

# Continuity and Change

Time,

## *Their Service—Our Heritage*

*Their Service—Our Heritage* is a program being run by the Department of Veterans' Affairs to commemorate the place of Australian servicemen and servicewomen in Australia's history.

It has been inspired by the approaching centenary of Federation, and is part of a move to see that the contribution to our nationhood made by these men and women is acknowledged and honoured.

Every Australian has been affected by war this century. *Their Service—Our Heritage* will help students to be aware of and understand what Australian servicemen and servicewomen have done, and help them to appreciate the contribution they have made to creating the society which young people enjoy today.



## Gallipoli and Australian Identity:

# 1915—2000



- 1 On 25 April Australians will have a holiday. Why? List your reasons to explain why we have a holiday on that day.

Also on 25 April 2000 a new memorial park will be dedicated at the Gallipoli battlefield, in Turkey. 10,000 people, many of them young Australian and New Zealand backpackers, will be there for the dawn ceremony.

Look at the artist's illustration of this memorial on the back cover of this magazine.

- 2 Describe the memorial.
- 3 What is your impression of it?
- 4 Why do you think it has been designed and placed in the way it has?
- 5 What ideas or messages do you think it might be trying to get across to people?

Here is the text on Anzac which has been written for the new memorial. The writer is trying to express the meaning and significance of Anzac. List the elements that the writer emphasises. Why do you think he has chosen those elements?

## ANZAC

*'Anzac stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat.'*

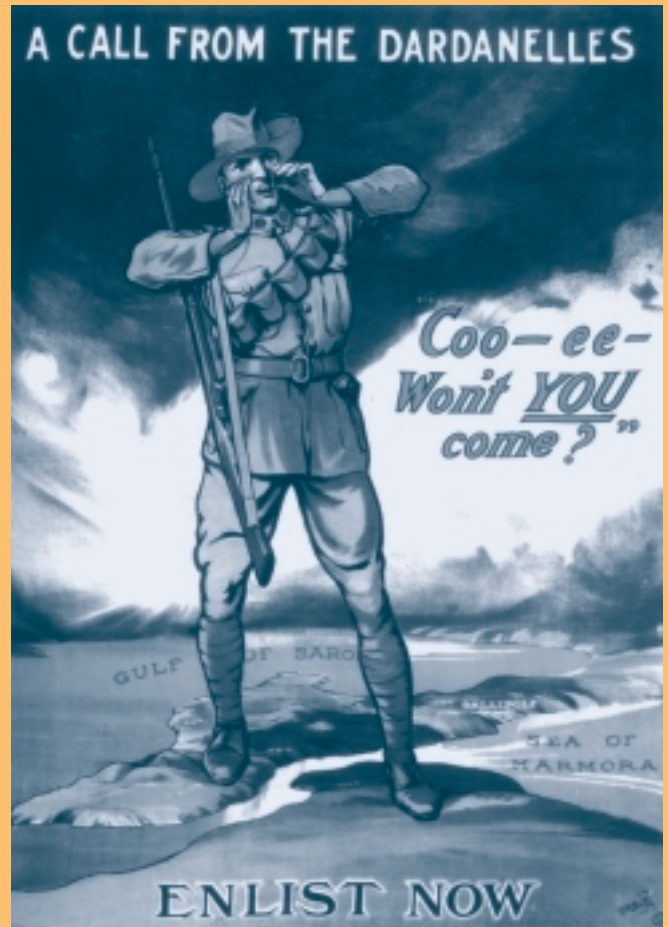
C. E. W. Bean, Australian official historian

The British Empire, Dominion and French forces suffered severely on Gallipoli. More than 21,000 British, 10,000 French, 8,000 Australians, 2,400 New Zealanders, 1,350 Indians and 49 Newfoundlanders were killed. The wounded totalled nearly 97,000. In Australia and New Zealand people looked in disbelief at the mounting casualty lists. Gallipoli was the beginning of a long road for the Australian and New Zealand soldiers that took them to the even more costly battlefields of France and Belgium.

On 25 April 1916, people gathered throughout Australia and New Zealand to commemorate Gallipoli. Today, Anzac Day has become a time to remember those who served and died for Australia and New Zealand in war. However, it remains a day that recalls particularly 25 April 1915 when Australians and New Zealanders landed on the shores of Gallipoli, founding a lasting tradition of courage, endurance and sacrifice.

The memorial commemorates the landing on 25 April 1915, 85 years ago, of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps—ANZAC—on the Gallipoli peninsula during World War 1.

The importance of Gallipoli to Australians puzzles many people from other countries. Gallipoli was a defeat; there were many other nationalities in the armies which fought at Gallipoli; casualties among the British and French were far more than among the Australians; more Turks than anyone else died there; far more Australians died on the Western Front than at Gallipoli.



So why do Australians make so much of it? Why will the Australian Prime Minister be at the dedication, and why will the event be the main focus of interest in Australia on that day? And, what is it that will be remembered and commemorated on the day – what is the meaning of it all?

This article will help you to answer those questions.

### INQUIRY SEQUENCE

#### Investigation 1

What happened at Gallipoli in 1915?

#### Investigation 2

Why has Gallipoli become so important to Australian identity?

#### Investigation 3

What is being commemorated at Gallipoli and in Australia in 2000?

## Curriculum Links

This unit is useful in helping students achieve the following learning outcomes for **Time, Continuity and Change**:

- Describe some significant ideas, people or events that have contributed to Australian identity;
- Describe and explain lasting and changing aspects of a society;
- Critically compare representations of people, events and issues;
- Use knowledge about the past to explain contemporary events;
- Analyse people, issues and events in their own time.

## Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit students will be better able to:

- Describe what happened during the Gallipoli campaign
- Empathise with the soldiers' experience of the war
- Discuss why the campaign failed
- Explain the origins of the Anzac tradition
- Analyse the changing nature of the Anzac tradition in Australian national identity
- Appreciate the nature of the new memorial at North Beach, on the Gallipoli peninsula.

## INVESTIGATION 1

### What happened at Gallipoli in 1915?

**We talk about 25 April, and the Gallipoli landing. But the events at Gallipoli went for over eight months.**

Look at the timeline and narrative below. Use this information and the evidence in the following pages to create a brief summary of what happened during each of the main stages of the Anzac experience at Gallipoli. Draw up a table like this to summarise your information and ideas.

**AT THE END OF THIS UNIT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR SUMMARIES:**

- ★ What happened at Gallipoli?
- ★ What was it like for the soldiers there?
- ★ Why did the campaign fail?
- ★ Why has Gallipoli been so important to Australia both then and now?

