Hutton's Diary

Source:

<http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?c=5123&mode=singleImage>



A concise map of the Western Front in 1917

Source:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/do/Western_Front_1917.jpg



A very typical scene at the Western Front between 1916 and 1918

Source:

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/fc/Gibraltar_bunker_Poizieres_\(AWM_EZ0098\).jpg/796px-Gibraltar_bunker_Poizieres_\(AWM_EZ0098\).jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/fc/Gibraltar_bunker_Poizieres_(AWM_EZ0098).jpg/796px-Gibraltar_bunker_Poizieres_(AWM_EZ0098).jpg)

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