

Remembering and Commemorating

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Eulogy at the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier

We do not know this Australian's name and we never will. We do not know his rank or his battalion. We do not know where he was born, nor precisely how and when he died. We do not know where in Australia he had made his home or when he left it for the battlefields of Europe. We do not know his age or his circumstances—whether he was from the city or the bush; what occupation he left to become a soldier; what religion, if he had a religion; if he was married or single. We do not know who loved him or whom he loved. If he had children we do not know who they are. His family is lost to us as he was lost to them. We will never know who this Australian was.

Yet he has always been among those whom we have honoured. We know that he was one of the 45 000 Australians who died on the Western Front. One of the 416 000 Australians who volunteered for service in the First World War. One of the 324 000 Australians who served overseas in that war and one of the 60 000 Australians who died on foreign soil. One of the 100 000 Australians who have died in wars this century.

He is all of them. And he is one of us.

This Australia and the Australia he knew are like foreign countries. The tide of events since he died has been so dramatic, so vast and all-consuming, a world has been created beyond the reach of his imagination.



The Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. Photograph courtesy Paul Stevens

He may have been one of those who believed that the Great War would be an adventure too grand to miss. He may have felt that he would never live down the shame of not going. But the chances are he went for no other reason than that he believed it was the duty he owed his country and his King.

Because the Great War was a mad, brutal, awful struggle, distinguished more often than not by military and political incompetence; because the waste of human life was so terrible that some said victory was scarcely discernible from defeat; and because the war which was supposed to end all wars in fact sowed the seeds of a second even more terrible war—we might think this Unknown Soldier died in vain.

But, in honouring our war dead, as we always have and as we do today, we declare that this is not true. For out of the war came a lesson which transcended the horror and tragedy and the inexcusable folly. It was a lesson about ordinary people—and the lesson

was that they were not ordinary. On all sides they were the heroes of that war; not the generals and the politicians but the soldiers and sailors and nurses—those who taught us to endure hardship, to show courage, to be bold as well as resilient, to believe in ourselves, to stick together.

The Unknown Australian Soldier whom we are interring today was one of those who, by his deeds, proved that real nobility and grandeur belongs, not to empires and nations, but to the people on whom they, in the last resort, always depend.

That is surely at the heart of the ANZAC story, the Australian legend which emerged from the war. It is a legend not of sweeping military victories so much as triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. It is a legend of free and independent spirits whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship and the demands of necessity. It is a democratic tradition, the tradition in which Australians have gone to war ever since.

This Unknown Australian is not interred here to glorify war over peace; or to assert a soldier's character above a civilian's; or one race or one nation or one religion above another; or men

above women; or the war in which he fought and died above any other war; or one generation above any that has been or will come later. The Unknown Soldier honours the memory of all those men and women who laid down their lives for Australia. His tomb is a reminder of what we have lost in war and what we have gained.

We have lost more than 100 000 lives, and with them all their love of this country and all their hope and energy.



We have gained a legend: a story of bravery and sacrifice and, with it, a deeper faith in ourselves and our democracy, and a deeper understanding of what it means to be Australian.

It is not too much to hope, therefore, that this Unknown Australian Soldier might continue to serve his country—he might enshrine a nation's love of peace and remind us that, in the sacrifice of the men and women whose names are recorded here, there is faith enough for all of us.

**The Hon. P. J. Keating MP
Prime Minister of Australia
11 November 1993**

Eulogy at the Dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown New Zealand Warrior

E te toa matangaro.

O warrior without name.

Ko koe tetahi i haere ki te pae o te pakanga.

You were one of many who marched to the theatre of war.

Ko koe tetahi i timungia e te tai.

You were one of many taken by the ebbing tide.

*Ko koe kua hoki mai ki to whenua, hei tohu aroha, mo ratou katoa
kua riro i te mura o te riri.*

*You have come home to your land as a symbol of love for all who
were taken by the flames of anger.*

E te toa matangaro, e takoto, e moe, e okioki.

O unknown warrior, may you now rest in peace

Twenty-seven thousand of our people, 27 000 New Zealanders, have died in wars in other countries. One third still lie in unmarked places, or in the graves of the unknown. Today, in the respect and feeling we bring to the burial of one of these, we honour all those others whose names, like his, we shall never know. Yet what we do know is that he, like each of them, was one of us. This young man left his country almost ninety years ago. He fought in the most savage war history had yet seen. He died, with countless thousands of other young men, on the Western Front in France, at the centre of that war's devastation. He died wearing a New Zealand uniform, and shared with those he had left on the other side of the world his



The Tomb. Photograph courtesy New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

belief that the lives of many might be better, by risking his own.

His was the hope that when the days, the years, of fighting were done, and the troop ships sailed south, he would return to what mattered most. To be with the people he came from. To live again with the coasts of his own country around him, among the hills he knew as a boy, in the streets where he had grown up. These are the simple things he left and gave his life for. And now we have brought him home. We think of how many he stands for, this unknown warrior, how many were like himself. And yet how individual he was. We wonder, as we bury him, what was he like, this boy, this man? Did he come in from some distant camp, or along a northern beach, or walk out of the bush, to enlist for what he believed was right? Did he close the gates on a milking shed for the last time, before setting off to town? Did he leave a factory bench or an office desk, park his truck and give his mate the key, walk from the classroom where he taught, or put down his tools, thinking it would not be long until he came back to them? Or cross the plains where he had spent his

Departing the Cathedral with the casket of the Unknown Warrior.
Photograph courtesy New Zealand Defence Force.



life, and was farewelled by the singing on his marae, or by a service in his church? Did he get a lift to the local station, and see his family on the veranda as the train went past? Or catch the last sight of his parents or his children, his wife or his girlfriend, waved at from a carriage window, from the deck of a departing ship?

