



Finding out about...

The Last Gallipoli ANZAC— Constructing a biography of Alec Campbell

Imagine that this man, who was an Australian soldier in World War 1, is coming to talk to your class about his experiences.

You are able to ask him ten questions.

- 1** As a small group, decide what questions you would like to ask him.
- 2** Have all groups share their questions with the class. Then, from that full list, choose the ten that you would ask the man when he arrives.
- 3** You will have a chance to find out his answers to these questions—so read on!



Alec Campbell

In 2002 the last Australian soldier to have been at Gallipoli in 1915 died. He was not the last soldier to have been at the landing on 25 April to have survived—we do not know who that man was. He was not the last Australian soldier of World War 1 to die—there were nine of these men still known to be alive in 2002. But because Gallipoli is so significant in Australian history and identity, the death of Alec Campbell was a significant event for all Australians.

Who was Alec Campbell? What sort of man was he? What did he experience? How did he feel about and respond to those experiences? How did he cope with life after his experiences in the trenches? Can his life help us understand more about the nature of war, in the past and in the future?

YOUR TASK is to try to find out the answers to these and the other questions that you have chosen. Imagine that you have been asked to present either a class or school ANZAC Day address, or an article for the school newsletter, based on the passing of the last Gallipoli ANZAC.

You will need to use evidence to find out about the man, and then use that evidence to create your biography of him. There are some questions with each source of evidence to help you analyse it critically and to reflect on your findings from it.

The list on the following page provides a summary of some of the aspects of his life you will need to find out about. You will want to add more to the list, but use the list as a starting point for your summary.

Then, when you have completed the summary and looked at some ways in which other people have written about Alec Campbell, you will be able to craft your own short biographical article. You might make different groups responsible for gathering information about a particular question, and then have the whole class share all the information at the end.



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SOURCE 1

Some photographs of Alec Campbell

For many of us one of our major sources of information about someone is family photos. On this and the following page are some photographs from Alec Campbell's family album.

4 Discuss what they show, what they tell you about the man, and write in a caption for each one.

5 Decide which, if any, of your questions these photographs help you to answer.

Caption:



Caption:



Caption:



Caption:



Caption:



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ELECTIONS - LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL
Voting Day : Thursday, December 11, 1941
For Civic Improvement and Progress

VOTE FOR THESE CANDIDATES



OFFICIALLY ENDORSED
BY THE
TRADES HALL COUNCIL

WILLIAM MORROW

ALEC WILLIAM CAMPBELL

SUPPORT THIS PROGRAMME —

- ◆ Municipal Modern Housing with Cheap Rent to replace slum dwellings.
- ◆ Scientific Processing and Distribution of Pure Milk.
- ◆ Better Sanitation and Extension of Sewerage Services.
- ◆ Building and Rehabilitation of Street Arteries.
- ◆ Reduction in Charges for Electric Light and Power.
- ◆ Incentives for Destruction of Rubbish and Abolition of the Smoke Nuisance.
- ◆ Good Wages and Working Conditions for Employees.
- ◆ Restriction of Land Speculation in City Area.
- ◆ Extension of Children's Playgrounds fitted with Modern Equipment for Health and Physical Training.
- ◆ Abolition of Beer Chamber Methods—Beerings to be Open to the Public and the Press.
- ◆ Regular Meetings and Conferences with Representatives to discuss Public Questions and Receive Suggestions.

These Candidates are experienced in Transport Organisation and have Business Training. They will apply Modern Methods in your Civic Affairs.

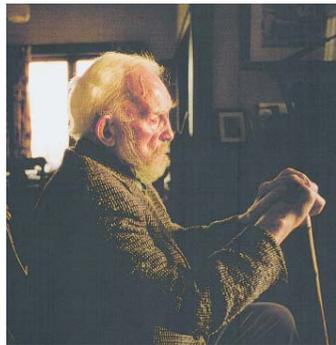
REMEMBER — Every Voter and Occupier has a Vote — USE IT
THREE CANDIDATES MUST BE VOTED FOR — OTHERWISE THE BALLOT PAPER WILL BE VOID.

Vote for Alec WILLIAM CAMPBELL
and William MORROW
Endorsed Trades Hall Candidates

We Recommend you to give the Third Vote to W. J. (BILL) GILLIE

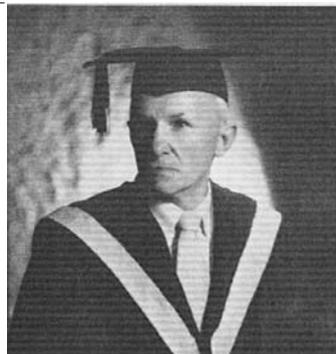
Authorised by F. F. Fife, Secretary Trades Hall, Launceston, and printed by Telegraph Printing Pty. Ltd., 48-49 Charles Street, Launceston.

