

Unit

6

Receiving news of Gallipoli on the home front

OVERVIEW

Focus questions	DVD-VIDEO connections	DVD-ROM interactives connection
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 How did Australians learn about the Gallipoli campaign at the time? What was the image that was presented? 2 How did an 'Anzac legend' develop during the Gallipoli campaign? 	<i>Australians at War</i> Episode 2 24:30-26:20 (Chapter 5) 30:55-32:35 (Chapter 7) 44:10-46:18 (Chapter 9) 48:40-49:30 (Chapter 11) 52:15-52:40 (Chapter 12)	<i>The Anzac Legend over time</i> <i>The Gallipoli Times</i> <i>Listening to the headstones</i>

The Gallipoli campaign was a failure. The Allies did not achieve their objective of clearing the Dardanelles Strait of its artillery protection to open the Strait to an Allied naval attack on Constantinople. The campaign cost thousands of lives on all sides.

How did the Australians learn about the events at Gallipoli at the time? And what image or representation of the conflict did they receive from those sources?

This unit looks at ways by which Australians found out about the events at Gallipoli, and the image of the campaign that these sources presented to them.

The sources that are investigated are:

- The earliest report of the landing from the British war correspondent at Gallipoli, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett;
- Casualty lists and commentaries published in newspapers;
- 'Letters from the boys' in local newspapers;
- School resources; and
- *The Anzac Book* 1916, compiled from material written and drawn by the troops at Anzac, and edited by the Australian war correspondent, author and editor of the twelve-volume official history of Australia in the war, and founder of the Australian War Memorial, CEW Bean.

As you work through this evidence try to imagine yourself on the homefront at the time. You would know that the Australian troops have been sent to Egypt. You most likely have a relative or friend or know someone who has a family member at Gallipoli. You are interested to know how the soldiers are performing in the war, and anxious about what might happen to them. You have very little detailed knowledge of what is happening in that part of the world, who is likely to be involved in any fighting, where Gallipoli is, or what it is like.

You are about to start receiving information about all these aspects. See how you respond.

How did Australians learn about the Gallipoli campaign at the time? What was the image that was presented?

1 Early news of the landing at Gallipoli – 30 April 1915

The first news of the landing of 25 April was published several days later in daily newspapers around Australia. Read this typical account from the Melbourne newspaper the *Argus* and answer the following questions.

- 1.1 What is this newspaper report telling you?
- 1.2 Why is this report significant for Australians at home?
- 1.3 What information that you might like to know is not included in this report?
- 1.4 What do you think your main reactions to this report might be?

The Allies' Expeditionary Force, including the Australians and New Zealanders, has been engaged with the Turks on both the European and Asiatic shores of the Dardanelles.

The British War Office announced at midnight on Wednesday that, despite continual opposition by the enemy, the Allies' troops succeeded in establishing themselves across the Peninsula of Gallipoli, north-east of Eski Hissarlik.

All attacks made by the Turks at Sari Bair, it is also announced officially, have been beaten off, and the Allies are advancing steadily up the peninsula.

Among the preparations made by the Turks to resist the landing of the troops were entanglements both on land and sea, and deep pits with spiked bottoms.

The principal points at which the Allies landed were Suvla (on the western shore of the Gallipoli Peninsula), Helles (at the northern entrance to the straits), Kum Kaleh (at the southern entrance), and Jenikoi (on the Gulf of Saros, and in a line with the town of Gallipoli). A majority of the men disembarked at Seddeh Bahr, at the northern entrance to the straits.

Argus 30 April 1915

2 First commentaries — 30 April 1915

- 1.5 What does this commentary add to the initial report?
- 1.6 What is the attitude of the writer to how the Australians were expected to react in battle?
- 1.7 What is your reaction to this in 1915?
- 1.8 What do you still need to know about the event?

Australians have taken their place in the fighting line, and ... have won honour by their brilliant work. We expected this of them, and they knew that we expected it. Men who realise that the faith of their country reposes in them may be expected to fight like heroes ... The details of the operations are tantalisingly brief ... But while in one respect we know little, in another we know much. We know that our troops are credited by His Majesty's Government with 'splendid gallantry and magnificent achievement'. The 'splendid gallantry' is the general expressions, but 'magnificent achievement' is particular and specific ... It is very high praise indeed, coming from a quarter that is always courteous to the Dominions, but is not wont to indulge in the language of exaggeration.