Date	Event / Period	Your summary of the key elements involved
25 April	A Landing	
26 April– 19 May	B Consolidation	
19–24 May	C Turkish offensive	
25 May–July	D Summer stalemate	
August	E August offensive (includes Lone Pine and The Nek)	
September– December	F Winter stalemate and evacuation	



## A NARRATIVE OF THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN

### The strategy

By April 1915 there had been fighting in World War 1 for eight months. Britain and France were facing Germany on the Western Front (northern France and Belgium); Russia was fighting Germany and its ally Austria-Hungary on the Eastern Front; Turkey was supporting Germany. (See Source 1)

The British and French agreed to land troops on the Gallipoli peninsula separating Europe from Asia. The aim of this was for the troops to move overland and attack the forts which were overlooking the Dardanelles Strait, and to seize the Turkish capital, Constantinople. Controlling the Dardanelles would enable Allied ships to provide supplies to Russia, and put more pressure on the Eastern Front. It might also take Turkey out of the war. Ships alone had failed to take the Dardanelles. Therefore a landing of troops by sea was now decided on.



Source 1

### 25 April

Australians landed on the Gallipoli peninsula, at Ari Burnu (soon renamed Anzac Cove by the Australians) before dawn on 25 April. The aim of the first wave of 1,500 Australian and New Zealand troops was to secure the beach, and seize the high ground of the Third (or Gun) Ridge. Control of this high ground was vital for success. Later landings of the remaining 2500 troops would then be able to push their way inland towards the forts of the Dardanelles. Finally, the remaining 21,000 Anzacs would be sent ashore to move inland under the protection of the first 4,000. (See Source 3)

The first wave of troops took the beach, but they failed to secure the higher ridges overlooking the area. This meant that the following troops were unable to advance.

The area where the troops landed was very rugged. (See Source 4) There were steep cliffs, crisscrossing gullies, and excellent cover for Turkish snipers. Troops quickly lost contact with each other, and were unable to reach their objectives. The Turkish defenders, though there were few of them, had the great advantage of the higher ground. The Anzacs failed to achieve their objective. (See Source 5)

Historians still debate today whether the Anzac troops were landed at the correct place. Most people believe that currents or a mistake by the navigators on the landing barges took the troops over a kilometre too far north, and away from the much gentler area inland from Gaba Tepe.

However, some others argue that the landing at Ari Burnu was deliberate: although the area was much more rugged, it was lightly defended, there would be the element of surprise, and it was protected from recently reinforced Turkish artillery.

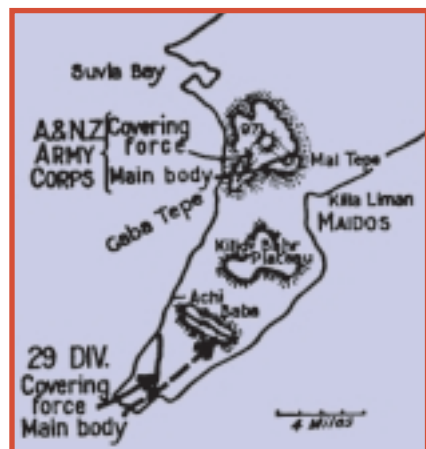
The Anzacs had gained a few hundred metres by nightfall, and gained little more ground for the remaining seven months of the campaign.

Other troops also landed on that day.



Source 2

John Laffin, *Damn The Dardanelles! The Story of Gallipoli*, Doubleday, Sydney, 1980 page 44



Source 3

Denis Winter, *25 April 1915, The Inevitable Tragedy*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994 page 154



#### Source 4

Denis Winter, 25 April 1915, *The Inevitable Tragedy*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994 page 156

A French force landed at Kum Kale, opposite Cape Helles and on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles, and established themselves, but were then withdrawn the following day to join the British forces.

By nightfall on 25 April the military leaders realised that they had no hope of achieving their original objectives. They considered withdrawing all troops, but decided to stay. The order was given: 'Dig! Dig! Dig!'

### WHERE DID THE TROOPS AT GALLIPOLI COME FROM?

There were three main landing forces:

The ANZAC Corps (Australians and New Zealanders)

The British 29th Division

A French Army Corps

The total number of men was about 75,000

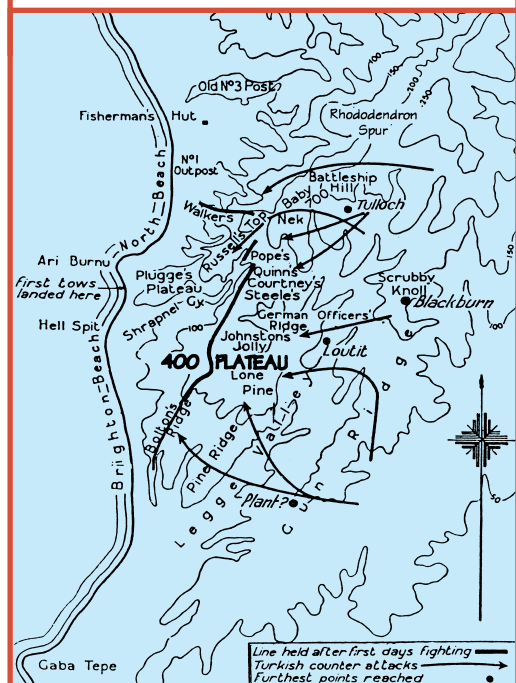
The troops came from:

- ★ Britain – with Regiments formed in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales
- ★ British Empire – Australia, Newfoundland, Ceylon (the English Planters' Rifle Corps), New Zealand (including Maoris), India (Sikhs in the Indian Mule Cart Corps), Nepal (Gurkhas)
- ★ France
- ★ French Empire – Algeria, Morocco, Senegal
- ★ Palestine – Russian and Syrian Jewish refugees (the Zion Mule Corps)
- ★ Turkey
- ★ Germany

The British and Indian troops landed around Cape Helles area (see Source 2). In several areas this landing was almost unopposed. However, at V and W beaches, in the Cape Helles area, the fighting was as hard and as bloody as at Ari Burnu, with men from Dublin, Munster, Hampshire and particularly Lancashire being caught in murderous fire. At W Beach, six Victoria Crosses were awarded for bravery at the landing.

#### Source 5

Denis Winter, 25 April 1915, *The Inevitable Tragedy*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994 page 157



### 26 April – 24 May

During this period the front lines were established and strengthened, but there was little advance on what was established on the first day.

Between 6 and 8 May Australians and New Zealanders were involved in a major attack at the Battle of Krithia, around Cape Helles. The attack failed with great loss of life. The attackers did not even reach the enemy trenches.

