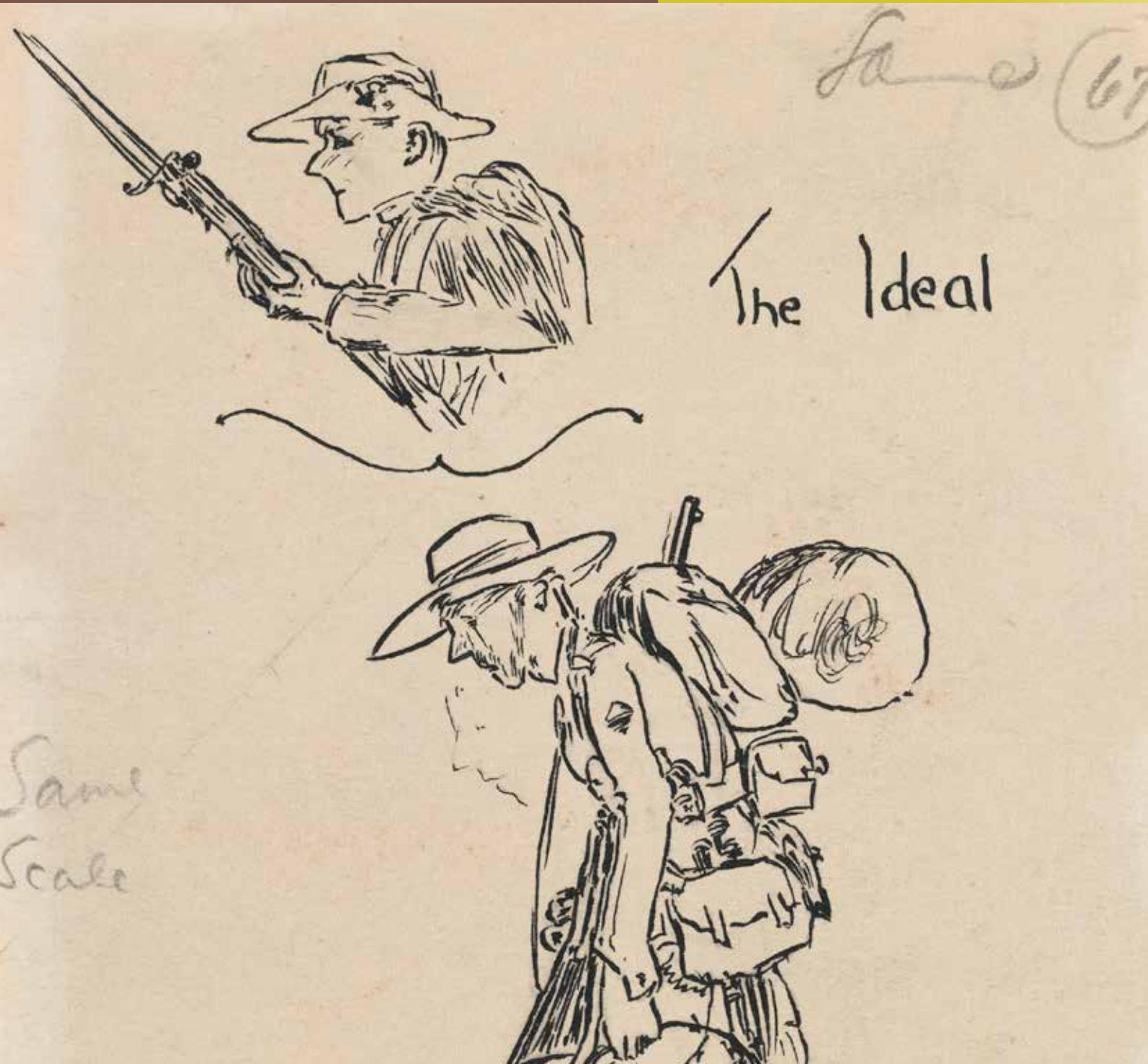


# Great Debates: The Anzac Legend

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

**THE AFFIRMATIVE CASE**

**Paul Keating**



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?

## Background Information

# Paul Keating

*'... the Great War was a mad, brutal, awful struggle, distinguished more often than not by military and political incompetence'*



Image courtesy of Hon Paul Keating

Paul Keating was Australia's Prime Minister from December 1991 until March 1996. During his term, he challenged some commonly held views regarding Australian identity and history. This included acknowledging past wrongs inflicted on Indigenous Australians and advocating for a republic. He also questioned aspects of the Anzac legend.