He could be any of those young men. He may have been remarkable or ordinary. He may have loved parties, or was one who liked to be alone. He may have walked for miles to borrow a book, or counted the days to next Saturday's game, or worried about his

job, or hoped the girl on the tram would talk to him. What he wanted was what the young always and rightly expect—to live in peaceful times, to work at what he chose, to be with those he loved. Here is the young New Zealander who takes this place of honour for himself, and for those in his own or any war we have been a part of, where what we value, and what defined us, was defended. In honouring him, we honour too his family, their memories of a place and a time, with that saddest of words, 'unknown'. I end with what a soldier at the end of the Second World War wrote of his contemporaries. They are words that ring as true of any generation, of those New Zealanders who put their lives at risk for what makes us the people we are.

'Everything that was good from that small remote country had gone into them—sunshine and strength, good sense, patience, the versatility of practical men. They had confidence in themselves—knowing themselves as good as the best in the world could bring against them. And they marched into history.'

It is one of these we now commit to his country's most honoured grave. After almost a century, he has come back. Because of him, home is a better place.

**Dame Silvia Cartwright
Governor-General of New Zealand
11 November 2004**



Bearers approach Tomb with Unknown Warrior.
Photograph courtesy New Zealand Defence Force.

Gallipoli in a Nation's Remembrance

25 April 2005 was the 90th anniversary of the landing of ANZAC troops at Gallipoli. That event has become a central part of our national identity. The way Australians have identified with and interpreted this event and the 'Spirit of ANZAC' that it created has varied over time. Each generation sees the tradition differently. How do the youth of today see Gallipoli and the ANZAC tradition? In this article, writer Les Carlyon provides a stimulating discussion of the meaning of ANZAC Day for today's generation.

Alan Bond, that casehardened warrior from the corporate wars, was in a little trouble in 1983, and this time it wasn't financial. The Australian yacht—his yacht, really—was trailing by three races to one in the America's Cup. Bond still thought victory possible. He made a reference to Gallipoli. Then he spoke the deathless words: 'We had our backs to the wall there and we won that one.' We shouldn't take easy shots: this man later bought his own university.

Q 1. What are the facts of the landing at Gallipoli in 1915?

Go to:
www.anzacday.org.au/spirit/gallipoli/gallip01.html
for the detailed story.

England for the ritual war against the old enemy. The idea, one presumes, was to immerse the team in the atmospherics of a story that has become our Homeric tale. I guess all of us here tonight would understand what the cricketing authorities were trying to do. Gallipoli is a good and feisty spirit to take to the battlefields of Lords and Old Trafford. But

A few years ago Steve Waugh took the Australian cricket team to Gallipoli before going on to



Lone Pine, ANZAC Day 2004. Photo courtesy of Rod Sutherland.

outsiders—Americans, say, or Russians—might have been puzzled by the pilgrimage. Wasn't Gallipoli a defeat? Didn't the Turks enforce the follow-on?

My own theory is that Steve Waugh really wanted to take the team to Suvla Bay, the scene of one of the great British batting collapses. There's an old saying that says victory has a thousand fathers but defeat is an orphan. No orphan has ever been so warmly embraced as Gallipoli.

And here's another unusual thing. The casualties on both sides for the eight months of the Gallipoli campaign came in at around 400,000. It thus ranks as a terrible battle, nothing like as terrible as Passchendaele or the Somme, but bad enough.

Terrible battles usually throw up grievances and hatreds that are passed down the generations. I have the feeling that the Russians still haven't forgiven the French for 1812. There is still ill-feeling between Japan and the countries it occupied in World War 2. Some Turks have not quite forgiven Britain for its opposition to Ataturk during the Turkish war of independence. It is unusual for a war to end without some incident or

atrocities that refuse to go away. It is more unusual still for adversaries to admire each other.

Yet this is what has happened with the Turks and Australians. There is mutual admiration. There is no incident that rankles, and it may have helped that very few civilians were caught up in the campaign. There is no perception that good and evil faced each other on the battlefield there. Both nations celebrate Gallipoli, although for different reasons, and one has to say here that the Turkish reasons are easier to understand. There is good humour, affection even, between the descendants of the men who fought each other with such brutality. The phrase 'war with honour' is often an oxymoron, but perhaps not at Gallipoli.

On ANZAC Day in 2000 I was walking up to Lone Pine. A retired Australian army officer paused, turned to another retired officer, pointed towards the scrubby hills above Russell's Top and said: 'Now if we'd turned left here instead of right ...' A young school teacher from Çanakkale overheard this. 'You Australians never learn,' he said, a grin on his face and a twinkle in his eyes. We all laughed, Turks and Australians.

I begin with these anecdotes in an attempt to attract a little sympathy. I've taken on a difficult topic tonight, not because I'm adventurous but because Steve Gower [Director of the Australian War Memorial and a retired major general in the Australian Army] told me I wanted to talk about 'Gallipoli in a Nation's Remembrance' and generals must be obeyed, lest order break down completely.