On 19 May the Turkish forces attacked along the whole Anzac Front. An estimated 3,000 Turks were killed in a virtually suicidal series of attacks on the Australians' trenches. After five days an armistice was called to bury the rotting, swollen and maggot-infested dead bodies. This was the last time the Turks tried a frontal attack on the Anzac lines.

### May – July

This was a period of stalemate. There were occasional attempts to gain ground, with no success. There were trench raids, sniping, bomb-throwing, and attempted undermining of each side's trench system. The summer heat brought millions of flies, and with them dysentery and other diseases. Disease became the biggest killer of troops during this period. Life was uncomfortable, unhygienic and monotonous.



## August offensives

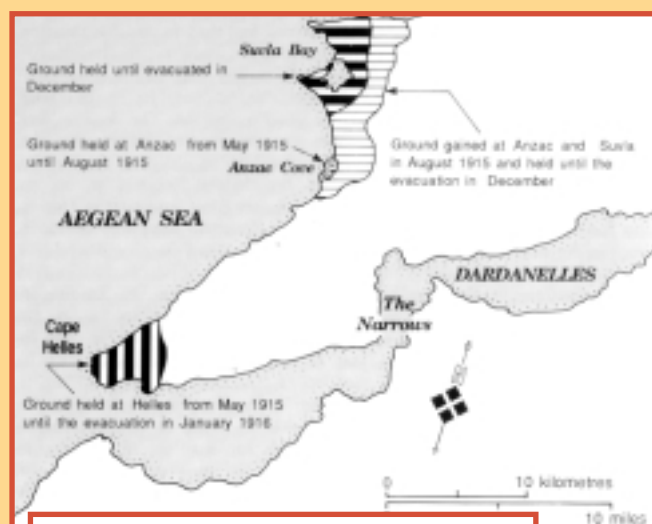
In August the leaders decided to try and break the stalemate. (See Source 6) They planned a major landing by British troops north of Anzac Cove, at Suvla Bay. This force would seize the area, which would then be used to land supplies for the Anzacs during the coming winter. These troops would then, if possible, be used to help the main attack, which was to gain the high ground between Chunuk Bair and Hill 971 (or Koja Chemu Tepe). The idea was that the troops at Suvla would quickly move inland and attack the defending Turkish troops from the rear while they were facing those attacking them from the front. A series of diversionary attacks by the Anzacs further south would stop the Turks from rushing other defenders to the main attack area.

One of these diversionary attacks was at Lone Pine. The Australians rushed a heavily entrenched area, and in savage hand-to-hand fighting drove the Turkish defenders out. Seven Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians involved in this attack, and many Australians were killed. The following day, Australian troops attacked across the tiny area of flat land called The Nek. Three waves of Australian Light Horsemen were massacred on the tiny area separating the Australian and Turkish trenches by the defenders.

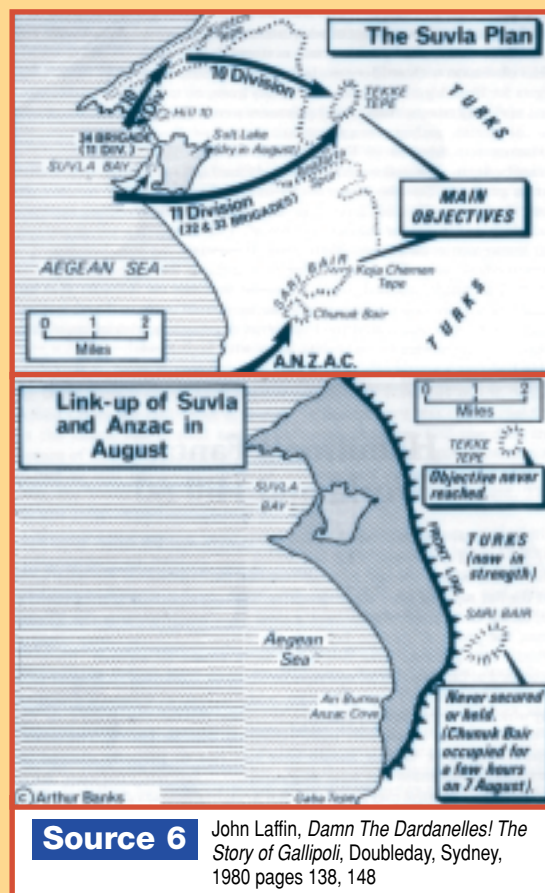
The Suvla and Anzac link-up was successfully made, (see Source 7) but the main attack strategy failed. Only the New Zealanders reached their objective of Chunuk Bair. They briefly gained the summit, but could not hold it. The troops at Suvla were not called into the main offensive, as the main objectives had not been taken.

This is the action shown in the 1981 film *Gallipoli*, which presents an inaccurate view of the strategic situation and distorts the role of the British ('drinking tea on the beach while the Anzacs are being slaughtered at the Nek').

In late August there was a major attempt to capture Hill 60, part of the heights above Suvla Bay. Once again the Turkish defenders were able to maintain their position. Casualties, many of them newly arrived reinforcements who were poorly prepared for the attack, were very high.



**Source 7** Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990 page 96



**Source 6** John Laffin, *Damn The Dardanelles! The Story of Gallipoli*, Doubleday, Sydney, 1980 pages 138, 148

## September 1915 – January 1916

The stalemate continued into the bitter cold of early winter, with many cases of illness and severe frostbite quickly developing among the troops.

The decision was made to withdraw the troops. This was a difficult operation, as the Turks would be able to attack the weakened defences. Over three weeks in December the 40,000 strong Anzac force was withdrawn by stealth, without the Turks realising. On 20 December the defenders suddenly realised that there was not one enemy soldier left at Anzac.

The British were then also withdrawn from Helles, the last men leaving under cover of dark on 9 January.

In 1919 Imperial War Graves Commission staff returned to establish cemeteries, and to identify and bury the thousands of dead whose bones had laid bleaching in the open since 1915.

## THE DEAD AT GALLIPOLI

Turkey – 86,500 (estimated)  
 Britain – 21,000  
 France – 9,798  
 Australia – 8,141 (from 50,000 who served)  
 New Zealand – 2,431  
 India – 1,350  
 Newfoundland – 49

Many of the battlefield areas on the Gallipoli peninsula have now been farmed, and would be unrecognisable to the men of 1915. Not so the Anzac area. It is so rugged and inhospitable that almost the only change has been the planting of some trees, and the establishment of many military cemeteries and monuments. Visitors to the area today can still see the remains of the trenches, still stumble over the rugged gullies and ravines, still be torn and scratched by the prickly bushes, still see basically what the Anzacs saw in April 1915.