Argus 30 April 1915

3 The first full report by British war correspondent Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett

AUSTRALASIANS GLORIOUS ENTRY INTO WAR HISTORIC CHARGE. BRILLIANT FEAT AT GABA TEPE.

Never before has an attempt been made to land so large a force in the face of a well-prepared enemy ... The Australians who were about to go into action for the first time under trying circumstances, were cheerful, quiet, and confident, showing no sign of nerves or excitement. As the moon waned the boats were swung out, the Australians received their last instructions, and men who six months ago were living peaceful civilian lives began to disembark on a strange, unknown shore in a strange land to attack an enemy of different race ...

The boats had almost reached the beach when a party of Turks entrenched ashore opened a terrible fusillade with rifles and a Maxim. Fortunately most of the bullets went high. The Australians rose to the occasion. They did not wait for orders or for the boats to reach the beach, but sprang into the sea, formed a sort of rough line, and rushed the enemy's trenches. Their magazines were uncharged, so they just went in with cold steel.

It was over in a minute. The Turks in the first trench either were bayoneted or ran away, and the Maxim was captured.

Then the Australians found themselves facing an almost perpendicular cliff of loose sandstones, covered with thick shrubbery ... Here was a tough proposition to tackle in the darkness, but those colonials were practical above all else and went about it in a practical way. They stopped a few minutes to pull themselves together, get rid of their packs, and charge their rifle magazines. Then this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliff without responding to the enemy's fire. They lost some men, but didn't worry, and in less than a quarter of an hour the Turks were out of their second position, and either bayoneted or fleeing ...

The country in the vicinity of the landing is formidable and forbidding. To the sea it presents a steep front, broken into innumerable ridges, bluffs, valleys, and sandpits. Rising to a height of several hundred feet the surface is bare, crumbly sandstone, with thick shrubbery about six feet in height, which is ideal for snipers, as the Australasians soon found to their cost. On the other hand, the Australasians proved themselves adept at this kind of warfare ...

When the sun had fully risen we could see that the Australians had actually established themselves on the ridge, and were trying to work their way northward along it. The fighting was so confused and occurred on such broken ground that it was difficult to follow exactly what happened on the 25th; but the covering force's task was so splendidly carried out that it allowed the disembarkation of the remainder to proceed uninterruptedly, except for the never-ceasing sniping. But then the Australians, whose blood was up, instead of entrenching, rushed northwards and eastwards, searching for fresh enemies to bayonet. It was difficult country in which to entrench. They therefore preferred to advance ...

The Turks continued to counter attack the whole afternoon; but the Australasians did not yield a foot on the main ridge. Reinforcements poured up from the beach, but the Turks enfiladed the beach with two field guns from Gaba Tepe. This shrapnel fire was incessant and deadly. The warships vainly for some hours tried to silence them.

The majority of the heavy casualties during the day were from shrapnel, which swept the beach and ridge where the Australasians were established. Later in the day the guns were silenced or forced to withdraw, and the cruiser moving close inshore plastered Gaba Tepe with a hail of shell.

Towards dusk the attacks became more vigorous, the enemy being supported by powerful artillery inland, which the ships' guns were powerless to deal with. The pressure on the Australasians became heavier and their line had to be contracted ...

continued >

1.9 What do these headlines indicate will be in the report?

1.10 How would you expect to react to the report? Why?

1.11 What qualities of the Australian (and later New Zealand) soldiers are being emphasised?

How did Australians learn about the Gallipoli campaign at the time? What was the image that was presented?

A serious problem was getting off the wounded from the shore. All those unable to hobble had to be carried from the hills on a stretcher, and then hastily dressed and carried to the boats. Boat parties worked unceasingly the entire day and night.

The courage displayed by these wounded Australians will never be forgotten. Hastily placed in trawlers and lighters' boats, they were towed to the ships. In spite of their sufferings they cheered the ship from which they had set out in the morning. In fact, I have never seen anything like these wounded Australians in war before.

