

Unit

Understanding Anzac Day — past, present, future

OVERVIEW

Focus questions

- 1 How have we commemorated Gallipoli and Anzac Day in the past?
- 2 How do we commemorate Anzac Day today?
- 3 What do Gallipoli and Anzac Day mean to you today?

DVD-ROM interactives connection

The Anzac Legend over time
Community memorial board
Analyse a museum display

Every year Australia commemorates Anzac Day — that day, 25 April, when in 1915 Australian and New Zealand forces landed as part of an Allied invasion of Gallipoli.

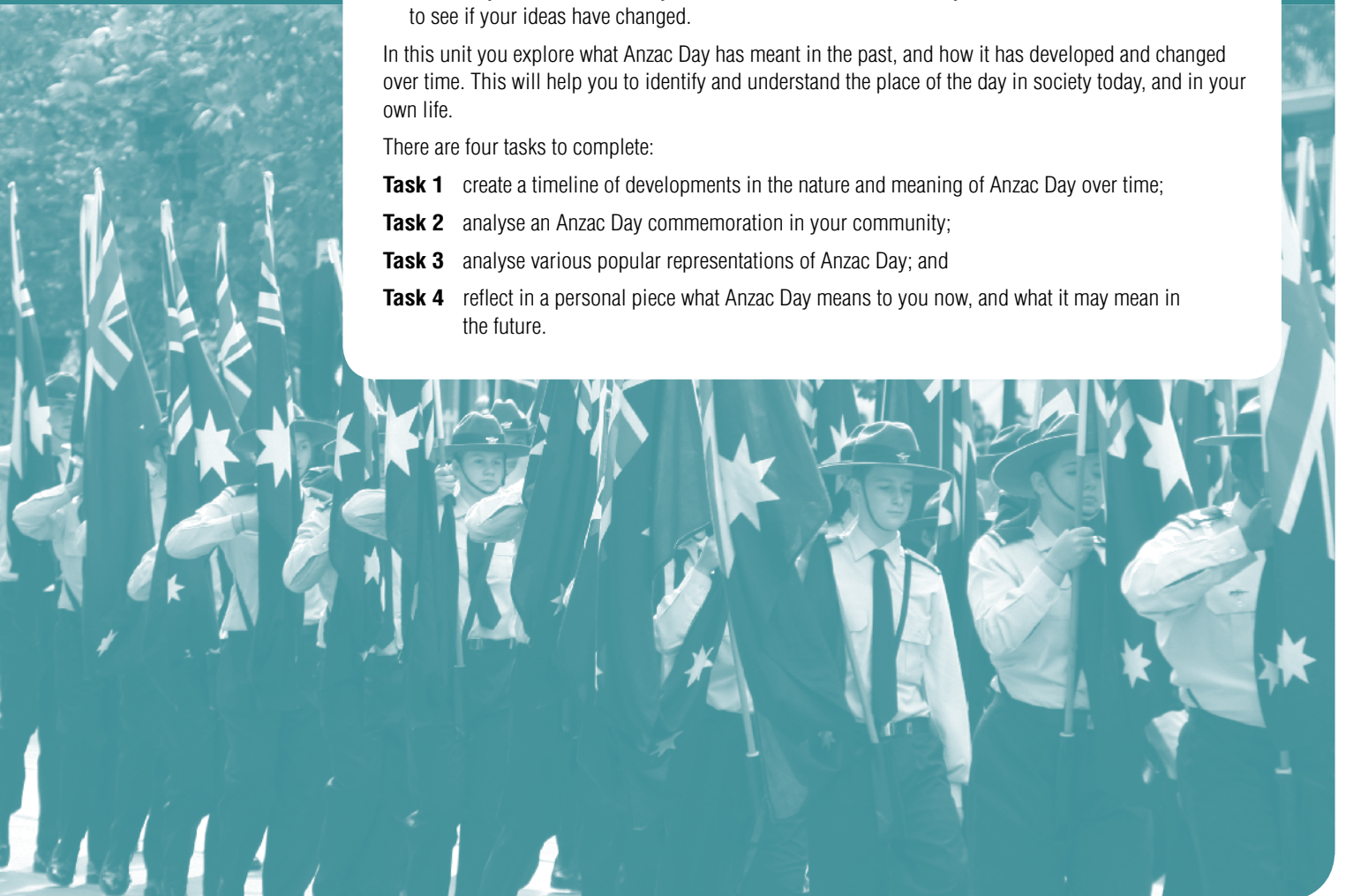
But that was nearly one hundred years ago. Why do we still commemorate that day now?

- 1 Write down what Anzac Day means to you. You may consider it important; you may consider it meaningless in your life; you may have mixed or uncertain feelings about it. Record as clearly as you can what you feel about the day. You will be able to come back to your answers at the end of this unit to see if your ideas have changed.

In this unit you explore what Anzac Day has meant in the past, and how it has developed and changed over time. This will help you to identify and understand the place of the day in society today, and in your own life.

There are four tasks to complete:

- Task 1** create a timeline of developments in the nature and meaning of Anzac Day over time;
- Task 2** analyse an Anzac Day commemoration in your community;
- Task 3** analyse various popular representations of Anzac Day; and
- Task 4** reflect in a personal piece what Anzac Day means to you now, and what it may mean in the future.



How have we commemorated Gallipoli and Anzac Day in the past?

Task 1 Create a timeline

Anzac Day is the anniversary of the landing of the Anzacs as part of an Allied force at Gallipoli in 1915.

How has Anzac Day developed over time?

Look at the following collection of information, evidence and opinion on pages 105–112.

Your task is to read the material, decide where on the timeline it best fits, and what it tells you about how Australians perceive Anzac Day. For example, you may decide that the publication of the play *The One Day of the Year* in 1960 showed a decline in respect for Anzac Day, whereas the release of Peter Weir's popular film *Gallipoli* in 1981 shows that there was increasing interest in the

story of Gallipoli and its relevance to Australians' sense of national identity. You should enter these key events and your commentary on them in the relevant decade.