### What was the ANZAC area like?

Look at the following images of the Anzac area, and answer these questions:

- 1 Describe Ari Burnu (Anzac Cove)
- 2 Describe the rest of the Anzac area.
- 3 Why would the area be difficult to attack?
- 4 How was the Anzac area different from the rest of the Gallipoli peninsula?
- 5 We do not know if the troops were landed there deliberately or by mistake. How might it be an advantage to have landed there? How might it have been a disadvantage?
- 6 Add any comments to the table on page 5.

#### Source 8 Topographical map of the Gallipoli peninsula

Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland, 1984 page 106



#### Source 9 Rest Gully

George Odgers, *Diggers*, From 1860 to June 1944, Lansdowne, Sydney, 1994, page 78



#### Source 10 Ari Burnu (Anzac Cove), showing the landing boats

Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland, 1984 page 8



#### Source 11 The Anzac battle area

Nigel Steel and Peter Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*, Macmillan, London, 1994 page ix





## Source 12 The words of the ANZACS

Look at these accounts of aspects of the soldiers' experiences.

- 7 Mark each account A – F, to match the period of the campaign each seems to be from (see page 5).
- 8 Discuss what these accounts tell you about these aspects of the soldiers' war experience:
  - food
  - nature of the fighting
  - living conditions
  - sanitation
  - disease
  - attitudes
  - characteristics and qualities.
- 9 Add any comments to the table on page 5.

**A**  
Private L. R. Donkin, labourer, Maitland, NSW. Diary, 25 April 1915. (Killed in action 15 August 1915 aged 23)

*I know its right and proper that a man should go back and fight again but Sunday's battle and the horrors of the trenches Sunday night... had unnerved me completely.*

**B**  
Private L. R. Donkin, Diary, 16 May 1915.

*[We sailed] off to death and 'Glory.' What fools we are, men mad. The Turk he comes at one, with the blood lust in his eyes, shouts Allah! Australia like, we swear Kill or be killed... Where are the rest of my 13 mates?... myself I consider lucky getting away from the acres of dead men... And now I go back there... God only knows what is in store for me.*

**C**  
CSM G. S. Feist, wheat agent, Mount Kokeby, WA. Letter May 1915. (Killed in action 3-4 September 1916 age 28)

*I was in the second tow and we got it, shrapnel and rifle fire bad. We lost three on the destroyer and four in the boat getting to land. The Turks were close on the beach when we got there. We had to fix bayonets and charge. We jumped into the water up to our waists and some of them their armpits... we had to trust to the penknife at the end of our rifles. When I got there it was not long, but... I tell you, one does not forget these things... all we thought of was to get at them. One would hear someone say 'They've got me' and you register another notch when you get to them, that's all.*



**D**  
Lance Corporal G. D. Mitchell, clerk, Thebarton, SA. Diary 25 April 1915

*I remember saying 'the —s will give us a go after all.' 'Klock-klock-klock. Wee-wee-wee' came the little messengers of death. Then it opened out into a terrific chorus... The key was being turned in the lock of the lid of hell. Some men crouched in the crowded boat, some sat up nonchalantly, some laughed and joked, while others cursed with ferocious delight... Fear was not at home.*

**E**  
Trooper I. L. Idriess, miner, Grafton, NSW. The Desert Column, p 46 (Diary September 1915)

*... immediately I opened...[my tin of jam] the flies rushed [it] ...all fighting amongst themselves. I wrapped my overcoat over the tin and gouged out the flies, then spread the biscuit, then held my hand over it and drew the biscuit out of the coat. But a lot of flies flew into my mouth and beat about inside... I nearly howled with rage... Of all the bastards of places this is the greatest bastard in the world.*

**F**  
Lt R. C. Hunter, solicitor, Forbes, NSW. Letter 6 October 1915 (Killed in action 13 June 1916, aged 24)

*A wash would be a great luxury, lice and flies...[are] in everything, I wear my clothes inside out every few days, but still the brutes are scratched for.*

**G**  
Captain D. G. Campbell, grazier, Bombala, NSW. Letter 11 August 1915. (Killed in action 21 October 1917)

*The worst things here (Turks excepted) are the flies in millions, lice... & everlasting bully-beef and biscuit, & too little water. Also it will be good thing when we get a chance to bury some of the dead.*

**H**  
Pte E. C. N. Devlin, clerk, Manly, NSW. Letter 2 September 1915. (Killed in action 30 May 1916, aged 35)

*They are lucky who get away from here wounded... It is quite common for men to go mad here. The strain on the nerves is so severe.*

**I**  
Lt F. H. Semple, company secretary, Mosman, NSW. Letter 13 August 1915. (Killed in action 19 May 1918 aged 29)

*One of the greatest difficulties here is the shortage of water... I had... the first [shave] for a week and my face was coated with the dust and grime I had got through all the recent fighting and trench digging. After I had finished the water in my mess tin ... [was] muddy ... and I washed my face in that and ... [then] had my tea out of the same tin.*



**J**  
Capt. F. Coen, barrister, Yass, NSW. Letter 12 August 1915.  
(Killed in action 28 July 1916 aged 32)

*I have not had a wash now for 4 weeks, not had my clothes off. I accomplish my toilet with the corner of a towel steeped in a 2 ounce tobacco tin. Water for washing purposes is out of the question.*

**K**  
Private Adil Shahin, 27th Battalion,  
Turkish 5th Army, Interview 1985

*One part of my company lay wounded, one part had been killed, so we had to pull out till our regiment came to support us. We retreated to Kemalsirt (Scrubby Knoll), and there we met Mustafa Kemal ... And we jumped into the second line of trenches there, and when the second attack came at us we stayed there in our trenches and from then on, no one left their places.*

**L**  
Private Mustafa Koja, 19th  
Division, Turkish 5th Army,  
Interview 1985

*You either die or you survive. At the front there is nowhere to escape. We were up on the hill and they were down on the plain. They put their machine-guns at the bottom of the slopes and tried to dig in ... Even eventually made some flower beds there, right on the flat where they were, and they're still there.*

Kit Denton, *Gallipoli: One Long Grave*, Time-Life Books Australia, Sydney, 1986, page 31



**M**  
Private Tom Usher, 9th Battalion AIF, Interview 1984

*You're up to your neck in water – and a lot of them got drowned, too, with the weight of the packs and that – then scramble ashore and take shelter as quick as you could. You're only looking after yourself, you couldn't worry about the other bloke, you had to get ashore as quick as you could – just keep your rifle above your head, keep it dry ... I could see these cliffs, and I ran for it. You didn't care who you were with as long as you got away from the fire ... I remember one bloke, he got hit in the mouth – he lost part of his tongue, I couldn't understand what he was talking about.*

