

2022 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize



Captain David Leslie Todd
(29th June 1891- 12th February 1969)
Amelie Martin- Mitcham Girls High School

2022 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize

David Leslie Todd was a South Australian army soldier whose efforts in serving Australia spanned both World Wars and contributed greatly to national victory. The bravery Todd (known as "Toddy" to his friends) demonstrated the four true values of mate ship, courage, perseverance, and resourcefulness of Australian ANZAC spirit.¹

Events prior to leaving for the war

David Leslie "Toddy" Todd was born on the 29th of June 1891 in Adelaide, South Australia. He was the child of John and Margaret Todd, and his father was an established businessman with his engineering and blacksmithing firm *J Todd & Son*. He resided in Adelaide for some of his formative years, which he received his primary education at Grote Street School, before relocating to Scotland between the years of 1902 and 1908 to receive the final years of his schooling.² For several years following his return, he was employed in a clerical position, before he enlisted in the army in 1909. He commenced his military career by joining the South Australian Scottish Corps. In the following years, Todd entered the AIF (Australian Imperial Force) and eventually rose to the rank of corporal in 1912, followed with a voluntary enlistment into the 76th Hindmarsh Infantry. His life was comfortably led prior to WWI, his priorities were split between his standard day-job and his duties to his country through the army. However, this all changed on the 20th of October 1914, when Todd embarked on the *HMAT A11 Ascanius* (Figure 1) and set his sights on Egypt.

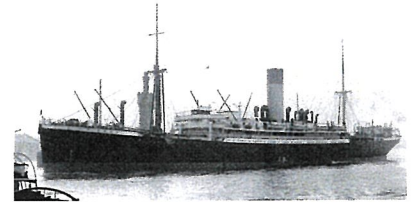


Figure 1:
Photograph of HMAT A11 Ascanius

Service during the relevant wars

Though Todd suffered many injuries during his service in the first war, he continued to persevere and demonstrate vital qualities of leadership and pride in his unit and country. Between the months of August and October 1915, he was badly wounded on the battlefield by a Turkish Sniper in the Dardanelles. He was in the position of temporary captain of the 10th Infantry Battalion (Figure 1.1) and continued to fight for a better life for the people of Australia. In October 1915, Todd contracted Typhoid Fever and evacuated his troops from the Turkish Peninsula for England. However, Todd did not let his bout of sickness slow him down, as he went back to fight by early 1916, where he was drafted into the 50th Battalion as a Commanding Officer and was once again stationed for a brief stint in Egypt, before moving towards France in June of 1916 as part of the 13th infantry brigade in the 4th Australian Division sent to France. While he did not serve on the front-line during this time, he used his position to strategize and solve problems that were under his command.



Figure 1.1: Photograph

During his time in Nourleil, France, he was taken as a prisoner of war by the German Army in April 1917 when he was set to advance with the 50th battalion towards the Hindenburg line where the German forces had purposely withdrawn their troops, in the efforts of eliminating a *Salient* (Projection of the front line into enemy territory).³ The sheer pace of this action took the Allied forces by Surprise, and as a result, they went into the area unprepared for what they were to face. His unit under the 13th infantry suffered greatly during and after his capture, losing more than half of their accumulated power and influence over the French region. Todd would remain imprisoned following

¹ https://rslvwm.s3.amazonaws.com/l/documents/107/file/56_TODD_David_Leslie_POW_.pdf

² <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/304615>

³ <https://vwma.org.au/explore/campaigns/21>

2022 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize

the Treaty of Versailles in 1918. While his battle service was cut short, Todd bided his time in a Prisoner of War Camp (PoW) and continued to prove his fighting spirit and allegiance to Australia following his release. Todd upheld the Anzac Values of persistence and perseverance in a time of hardship, despite the considerably weakened force of his infantry. Along with approximately 112 casualties experienced while battling in Nourleil, 75 Prisoners of war were captured; Todd included in this number (see *Figures 2 and 3*).