Divide the following **Resource pages** among groups in your class. Each group is responsible for summarising one or two of the Resource pages and reporting back to the whole class. In that way every member of the class will be able to gain information and insight from all the evidence, without having to work through it all in detail.

An alternative approach to this activity is on the DVD-ROM included with this resource, *The Anzac legend over time*.

A timeline of Anzac Day commemoration

Period	Source	What it tells you about the Australian perception of Anzac Day in this period
1915–1919		
1920s		
1930s		
1940s		
1950s		
1960s		
1970s		
1980s		
1990s		
2000s		

Resource Page 1

For each of these sources identify:

- 1 What period of the timeline it fits.
- 2 What it tells you about the way Gallipoli and Anzac Day were regarded at this time.

Source 1 South Australian Governor Sir Henry Galway, 2 July 1915

If any day is to be chosen for Australia's day I think it should be April 25 ... Those heroes will hand down the finest traditions to their sons and their sons' sons, and still further on ... today we not only honour the dead, but our hearts go out with the deepest respect and sympathy to those who are mourning the loss of their nearest and dearest. The British Empire will never be able to repay the debt owed to the women for their calm self-sacrifice in this great struggle.'

JG Pavils, *Anzac Day: The Undying Debt*, Lythrum Press, Adelaide, 2007, page 5

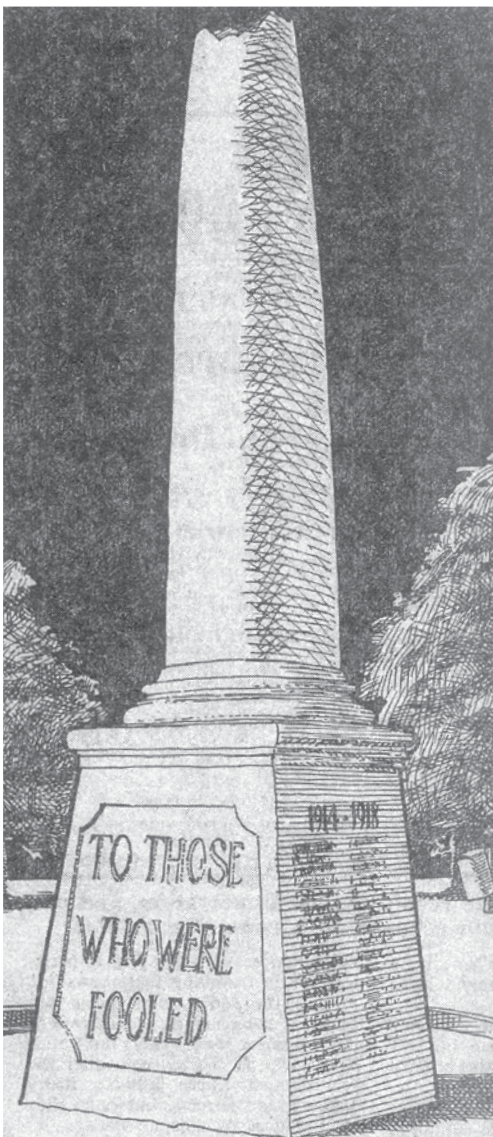
Source 3 The Last First World War Anzacs

In the last decade there was great publicity and great respect shown towards the last of the Australian First World War veterans who died:

- 2002 — Alec Campbell, the last Australian Gallipoli veteran,
- 2005 — William Evan Allen, the last Australian to see active service in First World War (in the navy),
- 2009 — Jack Ross, the last Australian to be in the services during the First World War, although he did not see active service.

See *The Australian* 4 June 2009 (Ross), *The Age* 18 October 2005 (Allen), *ABC 7.30 Report* 16 May 2002 (Campbell)

Source 2 A cartoon comment 1984



Sydney Morning Herald 15 December 1984

Source 4 Protection of the word 'Anzac'

Commonwealth laws were passed in 1921 to protect the word 'Anzac', and any word which resembles it, from inappropriate use. Under the Regulations no person may use the word 'Anzac', or any word resembling it, in connection with '... any trade, business, calling or profession or in connexion with any entertainment or any lottery or art union or as the name or part of a name of any private residence, boat, vehicle of charitable or other institution, or other institution, or any building ...'

www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/commemorations/protection_of_Anzac/Pages/index.aspx

Source 5 Pilgrimages to Gallipoli

During the 1980s, 1990s and into the 2000s there has been a huge increase in the numbers of young 'pilgrims', men and women, gathering at Anzac Cove in Turkey for the Anzac Day ceremony. Even though only 8000 of the 60,000 Australians who died in the First World War died there, Gallipoli has a much stronger place in the Australian consciousness than the Western Front.

In his book *Return to Gallipoli* Historian Bruce Scates has analysed the reasons why young people came to Gallipoli for Anzac Day. He believes that for a few it is a connection with old family stories, for some it is a compulsory place on the international backpacker itinerary, for many it is a celebration of identity, part of a search to experience 'being Australian'. For whatever reason young people were there, one of the most powerful outcomes is that for these young people history gained faces and names, gained reality, and that gave Anzac Day great power in their minds.

Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2006, passim

Source 6 Anzac Day marches 1916

In 1916 Australian troops in France, Egypt and Britain held services commemorating the landing, with over 2000 Australian troops marching along Whitehall to Westminster Abbey in London. The service included King George V, Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes, and British and Australian military leaders.

www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac.anzac_traditions.asp

For each of these sources identify:

- 1 What period of the timeline it fits.
- 2 What it tells you about the way Gallipoli and Anzac Day were regarded at this time.

Source 7 Australia Remembers 1995

In 1995, we honoured our veterans through Australia Remembers 1945-1995 — a pageant of events commemorating the end of Second World War.

