

# Great Debates: The Anzac Legend

*That the Anzac legend is an idealised version of the truth*

**THE NEGATIVE CASE**

**Alice Ross-King**



*Fame  
Book*

*"at the landing and here we see Duce"*

Great Debates: The Anzac legend

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## Source Analysis Worksheet

Source	What is the source? Who created it?	What information does the source provide?	What argument does this provide your character?	What questions are you left asking?

**THE NEGATIVE CASE**

**Alice Ross-King**

**Background Information**

# Alice Ross-King

*‘Same old story. I simply wept this a.m.  
when they [would] not let me go on duty.  
All the same I am pretty sick ...’*

Extract from diary of Alice Ross-King, 6 June 1915

[awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0000976/?image=32](http://awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0000976/?image=32)



NLA Trove

[nla.gov.au/nla.news-article132695390](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article132695390)

Alice Ross-King enlisted as a nurse in the Australian Army Nursing Service in November 1914, and just weeks later she sailed for Egypt with the Australian Imperial Force. She helped to set up the 1st Australian General Hospital in Cairo, before going to Suez, where a clearing hospital for casualties from Gallipoli was established. When Anzacs injured at the landing of 25 April 1915 started to arrive at the hospital, Ross-King noted in her diary ‘The wounds are terrible. The boys are such bricks about it too ... I went to bed heartbroken.’

After the Gallipoli campaign, Sister Ross-King was sent to France. At the end of July 1916, Ross-King learned that the soldier she had planned to marry had been killed in action. Despite her grieving, she continued to serve on the Western Front until the end of the war. She was awarded the Military Medal for her ‘great coolness and devotion to duty’ during the bombing of an Australian Casualty Clearing Station on 22 July 1917, one of only seven Australian nurses to receive this award during the First World War.

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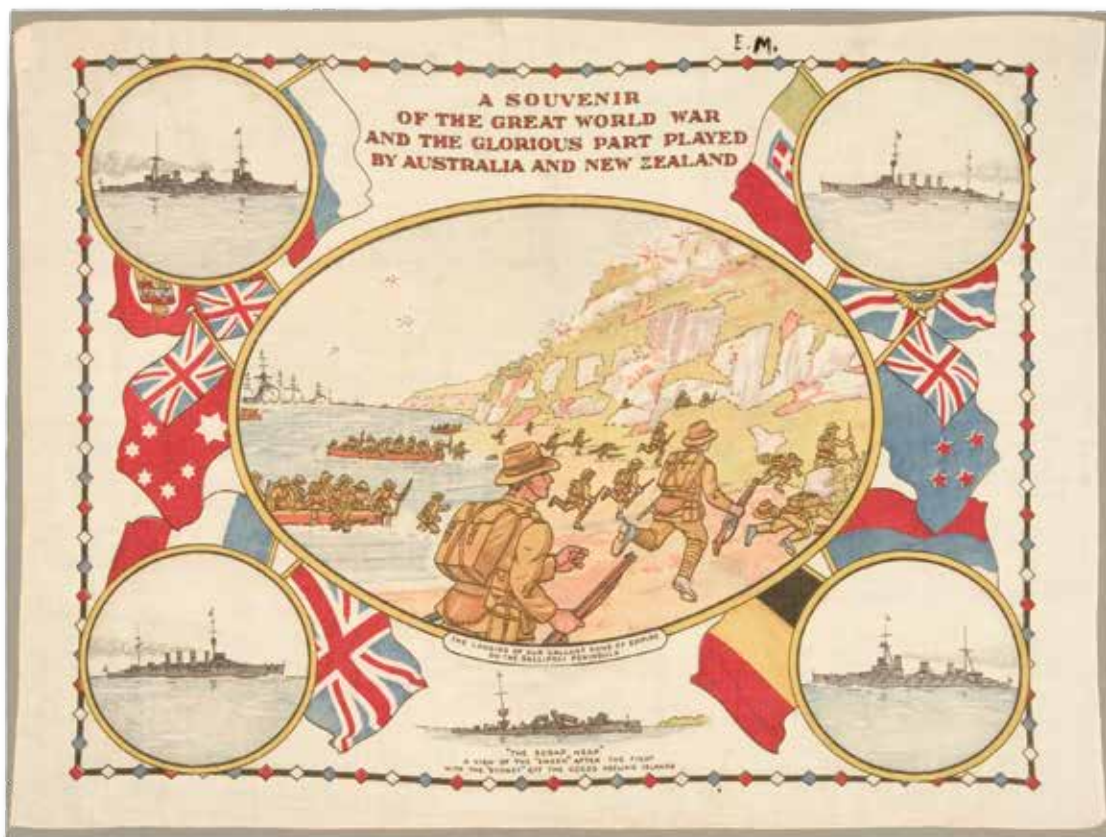
■ Source 2.1