Mike Bowers, The Fairfax Photo Library

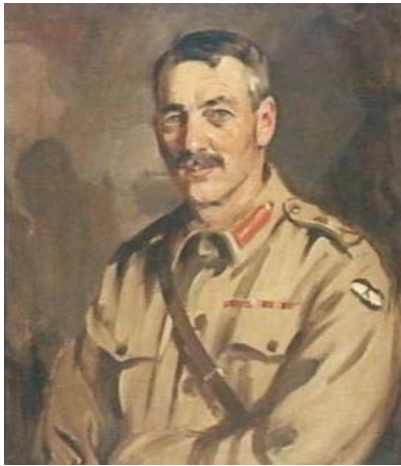


AWM ART02873_2. George Lambert, *ANZAC, the Landing*, 1920–1922, Painting: oil on canvas, 190.5 x 350.5 cm.

Part of the trouble is that Gallipoli means different things to different people. It is a set of facts and these facts are impressive enough by themselves and, I think, say enough by themselves for Australians to feel proud about what happened at Gallipoli. But these facts are also mixed up with legends and myths and symbolism and sometimes, most of the time perhaps, these latter things become the larger part of the story.

Gallipoli is an episode of military history and, in the context of the Great War, not a big one.

In Australia Gallipoli is also a state of mind, a place in the heart, and the stuff of warm inner glows for those of us who were lucky enough not to have been there or to have suffered from its after effects. Gallipoli is part of the folklore, one of the few words spoken in Australia with something approaching reverence. Gallipoli has become a church and even secular churches need myths.



AWM ART03346. Major General Sir John Gellibrand KCB GB DSO. He served as a British officer in the Boer War. He retired to Tasmania in 1912 then joined the AIF in 1914. He landed at Gallipoli at 7.30 am on 25 April 1915 with the 1st Division HQ responsible for supply. He served on the Western Front from 1916-1918. He was knighted in 1919.

Gallipoli had become a faith and faiths are hostile to analysis. As Bill Gammage wrote long ago, 'Gallipoli is bigger than the facts'. And as someone else said, 'Gallipoli just is'.

What we all know is that it has become a larger part of this nation's remembrance. When a lot of people thought the story might begin to fade, when all the Australians who fought there have passed on, the tale has taken on a lambent glow. When I was a kid, the mood of ANZAC Day was rather different, perhaps because the day usually ended up being linked to the latest crisis of the Cold War. It was also probably true that Gallipoli was not a happy word in many families then, because men had come home moody and morose, wives and children had suffered, and the memories were still fresh.

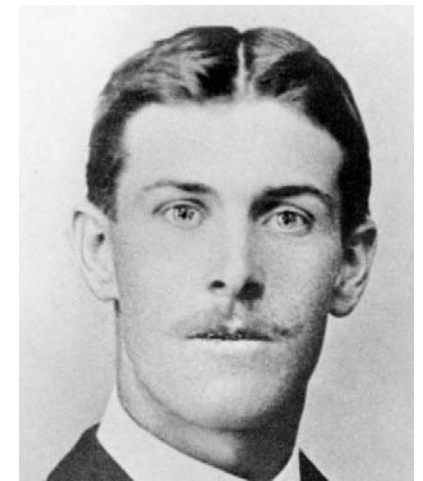
Gallipoli is more appealing to modern generations who did not have to live through the aftermath. When I was a kid Gallipoli

Q 2. ANZAC Day might have just 'faded away'. Suggest reasons why it has not, then read on to test your ideas.

and ANZAC Day seemed to belong to the returned servicemen. We others looked on, politely and from a proper distance. Now Gallipoli, it seems, belongs to all of us, all of the nation. It is above politics. It is not linked to the military causes of the day. It stands alone and apart. It has found a place of its own.

To sit above North Beach on ANZAC Day is these days a thing of wonder. As the dawn breaks, as little waves rattle the shingle, you see thousands upon thousands of Australians, far from home, huddled against the cold, spread out around the amphitheatre and silhouetted high above on Walker's Ridge: young women using the flag as a shawl, middle-aged men in Wallaby guernseys, older men wearing ties and sports coats and medals, grandmothers cupping their hands around flickering candles, children on school excursions.

Why are they here, so many of them? What has changed? Why has the place of Gallipoli in a nation's remembrance become more secure? Perhaps we need



AWM P02058.001. Captain Alfred J Shout was awarded the Military Cross (MC) and Victoria Cross (VC) for actions at Gallipoli. He was awarded the VC for bravery in actions at Sasse's Sap, Lone Pine. He was fatally wounded and died on 11 August 1915.



AWM J06392. Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick (he enlisted as John Simpson), 3rd Australian Field Ambulance, helping a soldier wounded in the leg by carrying him on his donkey. He was killed by a machine gun bullet on 19 May 1915.

to look at how Gallipoli first came into the nation's consciousness.

The first reports linking Australians to the Gallipoli landings appeared in the Australian press on April 30, 1915. Most of the newspaper editors didn't know what to do with them. For days the main story had been about the fighting at Neuve Chapelle in French Flanders. That's where the war was supposed to be, not at the Dardanelles, and that's where the Australian contingent was assumed to be heading. What was to become one of the strongest strands in our folklore began with falsehoods.