*I didn't like the dirty conditions – you couldn't even clean the old flamin' shirt, couldn't get a new issue and you'd have to go and wash it in the sea-water. There was no fresh water to wash your clothes in – gee, it was filthy ... The fatigue work with water was an awful job, carrying two tins of water from the beach back up to the trenches ... It was two hours off four hours on for that ...*

*You can't imagine what it was like, the filthy conditions, and especially using those latrines with all those paper (for cleaning) blowing all over the place. And flies! Look, you'd open the tin and there'd be millions of them, Crikey filthy filthy conditions ....*

**N**  
Private Frank Parker, 5th Battalion AIF, Interview 1984

*It was very steep terrain, steep gullies, and it was very hard going. We didn't see many Turks at all. It was just a matter of going for your life. We all got mixed up. We were all over the place – there was the 5th Battalion mixed up with the 6th Battalion, the 8th Battalion – all over the place! The higher up we got the worse it got! We had to pull ourselves up in the virgin country, and here they were in trees and God knows what they had a sitting shot at us. Then we started to get heavy fire and the casualties were very, very high, and after that we got orders to dig in ...*

#### Sources:

**A–J** Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1974, pp 59, 55, 76  
**K–N** Harvey Broadbent, *The Boys Who Came Home*, ABC, Sydney, 1990 pp 80, 52, 49, 47

## Why did the Anzacs fail to take Gallipoli?

Historians have suggested many reasons.

**10** Look at this list, and explain how each might be relevant in answering the question. You may also be able to add more if you do more reading and research on the subject.

**11** Add any comments to the table on page 5.

Factor	Why it might be important
Poor planning of the invasion	
The courage and skill of the Turkish soldiers	
The skill of the Turkish leadership, especially Mustapha Kemal	
The topography	
The lack of effective artillery support	
The lack of firepower by machine guns	
Other	

## Film as a representation of history

One of the strongest ways of transmitting ideas today is through film, particularly popular feature films. Some of you may have seen the 1981 film *Gallipoli*. What is it telling us about the Anzac Legend in the 1980s and beyond?

**12** Look carefully at the film, and consider these questions:

- a) What incidents do the film makers choose to present? What picture or image does this collection create?

- b) What image of the Anzacs do they put across, and how do they do this? (Look at such things as casting, humour, bravery, discipline, identity, messages about war, etc.)
- c) What messages are presented in the film? (For example, who is to blame for the massacre at the Nek?)
- d) Try to go back to historic documents to compare the historical records with the film version. (What is selected, what is left out, what is changed?)
- e) Compare the image of Gallipoli which finally emerges with C. E. W. Bean's work. (See Source 3 in Investigation 2 below). What are the similarities and differences?

## INVESTIGATION 2

### Why has Gallipoli become so important to Australian identity?

On 25 April 2000, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children in Australia and overseas will attend Anzac Day ceremonies and marches. The nation will stop to observe the occasion.

Why is Anzac Day so important to Australians and their sense of national identity?

Look at the following documents to help you consider this question.

- 1** What, according to the newspaper account, had happened at Gallipoli?
- 2** What is the image of the Australian soldier which emerges from this account?
- 3** How does the language of the article get this impression across? Select four examples and comment on them.
- 4** What are the strengths and weaknesses of this account as a source of knowledge of what happened at Gallipoli?

### Source C4 Extracts from an account of the landing by Ellis Ashmead Bartlett

Australians knew by 30 April that their troops had landed, but they had no details. They only knew that they were involved in a major action at Gallipoli. The first detailed report was printed in the daily newspapers on 8 May. It was written by the experienced British official war correspondent, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett.

#### THE LANDING.

Their magazines were not charged, so they just went in with cold steel.

northwards and eastwards, searching for fresh enemies to bayonet. It was difficult country in which to entrench. Therefore they preferred to advance.

#### A STIRRING STORY.

Then the Australians found themselves facing an almost perpendicular cliff of loose sandstone, covered with thick shrubbery. Somewhere, half-way up, the enemy had a second trench strongly held, from which they poured a terrible fire on the troops below.

A serious problem was getting the wounded from the shore. . . . The courage displayed by these wounded Australians will never be forgotten. . . . In fact, I have never seen anything like these wounded Australians in war before. Though many were shot to bits, without the hope of recovery, their cheers resounded throughout the night. . . . They were happy because they knew they had been tried for the first time and had not been found wanting . . .

#### HOW THE AUSTRALIANS GAINED FOOTING AT THE DARDANELLES.

#### "NO FINER FEAT IN THE WAR."

#### OPERATIONS PROCEEDING SUCCESSFULLY.

The Australians, who were about to go into action for the first time in trying circumstances, were cheerful, quiet and confident. There was no sign of nerves nor of excitement.

Here was a tough proposition to tackle in the darkness but those colonials, practical above all else, went about it in a practical way . . .

They stopped for a few minutes to pull themselves together, got rid of their packs, and charged their magazines.

Then this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliffs without responding to the enemy's fire. They lost some men, but did not worry.

There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights, above all holding on whilst the reinforcements were landing.

The Australians rose to the occasion. Not waiting for orders, or for the boats to reach the beach, they sprang into the sea, and, forming a sort of rough line, rushed at the enemy's trenches.

But then the Australasians, whose blood was up, instead of entrenching, rushed

Melbourne Argus, 8 May 1915.

## Source 2 Extract from a soldier's letter home to his mother in Yass, NSW

*In the early hours of the morning [of 26 April, 1915] I heard the Officers going along amongst the men, saying "Stick to it lads, don't go to sleep", and the cheerful reply would be "No Sir, we won't go to sleep", and my heart swelled with admiration. I knew what the ordeal of the strenuous day before had been, and knew what pluck and determination was necessary to keep awake and alert through the long weary hours of the night, therefore I thought I was justified in being proud of being an Australian and after that night I had no fear as to the result of our operations eventually. Give me Australians as comrades and I will go anywhere duty calls, and I hope to be pardoned for saying so, being one myself. Thus it was the Australians passed their first day and night on the battlefield, Sunday, April 25th. What a difference to the Sunday spent at home, I wondered often through the day and night if the loved ones at home had any kind of presentiment of what we were doing.*

Extract from a letter of Roy Denning to his mother, in Cheryl Mongan and Richard Reid, *'We have not forgotten' Yass & District's War 1914-1918*, Milltown Research & Publications, Yass, 1998, p 98

It was published in early 1916, and sold over one hundred thousand copies among the troops and in Australia in that year. The image of the Anzac soldier as it was presented in *The Anzac Book* emphasised that they were:

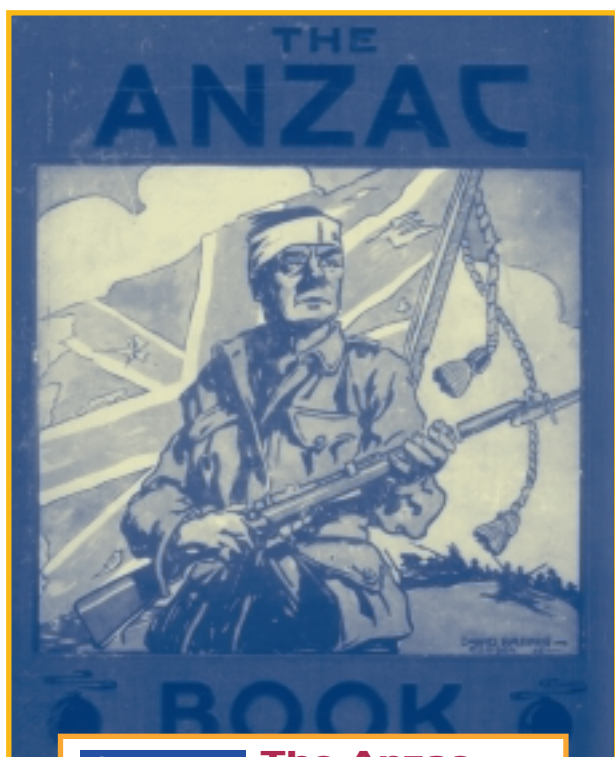
- ★ direct and straightforward in their dealings with each other
- ★ contemptuous of class and privilege
- ★ undisciplined as formal soldiers but effective, skilful, fierce and independent fighters
- ★ fanatically loyal to their mates
- ★ originally contemptuous of the Turks, but they soon came to respect them
- ★ hard, tough
- ★ respectful to officers only who had earned their respect
- ★ with a sardonic (bitterly ironic) sense of humour.

- 5 Each element of this drawing has been carefully and deliberately selected by the artist. Comment on the flag, the soldier's appearance, his stance, the background.
- 6 To what extent do you think the cover illustration shows the characteristics emphasised by Bean?
- 7 Why might this image of the digger have been so popular and lasting?
- 8 Did other publications at the time present similar images? Look at the very popular 'Ginger Mick' saga of C.J. Dennis, or the popular (though possibly divisive) recruiting images of Norman Lindsay to test this assertion about the image of the Anzac soldier.

But while an image of the soldier might have been created, did this translate into an accepted **national** image, one which other Australians could adopt even though they were not soldiers at Gallipoli themselves?

Look at **Source 1** again.

- 9 How do you think people reading this account would have responded to this event?
- 10 What evidence is there that this battle was seen as a 'test' by many Australians?
- 11 This account was written by an Englishman, who was an experienced correspondent. What influence might that have on people's reactions to the report?
- 12 Why might Gallipoli have been adopted by Australians as a symbol of national identity in a way which was not done by other nations who were also involved?
- 13 To decide how accurate this account was, what questions would you want answered about the correspondent's involvement at Gallipoli?



## Source 3 The Anzac Book

One popular account of the Anzacs was in *The Anzac Book*. This was a collection of articles, stories, jokes and cartoons put together by the Official Australian War Correspondent, C. E. W. Bean, from materials supplied by the men of Anzac.

To test these ideas about the reaction of Australians to the event, and the impact it had on creating a sense of national identity, look at these documents and answer the questions which follow.



# ANZAC DAY – The Birth of a Nation

The price of nationhood must be paid in blood and tears ... It is the fortunes of Australia to find her true soul in a great and glorious struggle to preserve the liberties of the smaller nations, to crush a despotic militarism which would awe and subjugate the rest of the world. Anzac Day, which we have celebrated for the first time, and celebrated, we hope, in a solemn and thoughtful mood, means more to us than an immortal charge up the cliffs of Gallipoli. Whilst it reminds us of the valour of

our dead heroes ... it reminds us, too, in a much greater degree, of the day Australians really knew themselves. Before the Anzacs astonished the watching nations, our national sentiment was of a flabby and sprawling character. We were Australian in name, and we had a flag, but we ...were nothing better than a joint in the tail of great Empire, and the Empire Day orators had a better hearing that the faithful souls who clung to Australia Day and gave special honour to their own starry banner.

Anzac Day has changed all that. The Australian flag has been brought from the garret and has been hoisted on a lofty tower in the full sight of its own people. No matter how the war may end – and it can only end one way – we are at last a nation, with one heart, one soul, and one thrilling aspiration. There is mourning in our homes and grief in our hearts and the flower of our youth will not return to us; but there runs through the Commonwealth a lifting spirit such as it never knew before.

*Freeman's Journal, Sydney, 27 April 1916*

## **Source 5** Some anniversary 'in memoriam' notices

**CLARK** In loving memory of our Jack (Pte John Wasford Clark) who laid down his life at Gaba Tepe on 25th April 1915 (inserted by his mother).

**CROWL** In loving memory of my dear friend Claud who was killed on Gallipoli on 25th April 1915.

**EHRENBERG** In loving memory of our dear cousin Morris (Sgt S.M. Ehrenberg) who was killed in action at Gallipoli. Deeply missed by Doris and Eric.

**FOTHERGILL** In sad memory of our dear son Jack who was last seen on 25th April 1915 at the Dardanelles:  
"Far and oft our thoughts do wander  
to a grave so far away  
where our boy gave his life, so noble and brave.  
The dear face we love to see.  
And in the hearts of those that love it, ever  
dear shall be"

*Melbourne Argus 25 April 1916*

### **MUNRO**

In memory of my dearest friend, Pte James Munro, who fell in action at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915; also his beloved brothers, Lance Corporal George, killed in action in France, 25th July 1916 and Pte Colin, killed in action in France 20th September 1917.

"Thy will be done"

(Inserted by Elsie Mitchell, North Mooropna)

*Melbourne Argus 25 April 1920*

**FOTHERGILL** In loving memory of our darling son and brother (Jack) who was killed in action in Gallipoli, 25th April 1915. Eight long years since you were laid in your lonely grave, darling Jack. The world has never been the same. No one knows how much I miss you, plucked like a flower in bloom, so bright, so young, so loving. It's sad but true, the best are the first to die. Darling Jack, if only I could see your grave, I would die happy (inserted by your sorrowing parents, brother and sisters, R & I Fothergill).