In his role as Prime Minister, Keating spoke at several commemorative events, including on Anzac Day in 1992. While he acknowledged the bravery, skill and sacrifice of the Australian troops during the First World War, he warned that legends 'should not constrain our growth, or restrict us when we have to change.'

His most well-known commemorative address was on Remembrance Day 1993, when an unknown soldier was interred at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. In his eulogy, Keating said of the unknown soldier, 'He is all of them. And he is one of us.' These words were later inscribed beneath the tomb, and unveiled when Keating spoke at the Remembrance Day Ceremony in 2013.

Keating has continued to speak publicly about the Anzac legend since his retirement from politics.

Read Keating's 2013 Remembrance Day address here:

[keating.org.au/shop/item/remembrance-day-speech-2013](http://keating.org.au/shop/item/remembrance-day-speech-2013)

**THE AFFIRMATIVE CASE**

**Paul Keating**

■ Source 3.1

The truth is that Gallipoli was shocking for us. Dragged into service by the imperial government in an ill conceived and poorly executed campaign, we were cut to ribbons and dispatched.

And none of it in the defence of Australia. Without seeking to simplify the then bonds of empire and the implicit sense of obligation, or to diminish the bravery of our own men, we still go on as though the nation was born again or even was redeemed there. An utter and complete nonsense.

For these reasons I have never been to Gallipoli and I never will.

Paul Keating, Extract from speech at launch of Graham Freudenberg's 'Churchill and Australia', Sydney, 30 October 2008

[keating.org.au/shop/item/churchill-and-australia-the-launch---30-october-2008](http://keating.org.au/shop/item/churchill-and-australia-the-launch---30-october-2008)

■ Source 3.2



Sydney Nolan, *Gallipoli* (1963, oil on hardboard panel, 159.9 x 243.8 cm, AWM ART19581.002)

[awm.gov.au/collection/C177780](http://awm.gov.au/collection/C177780)

### ■ Source 3.3

All this leads to an unwelcome conclusion about Gallipoli and the Dardanelles. Despite the bravery of the Allied troops who fought there, the campaign was fought in vain. It did not shorten the war by a single day, nor in reality did it ever offer that prospect. As Churchill said (and then promptly forgot), 'Germany is the foe & it is bad war to seek cheaper victories'. Gallipoli was certainly bad war. As it happened, it did not even offer a cheaper victory or in the end any kind of victory but even if it had, the downfall of Turkey was of no relevance to the deadly contest being played out on the Western Front.

Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: the end of the myth*, Sydney, 2009, page 252

### ■ Source 3.4

He may have been one of those who believed the Great War would be an adventure too grand to miss. He may have felt that he would never live down the shame of not going. But the chances are that he went for no other reason than that he believed it was his duty – the duty he owed his country and his King.

Because the Great War was a mad, brutal, awful struggle distinguished more often than not by military and political incompetence; because the waste of human life was so terrible that some said victory was scarcely discernible from defeat; and because the war which was supposed to end all wars in fact sowed the seeds of a second, even more terrible, war – we might think that this Unknown Soldier died in vain.

But, in honouring our war dead as we always have, we declare that this is not true.

Prime Minister Paul Keating, extract from speech at the funeral service of the Unknown Soldier, 11 November 1993

[keating.org.au/shop/item/funeral-service-for-the-unknown-australian-soldier---11-november-1993](http://keating.org.au/shop/item/funeral-service-for-the-unknown-australian-soldier---11-november-1993)

### ■ Source 3.5

For Australia, the First World War remains the costliest conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of whom more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.

Australian War Memorial website

[awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war](http://awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war)

Source 3.6



F Paget Hewkley, *The ideal and the real* (1915, pen and ink, pencil on paper, 13.6 x 10.3 cm AWM ART00021.003)

[awm.gov.au/collection/C1020977](http://awm.gov.au/collection/C1020977)

### Glossary of terms

**Anzac:** 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.

**Dardanelles:** A narrow strait of water in Turkey which lies along the Gallipoli peninsula. During the First World War the Gallipoli campaign was also referred to as the Dardanelles campaign.

**Gallipoli:** A peninsula located in Turkey where Australians fought in 1915.

**Western Front:** The central area of operations in Western Europe during the First World War.