Caption:



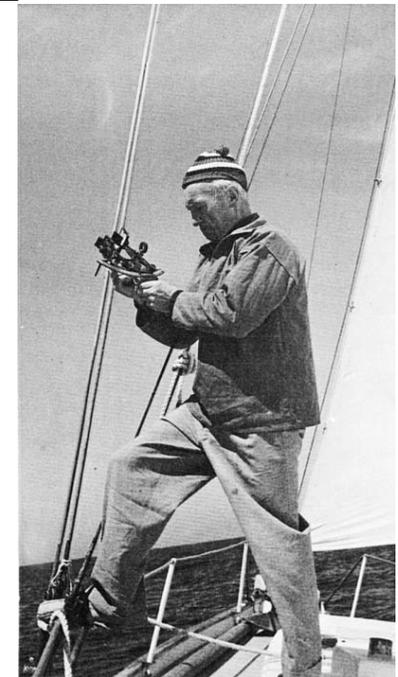
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End of Source



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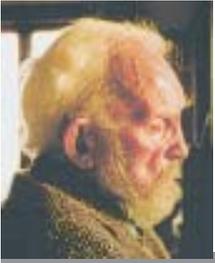
SOURCE 2

Information from the official service file of 2731 Alec Campbell

Use this source to start answering as many of your questions about Alec Campbell as you can.

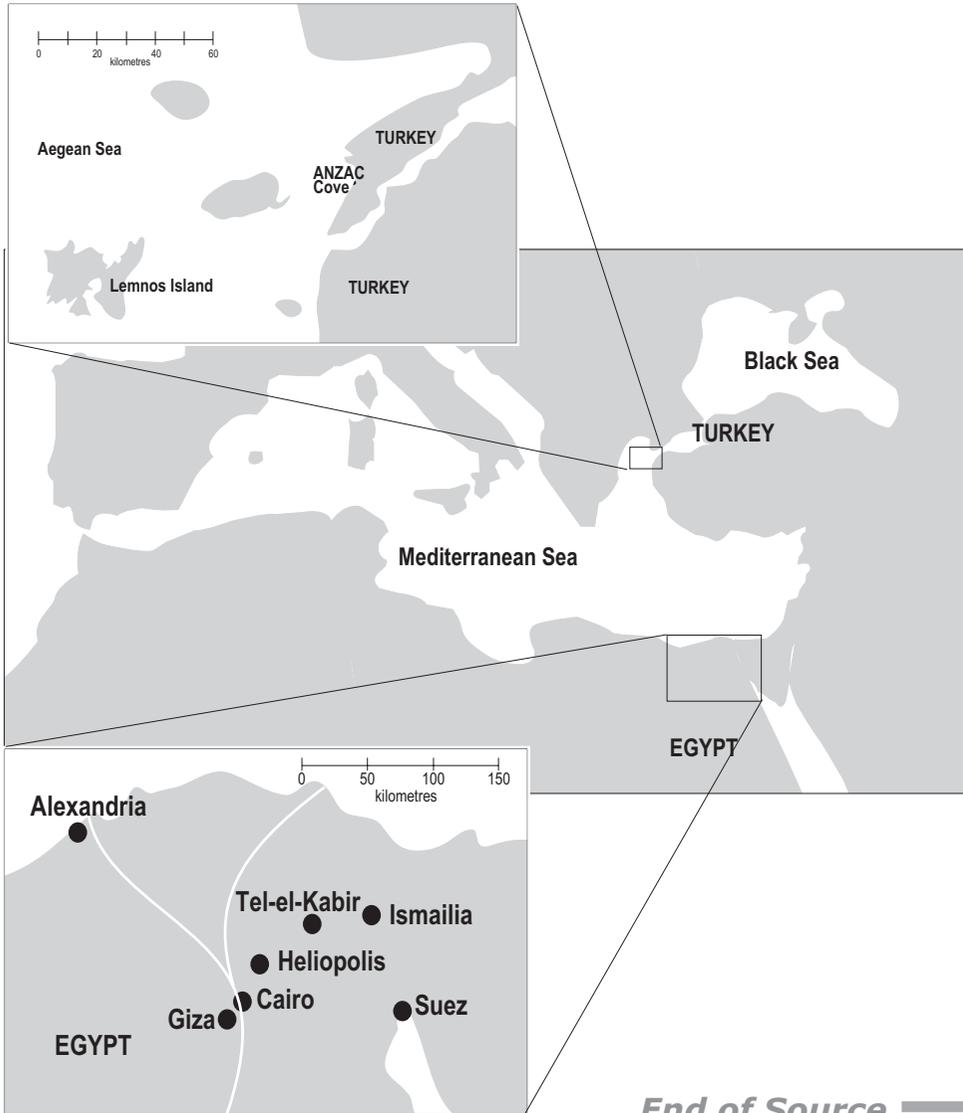
Name	Alec William Campbell
Enlistment Number	2731
Born	Launceston, Tasmania
Nationality	British subject
Age	18 and 5 months
Trade/Calling	Clerk
Marital status	Single
Next of kin	Mother
Criminal convictions	Riding without a light
Military service	Senior cadets 3 years
Illnesses	None
Date	2/7/15
Unit	15th Battalion AIF
Age	18 and 4 months
Height	5 feet 5 inches
Weight	135 pounds
Chest measurement	34–36½ inches
Complexion	Medium
Eyes	Yellowish
Hair	Brown
Religion	C of E

