

1915: Australians at War and On the Home Front

Edited by
Daniel Baldino and Mike Brennan



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1915: Australians at War and On the Home Front

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Introduction

One hundred years on from the Gallipoli campaign the events of 1915 continue to play a central role in the narratives of Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. The campaign continues to generate debate over strategy and planning and failures that resulted in the loss of over 140,000 allied casualties. These losses were to have a profound impact on a young nation.

During 2015 Australians and New Zealanders commemorated the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign with a range of local and national events. For their part, members of the Royal United Services Institute of Western Australia and staff of Notre Dame University set out to commemorate the centenary of Gallipoli with a Military and Political History Conference, to re-visit the aftermath of 1915, with a conference title of 'Western Australians at War and on the Home Front'.

The conference, held at The University of Notre Dame in June 2015, included delegates from the Royal United Services Institute of Western Australia, military historians, university and secondary students and members of the public.

The conference went well beyond the events on the Gallipoli peninsula to cover informative topics and stimulating cases as broad ranging as Indigenous service, individual heroism, Western Australian units, archaeology, architecture, the home front, and the short- and long-term implications of the Gallipoli campaign.

The papers delivered to the conference were of such a high standard in their range and depth of coverage that it was decided that they would be published to make them available to a wider audience. The papers are of national significance, address complex debates and problems on war, strategy, national identity, politics and the Anzac story: consequently the title of this publication is *Australians at War and on the Home Front*.

In chapter 1, John Blaxland reflects on the legend of Anzac and what it means in the contemporary era. He argues that Australia identity has long had a dominant warlike foundation. He also addresses how the Anzac legend means many different things to different people, although Gallipoli continues to remain strongly identified with understandings about national representation

and the very essence of being 'Australian'. Yet while the Anzac national story remains a compelling and evocative national narrative, this chapter challenges the reader to re-examine how they think about military service, conceptions of war and the host of emotions that surround issues such as national identity, commemoration and defence policy.

Chapter 2 uses material remains from archaeological excavations done at the site of the Blackboy Hill training camp to explore the physical manifestation of the Anzac legend. For instance, the Anzac legend or spirit includes behavioural characteristics such as mateship, laconic manners, irreverence in the face of authority and danger, disdain of class differences, bravery and endurance. Blackboy Hill camp in the Darling Range near Perth, Western Australia, was where the first enlistees in World War I trained before departing for Gallipoli, the Western Front and the Sinai. However, despite a good sample size of artefacts from a range of different functions, Erin Taaffe and Shane Burke suggest that it is very difficult to establish a direct link between objects used by the men of the first AIF and the Anzac legend. Nonetheless, the assemblage that included mostly personal, military and food consumption artefacts does reflect on the 'ordinariness' of the men who fought and died for Australia between 1914 and 1918.

In chapter 3, Roger Lee argues that the legacy of the Gallipoli campaign has long been a source of polemic and argument among and between historians, politicians and the wider community. At the same time, many claims have been made about the military performance on that unforgiving Peninsula, both in comparative terms between different national groupings of combatants and in qualitative terms regarding assessments of relative military effectiveness. Yet one area that has received very little analytical attention is the contribution, if any, that the campaign made to improving the tactical military skill and ability of those inexperienced troops. This is particularly true for the real amateurs of the Gallipoli campaign—the Australian and New Zealand citizen soldiers.

Chapter 4 by Neville Browning addresses military tactics and the story of the 51st Battalion. The Western Australian 51st Battalion AIF was raised from the 11th Battalion after the first four brigades were split in Egypt early in 1916. After tenure in defence of the Suez Canal, the 51st deployed to the Western Front and went on to serve across France and Belgium until the Armistice, in campaigning typical of many of the Australian battalions. The battalion was destroyed in the fighting for Mouquet Farm, but was rebuilt and went on to serve through the winter of 1916, the Battle of Noreuil during the German withdrawal, Messines, Third Battle of Ypres, Dernancourt, Amiens and the

Hindenburg Line. The 51st is particularly remembered for its outstanding role in the Battle of Villers-Bretonneux on Anzac Day in 1918.