All Australians were given an opportunity to remember those who served in the armed forces, those who died and those who worked so hard at home to fuel the war effort. Australia Remembers celebrated the heroism and sacrifice of Australian servicemen and women in their battle for peace.

A total of \$9 million was allocated for commemorative events in cities, suburbs and country towns across Australia.

The Prime Minister, The Hon Paul Keating MP said at the launch of the program:

'The generation we will commemorate and thank was a heroic one. Our freedom was their legacy: the robust democracy we enjoy, the security, the marvellous continent which is ours, the unequalled personal freedoms.

But they left us more than that. They passed on a tradition and a faith for us to live by. By their example they taught us about the ties that bind us, and our common cause.

And by the same example they compel us now, not just to remember them, but to pass on the lesson to our children.'

The Australia Remembers 50th Anniversary Commemorative activities, to celebrate the end of the Second World War in the Pacific, provided the Australian people with the opportunity to learn about the history of their country and the impact that the war had upon Australia and South East Asia.

www.diggerhistory.info/pages-conflicts-periods/ww2/aus-remembers.htm

Source 8 Memoriam Notice 1923

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).

The Argus (Melbourne) 25 April 1923

Source 9 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

Resource Page 3

For each of these sources identify:

- 1 What period of the timeline it fits.
- 2 What it tells you about the way Gallipoli and Anzac Day were regarded at this time.

Source 10 A comparison of three Anzac Days

A film comparison of three ceremonies suggests these changes:

- *The unveiling of a war memorial in Sydney in 1916 shows mainly women in black for mourning*
- *The 1926 Anzac Day march in Melbourne shows women laying wreaths, returned men marching, and crippled and wounded men in carriages and cars*
- *The 1930s Sydney Anzac Days show men marching, and only a few elderly women laying wreaths.*

Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory. Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War*, Curtin University Books, Fremantle, 2004, page 199

Source 11 *The One Day of the Year*

The One Day of the Year, was first performed by an amateur organisation, the Adelaide Theatre Group. The play had been rejected by the Adelaide Festival's Board of Governors on the basis that it might cause offence to former armed forces personnel for its treatment of Anzac Day commemorations. In 1961 the play was performed professionally with great success in Sydney with the support of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. It was also performed in London ... A play which contains the once-heretical perspective that Anzac Day – the proud emblem of Australia's military sacrifice – was founded on confused ideals and often degenerated into a squalid orgy of drunkenness and street brawls ... The One Day of the Year was inspired by an article in the University of Sydney newspaper Honi Soit lambasting Anzac Day. The article, says Seymour, was considerably more strident than the photo essay about drunken diggers concocted by the play's young characters: a university student, Hughie Cook, and his North Shore girlfriend Jan Castle. Seymour saw the Honi Soit article as an emblem of a generational shift, the chasm between an older Australia that venerated the Anzacs and a younger voice disgusted by war and ready to question the past. His own impressions of the commemoration were shaped in the 1950s when he ventured into Sydney on an Anzac Day morning from his home in the city's inner-west. He returned to a frightening scene – drunken men brawling and vomiting in the street.

This alcohol-fuelled debasement is represented in the play by the working-class father Alf Cook. Belligerent and resentful of foreigners and anyone with an education, Alf clings to Anzac Day like a drowning sailor clings to a life raft. Boozing is just part of a noble tradition.

"I'm a bloody Australian, mate, and it's because I'm a bloody Australian that I'm gettin' on the grog. It's Anzac Day this week, that's my day, that's the old digger's day."

Seymour, who was born in Fremantle, says Alf's salty language and prejudices were inspired by his late brother-in-law Alfred Chester Cruthers. It was Cruthers and Seymour's sister, May, who raised the playwright from the age of nine after his father was killed in an accident on Fremantle's wharves.

"He [Cruthers] had all the same qualities," says Seymour. "He resented his lack of education and he was quite nasty about anyone that had a better deal than him." Years later, Cruthers wrote to Seymour after seeing The One Day of the Year and asked him if Alf was indeed based on himself. The playwright was unable to reply. The play's perspective on Anzac Day earned it instant notoriety when it was unleashed on conservative, Menzies-era Australia. On the first night of the 1960 Adelaide production a policeman was stationed at the stage door. In 1961, at the first professional season in Sydney, a bomb scare during a dress rehearsal forced police to clear the theatre.

www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/04/01/1048962752382.html

For each of these sources identify:

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Source 12 The impact of the Vietnam War

Between 1965 and 1972 Australian troops, including conscripts, were sent to fight in Vietnam. Five hundred and twenty-one of them died during their service. Some people in Australia were against this involvement, and there were some large and violent protests. On their return some soldiers felt that their efforts were not appreciated by the Australian people, and they felt that they were not being included as part of the Anzac tradition. A number of veterans continued to suffer the physical and mental effects of their service. Some Vietnam veterans chose not to march in Anzac Day ceremonies in the years following their service.

DVA Australia and the Vietnam War 2007
www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/commemorations/education/Documents/Aus_and_the_Vietnam_war.pdf

Source 14 Eric Bogle's *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* 1971

This popular folk song about an Australian who fought and was badly wounded at Gallipoli, losing his legs, included the final verse:

*And so now every April, I sit on me porch
 And I watch the parades pass before me
 And I see my old comrades, how proudly they march,
 Reviving old dreams of past glories
 And the old men march slowly, old bones stiff and sore
 They're tired old heroes from a forgotten war
 And the young people ask 'What are they marching for?'
 And I ask myself the same question
 But the band plays Waltzing Matilda, and the old men still answer the call
 But as year follows year, more old men disappear.
 Someday no one will march there at all.*

And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda
 Words and music by Eric Bogle
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Source 13 Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*

Gallipoli is a 1981 Australian film, directed by Peter Weir and starring Mel Gibson and Mark Lee, about several young men from rural Western Australia who enlist in the Australian Army during the First World War. They are sent to Turkey, where they take part in the Gallipoli Campaign. During the course of the movie, the young men slowly lose their innocence about the purpose of war. The climax of the movie occurs on the Anzac battlefield at Gallipoli and depicts the futile attack at the Battle of The Nek on 7 August 1915.

