

Thomas Francis Arnold



Thomas Francis Arnold



Anzac Day

Premiers ANZAC Spirit School Prize

For this assignment, I have chosen to research a soldier, who fought on the Western Front on behalf of his country, by the name of Thomas Francis Arnold [as seen in Figure 1]. Arnold was not a celebrated soldier and was not known to me before I started this project, however his journey of hardship, commitment, sacrifice, courage and achievement struck a chord with me and typifies the ANZAC spirit. Arnold was born on May 5, 1897 in the small South Australian town of Watraba. His parents, William Berry Arnold and Alice Lydia Arnold, were sheep farmers on St Francis Island, Nuyts Archipelago, a small island off the coast of Ceduna where they leased land for grazing. His parents privately schooled him whilst he was on the island and he later attended Norwood State School until his mother passed away when he was 16. He returned home to help his father run the property and never resumed school again, sacrificing his opportunity for a further education.



Figure 1: Thomas Francis Arnold¹

On September 7th, 1915, at the age of only 18, Arnold enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force [Refer to Appendix]. I can't imagine having the courage and selflessness in three years' time to do what he did. Being away from family at such a young age and not knowing what you were getting yourself into would be extremely scary and terrifying for me, as I am sure it was for him. He, like many other fair dinkum volunteers were eager to show how brave and strong they were in battle for our country.



Figure 2: HMAT A28 Miltiades²

On February 7th, 1916 Arnold embarked on the HMAT A28 Miltiades for France [Refer to Figure 2.], a journey that took over 5 months.

On October 31st, 1916 Arnold was transferred to the 48th Battalion and went to battle on the Western Front [as shown in Figure 3], first at Flers and later at Gueudecourt, which has been described as the most difficult ever faced by the Australian Imperial Forces, due to the onset of Autumn rains. They experienced overwhelming odds and atrocious conditions during this time where trenches were a sea of mud, stretchers had to be carried by at least 4 men and there was no wheeled transport for 3,500 yards. Frost bite and trench foot was also an enemy. Arnold endured these indescribable conditions with a commitment to keep going and to be there for his mates. Arnold narrowly escaped death when he broke through the enemy wire and surprised a German Sentry Post, however he showed skill for scout work and excelled in patrolling and was awarded the military medal in the battle of Bullecourt in April, 1917. The Battle of Bullecourt was



Figure 3: The Western Front³

¹ 2012, World War 1 Pictorial Honour Roll of South Australians, <http://www.ww1sa.gravesecrets.net/a.html>, accessed 21 August 2012.

² Hoskin, J 2012, Australian & New Zealand Army Corp (ANZAC) Essential Shipping History, Flotilla Australia, <http://www.flotilla-australia.com/hmat.htm>, accessed 9 August 2012.

³ Rembrella 2009, WW1 Battlefields of the Western Front, <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/places/ww1-western-front.htm>, accessed 31 August 2012

Premiers ANZAC Spirit School Prize

hastily planned and ended in disaster with the allied forces forced to retreat. He was promoted to Lance Corporal, and then in May he was made Corporal.

During the Battle of Messines, on June 11th, 1917, Arnold won his second award, the Distinguished Conduct Medal for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty'. Arnold was a very committed and determined soldier and was rewarded for his excellence. During the Messines battle, a product of a long preparation by the British Army which saw the detonation of 19 mines under the German front line and caused an estimated 10,000 German casualties, Arnold went out with a bombing patrol and overpowered two areas of strong enemy occupation containing field guns. Arnold was then promoted to Lieutenant in October, 1917 and in April 1918, was awarded the Military Cross [as seen in Figure 4 and Appendix] for bravery.



Figure 4: Military Cross Medal⁴

At the end of the war, Arnold returned to South Australia and resumed sheep-farming in partnership with his father. He married Edith May Daniel on the 17 June 1922 with whom they had 2 children.

The ANZAC spirit was formed on April, 25th, 1915, when an event took place that moulded life today as we know, whether we are an Australian or New Zealander [Refer to Figure 5]. The ANZAC tradition began on that day in Turkey on the shores of Gallipoli when Australia participated in international conflict for the very first time. The Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher pledged our full support for Britain by agreeing to participate in this conflict 13 years after Australia's Federation. "ANZAC" was a name given to the united Australian and New Zealand Army Corp by their generals and this unity formed the basis of the ANZAC Spirit.



Figure 5: The ANZAC Spirit⁵

On the 25th April, we gather together as a nation and pay tribute to the fallen and surviving soldiers for their courage and sacrifice during their time at war. We listen to the bugle playing the last post, and bow our heads for one minute's silence. This day each year, is given to the memory of the ANZAC's, who fought for our freedom and the life we enjoy today and to honour them with appreciation and pride.

We are able to stand safe and free with privileges and rights of citizens of our free country. They displayed bravery, many beyond their years, and fought this mighty battle for us all. The ANZAC Spirit did not conclude at the end of the conflict. When the soldiers returned home, they and the families and friends who stayed behind to keep the country running, displayed all the qualities of the ANZAC spirit, like mateship, good humour, resilience, perseverance, tenacity and courage, as adapting back into normal life would not have been easy for any of them.

