

MILITARY HISTORY

THE FORGOTTEN *FIRST*

THE 1ST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION IN THE GREAT WAR AND ITS LEGACY

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ABSTRACT

As the last veterans of Australia's involvement in the First World War pass away, this article outlines the history and evolution of Australia's first and finest Army formation, the 1st Division. From the generals to the privates, from Australia, Egypt, Gallipoli and France, the long-term impact of these soldiers and leaders on both Australian military and civil institutions has been profound. Indeed, their actions and sacrifices are imprinted on the national psyche, although, as the author argues, the mythology that has grown around them does not do full justice to the legacy of this organisation.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2005, the last Australian veteran of the Great War passed away. Although the last living links with the 'war to end all wars' has now been severed, their experience continues to cast a giant shadow over contemporary society and popular culture. The 'A' in Anzac has become a veritable industry, with every year seeing another publication or television special on Gallipoli, John

Simpson Kirkpatrick and his dewy-eyed donkey or one of the seemingly endless bloody and futile battles that raged along the Western Front. While popular culture has embraced the Great War as a defining event in Australia's story, much of the history of this war is narrow, distorted or mythologised. One of the more popular of the contemporary genres of war writing are the collections of letters, diaries and reminiscences of individual diggers during what Bill Gammage evocatively called *The Broken Years*.¹ The public's fascination with the particular horror of this war shows no sign of slackening, but too much of our understanding of the war is based on the very narrow experiences of individuals, which has only been further distorted by our fascination with the last men standing.² Just as the physical confines of the trenches limited their view of the war around them, so too is our understanding often blinkered by the obsession with social history—the 'hell and whores' school of military historiography.

Australia, with a population of just over five million people, despatched a force of 330 000 men and women to the First World War. Despite the digger's well-known but exaggerated individualism, these volunteers were not self-actualising Edwardian 'Rambos'; rather, they fought within structured organisations that in many ways defined and shaped their experience of the war. The vast majority served in one of the seven Australian divisions. The 1st Australian Division was formed in 1914 as the major component of Australia's commitment to imperial defence and the war in Europe—the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). It was the 1st Division that led the way on Gallipoli and was joined by the 2nd Division in September 1915. Following the withdrawal of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) from Gallipoli, the AIF expanded to a force of five infantry divisions, which eventually served side-by-side on the Western Front as an integral part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). In the Middle East, the best part of another two light horse divisions served in the Desert Mounted Corps. Surprisingly, only one of these divisions, and the most junior, produced a history in the immediate post-war era, leading one veteran to opine that the 'Most remarkable feature of the dearth of AIF unit histories is that of the divisions; the 5th has been the only one heard of so far'.³ This situation remained

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unchanged for eighty years, until the next century when one more was added to this very short list. In 2002, Al Palazzo's wide-ranging history of the 3rd Division was published, but this division did not see action in France until 1917, halfway through the war.⁴ The lack of divisional histories is a serious deficiency in our understanding of the Great War and it has meant that Australia's greatest fighting formation has all but been forgotten.

This article provides a brief history of the 1st Australian Division in the Great War. The choice of the 1st Division is obvious: it was the *first*. The first division raised by Australia in the Great War—in fact the first division that Australia had ever raised—and it was the only division that served throughout the war from beginning to end. The article sets out to provide an overview of this most famous but historically neglected formation. It begins by describing the 1914-era division, how it was structured and why it was the division that was the actual 'currency' of armies. The article then provides a brief history from the 1st Division's mobilisation in 1914 to its disbanding in 1919, and concludes by describing the legacy left for the nation and the modern Army.