The 11/11/1918 marked the beginning of a dramatically influential time period, known as the *Interwar Years*. In December of the same year, David Leslie Todd was released from *Krefeld*, A PoW camp in Germany, and he embarked for London, England, where he would conduct some of his daily business during the 'Roaring Twenties'. Not only was this time a period of successful business and entrepreneurial development for Todd, but he also married, Violet Lilian Lawes, and began a family with her. Following his Marriage, Todd and his wife returned to Adelaide. While few major facts about Todd's personal life were recorded during this time, it was known that his wife bore two children, in 1920 and 1923, and he began working for the South Australian Public Services department during the 1920s. After entering a business partnership to run his family business with his brother in 1921, Todd elected to become sole proprietor of their firm in 1930. While the interwar years were a time of great development for Todd, he would eventually continue his service to his country in the Second World War.

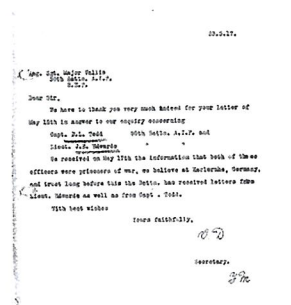


Figure 2: Archival Material

Confirmation of Todd's status as a prisoner of war. Sent from Sgt. Major. Vallis from the 50th battalion



Figure 3: Photograph

David Leslie Todd pictures along with other PoW officers at Krefeld Concentration camp (9th from left, middle row)

In 1939, Todd enlisted once again for service, wanting to fight for the safety of his country and the allied powers. As he was a class B serviceman (a male between the ages of 45 and 55) he never ventured onto the battlefield, and found his knowledge once again best served behind the scenes, directing military action from the side-lines. He was appointed to the position of Adjutant (an administrator who served a senior officer) of 4th Garrison Battalion. His presence in this battalion was particularly vital, as the 4th unit had the responsibility of manning national boundaries and fixing defences within South Australia, which contributed to the safety of the state. Homeland defence was far more crucial in WWII in comparison to WWI, as the threat of bombing and invasion was extremely realistic for Australians as the Japanese presence in the Pacific War continued to grow⁴. The population was far more aware of the threat the Japanese posed, since most of Australia was uninhabited, meaning that the larger cities required protection methods around major ports, ammunition depositories and army reserves. Todd's bravery and honour demonstrated the ANZAC spirit, as he utilised his available resources and experiences in World War 1 to benefit others when unrest broke out once again. Following the end of the second world war (1945) Todd returned to his previous station of employment and remained an avid member of the Mitcham RSL (Rotary & Services League). In 1967, he applied for the Gallipoli Medallion and Badge and died peacefully of natural causes in his Netherby home two years later, on 12/02/1969 after living a highly fulfilling and enriched life.

⁴ <https://vwma.org.au/explore/campaigns/54>

2022 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize

Four qualities outline what it means to demonstrate ANZAC spirit: these qualities being mate ship, perseverance, courage, and resourcefulness. Over the course of his service to the Australian Army, Todd demonstrated all four qualities, mainly showing his perseverance and resourcefulness. Throughout his many years of Australian military service, David Leslie Todd valued understanding, strategizing, bravery, perseverance, and constancy as he adapted his dedications towards his personal life and career to put his utmost efforts into protecting South Australia. While Todd may have shown limited battlefield experience following the first World War, he demonstrated his faithfulness to his nation by returning to a position in which he would continue to direct others toward safety. His willingness to volunteer and maintain a presence in the Australian Army is incredibly admirable, as he was prepared to put everything on the line for a better world for his wife and children. Todd also showed great bravery and resilience, when he was seriously wounded in the First World war, as he was eager to return to service and demonstrate his ability to adapt. His service in WWII also showed his persistence and sheer dedication to his rights and freedoms, which was also proven in that he voluntarily enlisted once again. His acts during both world wars display national pride and commitment. While David Leslie Todd is no longer alive to tell his story, his legacy lives on and is proven by the lifestyle that Australians have access to today. (Figure 4)



Figure 4: Photograph

Author: Unknown
Date: Unknown
Description of Image: four men in uniform, David Leslie Todd seated front Row on right side.

(Word Count: 1409)

Part B

When research was being conducted for my essay, I decided to use a variety of sources to gather different forms of information, develop my ideas and strive for accuracy in the content of my essay. I focussed on using credible sources, and this was demonstrated through my use of primary and secondary sources, meaning that the information was recorded during or after the lifetime of my selected individual.

