

2013 Premier's Anzac Spirit School Prize

Private Harold Percival Gooding

By Matilda Bristow

*'Fight on and fly on to the last drop of blood and the last drop of fuel, to
the last beat of the heart.'*

(Baron Manfred von Richthofen)¹.

1 Merrit, E n.d, *Some famous (and not so famous) quotes from WW1* <<Great War Heroes Weblog - Win WordPress.com,

<<http://worldwarone.wordpress.com/2011/02/28/some-famous-and-not-so-famous-quotes-from-ww1/>>, accessed 22 August 2012

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'Fight on and fly on to the last drop of blood and the last drop of fuel, to the last beat of the heart.'
(Baron Manfred von Richthofen)¹.

This quote, although stated by a German, portrays the ANZAC Spirit perfectly. Determination is a large part in the ANZAC Spirit, to continue when you are injured, having the willpower to keep fighting and never give in. Harold Percival Gooding (figure. 1), often referred to as "Perce," was a Private in the 27th Battalion, serving on the Western Front. If Perce and his comrades in conflict did not epitomize the ANZAC Spirit and continue with determination, World War I may have ended very differently.

Upon researching the words 'ANZAC' and 'Spirit' in the dictionary ANZAC is described as, "a member of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during World War I."³ 'Spirit' is defined as, "the principle of conscious life; the vital principle in humans, animating the body or mediating between body and soul."⁴ These two meanings together make up the ANZAC spirit. It encapsulates the ways the soldiers and nurses in World War I lived, and the



Figure 1 – Private Gooding on his enlistment day, 11th January 1916².

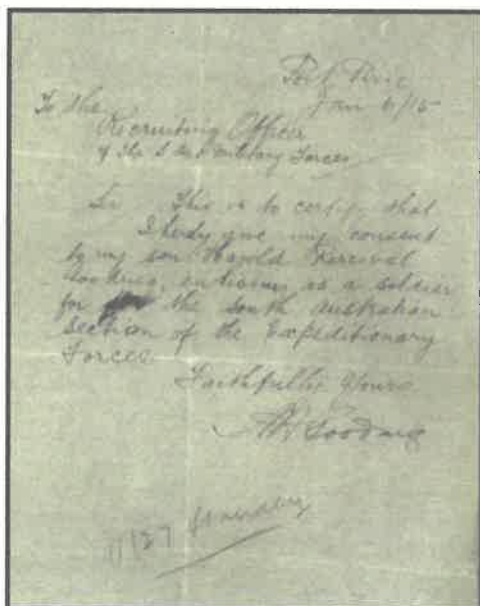


Figure 2- Letter signed by Alfred Gooding allowing Perce to go to war⁵

way they acted. They lived with determination and passion to continue fighting, kindness to help one another, support for their comrades and love for their home, friends and family.

The ANZAC Spirit was also carried by the families through them loving their children or relatives and supporting them in all of their decisions. There were siblings who couldn't go to war, due to illness, but still assisted their brothers by starting a business for them to come back to.

Perce showed the ANZAC Spirit by the ultimate sacrifice of his life. As Perce was only 19 and underage to go to war without permission, he proved his determination to go by obtaining a letter from his father allowing him to leave (figure 2). Furthermore, he also typified the ANZAC Spirit by showing the

1 Merrit, E n.d, *Some famous (and not so famous) quotes from WW1* <<Great War Heroes Weblog - Win WordPress.com,

<<http://worldwarone.wordpress.com/2011/02/28/some-famous-and-not-so-famous-quotes-from-ww1/>>, accessed 22 August 2012

2 Dunstone, P, interview by Matilda Bristow, via email, 7-22 August 2012

3 Anzac | Define Anzac at Dictionary.com 2012, Dictionary.com, <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/anzac?s=t>>, accessed 22 August 2012

4 Spirit | Define Spirit at Dictionary.com 2012, Dictionary.com, <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/spirit?s=t>>, accessed 22 August 2012

5 Dunstone, P, interview by Matilda Bristow, via email, 7-22 August 2012

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love for his family and friends when he left to help his country in need, to keep them safe.

Perce, a brave man, was born in Clare on the 12th May 1886⁶; however, he soon moved to Port Pirie and began primary school there, at the 'Port Pirie Public School.'⁷ Perce's parents, Alfred and Sarah had several children together, including another son named Donald, who was also a soldier.⁸ Later in his life Perce moved to Adelaide and attended Adelaide High School. While Perce was in Adelaide he took up the career of an engineer's apprentice. Perce enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on the 11th January 1916; two months later he embarked on the 25th March 1916. He was onboard HMAT A9 *Shropshire*, and left from Adelaide in South Australia.

