

Remembrance day. It's a time to reflect on the people who fought for our country over 100 years ago .

Every year at the crack of dawn, on the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month, we pay our respects to the determined soldiers, past and present, who have tried their hardest to protect us, our loved ones and our way of life.

Poppies have been an iconic part of Remembrance Day since World War 1. Today we wear poppies as a sign of respect to the fallen soldiers. These soldiers were pulled away from their family to fight for their country, and many did not return. I cannot imagine the fear they would've felt. I cannot imagine the harsh conditions they put up with. I do know that they were brave. And I do know that they are heroes for the rest of time.



Many of the soldiers wrote letters to their families. Here is part of a letter that Hugh Anderson wrote to his mother before he died at about 8pm on the 5th of May 1914.

"I am in good health and full of fleas. The lice are appreciably less but the rats and mice are here in millions, gigantic species at that, and evidently breed fleas and give them to us in return for the tucker they pinch. The beggars."

A colleague described the events that led to Hugh's death.

"It was about 8pm on the 5th of May that Hughie was killed. There were about 12 of us under his command in an advance bombing post. It was a communication trench running between the first German line, then captured, and the second German line. We had built a barricade across it for protection.



"We had just arranged the bombs and grenades and dug possies in preparation for the night. The trench was very crowded and I complained to an officer. He said we could move if we could find a place but he himself knew of none. I looked round and saw a large shell hole a few yards outside the trench and I and another chap hopped into it. We must have been in it only about a minute when a high explosive shell landed in the trench.

"When all the dust and smoke had cleared a bit an officer called out to see if anyone was left. I answered and both of us got back into the trench. We then saw Hughie stagger down to the machine gun post where Corporal Dawes was in charge, about 20 yards, and ask for the dressing station and then he collapsed.



He lived about 10 minutes longer but remained unconscious."

Thanks to soldiers like Hugh Anderson most of the following Australian generations have not had to undergo the anguish and hostility of war.

On a personal level I believe that we can learn a lot from the unrelenting spirit of these men at war. No matter how difficult their situation was, they fought through. I hope that as I grow up, I too can fight for what I believe in.

Another legacy the soldiers have left with us is the importance of mateship. During this time of great hardship it was the mateship and strong bonds formed by the soldiers that got them through the battle of daily life.

Today we remember the bravery and sacrifice of the fallen.

LEST WE FORGET!



