

# Joshua Berman 2017 Premier's ANZAC Spirit School Prize Essay



Eric James Jarrett  
Source: McLeod family, 2017

To be born just to have your life taken by the hands of another man also fighting for his life and to see only war in your last short years: This was the life of many young men between the years of 1914 and 1918. Many young brave men have had their stories told. This is the untold story of Eric James Jarrett, who showed the ANZAC spirit with his service far away from "home".

Eric was born on the on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1895 in Great Britain. He grew up in Tunbridge Wells with loving parents Frederick and Jessie Jarrett, lived in a small house and by 1911 Eric shared his home with 7 siblings. As a 16 year old, Eric began working as a carpenter, a very different career to his older brother Herbert, who was an 18 year old chemist. Both boys were to leave their small home with its

hardships and begin their life journey, so at age 18 Eric emigrated to Australia. On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1913 Eric arrived on the SS Beltana in Elliston, South Australia to begin work as a farmer. Eric picked up our culture very fast, playing Australian rules football for the Colton Football Club. Herbert also came to South Australia on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1914.



Eric with a group of farmers who emigrated to South Australia in 1913 from England  
Source: McLeod family, 2017

At the outbreak of war, Eric enlisted in the AIF on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1914 at Oaklands, South Australia. Herbert also enlisted to fight some time after his brother, but the two fought far apart with Herbert serving on the Western Front as a medic. Within two months of Eric enlisting, training commenced. Eric began training with the 11<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment due to his experience with farming. Two squadrons were formed in Queensland and the third in South Australia and the squadrons met on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1915 outside of Brisbane and finally start their battlefield journey.

On 29<sup>th</sup> August 1915 Eric stepped into the place where the ANZAC spirit was born, Gallipoli. When arriving in August the goal for soldiers was to break the stalemate between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies. In disappointment for the Allies, they would not come out triumphant and even more trench warfare would follow, causing many casualties. Eric showed his ANZAC spirit for five months of conflict and experienced the terrible conditions of trench warfare, a new method of conflict. Eric actually fought for the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, having being moved from the 11<sup>th</sup>. Eric was so far away from his new home Australia and his family in England but he and his new mates showed their brotherhood to one another and their bravery to the enemy, exemplifying the ANZAC spirit of bravery and willingness on the Gallipoli battlefield. Eric further demonstrated the ANZAC spirit through his sacrifice for his new country and his one of origin. As a young man he had already left his family in England to travel to a place far from home at the age of eighteen, not knowing if he would ever see them again. Then to sacrifice his new career farming at the time his

new country needed him showed great loyalty to Australia. Eric survived his first campaign of the war, and after the evacuation of Gallipoli, joined the Middle East campaign.

After Gallipoli, ANZAC soldiers were either moved to the Western Front or the Middle East. Eric arrived at Alexandria on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1915. ANZAC soldiers were sent to the Middle East due to their experience with heat living in Australia and their goal was to defend Egypt, which would soon turn into the invasion of Palestine. Battles finally commenced in 1917 and 1918, which is why many people view the Middle East as having a minor role in World War 1. They believe serious battles only took place in Gallipoli and the Western Front. Through Eric's story, I believe the ANZAC spirit also lives in the Middle East. He continued his commitment to the ANZAC cause but even more so, knowing what he was getting into this time.



Eric James Jarrett  
Source: RSL Virtual  
War Memorial

Eric would bring all his new mates with him who had not fallen at Gallipoli. At the start of this campaign, Eric would get to know his mate's stories even better since they travelled in the hot desert on camels all day. These mates became Eric's new family, who he could talk to about the horrors of Gallipoli and how much he missed his real family. This demonstrated the unity and brotherhood of the ANZAC spirit. ANZACs would often drink due to the stressful nature of their situation and the Australian culture of doing so, but in the morning they would be up doing their job for their country. While Eric was on prison guard duty 5<sup>th</sup> March 1917, he was caught supplying liquor to prisoners and drinking it with them. He was awarded seven days punishment. When we look back on this today do we see this as good or a bad thing? Did our soldiers value even their enemy as mates and want to drink with them? Do we judge Eric as showing ANZAC spirit by showing compassion to an enemy? Both the Allies and the Central Powers showed mateship and sacrifice, so perhaps Eric saw this and wanted to make a defeated enemy's time in war easier for them, instead of putting the prisoner through terror and fear. This was Eric demonstrating the ANZAC spirit through knowing his own sacrifices but also acknowledging that the enemy made sacrifices as well.

While Eric was in the Middle East he suffered many diseases from the poor diet and being out in the sun all day, including, pyrexia, a fever and heatstroke. He would go on to suffer more illnesses like phlebotomus fever, which is a virus transmitted to humans by the bite of phlebotomine sandflies, and diarrhoea. None of this stopped him from doing what he needed to do for Australia, exemplifying the sacrifice and bravery of the ANZAC spirit. When he recovered, Eric would be back out on duty. In 1918 Eric became part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ANZAC battalion known as the Imperial Camel Corps and he finally participated in battle. Eric's experience in war had been incredibly challenging for a young man, being away from his family for over five years and knowing his closet brother Herbert was fighting on the Western front.

