

# Stanley Charles Bishop

23/07/1898 – 02/12/1970

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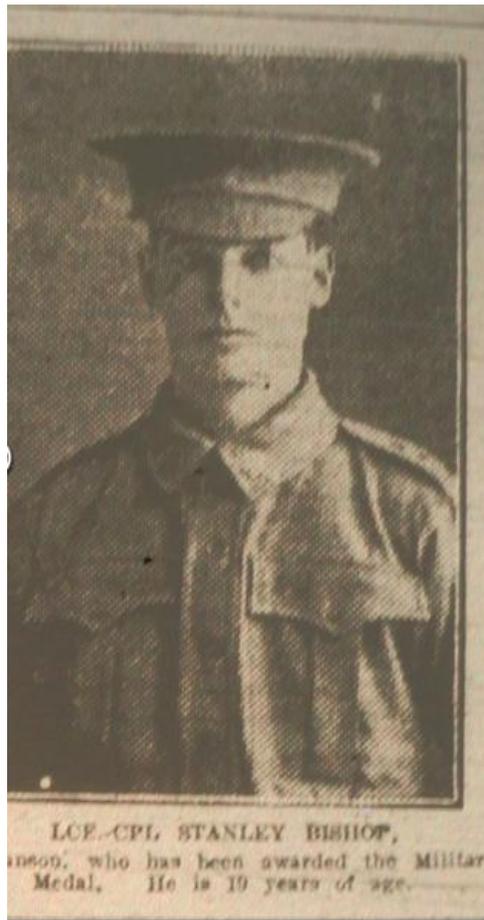


Figure 1:  
Stanley Charles Bishop  
(Australian War Memorial)

## Stanley Charles Bishop

By Cassie Spada

Spanning from 1914 - 1918, the First World War is one of the bloodiest wars to have been fought. Over 16 million people, military and civilian, died during World War I. This left the hearts of many families shattered as their loved ones had left and were never coming home. Fortunately for Stanley Charles Bishop, he did come home. (see Figures 1, 2 & 3) Many of the returning soldiers were left with the scars of war. '1 in 8 returning soldiers suffer from PTSD', or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. 'Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, feelings of detachment, irritability, trouble concentrating and sleeplessness.' Says NBC News. (msnbc, 2018)



Figure 2:  
Stanley Charles Bishop.  
(Tabatha Robinson, 1915)

*Describe the context of the battlefield*

The Western Front stretched 750 km's from the Belgian Coast, through France to the Swiss Border. This distance allowed for many battles to happen between the armed forces. Living on the battlefield brought not only danger but also disease. Men were constantly at risk from German explosives or snipers as they were always near the battlefield. War was filled with deafening noises of gunshots, grisly sights of your mate's dead body, the feeling of adrenalin that was concealing the pain of shrapnel piercing your skin and the scent of rotting flesh from your comrades and enemies.

*"My tunic is rotted with other men's blood and partly splattered with a comrade's brains. It is horrible but why should you people at home not know."* - John Alexander Raws, 1883-1916.

The blood of your comrades and enemies stained the ground wherever you turned, the smell of fear was all around and the never-ending sound of gunfire, bombs and death was always with you. Rats and lice lived with soldiers and the brown rats were the size of cats from feasting on remains. Rats brought disease, as did fleas and lice. Lice

caused Trench Fever and this disease took nearly three months to recover from. Often, you could feel the earth shake underneath your feet from explosions and bombs constantly going off. Stanley was a runner which means that he would have felt the war's distinguishing traits more than some.

*Describe his background before departing for the war*

Stanley was born in Jamestown, 216 km north of Adelaide on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, 1898. His hometown was Lock and he attended Hanson Public School in South Australia. He came from a Methodist family and before departing to war, Stanley was a farmer. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, farm life involved early starts, cutting hay, raking hay and planting crops. All of this evidence shows that Stanley was extremely hardworking. The life of a farmer was not easy in the early 1900's. Based on his religious beliefs, it is obvious that he was humane, genuine and had good principles.

