

**2015 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize  
Annabel Collins  
Loxton High School Year 10**



Lest we forget

## Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize

### Annabel Collins

### Loxton High School



Private Francis George Davis experienced one of the most horrific battles of the Great War, landing at Cape Helles on the Gallipoli Peninsula, at dawn on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1915. George was fortunate to have survived the battle of Gallipoli demonstrating the true values of ANZAC spirit. The ANZAC spirit is to not only celebrate and honour courage, selflessness and to fight for what you believe in but it is being able to sacrifice yourself for your country and fellow citizens. It requires our country to work strongly together and to provide a good sense of humour through good and bad times. These values have helped us citizens to be living in a country that provides freedom, security and an endless amount of opportunity. Our country will forever be in debt to those Australian soldiers like Francis Davis for they sacrificed everything for the lives we lead today.

Francis, commonly called George, led the typical childhood of a country boy. His upbringing would have prepared him for war, as he would have adapted more easily to the land during battle, proving to be a useful asset to the Australian Forces. As you can see in the document below Francis was born and raised in the town of Wallaroo, South Australia, son to Francis and May Davis and was surrounded by nine brothers and sisters. As a child, George attended Wallaroo Primary School and later became a blacksmith. Not only would George have learnt to be resilient and strong whilst being a blacksmith but his skills may have helped him throughout his duration in the war. Being the eldest in the family George required a lot of bravery which demonstrated ANZAC spirit, to be the first to enlist for the war. He made his way to Adelaide on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1915 and was placed in the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion. The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion

The 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion together with the 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> battalions they made the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. Their mission was to train in Egypt and then fight the soldiers of Turkey. Unfortunately their sneak attack on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1915 went terribly wrong, leaving the ANZAC's sitting ducks. What the ANZAC soldiers hoped to be a successful invasion did not occur due to the Turks hearing of their actions and placing themselves strategically up in the cliffs so they could gain an advantage on their enemies. Thousands of ANZAC soldiers lost their lives in the first few hours of the battle leaving the remaining outnumbered soldiers to fight the Turkish. 8,141 men died on the shores of Cape Helles before they even made their way up the cliffs. Most soldiers would have gained hatred towards their enemy but according to stories told George was proud to admit that he respected the Turkish soldiers, for they never decided to make sneak attacks on one another once they agreed upon truce. George always had the interests of his fellow soldiers before his own and his ANZAC spirit such as bravery and

selflessness was displayed when he sacrificed his own life for Vincent 'Copper' Palmer, a dear mate from his hometown of Wallaroo.

Private Vincent Reginald Palmer also known as 'Copper' due to his bright red hair, had a similar rural upbringing to George, also growing up and living in the small South Australian town of Wallaroo. Like many country lads 'Copper' always made sure to look out for his mates and stick together. He began his involvement in the war when he made the journey to Adelaide on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 1915, to enlist. Like many South Australian soldiers, Vincent was placed in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion and was trained to fight at Gallipoli. Vincent survived the first few days of the battle but was severely injured and was left to die in a deep shell hole. Private Francis George Davis's ANZAC spirit was greatly displayed when he crawled in to 'No Mans Land' for six nights feeding and hydrating Vincent until he was well enough to be placed on Georges back and return safely to their trenches. George executed ANZAC spirit for those six nights risking the possibility of being captured and made prisoner or dying a slow painful death like Vincent would have endured, if it were not for George. George was privileged enough to be considered for one of the most prestigious awards, The Victoria Cross. Unfortunately before his Corporal could tell the Army Sergeant the Corporal passed away leaving George nothing but Vincent's life and his pride to remind him of the sacrifice he made.

Throughout the battle of Gallipoli George experienced injuries much like many of the other soldiers but nothing would stop him from fighting for his country. At one stage of his participation in the war George suffered the near loss of one of his legs. He was repatriated to Eastbourne in England, where he was to recover and be prepped for the amputation of his leg, this often resulting with infection and usually death. A French doctor performed a radical surgery on his leg replacing his severely damaged nerve with the nerve of a dog. Within a few months George was back on his feet and ready to show his ANZAC spirit once more. After the withdrawal from Gallipoli the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion returned to Egypt and made their way to France in 1916 to continue the fight against 'the Hun'. The 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion were known for their bravery and courage and were nicknamed 'The Fighting 10<sup>th</sup>'.

