



Source: http://www.smythe.id.au/lestweforget/ch9_3.htm

LANCE CORPORAL PHILIP ROBIN

19TH AUGUST 1884 - 28TH APRIL 1915

UNIT: 10TH INFANTRY BATTALION, AIF

CONFLICT: FIRST WORLD WAR

SERVICE NUMBER: 638

AGE: 30

LACHLAN BRUCE

ABERFOYLE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 2014

1) Describe his background before departing for the war.

Lance Corporal (Lcpl) Philip Robin, son of Rowland and Mary Robin was born on the 19th of August 1884 in South Australia.

In his early years he studied at St. Peters College. After leaving school he began his career with G&R Wills & Co, then the Union Bank and finally getting a position as an Accountant at the Murray Bridge Branch of the Bank of Adelaide.

Many of his friends and the town folk of Murray Bridge would refer to him as one of the best. This was due to his honesty and willingness to help anyone. Robins was loved by customers, co-workers and the sporting community. He was a talented Australian Rules Footballer, and played his first game for Norwood against the Port Adelaide Football Club.



Private Robins in Uniform 1914
<http://www.railvictorianwarremorial.org.au/explore/people/9135>

While playing football he was awarded the 1907 prestigious Silver Magarey Medal as the best and fairest Australian Rules Football player in South Australia. He became well-known and was chosen to play for the South Australian Team (Year unknown, most likely 1914).

Robins continued playing until his enlistment on the 24th of August, 1914 as a Private, deciding he wanted to put his life on hold and contribute to the nation's peace and prosperity.

He was appointed to the 10th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Brigade AIF. Robins girlfriend at the time, Nellie Honeywill, planned to meet him in London, the 10th Battalions initial destination.



10th Battalion on the deck of HMS Prince of Wales,
departing Mudros Harbour, Limnos, destined for Gallipoli 1915
<http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/nbeach1.html>

2) Describe the Gallipoli campaign and Australia's involvement in it.

When the Western Front turned into a stalemate the British looked to create other fronts to destroy the Triple Entente. Turkey was on this list. It would also provide the Allies with a supply route for Russia, opening a stronger alliance. The British began undertaking Naval operations against the Dardanelles Strait in February 1915, with the belief that if the Navy could sail a fleet into Constantinople Bay, it's firepower would cause enough panic and fear to force Turkey into surrendering.

However, this was not to be and the British decided to land ground forces on three separate landing areas. One of these, at the time was named, Gaba Tepe. This was a bay with rugged cliffs, and was the accidental landing grounds for the 1st Division, Australian New Zealand Army Corps whom were meant to land slightly to the north. On the 25th April, 1915 the forces landed ashore, they fought heavy resistance and the small amount of ground that was taken was a difficult task and countless lives were lost.

Casualties were shipped out to the island of Limnos, which was about 60 km out in the Aegean Sea, where Allied doctors and nurses comforted and cared for the wounded.

The ANZAC landing grounds at Gaba Tepe were about half way up along the western side of the peninsular. The Gaba Tepe landing grounds quickly became known as ANZAC Cove, as we know it today.

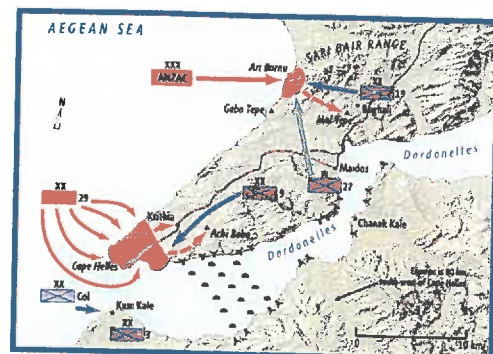
The British landed another force just north of ANZAC Cove in a failed attempt to break out of the Gaba Tepe beachhead. The landing of the ANZAC forces were originally planned to be a cut-off point for the Turkish supply lines to Cape Helles, and as a distraction for the Turkish foes from the British beachhead.

It was soon decided to withdraw all Commonwealth Forces on the Gallipoli Peninsular, finishing with the final British troops stepping onto the ships on January the 8th, 1916 at Cape Helles. The Australians took 26,111 casualties (death or serious injury) throughout the campaign.



Gaba Tepe/Anzac Cove, 1915

<http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/blogs/ag-blog/2011/04/preparing-for-the-anzac-service-gallipoli-2011>



A Gallipoli Campaign Strategic map, Red is the Allied forces, Blue is the French and the Green are the Turkish Forces

<http://www.vox.com/a/world-war-i-maps>

3) What were his experiences at Gallipoli?

Robins attended a training camp in Egypt, where he married Nellie on the 20th of March, 1915. Nellie went to London and sadly later died on the 22nd of November 1915, while giving birth to their son, Baby Robin, who Lcpl Robins would have never known about.