Date	Event (see also maps on following page)
1915	
June 30	Letter from parents giving permission for him to join the army
July 7	Enlists in Tasmania
October	18 On troopship <i>Kalyan</i> to go to Alexandria, Egypt
	23 Joins his new battalion in Lemnos
December	8 Influenza at ANZAC Beach. Sent to hospital.
	11 Discharged from hospital to rejoin his unit
	25 Disembarked from the ship <i>Ionian</i> at Alexandria, Egypt
1916	
January	1 Sick, to hospital at Ismailia with laryngitis (a throat infection)
	12 To Casualty Clearing Station with jaundice (a liver problem that causes yellowing of the skin and a feeling of tiredness), sent to 2 Australian General Hospital (AGH) at Ismailia, then to 1 AGH at Helouan, Heliopolis
	19 Returned to holding base at Giza
March	6 Rejoins battalion at Tel-el-Kabir
	17 Absent without leave from parade. Confined to barracks for two days as punishment
	19 To hospital with scabies (an itch of the skin caused by a tiny mite), sent by hospital train to 4 Auxiliary Hospital, Heliopolis
April	3 At Tel-el Kabir. Mumps (a viral infection, resulting in painful swollen glands in the throat)
	14 Admitted to hospital with palsy [Bell's palsy is a form of facial paralysis resulting from damage to a cranial nerve. In addition to one-sided facial paralysis with possible inability to close the eye, symptoms of Bell's palsy may include pain, uncontrolled tears, drooling, hypersensitivity to sound in the affected ear, and impairment of taste. The common cold sore virus is the likely cause of most cases of Bell's palsy.] Transported to hospital at Heliopolis
	16 Sent back to duty
	16 Admitted to hospital— old fracture
	27 Absent without leave and drunk
May 15	Admitted to hospital with facial paralysis
June	5 Absent without leave—breaking out of hospital
	21 Absent without leave
	23 Transported to hospital ship
	24 Hospital transport ship departed Suez
July	12 Ship at Fremantle
	17 Ship at Melbourne
	22 Suffering facial paralysis
August 23	Discharged from the army medically unfit



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- 6 What does this official record tell us about Alec as a person—his characteristics and qualities?
- 7 How would you describe or summarise Alec's war service?
- 8 Is this official record of a soldier's service likely to be an accurate and reliable document? Explain your reasons.
- 9 What is the main strength of this source for finding out about Alec Campbell?
- 10 What weaknesses or limitations does it have as a source for helping you answer all your questions about him?
- 11 Add any information or new questions to your table.

Sources 3 to 10 following are some extracts from several interviews with Alec Campbell and family, friends and other people who knew him. The interviews with Alec were conducted in 1990 and 1997, and the others in February, March and May 2002.

- 12 Divide into groups, and have each group report back on an interview. The group should also mark which statements are relevant to which questions on the list. Use a simple numbering system. Look for information about his character, qualities, experiences, attitudes, and the opinions others had of him.

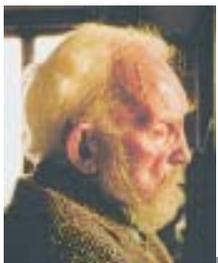
SOURCE 3

Extracts from interviews with Alec Campbell

I played cricket, or I played some football, but more cricket. I used to like to go into the bush shooting with dogs out in the stubble paddocks at quail.

