



**Fig.1- Edward August Docking in Uniform**

**Pro patria: Lance Corporal Edward August Docking**

Pro Patria, for one's country. On March 1st, 1941, Edward August Docking (see fig. 1) enlisted to serve his country in admiration of his older brother "Snow" who had patriotically enlisted earlier. Drafted to the 2/10<sup>th</sup> infantry battalion, Edward (Ted) was similar to many other soldiers prior to the second world war, an ordinary man with an ordinary life.

Born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 1919, to parents August Frederick Docking and Clara Tabitha Chapman in Pinnaroo, Ted was the youngest of the family with 2 older brothers. He greatly admired his older brothers William and Gavis-Harry and they remained extremely close throughout the years like many other Docking children in the family, with the bond only increasing as the years passed. Growing up, Ted never received any formal education and at the age of 14 he left home and travelled to Queensland to become a stockman working from sunrise to sunset. With a small wage equivalent to 40 cents, most of his money went back to

support his mother, only keeping a small sum for rent and food (this was during the Great Depression, and both his biological father and step father had died leaving his mother alone). This was his life until at the age of 22, when Ted came back to his new family residence in Gawler in order to enlist in the war.

Edward served over 5 years in the war from 1941 to 1945 across various locations such as the Pacific, Australia, and the Middle-East (the three main regions).

After Gavis enlisted, Ted followed so that they wouldn't be separated. They remained close, fighting in similar locations until they were separated in a later conflict.

After enlisting in Gawler and being drafted to the South Australian established 2/10<sup>th</sup> battalion, Ted was sent to Darwin for training where he then departed for his first two major conflicts. On March 21<sup>st</sup> 1941 the 2/10<sup>th</sup> arrived to aid the 2/9<sup>th</sup> in fighting the siege of Giarabub against the Italian forces. Giarabub was a strategic placement in the Libyan Desert to allow allies to counter enemy advances (it would cause conflict with the Italians at the base). Germany had initially planned to send reinforcements to the Italian troops, however the British troops stationed in the area were planning a full-scale attack, but needed more men. Two days after the 2/10<sup>th</sup> were sent as reinforcements, the troops successfully won the siege with a total of 17 casualties. Two weeks later, in early April, Ted's battalion left to fight the Siege of Tobruk, 60 kilometres east of Giarabub. Most other strategic bases in Africa had been captured by German and Italian forces but Tobruk was not one of them.

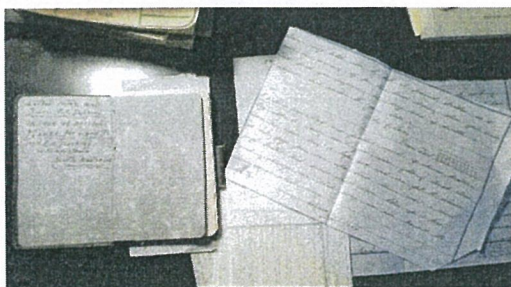


**Fig. 2- Above- Edward and Shirley on their wedding day with the Leave Pass that was granted, allowing Ted to get married during active service**

The allies had besieged Tobruk for 8 months until December 1941, at which time the Germans dubbed the troops "The Rats of Tobruk" (for propaganda). After Tobruk, the 2/10<sup>th</sup> trained in Palestine until late September as part of the Syria-Lebanon Campaign.

Troops stationed in Egypt and Libya, sailed back to Australia on February 11<sup>th</sup>, disembarking in Adelaide on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942. As the 2/10<sup>th</sup>'s next conflict wasn't until Mid-August, in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea, the troops had a temporary break. It was at this time that Edward married Shirley on March 30<sup>th</sup> 1942. (See Fig.2)

By August 25<sup>th</sup> the 2/10<sup>th</sup> and other battalions had arrived in Milne Bay, to fight a battle that lasted 12 days. Soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF, such as the 2/10<sup>th</sup> were the first line of defence to prevent the Japanese soldiers from advancing inland in order to take airstrips. Over the 12 days, the Japanese had miscalculated the sheer size of the allied troops, which prevented them from advancing inland and also resulted in their forces retreating on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Buna was the next destination for the 2/10<sup>th</sup>, and amongst all the conflicts faced by the battalion during the second world war, it was one of the most lethal campaigns. There were over 113 casualties and 225 injuries caused by the conflict that lasted from 23 December to 2 January, 1943. It was the ill-conceived attacks that caused the casualties. Unbeknown to Ted, Gavis, his brother was taken by Japanese forces to become a prisoner of war in Borneo. Egypt was the last place he saw his brother until the end of the war, from then his whereabouts were unknown to Ted.