Chapter 5 explores the issue of war-related suicide in Australia, with a focus on Western Australia as a case-study. One hundred years after the 'birth of a nation' at Anzac Cove, Australians continue to identify with World War I as a foundational history of the nation. For the servicemen who returned to Australia, the public and institutionalised Anzac tradition was often far removed from their personal experience of war. For some ex-servicemen, the trauma of war continued to affect their mental and physical wellbeing and impaired their process of 'return'. In many suicide cases, where inquest records have been lost or destroyed, newspaper reports continue to serve as important historical records for inquest proceedings, family experiences of the death and community commemoration. Leigh Straw aims to provide insights into the reasons behind suicide and to document the deeply personal struggles of ex-servicemen after World War I.

Chapter 6 illustrates that Fremantle's experiences are a microcosm of the broader Australian story of war in the 20th century. Deborah Gare states that the coastal town has seen important stories of departure and reunion, victory and celebration, and dissent and activism. It was to Fremantle that many wounded troops and prisoners of war were initially returned, and so it shares a myriad of stories of repatriation, heartbreak and recovery. In particular, the departure and return of troops during times of war have consistently provoked powerfully emotional scenes. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the important role played by women who were marshalled in every war, including World War I, for service abroad and on the home front.

In chapter 7, Michael Page argues that Indigenous military service in the Australian Defence Force has too often failed to be fully recognised or adequately acknowledged. Australian's lack of understanding of the Indigenous contribution to their country's military has, in part, been due to a lack of identification—which personnel were indigenous—but also to the myth and legend of Anzac. This pervasive paradigm framed Australian military service as male and European. The returned Indigenous veterans of both world wars were in a minority and easily forgotten, as evidenced by the lack of services and entitlements which had been mandated by discriminatory laws framed by pre-war prejudices. Indigenous military service existed prior to Federation, evolved during World War I and expanded to over 3000 Indigenous men and women who enlisted during World War II. Significantly, this last decade has

finally seen Australia research, record, reconcile, and recognise the military service of its Indigenous peoples.

In Chapter 8, Wayne Gardiner relays the story of Hugo Throssell who remains a significant player in Australian military history as he was the first Western Australian recipient of the Victoria Cross in World War I. But Hugo's story is also one that typifies and highlights challenges in post-war Australia and issues related to the circumstances that many returning war veterans faced in re-adapting to civilian life. Largely due to a combination of his war experience, psychological distress and physical wounds, we can now identify his condition as being an example of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Not identified until recent years, it is a condition that has destroyed the lives of thousands of Australia's war veterans over the decades. Sadly, in November 1933, Hugo took his own life. The war may have been over but his internal struggle to cope with it proved overwhelming.

The editors hope this collection of unique voices and sometimes little-known or understated stories will help the reader to reflect on why the spirit of Anzac remains relevant today while highlighting the humanity, sacrifice, courage and compassion of those individuals, past and present, who desire to do their duty for their country—and our gratitude as well.

Lest we forget.

Daniel Baldino and Mike Brennan

Contributors

Daniel Baldino is the Discipline Head of the Politics and International Relations program at The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle. He is also currently WA representative for the Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers. He is the principal researcher and co-author of a wide range of publications related to intelligence, defence and security studies including *Spooked: the truth about intelligence in Australia* (UNSW Press, 2013) and *Controversies in Australian Foreign Policy: the core debates* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

John Blaxland is a Senior Fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at The Australian National University who writes about military history, intelligence and security and Asia-Pacific affairs. He is a former Director Joint Intelligence Operations (J2), at Headquarters Joint Operations Command, and was Australia's Defence Attaché to Thailand and Burma/Myanmar. He is the author of *The Australian Army from Whitlam to Howard* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), *The Protest Years: The Official History of ASIO Vol. II, 1963-1975* (Allen & Unwin, 2015), and editor of *East Timor Intervention: A Retrospective on INTERFET* (Melbourne University Press, 2015).