Georges mother and father did not only have one son involved in the war but they were soon to have two of their boys fighting. In the year of 1916 Reginald, George's younger brother made the brave decision to enlist with the 27<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Our family is fortunate enough to have Reginald's diary in our possession. After two years of being involved in the war and fighting numerous battles Reg was killed in action on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1918 in the country of France. He fought fearlessly on the Western front demonstrating the values of a true ANZAC soldier. George accomplished enormous amounts of strength never giving in hoping that his achievements would make his brother proud.

Later in the year of 1918 George returned home. He was lucky enough to have returned with nothing but a scar on his thigh, a limp and the loss of his younger brother. In his hometown of Wallaroo he had gained the respect of the town's citizens and was given the nickname of 'Bravery Davis'. Private Francis George

Davis exemplified all that the ANZAC spirit means to me. He demonstrated camaraderie, bravery, adversity and determination, values that should not be taken for granted.



In the years that followed the Great War, George married his beloved sweetheart Ethel Voysey of Moonta Mines. Their three children Barbara, Valda and youngest son Reginald grew up in the suburb of Dulwich, Adelaide. My grandfather Reginald was proudly named after George's brother as he believed that Reginald's fine legacy should continue to live on. I am proud to be related to both Private Francis George Davis and Private Reginald Walter Davis, as they have given me the opportunities I am provided with today as well as the freedom our country offers. I will forever be in debt to the thousands of Australian soldiers who sacrificed their lives for their country and fellow loved ones.

*Image 1: (Francis George, year unknown)*

The ANZAC legacy continues to live on today through the Dawn services, parades, AFL ANZAC day match as well as every day at the Australian War Memorial. I will never experience or understand, see or hear what George did but everyday I can be appreciative and thankful for his sacrifice. Before completing this essay I never truly understood what the ANZAC values were. As a nation we exemplify ANZAC spirit everyday by putting others before ourselves and never giving up when times get tough. I believe it is very important to honour and respect those men and women who participated and died in the war. I am extremely proud to have been given the opportunity to tell the story of my Great Grandfather Private 1930 Francis George Davis. I believe he demonstrated true ANZAC spirit.

Word Count: 1357

## **Bibliography**

### **Primary References**

Davis, Margaret. 2014, description of Francis George Davis, 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

Image 1, Photo of Francis George Davis and fellow friends, attached, date unknown.

Image A, Francis George Davis's Leave Pass, attached, 21<sup>st</sup> of May 1919.

Image B, Francis George Davis's Military Pass, attached, 1919.

Image C, Post Card from Lance Taplin, Captain for Officer in Charge of Records, attached, 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1918.

Image E, Military cadet Corps Certificate of Discharge, 1911.

Image D, Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force Certificate of Discharge, 1915.

### **Secondary References**

10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2013, August 16<sup>th</sup>, Australian War Memorial, (online), viewed 23<sup>rd</sup> July, Available;  
[https://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit\\_11197.asp](https://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11197.asp)

Francis George Davis, 2014, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, The AIF Project, (online), viewed 1<sup>st</sup> September, Available;  
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=74309>

Gallipoli, 2014, March 15<sup>th</sup>, Australian War Memorial, (online), viewed 15<sup>th</sup> July, Available;  
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Private Reginald Walker Davis, 2014, July 21<sup>st</sup>, Australian War Memorial, (online), viewed 20<sup>th</sup> June, Available;  
<http://www.awm.gov.au/people/P10329623/>

Vincent Reginald Palmer, 2014, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, The AIF Project, (online), viewed 22<sup>nd</sup> June, Available;  
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/showPerson?pid=232888>

## Appendix

Image A; Francis George Davis's leave pass

**A N. ...** ... **ING THE**  
**CURRENCY OF THIS PASS BLUE ARM**  
**HANDS MUST BE WORN BY HOLDER.**  
**LEAVE PASS.**

**NOTE.**—If the holder of this Pass should fall ill whilst on leave he MUST report to No. 1 A.G. Hospital, Keswick, personally or by message, giving full particulars of the Unit he belongs to, and must notify his C.O. within 48 hours.  
Failure to report will cause pay to be stopped.