Why did I enlist? I don't know! You don't look for a reason why you did this, you just did it and I think one thing most young fellows were going and there was always a certain amount of—you see I was only 16 out there, so that I was not very mature to make decisions of any sort.

I joined fairly soon, because there were rumours of war coming out, you know. And then we heard war was



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declared. And then Australia, of course was in it too, because England was in it—I don't know if they'd do it today.

I just went up and went into their recruiting office and put myself in as a recruit and they were after men, and I was young, and not very big, but I was strong, and that was all right. Oh, yes. I think I said I was 18.

I remember the surprise we got in coming suddenly on a place like Cairo [in Egypt]—the bazaars, streets like they was and all manner of things that we had never heard about and strange dress of the people. I remember all those things quite vividly.

I didn't get to Gallipoli until October so the big August attack was over and it was mainly a holding operation the rest of the time I was there. There were casualties from Turkish snipers and the shellfire—the Turkish guns were very accurate with the shrapnel shelling. And their rifle shooting was accurate. If you exposed yourself in any way you were likely to get hit.

I can remember now, the first fellow that I saw hit. He was on the ship, actually, getting into the boats. And I think that shocked me more than a lot of others that I saw, because it was the first one and he was hit in the head and killed, and of course, a nasty mess. I remember that very well.

I suppose you weren't frightened, but you were aware of, you know, people were getting bowled over pretty often in our company. I suppose while I was there we had half of them hit. Not killed, but hit—some killed, and some just hit. Well I suppose there were several times that ... Bombs thrown over were dangerous, but they never hit me, but they hit plenty of other people. No I don't think I ever stood in fear—I don't think you really get frightened, you know—you're doing things all the time.

You see, it's almost a thing you expect, 'did you know, poor so and so was hit'—it was shocking when a man was near you, and got hit. I remember one engineer, a New Zealander—and he was quite near me and the top of his head was blown off. I still remember that, gave me a nasty turn, I suppose. But so many men were hit—it became a usual thing to expect, you know.

Yes, I suppose it was always dangerous on Gallipoli, because it was open country. Yes, I suppose you were aware that you could get killed any time, but you're not—you couldn't do anything about it. You were there and that was all. You can see how old I was and I came through Gallipoli where a lot of more mature people didn't—it wasn't a good place to serve, at all.

Especially when the snow and the rain came.

They were pretty awful, of course. Water was scarce—when I say scarce, it had to be carried up—it was brought to the beach in boats ... and every day a detail was sent off from the line, from our Battalion, from D Company, three of us would be detailed off to go down to the beach and carry cans of water up. And it was fairly dangerous operation—people often got hit on the way up because the Turks were good rifle shots and they knew people were carrying water up and so it was, every day somebody was hit bringing water up from the beach

It's all a jumble. You know, there's Hill 60—I remember as we went off looking back at Hill 60, and there was a pair of legs sticking out from a bush. And I don't know why I saw that, because I'd seen plenty of things like that, but that sort of impressed me. Gallipoli was not so bad for me from the firing, although that was bad enough. But you see, the only meat we had was stuff called Fray Bentos—that's a South American make of beef and it was dreadful stuff—fat and stuff running through it. We had biscuits, big heavy army biscuits. Oh, cripes, yes! You could hit them with an axe, I think and you wouldn't hurt them! Yes, they were thick and hard. And sometimes if you soaked them in something they were better—they'd soften then. But they were hard. But I think they were good enough food—I don't know, but they kept us alive.

And the flies were small, horrible flies—not blow flies like we have here, but they were an awful nuisance—you had to knock them away with your hand before you could take a



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bite of bully beef and the hard army biscuits. There were no vegetables or fruit or things like that.

I was sent to a clearing station for a while, because I got a hit across the face with a stake when we were putting up barbed wire, but I never got hit with a bullet. My illness appeared afterwards. At Lemnos, after we came off Gallipoli, when mumps were very prevalent and I got a very bad attack of mumps and I was ill for quite a long time afterwards and it was from that attack of mumps that my face began to decay.

