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***'In 2005, Australia commemorates the 90th Anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign and the forging of the ANZAC tradition. What elements of the ANZAC tradition and spirit have remained constant in Australian society?'***

*... They shall row not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn ...*

The 'ANZAC tradition and spirit', the image that all ANZAC soldiers are associated with, was formed in 1915 on the beaches of Gallipoli. There are many elements of the ANZAC tradition that are still evident amongst people in Australia today. The very essence of who we are as Australians has developed from the character of the ANZAC soldiers.

ANZAC is a word so powerful in meaning to Australians that it brings a tear to the eye, a lump to the throat and a feeling of pride just to be an Aussie.

ANZAC is a word that brings to mind many other words, so uniquely Australian, that originated in the trenches of Gallipoli 89 years ago — 'fair dinkum', 'true blue', 'hard yakka', 'digger', 'cobber' ... 'mate'.

ANZAC is a word that gives appropriate meaning to the many qualities that are an integral part of the ANZAC identity; resilience, courage, compassion, selflessness, endurance, loyalty, resourcefulness, self-sacrifice, devotion, composure, independence, ingenuity, audacity, enthusiasm, buoyancy, larrikinism, humour ... mateship.

I asked my thirteen-year-old sister what she thought of when I said 'ANZAC Tradition and Spirit'. She said she thought about the ANZAC Day parades that remember the soldiers. My mum responded with a single word — 'courage' — and when I asked my dad, he said the same. Then I asked my six-year-old sister what the words 'ANZAC Tradition and Spirit' meant to her. After a long pause she replied, 'that man who saved people on his donkey'. I think she was right. The face of the ANZACs and the icon of the ANZAC tradition is Simpson and his donkey.

In my eyes the most memorable and perhaps the most obvious display of the 'ANZAC Tradition' was the fortitude shown by John Simpson Kirkpatrick. Simpson was twenty-two when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. He landed at ANZAC Cove on 25 April 1915 as part of the third Field Ambulance. Simpson found a donkey, which he referred to

as Duffy and began the rescue mission for which he would become famous. The pair weaved the one-and-a-half mile round trip through the dangerous sniper fire of Shrapnel Alley up to fifteen times a day. Simpson rescued wounded soldiers and returned them to the safety of ANZAC Cove on the back of his donkey at the risk of his own life. Only three weeks later Simpson was killed as he returned to rescue more wounded soldiers. Simpson displayed courage, selflessness and mateship: the epitome of the ANZAC tradition.

The America's Cup is a yacht race held every three years and, until 1983, America remained undefeated. Australia won for the first time. The victory broke a 132-year American domination of the event and the longest running record in modern sports history. After being down 3-0 in a best-out-of-7 situation, Australia demonstrated a familiar spirit. Never-give-up, fight-to-the-end courage: the epitome of the ANZAC tradition.

Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop ranks among our most famous war heroes. He was a doctor who served in World War Two. Weary became famous not for his combat skills but for the work he did in the prisoner-of-war camps of South-East Asia and the Thai-Burma Railway. He was a prisoner-of-war for three years and during this time elicited profound loyalty and compassion to his fellow prisoners and even in the most horrific conditions Weary fought for the wellbeing and often the lives of these men. One of them — Cliff Moss — recalled an episode when he was ill and expected to work for the Japanese.

'The Japanese guard Okada was in charge of the party (of POW workers). Okada would say 'I want forty men to go to work'. Other doctors would argue and fight with him but he'd beat them. This particular day, Okada says 'I want thirty men' and Dunlop says, 'you can have ten. Don't be bloody ridiculous'. And they'd argue and fight away and Dunlop didn't budge. Okada said, 'Why are these men sick?' Dunlop didn't answer that. He pointed to the cemetery where there were several hundred graves and he said, 'Why are those men there?' Okada just walked away. Ten men went to work.<sup>1</sup> He demonstrated great loyalty to his mates and fought for their wellbeing, above his own which is the epitome of the ANZAC tradition.

In October 2002 Australia suffered brutal droughts. Farmers were left in desperate situations, with lack of crops and severe water shortages and therefore no money. The Farmhand Foundation held a music concert in Sydney featuring Bachelor Girl, Jimmy Barnes and Olivia Newton-John and drew a crowd of 10,000 people. Thanks to the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Our Australia' from 'At War Part 3 A Call To Arms', *Herald-Sun* 2004

generous donations of Aussies the foundation raised \$21.4 million, providing relief to more than 18,000 families suffering the effects of the drought. Local farmers donated bails of hay to those who needed it. In this hardship, Aussies illustrated selflessness and compassion and, above all, mateship: the epitome of the ANZAC tradition.

Keith Miller was a bomber pilot in World War Two. He was a man with remarkable guts and determination, flying hundreds of missions for the Royal Air Force. He possessed an 'only-live-once' attitude and as he loved classical music, after completing a mission one day, took a detour over Bonn, Beethoven's birthplace. He was also an outstanding sportsman playing both football and cricket at a high standard. After World War Two he returned to cricket but without the 'life or death' attitude towards winning he once had. He had felt fair dinkum loss constantly during the war and realised that the loss of game couldn't compare to the loss of a mate. 'Pressure is a Messerschmitt up your arse, playing cricket is not'.<sup>2</sup> He was known to all as 'Nugget' — pure gold. He demonstrated great courage and determination and his priorities and values in life were obvious, which is the epitome of the ANZAC tradition.

In 1999, Thredbo, a popular ski resort in New South Wales, became the scene of one of the biggest rescue operations Australia has seen. Nineteen lives were lost when a 100-ton torrent of earth cascaded downhill. One hundred state emergency service workers were on the scene as were an enormous army of volunteers. These volunteers displayed composure, mateship and selflessness. the epitome of the ANZAC spirit. Televisions all across Australia followed the work of the volunteers. Everyone prayed and hoped and waited in anticipation as the sole survivor was pulled from the rubble. Stuart Diver survived sixty-five hours. He displayed courage, resilience and endurance and possessed a never-day-die fighting spirit: the epitome of the ANZAC tradition.

'I'd rather be killed than leave them there to die',<sup>3</sup> said one ANZAC after he had risked his life to rescue a wounded mate from the battlefield and lowered him back to the Australians' trench at Gallipoli. An Anzac would never let a mate die alone. He would stay by his side and care for him until his last breath. This is a prime example of why many people refer to mateship as being the heart of the 'ANZAC Spirit'.

The true spirit and tradition of the ANZACs was a willingness to sacrifice everything for their country, their pride and their mates, and even today, times of hardship, suffering and need bring out the easily identifiable ANZAC spirit that all true-blue Aussies possess.

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<sup>2</sup> Internet web site: <http://www.iol.co.za/index.php.html>

<sup>3</sup> Internet web site: [www.prisontalk.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-57082.html](http://www.prisontalk.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-57082.html)

... At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them ...

... **LEST WE FORGET** ...

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