Though many were shot to bits, without hope of recovery, their cheers resounded throughout the night. You could see in the midst of the mass of suffering humanity arms waving in greeting to the crews of the warships. *They were happy because they knew they had been tried for the first time, and had not been found wanting.* (Italics added)

For fifteen mortal hours they occupied the heights under incessant shell fire, without the moral or material support of a single gun ashore, and subjected the whole time to a violent counter attack, by a brave enemy, skilfully led, with snipers deliberately picking off every officer who endeavoured to give a command or lead the men.

There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights, and above all, the holding on whilst reinforcements were landing. These raw colonial troops in these desperate hours proved worthy to fight side by side with the heroes of Mons, the Aisne, Ypres, and Neuve Chapelle.

Early on the morning of the 26th the Turks repeatedly tried to drive the colonials from their position. The latter made local counter attacks, and drove off the enemy with the bayonet, which the Turks never face ...

On the 26th, by great concentration of infantry and unceasing shrapnel fire, expecting to find the line held thinly by men exhausted by losses, and the exertion during landing. They were soon disillusioned. These Australasians were determined to die to a man rather than surrender the ground so dearly won. Every man knew that his only hope for safety lay in victory as it was impossible to re-embark an army once landed. The ring of hills commanding the beach lost most. Troops when under fire for the first time, especially volunteers a few months in training, keenly feel losses especially if the[y] occur before there is time to settle down, but these Colonials were the exception to the rule.

Despite heavy losses the survivors were as keen as ever.

Sydney Morning Herald 8 May 1915

1.12 Does the report give an indication of the casualties sustained? Underline the words that indicate casualties.

1.13 Explain the meaning and significance of the words in italics.

1.14 What is the writer's judgement about the Australian and New Zealand troops?

1.15 The writer is a British journalist. Is this likely to influence his comments about the Australian achievements? Explain your reasons.

1.16 How do you think people in Australia will react to this account?

Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett toured Australia in 1916 and gave a popular series of lectures based on his experience as a journalist at Gallipoli. His lectures repeated the praise and judgements that are part of his initial report.



4 Casualty lists and commentaries

As the first report was received, newspapers started to print casualty lists of the dead, wounded and captured from Gallipoli. These lists continued throughout the war. What effect would these have on people's awareness of, and attitudes to, the Gallipoli campaign?

Look at these two documents.

- 1.17** How does this journalist interpret the casualty lists?
- 1.18** Do you think families who were directly affected would have felt the same way?
- 1.19** Do you think families who were not directly affected would have felt the same way?

Document A

With the issue of the first lists of Australians killed and wounded in the fierce fighting on the shores of the Dardanelles must come to all of us the realisation of the grim severity of the struggle in which our Empire is engaged. The war is starting to tackle its toll of our bravest, and as the fatal lists come in they cannot but bring grief to the sorrowing hearts of many; but it will, we doubt not, be a grief tempered with ... noble pride ... when loved ones [fall] in obedience to their country's call upon the field of battle. Australians have all the high patriotism and self-control of a ruling race, and they will not let their private sufferings dim their eyes to the glory of wounds and death incurred in their country's cause by its gallant sons. All who have now to endure the prospect of a lifelong loss, or the present pain of knowing that one near and dear to them lies wounded, will have the certain assurance of heart-felt sympathy from everyone around them. It is not, however, upon the sadness of the inevitable cost of war that we should dwell, but upon the stirring story of duty manfully performed and undying fame won by courageous self sacrifice ...

Australia could not wish for a more inspiring scene in which to make her European debut as a fighting unit of the Empire.

Argus 3 May 1916

Document B

- 1.20** This page, printed in July, three months after the landing, shows a number of soldier casualties. Why did the newspaper include both the photographs of the dead and a call for recruitment?
- 1.21** How do you think Australians might have responded to this page?



Sunday Mail, 21 July 1915

5 Letters in local papers

Many newspapers, including local ones, published letters that had been received from local men at the front. Here are some from the Braidwood, New South Wales, newspaper. They can tell us much about both the experiences and attitudes of the men, and what people were being told about the war through these letters to families and friends back home.

Look at these extracts and use a table like the one below to record your answers. You might want to read all the letters, or you might allocate one or two letters to a small group, with each group reporting back to the whole class on what the letters reveal. Note that the spelling and punctuation of the letters are as they were reproduced in the newspaper. The extracts are all taken from the Braidwood local newspaper.

