



Who was Stan Savige?

Stan Savige was a World War I serviceman who, on his return to Australia, became one of the key founders of Legacy. This is his story.

Savige, one of eight children, was born and raised in Morwell Victoria, and at age 12 left school and joined his local cadet unit. In March 1915 he enlisted in the 1st AIF and was posted as a Private to the 24th Battalion. He worked his way through the ranks and in November was commissioned in the field to 2nd Lieutenant, remaining at Gallipoli until evacuation in December 1915.



He went on to serve on the Western front. By January 1918, he was a Captain and had been awarded the Military Cross. Soon after, Savige was given a secret mission to lead a small special force to attempt a rescue of 70,000 refugees who were trying to defend their people from the Ottomans and raiding horsemen that continued to attack them. The refugees had been cut off in the area of Lake Urmia in north western Persia.

Savige placed himself and his small force between the enemy and the refugees. In a daring and innovative move he was able to convince the enemy that he had a much larger group. He did this by creating dust clouds and lighting camp fires every hundred yards along a ridgeline over an extended distance. This gave the impression of a large and confident British force. The plan worked and over the ensuing weeks the column of refugees moved hundreds of miles to safety.

Savige was subsequently decorated with the Distinguished Service Order for his efforts on this occasion, and later wrote a book about this Special Forces operation, "Stalky's Forlorn Hope". He had a dedicated passion to support the children of fallen comrades and developed the initial Legacy Charter.

Savige went on to serve his nation again in World War II. For his service to his nation and the British Empire, he was Knighted in 1950 and appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire. In 1953, he travelled to London to represent Legacy at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. He died of coronary artery disease at his home in Kew, Victoria on 15 May 1954.