THE AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

The division in 1914 was an organisation of fighting 'arms' and their supporting 'services' and it was the largest formation in Western armies with a fixed organisation.⁵ The higher organisations of corps and army had flexible organisations that included a number of divisions supplemented with specialist corps and army troops. Subordinate to the division, the brigades and other divisional direct command units also had fixed structures but, unlike the division, they were organised by function and their personnel belonged almost exclusively to one type of military specialisation. There were infantry brigades, cavalry regiments and artillery batteries, but each of these had a specific task and little capacity to operate on their own. Indeed, they could only achieve their full potential when they co-operated together as part of a combined-arms team. The division, in contrast, had the mix of combat and service organisations which allowed it, and only it, to form and support combined-arms teams. In 1914 it was the infantry division that was the mainstay of armies, as Cyril Falls noted when he described them as the real 'unit' of the First World War.⁶

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The Australian (and British) infantry division in 1914 consisted of more than 18 000 men organised into twenty or so units, ranging in strength from 400 up to 1000 men each. It was commanded by a major general, supported by a surprisingly lean headquarters of just sixty-seven all ranks. Its main weapons were some 18 000

rifles, twenty-six machineguns and thirty-six modern quick-firing field artillery pieces. The bulk of its manpower and combat power was held in its three infantry brigades, which contained twelve battalions. The infantry did most of the fighting (and dying), and although they were supported by the other arms, in 1914 this amounted to just three artillery regiments (titled brigades), a single light horse regiment and three companies of field engineers. Later, the divisional artillery would be re-organised, expanded and supplemented with trench mortars, and battalions of pioneers and machineguns to boost the division's combat power. However, in 1914 the divisional teeth-to-tail ratio was weighted heavily in favour of the teeth.

The divisional administrative tail was as lean as the division's headquarters. It consisted of: the divisional medical services with three field ambulances, supply and transportation consisting of a divisional ammunition column and a divisional train, and the veterinary services. A mobile veterinary section, a sanitary section and a salvage company were added later. These organisations fed, clothed, bathed, ministered (physically and spiritually) and laundered all of the division's two legged and four-legged members. They organised the repair or replacement of equipment, and controlled the movement of this array of people, machines and animals. This was no small task, as the division had nearly 5500 animals (nearly all horses but later included donkeys, mules and pigeons), more than 600 horse-drawn vehicles, 310 bicycles and a mere eight motor cars and nine motorcycles. By 1918, many of the horses were gone but the day of the internal combustion engine had not quite yet dawned.

None of the division's organisation existed before the war and mobilisation only began after His Majesty's government advised its dominions and colonies that, as a result of Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium, the British Empire was at war. On 15 August 1914, the 1st Australian Division was officially raised as the main component of the AIF. It was born because of Australia's sentimental loyalty to Britain and the Empire, an ideological desire to stand against Prussian militarism, and a practical recognition that Australia was part of a global trading system that would suffer if Germany triumphed in Europe. Considering the lack of pre-war planning, the division was mobilised in the remarkably short time of six weeks but drew its forces from the length and breath of Australia. Each state's quota embarked from its home port and their contracted transports made their way individually to rendezvous off the port of Albany on the southern Western Australian coastline. Once this armada had assembled it was escorted by Australian, British and Japanese warships, and sailed west across the Indian Ocean bound for the Suez Canal and eventually Britain.

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Problems with accommodation and training facilities on Salisbury Plain in England led to the convoy being diverted to Egypt, where the division was to complete its training before moving to France. There, in the shadows of the great pyramids, the 1st Division was fully assembled. At Mena Camp, it celebrated its first Christmas away from home; for many it was the first of five spent on foreign shores and for many others it was their last. Fate intervened, with the entry of Turkey into the war on the side of Germany and its Triple Alliance partners. Britain took the opportunity of forming the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), two divisions composed of the 1st Australian Division and a composite New Zealand and Australian Division. With few troops to spare, this corps was earmarked as part of a larger Anglo-French invasion force bound for Gallipoli.

