

# The Spirit of the Anzac

The ANZAC Spirit qualities are proud and respected characteristics of our Australian soldiers displayed by all Australian service men and women, these include courage, perseverance, mateship and resourcefulness. Private “Tiny Toop” demonstrated all these ANZAC qualities during World War One.

Blood, sweat and tears were shed during the brutal conflict of World War One as our Australian soldiers sacrificed their lives to protect their home soil for four years, three months and fourteen days. Nearly 62,000 Australians sacrificed their lives during this horrific war for the freedom of each and every Australian today.

World War 1 began with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand; heir to throne of Austria-Hungary. War was declared on July 28, 1914. The two enemy sides were the Allies, which included Britain and Australia, France, Ireland, Russia and later United States of America, and the Central Powers, which included Germany and Austria-Hungary. Every Australian soldier emulated the *Spirit of the Anzac* during their time serving Australia including a local hero from Kingston SE SA, Fredrick Walter Hamilton Toop. Private Toop’s Service Number was 12683 and he was known in our local community as ‘Tiny’ or ‘Walter’ (see Figure 1)<sup>1</sup>. Toop was a stretcher bearer on the Western Front. He ran from the medical stations into horrific conditions of the trenches, dodging enemy bullets and artillery to save his fellow Aussie soldiers’. Tiny Toop will always be recognised as a local legend and an Australian war hero as he was one of three men selected to represent the British Empire in ringing in peace to signify the end of Great War on Armistice Day (see Figure 6)<sup>2</sup>.



**Figure 1:** Fredrick Walter Hamilton Toop.

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<sup>1</sup> Rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au. (2018). *Frederick Walter Hamilton TOOP*. [online]: <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/15724>, accessed 17 April 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The Office of British Consul General

Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, after the Germans invaded Belgium. Australia was still a young country with a population of only 4.5 million, but was extremely loyal to the British Commonwealth<sup>3</sup>. Australia deployed some 416,000 men into battlefields around Europe, which represented a staggering 38.7% of the total adult male population<sup>4</sup>. Tiny Toop was initially denied for active duty in the Australian Imperial Force as he did not pass the physical testing, but was deployed to the Western Front on February 21, 1916 (see Figure 2)<sup>5</sup>. Toop was 21 ¾ years of age and 6 foot 4 inches in height when he was deployed to the Western Front<sup>6</sup>.

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE**  
**ATTESTATION PAPER OF PERSONS ENLISTED FOR SERVICE ABROAD**

No. 2653 Name Toop, Frederick Walter Hamilton Toop  
 Unit 2nd Depot Battalion, A.I.F.  
 Joined on FEB 21 1916

**Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.**

1. What is your Name? Toop, Frederick Walter Hamilton Toop
2. In or near what Parish or Town have you been? 1928 St. Kingston
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (N.B. If the latter, papers to be shown.) SA
4. What is your age? 21 3/4 yrs
5. What is your trade or calling? Farmer
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? SA
7. Are you married? SA
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) Mr. Toop, 1928 St. Kingston, South Australia
9. Have you ever been discharged by the Civil Power? SA
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with ignominy, or as incapable and Worthless, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with disgrace from the Navy? SA
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Royal Navy or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge. SA
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? SA
13. Have you ever been rejected on enlist for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? SA
14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mothers) Do you understand that you are enlisting with no regard to the support of your service abroad, and which neither the pay nor bounty will be paid to you? SA
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against smallpox and enteric fever? SA

I, Toop, Frederick Walter Hamilton Toop do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.  
 And I further agree to allow my name to be used in any way in connection with the service of the Commonwealth of Australia.  
 Date FEB 21 1916  
 Signature of Person Enlisting: F. W. Toop

**Figure 2: Toop's enlistment papers.**

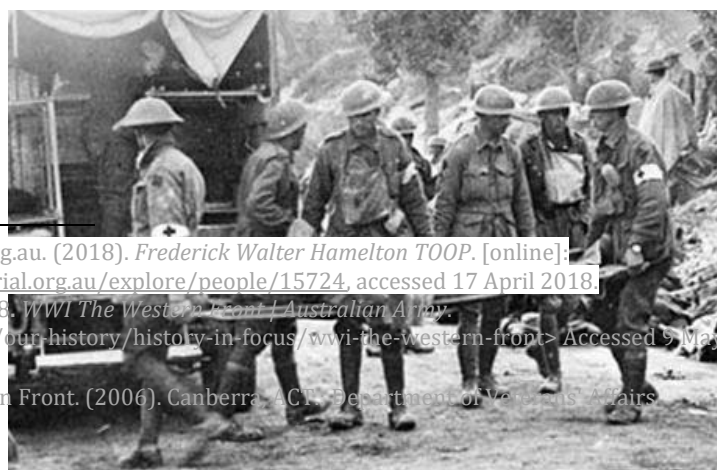
The Western Front was positioned on the north- eastern side of France where the allies held back the Germans from invading France (see Figure 3)<sup>7</sup>. The Germans had already invaded Belgium and were aggressively pushing into French borders. The Allies fought hard, through freezing weather, which made for unbearable conditions, most soldiers got frostbite and trench foot as a result<sup>8</sup>. Soldiers endured the perils of battle in the large trenches dug on the battlefield where they not only risked being intercepted by the enemy but were exposed to diseases like influenza, typhoid, trench foot, trench fever and malaria<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Australians on the Western Front. (2006). Canberra, ACT: Department of Veterans' Affairs.  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid  
<sup>5</sup> Australia National Archives, (2018). NAA: B2455, TOOP FREDERICK WALTER HAMILTON [online]: <<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8392395> [Accessed 15 May 2018].  
<sup>6</sup> Ibid  
<sup>7</sup> Australian War Memorial, (2018). Anzacs in France, 1916 | The Australian War Memorial. at: <<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/event/ww1/1916> [Accessed 17 May 2018].  
<sup>8</sup> Australians on the Western Front. (2006). Canberra, ACT.: Department of Veterans' Affairs.  
<sup>9</sup> Ibid