Mike Brennan is the President of the Royal United Services Institute of Western Australia. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College of Science technical staff course, Shrivenham, and a graduate of the Australian Army Command and Staff College, Queenscliff. He has served in a variety of Army appointments, including commanding the 8th Signal Regiment. He was a commanding officer of a peace monitoring team in Bougainville on Operation Bel Isi and he later served as the Australian Liaison Officer with the US Army in New Jersey. His final posting was as the Director of Combat and Operational Support Systems, in Canberra.

Neville Browning is a computer engineer with a keen interest in Australian military history. He has written and published unit histories on the 28th, 31st, 44th, 48th, 51st and 52nd AIF Battalions. He is also co-author (with Ian Gill) of *Gallipoli to Tripoli: history of the 10th Light Horse Regiment* (self-published, 2011) and co-publisher of an updated reprint (2001) of *Westralian cavalry in the war*. Neville is currently working on a new book on the 20th Battalion AIF, due for completion in 2016. He is a member of the committee of the

2/4th Machine Gun Battalion and is the voluntary author of their quarterly journal, a role held for over ten years. Neville conducts tours to the Western Front, with a focus on where Western Australian units served.

Shane Burke is a Senior Lecturer who specialises in the archaeology and history of the recent past, concentrating particularly on the material evidence of the early British settlement of Western Australia and how the British adapted to the new physical and cultural environment. He received his PhD from the University of Western Australia and has worked at The University of Notre Dame since 2007.

Wayne Gardiner is an Australian Army Reserve officer, now posted to the Australian Army History Unit as Assistant Manager (immediate past Curator) of the Army Museum of WA where he has been involved since 1978. In 2006 he was awarded an Australian Army Commendation for his museum work as Curator and became a recipient of the Returned and Services League of Australia's 2015 Anzac of the Year award for, amongst other things, his contribution to raising public awareness of Australian military history. He is also a member of the WA Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia since 1971 and currently their President.

Deborah Gare is an Associate Professor in the School of Arts and Sciences and leads the History program at The University of Notre Dame in Fremantle. She is the author or editor of several works, including *Making Australian History: Perspectives on the past since 1788* (Thomson Learning Australia, 2008). Her research interests are, broadly, Australian, Western Australian and Empire history.

Roger Lee has been Head of the Australian Army History Unit and Army Historian since 1996. In his role, he is chief adviser to the Chief of Army on all matters relating to the history and heritage of the Australian Army. Before that, he spent three years on the Directing Staff of the Joint Services Staff College, with responsibility for the international relations and military strategy components of the course. He received his PhD from The University of New South Wales, and is the author of two monographs, *British Battle Planning in 1916* (Ashgate, 2015) and *The Battle of Fromelles 1916* (AHU, 2010), as well as many articles on military history.

Michael Page is a graduate of the Australian Army Command and Staff College, Queenscliff, completing the course in 1999. He was promoted Colonel on the 1st January 2007, and posted as the Director Army Personnel Agency Perth,

and subsequently the Director of Studies—Army Reserve at the Australian Command and Staff College, Canberra, in 2012. His last posting in 2013 was as the Senior Military Liaison Officer at the Directorate of Indigenous Affairs, Canberra.

Leigh Straw is Senior Lecturer in Aboriginal and Australian Studies at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, where she researches and teaches in Australian crime and war history. She is the author of *The Worst Woman in Sydney: The Life and Crimes of Kate Leigh* (New South Books, 2016), and the forthcoming *After the War: World War One and Returned Servicemen in Western Australia* (UWA Publishing).

Erin Taaffe graduated with Honours from The University of Notre Dame Australia with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Archaeology and History in 2014. Her Honours thesis explored the archaeology of Blackboy Hill army training camp and its potential connection with the Anzac legend. She has also participated in numerous excavations at Peel town south of Perth where the first British settlers of Western Australia landed.