INTO BATTLE

It was the 3rd Infantry Brigade (AIF), of the 1st Division, that was the first force to land on that fateful shore. The 3rd Brigade, drawn from the fringe or outer Australian states and led by a British Army regular, actually launched the Anzac legend when they seized the initial foothold during the Gaba Tepe landings. Soon after, the Victorian 2nd Infantry Brigade earned the sobriquet the ‘white Ghurkhas’ for their gallant but failed attack at Krithia on the southern tip of the peninsula. In August, as part of a great new offensive to break the stalemate, the New South Wales–raised 1st Infantry Brigade spearheaded the bloody feint that seized Lone Pine and led to the award of seven Victoria Crosses (VCs). Despite selfless gallantry and stoic courage in the face of appalling conditions, the Gallipoli campaign was a failure and, the reality is that, as Robin Prior has succinctly observed:

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Gallipoli had no influence on the course of the war as a whole. More depressing still, even if the expedition had succeeded in its aims, it is doubtful if the war would have been shortened by a single day.⁷

The misguided and overly optimistic hopes of the ‘Easterners’ could not make up for a flawed strategy and poor planning. It was the ‘Westerners’ who were correct; it was only on the Western Front where the war was to be decided and it was there that the 1st Division could best help win the war. With no prospect of success, the ANZAC was spirited away in the most successful part of the entire operation, planned chiefly by the 1st Division’s old chief of staff, Cyril Brudenell White.

Back in Egypt, the division provided the nucleus of an expanded AIF and the old '1st Divvy' spread its hard-won experience throughout the new formations. Its influence permeated the entire force from top to bottom and provided the majority of the new brigade and battalion commanders.

In March 1916, the 1st Division again led the way, this time to the main theatre of the war. The 1st Division fought for nearly three years in northern France and Belgium Flanders, and it was involved in many of the most famous battles of the Western Front. After the division landed at the port of Marseilles, the sun-burned diggers were entrained through the French countryside north of Paris and deposited in the Armiertiers sector of the British line. This part of the line was regarded as a 'nursery' sector, usually quiet and where new formations could be introduced to the front. Here the Gallipoli veterans and the newer volunteers were introduced to the reality of the Western Front and they were issued with their steel helmets, Lewis machine-guns and factory-produced grenades. Much of their worn-out heavy equipment was exchanged for newer items from the immense British logistics depots along the northern Channel coastline while officers and non-commissioned officers attended British schools of instruction.

As they adjusted to the new and deadly war, to the south the diggers could hear the tremendous barrage that marked the beginning of the great Somme offensive. On 1 July, the BEF flung itself at the German defences on the northern side of the river in support of their French allies who were fighting desperately to the south at Verdun. Seen as too raw to join the opening thrust, the 1st Division remained in the north acclimatising and it was the 5th Division that was committed first to the offensive when it launched a hastily conceived and poorly executed diversion at Frommelles. Soon after, however, it was the 1st Division's turn as it entrained for the south to take part in the second phase of the month-old offensive. Now, instead of a major breakthrough, the British aimed a series of minor attacks to nibble away at the German second-line defences. On 23 July, the 1st Division, operating as part of General Hubert Gough's Reserve Army, seized Pozieres in what was seen as a significant achievement. According to the division's last commander, Lieutenant General Sir William Glasgow, this result was second only to Gallipoli in importance: 'If the landing at Anzac is the first page of the story of how Australia won their place as a full-blown nation, the second page is the story of the capture of Pozieres.'⁸ Two more tours on the Somme followed, with fruitless fighting around Mouquet Farm before the division was withdrawn north to the then-quiet sector of Ypres in Flanders. Later in the year they returned

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for the final phase of the Somme campaign as the offensive petered out in the mud and rain of a bitter French winter, and the division suffered a number of minor disasters at Gueudecourt.