Went to see Frank in the morning & again in the afternoon ... It seems that the Turks have a great respect for the Australians. Where [Frank] was wounded - They had been in the trenches for some days ... As soon as the Turks got a gap into the trenches after the explosion they came on in hundreds - Our boys were surprised at first and a few Turks got into the trenches, but soon our fellows went for them and as fast as they jumped up they 'pinked' them then they bayoneted the ones who had entered the trench. Then our boys jumped up & over into the Turks trench & started killing them in there. Our losses were 14. The Turks must have lost hundreds. The Australians are very highly esteemed there. Frank said that the Colonel of an English regiment always asks for about 10 of our men to mix in with his Tommies because the Tommies will go anywhere with the [Australians] ...

Extract from diary of Alice Ross-King, 17-18 June 1915

[awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0000976/?image=34](http://awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0000976/?image=34)

■ Source 2.2



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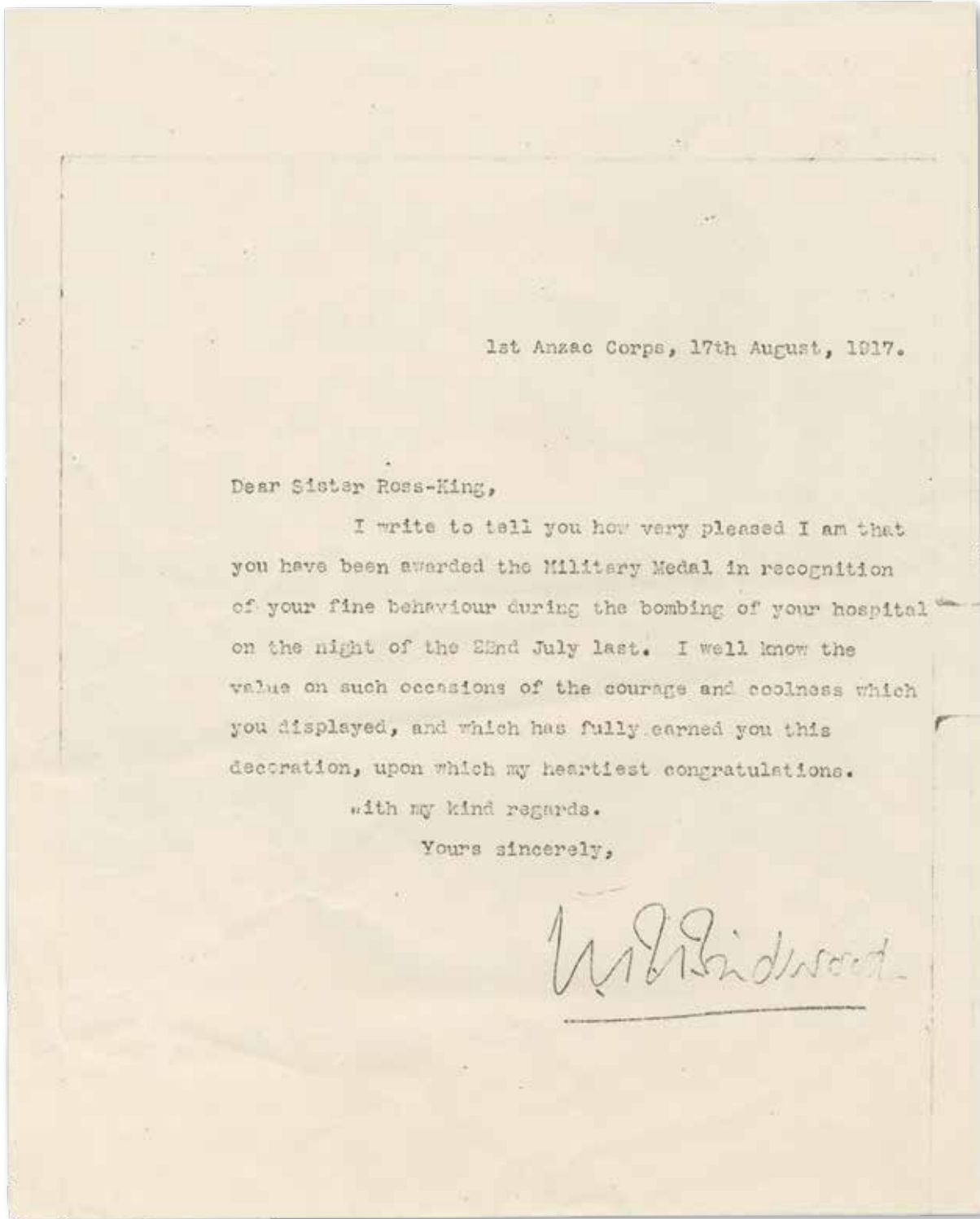
[awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/dawn/imagination](http://awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/dawn/imagination)