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1

Reflections on the legend of Anzac: What happened, what it meant and what it means today

John Blaxland

Australia has long had a martial dimension to its history and identity. One of the key factors behind the drive for federation, for instance, in the lead-up to January 1901 was the issue of defence of the disparate and sparsely-populated British colonies of Australasia (New Zealand was included in the deliberations) in the face of growing security concerns in Asia and the Pacific. Indeed, one of the key powers transferred to the new federal government from the colonies on becoming states within the Commonwealth of Australia was the defence power.

Others would point out that while colonial Australia lacked a declared war against its Indigenous peoples, akin to the Maori Wars in New Zealand, there were plenty of battles and much bloodshed as white settlement expanded across the continent and nearby islands.¹

Notwithstanding what Australian historian Henry Reynolds called 'The Forgotten War',² Australia's martial identity has been more closely associated with its military actions abroad. At the time of federation, for instance, Australian colonial forces were already fighting in the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902), alongside forces from other parts of the British Empire troops including from Canada, New Zealand and the British Isles. That conflict left little in the way of myths and legends, with the exception

¹ The key exponent of this view in recent years is Henry Reynolds. His views have been contested by Keith Windshuttle and others, but there is a growing consensus in support of Reynolds' arguments. Journalist and author Paul Daley is a leading example of those arguing for recognition of the earlier wars against the Indigenous people of Australia. See: Paul Daley, 'Indigenous Australians in wartime: it's time to tell the whole story', *The Guardian*, 7 July 2015.

² Henry Reynolds, *The Forgotten War* (Sydney: New South Press, 2013).

of a concern about British military justice (later given prominence through the movie *Breaker Morant*). However, it reinforced for many the sense that Australia had an important role to play as part of the British Empire. Australians were proud of the martial prowess demonstrated in fighting against the Boers, drawing on the skills of horsemanship and of bushman ingenuity that many associated with a hardy sense of the Australian identity.³

Federation itself, however, was a peaceful, some would say uneventful, transition from colonial rule to federated self-government. Unlike in other parts of the world, there was nothing like the American Revolutionary War in the 1770s, the storming of the Bastille in France in 1789, or the German wars of unification in 1866–1871.

Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that only a few years after celebrating a peaceful yet uneventful federation of the colonies, soldiers from every corner of Australia marked the moment of pathos that Gallipoli came to represent. The storming of the beach under fire and the scaling of the steep hills was seized upon and became a defining moment for the nation, echoing the pathos and significance associated with such moments of crisis in other countries.

Set against the backdrop of the haunts of ancient Greek writers like Homer, Thucydides and Herodotus,⁴ the events at Gallipoli had an air of a Greek comic-tragedy. Many of the men who fought there would have heard some of the tales, but the storytelling about the Anzacs' exploits would give a new meaning to this terrain for the members of this young nation. Being involved in a war where the ancients had fought seemed to mark Australia's coming of age. The war correspondent and official historian, Charles Bean, edited *The ANZAC Book*, which was produced at the end of 1916.⁵ It captured many of the poems, drawings, paintings and short stories from the men who fought there.

The images in Bean's commemorative work evoked many of the stories that would be latched onto for generations. Bean captured moments of heart-warming compassion, such as the story of Simpson and his donkey, in part

³ See Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War: the War in South Africa, 1899-1902* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Craig Stockings (ed.), *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History* (Sydney: NewSouth Press, 2010).

⁴ Homer was the author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Herodotus was the author of *The Histories* (on war between the Greeks and the Persians), and Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* (which details the wars between Athens and Sparta).

⁵ C.E.W. Bean (ed.), *The ANZAC Book* (London: Cassell & Co, 1916).

perhaps in an effort to derive meaning from apparent futility but perhaps also as a way to capture his notion of the Anzac spirit. This sentimental interpretation was warmly received by kith and kin at home who were eager for some validation and affirmation of Australia's contribution as part of the Empire and as comfort for their losses. This sentimentality perhaps generated an inflated sense of the significance of Gallipoli to the overall campaign.



