

Topic 8: What makes a hero?

Source Sheet 8G: Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels

Source 1

Buna, Papua, 25 December 1942. Private George 'Dick' Whittington being led through the kunai grass to the field hospital at Dobodura by Raphael Oimbari.



AWM 014028

www.ww2australia.gov.au/beachheads

Source 2

Stretcher bearers in the Owen Stanleys, William Dargie, 1947.



AWM 026856

www.ww2australia.gov.au/asfaras/angels.html

Source 3

Private A Baldwin receives a drink of water from his Papuan stretcher-bearers in October 1942.



AWM 026856

www.ww2australia.gov.au/asfaras/angels.html

Source 4

The evacuation of the wounded was a serious problem. The native bearers carried the stretchers, sometimes under fire, back to the ADS [Advanced Dressing Station]. The Papuans constructed the stretchers: blankets slung between two poles with spreaders at each end. Eight natives were allotted to each stretcher and they stayed with the same patient until they reached their destination.



The Bulldog Track, Wau. AWM 054746

www.australia1942.gov.au/asfaras/angels.html

Source 5

www.australia1942.gov.au/asfaras/angels.html
Audio: 'Angels' poem

'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels'

Many a mother in Australia
when the busy day is done
Sends a prayer to the Almighty
for the keeping of her son
Asking that an angel guide him
and bring him safely back
Now we see those prayers are answered
on the Owen Stanley Track
For they haven't any halos
only holes slashed in their ears
And their faces worked by tattoos
with scratch pins in their hair
Bringing back the badly wounded
just as steady as a horse
Using leaves to keep the rain off
and as gentle as a nurse
Slow and careful in the bad places
on the awful mountain track
The look upon their faces
would make you think Christ was black

Not a move to hurt the wounded
as they treat him like a saint
It's a picture worth recording
that an artist's yet to paint
Many a lad will see his mother
and husbands see their wives
Just because the fuzzy wuzzy
carried them to save their lives
From mortar bombs and machine gun fire
or chance surprise attacks
To the safety and the care of doctors
at the bottom of the track
May the mothers of Australia
when they offer up a prayer
Mention those impromptu angels
with their fuzzy wuzzy hair.

Bert Beros