The papers ran a British War Office announcement saying that the Allies were advancing steadily up the Peninsula and that the Turks had prepared deep pits with spiked bottoms. After that the papers ran patchy reports for several days, including a story that 8000 Turks had

Q 3. Carlyon here offers several ideas about how the way the war was reported are important in understanding Gallipoli's place in people's consciousness. Identify these and discuss them.

surrendered and another that the Turks were burning every village from which they were driven, which was really something because the Turks hadn't lost a single village, and didn't. According to the press, the Australian death toll had crept up to forty-one. Then Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett's story appeared.

Ashmead-Bartlett worked for the London *Daily Telegraph*. He was an experienced and intelligent war correspondent and a stylish writer who was occasionally careless with facts. But the best thing about him, as far as Australian editors were concerned, was that he was *English*, and here he was writing admiring words about Australians. England was the mother country and the child craved approval. Ashmead-Bartlett had the Australians jumping out of their boats and rushing trenches with bayonets. He had men who had been 'shot to bits' lying on the beach and cheering throughout that first night. He declared that the Australians were the equal of the heroes of Mons, the Aisne, Ypres and Neuve Chapelle. Clergymen quoted from Ashmead-Bartlett's piece in their Sunday sermons. People cut out his words and



AWM ART02926. Major General Sir Joseph John Talbot Hobbs General Officer Commanding the 5th Australian Division. Hobbs served at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. Post war, Hobbs took an interest in the erection of memorials. Of the six divisional memorials, five were of his simple design. He chose Villers-Bretonneux for the national memorial. Later he designed the WA War Memorial.



AWM ART00195. Norman Carter, *Major General William Holmes* [DSO], 1920, Painting: oil on canvas, 71.6 x 61.2 cm. He died of wounds June 1917. He was the most senior Australian officer killed in action on the Western Front. He also served at Gallipoli.

pasted them in scrapbooks. Enlistments soared, reaching heights in July and August of 1915 that were never again reached. Ashmead-Bartlett, without meaning to, had started the ANZAC legend. He had done for Gallipoli what Shakespeare did for Agincourt and Tolstoy for Borodino. The trouble was, there was also an ANZAC reality. It too was something to be proud of, but it was not the same as the story Ashmead-Bartlett had created.

Censorship is inevitable in war and Ashmead-Bartlett had to leave things out. The result of these omissions, and Ashmead-Bartlett's rush of enthusiasm, meant that Australians became captivated by a story that wasn't quite accurate and sounded like an adventure written by Kipling. Ashmead-Bartlett made Gallipoli sound romantic and it wasn't.

Rather than fleeing, the Turks were fighting bravely. In military terms the landing was nearer to a failure than

Q 4. There are at least three different words used in this article in association with ANZAC. They are *myth*, *legend* and *tradition*. Discuss the difference in meaning between these three terms.

a success. The Australians were clinging to around 400 acres above the beach and in the rough shape of a triangle. After that first day they could not advance; they were already in the early days of a siege. The casualties were not the few hundred the newspapers were suggesting. By the time Ashmead-Bartlett's report appeared the Australian and New Zealand casualties were approaching 8000, of whom more than 2000 were dead.

We should not be surprised that exact casualty figures were a long time coming: even in June the Australian newspapers were reporting only 688 dead. We should not be surprised that the papers were publishing despatches from men such as Sir Ian Hamilton, the Allied commander-in-chief, who announced, with a nice feel for the abstract noun, that 'good progress' was being made. But, as a result of all this, young men were lining up at the recruiting centres with a fraudulent picture of the war in their heads. And families with husbands and sons at Gallipoli were living with false hopes.

Soon the Gallipoli campaign had a hero: Simpson the Christ-like figure, Simpson the one-man epic with the



AWM ART00101. George Bell, *Lieutenant Colonel Henry Murray*, 1919, Painting: oil on canvas, 61.4 x 51.6 cm. Harry Murray VC CMG DSO and Bar DCM was Australia's most decorated WW1 soldier.



AWM P02939.004. Major Frederick Harold Tubb VC, was awarded the Victoria Cross for 'most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty at Lone Pine Trenches, on 9 August 1915'. He died after being wounded on 20 September 1917 at Passchendaele.

donkey, Simpson the man who didn't carry a gun. In death he enjoyed a grace he had never enjoyed in life. He became Everyman at the Gallipoli front. He was beatified, then canonised. He was described as a six-foot Australian when in truth he was a Geordie who wanted to go home and stood five foot nine. He lodged in Australia's collective mind and grew bigger and bigger. And indeed he was a brave man who performed selfless acts. But—and I hope this doesn't sound unkind, because it isn't meant to be—there were larger heroes on Gallipoli, dozens and dozens of them.

Q 5. What point is Carlyon making about the 'heroes' of Gallipoli?

Men like Harry Murray, who became the most decorated Australian of the war; his mate Percy Black, who died at Bullecourt; Alfred Shout, who won the VC at Lone Pine and talked cheerfully as they carted him off to die; Walter Cass, who the following year became one of the heroes of the battle of Fromelles in French Flanders; Fred Tubb, who won the VC at Lone Pine and died two years later trying to win another one during the battle of Menin Road; the irrepressible Pompey Elliott; Bert Jacka, who won the VC on Gallipoli and should have received another at

Pozieres; and William Malone, the New Zealander who should have won the VC on Chunuk Bair. Gallipoli was also a fine training ground for future Australian generals. Monash, Glasgow, Gellibrand, Rosenthal, Hobbs, Holmes, Blamey and Morshead—all these were on Gallipoli, but for reasons that are unclear we remember Simpson best of all.