Pvt Robins was amongst the first to board the boats during the early hours on the 25th of April, 1915. The skiffs were quickly towed behind the steam boats and headed towards shore. An extract from a diary that a doctor in Robin's company had written stated:

*"The first report (Enemy Gunshot) was followed by 2 or 3 irregular shots and then a fusillade of reports began. We must have been some hundreds of yards from shore when the first shot broke the stillness of the dawn"*¹

*"We listened to the irregular crackle of rifles, mixed with bursts of machine gun fire. Bullets were 'zipping' into the water round the boat; and whirring away into the distance, as they ricocheted. We had all been gradually crouching, lower and lower into the boat, as the bullets got thicker and closer."*²

At approximately 4 am, as the earliest cracks of dawn began to appear over the cliffs the men were headed towards, the steam tugs untied the skiff's they were carrying. The Company Doctor wrote the following:

"Four men in the boat had been told off to the oars with instructions to pull hard for shore as soon as we were cast adrift; but for a few seconds, everyone in the boat seemed paralysed - but only for a few seconds, because we heard a faint cheer from down the beach somewhere, and that just broke the spell; the oars splashed into the water and the boat leapt towards the shore"

When they finally slid up against the Mediterranean sand the men were in a frenzy trying to locate their units. By now the majority of the enemy fire had died down except for a few enemy snipers whom were off to the left of the landing grounds.

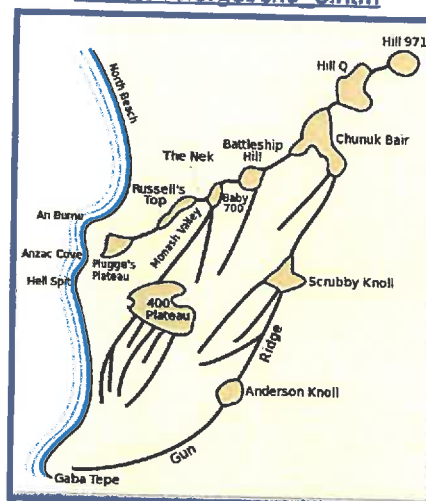
¹ Taken from <http://indicatorloops.com/manly/robin.html>

² Taken from <http://indicatorloops.com/manly/robin.html>



Robin and Nellie during their wedding in Egypt 1915

http://www.smythe.id.au/lestweforget/ch9_3.htm



A Map showing the Objectives at Gaba Tepe/ANZAC Cove

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_at_Anzac_Cove

Robin's and another Australian Soldier, Private Arthur Blackburn ^{VC, CMG, CBE, ED}, whom later won the Victoria Cross as a 2nd Lieutenant and rose to the rank of Brigadier, distinguished themselves that day by pushing further inland than any other soldier on Gallipoli during the campaign. They were the 10th Battalion scouts. Their orders were simple: "Once you are out of the boat, go for hell and get to the third ridge", and they got further than Scrubby Knoll, the main objective.

An extract from Pvt. Blackburn's diary he wrote to home shows the true Anzac spirit:

*"The beach was very rocky and it was not the easiest thing on earth to clamber over big slippery rocks. All this time bullets were whizzing all around us and men were falling here and there. I rushed across the shore to the shelter of a small bank and there shed my pack and fixed my bayonet then straight on to drive the beggars away. The way our chaps went at it was sight for the gods; no one attempted to fire but we just went straight on up the side of the cliff, pushing our way through thick scrub and often clambering up the steep sides of the cliff on all fours."*³

The two scouts, who had completed their objectives to the letter, now found themselves alone, far from the line, where they scouted, but without success turned south in search of Turkish forces. Here they found a large force, and quickly returned to their Battalion Headquarters.

For his heroic efforts Lcpl Robin was promoted from Private to Lance Corporal after his death. He was killed on the 28th of April, just 3 days after the landing.



No. 1 Section: Blackburn (seated second from left) with his platoon-mates, probably in camp at Morphettville, Adelaide. (Rear, from left) John Gordon, Francis Stokes (killed in action on 27 April 1915), Guy Fisher, Eric Meldrum and Phil Robin (killed in action 25-28 April 1915). (Front) Tom Whyte (died of wounds 25 April 1915), Blackburn, Wilfrid Jose (killed in action 3 April 1917) and Malcolm Teesdale Smith (killed in action on 27 April 1915). Guy Fisher mounted this photograph next to his shaving mirror so every morning he would remember his dead mates. Illustration War Memorial, Adelaide number 2046/11467

Robins and his mates at the Egypt Camp

<http://www.rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/9135>

³ Taken from <http://indicatorloops.com/manly/robin.html>

4) To what extent did his service reflect on the ANZAC spirit.

Lance Corporal Philip Robins and Private Blackburn showed that day a huge amount of determination and selflessness. In a typical ANZAC spirit they did not give up and kept pushing further and further inland. They only stopped when the main force was too far behind. They did not give up, they gave it their all.

They were reliable and proved capable in the face of the enemy, adapting to the terrain extremely quickly and never showing fear. They got on with the job and proved that the Australians were not a force to mess with. They were brave, but also were not stupid, and knew better than to try taking on the Turkish force that far outnumbered them.



