

On the 16th October, Grade 9 students (*and participants of the World War I Commemorative Tour to Europe in 2016*) from Rose Bay High School had the opportunity to visit the ANZAC Experience Centenary excursion that was set up at the Derwent Entertainment Centre. It was roughly 30 minutes of walking around the exhibition and we were given an iPod touch and an audio set to guide us through the different displays.

When we got there, we were given a little bit of background about the experiences that the real ANZAC soldiers had fighting in World War I. Then we lined up to get our iPod touch and audio set and were placed into groups of about 6 people, ready to go inside the expedition. The first thing that we saw as we went in the exhibition were portraits of some of the soldiers who died, old fashioned packaging of food that the soldiers ate and also some real objects that were collected from the war such as bits of exploded bombs, letters home and items that the soldiers wore.

KYLAH ROBERTSON



This year, the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign, many eye opening events and inspiring displays have been produced to revive the memory of the men and women who gave their lives for their countries.

The technological side of the experience in itself was incredible. The narration explaining what you were seeing was informative but didn't distract you from the displays and items adorning the walls around you. I thought the 'red spot' system was really inventive, with the photos being sent directly to your email. The way the displays were set up, to make you feel as though you were walking through the war, was incredible. I loved how there was

no two rooms that had the same set up, lighting and colours, or atmosphere in general – for me, it was as though I was feeling a different emotion in each room.

Personally, the most touching displays were in the second last room and the 'Red Cross/Nursing during the War' room. When I saw the tree beds, propped up against the wall with the images of dead and injured men projected on them, I was shocked. I must have stood in the centre of that room for quite a while, studying each of the pictures. There was an image of a man whose entire face was deformed, the stitches that covered nearly every piece of his skin looked like bloodied railway tracks, and I think this image is the one that truly got to me. I left that room being comforted by a nearby friend. After a walk through a few more displays, we entered the final room where the photos of soldiers dangled from the ceiling, and by using reflective surfaces, the centre piece looked as if it went down as far as you could see. I found that incredible, as if the memory of the men would go on forever. As I was walking out, I noticed that behind the sheer white curtains that lined the room, there were the death tolls from each country involved in the conflict. As I began walking around the room again, I actually started crying, which didn't stop until we left the building.

The only criticism I have, was that there wasn't enough information about the Aboriginal society during the war. I think I saw two or three small articles along the walls but I feel like in most exhibits I've seen about the World Wars, there hasn't been enough recognition towards the Aboriginal soldiers. Other than this, I loved the experience, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to attend.

HAZEL WILLSON-ALGER

The first zone we entered, *Australia; A Nation in the Making*, was a display dedicated to what life was like in Australia before war broke out. It showed emerging technologies, fashion, common interests and entertainment.

The final zones were dedicated to life after the war and the consequences it left behind. The soldiers' lives were changed forever. All of them had been affected in some way. Many were physically, mentally and emotionally wounded; for some it was all too much.

The Lest We Forget gallery was a place for reflection, contemplation and commemoration.

CONNOR WHITE



The Spirit of ANZACs was a great opportunity to learn more about the heroes who did well for their country. It got the message across to me that I should be more grateful for the things I have in my life today and we shouldn't be taking what we have for granted.

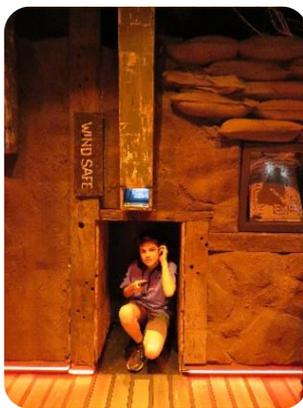
I found this event interesting as it was set out really well and was very informative. We could all have fun as well as learn at the same time.

It was all so realistic, you got cold shivers running down your spine every time the floor would creak. The venue had an old, rusty smell; it was a smell like no other.

MIKAYLA GRUNDY

I saw many things like masks, tanks, weapons but to me, the most interesting part of the Spirit of Anzac Centenary Experience was this wounded soldier who was lying on this bed which was in the wall. He was also talking to himself; he hears the bombing and gun firing outside and worries about his mates but never thought of himself for a second which shows how kind and good hearted the Anzac soldiers were.

PEI HAN BU



The ANZAC Experience was very moving, it accurately captured the spirit and atmosphere of the departure from Australia through to the Aftermath. As an event, it was very well organised with good use of technology which appealed to all the senses and all ages.

From the beginning when the fleet was gathering at Albany, the narration captured the excitement and anticipation. There was some indication of annoyance with the boredom and routine of ship life; they were spoiling for a fight and were frustrated that it wasn't happening soon enough. The sinking of the EMDEN by HMAS SYDNEY was a highlight which is often recounted. It was one of the first successes of WWI and was celebrated widely. It gave the Australians a sense of pride and they thought they were a force to be reckoned with.

Their time in Egypt was captured through the Pyramid photograph - the fact they held up the body of a comrade who had died on the journey to Egypt for the photo was both gruesome and endearing. It was a clear example of the mateship they felt with each other; they didn't want him to miss out on being in the photo. Seeing the names of all the Diggers was very emotional; *my Great-Great-Uncle was amongst them.*

The horrific Gallipoli experience was sickening and the fact that those same Diggers went on to the Western Front is horrifying - as if they hadn't seen and experienced enough. It truly did help with understanding where the 'spirit' of ANZAC came from - the recreated scenes of hardship and adversity was very confronting.

The artefacts were very interesting, they showed the ingenuity and ability of Diggers to 'make do'. The last shell ever fired at Gallipoli which was engraved with the time and date was very sobering.

The exhibition truly did honour the selfless contribution of hundreds of thousands of people - from the nurses to the officers. It didn't glorify war, it didn't vilify a nation; it just showed us what it was like. Reading about the incredible acts of bravery and being able to explore what it looked like was a very valuable experience.