In some ways the mould for the Gallipoli story was cast back then, back when the Great War was still going on. The story, so the legend had it, was essentially about the beach and the rushing of the hills. It was essentially romantic. And, as time passed and the Allies had to evacuate the Peninsula, it became a sort of romantic tragedy, and eventually the best remembered tragedy in Australia's military history, which surely sells short what happened to us at Singapore in 1942. Gallipoli was about Simpson and the beach.

My dear friend Kenan Celik of Çanakkale was a few years ago asked to go to the helicopter pad on Hill 971 and guide a Sydney couple around the battlefield.

AWM ART09830. Bernard Hall, Brigadier General Thomas Blamey, 1927, Painting: oil on canvas, 76.8 x 66.6 cm. Later Major General, then Field Marshal Sir Thomas Albert Blamey CB CMG DSO. He is the only Australian to reach the rank of Field Marshal.





Brigadier General (later Major General Sir Thomas William) Glasgow CB CMG DSO. Distinguished himself at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. Credited with being instrumental in the Allied victory at Villers-Bretonneux on ANZAC Day 1918. Knighted in 1919.

The couple arrived in a helicopter they had chartered in Istanbul and asked Kenan to drive them straight to the beach. They spent twenty minutes there, took photographs, said it was 'very moving', thanked Kenan for 'showing them Gallipoli', and at once flew back to Istanbul. In passing, I like to think the man was a rich Sydney property developer.

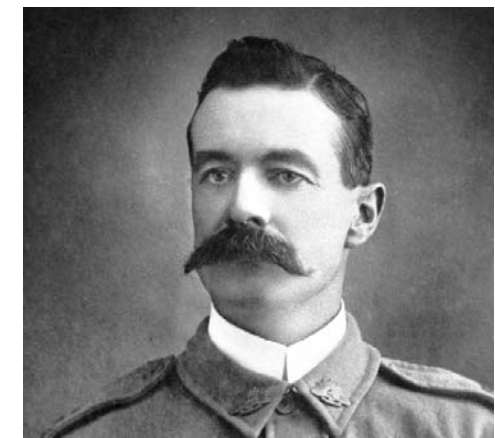
Whoever he was, he missed the real story, which was up on the escarpment. He missed seeing the scenes of true heroics. He missed seeing the sheer improbability of the Australian positions along that second ridge. He missed seeing Lone Pine where, in the grottoes, Australians did things so brave and so brutal they beggar the imagination. He missed seeing Chunuk Bair, where the New Zealanders fought a battle as frightful as Lone Pine. In short, he missed the grander story of Gallipoli, which was about the hanging on rather than the rush across the beach.

Q 6. What point is Carlyon making about the military significance of Gallipoli compared to that of the Western Front?

From those days in May 1915, when the first reports appeared in the press, Gallipoli has overshadowed all our military history. It is a word that immediately evokes an image, the way El Alamein, say, does not.

Gallipoli took two volumes of our official history of the Great War, against four volumes for France and Belgium, and one has to wonder if we got the proportions right. Six times as many Australians died in France and Belgium as did at Gallipoli. As one historian has put it, the western front is the major episode in Australia's military history. There, he said, we engaged the main army of the main enemy in the main theatre of war. Never was this more obvious than in the victories of 1918.

At Fromelles, in French Flanders, on one night in July 1916, an Australian division suffered 5500 casualties. Some of our best spirits died out on that soggy plain, mown down, as one man present put it, like great rows of teeth knocked from a comb. Fromelles was arguably the worst night in Australian history. It was a blunder by British and Australian generals. But who remembers it? Who goes there? Not many, if you look in the visitors' book at the Fromelles cemetery. Pozieres, down on the Somme, began a few days later. Three Australian divisions went through here twice. They fought under artillery bombardments that reduced the village to piles of ash and caused strong



AWM J00369. Major Percy Black DSO DCM who was killed at Bullecourt on 11 April 1917, aged 38 years.



AWM ART00201. George Coates, Captain Albert Jacka, 1921, Painting: oil on canvas, 76.8 x 63.3 cm. Albert Jacka VC MC and Bar was the first Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross in World War 1.

men to go mad. When, after six weeks, the last Australians were pulled out, our casualty list stood at 23 000—twenty-three thousand Australians dead and wounded to reclaim about 600 acres of France. The losses at Pozieres were the spur for the first conscription referendum in Australia and all the divisiveness that came with it. Men who had been at Gallipoli said Pozieres was worse, almost certainly because, by the standards of the western front, the artillery fire on ANZAC Cove had been relatively light. Pozieres is not that well-remembered either, and it should be.

Nineteen-seventeen was the worst year of the war for Australia. First there were the two battles of Bullecourt. Another 7500 casualties. Then came Passchendaele, or, more accurately, the series of battles that were called Third Ypres, a campaign that ended when men and horses were drowning in the mud. If you stand at Tyne Cot cemetery, look up the hill towards Passchendaele village and let your imagination run, you can see the hopelessness of the final assaults there. That field in front of you was a sea of craters, lip to lip, all of them filled with slime. The clayey soil had

turned to glue. Men couldn't move and rifles wouldn't fire.

You can stand at the Menin Gate and, if you have a few days to spare, read the names of 6176 Australians who were lost in the Ypres Salient and have no known grave. Australia's casualties from Third Ypres were 38,000. The British remember Passchendaele. There are buses of English pilgrims in the streets of Ypres just about every day. We don't remember Passchendaele so well here.