End of Source

SOURCE 4

Extracts from interviews with one of Alec's daughters, Mary Burke

He used to talk a lot about what he called the Cressy days, because they used to go to Cressy a lot for holidays. And that would have been, sort of early 1900s—life was very free—they used to roam around the place with a gun and shoot rabbits and it appeared to be a fabulous time. But I know he was very good shot with a gun from all the rabbit shooting, because he said that when he joined the army, they took him—although he was so young—because he was a crack shot and they thought he would be a good marksman. And I know he said that he was very glad that they didn't use him as a marksman, because it involved sitting around and taking pot shots at living people, whereas actually, when he went there he was used as a water carrier—because he was very small.

Why did he enlist? He always said it was just adventure—recruiting posters were all sort of big deal, and everyone was talking about the war. And I think he just thought it would be a great adventure. But, I know his

mother was horrified—heart broken—and couldn't get over it.

But in those days, the boys used to sort of be accepted into the army. And if their mothers wouldn't agree, they would say to them, well, if you don't agree, I'll never get into contact with you again, and you won't know what's happened to me. But if you do agree, then you'll have contact with me and get deferred pay and all those sort of things. I think they more or less blackmailed their mothers into agreeing. But whether Grandma actually agreed or not, I don't know.

He just didn't talk about it at all. Except that war was dreadful—he always campaigned for peace. And no, I don't think—he never sort of told us any anecdotes about war, or anything like that. There was the fact that they respected the Turks as soldiers—they always sort of spoke about Johnny Turk—sort of in a very different way from the way our [World War 2] chaps talked about the Japanese, for instance.

After the war he used to teach some of the other blokes in the Railway how to box. In fact, he was either Flyweight or Bantamweight Champion when he was young. Yes he was a good boxer. But Dad was sort of into any sport—riding, boxing, shooting, swimming, boating, anything at all. Yes he was very—athletic, yes. He was beautifully built—he was a small man, but beautifully built. Very nice looking. His face was not handsome, but he was—I don't know—he walked beautifully, and he sort of wore clothes nicely—yeah, he was a Dad to be proud of.

My parents were both very interested in social justice and in politics and they read a lot – they were sort of self educated I suppose— they left school fairly early, both of them. But they were—they used to discuss books and they used to have very interesting people for meals—they had sort of politicians, always Labor, Labor politicians, and union officials, and high school teachers and those sort of people for long evening meals. And they were both determined that all of us children—and there were seven of us—would go on to either, at least secondary, perhaps tertiary education, at a time when most children left school at fourteen unless they were fairly wealthy and girls worked in shops or offices. And they were both sort of determined we'd be teachers, or something just a little better than that. They helped a lot as well as being determined that we would be educated. They



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got to know our teachers and they always came down to the school and they always helped at the school. So that was the main thing that I remember about Mum and Dad – that education was sort of the primary factor, that they sort of felt it was their job to make sure that we were educated and make sure that we took advantage of opportunities that did come along.

I think he did a fabulous job as a father—I mean he had two families and he was a good husband to two women and the war service doesn't seem to have been of any great importance in his life.

He was never sentimental—that was the word I was searching for. He was sort of eager and conscientious and all those sort of things, but he never sentimentalised sort of being a father, or being a unionist, or going to Gallipoli.

End of Source

SOURCE 5

Extracts from an interview with Alec's second wife, Kate Campbell

He started with infections before he'd left Gallipoli. But he recovered and had several kinds of flu and then he came off with the evacuation. He does get annoyed if people suggested he was brought off before the evacuation. No he came off with the evacuation and he remembers that. They all led up to, I suppose, a general breakdown in health. That led to—well he had Bell's palsy. I don't think at that time it wasn't diagnosed—It was only the specialist and many years later he said this is the result of Bell's palsy and the result of all of these infections, particularly the mumps. That was sort of a new thought to him but it was so long after it had happened, that it didn't sort of make much difference. The fact that he had a facial disfiguration affected him as much as anything. There is a photograph of him—must have been

taken with the family after the war, he was quite a young man—whereas the family are all looking one way, he's got his face turned the other way. And I think that's an indication of his feeling about his facial, you know, deformity in that way. But once you talked to him for a while, you didn't even look at it or notice it.

End of Source

SOURCE 6

Extracts from an interview with his son, Neil Campbell

Well, the story is, after the World War 1, there was training for former servicemen, and he trained as a carriage builder—railway carriage builder. And eventually he actually went on and become a railway carriage builder from the mid '20s almost right up to the beginning of World War 2. But before he actually engaged in carriage building, he did some work on the mainland in the building trade—house building trade. And I think he did a course in laying out roofs in a sort of semi-pre-fab fashion in Adelaide. And this stood him in good stead in terms of being employed, and so this was his role in building houses for public servants in Canberra. Oh, I'd like him to be remembered as a pleasant man, an interesting man, a person who lived a very worthwhile life.

