

In a modern world that espouses the importance of credible role models, please define Sir John Monash's eligibility to sit comfortably within this privileged sphere.

"Adopt as your fundamental creed that you will equip yourself for life, not solely for your own benefit but for the benefit of the whole community" – Sir John Monash.

In our modern world, enveloped in a faithless public mood towards our screen icons and politicians, does it place great importance on the credibility of our current and past role models? Sir John Monash serves as a near perfect representation of this much-needed role model. Monash, throughout his life and career, managed to overcome innumerable barriers to prove himself as a respected and admired icon to all Australians. He not only displayed the effectiveness of self-belief but stressed the importance of vision, opportunity and education to achieving his goals, regardless of the significance. These traits extended past Monash's truly exceptional abilities during World War One, to his efforts to the post-war reconstruction and education, proving Monash's eligibility as a credible role model then and now, a century later.

During World War One, Sir John Monash's success is due to not only his substantial abilities, but that too of his drive, magnetism and self-belief. Despite a reasonably mediocre performance during the Gallipoli campaign, Monash's self-belief, vision and charismatic leadership allowed him the promotion to command the 3rd Division at the Western Front in 1916. There, in the slow, unimaginative war of attrition, Monash was able to succeed where all others had failed through his vision and adaptability. Later, through his admirable ability and imaginative vision, Monash would be promoted to the command of the entire Australian Imperial Force despite some notable attempts to prevent it occurring. The Australian forces were now, for the first time, to be led by an Australian: a Jew of German origins. Monash appreciated and valued his men arguably more than any other commander on the Western Front and approached his role with a relatively independently line from his British superiors. Rather, Monash embraced the combined mechanical opportunities to avoid the mass casualty rates through his innovative creation of the 'modern' warfare. Further, Monash embraced the Australians individuality: "not lip service, nor obsequious homage to superiors, nor servile observance of forms and customs ... the Australian army is proof that individualism is the best and not the worst foundation upon which to build up collective

discipline". This acceptance of a diverse character supports Monash's credibility as a role model: rather than any attempt to contain these actions, he allowed their individuality to flourish under his command in return for their absolute loyalty and respect. Moreover, Monash, through this wartime experience, was able to demonstrate how the Australian character is diverse: "Monash's presence and prestige ... made anti-Semitism impossible in Australia" – Geoffrey Serle. Later, as the war ended, and Australia embarked upon post-war reconstruction and reparation, Monash would assume the role of Director-General of Repatriation and Demobilisation, maintaining his personal, respectful connections with his men. Through the hardships endured by the Australian men and women, including those endured by Monash, Monash was able to display his ingenuity, vision, adaptability and value for each individual Australian life with the crucial victories provided by the Australians during World War One. Monash became a national icon and inspiration to all Australians and remains so.

Sir John Monash, a post-war national hero, utilised his popular support to encourage vision and education for the following generations. Monash stated in 1930 "the only hope for Australia is the ballot box and good education", this essential idea, vital to the success of democracy and the success of Australia now and into the future, is what Monash understood. Monash was the vice-chancellor of the University of Melbourne from 1923 to his death, in 1931. Within the position, Monash would be of a great influence on the necessity of education for all of Australia's youth. Monash was also instrumental in the post-war tradition of Anzac Day, arguably more so than any other, including the Official Historian, Charles Bean. In 1925, after a period of unsatisfactory government attempts to provide the public and veterans with a worthy memorial of the commitments of Australian men and women during the war, Monash led Melbourne's Anzac Day march. From 1927 onward, Monash was to become its chief organiser. Melbourne's 'Shrine of Remembrance' begun in 1927 under the guidance and driving force of Monash, who was also the chief engineer and fundraiser of its construction. Although the memorial wasn't completed until 1934, three years after Monash's death, it was stated that its cause was "closest to his heart" in his last years. Comparatively, the National War Memorial in Canberra wasn't unveiled until 1941 and Charles Bean's 'Official History' wasn't fully published until 1942, both during the Second World War, when the hoped 'ever-lasting peace' had diminished. This determination to properly

respect the sacrifice of Victoria's, and all of Australia's, men and women during World War One is a sure indication of Monash's belief in education and vision of hope for the future generations of Australians. This desire to publicly support Australian veterans and their youth through education and vision displays John Monash's willingness to be a role model for good, and in doing so, he justifies his reason to be as influential and important to his own generation and that of future generations.

Conclusively, Sir John Monash is a remarkable example of a role model for any Australian of any generation. His combined intellect, personality, vision and self-belief allowed an almost untainted legacy of loyalty, admiration and hope for the future. Additionally, Monash's emphasise on education and opportunity serves as the catalyst for increasing public support for equality, veterans and the youth. Monash's funeral in Melbourne beared witness to 300,000 admirers, nearly a third of Melbourne's total population. That statistic alone resembles the momentous impact Monash had upon the people of Australia. Sir John Monash's credibility as a suitable role model for all Australians is unquestionable - Monash will always serve as an ideal example of character.

Bibliography:

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- The Australian Victories in France in 1918, John Monash