RORY EATON



Walking through the Anzac Experience I heard the sounds of war what it would be like for those young men fighting for their country and the horrid conditions they had to serve their country in. Some of the pictures I saw were gruesome but it really showed and expressed what The Great War was like. I really enjoyed all the paper articles about the war that were hung up on the wall telling you how your country was going in the war and the enlistment signs. The sounds you were hearing while walking through looking at pictures and watching the videos really brought everything to life.

JACOB GENTILE

The rooms that were setup like trenches were the best bit; they had weapons displays, periscopes you could look through and lots of gas masks. They made you really feel like you were there as the guns fired and explosions boomed in your ears.

This exhibition was a good way to remember and honour our fallen soldiers. Family members of those killed during war would see this as a great way of remembering the fallen. It was a tribute to those who gave their lives for our country.

I thought the exhibition was great, it gave us all an insight into the horrors of war. I liked going around and looking at all the historic items, especially the weapons.

After going to this experience I feel like I understand war better and have a feel for it. The pain and suffering people must've gone through during war and after was horrific. I think everyone who went to this exhibition will be better off and will now be a lot more knowledge about what war was really like. I was very happy with this exhibition and would go again if given the chance. 10/10

TOM KENT

On the Anzac Experience excursion, from the things I saw and heard, my impressions of war were that it was very dramatic and tragic. The Anzac Experience was very real and showed a lot of information on war. The sounds and voices telling the information through the head phones were dramatic and made the experience a lot better. The information I read and heard, the pictures and objects I saw, have completely changed my thoughts and opinions about war.

The soldiers and everyone involved in war must have been through some terrible times and experiences, and if they were lucky enough to come home from war they definitely would have been scarred for life.

There was not a time throughout the excursion, walking around, where I got bored with what was happening around me and the information just kept coming.

I would definitely go through the Anzac experience one more time to take more information in and appreciate it a bit more than I already have.

DARIUS WOODHAM



The first area had exhibits of old items such as clothes, guns, binoculars etc. Because each area had its own theme, showing key points of the time, I found it very interesting. The rooms were made even more interesting because they were setup like the trenches. You could hear guns firing and bombs exploding.

We were also able to listen to songs of the time and some were very sad.

I thought it was a great exhibition and I really enjoyed it and I would recommend it to other people to go to it. I understand now what happened in WWI, especially about where the ANZACS fought in Turkey. Turkey is very important to me because that is where my family comes from.

TAHA GUNYEL

When I walked into the seating in the Derwent Entertainment Centre for the exhibition briefing I instantly thought that I would love it. And although they say to never judge a book by its cover; first impressions didn't change all the way through the exhibit.

The exhibition itself was well put together to form a timeline of the Australian involvement in World War One. As you walked through the exhibition you also walked through all the important events as part of Australia's

campaign. It starts at the lead up to the war, and moves through the WWI stages of the Military training in Egypt, the involvement in Gallipoli, to the bloody fighting on the Western Front, Sinai and Palestine, and the aftermath of the war. Each part of the exhibition was unique and very topical, with the scenery in each different room vastly different.

The effects used in the exhibits were the most amazing part of the exhibition for me as it brought the whole experience from being a good experience to an awesome experience. I especially liked the Western Front section, in which the rooms had been converted into rooms of a trench-like form, with darkness and being decorated with corrugated iron and large wooden plank being the main features of the exhibit. To make this section even better, sound effects of guns shooting etc. playing through the headsets to make it feel like you were actually in the trenches in WWI.

The last room was the room I found most moving, and was spectacular. Compared to the rest of the exhibit it was lit up brightly, and was purely a showing of respect to the WWI soldiers; particularly the fallen ones. There was a large memorial in the centre of the room which had hanging pictures of soldiers on it. In that room you could pay your respects by writing a message which would be posted on the Spirit of ANZAC website.

It truly was a worthwhile experience, and increased my awareness of the happenings of WWI. It was greatly educational, but also incredibly well-presented and theatrical.

ALASTAIR SCOTT



During the Grade 9 History excursion to the Derwent Entertainment Centre for the Spirit of Anzac Exhibition, I saw, heard and thought many things.

After hearing many accounts and stories from the excerpts of Archie Barwick and Charles Bean, you gain an understanding of what it could've felt like to be a soldier, to be a man of war. To know how terrifying it was to step outside the trenches into enemy fire, to know the hurt when your best mate dies, to feel the joy and overwhelming happiness at hearing the war is over and you're going home.

I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and I thought it was a good insight on how men and women of war fought through the tragedies and suffering. The human race is a powerful race, being able to cause massive amounts of devastation. The human race is also weak, succumbing to such methods to only gain control but again, strong and powerful, being able to overcome the stain that war leaves on humanity.

JEMMA MCCARTHY

It was interesting to also see a wide range of weapons, and other objects that had been retrieved from the First World War and helped to create a better picture in my mind as to what warfare would have been like at this time. Before then, I had never really seen such a range of World War One era weapons close up. It was saddening especially to see the facial reconstructions of those who had been injured during conflict, and they were among the images that stood out the most for me. Also the photographs that were shown throughout the exhibition of the battlefields on the Western Front helped me realise the extent of damage that could be caused from warfare on such a scale. It also showed the true potential of weaponry that was used on the Western Front, and what a battle over a long period of time could achieve. The way the exhibition had been designed also made the experience interesting. Many of the displays had been designed to look like trenches, camps or other settings.

Perhaps the only way I could fault the excursion to the Spirit of ANZAC Centenary experience, is that the limited time we spent there was not enough to fully absorb the information and exhibits that were there, and a longer visit would be easily utilised.

Bradley James



