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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?”

The ANZAC spirit is the epitome of Australian identity. It is a spirit characterised by strength and endurance, defined by “Aussie ingenuity” and respect for adversaries, and one bound by mateship and good humor. Our national identity was not one gained from a magnificent victory, but rather, a tragic failure. Our memory of the most significant battle in Australian military history focuses on the positive attitude of the men, which saw them retreat from the Turkish shores with no less honour than their victors on the opposing side. Indeed, the Turks deemed the Australians worthy opponents. The Australian public saw the troops as heroes. Yet to each other, the men at Gallipoli were ordinary Australians bound by a common purpose and a sense of duty. It is this portrayal of the ANZACs, as men whose actions and attitude are more familiar than the outcome of the campaign itself, which forms the foundations of the ANZAC spirit, a constant and integral part of Australian society.

Principal of the attitudes held by the ANZACs was a sense of camaraderie and equality within the ranks which was unmatched by any other nation during the war. They faced challenges that at times were trying, but served only to develop a sense of mateship and a bond between soldiers. Nowhere was this better displayed than in the actions of John Simpson, the man who, with his donkey, saved the lives of countless Australians. Writer, Les Carlyon, in his 2004 Remembrance Day address at the Australian War Memorial described Simpson as the embodiment of the Australian attitude saying “He became Everyman at the Gallipoli front.” [Carlyon:2004]. Clearly in his endeavor to support his fellows, Simpson came to represent the Australian ideals of mateship.

The ANZACs were bound also by a sense of duty and showed great endurance, a testament to the infamous ANZAC courage and spirit. The campaign suffered many

shortcomings, beginning with a failed landing and misdirection from British commanders. Despite this the ANZACs withstood constant opposition in order to achieve the seemingly impossible objective of securing the Dardenelles. They suffered in a hopeless situation simply because it was their duty as soldiers.

No event better represents the ANZACs' respect for their opponent, or the respect their opponent clearly had for them, than the cessation of fighting that occurred on the 24th of May 1915. Both sides agreed to a temporary peace so that the dead soldiers lying between the lines could be buried. It is remarkable that such an agreement could be reached between supposed enemies. This event illustrates the understanding held by the ANZACs that their actions in Gallipoli were service to a greater war. They drew the distinction between the Turkish troops whom they faced, soldiers like themselves, and the greater Central Powers who were their opposition in the war. In this way, the ANZACs showed that they fought for a greater good. They sacrificed their lives in the hope that it might benefit others.

The Australian tendency to unite with our fellows for a common purpose, and to serve those in need is one that finds its roots in the actions of the ANZACs 90 years ago. Throughout Australia's relatively short history as a nation we have proven our ability to unite for a shared cause in a display of mateship and good humour. The current political climate and tension in Iraq has required Australian troops to call upon their sense of duty in assisting with the conflict. Although our involvement is largely to assist US troops, we aim to maintain peace and instil ideals of democracy, and more importantly freedom, which the ANZACs fought to defend. Such involvement in conflicts is common in Australia's military history as we strive to uphold the spirit set forth in Gallipoli.

Another example of this spirit can be found amidst tragedy during the Thredbo landslide disaster in 1997. One worker attending the scene was noted to have said " We could have all been wearing the same uniform," [<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au:1997>] referring to unity of the effort presented. Indeed, this tragedy was cause for all who were present to work together for a common purpose. The situation, much like that at Gallipoli, seemed

hopeless, yet this did not serve as a deterrent. Rather, it encouraged a stronger and more unified effort and a resourcefulness that was essential to workers' success in an unpleasant environment.

More recent still was the 2003 firestorm, which occurred in the city of Canberra. No other event has caused this generation of Canberrans to display such a sense of community or mateship in a time of disaster. Schools were opened as evacuation centres and Canberrans reached out to their neighbours by delivering donations of food, clothing, bedding and mattresses and other essentials to the centres. More important than the material contribution made was the spirit and compassion displayed by the city's residents. Support networks were established and our sense of camaraderie was displayed through our interaction with others in a time of need. Even when devastation affected the community, our good humour and high spirits were not lost.

The Australian spirit inherited from the ANZACs is not one that is made evident only in a time of tragedy. On the sporting field our sense of teamwork and cooperation is evident. We only need to look at the regret of Greg Chappell, the captain of the Australian cricket team who, in 1981, ordered his younger brother and team-mate to bowl an underarm bowl to their opposition, New Zealand. In doing this, New Zealand was unable to achieve the six runs they required to draw the match. Chappell was publicly disgraced for his decision, quite simply, because his actions neglected the Australian spirit of honour and integrity. The true heroes of the Australian sporting field are those who value sportsmanship and show respect for their opposition, in much the same way that the ANZACs did. It is no surprise then that we dominate the national sporting arena in many different sports, despite our relatively small population. Indeed, even in the simplest of social interactions Australians uphold the ideals of mateship and good humour. Our attitude as a nation is therefore shaped by the actions of the ANZACs who fought at Gallipoli.

We are a country founded in peace baptised by loss and continually mindful of the spirit established by the ANZACs some 90 years ago. Our sense of mateship and camaraderie,

our good humour and resourcefulness are all qualities that are reflected in the military history of Gallipoli and the men who served our country while we were a nation in its infancy. It is said that Australia matured as a nation with our first defeat. Undoubtedly we did so with a spirit and attitude that would set the standard for generations to come. The ANZAC spirit is very much alive in Australian society.

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