1.22	What facts about the way the war is being fought are presented in the letters?	
1.23	What attitudes do the soldiers express about their experiences?	
1.24	What responses might people have as they read these?	
1.25	What image of the war is being presented? Are the soldiers softening the reality so as not to worry their families?	
1.26	How might these letters influence people's attitudes to the war and Australia's involvement in it?	

Extract A Private A. D. Temple writes from a Military hospital at Alexandria May 1915 to his sister, Mrs B. Sullivan:

You will have seen by the papers that we have had to go in the Dardanelles, our Brigade was the first to land, and got in pretty hot. The Turks burnt a lot of munitions, but are very poor shots. We landed last Sunday morning under terrific fire, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. We chased the Turks in about a mile from the beach before we had any opposition to speak of, and then all hell opened. It was indescribably splendid ... The bullets fell about its like a hailstorm. We the infantry had to hold back until our artillery landed, and we had a lively time.

I went down about midday with a bullet through the jaw. I lost a lot of blood, and am very weak, but I think I will be alright again inside a month. It did not break my jaws, going in the front of one jawbone and smashed my false teeth, and came out just below the ear on the other side. Another bullet caught a button on my trousers. Mr Turk might have only been practicing when he fired that shot at knocking of buttons, but it was cutting it a bit fine.

The doctor said it was a miracle I was not killed on the spot, think I must be fairly hardy. Another chap bound up my wound for me, after I had rolled into a hole where he was, I stayed there until dark so they wouldn't get another shot at me, and then got back to the beach. We have a nice hospital here with a big flower garden in the middle of it.

Extract B Private A. R. Lynn, of Araluen, writes from Zaherich Camp, near Alexandria, Egypt, 6/7/1915:

We sailed from Lemnos Island, where we had been anchored for some time on Saturday night. It is only a few hours' sail to Gallipoli Peninsula. Arrived there in the very early hours of the never-to-be-forgotten 25th April (Sunday). The old saying re 'the better the day the better the deed' perhaps had something to do with the brilliance of our boys.

However, our infantry started for the shore at about 3/30 and their jobs was one of the stiffest ever taken on in the annals of history when you take into consideration the fact that a great majority of them were untried men, who had never previously been under fire, and they had to land, or rather swim ashore, in the face of terrific fire from the Turks, who were entrenched and waiting right up to the water's edge. Our boys could see it was to be a case of swimming as they neared the shore, and the Turks began to pour in a deadly machine gun and rifle fire.

So into the water they went and got to hand-grips with the Turks with "cooees" and leaps; the boys simply drove the Turks back and within a few minutes had captured three quick fliers from the enemy, which had been doing a great amount of damage. And then began the most brilliant bayonet charges of all time. A stone wall would not have stopped our fellows. The Turks fled in disorder.

Extract C From Lieutenant Harry Maddrell, writing to his brother Garnett from the Gallipoli Peninsula 27th July, 1915:

7th Light Horse A.I.F.

My dearest brother, just a line to let you know I am still in the Land of the Living, thank you for your letter which I was pleased to get, and glad you liked the cigarette case I sent from Egypt. We are still fighting in the trenches and shaking the Turk up a bit, lead fillings are very cheap here, one can get a filling without trying if his luck is out, so far I have been lucky although I have had some close shaves, of course the life we live is fairly tough, we are used to it now.

Sleep in our clothes, boots and all at night when off duty for a few hours, one is never really off duty, because you don't know you will be called upon, I have had to go ten days without being able to give my face and hands a decent wash, this fighting life is a wide experience for a man if he gets through all of it.

When a man gets home and sleeps in a nice bed, he will wonder where he is, think he's in fairy land. Ruby said you were thinking of enlisting if so apply for a commission, you should not have any trouble in getting it. just heard a piece of shell fall close by, one burst about three yards from my dug out about tea time last night, when you hear them coming, one learns to duck quick and lively behind the nearest cover. Ones you don't hear come are the worst when a shrapnel shell bursts the shrapnel bullets spread over a fairly large radius, just depends where the shell burst. Sometimes it rains down like hail stones, its much safer in the trenches than out of them ...

Please give Father and Mother my love and all at "Mona" give Ida and Ruby Purchase my love when you see them.

Good bye old boy, write more often and longer letters, you have more time off than me! your loving brother Harry.