An ANZAC soldier looks to the hills at Gaba Tepe
<http://www.smb.com.au/news/World/Sacrilege-at-Anzac-Cove/2005/03/05/1109958157536.html>

Like many of the men at Gallipoli, Robins would have given it all to protect the people around him, just as they would have likely done for him. The close mateship bonds formed at Gallipoli were truly forged in fire. Mateship is something almost any soldier develops with his comrades, and its a connection closer than any other. They would go through hell and back to protect and help them, knowing that the other would do the same.

Robins and Blackburn would have reflected this along with other ANZAC's on the hills. The Australians worked together as a team, and it was most often on a first name basis. This is something uncommon in the military. This showed how laid back the Australians could be, yet still proved that they had what it took to be disciplined when it was necessary.

This single effort formed a bigger picture even though the ANZAC's were not victorious. They gained a reputation as being extremely brave and determined soldiers and skillful fighters who always fought together not just as team members, but also mates. This spirit continued through to the Western Front in France and Belgium, and also in future conflicts.

5) Give your own understanding of the meaning of the ANZAC spirit.

To me, the ANZAC spirit is the attitude that Australian and New Zealand servicemen typically have. It is believed the roots of this spirit began at Gallipoli.

It reflects true valour, mateship, bravery, defiance in the face of the enemy, reliability, adaptability, loyalty, resilience and the willingness to sacrifice for the benefit of others. These simple values are just some examples of the typical ANZAC spirit, and it comes in many forms and does not have set boundaries. It means something different for every person.

I was met with the full force of sacrifice and selflessness on my recent trip to Europe in April/May. The sheer scale of cemeteries such as Tyne Cot and Pozieres amazed me, and made me think of how many soldiers' bodies were never recovered and given such a resting place.

I read a book a year or so ago by Andy McNab ^{DCM, MM}. It talked about when soldiers got into the SAS, that they would have to pick a role model, someone they felt they wanted to be, their vision of the "Perfect" soldier. I decided that I would pick one for myself, not as a soldier but as a person. That person was ex-Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith ^{VC, MG}.

I had the honor of meeting him by coincidence while I was in Ypres, Belgium. It was before the Menin Gate ceremony that is held every night of the year. We talked for a good fifteen or so minutes. It is certainly a conversation that I will never forget. We talked about the sacrifice so many soldiers made during their service life. The way he talked amazed me, as he spoke in the ANZAC spirit himself. He was proud, but even more so of those around him. It was one of the highlights of my life and I know it changed my thoughts a great deal. Reading about the inspiring Ben Roberts-Smith is one thing, talking to him is another.

Being an Australian Air Force Cadet has also reflected on the spirit for me, and Remembrance Day services make me feel proud that I am one of many paying my respects as well. It gives me pride and relief to know that soldiers who died for their country are not forgotten, just as I would not want to be if I was them.



Me in Service Dress at the RAAF Memorial for the Battle of Britain Week ceremony, Torrens Parade Ground, September 2014



Me with Ben Roberts-Smith at the Menin Gate Ceremony, Ypres, Belgium, April 2014

6) What was the impact of their service on families and communities left behind in South Australia?

Whilst men were fighting overseas women were left to care for families single-handedly. Communications and transport were poor and people were often very lonely and isolated. Food and other necessary supplies were rationed.

There were long periods of uncertainty about the fate of loved ones and returning soldiers often suffered from stress related illnesses that we now know as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Women and children gathered donations at schools and were knitting socks, sewing and organising much needed trench comforts. They baked biscuits such as the ANZAC biscuits, which had a long shelf life. Children were awarded special War Service Medals from the SA Children's Patriotic Fund for their efforts.



These are some of the badges awarded to women and children's war effort back home
http://www.ebay.com/sch/iss.html?_nkw=RARE%20WW2%20SPF%20Aeroplane%20Badge%20South%20Australian%20Schools%20Patriotic%20Fund&_itemid=230719810742 & <http://www.samemory.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm>

Lutheran Primary Schools, changing the names of German towns and some families were even forced to change their surnames. Some Germans were even interned in a prison camp on Torrens Island, in the Port River mouth.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this research task as much as I did researching Lcpl Robins and others like him on their experiences at Gallipoli. It is a great opportunity for incidental learning and expanding my knowledge of World War 1.

LACHLAN BRUCE - REFERENCE FILE

Websites

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Obituaries Australia	nd	Robin, Philip de Quetteville (Phil) (1884–1915)	16/05/2014	< http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/robin-philip-de-quetteville-phil-16387 >
Australian War Memorial	25 June 2013	The Last Post Ceremony commemorating the service of (638) Lance Corporal Philip de Quetteville Robin, 10th Battalion (Infantry), First World War	19/05/2014	< http://www.awm.gov.au/collecti on/PAFU%2F855.01/ >
Trove	nd	The Late Lance Corporal Philip Robins	19/05/2014	< http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/a rticle/89142276 >
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David Matthews, Vice-President of the Blackwood Community RSL [27/08/14].

Keswick Barracks Army Museum & West Terrace Cemetery Commonwealth War Graves Section. [March, 2014]