**Fig. 3- A letter Edward wrote to his mother and (left) the book the used as a diary documenting sent letters**

Before returning home on March 12<sup>th</sup> 1943, Sanananda was the battalion's last engagement in Papua New Guinea until August.

Continuing onto the last three remaining conflicts of his war service, Ted had one problem. He had come to the conclusion that his brother was missing but he was left with a questioning mother looking for her son. It was understandable that his mother would be worried about the unknown whereabouts of her child, fearing he could be dead, but Ted unfortunately had the burden of trying to reassure her without fully knowing himself either.

*"P.S. Have you heard any further word from Snow, Mother, try not to worry won't you, we're getting back close now and I hope to God that we will see fit to return.... Don't forget mother that Snow's words were chin up and keep smiling always, cos that way we are bound to win, come what may.*

*Cheerio, Ted"* An excerpt of a letter written to Ted's mother, July 1942 (See fig-3)

After stationing in Port Moresby during early August, Edward's Battalion trained, preparing to secure Shaggy Ridge from the Japanese forces. After being deployed at the Finisterre Mountains on December 31<sup>st</sup>, the Shaggy Ridge campaign lasted from the 4<sup>th</sup> of January to the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1944.

May 8<sup>th</sup> 1944 saw the battalion returning home once again prior to embarking upon the battalion's final conflict at Balikpapan, Borneo.

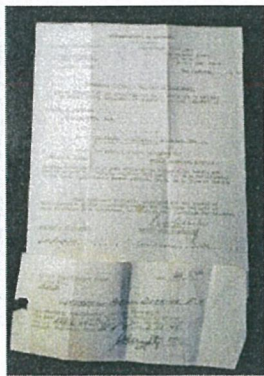


**(Above) Fig 4- Military issued Guides for fighting in the Asia Pacific**

From July 1st 1945, Edwards's battalion fought the Parramatta Ridge Battle to clear the Japanese soldiers from Balikpapan town. Guides handed out by the military, provided soldiers with assistance to cope whilst also becoming familiar with the language and people (see Fig-4).

As of July 6th, there were no more battles for Edward's battalion, as the war ended on August 15th 1945. After the conflict, only a cadre of 45 remained from the battalion, Edward August Docking, who finished the war as a commissioned Lance Corporal, was fortunately one of them. With his medals as proof of his bravery and achievements (and a few small permanent injuries), the entirety of the War was extremely tough for Edward and many alike but he survived.. (see Fig-6/8)

By the end of his last battle, Ted still had not been reunited with his brother, Gavis. He did not come into contact with him until returning home sometime during September but it was a great relief to find that he was still alive. His brother who nearly died on 5 occasions from illnesses as a Japanese POW, was alive. Although severely depleted of energy and seriously unhealthy, they were alive and finally back home at last.



After 1769 days of service, Ted was discharged from the military and returned to Australia, happy to be back home. Ted continued to attend Anzac Day Services (see fig-8). Life back home was quite a contrast compared to active combat, and as soldiers integrated back into civil life, more guides were issued by the military to assist these soldiers (see fig-5). On September 1st 1948, Ted's biological son, Vincent Frederick Charles was born.



After the war, Ted's occupation was Chief Engineer for the South Australian Water Department. His most notable task was supervisor during the construction of major pipelines such as the Morgan-Whyalla and

Mannum Pipelines (see Fig-7). In 1979 Ted retired from work, and bought a house moving from Gawler to Henley Beach. During retirement Ted continued to live with his wife. Old age was mentally and physically affecting Ted as he had by then been diagnosed with testicular cancer. The next 7 years were lengthy. Ted had always felt emotionally weighed down as he felt he was destined to die soon anyway until he met Great niece Tabitha Docking and her family. It was Tabitha's, one year-old daughter Sakinah Karras (myself) who won his heart and this led to an extremely close relationship in his latter years.