Extract D Mr A. Ritchie, town hairdresser, received the following letter from his brother, dated June 24th:

From the Trenches

Just a line to let you know I am still living. This soldier's life is not so bad, after all, only a bit risky, but I think I will come out of it safe.

I have been in the firing line about seven weeks, have been through one bayonet charge, and I will never forget it. The first thing I remembered was having my mouth full of blood, most of our time is spent in the dug outs, and they are fairly cosy.

We get good tucker, and there is not much to complain about. Tell the boys to come over here, those who can, I am sure if they only knew how hard we are pressed by the Turks at times not one would stay behind.

I often think of the happy days spent in N.S.W, and wonder if I will be spared to return again, I am writing this on a piece of cocoa wrapper; that's all the paper I have here.

Extract E Private P. F. Sherman

'Doughy' as more familiarly termed in Braidwood was the son of Mr F. Sherman formerly a baker in Braidwood, he was a smart respectable young man, and well liked in the community. The greatest sympathy is felt for his parents in their bereavement.

Extract F Trooper E. H. Daft writes to his mother, June 13th, 1915:

We have been in the trenches just out a month, and been attacked on both flanks since we arrived, but the enemy had to beat a retreat, and suffered heavily. I am not allowed to tell you our whereabouts, but we got a good footing, and it will not be long before we settle the Turks, and in a short while will have shot enough poultry to feed Australia for years to come.

The Australian troops have earned a great reputation here for their gameness. The Indian troops think the world of us, also the French.

As health is concerned, I have never enjoyed myself as much, thanks to the generosity of the English people.

The war is hell on earth, but I reckon I am having a little of heaven now, my eye is alright except that I will have to wear the shade a little longer yet. My wrist is also getting along favourably.

I have met a few of the 9th Light Horse in London. They are having a good time.

Extract G Sergeant Rupert Chapman writing to his uncle the Hon. Austin Chapman M.H.R. from the Dardanelles July 1915:

It is surprising the number of young soldiers and officers now with the colours. The grim realities of war are brought home every day, when these young men in the first blush of manhood are stricken down.

They go out cheerfully in the morning in the best of health and spirits, and some are in their grave before sundown.

It makes one think, but the battlefield soon makes one take it as a matter of course. Just at the moment it is a shock to see the fallen, but others step forward and fill their places, the struggle going on like a never ending stream.

Colonel Ryrie is looking well, and active service evidently agrees with him. Lieut. H. Madrell and Major Rutledge in whose squadron Sgt. Chapman is, the regiment had plenty to do in the way of trench digging, etc., its a bit different to the life on horse back, that we pictured, but the boys took kindly to it, and put in good work, which received the commendation of General Maxwell and Ian Hamilton.

We are up close quarters with the enemy, in some places not more than 20 yards apart. It's pretty risky to get too inquisitive to see what is happening on the other side of your trench.

I had a look over the other day in adjusting some sand bags, and stopped a bullet with my head. I must have an extra hard cranium, for excepting small parts in my hair, and good view of numerous stars, there were no ill effects.

It was a close call, the lives we have lost have not been in vain, and when we are at liberty to tell the story it will be that Australia played a great game in the final test against the might of Turkey.

How did Australians learn about the Gallipoli campaign at the time? What was the image that was presented?

Extract H Another letter from Sergeant Rupert Chapman:

He has been in the thick of the fight, and states that they are well cared for, and the commissariat and everything is all right. The Turks are using marked VI ammunition, and their rifles are sighted point blank at 600 yards. Some of them are very good marksmen, and a number of Australians have paid the death penalty for looking over the trenches.

It is rather trying being cooped up in so small a space, with the bullets sounding overhead; and the Turks are rarely seen; owing to their painting themselves green, they are almost invisible, even at a distance of 50 yards, they are approaching a high mountain just in front.

As soon as they get there, he expects they will give the Turks a really good push back. The Australians have established their superiority with the bayonet, of which the Turks appear to be very fearful.

Sergeant Chapman has since been wounded.

Writing again in October 1915, from Gallipoli.

I notice my name amongst the list of casualties published September, my wound was only slight, I have won the position of Warrant Officer of the 7th Regiment, so I have advanced some in 12 months.