End of Source

SOURCE 7

Extracts from an interview with a sailing friend, Mike Townsley

When I first met him, he was active in trade union affairs. He was a manual worker linked with the ARU—the Australian Railways Union—with the railways of Tasmania. And he was very mentally active too, because he wanted me to give lectures and various other things associated with what he was doing. And he was also interested in the events of the day—very active indeed. In fact he had, just before I met him, he'd been thinking seriously of going to join up in the Spanish Civil War against Franco. But he had a family of six young kids, so he thought twice about it, very sensibly, and didn't go! But we met regularly after that.

End of Source



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SOURCE 8

Extracts from an interview with his daughter, Sam Claridge

There was talk about it around about ANZAC Day probably every year, because Dad seemed to take an interest in ANZAC Day. Apart from ANZAC Day generally speaking, he didn't go into long memories about Gallipoli. For a start he wasn't there very long, and he was much more interested in learning of the good things, and sort of, passing on the good things that life had to offer rather than trying to sort of tell us how horrible Gallipoli must have been for everybody there. He didn't seem to pass on the horrors. That wasn't his aim at all.

He wanted us to get the good things out of life like friendship and scholarship and the attainment of qualifications. And mixing and conversation and music and art. He was much more interested in seeing that that was going to be a feature in our lives.

Well I think Dad's life's been remarkable, for the stretch of it and for the depth of it too. He knew so many people and he had so many things that he was good at. I mean he learned navigation and then went into sailing Sydney to Hobart. And he did it quite often, not only once. He started a degree and then finished that. His craftsmanship, you know, his woodwork ability. I mean he became quite good at that. And you would have to say he was very good family-wise, because he had nine children that were all successful. He seemed to have the happy knack of sort of being successful whatever he was at. And I think his life has been blessed.

End of Source

SOURCE 9

Extracts from an interview with the Governor of Queensland, Peter Arnison

When Alec went, he was a son, he was a brother—he was like all those young men who went. They were a part of a family. And I'm sure as he looked to the future, he was looking to ... growing up—I mean he was only 16 when he went—growing up into adulthood, getting married, getting a job, raising his own family. And that, if you like, was put on hold when he went with those others to Egypt and then to Gallipoli. When they were there, they got on and did the job as best they could. And they did it very, very, well. And those who returned then got on with their lives and sought to put the terrible events of Gallipoli, and those who went on to France, best out of their minds, or out of the minds as best they could. But they were ordinary people. They were young Australians who went and did what they were asked to do. And they did it to the very best of their ability. And they did it to a very high order of performance.

End of Source



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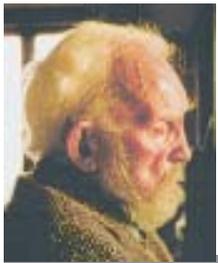
SOURCE 10

Extracts from an interview with historian Michael McKernan

The passing of Alec Campbell I think is a sadness for the nation. He represented the last man who had personal experience of fighting in the Gallipoli campaign for Australia. In that sense, he was a tangible expression for all of us, of the permanence of that campaign in our lives, in Australian life. That will go on, there's no doubt about that. The place of Gallipoli, I think, is embedded in the Australian life now. But while ever we had the opportunity of personal contact with a man of the decency and humanity and humility of an Alec Campbell, we had the opportunity of knowing what we needed to know in a personal sense about that campaign. It will be up to others now, to try to ensure that we don't make exaggerated heroes of these men, or that we don't see the campaign through rose-coloured glasses. This was a vicious and awful experience for the men who were there. And those who lived long lives to tell us about that constantly reminded us of that. So we need to bear that in mind. But we will take from them, as I say, a sense of their decency and humanity. And I think it's a remarkable thing that a man like Alec Campbell lived as long as he did to keep that personal contact and message for all Australians. And, somehow or other, we've got to make sure that that's not lost.

End of Source —

- 13 *What is your impression of Alec Campbell as a man?*
- 14 *What was his life like after the war?*
- 15 *Are there any aspects of his life that surprise you? Why?*
- 16 *Are these interviews likely to be accurate and reliable sources of evidence about Alec Campbell? Explain your reasons.*
- 17 *You might find some contradictions between the official record of Alec Campbell's enlistment, and his and others' memories of it. Why do those contradictions exist? Which version is the more likely to be accurate?*
- 18 *What strengths and weaknesses or limitations do these interviews have as a source for helping you answer all your questions about him?*
- 19 *Add any information or new questions to your table.*



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— SOURCE 11

Two obituaries of Alec Campbell

Newspapers often publish obituaries of notable people on their death. An obituary is designed to summarise and assess the significance of a person's life.