I enjoyed our nostalgic memories but I was young and knew he was sick. I rarely visited him in the hospital, so my memories as a teen wouldn't be filled with images of a dying man.

(Above Left ) Fig 5- Books Edward used to get used to civil life

(Above Right) Fig. 6- Documents stating treatment for Edwards temporary and permanent illnesses post war

(Below) Fig.7Polaroids taken by Edward during the construction of the Mannum Pipelines (1949)

Fig. 8- Edward's Medals accompanied by a newspaper clipping from a 2006 ANZAC march (featuring myself)

On January 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, during the early hours of the morning, Edward passed away due to renal failure caused by the cancer, in the Repat. General Hospital, South Australia.

The funeral was to be later held at a Gawler funeral home, then the South Australian Williamstown Cemetery, where he was buried next to his wife.

**1482 words**

### **(References)**

All Images are photos taken of Edwards personal belongings

Fig1- Docking Family History Books

Fig2- Photo of Edward's wedding (a postcard format)

Fig3- Photo of personal letters and letter diary

Fig4- Photo of some of Edward's Military Guides for the Asia Pacific

Fig5- Photo of Edward's Books used to integrate into civil life

Fig6- Photo of medical documents post war

Fig7- Photo of Polaroids taken by Edward during Construction of Mannum Pipelines

Fig8- Photo of Edwards Medals and 2006 Newspaper clipping

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^^National Archives Record Search- Edward August Docking

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## **2nd/10th Infantry Battalion**

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## **DVA's Nominal Rolls**

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## **Allchin MM, L., 1958. *Purple And Blue : History Of The 2/10Th Battalion AIF (Adelaide Rifles)*.**

**Docking Family History Books- a record of Docking genealogy (private and unpublished) compiled by Edward August Docking and Family**

**Stories/experience spoken written by Edward prior to passing**

**Part B: The Anzac Spirit is generally considered to be comprised of courage, perseverance, mateship and resourcefulness. Using evidence drawn from your research in Part A, choose two of the characteristics of the Anzac Spirit that is shown best by the individual you researched. (Maximum 500 words)**

### ANZAC Spirit

ANZAC spirit, the qualities that our soldiers possessed both physically and mentally across the battlefield, merely represent coping tactics used to overcome the most difficult challenges.

Edward, like many other comrades admittedly had his fair share of struggles from a young age, and these continually persisted throughout his service.

Perseverance would be one of the strongest qualities Ted displayed. He left home at a young age, due to the absence of a working father in order to be able to provide for the family. Having to care for a struggling mother in itself would be physically taxing considering that most of his days were spent working from sunrise to sunset, and during the great depression, money was hard to come across.

Initially, if you compared Edward to the likes of other soldiers, his story is extremely fortunate. He returned home from war practically uninjured, and was lucky enough to survive the entirety of his service however the struggle with perseverance still continued. During 1942, his brother became a Burma railway prisoner under the Japanese empire, notoriously known for the extremely poor conditions provided for its prisoners. It was a burden in itself, not knowing his whereabouts, nevertheless not being able to provide his mother reassurance, since he hadn't spoken to her in months. The Docking brothers were extremely close, similar to many others in the family, so it would have been quite understandable that he became stressed and anxious not knowing that his brother was on the brink of death almost every single day. Egypt had been the last time he saw his brother, and the time that ensued, another 5 and a half years, added to the mental torment. It's evident that if perseverance had not allowed Ted to successfully complete his service, he may have not been able to have been discharged from the military in a healthy condition, it allowed him to be reunited with his family.

Courage, in combination with perseverance, allowed Edward to make it through each passing day. Each period in service, each nation visited only presented newer, more difficult challenges to overcome. From fighting in New Guinea and the Pacific for example, Ted himself always said how big a misconception there was behind what was to be expected there. The army had described the Japanese to be weak fighters and small in stature, this was proved otherwise. The Pacific campaigns fought between the Japanese and the Australians were among the most brutal caused by the determination of the Japanese and the high casualty rates. Courage, the ability to stay strong allowed the ANZACs such as Edward the mental ability to make it through the most violent of times, allowing them to face death in the moment, where the sheer surprise of events would most likely cause someone to run away in fear. They continued to fight as opposed to cowering out.

483 words