Gallipoli provides a faithful portrayal of life in Australia in the 1910s . . . and captures the ideals and character of the Australians who joined up to fight, and the conditions they endured on the battlefield. It does, however, modify events for dramatic purposes and contains a number of significant historical inaccuracies. In particular the officers responsible for Entente replace with 'Allied' command of the attack are depicted in the film as being British, when in fact most British historians agree that the blame for the failure falls at the feet of the two Australian Commanding Officers.

It followed the Australian New Wave war film Breaker Morant (1980) and preceded the 5-part TV series ANZACs (1985), and The Lighthorsemen (1987). Recurring themes of these films include the Australian identity, such as mateship and larrikinism, the loss of innocence in war, and also the continued coming of age of the Australian nation and its soldiers (later called the ANZAC spirit).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_\(1981_film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_(1981_film))

Source 15 Some anniversary 'in memoriam' notices 1916

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

For each of these sources identify:

- 1 What period of the timeline it fits.
- 2 What it tells you about the way Gallipoli and Anzac Day were regarded at this time.

Source 16 Some Vietnam veterans comment on the significance of the Welcome Home parade 1987

On 3 October 1987, 25 000 Australian ex-servicemen and women who had served in Vietnam gathered in the Sydney Domain. They set off behind 500 Australian flags – each one representing one of the Australian dead in the Vietnam War. They were cheered by the huge crowd. Many of them wept at the reception and recognition they received.

We met mates again, we were welcomed by the Australian people, we no longer had to feel almost unclean about what we had done and where we had been. At last Australia was recognising those men and women it had shunned for so many years. Call it an emotional healing. Call it a Welcome Home. The fact is that many of us are now able to stand up and say with pride 'I'm a Vietnam veteran'. And people are listening.

Noel Giblett, *Homecomings*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1990

Source 17 A changing focus of Anzac Day

During the 1930s the focus of Anzac Day shifted from a day of mourning to a day on which servicemen celebrated their own war service and sacrifices. This was an era in which the Returned and Services League (RSL) called for greater acknowledgement of the living returned servicemen.

Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs. Living with the scars of war*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009 page 248

Source 18 An Anzac Day protest 1984



Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2008, page 441

Source 19
A cartoon comment on Gallipoli 1915



'Well dad?'

The Bulletin 13 May 1915

For each of these sources identify:

- 1 What period of the timeline it fits.
- 2 What it tells you about the way Gallipoli and Anzac Day were regarded at this time.

Source 20 75th Anniversary of Gallipoli 1990

The 75th anniversary pilgrimage could not have been more different from the fiftieth. Any questioning of the role of Anzac Day in the Australian calendar seemed irrelevant as the Australian nation, led by its government and the media, embarked on what seemed akin to a love affair with the remaining Gallipoli veterans, now numbering just over a hundred. Fifty-eight original Anzacs were deemed fit enough to make the journey — or pilgrimage as it was called — back to Gallipoli for a Dawn Service at Anzac Cove, and to other ceremonies at the Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair war cemeteries and the Abide Turkish Memorial throughout the day ... The Australian Government reportedly spent \$10 million on the project.

Harvey Broadbent *Gallipoli The Fatal Shore*, Penguin, Melbourne, 2005, page 318

Source 21 The interment of the Unknown Soldier 1993

The Unknown Australian Soldier whom we are interring today was one of those who, by his deeds, proved that real nobility and grandeur belongs, not to empires and nations, but to the people on whom they, in the last resort, always depend.

That is surely at the heart of the Anzac story, the Australian legend which emerged from the war. It is a legend not of sweeping military victories so much as triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. It is a legend of free and independent spirits whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship and the demands of necessity. It is a democratic tradition, the tradition in which Australians have gone to war ever since.

This Unknown Australian is not interred here to glorify war over peace; or to assert a soldier's character above a civilian's; or one race or one nation or one religion above another; or men above women; or the war in which he fought and died above any other war; or one generation above any that has been or will come later.

The Unknown Soldier honours the memory of all those men and women who laid down their lives for Australia. His tomb is a reminder of what we have lost in war and what we have gained.

We have lost more than 100,000 lives, and with them all their love of this country and all their hope and energy.

We have gained a legend: a story of bravery and sacrifice and, with it, a deeper faith in ourselves and our democracy, and a deeper understanding of what it means to be Australian.

It is not too much to hope, therefore, that this Unknown Australian Soldier might continue to serve his country - he might enshrine a nation's love of peace and remind us that, in the sacrifice of the men and women whose names are recorded here, there is faith enough for all of us.

The Hon. P. J. Keating MP Prime Minister of Australia
www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/keating.asp

Source 22 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 won 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

Resource Page 7

For each of these sources identify:

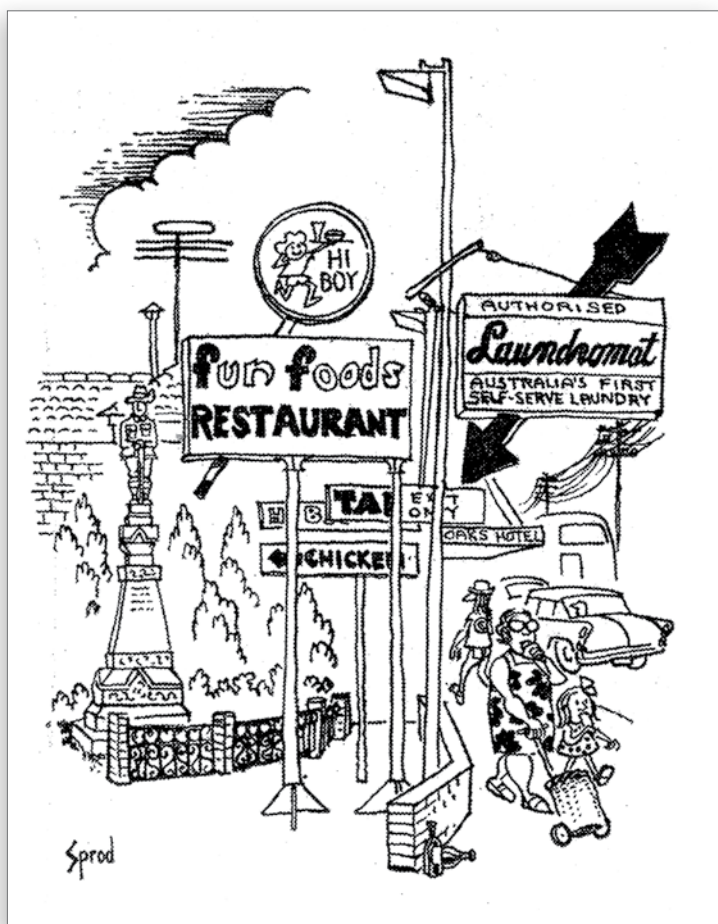
- 1 What period of the timeline it fits.
- 2 What it tells you about the way Gallipoli and Anzac Day were regarded at this time.

Source 23 A Prime Minister apologises to Vietnam veterans

The sad fact is that those who served in Vietnam were not welcomed back as they should have been. Whatever our views may have been — and I include those who supported the war as well as those who opposed it — the nation collectively failed those men. They are owed our apologies and our regrets for that failure. The very least that we can do on this 40th anniversary is to acknowledge that fact, to acknowledge the difficulties that so many of them have had in coping with the postwar trauma and to acknowledge the magnificent contribution that they have continued to make to our nation.

Extract from a statement by the Hon John Howard, Prime Minister, to the House of Representatives on Thursday, 17 August 2006 re Vietnam Veterans Day and the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan

Source 24 A cartoon comment on the changing world 1984



Sydney Morning Herald 25 April 1973

Source 25 Some critics of Anzac Day

Ever since 1915 the message embodied in Anzac Day and Anzac monuments has been challenged by different individuals.

- Victoria Cross winner Hugo Throssel, at the dedication of a war memorial in Northam, WA, reminded the crowd that in 1914 he had ridden through the town at the head of 18 men, seven of them, including his brother, had been killed. He had 'seen enough of the horrors of war and wanted peace'.
- In 1975 a message was painted on the wall of Sydney's Anzac Memorial, WOMEN MARCH FOR LIBERATION.
- On the eve of Anzac Day in 1971 the pillars of the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance had the word PEACE painted on them.
- In 1983 the words DEAD MEN DON'T RAPE were sprayed on the Cenotaph in Sydney.
- In 1994 historian Marilyn Lake criticised the notion that only men could give birth to the 'imperishable identity of the nation' and has argued instead that those who won democratic developments in Australia such as the secret ballot, women's suffrage and the principle of the living wage, should be the focus of national attention. She has also criticised what she sees as the deliberate and government-sponsored 'militarisation' of Australian history to serve the purposes of the government of the day.
- Some have argued that as Anzac was a misguided campaign in support of 'other people's wars it is unworthy of national commemoration'.
- Historian Mark McKenna has expressed dismay at the popularity of books about the Australian war experience, and that war memorials are presenting the idea that 'war is beyond human control, that it is the will of God, the course of history, our cruel and bitter fate'. Anzac Day has become 'an article of faith ... a sacred parable we dare not question'. With politicians 'tripping over one another to praise the fallen heroes, [and] media outlets whipping up patriotic fervour', Anzac Day has become more holy than December 25.

Adapted from KS Inglis, *Sacred Places*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2009, passim

For each of these sources identify:

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Source 26 The popularity of Anzac Day

Anzac Day continues to draw increasing crowds to both the Dawn Service and the March. Canberra's Dawn Service drew about 15,000 or 20,000 in 2003, 27,000 in 2005 and 28,000 in 2007. At the Sydney Cenotaph — 15,000 in 2003 and 20,000 plus in 2007. At the Melbourne Shrine more than 30,000 in 2007, with 5000 in Hobart and more than 30,000 in Perth.

KS Inglis *Sacred Places*, MUP, Melbourne 2008, page 547

Source 27 The 50th anniversary pilgrimage 1965

In 1965, on the 50th anniversary of Gallipoli, the Sydney Morning Herald ran the headline: Can Anzac Day survive?, and included the comment: 'To most children, Anzac Day is quietly dying out ... It's very strange how you go to great lengths to commemorate what was after all a defeat ... It is meant not to commemorate a type of warfare, but a type of spirit, a sort of selflessness ...'

Harvey Broadbent, *Gallipoli. The Fatal Shore*, Penguin, Melbourne, 2009 page 315

Source 28 Bicentennial Anzac Day March (1988)



M Beilby, *Bicentennial Anzac Day march*, 1988, oil on canvas, 149 x 241.7 cm, AWM ART29417

Source 29 Department of Veterans' Affairs education programs

The role of the Commemorations Group of DVA is to acknowledge and commemorate the service and sacrifice of all those who served Australia and its allies in wars, conflicts and peace operations.

Since 1995 it has provided primary and secondary schools with resources for the study and commemoration of Australia's wartime history.

www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/commemorations/education/Pages/index.aspx

Source 30 A young man's visit to Gallipoli

I will never forget Gallipoli. I will never forget the sacrifice — and that it might have been me. I think I understand now an historic point in Australia's development. In my fellow pilgrims I saw the Anzac spirit. The camaraderie, the respect for the fallen men, be they Anzac or Turkish, made me proud. There was no glorification of war but a deep understanding of how important it is that this should never happen again.