Here are two such articles published on Alec Campbell's death on 16 May 2002. Compare the way the writers have done this.

The last ANZAC marches on

TRIBUTES have been flowing in for Mr Alec William Campbell, Australia's last ANZAC, who passed away last week at his nursing home in Hobart.

Suffering a chest infection, the condition of the 103-year-old veteran deteriorated in recent weeks with Alec passing away peacefully in the presence of his wife, Kate. With a rich

life spanning three centuries, Alec Campbell amazingly had a very short war of six weeks on the battlefields of Gallipoli.

Yet, as Australia's last ANZAC he represented the last physical link with the campaign that forged our national spirit—"a unity of purpose and a willingness to fight against the odds", as Prime Minister John Howard defined in his tribute. Private Alec Campbell was only 16 years of age when he enlisted with the 15th Battalion, leaving his job as an insurance clerk.

Not even being old enough to shave, Alec gained the nickname 'The Kid' during his training in Hobart.



His mother was afraid that Alec would die at Gallipoli, as her nephew already had. His father was so upset at the possibility of losing his eldest son, he refused to farewell Alec off to war. Alec landed at ANZAC Cove in early November, 1915 and assisted in carrying ammunition, stores and water to the trenches. Illness forced his evacuation in December 1915 and Alec Campbell was formally discharged in 1916.

To Alec, being at Gallipoli represented a small part of his life. While accepting that he was the last ANZAC, he never fully understood the public interest in his life. Many feted him, from governor-generals, prime ministers and journalists, down to young children. Everyone had an interest in Alec Campbell.

He realised the public attention also was because of his longevity. Every year Alec would lead the ANZAC Day Parade in Hobart. This year he sat in his car, before the parade, and shook hands with dozens of young children. In recent months his legs were no longer able to support him and he became confined to a wheelchair.

Last December, at 102, Alec still used a walking frame while unveiling an ANZAC memorial stone at Hobart's Anglesea Barracks.

Like many veterans, he was reluctant to talk about his times in the trenches, dodging the bullets in a barren,

bitterly cold country. The blizzards of late 1915 were one thing that he did remember.

Despite his very short war, Alec went on to have a full life in Hobart. He put himself through university, gaining a degree at fifty years of age. He loved sailing, built boats and sailed in six Sydney to Hobart races.

Alec also worked on the first Parliament House in Canberra 1927 and went on to work in the union movement. He fathered the last of his nine children at the age of sixty-nine. Tasmanian Returned and Services League (RSL) State President Ian Kennett, said that Alec Campbell was a great Australian. "We must also remember that he lead a full and happy life and put his energies, upon returning to Hobart, back into his career and family." Alec is survived by his wife, Kate, thirty grand-children, thirty-two great grand-children, and two great-great grandchildren.

A State Funeral for Private Alec William Campbell, 15th Battalion 1 Australian Imperial Force (AIF), will be held in Hobart on May 24.

By Capt Phil Pyke

Army newspaper and magazine
www.defence.gov.au/news/armynews/html/what_is.htm



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The last Gallipoli ANZAC

Mr Alec William Campbell was the last ANZAC. The last living link with a legend that defined a nation. His life spanned three centuries, linking our heroic past with the minds and hearts of the present.

Like the ANZAC legend, Mr Alec William Campbell's life was one of spirit, determination and endeavour. Though his status as a national hero is owing to his months spent as a young soldier at Gallipoli, Mr Alec Campbell's exceptionally varied 103 years were filled with galantry and adventure.

To the many friends and vast family he leaves behind, nine children, 33 grandchildren, 35 great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

Mr Alec Campbell was more than a war hero. His life was full and eclectic. Mr. Campbell was a father and a husband, a

jackeroo and a carpenter, a union official, an economist, a railway carriage builder, a yachtsman and a boxer, to name but a few.

He put himself through university as a mature-age student; he taught himself to sail and competed in six Sydney-Hobart yacht races. Born at the end of the 18th century, Mr Alec Campbell's mettle was a tribute to his generation. He never shied from work and never shirked a challenge.