The New Year of 1917 found the division garrisoning the line in the worst European winter in forty years. The diggers found these conditions very difficult to bear and not for the first time there were discipline problems and increased incidents of absence without leave. On a more positive note, this quieter period gave many their first opportunity for leave both in Britain (or ‘Blighty’) and in Paris. This year also saw a gradual maturing of the British Army on the Western Front as new techniques and tactics were developed by trial and error or fine-tuned from the experience gained from the 1916 Somme fighting. These improvements were most evident in the artillery, but they also embraced a range of new weapons systems that were being employed in support of combined-arms teams at the divisional level, such as gas, machine-guns, tanks and trench mortars. This growing sophistication of the BEF as a new fighting system began inauspiciously for the 1st Division with the attacks at Bullecourt and the defence of Lagnicourt, but later in the year the division played a central role in a number of the successful attacks in Flanders during Third Ypres. Again the division played a significant part at Menin Road, Polygon Wood and Broodseinde in a series of overwhelming but limited attacks to which the Germans had no effective answer. Unfortunately, the ground was ill-suited to a late-season campaign and when the weather broke the final attacks floundered in a sea of mud. Eventually, utterly exhausted, the division was withdrawn for a major period of rest and training; none too soon as disciplinary problems resurfaced towards the end of the year just as they had at the beginning.

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In March 1918 the Germans struck the Allies hard, attempting to drive a wedge between the British and French and win the war before the arrival of the American armies tipped the balance. Along the Somme the Germans drove a deep fissure in the British line aimed at the great city of Amiens. The newly formed Australian Corps, rushed south from Messines, helped stem the offensive just as the German thrust began to slow in the face of stiffening British resistance. As a new threat emerged to the north at Hazebrouck, the 1st Division about-turned and was pushed into the line as part of the British XV Corps. Holding an extended sector throughout April, the division was able to engage in the type of low-level tactics at which the Australian soldier had come to excel. This form of aggressive minor tactics, colloquially known as ‘peaceful penetration,’ involved minor patrols, raids and small unit offensive

action, usually initiated by junior commanders. Although there were many brilliant examples, the attack of Lieutenant Colonel Maurice Wilder-Neligan's 10th Battalion on the village of Merris in July was so outstanding that the British Inspector General labelled it 'the best show ever done by a battalion in France'.⁹

The skill with which these operations were conducted, and the devastating effect they had on the German formations facing them, demonstrated just how far the 1st Division (and the AIF and BEF) had come in four years. No longer was it a raw conglomeration of units—with four years of hard experience and tough training—by 1918 the division was a highly professional combined-arms team that had few equals on the Western Front. It was no longer totally dependant on the rifles and bayonets of its dwindling riflemen; now they were armed with an array of weapons, from Lewis light machine-guns to rifle grenades and light mortars. They were also fighting within a new doctrinal framework that placed the platoon at the centre of minor tactics. Supporting the infantry were the divisional artillery, trench mortars and machine-guns firing sophisticated barrages that combined smoke, chemical and high explosive, as well as unprecedented quantities of medium and heavy guns from the corps artillery, tanks and close air support. Historian Jonathan Bailey described this as the birth of modern war and, according to Williamson Murray it was *the* Revolution in Military Affairs of the last century. By 1918, the diggers of the 1st Division had fought through this revolution and mastered the new style of warfare.¹⁰

When the crisis abated, the 1st Division was recalled to reunite with the other four Australian divisions just in time to take part in the final 100-days campaign. Despite the claims of post-war German apologists, this campaign saw the final and conclusive defeat of the German Army on the Western Front. Throughout the months of August and September the division achieved further honours at Lihons, Chuignes, and finished the war poised on the Hindenburg Outpost Line. The end came none too soon as, during its final attacks of the war, the 1st Division suffered the single largest mutiny in the history of the AIF; fortunately, the Armistice intervened.

At the eleventh hour on 11 November 1918, the guns finally fell silent. With the war all but over, the veterans of the 1st Division stood in proud silence. It was the 1st Division that had served from 1914 to 1919; it was only the *First* that had fought from the

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Anzac landings to the Amiens counterattack; and it was the *First* that had suffered casualties higher than any other Australian division, with 15 000 fatalities and nearly 35 000 wounded. It officially disappeared as a separate entity on 23 March 1919, although members of the division continued to serve until the AIF was disbanded two years later on 31 March 1921.

THE LEGACY

In all more than 80 000 men passed through the ranks of the 1st Division, nearly a quarter of those who served overseas in the AIF. Today, few Australians could name any of the men who made the 1st Division a household name in Australia during the Great War, but it was this division that formed the nursery of the AIF—its commanders, junior and senior, came to dominate the Army during and after the war.