Stanley's father was Andrew Bishop and his mother was Emily nee Weston. He enlisted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August, 1915, just a week and a half after his eighteenth birthday. Stanley was single at the time of embarkation so he did not have to say an impossible goodbye to someone that he was deeply in love with. He had two brothers, Clarence Bishop, who was killed in action on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 1916, and Andrew Hedley Bishop, who enlisted in 1915 and returned home in 1920. Clarence served in the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Pozieres, France and Andrew served in both the 10<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Battalions. Having all of your sons serve in the war, with one being killed in action, could not have been easy for the Bishop's parents. The impact this would have had on his entire family would have been something that they would never have recovered from.



Figure 3:  
Stanley Charles Bishop  
(Tabatha Robinson, 1915)

*Describe his life on the Western Front and Middle East*

Stanley embarked from Adelaide on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, 1915. His first unit was the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, his Service Number was 3695 and his first rank was Private. The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion served on the Western Front at the end of 1915 and early 1916. This included participating in the Battle of Pozieres. He then transferred to the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 1916, the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion arrived in France and went on to be in succession to the attacks near the village of Pozieres. The Battalion's first major battle was from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. The battalion had many casualties. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1917, Stanley was wounded but remained on duty, where he was involved with the German Withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line - the Outpost Villages. This was when the 50<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Battalions attacked Norueil on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, 1917 and when Stanley acted in ways that would see him be awarded the Military Medal.

A writer for the Observer Newspaper said that at Noreuil on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 1917, *“this runner came prominently under notice continually, when he brought messages from his company to the forward relay station. His work was exceptionally good as he carried messages from the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>, during all this time under heavy fire, particularly that of machine-guns”*.

After this, he was promoted to Lance Corporal and on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, he was awarded the Military Medal. Then, he was promoted to Corporal 3 months later. 7 months later, he was promoted to Lance Sergeant. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1918, the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion aided in the defeat of the biggest German attack against the Australian troops during the entire war. Another 10 months later, he was promoted to Second Lieutenant and on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, 1919, the 50<sup>th</sup> Battalion combined with the 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion as soldiers were extradited back to Australia. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, he was finally promoted to Lieutenant. Stanley was discharged on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, 1919.

*The Anzac Spirit is generally considered to be comprised of courage, perseverance, mateship and resourcefulness. Using evidence drawn from your research in Part A, choose one of the characteristics of the Anzac Spirit that is best shown by the individual you researched*

Courage, by definition, is the ability to do something that frightens one. Stanley showed significant amounts of courage throughout World War I. According to the Observer Newspaper, *‘he was always cheerful and cool and displayed exceedingly great courage. In every way he was thoroughly reliable and deserving of high praise.’* This observation belonged to the same newspaper comment that stated Stanley had received the Military Medal which also corroborates the fact that he showed immense courage during battle. The fact that Stanley joined the war in late 1915 means that he would have known what the war was like and he would have heard the horrific details coming out of Gallipoli and yet he still decided to go at the young age of eighteen. This to me, shows great amounts of courage.

Stanley started out as a Private and worked his way up to Lieutenant. I believe that this is due to his hard work and courage as otherwise, he would not have been promoted to such a high rank.

Stanley was a runner who took messages from one area or command to another while the war was raging on around him. The entire time, he was under heavy fire, particularly from machine guns. As we can only imagine, being under heavy fire, with bullets raining down wherever your eyes were to look would be terrifying. Stanley had the courage to continue his mission for two days straight. This act of duty shows vast amounts of bravery and audacity that one could only hope to achieve in the line of fire. In light of his tremendous achievement, Stanley was awarded the Military Medal for his service.

Stanley served in both in Egypt and on the Western Front. He also served in World War II. His rank was Captain and he served from 1941-1946, when he was discharged at the end of the war. It would take great strength and courage to be able to return to the battlegrounds, knowing what war looked like, what war felt like and what war sounded like. I am almost certain that Stanley would have lost not only his brother in World War I but many of his friends and comrades as well. To be back in an environment where there is so much loss and so many reminders of loss would be gut-wrenching. Still, even with these painful signs all around him, Stanley continued to serve with honour.

Stanley passed away at age 72 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, 1970 from natural causes. He is buried at Tumby Bay, Plot C99.



Figure 4 – Tombstone of Stanley Charles Bishop

(Tumby Bay District Council)

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