**THE NEGATIVE CASE**

**Alice Ross-King**

■ Source 2.3



Letter from General Sir William Birdwood to Alice Ross-King,  
1 ANZAC Corps, 17 August 1917  
AWM PR02082  
[www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1424538](http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1424538)

**THE NEGATIVE CASE**

**Alice Ross-King**

■ Source 2.4

David Barker, *At the landing and here ever since* (1915, pencil and ink on paper, 21.1 x 16.7 cm, AWM ART00025.002)

[awm.gov.au/collection/C174655](http://awm.gov.au/collection/C174655)



■ Source 2.5

An unidentified member of the Australian Army Nursing service reads to a wounded AIF soldier at the No. 4 AGH.

AWM H16664

[awm.gov.au/collection/C382740](http://awm.gov.au/collection/C382740)



**THE NEGATIVE CASE**

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■ Source 2.6

I shall not cry Return! Return!  
– Nor weep my years away;  
But just as long as sunsets burn,  
– And dawns make no delay  
I shall be lonesome – I shall miss  
Your hand, your voice, your smile, your kiss.

Not often shall I speak your name,  
– For what would strangers care,  
That once a sudden tempest came  
And swept my gardens bare,  
– And then you passed, and in your place  
Stood Silence with her lifted face.

Not always shall this parting be,  
– For though I travel slow  
I, too, may claim eternity  
– And find the way you go;  
And so I do my task & wait  
The opening of the outer gate.

‘I shall not cry return’ by Ellen Gates, from the diary of Alice Ross King, 6 September 1916

[awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0000976/?image=74](http://awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG0000976/?image=74)

**Glossary of terms**

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<b>Anzac:</b>	Originally used to describe the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) that first formed in 1915, ‘Anzac’ was soon used to describe the men themselves.
<b>Gallipoli:</b>	A peninsula located in Turkey where Australians fought in 1915.
<b>Tommies:</b>	A slang word used at the time to describe English people.
<b>Western Front:</b>	The central area of operations in Western Europe during the First World War.

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