Few today have heard of William Throsby Bridges, ‘the first great soldier Australia possessed’, the creator of the 1st Division and the first dominion officer to command a division in battle.¹¹ Few outside military and academic circles know much about Cyril Brudenell White, Bridges’ brilliant chief of staff and hero of the withdrawal from Gallipoli, who finished the war as the Chief of Staff of the British Fifth Army. Most Australians, even those in the military, would be surprised to learn that Australia’s senior division was commanded by a British Army regular, Harold Walker, for most of the war. Walker took over when Bridges was killed by a sniper on Gallipoli. If Australians recall Thomas Blamey, it is more likely for his controversial World War II career rather than his brilliance as a staff officer and Walker’s chief of operations in France. Thomas Glasgow is more likely to be remembered as Australia’s first High Commissioner to Canada rather than for his achievements as the last commander of the 1st Divvy. These men ‘earned their spurs’ on Gallipoli with the 1st Division and, by the final campaigns, those that survived dominated the senior command and staff appointments across the AIF. By 1918, all but one of the five Australian divisions in France was commanded by an ex-1st Division officer. Even the Desert Mounted Corps in the Middle East was commanded by an ex-1st Division commander—Harry Chauvel, the first Australian to command a corps. The same held true at the lower levels.

In August 1918 there were 15 AIF infantry brigade commanders serving on the Western Front. Nine of these (60 per cent) began their service with the 1st Division. Of the five divisional Commanders Royal Artillery in 1918, four (80 per cent) had begun their AIF service with the 1st Division. At the regimental level, the division

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had produced a host of outstanding combat commanders; of the fifty-seven AIF infantry battalion commanders on the Western Front, more than one third began their service with the 1st Division.¹²

As the longest-serving Australian division, it is not surprising that the 1st Division was also the most highly decorated in the AIF. While the recent purchase of Captain Alfred Shout's Victoria Cross for A\$1 million dollars—and its generous donation to the Australian War Memorial—attracted the public's attention, members of the 1st Division won seven of the nine VCs awarded to Australians on Gallipoli. Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Harold 'Pompey' Elliott's 7th Battalion (AIF) contributed four of this total for its actions at Lone Pine, making it the only AIF battalion to win four VCs during the Great War. Members of the 1st Division won a total of twenty VCs during the war and another was awarded to a 1st Division veteran for his actions fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia. The division's units also received the most battle and campaign honours, with the 7th and 8th Battalions, both of the 2nd Brigade, receiving more honours (twenty-six each) than any other AIF battalion. At the end of the war these honours were handed on to the Citizens' Military Forces (CMF), who became the chief custodians of the 1st Division's military legacy.¹³

The very success of the 1st Division and its sibling AIF formations led to a complete re-organisation of the post-First World War Australian Army. On 12 March 1921, after a review of the Army's order of battle, Army Headquarters issued a direction to reorganise the CMF along the lines of the AIF. For the first time the CMF was to have a divisional structure with four infantry divisions, two cavalry divisions and three mixed brigades that could be amalgamated to form the fifth infantry division. CMF formations and units were numbered, or sometimes re-numbered, to correspond with the AIF system. Thus, on 31 March 1921, within a week of the old 1st Divy disappearing from the AIF's order of battle, a new CMF 1st Division was officially created. As the 65 000 1st Division veterans slowly returned home, many helped to flesh out Australia's first peace-time division.¹⁴

Drawn from across society in a way that few other institutions were or are, the 1st Division has a reasonable claim to be Australia's first truly national institution. Drawn from every town and city—and from across the wide bush blocks of the six states and territories of the new Commonwealth—it was a true reflection of the society from which it came, aside from the absence of women. These men were to shape how Australians saw themselves for the next century.

