

BOOK REVIEWS



The Man the Anzacs Revered: William 'Fighting Mac' McKenzie Anzac Chaplain

Daniel Reynaud (2015). Warburton, VIC: Sign Publishing. 262 pp
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The name William McKenzie might be a familiar one to you. McKenzie was a Salvation Army officer who ministered in some of Australia's toughest mining and industrial towns around the beginning of the 20th century. With the outbreak of World War I, he was quick to volunteer to serve his country.

Despite McKenzie's evangelistic zeal and preaching against the vices enjoyed by many of the soldiers, he soon became well known and loved by the men of the Australian Imperial Force, during their training camps in Egypt, on Gallipoli and then on the battlefields of France, as well as by many of the soldiers' families back in Australia. On his return to Australia and for years after the war, admirers mobbed McKenzie wherever he went.

This new book by Daniel Reynaud goes much deeper into this remarkable story, the larger-than-life personality and the active faith of the most famous—but now almost forgotten—Anzac chaplain.

The Man the Anzacs Revered is a work of careful historical research and a good story, written with respect for McKenzie and an understanding of the faith that drove him. Reynaud is associate professor of history at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has been researching different aspects of the Anzac stories for many years, with a growing interest in the role of faith among those Australian and New Zealand soldiers.

Amid the strong interest in the Gallipoli centenary, *The Man the Anzacs Revered* is an important contribution to the discussions of

what the Anzac mythology means, questioning some of the assumptions and offering another important story to our understanding of what it can mean to serve others and to serve God in even the most difficult of circumstances.

Editor's suggestion

In this year of the 100th anniversary of ANZAC, when planning commemorations or curriculum elements, teachers could use as sources across many levels, *The Man the Anzacs Revere*—with its stories of William 'Fighting Mac' McKenzie's experiences—and parts of *The Hero of the Dardanelles* (from the DVD or film clips available from the National Film and Sound Archives site <http://aso.gov.au/titles/features/hero-of-the-dardanelles/clip1/>) to create more realistic awareness of Christian witness in particular within the human story of the ANZAC legend.

Understanding McKenzie's story "adds a new dimension to the Anzac legend, one that has been relentlessly indoctrinated to paint the Anzacs as indifferent to religion," says Reynaud. "Yes, the majority of soldiers were secular, but Christians were strongly represented and many chaplains engaged the Anzacs in spiritual things." About one in four of the diaries Reynaud read makes positive references to religion. "That's startlingly high for a secular legend! If we're to understand and memorialise Anzac fully now, we need to know Christians were active, visible and influential in the Anzac story. McKenzie is the most obvious and most powerful example of this." **TEACH**

Note: Reynaud is also author of Celluloid Anzacs: The Great War Through Australian Cinema and The Hero of the Dardanelles and Other World War One Silent Dramas (released for the 90th ANZAC commemoration).

The Hero of the Dardanelles, released in 1915, is Australia's first Gallipoli movie—Reynaud recovered and partially reconstructed it. Released on DVD by the National Film and Sound Archive this month (April, 2015), the movie is now publicly available for the first time.