Toop was positioned in the Third Australian General Hospital during the ‘Hundred Days’ campaign<sup>10</sup>; a campaign on the Somme. Although not directly on the front lines, he still experienced the horrors of war whilst retrieving the injured soldiers, often during active fighting (see Figure 4)<sup>11</sup>. During the First World War, approximately nine million soldiers were killed and twenty-one million wounded. Some five million innocent civilians died from disease, starvation or exposure<sup>12</sup>. Many soldiers became deaf from artillery and bullets being fired at close range. Soldiers on the Western Front were also exposed to the first chemical weapons of war including Chlorine Gas, Phosgene and Mustard Gas<sup>13</sup> (Figure 5).



Figure 3: A map of the Western Front



<sup>10</sup> Rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au. (2018). *Frederick Walter Hamelton TOOP*. [online]: <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/15724>, accessed 17 April 2018.

<sup>11</sup> The Australian Army, 2018. *WWI The Western Front | Australian Army*. <<https://www.army.gov.au/our-history/history-in-focus/wwi-the-western-front>> Accessed 9 May 2018.

<sup>12</sup> DVA

<sup>13</sup> *Australians on the Western Front*. (2006). Canberra, ACT: Department of Veterans Affairs

Figure 4: Stretcher bearers on the Western Front.



Figure 5: Stretcher bearers wearing gas masks.

Before Toop was deployed to France, he lived in my home town of Kingston SE. Toop grew up in Kingston with his mother Susannah and his older brother William Arrais Toop (see Figure 7)<sup>14</sup>. William also enlisted in the war on August 25, 1916 and became a transport driver for the Australian Imperial Force<sup>15</sup>. Before enlisting, Toop purchased farming land between Rosetown and Old Coorong Road, known as the 'Hummocks'<sup>16</sup>. On his land he farmed cattle and sheep but bee keeping was his passion and he worked hard as an apiarist<sup>17</sup>. His farm was located on a flood plain and he spent much of his time working with water up to his ankles. One of his favourite pastimes was to go rabbit trapping and he is remembered for his hunting expertise<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Australia National Archives, (2018). NAA: B2455, TOOP FREDERICK WALTER HAMILTON : <<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8392395> [Accessed 15 May 2018].

<sup>15</sup> Rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au. (2018). *Frederick Walter Hamelton TOOP*. <https://rslvirtualwarmemorial.org.au/explore/people/119501>, accessed 17 April 2018.

<sup>16</sup> Advertiser, World War I Digger dies proud peace role, 8 December 1987, Adelaide, p. 2

<sup>17</sup> Peter Jackson, Interview with the author, April 18, 2018

<sup>18</sup> Ibid



Figure 6: Toop's medals.



Figure 7: Frederick Toop and his brother William Toop, March 1918.

On February 21, 1916, Toop enlisted in the AIF at Ballarat. Toop, like many young single men enlisted because he felt a sense of duty towards the mother country England, but was unaware of the horrors he would face in the realities of war. In World War 1 approximately 179,537 Australian soldiers were injured<sup>19</sup>. The majority of soldiers were wounded by flying shrapnel and high velocity bullets. The medic from Kingston was often requested by the wounded because his stature made the soldiers feel safe<sup>20</sup>. Toop was exposed to death, horrific injuries and experienced active fighting, running through battle fields to retrieve wounded soldiers dying or injured whilst under fire. These experiences caused post-traumatic stress or what was known as “shell shock”. Following the war, he was never able to tolerate blood or a bleeding animal, such as sheep cut during shearing<sup>21</sup>. Toop was sought and praised by the surgeons back at medic tents because of his height and strength, which enabled him to hold up a lantern above the surgery table for hours on end while they attempted to save countless lives.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Australians on the Western Front. (2006). Canberra, ACT.: Department of Veterans' Affairs