Nigel Adnum, 'Back to Gallipoli', *The Bulletin*, 27 April 1993, page 41

How do we commemorate Anzac Day today?

Task 2 Analysing an Anzac Day commemoration

How is Anzac Day commemorated in your community today?

Look at the record sheet on the next page. Use it to observe, research, record and analyse an Anzac Day commemoration in your local community or school.

Record information about what happens on the day, and then comment on what it means, and the messages and ideas that the ceremony is delivering. You will need to research some of the elements further, and also talk to people about what their ideas and understandings of the day are.

When you have completed your investigation you should be able to answer the question:

How do Australians see Anzac Day today?

Present your information in the form of a report in one of the following formats:

- a photo montage, display or photo essay;
- a report for the local newspaper or a school magazine; or
- a storyboard for a TV documentary (outlining what you would show and say in each scene of your report).

Here are some of the elements of the ceremony you can research and include in your analysis. Include details about their origin, meanings and significance:

- Slouch hat
- Medals
- The Last Post
- Lest We Forget
- Banners
- Riderless horse
- Wreaths
- Rosemary
- Digger image
- Emu plumes
- Dawn ceremony
- Unit colours
- One minute's Silence
- Regimental badges
- Red poppies
- Flame of remembrance

Information about aspects of Anzac Day can be found on these sites:

- Department of Veterans' Affairs site www.dva.gov.au
- Australian War Memorial site www.awm.gov.au
- ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee (Qld) www.anzacday.org.au



Analysing Anzac Day – Record Sheet

Aspect	Observation	Your comments on, and interpretation of, this information
Date		
Who is involved		
Who is not involved		
Ceremonies		
Words spoken		
What participants say		
Special messages / addresses		
Symbols		
Special clothing		
Special places		
Special times		
Special music		
Any opposition / criticisms		
How it is reported by the media		

Task 3 Analysing popular representations of Anzac Day

How is Anzac Day presented in popular media — such as in songs, films, statues, memorials and even museums? Do these popular representations provide a fair and accurate and balanced view — or are they accidentally or even deliberately distorted in some way, to influence the viewer to accept a particular point of view?

Here are some popular representations of Gallipoli and Anzac Day. You will need to research them further to investigate how well they present aspects of Gallipoli and Anzac Day.

- The **song** *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda*;
- *Gallipoli*, the **film** by Peter Weir;
- **Statues** such as that of Simpson and his donkey at the Australian War Memorial;
- **Memorials** such as the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne and the Cenotaph in Sydney;
- **Websites** such as the Queensland Anzac Day Committee, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian War Memorial; and
- **Museums** such as the Australian War Memorial's Gallipoli Gallery.

Choose one of these to analyse. Answer each of the following questions:

- What is it about/what does it show?
- What is its perspective of Gallipoli and Anzac Day?
- What is the attitude of the creator to Gallipoli and Anzac Day? What evidence do you have for this?
- What is its message or meaning?
- Is it accurate?
- Is it fair and balanced?
- Is a particular viewpoint represented?
- Is it popular and influential?

Once all members of your class have reported on their investigation you will have a very detailed understanding of how Anzac Day is popularly represented today.

*The Shrine of Remembrance,
Melbourne*



What do Gallipoli and Anzac Day mean to you today?

Task 4 Creating a personal reflection of what Anzac Day means

What does Anzac Day and the history created at Gallipoli mean to you? What are your own responses and attitudes to Anzac Day and the Anzac tradition? Do you agree that it provides us with a set of qualities that are worth trying to live up to, and that set a standard that we should try to maintain? Do you agree with the critics that it is excessively patriotic, or non-inclusive of some groups in society, or militaristic? Look back at the first question you were asked in this unit. Have you changed or developed your views?

Your task now is to create a personal statement about Anzac Day and what it means to you today. Your reflection can be in the form of a statement, a poem, a song, a painting or sketch, a photograph montage, a video or audio piece, or any other way that best expresses your ideas.

The following comments from historians, journalist and others about Anzac Day will provide insights to assist your reflections.

Source 1 Historian Ken Inglis' comments on Anzac Day

Australian history before 1915 could not supply that theme of divine national purpose ... The first settlers were no chosen people, except in the ... jest that they were chosen by the best judges in England. The Great War delivered ordeal, achievement and loss comparable with the [identity-forming] Americans' Civil War. From Gallipoli to Villers-Bretonneux and Beersheba, the fighting and dying of men in the AIF yielded a solemn new theme in their country's rhetoric. The word 'Anzac', immediately and permanently protected by law from profane use, encapsulated the theme. Five elements had converged to create it. Three of them were shared with all other participant nations: the special place of military endeavour for European minds in an age when the spirit of nationalism was at its height; the unnaturally early death of so many men; and the inability of suddenly bereaved people to draw adequate comfort from their traditional Christian faith. For Australians there were two other elements. First, men from colonies had proved to be at least as valorous and proficient on battlefields as men from the imperial heartland ... [and] the squalid peculiarity of their nation's origin made the performance of the AIF especially precious. Secondly, theirs alone among the contending armies was composed entirely of volunteers, men who could be celebrated for having freely offered their lives in the service of their country.

KS Inglis, *Sacred Places*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2008 page 436

Anzac Day 2009



Source 2 Journalist Mark McKenna comments on Anzac Day

Whether it is the Coalition or the Labor Party in power in Canberra, the uncritical embrace of the Anzac legend is likely to continue, a scenario that suggests some disturbing consequences for Australia's future. The more all-consuming the Anzac myth becomes, the less public space exists for understanding the non-military aspects of Australia's history, be it our democratic history, our indigenous history or our intellectual and cultural history.

The new love of Anzac is not about Australians paying more attention to their history, as is often claimed; rather, it is about the making of historical myth as a source of national pride and independence, the foundation stone of a new sentimental nationalism. This is not what the Anzacs fought for. It is what an increasing number of Australians would like to think they had fought for. The Anzacs were not like us. So many aspects of the world in which they lived are fundamentally foreign to our world today.

