

What inspiration does the legend of the ANZAC provide for youth in the 21st Century?

"A ticket to France"

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The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) are a rare breed, of men who will never be forgotten. The men behind the legend of the ANZAC's are worthy and inspirational role models for a society with lost youth.

In the early morning on the twenty fifth of April 1915, courageous Australian soldiers made it into Australia's history when they landed at Gallipoli Peninsula with the intent of reaching Plugge's Plateau. That same day, troops from New Zealand landed in Gallipoli, and side by side the Australians and New Zealanders created the Anzac legend. This battle forever bound the two cultures, in a web of glory and mateship.¹ These men, the best of humanity were shot down in a manner which could only be called, a slaughter. Many men, some of whom can be described as fresh from boyhood, had smuggled themselves into the war because their judgement was clouded with promises of glory and peer pressure.² These men were gunned down by bullets shot by men they had no personal quarrel. Soldiers or 'diggers' as they later became known, were slain until the blood red of the poppy could no longer be indentified and separated. Although the men, watched their mates be cut down without mercy, they continued to charge up to the cliffs and give their life in the service of their country. 'Lest we forget'.

The ANZAC's displayed inspirational traits such as bravery, loyalty, discipline, endurance, mateship, persistence and initiative. ANZAC's were cheeky youth who had thrown themselves into the brutal world of war and proved to all, they were equal to anyone on the battlefield. These young men are an inspiration to youth today in the way that they never gave up, despite being surrounded by death in a never- ending situation. Jessica Watson demonstrated the classic characteristics of the ANZAC's when she sailed into the history books as been the youngest sailor to ever sail solo around the world. Despite rough seas and broken spirit, she found the courage and initiative to persist.³ Today's youth are submerged in a world where among many things; they are forced to deal with a changing society incorporating an ever changing structure of the family unit, cyber bullying, eating disorders, mental illnesses, world financial insecurity, violence, drug and underage alcohol consumption ⁴. Combining this with high unemployment and evolving house prices, their ability to survive is governed by their ability to cope. Young adults need something real to inspire them and stand the test of time. The ANZAC's had a 'spirit' about them, an inner strength which no one could break. Even in a world surrounded by despair, the ANZAC's held their heads high and continued to fight. By remembering the ANZAC legend through

annual National dawn services, youth in the twenty first Century draw strength to deal with constant change and uncertainty⁵ 'Dawn of the legends'.

John Simpson is Australia's greatest hero, a champion forged in the time of great need. Simpson's responsibility was to transport wounded soldiers with the help of his donkey. He took mateship to a level which can be rivalled with those in the league of superheroes. He demonstrated to all Australians particularly the youth of today the true meaning of selflessness. Regardless of their background he cared for all⁶. A recent example of the ANZAC spirit in young people today, was when a young female police officer showed characteristics similar to the ANZAC's ninety six years ago and refused to leave a teenager with a suspected bomb around their neck⁷. Simpson is a strong role model for today's youth because like so many troubled youth today, he was brought up in an average family. 'For the broken'.

The ANZAC's gave my generation freedom and the choice, to do whatever we want to do with our lives. No longer is there a set plan for men and women in society. Women are welcomed at universities to increase their chances of securing high paid jobs, rather than childbearing and homemaking. In addition, youth like me have grown up listening to the stories passed down from old diggers and remembering the sacrifices these immortal men made for us. There is no sacrifice more selfless and more appreciated than the act of a stranger, giving their life to protect the lifestyle which many of us, including the youth of today take for granted. We owe these brave men everything. Here in Australia, we are free to walk down the street without fear of bullets flying and to send children to school without the fear they won't come home. It is at school, that young people learn the qualities of the ANZAC's and how to apply them to their own lives. Throughout the years at school, youth understand through experience what mateship and endurance really mean. They develop the courage to stand up for what is right, demonstrate initiative when things don't go 'according to plan' and lastly discipline as it is the ANZAC way. Life was never supposed to be easy and it certainly wasn't for the ANZAC's but the best of their character has been handed down to youth of today. Daniel Flynn and his team are attempting to break the selfish reputation of 'Generation Y'. Their goal is for people in poverty stricken areas to have access to clean water. In order to finance this the company sells bottled "thank you" water and donates all profit⁸ 'For us, they fought'.

The legend of the ANZAC's is a weight on every young Australian's shoulders. Young people can change the world in a positive way by coming together, being inspired by the characteristics of the ANZAC's and remembering the tears, horrors, pain and blood spilt. The courage and selflessness displayed at Gallipoli, will forever separate the ANZAC's and place them on a pedestal in the hearts and minds of Australians.

Dedicated to the families broken and the lost diggers.

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