<sup>20</sup> Peter Jackson, Interview with the author, April 18, 2018

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

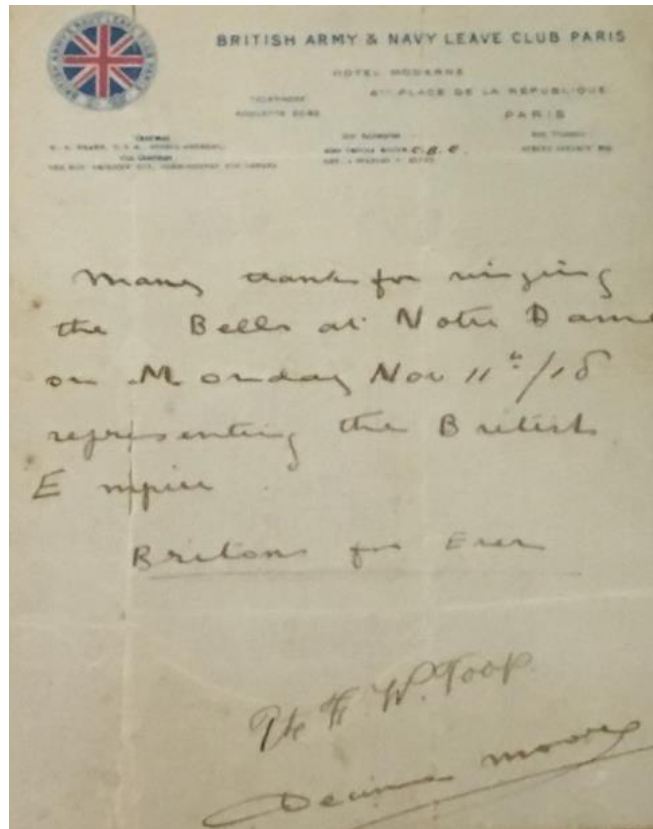


Figure 8: A letter from the British Consul to Private Toop.

After months of brutal fighting on the Western Front, the Allies finally broke through the Hindenburg Line on 29 September 1918. The Allies had defeated the German army and within weeks came the Armistice. The Armistice of Compiègne between the Allies and Germany came into effect at 11am on 11 November 1918. The battlefields were silent on the Western Front and after more than four years of horror the war was finally over.

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918 Walter “Tiny” Toop played a significant role in the celebration of the signing of the Armistice agreement at the end of the war (see Figure 8)<sup>23</sup>. He was chosen to represent the British Empire to ring the bells at Notre Dame in Paris to signify peace. Seven soldiers, representing the British Empire, France and America were a chosen from hundreds of thousands of soldiers. There is no recorded history as to why he was chosen to ring the bell, but some people believed it was because of his strength and height. Only 3 British Empire soldiers were selected for this honour, one of them was Private Fredrick Walter Hamilton Toop from Australia.

<sup>23</sup> Letter from the British Consul to Private FWH Toop, Kingston RSL, 2018

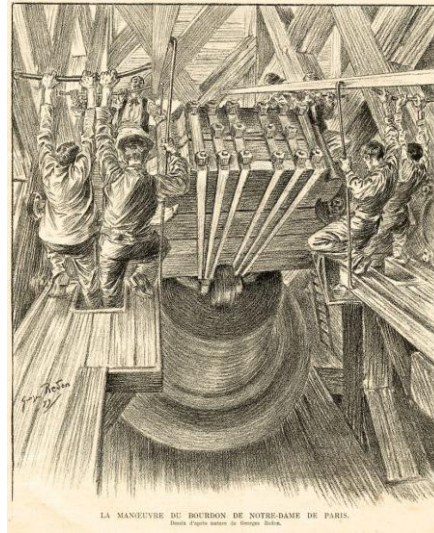


Figure 9: Drawing of the bells of Notre Dame being rung.

Toop's courage on the battlefield was recognised by being chosen to represent the British Empire on Armistice Day to ring the Notre Dame Bells which signified the long awaited end of World War 1, he also represented the thousands of Australian soldiers who fought together with so many of them giving the ultimate sacrifice to their country, their life. "Tiny Toop" was also awarded 'The British War Medal' and 'The Victory Medal' (see Figure 7)<sup>24</sup> as recognition for his service, bravery and courage during World War 1.

After the war, Toop stayed in London for a year where he met his wife Edith, an English nurse who also served during the war. In 1919, Walter travelled back to Australia to resume his life as a farmer and apiarist in Kingston. Toop continued to contribute towards the Australian army, during World War II from 1939-45, he supplied the forces with honey and bees wax to cover the ammunition overseas.

On November 11<sup>th</sup> 2018 it will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing of the Armistice agreement and ringing of the bells at Notre Dame. The Australian War Memorial in Canberra will commemorate this by laying 62,000 knitted poppies in the War Memorial grounds. Each poppy represents an Australian life lost in WW1.



<sup>24</sup> Private FWH Toop Military Medals, Kingston RSL, 2018

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*World War I Digger dies proud peace role*, 8 December 1987, Adelaide, p. 2



