

The Story Of Max

When war broke out in 1914, Robert Maxwell Brown, known from birth as Max was eighteen, the youngest of three brothers who had all enlisted like many other young Australians. Max was the son of James Brown and Mary Elizabeth, of Mt Gambier South Australia. This is the story of what Max went through during the First World War. All the quotes in this text were taken from various letters and memories of conversation.

Some of my fondest memories as a child were swimming down to the depths of the ocean for the crayfish to cook and sell. I was a great swimmer best at my school. My names Robert Maxwell Brown but everyone just calls me Max. I had two Brothers Oswald and Horus they were pretty much my best mates growing up helping Dad out with the business. Quite the entrepreneur I was, always thinking up ideas I remember once when I bought a cow and sold the milk to everyone in Mount Gambier. That's where I lived Mount Gambier I liked it there. Unfortunately none of these business ideas ever did take off so I was stuck with my brothers and my Dads painting business called 'Browns Brothers' no wonder we all thought war was going to be so exciting.

I had heard stories of what Australia was doing for the War courageous things, amazing things, I couldn't believe what Australia had been doing in the war. Like all of my other friends I embraced the war and thought it was brilliant that Australia was going to take part in such an amazing event. Gallipoli was the first major battle Australia was involved in during World War One. Gallipoli is a beach in Turkey decorated with extremely steep cliffs making it very hard to attack. The whole purpose of the Gallipoli campaign was to try and secure Turkey (as they were allies of Germany) and take them out of the war. The Turks proved to be a good fighters and very little success occurred throughout the four months we were there. Australia was involved in many battles throughout the Gallipoli campaign some of these were, The Battle of Lone Pine where over 2298 men died, and The battle of the Nek were over 372 men died in the space of an hour. I arrived in Gallipoli in the last of the reinforcements where I was collected by my brothers, as I was 19 and underage at that time. Gallipoli only lasted for four months as the allied troops were evacuated, meaning I was only in Gallipoli for a few days. I still struggle with the thought that, Thousands of Australian men died on a coast tens of thousands of kilometres away from their family, only to be remembered as a distraction by those English snobs, my mates died as a distraction, I will never forgive England for this. After we were evacuated from Gallipoli, I worked the rest of the war as a dispatch rider. This was an extremely dangerous job in which I had to ride a motorbike to send messages to and from the frontline sometimes entering in to enemy lines. Many men who did this job were beheaded as the Germans would place wire across the roads that if one were to drive under would take their head clean off. Australia's involvement in Gallipoli and World War One in general was extremely important, and although Gallipoli was seen as a military fail, Gallipoli became a household name in Australia and from it came the ANZAC tradition, bonding the colonies and people of Australia into a nation.

I enrolled in the Army on the 10th of August 1915. I was put on a boat to Egypt almost immediately after and barely had enough time to say goodbye to my parents. I arrived in Egypt a bit more than a month later. There I spent a short time training before I was placed on a ship meant for Gallipoli. I was one of the last 150 reinforcements to be sent to Gallipoli. I arrived in Gallipoli in the last few days of September as part of the tenth Battalion, 4th regiment light horse field Ambulance. My job was known as one of the riskiest jobs in the Army. Essentially what my job was, was to jump up into the middle of the battlefield search for the closest wounded man, pick him up put him on my shoulders or a stretcher (this never really happened because there were barely any) then sprint back to the trenches and take them down to the beach. Easy when said like that, but a terrifying and horrible experience. I will never forget the first time I went over the top, dead men as far as the eye could see, some still looking as though they had just fallen into a peaceful sleep, and others with entire faces picked of almost all flesh. I stood in shock for a few seconds just not believing the seen in front of me and then gunfire to the left of me. I snapped into gear running, turning over the simple instructions in my head, look, find, pickup, get the hell out there. I found a man within seconds of me looking. I slung him over my back and got out of there. I did this a few more times until Australia decided to give up and go back, I remember the flood of relief as I backed away from those shores those shores of Hell.

My brothers and I, being away was a massive blow for our family. Our Dad had basically relied on my brothers and I to run 'Brown Brothers' once he got to old. with us gone he was basically hopeless with the painting and Browns Brothers soon crumpled. This left my parents in major financial stress leading to my father becoming extremely ill. The whole of Mt Gambier suffered severely, as many young men died. After war however all three of us brothers came back home an absolute miracle which I still thank God for every day, my brother again set up my fathers painting business. I was to eventually buy a small shoe shop which expanded with the help of my wife leading to us becoming a wealthy family.

I am Max Spurling and for me, From a life time of hearing stories of the ANZAC legend, the ANZAC spirit to me is the courage that pulled the allied troops across the line. The power of the Australian mateship that no other country possesses is what won many battles. ANZAC spirit is the fight that the Aussies brought. It was there never say die attitude. Their pride in wearing the Australian flag. The camaraderie or mateship they had that was unbreakable. There unbelievable toughness that has been documented by the enemy on all fronts of the war, and there famous larrikin approach to adversity. In many cases I believe that the ANZAC spirit saved the lives of men, men courageously running out to save friends and men risking their lives to get messages across dangerous territory that would save lives. I heard a story about a man who served in World War One. This man was slightly gassed during the third year of the war. Over the next year he contracted pneumonia three times. The third time he contracted pneumonia his friends were about to enter one of the deadliest and most horrific battles during the war. Seeing this coming, he refused to leave his friends despite his sickness. Eventually he was threatened with being court martialled to finally depart from his friends. Inspiring stories like this are what makes me associate the word ANZAC with national pride. Every year at dawn service I feel the amazing sense of respect and pride.

Max showed the ANZAC spirit in a number of ways. Max was an extremely courageous person to risk his life, out on the battlefield for the good of others. This job was so dangerous that most men only lasted a number of days while doing it. This would have also been an extremely taunting thing to see, thousands of men laying dead and rotting. Making this a very courageous and tough thing to do, two of the major characteristics that I think represent ANZAC spirit. To know that with in seconds of going over the top that he could be killed and his family would never be able to see him or his body again is one of the bravest things I have heard of. I think Max's brothers also showed extreme signs of ANZAC spirit. Picking him up in Gallipoli and promising their mother that they would protect him and not allow him to be harmed shows great love and loyalty, key aspects of the ANZAC spirit.

Thankyou for reading my telling of Max's experiences in the war, Max was one of thousands of heroes whose stories have never been told, but to our family Max's story is part of our culture. Max is my great Grandfather who I am named after and have grown up having a fascination of, Max died at the age of sixty, meaning many of his grandchildren never met him, but have always been proud and cherished his legend. My Mothers, Grandma said one thing to her before she died, "Don't worry about it Alex he's a coward(she had recently broken up with her boyfriend) one day you'll find a man as brave and amazing as Max Brown."

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About Myself: Max Spurling

My fascination with the history of the ANZACs came from my Grandfather, as long as I can remember he would tell me stories of war. Stories he has from the thousands of books he has read and the stories told to him by my Great Grandfather, who the assignment was written about.