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When their duty was done, the survivors returned to Australia or other parts of the Empire to pick up the pieces of their lives as best they could. Some were destroyed by the terrible experience, shattered in mind or body. The vast, silent majority quietly got on with their lives with the same stoicism with which they faced the murderous barrages and the often deadly boredom of frontline service. With little external support, they sought to reconcile the experience of the ‘broken years’, knowing that only other veterans could fully appreciate what they had witnessed, endured and achieved. Yet, despite the well-worn stereotype of the burnt-out, shell-shocked digger, many veterans actually grew if not blossomed because of their military service.

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Some veterans, despite all the horrors of the war, actually took to soldiering and were willing to serve on. These stalwarts volunteered for hazardous service in Iraq with Dunsterforce, while others took a stand against the Bolsheviks in Russia. Others returned to resume full-time or part-time careers in the permanent and part-time forces. It was 1st Division veterans who shaped the Australian Army for the next fifty years. Their influence principally began with Brudenell White who, according to Prime Minister Robert Menzies, was ‘a remarkable man: a great scholar, and a real thinker, and a man of sensitive understanding’.¹⁵ During the inter-war years, successive ministers for the Army were 1st Division men and, with several exceptions, the division also produced a full generation of Australia’s Chiefs of the General Staff. It would also influence the other two services. Air-Vice Marshal William Bostock, chief of staff to the Allied Air Forces commander in the South-West Pacific during World War II, and Walter Brooksbank, founder of the ‘Coastwatcher’ organisation, both began their service with the 1st Division on Gallipoli. Outside of Australia, some chose careers in the British and Indian Armies and Ross McCay became the Chief of Staff of the Pakistani Army. These men were to have a profound and direct impact on the military forces of the British Empire in peace and war.

Upon the outbreak of the Second World War, a significant number of ex-1st Division soldiers enlisted again in both the 2nd AIF and the CMF. Some, like Thomas Blamey, Leslie Morshead and Vernon Sturdee, would command the Army at the very highest levels. Others again held regimental commands, including John Mitchell, unique in that he commanded the same unit in both wars. A hardy few would serve in the ranks, including Arthur Carson and Harold Murray, who have the distinction of having been decorated for bravery while serving in the Australian infantry in both World Wars. Some would lose their lives in this second great war, others would see their sons and daughters march off to war, never to return. Many more, too old now for frontline service, would join the Volunteer Defence

Corps to defend hearth and home. In the dark, early days of the war, this organisation was entirely led by ex-1st Division officers. Still, the 1st Division cast a much broader shadow than just its military one.

The men of the 1st Division left their mark in diverse spheres across almost every facet of Australian business, cultural, professional and political life. The ranks of the division produced a governor general (Baron Casey of Berwick, Victoria and the City of Westminster); a chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (Sir Richard Boyer); a chancellor of the University of Melbourne (Sir Arthur Dean); the founder of GJ Coles Pty Ltd; a butcher's apprentice who became a neurosurgeon (Sir Albert Coates); a rugby union international (William Watson, DSO DCM MC and Bar); the philanthropist who created Legacy (Sir John Gellibrand); and Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey, Australia's only native-born field marshal. They were indeed an eclectic group but they made history before, during and after the Great War; they left the country a better place because of their service.

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CONCLUSION

During 1942, in the grimmest days of World War II, the Australian official historian, Charles Bean, wrote in his final volume of the history of the AIF:

Twenty-three years ago the arms were handed in. The rifles were locked in the rack. The horses were sold. The guns were sheeted and parked in storage for other gunners. The familiar faded-green uniform disappeared from the streets.

But the Australian Imperial Force is not dead. That famous army of generous men marches still down the long lane of its country's history, with bands playing and rifles slung, with packs on shoulders, white dust on boots, and bayonet scabbards and entrenching tools flapping on countless thighs—as the French country folk and the fellaheen of Egypt knew it.