*Melbourne Argus 25 April 1923*

**Source 6****Extract from a  
Victorian Primary  
School Reader,  
1932****ANZAC DAY**

1. The boys and girls of to-day live in a time of peace. There is no great war to call their fathers and brothers far across the seas. Are you not glad?
2. It was not always so. Years ago many of our finest men sailed far away to take part in the greatest war the world has ever known.
3. They did not go because they like fighting other men, it was not easy for them to leave Australia, and it was not easy for their own fold to let them go. They went because they thought it was their duty to go.
4. In those days the British Empire was at war with Germany and Turkey. Our men were sent to land on a peninsula called Gallipoli, on the shores of Turkey.
5. They were taken there in ships and just before the dawn on the 25th April, 1915, they climbed over the ships' sides into little boats. These little boats were towed towards the shore by launches.
6. It was a terrible time. The Turks were waiting for our men on the beach. Great guns began to fire, and bullets hit the boats. Many of our men were killed and wounded before the boats reached the shores.
7. Yet, in spite of all, those who were untouched sprang ashore, and fought their way up the cliffs. They won a strip of land, which was held by them for eight months. It was called Anzac Cove. This name was formed from the first letters of the words, Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.
8. So, on every Anzac Day, we remember the men who made that landing. Some of them are still living amongst us, but many of them lie in graves in far Gallipoli. They were all brave men.
9. They died that we might live in peace. Surely, then, we must work to keep peace among the nations.

*Victorian School Paper, 1932*

- 14 What is the image of the Australian soldiers at Gallipoli which emerges from these documents? Is it consistent with the image presented by Bean and Ashmead-Bartlett?
- 15 Does the landing at Gallipoli seem to be affecting more people in the Australian community than those who were directly involved?

- 16 Do some people seem to be excluded from the event, or does it seem that all elements in Australian society could accept and adopt the Anzac image as their own?
- 17 What are the attitudes and emotions which emerge? For example, is there pride, bitterness, determination?
- 18 What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of the documents as evidence of the impact of the event on Australians' sense of national identity?
- 19 Do you think the landing at Gallipoli provided Australians with a strong sense of what it meant to be Australian?

Was this image the reality? If you read history books now, you will find some information which seems to contradict the image which is created of the nature of the Anzacs at Gallipoli. We now know that some Australians took almost savage pleasure in killing, while others ran from the fighting. A few wounded themselves to escape fighting. Many who were leaderless wandered aimlessly until ordered back into the fight, and many did not put themselves in danger to help wounded comrades. We know that some Australians killed prisoners.

Look at the following 'darker' elements of the Anzac legend, and answer the questions which follow.

**Source 7****Extracts from  
soldiers' letters  
and diaries**

*The Turks started to run those that did stop flung down their guns and cried mercy but the boys were not that way inclined and killed them all ... we captured some German officers who got a short shift one of them ... shouted good old Australia ... a lad pushed his rifle up to his head and blew it nearly off.*

Private W. J. Gray, jockey, Sale, Vic. Letter to his mother 27 May 1915. (Died of disease 30 May 1915 aged 27)

*... up the hill ... we swarm ... the lust to kill is on us, we see red. Into one trench, out of it, and into another. Oh! The bloody gorgeousness of feeling your bayonet go into soft yielding flesh - they run, we after them, no thrust one and parry, in goes the bayonet the handiest way.*

L/Cpl W. Francis, surveyor, Hull, England. Letter 25 April 1915.

*... a soldier had 8 turks (wounded) to guard he was placing them along in a row he said I am only going to bandage them up, finis Turk.*

Sgt H. B. Macarty, electrician, Broken Hill, NSW. Notes.

Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1974, pp96-97

Historians have also investigated the material which was submitted by soldiers to Bean for *The Anzac Book*, but which he chose to leave out. This included material which illustrated the grim reality of war, or mentioned cowardice, malingering, a longing for beer, bitterness at officers, cynicism or personal grief.

- 20** Does this knowledge mean that the Anzac legend is inaccurate, or not a desirable one? Discuss your responses.

The influence and significance of Anzac Day has varied and changed over time.

- 21** Look at this list of events and possible factors. Discuss whether they are likely to have enhanced or diminished the power and relevance of the Anzac Legend in Australia.

The Anzacs represented all Australia

Most Australians would have had some contact with someone who was there

They were operating as an identifiable group, and were not part of a mixed force

Australia was a new nation

The nature of the fighting was hand-to-hand and very dramatic

The newspaper reports on them were very positive

Australians felt they were being 'tested' as a nation

In the 1920s almost every town and suburb in Australia erected its World War 1 memorial

In 1927 all States accepted Anzac Day as a uniform national day

In World War 2 most people believed they might be invaded

The main war effort was in New Guinea in 1942–43

Thousands of Australians were taken prisoner by the Japanese

Between 1950 and 1953 Australian troops contributed to the United Nations force supporting South Korea against invasion by North Korea supported by Chinese troops

In 1960 the popular play *The One Day of the Year* depicted the diggers as drunken oafs

1970s many Australians opposed the Vietnam War

The 1980 film *Breaker Morant* depicted the Australians in the Boer War as heroic, and as scapegoats of the British

The 1981 film *Gallipoli* showed the diggers as heroes, and criticised the British handling of the situation

In 1987 the Vietnam soldiers marched in the 'Welcome Home' parade in Sydney, before huge and cheering crowds

1990 there were huge crowds at Gallipoli and at marches in Australia on the 75th anniversary of the landing

1993 the Unknown Australian Soldier was interred in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial

The 1980s and 1990s saw a massive increase in the number of schools studying World War 1

The 1980s and 1990s saw a huge resurgence of interest in genealogy, and in finding an Anzac ancestor

1999–2000 Australian servicemen and servicewomen are the key element in the United Nations East Timor peace-keeping force

## Source 8

### Extract from an article on 'The Anzac Legend'

Despite the undermining of the traditional Anzac legend and despite confident predictions in the 1970s of the imminent demise of Anzac Day and its associated tradition, the 1980s and 1990s have seen a resurgence in popularity of the legend, albeit partly in a new form.

Both the revival of the legend and its changed meaning can be explained by the rise of Australian nationalism, since the 1970s. The breakup of the British Empire, the increasing involvement of the United Kingdom in European rather than Commonwealth affairs, the massive postwar migration to Australia which has significantly decreased the proportion of population which is of British decent, all have made Australian nationalism increasingly incompatible with loyalty to Britain.

The suspicion of overseas military entanglements engendered by the Vietnam War has also forced a reassessment of Australia's myths.

In searching for a national identity which is not defined in terms of Britishness, politicians, artists, historians and others have returned to Australia's existing myths to find the origins of a truly independent nationality.