Photo taken from: CEW Bean's *The ANZAC Book* (1916)

Strategically Kitchener and Churchill's plan to seize the Gallipoli Peninsula and open up a pathway to Britain's ally Russia through the Bosphorus Strait to the Black Sea seemed like an extraordinary proposal. But in practice the key element of surprise was given away, even before the troops landed ashore. The Gallipoli campaign bogged down, becoming a sideshow to Britain and France's main war effort on the European Western Front. The contribution of Australia and New Zealand, lauded in the local press, was in fact only a portion of a greater coalition effort with more British and Indian colonial as well as French troops than Anzac ones.

What is more, the Gallipoli campaign was a tactical and operational failure. The initial objectives were not captured. The campaign objectives were not secured and Turkey was not knocked out of the war. In essence, the campaign made little difference to the war's outcome.⁶ But that is not how the Gallipoli campaign came to be seen in Australia and New Zealand.

The Anzac legend means many different things to different people. How strange it is that this defeat should turn into a moment of such commemoration, if not celebration. Initially, emphasis was placed on Australia's contribution as being the Australian *Imperial Force* (italics added). Australians, perhaps seeking to overcome the colonial and convict cringe, sought to be seen as 'worthy sons of Empire'—and King George V obliged by declaring it so.⁷

In addition to marches and parades, early Anzac Day commemorations focused on religious remembrance, hymns and prayers for those lost and those left behind. Over time, the 'one day of the year'⁸ would subtly change, with the return of the veterans and then with successive generations of veterans each leaving their imprint on how events would be managed on each April 25th.

There was, of course, another side to the Anzac myth. This was most clearly demonstrated with the anti-conscription movement in 1916 and 1917, with a prominent role played by the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix—himself a recent migrant to Australia from Ireland, where the 'Easter Uprising' was generating a significant challenge to Britain's sense of invincibility and virtue.⁹ The heated passion on display at protests for and against conscription would be echoed in the anti-conscription protests during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁰

6 There are many published works which make this argument compellingly, not the least of which is Rhys Crawley, *Climax at Gallipoli* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014); and Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth* (New Haven, CT/Sydney: Yale University Press, 2010/University of New South Wales Press 2009). See also Jeffrey Grey, *The War with the Ottoman Empire: The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2015).

7 The colour plate at the front of Bean's *The ANZAC Book*, attributes this quote to King George V.

8 In 1958 Alan Seymour wrote the play 'The One Day of the Year'. It questioned the traditional values associated with Anzac Day, but since then the term has come to refer to the significance of Anzac Day in Australian consciousness.

9 See Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2013).

10 See Peter Edwards, *A Nation at War: Australian politics, society and diplomacy during the Vietnam War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997); and John Blaxland, *The Protest Years: The Official History of ASIO, Volume II, 1963-1975* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2015).

Commemoration of Anzac Day for many, came to symbolise loss and grief—over those who never came home, as well as over those who did return, but were so scarred that their return perpetuated the grief for generations. Those with 'shell shock', or what today is called post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD, returned carrying visible and invisible wounds. In subsequent years, many took their own lives in desperation and many others of their families, their wives and children, bore the burden of the trauma for decades. In some ways, while the mythology of Anzac was of brave bronzed Aussies fighting successfully against the odds, the reality at home was what Professor Joan Beaumont described as a 'broken nation'.¹¹ With over 60,000 dead and many more wounded and scarred for life, commemorating Anzac for some, in a way, was an escape from the tragic reality they faced—an attempt, if you like, to give meaning to an otherwise complete and utter tragedy.

World War II would see soldiers recruited drawing on the mythology and sense of created identity associated with the first Australian Imperial Force to create the Second AIF. The sons of Anzacs were expected to live up to the expectations of their forebears. Many would serve in similar places to those where their fathers had fought in the Middle East, but this time, from late 1941 onwards, fighting closer to home in Southeast Asia and the Pacific was far more ominous. After the fall of Singapore to Japanese forces in February 1942, many feared the Japanese would invade Australia. Fighting them to a standstill on the Kokoda trail, in the mountains north of Port Moresby, presented what appeared to be the apogee of the existential threat posed by Japan. Australian troops indeed fought valiantly. But Kokoda never managed to generate the mystique generated by the events at Gallipoli. Perhaps this was in part because Japan's main effort was focused further east, at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Or perhaps it was because of the overwhelming and overpowering American military contribution that saw Japan's offensives blunted and the tide turned at the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway in 1942.¹²