What these men did nothing can alter now. The good and the bad, the greatness and smallness of their story will stand. Whatever of glory it contains nothing now can lessen. It rises, as it will always rise, above the mists of ages, a monument *to* great-hearted men; and, for their nation, a possession for ever.¹⁶

It is now more than ninety years since the 1st Australian Division was formed at dozens of different camps across Australia and shipped overseas to fight in the Great War. These original Anzacs stormed ashore at Gallipoli ninety-two years ago in what

was at that time the largest amphibious operation ever undertaken. Following their withdrawal, they moved to France and last year marked the ninetieth anniversary of the epic capture of Pozieres—a place ‘more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth.’¹⁷ This year will see a spate of commemorations marking the Third Battle of Ypres, and next year will mark the 100 days campaign, which saw the defeat of the German Army and the Armistice that led to peace. On each of these occasions it will be worth remembering that only one Australian division was present at all of these momentous events.

The role, place and importance of the 1st Division in Australian history has been neglected and all but forgotten. Today, its history has been drowned in a flood of popular works that paint the war as merely a bloody backdrop to the digger’s story. There also exists a national fixation with personal reminiscences, which leaves little room for the collective experience. They tell a ripping yarn, but one that is often without context. The 80 000 men who passed through the ranks of the 1st Division were shaped by the part they played in a vast and complex military organisation—an organisation that was arguably the most complex the young nation had ever created.

On the anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, each year since 1916, Australians have stopped to recognise the achievements of the 1st Division and the thousands of Australian and New Zealanders that followed them. Since then, their legacy is commemorated in hundreds of towns across Australia, on the stony Gallipoli peninsula, and in the green uplands of the Somme. Today, in a dozen foreign lands, Australian soldiers are still striving to uphold the Anzac legend, and many are serving in units that belong to old 1st Divy’s successors.

The men who fought with the 1st Australian Division, those ‘great-hearted men’ who died and those that survived, belong to Australia’s premier division. The legacy they left has become a central pillar of the Australian national identity. It continues to shape how Australians see themselves and their place in the world, nearly 100 years after the 1st Division served in the Great War. These men deserve to be remembered—the heroes and the villains—but they should not be eulogised, either as mythological heroes who could do no wrong or naive adventures fighting someone else’s war. Rather, they were ordinary Australians who, under terrible conditions, became masters of a new style of warfare. Collectively, they left an example that is still worthy of commemoration and emulation.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1975.
- 2 The last survivor of the Anzac landings was Albert Matthews, who died in 1997 aged 101. The last Australian Gallipoli veteran was Alec Campbell, who passed away in 2002. The last Australian World War I soldier, Peter Casserly, passed away three years in June 2005, although at the time of his death two other World War I soldiers were still alive, neither had served overseas during the war. Australia's last World War I veteran, Evan Allan, a member of the Royal Australian Navy, died in October 2005 aged 106. Stuart Rintoul, 'Last of our Great War fighters fades away', *The Australian*, 19 October 2005, pp. 1 and 4; and Tony Stephens, *The Last Anzacs—Gallipoli 1915*, Allen and Kemsley, Sydney, 1996.
- 3 'Battalion Histories: Plea to Governments', *The Reveille*, 31 January 1930, p. 5. The history referred to is MC Ellis, *The Story of the Fifth Australian Division*, Hodder and Stoughton Limited, London, 1920.
- 4 Albert Palazzo, *Defenders of Australia: The Third Australian Division*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, NSW, 2002.
- 5 Unlike contemporary doctrine, which divides the units into combat, combat support and service support, British Edwardian doctrine only divided units into arms and services. The arms were cavalry, artillery, engineers, infantry, cyclists and the flying corps. The services were medical, ordnance and veterinary. General Staff War Office, *Field Service Regulations Part I, Operations (1909)*, HMSO, London, 1909, reprinted with amendments 1914, p. 14.
- 6 Cyril Falls, *War Books: An Annotated Bibliography of Books About the Great War*, Greenhill Books, London, 1989, p. xiv.
- 7 Peter Dennis, Jeffrey Grey, Ewan Morris, Robin Prior and John Connor, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, p. 261.
- 8 William Glasgow quoted in Peter Burness, 'Hell on earth: 90th anniversary—the Somme, 1916', *The Canberra Times*, Anzac Day 2006 Special Edition, 25 April 2006, p. 2.
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