Late in 2006, I attended a conference on Anzac Day, held at Deakin University in Geelong. There, Andrew Hamilton, who teaches at the United Faculty of Theology in Melbourne, gave one of the most penetrating critiques of Anzac Day I have encountered: When we say that people sacrificed their lives for an abstract cause like victory or nationhood, we easily imply that their lives and deaths are given value only by the cause they serve. We lose sight of the preciousness of each human life and equate human value with usefulness. Rhetoric about war is particularly vulnerable to this instrumentalising of human beings because its core business implies that human lives are expendable ... I find more ambiguous the recent nationalist emphases in the celebration of Anzac Day: the proliferation of flags, the singing of national anthems and the desire to make Anzac Day emblematic of Australian values. These things diminish the real humanity of those who have died in order to allow another generation to inflate its image of itself.

*The Anzacs did not sacrifice their lives for the Australian nation. The nation has created their deaths as sacrifice to serve its own ends. On May 18, 1915, less than four weeks after the first landing at Anzac Cove, the NSW Department of Education released a pamphlet for distribution in the state's schools. Its title, *Australians in Action: The Story of Gallipoli*, revealed the desperate need for deaths on the battlefield upon which the new nation could at last stand proud. This ideal of blood sacrifice was precisely the sense of nationalism that existed at the time. But after the horrors of the 20th century, should it be ours today? Do we still need to prove ourselves in this way, to continue to accept the myth that our nation was only truly born on the beaches of Anzac Cove, not when the colonies became self-governing, not at Federation? Are our national values defined only when we have to fight for them? When we have an enemy? By [making a sacred rite of] the blood of the Anzacs, do we not forget the blood of Aborigines and settlers spilled in the frontier wars? Do we still prefer our history to be made elsewhere?*

Associate Professor Mark McKenna, Department of History, University of Sydney, 'Patriot Act', *The Australian* 6 June 2007
www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21813244-25132,00.html



Source 3 A Victorian parliamentary committee comments

The importance of the ANZAC spirit was a common theme of submissions to the Committee. The RSL (Victorian Branch) observed that: "ANZAC Day should be continued to be honoured as the principal National day of commemoration in relation to patriotic and like activities for the indefinite future."

The Committee found there is overwhelming support of Anzac Day as a day of national commemoration. This support manifested itself in submissions made to the Committee, the high level of media coverage of Anzac Day, the volume and success of literature about the Anzac spirit and the growing popularity of "pilgrimages" to Gallipoli, particularly by young Australians. It is apparent that this response of support reflects the community's recognition that there are worthwhile principles and values that derive from the Anzac spirit. The RSL (National Headquarters) submission stressed the importance of Anzac values as follows:

"Anzac Day commemorates the contribution of all who served Australia, but the RSL also sees Anzac Day as important in preserving Anzac values and promoting them as shared values in the Australian community.

Anzac values include such human qualities as courage, mateship, fairness, persistence, integrity, humour, initiative, endurance, determination, ingenuity, respect, and the 'selfless spirit of Anzac'.

The best way to help preserve Anzac values is to involve young people in Anzac Day ceremonies in a managed way that brings these values to them meaningfully."

The Committee concluded that the commemoration of Anzac Day should be further enhanced by greater emphasis on education activities. The Committee considers that education in this sense includes not only educating our children, but also catering for the increasing interest of Victorians in the significance of Anzac Day.

Victorian Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, Parliamentary Review of Anzac Day Laws, Chapter 2 – The Anzac Spirit, October 2002
www.parliament.vic.gov.au/sarc/Anzac/Anzac%20Report%20Ch2.htm

Source 4 The *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History* entry for Anzac Day

ANZAC DAY, 25 April, is Australia's most important public festival and has become over time the country's de facto national day, eclipsing the more manufactured Australia Day, 26 January. It commemorates the landing at Gallipoli of Anzac forces on that day in 1915; it is the day on which Australians remember the nation's war dead and all of those who have served and suffered in war; and it is also the day on which Australians remember what it is to be an Australian. It is a day both of solemn ritual and of boisterous celebration ...

In 1918 the RSL called for Anzac Day to be made a national holiday. The next year Western Australia led the way by making it a public service and bank holiday, and from 1920 closed shops as well. The Day fell on a Sunday in 1920, but from 1921 all states bar New South Wales declared a public holiday ... and in 1924 New South Wales finally fell into line ... Though ... some in government would have preferred the anniversary of a battle of more significance than the Gallipoli landing, such as Pozières where in 1916 more Australian blood was spilled than anywhere else, and though Armistice Day, 11 November, or the nearby Remembrance Sunday, was preferred in Britain and elsewhere, Anzac Day won popular support in Australia and governments were eventually forced to acknowledge it.

Anzac Day has a number of factors in its favour. It marks the first significant action by clearly identifiable Australian national troops, thus showing the country's 'coming of age' ... One can only pass this rite of passage once, so later more militarily important battles, like Villers-Bretonneux or Kokoda, do not signify, but rather are absorbed. Anzac Day falls around Easter, which in Australia puts it at a pleasant time of year in mid-autumn. Easter also helps give its language of sacrifice, birth and rebirth deep sacerdotal undertones ... And it falls close to the start of the football season, so the afternoon produces a heady brew of sport and patriotism ...

The march has always had more than diggers present. Many more watch than march ... In the march itself, the bands are supplied by municipalities, schools, service organisations, and the Salvation Army (always a favourite with the diggers); and Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and St John Ambulance Brigade are on hand to carry signs and banners and assist with the marshalling and first aid. It always has been a communal event ... From its beginnings Anzac Day has been contested by various minority groupings and has changed to accommodate some criticisms or has simply outlasted others. In 1916 some criticised the appropriateness of holding 'a picnic o'er Australia's dead'. This view was never put more sharply and unsympathetically than by the character Hughie in Alan Seymour's satirical and at the time controversial Anzac Day play, *The One Day of the Year* (1960):

Yeah, it's a lot of old has-beens getting up in the local RSL and saying, 'Well, boys, you all know what we're here for, we're here to honour our mates who didn't come back.' And they all feel sad and have another six or seven beers.