There certainly were other significant wartime experiences which helped further define and distinguish the Australian identity. The experience of thousands of prisoners of war captured at Singapore and in the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia), for instance, who underwent the hellish experience of building the Thai-Burma railroad, is one such phenomenon. That

11 Beaumont, *Broken Nation*.

12 See Peter Dean (ed.), *Australia 1942: In The Shadow of War* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

extraordinarily awful experience shattered the myths of British imperial hubris and it was etched searingly onto the minds and bodies of the participants. Their stories on return would leave a strong impression on many others, helping at least in part to raise awareness of the need for Australia to be more engaged with and aware of its Southeast Asian neighbourhood.¹³

Thereafter Australia made military force contributions to the war in Korea, the Malayan Emergency and in the defence of Malaysia during Confrontation with Sukarno's Indonesia. Australia joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), clutching for security that was hoped to be akin to the collective security mechanisms of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). But SEATO was only ever a shadow of NATO. Security for Australians seemed elusive, demanding greater efforts to elicit security guarantees from great power benefactors, originally Britain and increasingly the United States.¹⁴

The onset of the Cold War and the apparent inevitability of the domino theory, whereby successive states north of Australia would fall to communism unless they were stopped militarily, saw Australia commit forces also to Vietnam. From the mid-1960s until the early 1970s, the sons of the sons of Anzac fought there. But like during World War I, the issue of conscription had a polarising effect on society, badly denting the aura around the Anzac mythology.

Generations after World War I and a decade after the end of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, David Williamson and Peter Weir's 1981 movie, *Gallipoli*, had an essentially cathartic effect on the popular imagination. After the Vietnam War generation had shied away from commemoration let alone celebration of Anzac and of Gallipoli in the 1960s and 1970s, Weir's movie effectively provided a new generation of Australians with a reconception of the Anzac myth as a tragedy.¹⁵ This time Australians were presented not so much as loyal sons of Empire, but instead as being separate and distinct, if not better than, the British. Weir portrayed British commanders as the heartless orchestrators of the futile deaths of Australia's fittest and strongest young men.

13 See, for instance, Edward E. Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop: Java and the Burma-Thailand Railway 1942-1945* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1986).

14 On the Korean War see Robert O'Neill, *Strategy and Diplomacy* (Canberra: The Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, 1981). On the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation see Peter Edwards with Gregory Pemberton, *Crises & Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin with the Australian War Memorial, 1992).

15 See, for instance, Peter Galvin, 'Retrospective: Gallipoli', SBS, 24 April 2012, at <http://www.sbs.com.au/movies/article/2012/04/24-retrospective-gallipoli>, accessed on 30 November 2015.

The British are depicted as being at fault for the losses at Gallipoli. Australia's losses are epitomised by the movie's main character, portrayed by Mark Lee, who is shot dead in the closing scene, in the charge at The Nek. To Weir and his audience, the Brits had become, in a way, the new enemy, or at the least the antithesis against which the egalitarian Australian natural soldier could be distinguished. This, of course, was a grossly inaccurate portrayal of events. In fact, Australian commanders were instrumental in the fateful decision portrayed in the movie which led to the final death scene. The sad truth is that Australia's amateur combat commanders only became more competent and professional through trial and error—and much shedding of Australian blood in battle. General Sir John Monash, for instance, who would go on to become one of Australia's finest and greatest commanders of the war, learned early on from his costly mistakes as a brigade commander in Gallipoli.¹⁶

