



Tegwen Betts | Year 12

Speech from 2019 ANZAC Day Commemorative Ceremony

On the morning of the 25th of April 1915, Australian and New Zealand soldiers set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula to allow passage for the allied navies through to the area now known as Istanbul. Their aim was to invade, then apprehend a key German ally. As the troops landed, they were met with fierce opposition resulting in casualties from both sides. In fact, over 8000 soldiers were killed on that first day. The Gallipoli campaign eventually ended in failure; however, it was on this battlefield that the ANZAC legacy was born. A legacy of mateship, bravery, ingenuity and endurance. This legacy is what we remember and honour on ANZAC Day. Today, we remember the sacrifices of those men who fought and died in Gallipoli, as well as, honouring those men and women who have served and are still serving in military operations around the world.

Good morning/afternoon special guests, staff and students. I would like to share the stories of Sgt. Edward David Smout – also known as Sgt. Ted Smout - and Flight Lieutenant VP Brennan, both of whom were members of the Brisbane community. While both gentleman served in different conflicts their legacy continues on to this day and even though both wars seem so distant their legacy and the ANZAC spirit is still relevant to us today.

Sgt. Edward David Smout was a soldier in the First World War. He was born in Brisbane in 1898 and joined the army at the age of 17 but provided the age of 18 and 8 months in order to enlist. Upon arrival in France, he was posted to the 3rd Sanitary Section of the Australian Army Medical Corps where he served as a stretcher bearer. During an engagement near the Somme River on the 21st of April 1918, Smout was eyewitness to the final moments in the life and career of the German Flying Ace Manfred Von Richtofen AKA the Red Barron. He was discharged on the 8th of September 1919 - a year after the war ended.

When he returned from war and in the years following, he received many honours - both here and abroad. In 1998, as well as receiving France's highest honour, being knighted as a Chevalier - he was also awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the community. Throughout his life, he was a regular participant in ANZAC Day marches and was one of the most celebrated war veterans in Queensland. Smout died in 2004, at age 106. At the time, he was the oldest surviving veteran of World War 1. We will remember him.

This brings us to Flight Lieutenant VP Brennan, a past student of Brisbane State High School.

In 1934, Brennan was in the Junior Class here at State High. He was an Australian Aviator and Flying Ace during World War Two. He was one of the most distinguished Spitfire pilots who took a prominent part in the Battle for Malta. In November 1940, Brennan enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force. Over the next five months, he was officially credited with the destruction of 10 German and Italian aircraft from a total of 24 operational sorties. Reposted to England, Brennan was a flying instructor and collaborated in the writing of a book about his experiences titled 'Spitfires over Malta'. In 1943, he returned to Australia, where he was tragically killed in a flying accident.

We will remember him.

The legacy of the ANZACs is not forgotten. Remembering those who have served and made sacrifices for our country has humbled and helped shape us. This reminds us of the values that we should represent through our school. We come together and share the sorrow and also honour those past students and our ancestors who served and upheld the ANZAC legacy. As the years progress and as we continue to lose our veterans, those men and women who fought and died for our country, it is up to us - the young people of Australia - to continue their legacy. Look above you, look around you, we have access to incredible resources and an ability to continue to work hard and uphold the ANZAC values.

Mateship, bravery, ingenuity and endurance are the values that can unify us. These values thrive when we display empathy, loyalty and friendship to our peers, regardless of our differences. We are brave when we stand up and ask for help, even though we may be scared of judgement. We show ingenuity when we find solutions to problems that appear impossible to solve and our endurance is evident when we persist and do not give up.

When we display the ANZAC values in everyday life, we remember and honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Throughout his life Sgt Smout stated that, "We should not glorify war." In honour of his memory and of all service men and women – both past and present – we remember and thank them for their service to our country.

Lest we forget.