But the public has always been more tolerant than the wowsers and the cynics on 'the one day of the year' ...

Feminists have criticised Anzac Day for being only men's business and for marginalising women. This has always been open to argument and is becoming more so. While warfare was gendered, women had the role of nurturing and nursing the warriors rather than being warriors themselves. Hence women have always been very prominent in their attention to the personal memory side of Anzac Day. For many years few women marched, though some did as nurses and others wearing the medals of dead or stricken relatives, but many watched, in every sense of that word, and in so doing participated. After the Second World War, in which thousands of women served in all services, it became much more common for women to march in their own right. Since the 1980s, with women serving in increasingly more active military capacities, the gender distinction has blurred even more.

Radical socialists and pacifists have condemned Anzac Day since its inception as a day glorifying war and held counter raffles and meetings on the day. Their sentiments might be encapsulated in this couplet from an Anzac Day poem published in *Labor Call* in 1927 railing against those who tell

*'The strange insidious lie,
That nationhood is born where men
In bitter warfare die.'*

continued >



However, as the Day has always been about memory, comradeship and civic virtue, that criticism has missed the mark. There have been occasional attempts to hijack the march for sectional propaganda purposes. In 1926 the Unemployed Soldiers' Association was banned from participating as a distinct group in the Melbourne march. Between 1932 and 1940, Italian immigrant ex-servicemen, marching as former Allies, gave the fascist salute at the cenotaph in Sydney and elsewhere, from 1966 to 1971 the women of the 'Save Our Sons' movement demonstrated against conscription for the Vietnam war; and from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s the radical feminists of the 'Women Against Rape in War' organisation disrupted Anzac Day in attention getting ways, such as splashing blood-red paint on memorials and laying wreaths of barbed-wire. It seems they realised their behaviour was counterproductive after the President of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia pointed out that the women protesters were committing 'an act of symbolic rape' on Anzac Day itself. In 1987, some of Melbourne's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander diggers staged their own march in the suburb of Thornbury when their request to march as a group was denied. None of these protests attracted mass popular support.

It is a great paradox of Anzac Day since the late 1980s that as the initial gatekeepers of the exclusive 'returned-men only' version of the tradition have begun to die out (the last survivor of the Gallipoli landing died in 1997; the last Great War digger in 2005), and as Second World War veterans have become increasingly thin on the ground, Anzac Day itself has undergone a remarkable revival ... [such as] the practice of youngsters wearing their parents' medals and marching ... there have been many other signs of the Day becoming more inclusive, many with the RSL's active encouragement. The civilians of the Women's Land Army first marched in Melbourne in 1937, and earlier elsewhere. Aboriginal diggers and families first marched as a group on the Gold Coast in 1993, and led the march in Perth in 1995. Allies from the Vietnamese (first in Melbourne in 1987), Greek, Polish, Serb, Russian, Italian, French partisan and other communities have long joined in. Relatives wearing medals are now a very common sight in marches all over the country, and will soon become the majority of even 'Second World War' marchers. And this process is bound to continue for relations of veterans of the Korean and later wars. Though there are fewer returned servicemen and women to march, the size of the march has remained steady or grown, Dawn Service attendances have burgeoned, as have television audiences. Bolstered by such events as the 75th anniversary of Anzac in 1990, which was the first such event to receive government patronage, the extensive 'Australia Remembers' ceremonies of 1995, the Sydney Olympics, and several prime ministerial visits to Gallipoli, Kokoda and other sites, Anzac Day has become a touchstone for a new, inclusive nationalism, backed more strongly than ever by State authorities and the mass media.

Again, paradoxically, as the nation remembered the events more and more, in the 1990s, so the direct demography of grief, or of 'blood sacrifice', attenuated. The immediate relatives of the 60,000 dead of a nation of 5 million of the First World War were themselves dying out, as increasingly were those of the 34,000 dead of 7 million from the Second World War. And those of the 339 dead in Korea of 7.5 million, of about 500 in Vietnam of 12 million, and the handful from more recent conflicts of 20 million are absolutely and proportionately too insignificant to sustain a national day of mourning on their immediate behalf. Thus, modern, inclusive Anzac now remembers not individuals with whom a significant proportion of the population is not personally directly acquainted, but rather an idealised Anzac who exemplifies shared Australian (or indeed universal) communal values and virtues ... Fuelled by the 'New Nationalism' of the 1970s and 1980s, by the Australian history and genealogical booms, and by such influential popular 'history from below' as Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years* (1974) and its cinematic offspring, Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* (1981), the ... nationalist version of the Anzac tradition has come fully into its own, while the older imperial tradition has long gone and the tradition of personal grief is fading fast. The new inclusive Anzac spirit was epitomised by Prime Minister Paul Keating when he remarked, at the entombment of the Australian Unknown Soldier in 1993, of the 100,000 Australian war dead in twentieth-century wars and of the soldier being entombed, 'He is all of them. And he is one of us'.

Peter Dennis et al (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, OUP, Melbourne, 2nd edition 2008, pages 32-37
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Connections



DVD-ROM interactives connection

- *The Anzac Legend over time*
- *Community memorial board*
- *Analyse a museum display*

Website connections

Gallipoli and the Anzacs website

www.anzacsite.gov.au:

- Visiting Gallipoli Today
www.anzacsite.gov.au/2visiting/index.html
- Building the Anzac Commemorative Site
www.anzacsite.gov.au/3building/index.html
- Researching Gallipoli and Australians at War
www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/

*Stone of Remembrance,
Australian War Memorial*