While the Anzac myth was being reinvented by Peter Weir, the reputation of the Australian digger went through a transformation as well, particularly after the end of the Cold War. The ghosts of Vietnam would be dispelled, particularly from the beginning of the 1990s, when there was a resurgence of military operational commitments far from Australia's shores. But this time the operations were not so much about warfighting as peacekeeping. With much good publicity arising from these deployments, the Australian soldier gained the moniker of 'ambassador, soldier, teacher, peacekeeper', reflecting the diverse range and nature of tasks expected of Australia's professional armed forces and the great pride Australians came to feel in their soldiers, sailors and airmen and women. That reached a climax with the successful and daring Australian-led multi-national intervention into East Timor in 1999.¹⁷

One would have thought that subsequent force contributions to the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, with its messy counterinsurgency, multiple deaths and murky political outcomes, would have generated a considerable counter-effect, perhaps detracting from the glowing Anzac mythology. But unlike during the Vietnam War, there was little groundswell of public criticism of the Anzac legend and what critics saw as its association with militarist and adventurist support for a superpower. Undoubtedly the absence of large numbers of soldiers

16 For good reason, Monash is portrayed in less than glowing terms at Gallipoli by the official historian. See C.E.W. Bean, *Anzac to Amiens: A Shorter History of the Australian Fighting Services in the First World War* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1946).

17 See John Blaxland, *The Australian Army from Whitlam to Howard* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

killed in the fighting and the absence this time of conscription meant there was little groundswell of opposition. In parallel, there was little erosion of the high esteem in which the Australian soldier came to be held following the East Timor intervention.¹⁸

Along the way, in the mid-1990s, the then Prime Minister of Australia, Paul Keating, tried valiantly to move away from Gallipoli, singling out instead the Battle of Kokoda in 1942 as the quintessential Australian martial moment. But as Professor David Horner has pointed out, his argument was based on incomplete and circumstantial evidence. After all, Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, where the US Marine Corps fought, was Japan's point of main effort, not Kokoda. But for Horner to dare to say such a thing was to some, verging on sacrilegious.¹⁹

In his efforts to help redefine Australian-ness as being not British and distinctly local and home grown, an unidentified Australian soldier of World War I was disinterred, returned to Australia and re-buried in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial. This act was endowed with great significance as further helping to define Australia and Australians as independent and unique.

Today, despite Keating's gallant efforts to find other defining moments, Gallipoli remains identified with the very essence of being Australian. Gallipoli has come to represent taking on a challenge against overwhelming odds, stoically standing up for one's mates, being the underdog, revelling in defeat and turning it into an inverse moment of achievement. Bean is partly to blame but he can't be held responsible for this alone. He simply captured the zeitgeist (funny that a German word seems most apt).

In fact, with the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign just passed, we have witnessed a wave of triumphalist reinterpretations of the Gallipoli campaign and the Anzac legend. Some have expressed concern about the apparent militarisation of Anzac Day and its rising prominence as the defining character of Australian history.²⁰ Understandably enough, the Australian Defence Force has drawn on the images and heritage of Anzac to bolster its standing and recruiting numbers for the all-volunteer defence force. The question remains whether commemoration should focus on the tragedy of war and the imperative

18 Ibid.

19 See Simon Black, 'Veterans' fury as history battles with legend', *Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 2012. Horner's arguments are outlined in Dean (ed.), *Australia 1942*.

20 See for instance, Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (eds), *What's Wrong with ANZAC? The Militarisation of Australian History* (Sydney: NewSouth Books, 2010).

to strive for peace or whether it should serve as a reminder of the importance of enduring vigilance and military preparedness to face threats that might arise at short notice.

Others have come to label this virtual adulation and canonisation of the digger as 'Anzackery'.²¹ Anzac Day was centred on commemoration, they would point out, whereas Anzackery is a jingoistic commemoration, even celebration, of the Anzac experience.²² The spike in attendance at Anzac Day dawn services around the nation and abroad, especially at the Gallipoli peninsula itself, points to the surge in popularity of Anzac and the dangers of hagiographic accounts of Australia's martial prowess in reinforcing a version of the Anzac legend that, in the eyes of some, borders on chauvinism.

The Australian War Memorial itself, on the parliamentary axis in central Canberra, has become the sacred place, to many virtually the temple of what is akin to a secular religion. As Australians of European descent become less attached to traditional religion, it is interesting to speculate about the extent to which the Anzac mythology has taken on additional reverence. Indeed, the legend of Anzac is even involved as part of a national rhetoric to unite us, in the absence of any other compelling and evocative national narrative.