And now we move on to the strangest thing of all, the famous victories of 1918 that led to the first Remembrance Day: the battle in front of Amiens, the taking of Mont St Quentin and the breaking of the Hindenburg Line. Much is made these days of small detachments of Australian troops being under some form of American control. It is not generally known in this country that Monash at the Hindenburg Line had command over two American divisions. The Australian and Canadian corps in 1918 were important in a way quite out of proportion to their size, and probably didn't receive the credit they deserved because that would have implied some criticism of the divisions from the United Kingdom.

Monash and Arthur Currie, the Canadian commander,

AWM ART03350. James Peter Quinn, Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash [GCMG KCB], 1918, Painting: oil on canvas, 76.2 x 63.8 cm. Arguably Australia's most famous soldier. Landed at Gallipoli 26 April 1915. May 1918, given command of the Australian Corps. Post war, November 1918—Commissioner of Repatriation.





AWM ART02988. John Longstaff, *Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal* [KCB CMG DSO], 1919, Painting: oil on canvas, 73.8 x 61 cm. He landed at Gallipoli on 26 April 1915 where he was wounded twice. He served on the Western Front from 1916 until the end of the war and was Mentioned in Despatches seven times.

were perhaps the two best generals in the last year of the war. This wasn't going to be mentioned much in Britain either. The British generals came from the officer classes of Victorian England; Monash and Currie were citizen-soldiers.

We, as a nation, could have talked about these events in France and Belgium, but mostly we didn't, and still don't. Gallipoli is the campaign that goes past the brain and wriggles into the heart. It dominates popular discussions not only of the Great War but also of all Australian wars, and in objective terms this is surely wrong. But here we come to the essence of the matter. Gallipoli is part of the national mythology and mythology is seldom objective.

Ned Kelly is a lesser part of that same folklore and one might argue that he fails the test of objectivity too. Kelly fascinates people, generation after generation. We don't remember Redmond Barry, the judge who sentenced him to death, and yet it might be argued that Barry, through his interest in libraries and Melbourne University, was a civilising force in the Victorian colony, whereas Ned Kelly was a colourful step towards anarchy. We remember Bradman from the thirties and forties, and rightly so, but we don't much remember Howard Florey, the

pathologist from Adelaide, who saved the lives of hundreds of millions. There are no rules to these things, and we should not try to find them.

Military history has its paradoxes too. I sometimes get the feeling from things people say that World War 2 was won when Steven Spielberg landed Tom Hanks on Omaha Beach. I read a particularly silly piece in the *New Yorker* recently, a triumph of style over content that suggested that the lore of World War 2 remains 'on the whole heroic', while the imagery of the First 'remains that of utter waste'. There were Sommes and Passchendaeles in World War 2, lots of them, but they mostly happened in Russia and outside Berlin. I doubt Ukrainians would say that World War 2 was 'on the whole heroic'. We in the west will one day need to accept that the worst horrors of the second war against Germany happened in the east and that the war was actually won there.

Agincourt has a special place in British history, thanks mainly to Shakespeare. In truth the tale is rather seedier than he would have it. The Englishmen didn't



AWM PS0182. Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Walter Edmund Cass CMG, Brigade Major, 2nd Imperial Brigade and Colonel David Sydney Wanliss, CMG.



Brigadier General Harold Edward 'Pompey' Elliott CB CMG DSO DCM. Elliott was a veteran of the Boer War where he was awarded the DCM.

look nearly so handsome as they did in Laurence Olivier's film and one probably needed to be upwind of them. They were ragged and suffering from dysentery. And they weren't quite gentlemen either: they methodically set about butchering prisoners. The incident at San Juan Hill has a place in United States history way beyond its true significance, even if it did help with the election of a very fine president. There is also the Russian veneration of Marshal Kutuzov for his defeat of Napoleon. I wonder if Kutuzov really was as crafty as he is made out to be. Might it be that Napoleon was beaten by his own vanity and the snows of a Russian winter?

No, these things are not objective. But we should not be in a hurry to say that Gallipoli doesn't deserve its tender place in Australian life simply because it is shrouded in myths and half-truths, or because it is occasionally reinterpreted by adjunct professors like Alan Bond.

Q 7. So, why is Gallipoli special to Australians?

There are several things about Gallipoli that make it special. It is the first big thing that Australia, the new nation, did in the world. Then there is the place itself. It gets into your soul. Every time I smell thyme I think of Gallipoli. Every day I turn to the weather page of

The Australian to see what the weather is like there. Gallipoli is a harsh landscape, more Asian than European, and yet it has a pagan beauty. The water has all the colours of a peacock's tail. The sunsets make you wish you could paint. You look across to the island of Samothrace, a mountain peak exploding out of the sea, the home of gods with a corona of mist around the summit to prove it. There is a sense of timelessness. Every now and then you think you are lost in antiquity. You climb a hill and you can see Troy on the plain over the water. Climb another and you can see where Xerxes crossed on his way to Athens 2400 years ago. Look out from one of the abandoned forts on Kilit Bahir plateau and you can see pretty much what Alexander the Great saw.

