

## ANZAC Values – Jill Curry

Australian Curriculum, Year 9 – ACDSEH095, ACDSEH097, ACHHS172,  
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### F-10 Humanities and Social Sciences/Key Ideas/Who we are...values that have shaped societies

Patrick Lindsay, in *The Spirit of the Digger*, reflects on what sets the Australian soldiers apart:

Soldiers everywhere reflect, and are only as good as, the community from which they are drawn. It follows that Australians have the essence of the Digger within them. The spirit emerges when the individual calls on it in times of need. The image of the Digger is derived from an intricate amalgam of qualities: each has been proven in the heat of battle and has been personified at various times by remarkable members of the tribe. Chief among these qualities are mateship, courage, compassion, endurance, selflessness, loyalty, resourcefulness, devotion, independence, ingenuity, audacity, coolness, larrikinism and humour.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Mateship

Frank McNamara came from Rushworth in northern Victoria, and studied to be a teacher. He enlisted in the air force and trained as a pilot. In the days leading up to the ground assault on Gaza, he was flying with the No 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps involved in bombing raids over railway storehouses near Gaza.



On 20 March, 1917, due to a shortage of bombs, McNamara was using modified Howitzer shells and was injured when one of these exploded with shrapnel causing a large gash in his leg. He saw a fellow squadron member, Captain D. W. Rutherford, shot down. Despite his serious leg wound, McNamara landed his one-seater Martinsyde plane near the stricken Rutherford who jumped on to the wing of the plane clinging to the struts. His weight overbalanced the plane and with McNamara's injury he could not control the plane causing it to crash. The two struggled back to Rutherford's plane. He repaired the engine while McNamara held off the Turkish cavalry with a revolver. They took off and suffering pain and loss of blood, McNamara flew the aircraft back to El Arish base before blacking out and being rushed to hospital. He then nearly died after an allergic reaction to a routine tetanus injection, which left him on a respirator. He recovered but was unable to continue service because of his wound and was repatriated back to Australia. His mates attested that even had he not been injured, his gallantry would have deserved a Victoria Cross. This was also the only VC awarded to any ANZAC in the Middle Eastern Campaign.

#### 2. Courage

On Oct 31 1917 an hour before sunset, 800 Light Horsemen set off in do-or-die charge against 4,000 entrenched Turkish soldiers protected by artillery, rifle fire and supported by German bomber aircraft. They had trudged 3 nights through the desert to get to Beersheba

and endured hot, dry days. If they did not get the water wells of the town they would likely perish from thirst. Losing was not an option. They came so fast and with such reckless courage that the surprised opposition failed to lower their guns fast enough and the shrapnel burst behind them. Some dismounted and fought in the trenches while others jumped the trenches and galloped right into town. One of those was Trooper Sloan ('Scotty') Bolton.

Bolton had a close shave when a bullet just missed his leg but gouged the horse's rump causing it to stumble, almost throwing Bolton off. They leaped over the first row of trenches, he lashed at two Turks in the second with his bayonet and galloped into town. He grabbed a revolver from a Turkish soldier and kicked him to the ground, just as one well exploded, then another. He saw wires on the ground leading into a building. Looking through the windows he saw a German officer at a switchboard wired to detonate all the wells. Bolton jumped from his horse and burst into the room pointing the revolver at the officer. His mate, Trooper Ray Hudson, joined him and took the officer prisoner, thus saving most of the wells intact.



As he came out of the building, he saw a German officer leading six men and a Turkish field gun, escaping town. He took off in pursuit and ordered the officer to stop, which was ignored. He took aim but the revolver was empty. He then pushed the revolver into the face of the officer and knocked him to the ground. He grabbed the reins of the lead horse and stopped the escapees, keeping them bluffed with his empty gun until help could arrive. He headed back to town and collected about 25 more Turkish prisoners on the way. For his bravery he was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal. The following year, he was injured and lost both legs. What got him through this difficult time was that he met the nurse in the hospital who eventually became his wife.



### 3. Endurance

The ANZACs' resilience was shown by the way they pushed on through some of the most difficult conditions imaginable. They endured sleepless treks through the desert at night, then fought all day at Magdhaba, with some falling asleep in the saddle on the return trip, or hallucinating from dehydration. Temperatures in the Sinai could reach 50 degrees by day and choking sandstorms were a regular occurrence. They often survived on a diet of bully beef and biscuits and a ration of one quart of water (about a litre) per day for weeks on end. In Palestine in winter they slept in tents on bitter-cold nights. Then there were malarial mosquitoes, scorpions, deadly spiders, millions of flies and other creepy crawlies which invited themselves into their tents. Emotionally they had to deal with homesickness and the heartache of losing mates or their beloved horses. This toughness enabled them to overcome when the odds were stacked against them but they didn't give up.



Major Michael Shanahan would never unduly put his men in danger. At the battle of Romani, he found four of his men cut off from their horses and encircled by Turks. They had no way of escape and faced becoming prisoners of war at best, or death. He rode his horse through the enemy lines and picked them all up onto his huge horse, and took them to safety whilst warding off the Turks with his rifle. He then went back to the battle, was injured shortly after, but kept fighting for an hour, until he lost consciousness. He ended up having

part of his leg amputated. He was also awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal.

#### Questions:

1. Has your character been tested in the time of battle? Did you come through and are you a stronger person for that? Explain.
2. Which of the ANZAC qualities that Lindsay refers to do you reflect in your life? Are there some that you would like to develop more?
3. The 'Golden Rule' says, "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). Which of the ANZAC attributes align with this principle?

#### Endnotes:

1. Lindsay, P., *The Spirit of the Digger*, Harper Collins, 2003, 16

#### Pictures:

1. Frank McNamara – Australian War Memorial  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/A03689/>
2. Scotty and Elsie wedding photo <https://anzacday.org.au/trooper-sloan-scotty-bolton-dcm>
3. Captured Turkish artillery at Beersheba. Australian War Memorial  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/H01373/>
4. Michael Shanahan in hospital – <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P03088.008>. 2nd Australian Light Horse, Cairo Sept 1916

#### Powerpoint:

1. \$1 coin <http://www.australian-coins.com/complete-guide-australian-1-dollar-1-coins/2015-100-years-anzac-circulating-dollar/>
2. Lindsay, P., *The Spirit of the Digger*, Harper Collins, 2003, page 16
3. Frank McNamara – Australian War Memorial,  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/A03689/>
4. <http://www.stevebusterjohnson.com/6-sqn-aircraft>
5. Disputed picture of the charge at Beersheba (or re-enactment) – Australian War memorial  
<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/A02684/> It was probably taken when two regiments

of the 4th Brigade, Australian Light Horse, re-enacted the charge for the official photographer Frank Hurley, at Belah on 7 February 1918.

6. Jumping the trenches – from a photograph at an exhibition in Beersheba in 2012
7. Scotty and Elsie wedding photo <https://anzacday.org.au/trooper-sloan-scotty-bolton-dcm>
8. Captured Turkish artillery at Beersheba. Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/H01373/>
9. 10<sup>th</sup> LH with 1400 Turkish prisoners from Maghdaba <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P01350.006>
10. <http://medalsgonemissing.com/military-medal-blog/military-memorabilia/the-21st-lighthorse-and-an-03-pattern-waterbottle/>
11. Dead Horses at Romani <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/J05572/>
12. Michael Shanahan in hospital – <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P03088.008>. 2nd Australian Light Horse, Cairo Sept 1916