Most notably, he was never deterred by the constraints of age. Whether in old age or in youth, Mr Alec William Campbell defied conventions. And, when he volunteered to fight in World War I, young Alec even defied the law. He admitted in interviews he lied about his age to be accepted into Australian Imperial Force.

"I had to put my age up if I wanted to go and everyone was going" he had said.

Mr Alec William Campbell was born in Launceston on February 26, 1899. The son of a commercial traveller and grandson of a Scottish migrant, Alec was the eldest of four, three brothers and one sister.

Alec completed his schooling at Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston, from 1910 to 1915. During his schooldays he excelled in football and cricket. His first job was as an insurance clerk, but he had been in the position only a couple of months before fate and his adventurous spirit beckoned. Alec was a fresh-faced youth of 16

years and four months when he enlisted in June 1915, one of 324,000 who volunteered to fight overseas. But this baby-faced fighter did not even need to shave.

Looking back on his eagerness, Mr Alec William Campbell had told *The Australian*: "I did not have much sense at that time and most of my mates were joining up for a bit of fun." But his family took the departure less lightly. His father was so upset he would not see his son off to war. His heartbroken mother, meanwhile, did farewell young Alec at the dock, dreading his fate would be the same as her nephew, who had already died in the slaughterhouse that was Gallipoli.

One of Mr Alec Campbell's daughters, Mary Burke, said: "I've been told his (Mr Campbell's) mother was terribly, terribly upset because her brother's only son was killed at Gallipoli. "So when Dad went she was very upset. She ran along the length of the pier as the ship pulled out. It was very hard."

The young soldier, nicknamed "The Kid" because of his youthful looks, trained in Hobart before sailing with the 15th Battalion for Gallipoli. Mr Alec Campbell was one of 50,000 Australians who fought at Gallipoli, forming the nation's identity in our greatest and bloodiest battle. He fought in the trenches for two months, dodging bullets by day and keeping his

head down by night as he slept in a damp hole in the ground.

Like many who have survived such horrors, Mr Alec Campbell was reluctant to talk about his time at Gallipoli. He told *The Mercury* in 1997:

"There's not much to remember. You were stuck in a barren country being shot at and shooting at other people." After a bitter winter ("My word I remember the snow and the damn cold," he had said), the soldier fell ill with common afflictions: enteric fever, the measles and the mumps.

The illnesses led to Private Campbell falling victim to a relapse of Bell's palsy, a partial paralysis of the face which he first contracted during dental problems as a child. The paralysis stayed with Mr Campbell all of his life, rendering his right eye incapable of closing. The eye, which constantly wept, was finally removed in 1999. Just after the evacuation of Gallipoli in December 1915, Mr Alec Campbell was shipped to a hospital in Egypt, where he arrived on Christmas Day, 1915.

He spent the next six months in and out of the foreign hospital. Unfit for any other theatres of war, he left the Suez in June 1916 on the Port Sydney to return to Australia. He was medically discharged on August 23, marking the end of his war career. Though the ANZAC legend is painted by historians as the rich and glorious cornerstone of our nation, Mr Alec Campbell rarely edified his time in the trenches.

He recalled the scrubby bush, the bitter cold, the "nasty Turks" and their sea of bullets. But he was not one to continually relive the glory or the horror.

The Mercury www.news.com.au



Finding out about...

The Last Gallipoli ANZAC— Constructing a biography of Alec Campbell

End of Source —

- 20** Add any new information to your summary table.
- 21** Brainstorm to create a list of words that you now think apply to Alec Campbell. Some that you might include are: naïve; friendly; determined; unlucky; lucky; normal—it's up to you to decide what you think. You will use these in the final exercise.
- 22** Go back to the family photographs. Now that you have more information about Alec's life, are there any captions that you would change?

Your Task

You have now investigated a variety of evidence to gather information about the last Gallipoli ANZAC, Alec Campbell. Your task now is to create your version of the story of Alec Campbell, to present at a school ANZAC Day commemorative service, or in a newsletter to be sent home to families. You can also further investigate the meaning of ANZAC Day through the education activity at:

www.anzacday.org.au/education/activities/anzacday

A copy of a specially produced CD ROM of extracts of interview with Alec Campbell, his family and friends was sent to every secondary school in Queensland during 2003, courtesy of the ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland. Look out for this great resource in your schools.

Thank you to:

- National Archives of Australia for access to Alec Campbell's file—see naa.gov.au for information on how to access a World War 1 (and World War 2) file
- Peter Rubenstein of Radiowise Media Networks Pty Ltd for access to the family photographs and interviews with Alec Campbell and his family and friends.