Sadly, things for the Jarrett family were to become tragic. 24<sup>th</sup> March 1918, a battle would rage for 24 hours, with the Allies capturing the town of Es Salt. This preceded the raid on the town of Amman and by the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> the railway north and south of the town was blown up. However, more German and Turkish troops arrived



Eric James Jarrett gravestone. Source: McLeod family, 2017

and fighting commenced. On 28th March Eric would step onto the battlefield for the last time. Eric James Jarrett was killed in action and buried on the battlefield by L.J. Williamson, a soldier who fought with him. Eric would go on to be exhumed and re-buried in Syria at the Damascus War Cemetery with the inscription "Till the dawn breaks".

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" is the bible verse dedicated to Eric on his memorial card. Indeed Eric was a man who sacrificed ever seeing his true family again, to die for the new family he had

around him. His service reflects the ANZAC spirit. He was a man who had left home at the age of eighteen sacrificing his family to come to our country to work for the Australian people so he could live his dream, a man who sacrificed his life to fight for our country in the empire's time of need. He had not seen his mother for over five years and was due to go on leave to travel back to his English home very soon but now there was only another mother reading a telegraph about the death of her son in tears surrounded by those who loved him. A brother was left in the trenches to cry alone about his death and then sent into the battlefields to risk his own life the next day. I see Eric James Jarrett as a hero and someone who deserves tremendous respect for what he did for our country. I hope to pay my respects to the brave man at his war memorial in Elliston one day.



Eric James Jarrett memorial card Source: State Records of South Australia 2017

Eric James Jarrett's story has shown me the meaning of the ANZAC spirit, including mateship, brotherhood, bravery, loyalty and most importantly sacrifice. I am ever so grateful and honoured to have the chance to study the ANZAC's action in World War 1 in great detail and most of all, bring Eric James Jarrett's story to life.

Lest We Forget.



Example of the three medals won by Eric James Jarrett  
1914-1915 star, British war medal, Victory medal

## Bibliography:

### Primary Sources

Commonwealth War Graves Commission, retrieved from <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/897287/JARRETT,%20ERIC%20JAMES> accessed March, 2017

Family records and photographs accessed through pers. comm. with Herbert Leo Jarrett's grandson, Nigel McLeod, accessed April, 2017

National Archives of Australia, World War 1 Service Records, retrieved from <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=7362474&isAv=N> accessed March, 2017

*RSL Virtual War Memorial, Eric James JARRETT*, retrieved from <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/95893> accessed March, 2017

State Records of South Australia, Immigration Files for British farm apprentices 1913-14, Eric James Jarrett and Herbert Leo Jarrett, accessed April, 2017

### Secondary Sources

Australian War Memorial, The Imperial Camel Corps, retrieved from <https://www.awm.gov.au/education/imperial-camel-corps/> accessed March, 2017

Australian War Memorial, 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment, retrieved from <https://www.awm.gov.au/unit/U51043/> accessed March 2017

Australian War Memorial, Rules for Field Punishment, retrieved from [https://www.awm.gov.au/sites/default/files/encyclopedia/field\\_punishment/355\\_1330941\\_G253M\\_1914.pdf](https://www.awm.gov.au/sites/default/files/encyclopedia/field_punishment/355_1330941_G253M_1914.pdf) accessed March, 2017

Cleary, M.N. Flies, filth and bully beef: life at Gallipoli in 1915, *The Conversation*, retrieved from <http://theconversation.com/flies-filth-and-bully-beef-life-at-gallipoli-in-1915-39321> accessed March, 2017

DAILY LIFE AT GALLIPOLI, retrieved from <http://www.anzacsofgallipoli.com/daily-life-at-gallipoli1.html> accessed March 2017

Department of defence, *Defence honours and awards*, retrieved from <http://www.defence.gov.au/Medals/> accessed March, 2017

Reid, F. (1934). *The Fighting Cameliers*. Leonaur Ltd.

The Shrine of Remembrance (2013) *The spirit of ANZAC* (film), retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29nDdzzTMbs>, accessed March, 2017

Simple History (2016) *The Gallipoli Campaign 1915* (film), retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dJH\\_2SzVK8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dJH_2SzVK8), accessed March, 2017

Staunton, A. (2007) *Australian Light Horse*. Canberra, Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Tufan, Z.K. and M.A. Tasyardn, *Virology and Mycology journal*, retrieved from <https://www.omicsonline.org/sandfly-fever-a-mini-review-2161-0517.1000109.php?aid=14137> accessed March, 2017

Woodward, D.R. British Broadcasting Corporation, *The Middle East during World War One*, retrieved from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/middle\\_east\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/middle_east_01.shtml) accessed May, 2017