⁴ Heritage Medals and Memorabilia Archives 2012, Medals, http://www.heritagemedals.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=68&products_id=194, accessed 31 August 2012

⁵ Ethnic Publications Pty Ltd 2012, ANZAC Spirit honoured by students, <http://neoskopos.com/news/en/anzac-spirit-honoured-by-students>, accessed 31 August 2012

Premiers ANZAC Spirit School Prize

The ANZAC Spirit continues today through times of hardship and events such as the 2002 Bali bombings, 2009 Victorian Bushfires and more recently the Christchurch Earthquakes and Queensland floods in 2011. Citizens going about their everyday life soon became rescuer's, the majority being volunteers, provided food and shelter, support and risked their own life for the benefit of others.

Closer to home, I experienced the ANZAC Spirit first hand when last year my mum fell seriously ill and was very close to death and hospitalised for nearly 2 months. During this difficult time, our family and friends rallied and sacrificed their own time to help us. Their support, both physical and emotional, providing transport to schools and sport, helping dad run the family business and cooking meals for us, made this very difficult time more bearable for all of us. My friends helped me with getting through this tough time by offering support and listened to me when I needed to talk. My teachers were also very thoughtful and understanding, with deadlines for homework. Even after she returned home from hospital, people we barely knew gave their time and expertise freely to assist us at this trying time. This certainly typified the ANZAC Spirit and helped my mum get back to good health, something we could not have achieved on our own.

I now have a deeper understanding of the importance of this day. My understanding is now more than having a public holiday every year and that this day is set aside to commemorate the bravery of the men and women who fought in international warfare [refer to Figure 6]. When my dad asked me to march with him on ANZAC Day in Perth in 2005 on a damp and wet day on behalf of my great great aunt who served with the Women's Royal Australian Navy (WRANS), I was too young to understand. But I can remember the thousands of people lining the streets all clapping together and that Dad was holding back tears whilst we marched. He was very proud of the achievements of his great aunt and all those who fought for us.



Figure 6: Poppies placed next to names at the Australian War Memorial⁶


Every day I can look around and be reminded by the sacrifices that my Dads great aunt, Arnold and many thousands like them made for us and future generations. I now have a warm comfortable bed at night, a roof over my head, food and water on the table, a good education, access to health care and my choice of sports to name a few. We can all carry on the ANZAC Spirit in our everyday lives without prejudice.

I admit, before I started researching this project, my understanding of the ANZAC's and the ANZAC Spirit was limited. This has been a real eye opener for me and has given me the passion to learn and experience more. I now understand why it was so important for my dad to march on that day in 2005. Should I be successful in my quest to visit the Western Front, I would be extremely honoured to represent Arnold and his story, his family and the many other soldiers who fought for us.

Like all those who fought for our great country, whether they lost their lives in battle or returned home, they have set a legacy for all Australians to be proud of. This legacy is called the ANZAC Spirit.

⁶ Archives Outside 2012, ANZAC Day 2011, <http://archivesoutside.records.nsw.gov.au/anzac-day-2011/>, accessed 31 August 2012

Appendix



AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

ATTESTATION PAPER OF PERSONS ENLISTED FOR SERVICE ABROAD

7137 A
 46104
 Name: ARNOLD Thomas Francis
 Unit: 10Bn, 14R
 Joined on: 14th Aug 1915

M. Arnold

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your Name? Thomas Francis Arnold

2. In the Parish of _____ in or near the Town of Mount Bay in the County of St. Austrialis

3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B.—If the latter, papers to be shown.) NR

4. What is your age? 18 1/2 yrs

5. What is your trade or calling? Laborer

6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? No

7. Are you married? No

8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) Father: Mr William A Arnold, Mount Bay, St. Austrialis

9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No

10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with ignominy, or an incurable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with disgrace from the Navy? No

11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge. was sent back to country

12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? Yes

13. Have you ever been rejected as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No

14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mothers)—Do you understand that on Separation Allowance will be paid to you after your discharge from your term of service? Yes

15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against smallpox and enteric fever? Yes

Thomas Francis Arnold do solemnly declare that the above answers made me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to give not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my term of service for the support of my wife and children three-fifths

Date: 14th Aug 1915 Francis J. Arnold
Signature of Person Enlisted

* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 15 years of age.
 † Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

Appendix

B.S.

TELEPHONE
CENTRAL 2806

By all communications regional number
rank, full name, and unit of Soldier referred
to are to be stated.

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.

BASE RECORDS OFFICE,
VICTORIA BARRACKS.

Melbourne, 21st February, 1919.

DESPATCHED

Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in forwarding hereunder copy of extract from Third Supplement, No. 30901, to the "London Gazette," dated 18th September, 1918, relating to the conspicuous services rendered by the undermentioned member of the Australian Imperial Force.

AWARDED THE MILITARY CROSS.

"HIS MAJESTY THE KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the above award to the undermentioned officer in recognition of his gallantry and devotion to duty in the field:—

Lieutenant THOMAS FRANCIS ARNOLD, D.C.M., M.M.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When during an attack, the left company was hung up by wire, he went forward through a murderous machine-gun fire, found the position of the right company, and communicated it to the left. He then went to battalion headquarters with full dispositions, and returned with fresh orders through intense machine-gun fire. His work throughout the attack was magnificent, and a model of devotion to duty. "

x

x

x

x

The above has been promulgated in Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No. 15, dated 4th February, 1919.

Yours faithfully,

W. B. Arnold Esq.,
Hurst Bay,
South Australia,

Captain
for Major,
Officer i/c Base Records.

C2442

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