

RUNNER-UP — NEW SOUTH WALES

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*‘ANZAC stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, for resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat’*¹ wrote dedicated journalist, war correspondent and historian Charles Bean after witnessing the spirit of the ANZACs at the Gallipoli campaign. It is this spirit and these values which have been reiterated into Australian society throughout the past 91 years, influencing Australian culture and identity. These values and characteristics demonstrated by the ANZACs at Gallipoli and the Western Front have translated into Australian society because *‘Anzac is a word that more than any other stirs our memories of courage, of sacrifice, of compassion and comradeship’*². While much has been said about the qualities demonstrated by the ANZACs in times of war, Sir William Keys aptly wrote that *‘[ANZAC] stands for all that is finest in the human personality and character. It stands for qualities... that have just as much application in our daily lives as civilians as they do on the battlefield’*³ and it can be seen that it has been these qualities which have defined the Australian identity as *‘The Anzac spirit is the Australian spirit, the spirit that founded a nation’*⁴.

Hon Gareth Evans QC stated that *“‘Mateship’ is a good and honourable word. It is a great Australian word; it is a quintessentially Australian word’*⁵ and it has long been identified as an iconic Australian attribute after the ANZACs of Gallipoli and the Western Front demonstrated unparalleled acts of mateship to an international audience, *‘the Anzacs proved the character of Australian manhood for the entire world to see and, through their victories and sacrifices, established a nation in spirit as well as in name’*⁶. These acts defined what mateship truly was and why it was ‘quintessentially Australian’, *‘We value excellence as well as fairness, independence as dearly as mateship’*⁷. In his chronicles from Gallipoli, Bean described the ‘typical Australian’, *‘...he held a prevailing creed ... of which the chief article was that a man should at all times and at any cost stand by his mate. This was*

¹ Bean, C.E.W. (1981) *The story of ANZAC from the outbreak of war to the end of the first phase of the Gallipoli campaign, May 4, 1915*, (Sydney, Angus & Robertson).

² Keys, Sir William, Foreword in Bolser, Nan. (1986) *ANZAC: Something to be Proud Of*, (Sydney, Narrabeen Community Learning Centre Publishing), p. vi.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Samarajiwa, Carlton. (2006) ‘The Soul of Mateship’, *Daily News – Sri Lanka*, 17th May 2006.

⁶ Thompson, Alastair. (1994) *ANZAC Memories: Living with the Legend*, (New York, Oxford University Press), p. 26.

⁷ Laws, John, (1999) *Transcript of the Prime Minister the Hon. John Howard MP Interview with John Laws – Radio 2UE*, (online) <<http://www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/1999/2UE2403.htm>> (accessed 11/11/06).

*and is the one law which the good Australian must never break*⁸. This ideology surrounding the quality of mateship and its relevance to Australia is not, however, limited to two battles decades ago, but has been translated and integrated into Australian culture and identity. On ANZAC day this year at the Beaconsfield Gold Mine in Tasmania, an earthquake caused a rock fall which killed miner Larry Knight and trapped Brant Webb and Todd Russell 925m underground for fourteen days. While this tragedy effected many Australians who witnessed the struggle for survival facing the two trapped miners, it enlightened the Australian and international audiences to the importance of mateship. Prime Minister John Howard said about the incident that *'It has been a triumph of Australian mateship, the way in which the whole community worked together.'*⁹ and further discussed how the tragedy was an example of the mateship that defines Australia, *'Australians just witnessed a rolled-gold miracle and a great Australian epic, an epic of mateship, an epic of family, people taking responsibility for each other, of skill.'*¹⁰ Similarly, Tasmanian Senator Guy Barnett described the rescue as *'a wonderful and joyful reminder of the innate spirit and mateship which made Gallipoli, on that first Anzac Day, in 1915, the Australian legend we cherish to this day'*¹¹.