You wander up Gully Ravine, probably the worst hellhole of the whole Gallipoli campaign, and you swear you are walking with ghosts and that you have entered a place of corruption. You can stand below the Nek at ANZAC, where the light horsemen crouched on that murderous dawn, and look, not at the ditch of perdition up ahead, but behind you,



AWM E02390. Lieutenant Colonel Leslie James Morshead DSO (later Lt Gen KCB KBE CMG DSO) landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. He served on the Western Front from 1916-1918. As a Major General in WW2, he commanded the 9th Division and won fame as the defender of Tobruk.

over the Aegean. It is such a shade of pale blue that you cannot tell where the sea ends and the sky begins. The ANZAC position has a charm: a sense of foreboding and foreignness on the one hand, and of uncommon beauty on the other. It is like no other place on earth. To me, the battlefields of France are sad and evocative places. They are set among some of the prettiest farm land in the world, among beech and plane trees and stands of corn seven-feet tall. Yet they are not exotic; they are not Gallipoli.

The poetic associations go beyond the place itself. The story has a poetry to it, which might explain why it has produced so many books, not just here but in Britain. It is a natural story in three acts. It has heroes and villains. It has the Hamlet-like figure of Ian Hamilton, a brave man but a poor commander, cultured and courtly, more a man of letters than a general, a man of real substance and a ditherer, a man looking back to some Arthurian age of chivalry, a man who did not understand the industrial age and its howitzers. And there is Kemal Ataturk, a man who believed in himself, who made his mind up quickly, who could reduce a problem to its essentials and never shrunk from the solutions that he deemed necessary. Hamilton was a romantic and Kemal a realist, and they are both the stuff of literature. And then there is the supporting cast: Enver Pasha, the intriguer who put his country up for auction; Churchill, a brilliant man consumed by the need to make a mark; Kitchener, the gloomy lighthouse who



AWM ART09807. Will Longstaff, *Menin Gate at Midnight*, 1927. *Menin Gate at midnight* was painted by Will Longstaff to commemorate those soldiers with no marked graves on the Western Front during the First World War. Longstaff attended a ceremony dedicating the Menin Gate memorial to the soldiers of the British empire forces, just outside the town of Ypres, Belgium, on 24 July 1927. Longstaff was profoundly moved by what he witnessed and that night, unable to sleep, Longstaff returned to Menin Road and later claimed to have had a vision of spirits of the dead rising out of the soil around him. On returning to his studio in London he painted *Menin Gate at midnight* in a single session.

every now and then gave off a flash of light, and Asquith, a good man who seemed terrified of the things a prime minister has to do in time of war.

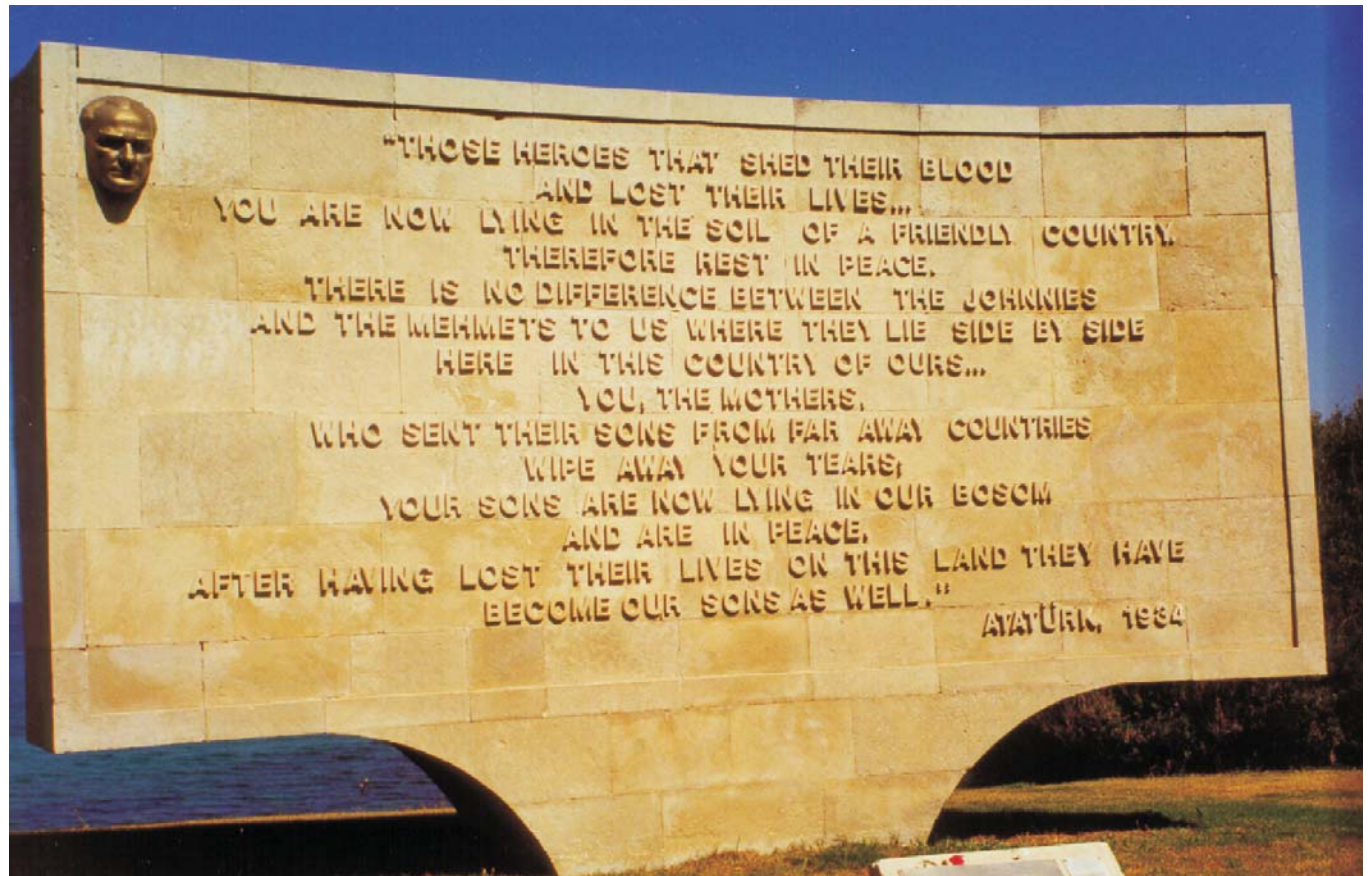
Part of the folklore is to see Gallipoli as an example of British military incompetence and we Australians as victims. There were some poor English generals there, notably Hunter-Weston at Helles, who had clearly envisioned *Blackadder*; Godley, the robotic soldier; and the doddering Stopford at Suvla. But there was also Birdwood. He was no tactician, but he had affection for his Australians. And there was Harold Walker who took over our 1 Division and to whom