Perce had joined the 27th Battalion as a Private, number 4435⁹; this battalion was formed in March 1915, in South Australia, and mainly made of recruits from the 24th Battalion and men from Adelaide suburbs. The

| Event | Date | Location | Remarks |
|------------------------------|----------|------------|--|
| Embarked for Egypt | 29.3.16 | Alexandria | A.F. 8000 |
| Disembarked at Alexandria | 30.3.16 | Alexandria | |
| A.D.R.D. admitted from Egypt | 4.4.16 | Staplee | A.G. 596 |
| Proceeded to join unit | 7.8.16 | do | A.K. 719 |
| Taken on strength | 11.8.16 | France | A.L. 2021 1/3 97/402 |
| KILLED IN ACTION | 21.11.16 | do | A.M. 10717 1/2 149, 1611.16 D.O. 31/10/17 Sgt. D. H. GROSS |

Figure 3 - Casualty Form - Active Service, displaying all of the places Perce served¹¹.

27th Battalion left Australia in June 1915 and first travelled to Egypt, training there before heading to Gallipoli. The 27th Battalion later spent more time in Egypt, and as a part of the 2nd Australian Division, went to France¹⁰.

The Battalion's first destination was Egypt, where they participated in training. Perce soon disembarked Alexandrina, Egypt on the 8th of June 1916¹² (figure 3). It is believed that Perce, still a part of the 2nd Division, continued his journey to France and took part in his first main

battle in Pozières. This battle took place between the 28th of July and the 7th of August 1916, where the allies fought against the Germans in the town of Pozières. The Allies had captured the town initially, and still held onto it after heavy attacks by the Germans, however, suffering thousands of casualties by the end of the attacks. The Allies later attempted to capture German positions; unfortunately it failed, resulting in many

6 AIF Details 2012, The AIF Project, <<http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au:8080/showPerson?pid=113922>>, accessed 7 August 2012

7 02 Oct 1909 - UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE. PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS BOARD n.d, Trove, <<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/5759662>>, accessed 26 August 2012

8 Dunstone, P, interview by Matilda Bristow, via email, 7-22 August 2012

9 AIF Details 2012, The AIF Project, <<http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au:8080/showPerson?pid=113922>>, accessed 7 August 2012

10 27th Battalion / Australian War Memorial n.d, Australian War Memorial, <http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11214.asp>, accessed 20 August 2012

11 Dunstone, P, interview by Matilda Bristow, via email, 7-22 August 2012

12 Dunstone, P, interview by Matilda Bristow, via email, 7-22 August 2012

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more deaths. The second attempt was successful and the Allies captured the German positions. A final attack was made against the Allies by the Germans, but the Allies defeated them, marking the final attempt by the Germans to capture Pozières.¹³ The Allies' ANZAC Spirit shone through in this event, as their willingness to continue fighting and never give in to the German's constant bombardment produced a success for them. The 2nd Division then continued into Belgium, before heading to France in October 1916¹⁴.

Perce's final battle is often called The Battle of Flers or The Battle of Gueudecourt (figure 4). It took place on the 5th of November 1916 soon after midnight; the aim was to capture two salients, one north of Guedecourt and one west. The 1st and 2nd Division both went to attack the enemy, however, due to the rain, the conditions were awful. As troops attempted to attack, the ever increasing mud sucked them down and they became stuck or slipped. Unable to keep up with their protection they therefore became easy targets for the German snipers and machine gunners. Many soldiers became exhausted before the attack had even begun. Although some of the soldiers managed to make it into the enemy trenches, it was impossible to make use of these gains. Through these tough conditions, the soldiers, including Perce, continued to typify the ANZAC Spirit as they were determined to struggle through the tough conditions. Even though the task was difficult, they still persisted to make a difference for their homeland.

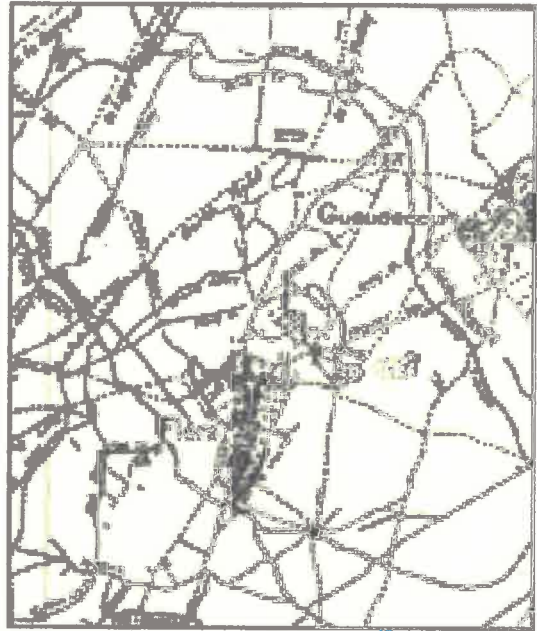


Figure 4 - A map of The Battle of Flers¹⁵

13 *Battle of Pozières* / Australian War Memorial N.d, Australian War Memorial, accessed 02 September 2012, <http://www.awm.gov.au/units/event_72.asp>

14 *27th Battalion* / Australian War Memorial n.d, Australian War Memorial, <http://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11214.asp>, accessed 20 August 2012