Date 20.10.1918

~~ALL TRAINING CAMP.~~

Place ...

**PASS.**

Issued to F. G. Davis

Available for several hours.

From 12 a.m. / /

Till 11 p.m. / /

Issued by L. Keefe Capt

C.O. Coy. Bn.

Image B; Francis George Davis's Military Pass

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS.** N<sup>o</sup> 2693

**MILITARY PASS.**  
FIRST CLASS

Available from 19/10/19  
to 3/8/19

**STATION TO STATION.**

ISSUED TO  
F. G. Davis  
1930  
10 B

This Free Pass is granted by the South Australian Railways Commissioner on condition that it is to be used only by the person to whom issued or in accord with the agreement by each person if he be taken in evidence of an agreement that the Commissioner is not to be held liable for any pecuniary or other responsibility or the holder on his representations for loss of his personal effects or for delay, or loss of, or damage to, property, baggage, livestock, that may be sustained by such person while using this Pass.

*C. J. Bayliss*

SEE OVER.



Registered No. F4567  
 (In any reply the above number should be quoted.)

Army Form A 2619A.  
 18th Nov 1919

With reference to your letter of the 11th inst.

I have to inform you that the name of No. 4409 Private DAVIS R.W. 27th Battalion A.I.F. France is not included in the recent casualty lists and it is assumed that he is well and with his Unit.

*Lance Taplin*  
 Captain.  
 for Officer in Charge Records.

W120-1211 200,000 THE B.W.V.P. (1919)  
 120-1211 400,000 1917

Image C; Post card to Private Francis George Davis, from Lance Taplin, Captain for Officer in charge of Records.

Register No. \_\_\_\_\_

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

**Certificate of Discharge** of No. 1930 (Rank) Private

(Name) Davis, Francis George  
 (Regiment or Corps) 10th Infantry Battalion  
 born at or near the Town of Burna  
 in the State or County of South Australia

Attested at Adelaide on the  
13th January 1919 for the Australian Imperial Force Regiment or Corps at the age of 22 years.

He is discharged in consequence of Medical Unfitness  
(not due to misconduct)

Service towards completion of engagement } Four years 203 days. Medals } \_\_\_\_\_  
 and } \_\_\_\_\_

Service Abroad Three years 96 days. Decorations } \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Officer } A Mitchell Lieut  
 755 } for S.O. 1 & R.S. 4th M.D.  
 Commanding Regiment or Corps. } \_\_\_\_\_

Place Heswich  
 Date 3rd August 1919

Discharge confirmed at Heswich Barracks,  
Adelaide.

Signature } A Mitchell Lieut  
 755 } for Commandant 4th M.D.  
 Date 3rd August 1919

NOTICE TO EMPLOYERS.—This certificate has been issued without any interlineation or erasure of any kind, and with all particulars entered in handwriting, and not typewritten. All signatures have been written, and rubber stamp signatures are not genuine.

D.160/17—0114.

Image D; Certificate of Discharge, Australian Imperial Forces.

COMMONWEALTH



OF AUSTRALIA.

MILITARY CADET CORPS,  
*South Australian* DISTRICT.

**Certificate of Discharge.**

SENIOR CADETS.

This is to Certify that *Acting Corporal George Davis*  
was Discharged\* *to join B Coy S A I R*  
from the *Wallaroo Detachment, D Coy* <sup>1st</sup> *Battalion, Commonwealth Cadet*  
*Corps* on the *20th February* 1911 *Senior*

Character *Excellent*  
Total Service *Two yrs* — mos.  
Effective „ *Two yrs* — mos.

*Recd by  
D Coy*

*Wm J. Adey Capt.*  
Commanding *1st* *Battalion*  
*South Australia*

\* Reason for Discharge to be stated.  
† Initials of Commanding Officer of Battalion as to reception.

Image E; Certificate of Discharge, Military Cadet Corps.