Thus, shorn of its imperial elements, the Anzac legend has emerged as a much more unambiguously nationalist story, which might be summarised as follows: Australia has a history of fighting other people's wars (initially Britain's wars, later those of the United States). These wars were not necessarily in Australia's interests

Has the meaning of the day changed for Australians? Look at this comment.



but, spurred on by imperial ideas, Australians enthusiastically fought in them nonetheless. In the First World War Australians fought bravely, and displayed typically Australian characteristics such as mateship, initiative, ingenuity, larrikinism and egalitarianism. However, Australians were let down by the British military establishment who, contemptuous of the lives of mere colonials, sacrificed them in the futile Gallipoli campaign and as shock troops on the Western Front. The war achieved nothing and, far from proving Australian nationhood, actually demonstrated Australian subservience, though Australian soldiers did learn how different they were from the British. Australia's real baptism of fire came during the Second World War when, deserted by Britain, Australians found themselves for the first time fighting to defend their country. This was worth fighting, but unfortunately Australia swapped its dependence on Britain for a reliance on the United States, and it took the disaster of Vietnam to shock Australians into giving political expression to the independent character their soldiers had displayed in battle.

This new Anzac legend has by no means gained universal acceptance, and indeed has been criticised as grotesque, even ahistorical and the assumption that Australia had no interest in the outcomes of wars fought far from its shores has been attacked by many, not all of them conservatives.

At the same time, the new legend is clearly appealing to a section of those Australians who came of age during or after the Vietnam era.

The new interpretation of Australia's military history was promoted in two of the flagship films of the Australian film revival which began in the 1970s, *Breaker Morant* and *Gallipoli*, both of which celebrate the Australian bushman hero while taking a dim view of British military officialdom. Renewed interest in the legend was evident at the Australian War Memorial, which recorded a 50 per cent increase in visitor numbers in September 1981, the year of *Gallipoli's* release, compared with same month in 1980.

Also becoming apparent at the Memorial was the way in which the search for national identity had become intertwined with the search for personal 'roots'. As genealogical research has increased in popularity, more and more people have been using the Memorial's Research Centre to find ancestors or relatives who fought in the First World War. In so doing they gain satisfaction by linking themselves to events seen as historically significant, while at the same time acquiring new reasons for perpetrating the idea that war is central to national identity.

Whether the Anzac legend will continue to be the subject of vigorous debate, or whether the renewal of faith symbolised by the entombment of the Unknown Australian Soldier will lead to a new conformity of opinion, remains to be seen; but it is clear that the Anzac legend will remain an important national myth for some time to come.

'The Anzac Legend', Peter Dennis et al, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, pp 42-49

- 22 Beside each paragraph, write a heading which in one or two words summarises the key point of that paragraph.
- 23 According to this account, how has the meaning of Anzac Day changed?
- 24 The writer says that the day is still 'contested'. What does this mean?
- 25 Who might still 'contest' Anzac Day as a national symbol?
- 26 To what extent would you say that it is accurate to say that the day has changed from one which celebrated the soldier, to one which celebrates the nation?

## Survey

- 27 Carry out a survey of family and friends, asking them about:
  - ★ the origins of Anzac Day
  - ★ what it commemorates today
  - ★ what it means to them.

Collate and analyse your findings. Are there any differences in the responses, for example, based on people's age? Or on their gender? Discuss your findings.

From your investigation, decide whether you agree with the ideas in **Source 8**.

## INVESTIGATION 3

### What is being commemorated at Gallipoli in 2000?

On 25 April a new commemorative site will be dedicated at Gallipoli. This has been created to draw crowds away from the original landing site, as it was becoming too crowded, and graves were being damaged.

The commemorative site consists of a series of information plaques set in a long, low wall. The information plaques are in English and Turkish, and include historical photographs. They describe the Strategy, the Landing, Krithia, Turkish counter-attack, Sick and Wounded, Lone Pine and the Nek, Chunuk Bair, Evacuation, Defence of Turkey, Anzac.

Imagine that you had to write a plaque for the wall which expresses the meaning of Anzac Day for you. What would you now say?

## THE SIMPSON PRIZE

*This year eight winning students, one from each State and Territory, will be flown to Turkey along with two teacher chaperones to attend Anzac Day ceremonies, including the dawn service at Gallipoli.*

*These students are winners of the Simpson Prize, a national essay competition for Year 9 students focussing on the significance of Anzac Day and the tradition and spirit that has developed from it. The competition is named after John Simpson Kirkpatrick, better known as 'Simpson: the man with the donkey', whose bravery and compassion have come to symbolise the Anzac spirit.*

*Winners and runners-up also travel to Canberra to participate in a two day program visiting relevant tourist sites, including the Australian War Memorial.*

*If you'd like to participate in the Simpson Prize 2001 competition, ask your teacher for details about this exciting opportunity to travel to the place where the Anzac spirit began, or call 03 9415 1299.*

*The competition is run by the History Teachers' Association of Australia, together with State affiliates, on behalf of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.*

## Anzac Day today

Anzac Day is still celebrated in Australia – but how? What is emphasised? Has this changed since 1916? Look at the next Anzac Day.

- 2 Watch the march, in person or on television. Try to attend the Dawn Service, and any local commemorative activities. How are events reported in the newspapers and on television? What is happening?

Use your research and observations to cover these aspects.

- ★ Who is involved and included in the celebrations / commemorations?
- ★ What are the main ideas or messages being conveyed?
- ★ What is the image of Australians which is presented?
- ★ What attitudes to war are being expressed?
- ★ How do people respond?
- ★ What is the tone of the ceremony?

## Debating an idea

Should Anzac Day be Australia's national day?

## Conclusion

Go back to the four questions on page 5:

- ★ What happened at Gallipoli?
- ★ What was it like for the soldiers there?
- ★ Why did the campaign fail?
- ★ Why has Gallipoli been so important to Australia both then and now?

How would you now answer these?

## More resources for investigating and commemorating Anzac Day

### Department of Veterans' Affairs

Information kits on Anzac Day will be distributed to all schools in early March 2000. Ask your teacher for more information.

### Ryebuck Media

*The One Day of the Year* (video and work book)

*The Anzac Experience – Investigating Australia's Battlefields Experience in World War 1*

Contact Ryebuck Media for details.

### Web sites:

<http://www.dva.gov.au> – Department of Veterans' Affairs – and follow the commemoration links

<http://www.anzacsites.gov.au> – A virtual tour of the new commemorative site at Gallipoli

<http://www.awm.gov.au> – Australian War Memorial site

<http://www.anzacday.org.au> – ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland site.