this country owes a large debt. For reasons I don't understand Hooky Walker is not remembered here. The truth is that some of our senior officers didn't perform that well either, particularly in the shambles that followed the landing and in the August offensive.

In folklore Gallipoli is all about 'what ifs'. What if we had been landed on Brighton Beach instead of at Ari Burnu? What if the New Zealanders had reached Chunuk Bair on time? What if the Suvla landing had worked? What if the Turks had not been warned that a landing was coming? What if Vice-Admiral de Robeck's Navy had shown more interest in fighting the Turks?

Speculating about those 'what ifs' and concentrating on failures of military command tend to miss a much larger point. Gallipoli was first of all a *political* failure. The 'Easterners' in the political salons of London believed that the war could best be won by opening up fronts on the flanks, by niggling not at Germany but at Austria–Hungary and the Ottoman empire. It is easy to see from this distance that this policy was wrong-headed. As someone said, it was like a boxer trying to win the fight by knocking out his opponent's seconds.

The truth, I suspect, is that the Gallipoli campaign, and what was supposed to follow from it, could never have succeeded. Thus, the 'what ifs' don't matter. I don't



The famous and evocative monument at ANZAC Cove inscribed: *Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now living in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours... You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace, after having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.* Atatürk, 1934.
Photograph courtesy Kevin Long.

think the Gallipoli campaign could have worked if ten, rather than five, divisions had been landed. It's a long way from Gallipoli to Vienna. The war was always going to be won or lost on the western front.

And I don't think it matters if there are two Gallipolis, one that belongs mostly to folklore and mythology and another that belongs to facts and reality. But I do think

the factual story is the more affecting, the more worthy, if you like. The story of what happened to the infantrymen, the volunteers from Ballarat and Bathurst, stands the scrutiny of ninety years.

Getting ashore was not that hard. Hanging on, up on that second ridge, for eight months—that was hard.

The Australians defended absurd positions like Pope's Hill, with a cliff behind them and the Turks a few yards ahead of them. They looked after each other: Gallipoli was all about mateship. They kept their good humour. There is indeed a cheerfulness in soldiers' letters from Gallipoli that one seldom comes upon in letters from France. There were no back areas: even when you were out of the line you were still under artillery and sniper fire. The food was unspeakable and almost inedible. The flies were a plague. At one point up to 70 per cent of the ANZAC force was thought to have dysentery. Everyone had lice: they made no distinction between generals and privates. Men who went briefly to the island of Imbros marvelled at sounds they hadn't heard for months: a woman's voice, a dog's bark, the tinkle of a piano.

The miracle is simply that these men didn't lose heart—and they didn't, not even when they knew it was all lost and they were creeping away by night, leaving so many of their mates dead in the ground.

Q 8. Identity is partly about what you would like to be, as well as what you are. How does Gallipoli set standards that Australians can still look up to and aspire to?

That, to me, is why we are right to remember Gallipoli—because of what it says about the spirit of the men, all of them volunteers, who served there. If we are to have a foundation story, we could do worse than a tale that is a compound of

mateship and endurance, cynicism and rough humour, bungling and heroics.

These, in Charles Bean's words, were great-hearted men. They were not necessarily better than the other men who fought at Gallipoli. But they were *our* great-hearted men, and they were not like those of any other nation. We are surely right to honour them. We are surely right to walk past the political intrigues and the military blunders and say that Gallipoli says something good about the Australian people and the Australian spirit.

And it says something too that, almost 90 years after the event, we believe in the Gallipoli story more ardently than we ever have. Maybe Bondy was right. Maybe in some unexplainable way we *did* win.

But it hardly matters at all what I say here tonight. To paraphrase from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the world will little note nor long remember what we say *here*, but it can never forget what they did *there*.

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About the author

Les Carlyon is the author of *Gallipoli*, which has become a best seller in Australia and Britain. It won the Queensland Premier's Literary Award in 2002 and the Readers' Choice Award conducted by the Australian Publishers' Association in 2003. He has been the editor of *The Age*, and editor-in-chief of the *Herald* and *Weekly Times* group. He won the Walkley Award in 1971 and the Graham Perkin Journalist of the Year Award in 1993.

Q 9. What does Gallipoli mean to you today? Does it still matter? Is it still relevant?