In order to tell the story of someone who is no longer living, further research and exploration into the available primary and secondary sources of information was needed. David Leslie Todd was no longer alive during my writing process, and this meant that I could only use the few websites and documents that were immediately at my disposal. When researching my individual, I struggled to find large amounts of information on his personal life, so I had to develop my main statements off the achievements and advancements Todd made during both world wars. I found that to develop my response, I had to have a strong beginning to my research.

2022 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize

I began to conduct my research by visiting *Virtual War Memorial Australia* to ensure I had my first credible source I could utilise. I decided to research David Leslie Todd, as his perseverance and story demonstrated the ANZAC values, and compared to other soldiers, he had far more documented personal information and photo evidence. I used photo evidence to provide an example of both the conditions that Todd persisted through, but also of the man he was, and how he interacted with others. Todd was a truly fascinating man, and his unwavering devotion towards his fellow soldiers, and to the nation was inspiring to research. The photographic evidence used was very telling of the conditions of the time, too.

I used legal documentation of Todd's time as a prisoner of war to provide backing for the dates and locations I listed, and as a source that demonstrated the correspondence that took place during this period, as the evidence established how the events of the First World War was documented and how the communication technology of the time influenced the knowledge on peoples whereabouts.

I continued to deepen my knowledge of David Leslie Todd through secondary sources, or retellings of his story. My original source of information from *Virtual War Memorial Australia* was an extract from "*The Fighting 10th*", (Adelaide, Webb & Son, 1936 by C.B.L.) and this source provided me with key dates that were utilised in my work.

Due to this, I demonstrated my use of resources through both primary and secondary sources. I was able to use my main secondary source to find the information I needed to form my piece, and primary sources such as images and legal documentation were used to provide example and solidify the impact that David Leslie Todd had on the lives of others.

(Word Count: 480)

Bibliography

"*The Fighting 10th*", (Adelaide, Webb & Son, 1936 by C.B.L.) Viewed 23 May 2022¹

https://rslvwm.s3.amazonaws.com/I/documents/107/file/56_TODD_David_Leslie_POW_.pdf

David Leslie (Toddy) TODD 2015, Vwma.org.au, viewed 23 May 2022,²

<<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/304615>>.

Virtual War Memorial 2013, Vwma.org.au, viewed 23 May 2022,³

<<https://vwma.org.au/explore/campaigns/21>>.

Virtual War Memorial 2022, Vwma.org.au, viewed 23 May 2022,⁴

<<https://vwma.org.au/explore/campaigns/54>>.

50th Australian Infantry Battalion 2016, Awm.gov.au, viewed 23 May 2022,

<<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51490>>.

2022 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize

Figures

Figure 1: Photograph

Photograph of HMAT A11 Ascanius

HMAT A11 Ascanius - Our Contribution 2022, Birtwistlewiki.com.au, viewed 20 May 2022,
<https://birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/HMAT_A11_Ascanius>.

Figure 1.1: Photograph

Author: Unknown

Year Produced: unknown (likely taken between October 1914 and October 1915)

Description of image: Four men eating together in a dug-out (Todd Positioned on Far Right)

<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/304615>

Last Accessed: 20/05/2022

Figure 2: Archival Material

Confirmation of Todd's status as a prisoner of war. Sent from Sgt. Major. Vallis from the 50th battalion

Source Type: Archival Material (PDF) Author: N/a Title: Australian Red Cross Society Missing and Wounded Enquiry Bureau Files. Years of Publication: 1914-1918.

Available at: <https://rslvwms3.amazonaws.com/I/documents/68/file/RCDIG1060149--1-.pdf>

Last accessed 20/05/2022.

Figure 3: Photograph

David Leslie Todd pictures along with other PoW officers at Krefeld Concentration camp (9th from left, middle row)

David Leslie (Toddy) TODD 2015, Vwma.org.au, viewed 20 May 2022,

<<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/304615>>.

Figure 4: Photograph

Author: Unknown

Date: Unknown

Description of Image: four men in uniform, David Leslie Todd seated front Row on right side.

<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/304615>

Last Accessed: 20/05/2022