



Angus Moran | Year 12

Speech from 2022 ANZAC Day Commemorative Ceremony

“In war, whichever side may call itself the victor, there are no winners, but all are losers.” Those words were spoken by British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, a man desperate to prevent war, in 1938. World War II, the most devastating war the world has ever seen would break out one year later.

Chamberlain would be proven right many times over. War is destructive. War tears apart friends, families and societies, and leaves horror in its wake. A select few past students rose above these harsh conditions to do not only themselves but also our school proud. As you have heard today, State High has a proud tradition of students representing the school in overseas conflict.



To me, a student who best left a legacy in difficult circumstances was Sergeant Edward David Smout, much better known as Ted. Ted was a student at Brisbane Central Technical College High School, which served as the precursor to State High before it was established in 1921. As such, Ted was honoured as a soldier in the First World War in the 1921 Honour Roll. He enlisted as a stretcher-bearer in 1915, at the age of just 17.

Ted left behind a legacy in several ways. Living until 2004, he was the longest living World War I veteran in Queensland, and the sixth-longest in Australia. Ted lived to the age of 106 and was older than Australia’s Federation. Throughout his lifetime, he was honoured with awards such as the Order of Australia in 1978 and the French Legion of Honour, France’s highest military award, in 1998. He also left a physical legacy – the Ted Smout Bridge, in Redcliffe.

Yet to me, Smout’s most memorable action was a choice not to act. Ted Smout was one of the first on the scene after the Red Baron, the most notorious fighter pilot in the war, was fatally shot down. Ted was one of few to hear his final words. As an honoured pilot, the Baron’s clothes were more expensive than those of normal soldiers. Smout found himself tempted to take the Baron’s fine leather boots and Iron Cross award, but nobly he did not. The Red Baron, despite being an enemy pilot, would later receive a full military funeral by the Australian army. If not for Smout’s nobility, the renowned pilot may not have received a burial with the dignity he deserved.

Ted Smout did not see the glory in war. He implored Australia and its government not to enter further overseas conflict, praying that others would not have to make the sacrifices made by himself and many others. Smout’s book, *Three Centuries Spanned*, talked about this same topic. I would like to acknowledge Ted’s selflessness and nobility, and the legacy he has left for the students of State High at present and in the future.

Smout will be remembered by many as a hero, both locally and internationally. Yet many who contribute to their country are not remembered in the same way.

Australian women were allowed into the Australian armed forces in 1899, but it took an astonishing forty-one years for the role of women in the military to expand beyond nursing. During World War I, while Smout battled for his country, women were limited to volunteer work, and nursing in rare cases. Even in the Second World War, women were limited to supporting roles at home in Australia, and medical roles overseas. The Women's Australian National Service, established in 1940, trained women to support the war effort through protecting their families and joining the workforce. For the first time, women were allowed to fill traditionally masculine roles, particularly working in factories – and they thrived, more than matching the production of men in the same jobs. But it was not easy for women to get these opportunities. They were described as 'beating a path to the doors of the authorities' just for the chance to work.

In 1945, a group of nearly 400 women blazed a new trail, sailing to New Guinea aboard the MV Duntroon in order to become the first Australian women to serve overseas in a role other than nursing. Some of those women are displayed on the screen behind me. I would like to take the time to acknowledge these women, who asserted themselves in Australian history, and the fight of thousands more women who were not lucky enough to be commemorated in this way. I would like to acknowledge some of those you see above me:

Private E. Carroll, Lance-Corporal E. Humburg, Sergeant D. Erickson, Sergeant A. Reeckman, Sergeant O. Edwards, Private Craig and Corporal Baddeley, as well as the three hundred more they travelled to New Guinea alongside.

Lest we forget the legacy that they, and Ted Smout, leave behind.