15 *Desert Column View topic - The Battle of Guedecourt, France, 5-14 November 1916* 2007, PhpBB Group, <<http://desert-column.phpbb3now.com/viewtopic.php?f=8&t=425>>, accessed 15 August 201

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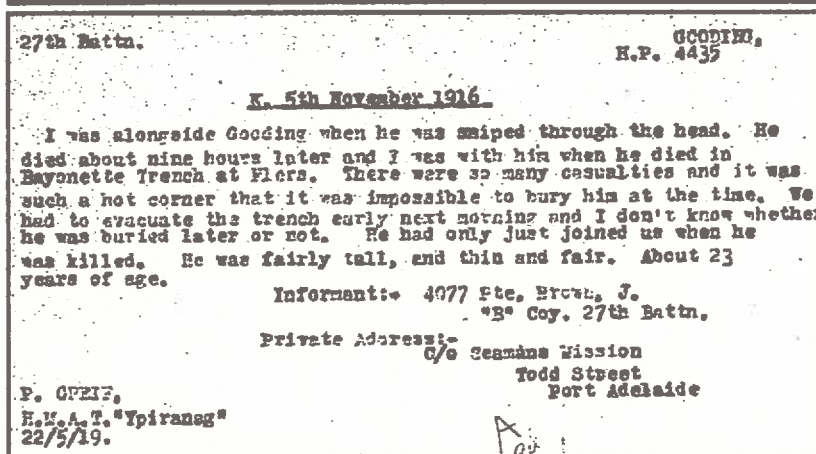


Figure 5 – Witness report on Perce's death¹⁷

When Perce was killed, he was shot through the head with a sniper, dying a painful nine hours later. Another private who was with Perce reported he died in Bayonette Trench (figure 5). Unfortunately, the Allies were under too heavy of an attack that it was impossible for Perce's body to be removed or buried. The private also explained that they had to evacuate the trench early the next morning, and he never knew if Perce was buried or not. Although, in the next few days, witnesses came and identified the dead and they were buried. To this day the whereabouts of Perce's body is unknown¹⁶. His determination to continue fighting through his pain to live 9 more hours after being shot in support of his country displays the ANZAC Spirit impeccably. His sacrifice of his life has been acknowledged with his name recorded on the Australian War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France, and also placed on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The French continue to recognize and honour the spirit of the ANZAC soldiers, like Perce, by ensuring that the memorial site at Villers-Bretonneux is cared for and maintained. This cooperation with Australia embodies the Anzac Spirit that is also extended not only between soldiers but between countries.

Perce had been awarded the *British War Medal* and the *Victory Medal* (figure 6). The *British War Medal* was awarded to anyone who served overseas in war from the 5th August 1914 to 11th November 1918. All of these medals were officially named for the recipient; it included their rank, name and unit on it.¹⁹ The *Victory Medal* was created in 1919 for all the allied soldiers, to remember the victory of World War 1. It was also only available to those who served from the 5th August 1914 to 11th November 1918²⁰.



Figure 6 – A photo of Private Gooding's medals¹⁸

¹⁶ [1drl-0428-2-118-7-4.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/1drl0428/2/118/7/1drl-0428-2-118-7-4.pdf) (application/pdf Object) n.d, Australian War Memorial, <<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/1drl0428/2/118/7/1drl-0428-2-118-7-4.pdf>>, accessed 11 August 2012

¹⁷ [awm131-20-0112.pdf](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/awm131/awm131-20-0112.pdf) (application/pdf Object) n.d, Australian War Memorial, <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/awm131/awm131-20-0112.pdf>>, accessed 11 August 2012

¹⁸ Dunstone, P, interview by Matilda Bristow, via email, 7-22 August 2012

¹⁹ *Royal Dublin Fusiliers - British War Medal* n.d, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, <<http://www.royaldublinfusiliers.com/medals/BWM.html>>, accessed 21 August 2012

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Baron Manfred von Richthofen's quote of *'Fight on and fly on to the last drop of blood and the last drop of fuel, to the last beat of the heart,'* truly illustrates the ANZAC Spirit that Perce demonstrated. He fought to the last drop of blood, the last drop of fuel and the last beat of his heart, when he unselfishly sacrificed his life.

The ANZAC Spirit will continue live on in each of us. It is the simple things we do every day, when a fundraiser is organized at school for commonly, disease or illness research, we donate our money, such as the ANZAC soldiers donated their time. Or the kind people who volunteer in their local community, to simply help out another person. The ANZAC Spirit is also displayed through the people who walk in the ANZAC parade or become involved in a service to take the time to remember and reflect on their sacrifices; the sacrifices of the soldiers who kept fighting until they no longer could, such as Perce bravely did.

20 Department of Defence - Defence Honours and Awards - The Victory Medal 20, January 2012, Department of Defence,

<<http://www.defence.gov.au/medals/Content/+040%20Campaign%20Medals/+150%20World%20War%20I/+050%20The%20Victory%20Medal/>>, accessed 21 August 2012

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