Perhaps of most interest is what it says about continuities and discontinuities. The imperative to stand united in defence of the British Empire in places like the Middle East has long since passed and yet today we still feel compelled to join coalitions on ventures in such foreign lands. This speaks to an enduring sense of insecurity of which Gallipoli is perhaps a touchstone.

For the Australian Army of today Gallipoli also points to continuities and discontinuities. Although also a volunteer force, today's Army is a small professional force—and one that is arguably more removed from the community than at almost any time in Australia's history. Soldiers today, in a sense, have the Anzac mantle on their shoulders, conscious that their deeds are an echo of the past. The legend of Gallipoli informs their actions and the 'sons and daughters of Anzac' feel the legend almost palpably. Army advertising and internal messaging reinforces this.²³

21 The term is believed to have been coined by Australian historian Geoffrey Serle in a *Meanjin* article in 1967.

22 This is a theme explored in the work of *Honest History*. See for instance, David Reid, 'Anzackery: a personal view', *Honest history*, 3 February 2015, at www.honesthistory.net.au, accessed 29 November 2015; and Paul Daley, 'Crowdsourcing is our latest weapon against nationalism and "Anzackery"', *The Guardian*, 29 December 2014, at www.the-guardian.com, accessed 29 November 2015.

23 See, for instance, the Australian Army's 'Centenary of Anzac' website: <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-work/Community-engagement/Centenary-of-Anzac>, accessed 30 November 2015.

Conclusion

It will be interesting to see to what extent Anzac Day and the folklore associated with it becomes more or less important to the national narrative in the years beyond the centenary of Anzac. With an ever greater proportion of the population having no direct association with those who fought as Anzacs a century ago, there are several questions about the future direction of how Australians will feel about and commemorate Anzac Day. Will an increasingly multicultural society continue to value the Anzac legend and participate in Anzac Day? Or will Anzac Day fade into the background, as fewer and fewer veterans of even World War II remain to remind us of the sacrifice involved? My sense is that, in searching for national symbols to unite and define the nation, governments will continue to stress the significance of Anzac Day, seeing it as particularly useful to reinforce the sense of shared identity as Australians. Expect to see more on the ideals of mateship, self-sacrifice and the significance for Australia of being active participants on the international stage.

2

The archaeology at Blackboy Hill and its possible relationship with the Anzac legend

Erin Taaffe and Shane Burke

Many discourses, oral histories and traditions have culminated in the creation of the Anzac legend. The notion of 'Anzac' described by war journalists during World War I has captured the imagination of writers, artists, historians and everyday Australians.¹ From 1915 until present, the legend has been the bedrock of Australian national identity and is sacrosanct to many Australians, contributing to what we understand today as an integral and revered part of Australian character and identity.

The Anzac legend rapidly became a social construct after the landing of the first Australian Imperial Force at Ari Burnu in April 1915. The legend—also called the Anzac spirit—incorporated the observed behavioural characteristics of Australia's soldiers in World War I that are supposedly a major part of contemporary Australian culture and identity. Behaviours such as mateship related to compassion and camaraderie; being stoical and laconic; irreverent in the face of authority and danger; naturally egalitarian; disdainful of class differences; bravery and endurance.² However, some argue that these behaviours and deeds are based on traits that are 'mythic' or 'illusionary'.³ The Anzac legend has become increasingly criticised by some who, while not completely rejecting its historical authenticity, challenge instead the traditional concept.⁴

1 See S. Welborn, *Lords of Death: a people, a place, a legend* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1982).

2 D. Gare & D. Ritter, *Making Australian History: Perspectives on the Past since 1788* (South Melbourne: Thomson Learning Australia, 2008), 292-4.

3 E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian relations during World War I* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

4 M.F. Bendle, *The Military Historians' War on the Anzac Legend* (Sydney: Quadrant Books, 2014).