

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 grow not old as we that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.*ⁱ

Lest we forget

As the flags flew at half-mast for the death of the last Gallipoli survivor, Alec William Campbell, the nation stood together, tall and proud. Lest We Forget. Lest we forget those who stepped forward into the line of fire as Alec once did, to uphold their duty. Lest we forget those who in desperate times gave their lives for their country. Lest we forget those ordinary Australians who never once doubted their companions. We remember them for their strength, their courage, and most of all, their mateship on the front at Gallipoli all those years ago. Those who never once turned to run when the going got tough, even in the face of danger they strove to prevail, this was their duty, their honour, their "ANZAC Spirit."ⁱⁱ

On Thursday 16th May 2002 and many days thereafter, the nation would succumb to the realisation that our last existing survivor of the Gallipoli campaign was never to tell his tales again. He may have passed on, but his deeds would not be forgotten. Although Alec is no longer around in a sense of being, his memory lives on, as does the spirit of those who served in the

Great War. They are in the minds of Australians, their legend flows through the blood in our veins.

As each new year commences, new faces appear in schools, offices, homes and towns. Here, the continuation of the ANZAC spirit is evident in all. It is a presence, which can be felt with every young prep. student turning up almost diligently on time for their first day of school, unaware of what may lie ahead. For them, the school ground will come to be a battlefield where day in and day out they will overcome struggles. Forming bonds with new people, just as the ANZACs once did. As a young child this seems just as much as an adventure as travelling overseas to take part in war.

The Gallipoli campaign was one in which thousands of lives were lost. On the first day the ANZACs arrived at ANZAC Cove, two thousand men were gunned down before even reaching the dunes. However it was not just the soldiers on the battlefield who forged the ANZAC spirit but also those at home who never once lost hope. For example Vera Deakin, the daughter of Melbourne's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin. At the age of 25 she sat in an office in London and wrote compassionate letters to the families of soldiers, informing them of men lost at war. Without her courage and empathy towards the waiting families, many of them would have only received official notification rather than a personalised letter informing them of the whereabouts of their loved ones. ⁱⁱⁱ

It was ordinary people like John Simpson Kirkpatrick who, when placed in an extraordinary situation, gave nothing but commitment and sacrifice. Originally enrolling in the AIF looking for a path back to his home country, England, Simpson found himself among those at ANZAC Cove on 25th April 1915, as a stretcher bearer. Upon landing, he was the second man in the water, the first and third men being killed. At the young age of 22, Simpson took it upon himself to save the lives of others, dodging bullets in the process. Finding a stray donkey grazing through the grasses, Simpson decided he would use the

donkey to transport the wounded from the battlefield to the beach. Disobeying the orders of his unit, he camped with the *21st Kohat Indian Mountain Artillery Battery*, which also employed the use of donkeys or mules. They gave him the nickname "Bahadur", meaning "bravest of the brave."^{iv}

Every year many Australians make the journey to Gallipoli for the dawn service. In 2002 Robert S Kearney, a veteran of the Vietnam War, visited Gallipoli for this service where he was directed to a veterans seating area. He and Fred Pryde, an 82-year-old Buna veteran, received a standing ovation whilst taking their seats. When a Turkish veteran entered the same area, he too received a standing ovation. After the ceremony a Turkish observer confronted Kearney and Pryde. Regarding this occurrence Kearney wrote:

These proud young people were filled with the ANZAC Spirit and if their behaviour wasn't enough to prove that, a few minutes later a middle aged Turk sat by the side of the road with us and said, "You know I can't remember the last time I cried, I suppose that's because it was long ago and I was a small child. I love the ANZAC Spirit. Today, as the politicians and the Generals entered the official area there was barely any response, just a few people clapped. When my countryman, the old veteran, laid his wreath, the crowd gave him a standing ovation and I cried."^v

Every year the various state governments and community organisations such as the Metropolitan Ambulance Service award medals of bravery to ordinary people who have in some way shown extreme courage. Upon reading the stories behind the acts of bravery you can't help but feel that the ANZAC spirit is reflected in many of the tales and is inherent in the individuals concerned. The Eltham teenager who crawled under a train to rescue a fellow school mate, fallen between the train and the platform said *"I didn't really think about it, I just got under the train then I hoisted him up onto my waist and*

pulled him out through the side. I lifted him up to another boy on the platform. My heart was going a hundred miles an hour and I was just glad I could help out.” ^{vi}

In another well-publicised case, Brett Jenkins crawled under a tram to comfort an injured girl. Whilst driving down St. Kilda Rd, Mr. Jenkins glimpsed something out of the corner of his eye. He said “...as I passed the tram I looked in the mirror and saw something under the tram...I wasn't sure at the time [what I'd seen], I did a u-turn and came back and could hear a girl screaming from where I had parked the car.”^{vii} Without hesitation Mr. Jenkins ran over to give as much support as possible while awaiting paramedics.

The ambulance service chief executive said of the medal recipients “These community heroes are an example of the best we can be...” Time and again the stories of bravery re-inforce our faith in humanity and to me demonstrate the ANZAC spirit.

Although their Gallipoli campaign would not result in victory over the Turks, the remarkable bravery and courage shown by the ANZAC's during that time would long be remembered. ^{viii}

Thus, our nation will follow with pride, the legacy of our great Aussie battlers and their Kiwi companions. They created true spirit of the ANZAC's, which was a willingness to sacrifice their lives for their country, their pride and their mates.

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i Order of Ceremony, 2004, Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne. Thursday 11th November 2004.

ii <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/05/24/1022038468678.html?oneclick=true>

iii Stated by John Magill; Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance volunteer, 19/11/04

iv <http://www.convictcreations.com/history/simpson.htm>, 20/11/04

v http://www.dva.gov.au/media/publicat/2004/oawg_journal2004/5_featurearticles/02_fa_anzacspirit.html

vi The Age, 20th November 2004

vii The Age, 20th November 2004

viii <http://www.rslwahq.org.au/anzacspirit.html>