The ANZACs at Gallipoli and the Western Front were faced with unanticipated dangers and were forced to deal with circumstances which tested their mettle and integrity and which inspired the iconic Australian value and characteristic of courage. One of the most unprecedented acts of courage witnessed at Gallipoli and the Western Front was the egalitarianism beliefs of the ANZACs because *'the typical Australian... believes that Jack is not only as good as his master, but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better and so he is a great knocker of eminent people.'*¹² This resulted in the ANZACs being portrayed as: *'enterprising and independent, loyal to his mates and to his country, bold in battle, but cheerfully undisciplined out of the line and contemptuous of military etiquette and the British officer class'*¹³. While tested by dire conditions, the ANZACs persisted and courageously continued to fight a battle they knew they had lost, describing Gallipoli as *'...a bastard of a place... I never understood what we were fighting for. All I could think of was that I never wanted to go back to the bloody place.'*¹⁴ There were also outstanding individual displays of courage particularly by John Simpson Kirkpatrick, a man who has inspired

⁸ Bean, *loc. cit.*

⁹ Hon. Howard, John in Anon. (2006) 'Beaconsfield celebrates mine miracle', *ABC News Online*. 9th May 2006.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Senator, Barnett, Guy, (2006) *Speech To The Senate On The Beaconsfield Miracle*, (online) <http://www.guybarnett.com/index.php?page=show_article&artid=554> (accessed 12/11/06).

¹² Ward, Russell. (1958) *The Australian Legend*, (New York, Oxford University Press), p.1.

¹³ Thompson, *loc. cit.*

decades worth of soldiers, medical staff and members of the general public. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Burke believes the legend of Simpson and his donkey embodies the ANZAC spirit of courage insisting that *'The Spirit was epitomised in the deeds of Simpson with his donkey at Gallipoli - comradeship, courage and sacrifice: others before self'*¹⁵. Courage has been displayed by Australians in diverse situations to varying extents, from the soldiers in the Pacific during World War II to current day inspirations like Sophie Delezio. Sophie Joy Delezio was born in January 2001 and captured the attention of Australia on 15th December 2003 when she and another child, Molly Wood, were trapped under a burning car after it crashed into their day care centre. She sustained third degree burns to 85% of her body, lost both feet, some fingers and an ear. After a long recovery time Sophie was in a second accident, on 5th May 2006 she was struck by a car and thrown 18 metres while out with her carer. Sophie's accidents and her attitude towards life has inspired Australia with her doctor describing her as *'an incredible five-year-old girl who has defied the odds not once, but twice'*¹⁶ and Victorian Premier Steve Bracks stating that she *'captured the hearts of an entire nation with her courage and determination'*¹⁷. Sophie Delezio's displays of courage, bravery and determination which *'[have] seen her raised to national prominence as a benchmark for courage and resilience in the face of adversity,'*¹⁸ distinctly link to the ANZAC values and characteristics, in particular the courage that influences our nation today, shaping our culture and identity.

Sir William Keys insisted that *'ANZAC symbolizes all that is best in the human character and all that is best in those of us who are proud to call ourselves Australians.'*¹⁹ The values and characteristics demonstrated by the ANZACs at Gallipoli and the Western Front, in particular those of mateship and courage, have had a resounding impact in influencing Australians throughout history whether it be during the battles of the century or the human triumphs that have taken place, to become as Premier Steve Bracks states *'The Spirit of Anzac... a vital part of our Australian way of life'*²⁰. These two specific attributes have had significant influence over Australia's culture and identity, and over the past 91 years there are many more examples like the Beaconsfield mine tragedy and Sophie

¹⁴ White, Albert in Stephens, Tony. (2002) 'Last ANZAC is Dead', in *Sydney Morning Herald*. 17th May 2002.

¹⁵ Retired Lieutenant Colonel Burke, Arthur, (unknown) *The Spirit Of ANZAC*, (online) <<http://www.anzacday.org.au/spirit/spirit2.html>> (accessed 10/11/06).

¹⁶ Dr. Taitz, Jonny in Anon. (2006) 'Brave Sophie Leaves Hospital', in *the Age*. 8th June 2006.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Magistrate George, Andrew in Anon. (2006) 'Driver Who Hit Sophie Delezio Escapes Prison Term', *New Zealand Herald*, 21st October 2006.

¹⁹ Bolser, *loc. cit.*

²⁰ Anon. (2006) Long Tan Battleground on 2006 Spirit of ANZAC Tour, (online) <<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/pressrel>> (accessed 12/11/06).

Delezio which display the extent that to which these ANZAC values and characteristics have influenced Australians.

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