I am looking forward to meeting your two boys, Jim and Jack, in these parts any day. The Turks are fighting a clean fight, and have proved themselves rattling good fighters too, I can assure you the great fight at Lonesome Pine was something to remember – one of the bloodiest on record.

The Turks did not run, but met our boys with the bayonet. Most of our fighting took place in underground tunnels, and both sides will remember it for 'ever and ever, Amen'.

I had a gruesome task crawling along dark passages separating our dead from the Turks, God alone knows how many we buried.

We are steadily gaining ground, and hope to be in the final attack on Constantinople, then to have a crack at the Germans.

Extract I In Memory of Private F. Green of Braidwood who was killed in action at Gallipoli on August 9th, 1915.

*Was it but yesterday we saw you here,
One of us, strong in youth and manly power,
Ready and true with open helpful hand
At side of want to take a manly stand —
When duty's voice its message gave to you
It found you true and ready to obey,
Responsive to its urgency and call,
You bade goodbye to home, to all.
Like a British soldier you stood before the foe,
Ready and strong, your duty to perform;
Ready in cause of justice, truth, and right
To sacrifice your life in strenuous fight.
'Twas there you fell assailing Hunnish aims
To rob our homes and lives of freedom's boon;
Right to the last through your actions ran
Deeds that proclaimed a soldier and a man.*

Mary Ann.

Extract J Corporal S. Dowell writes to his father:

We are in the trenches now, getting the best available food, the boys are all in very good spirits. There are plenty of bullets flying about. Poor Percy Sherman was shot not very far from me about the 27th May, there are a great number of our company gone. A big Jack Johnson shell killed two of my mates three days ago, and another shot yesterday and killed outright.

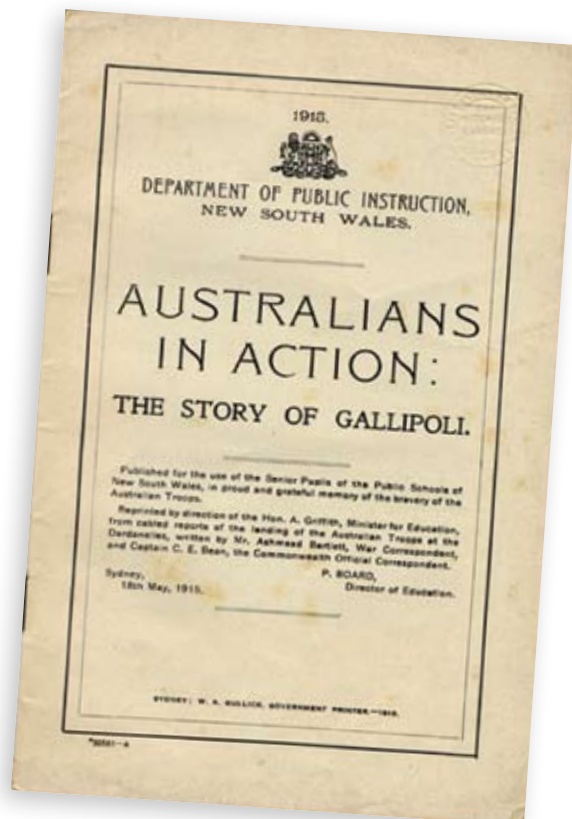
I am feeling fine, and hope to keep like it. It is lovely weather here now.

Extracts A-J from Roslyn Maddrell, *Letters From the Front*, Braidwood, 2004, pages 53-66

6 Schools

School students received information at school about the Gallipoli campaign. How would this influence their attitudes to the event? Look at the following information and answer the questions below.

School students in New South Wales and Victoria were provided with classroom resources that reproduced the accounts of Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett and CEW Bean on the Gallipoli landing. Here is an example of a booklet distributed in New South Wales schools.



1.27 Why do you think these resources would have been supplied to schools?

1.28 How would these influence students' attitudes to Gallipoli?

Victorian students also received several accounts of events at Gallipoli as part of the educational resources regularly sent to schools. Here is an example of how the report of the landing was presented to school children.

8. At four o'clock, three battle-ships in line abreast and four cables apart stood in 2,500 yards from the shore. Their guns were manned and their searchlights got ready. Very slowly, the lines of boats, like twelve great snakes, moved inshore, each edging towards the others in order to reach the beach four cables apart. The battle-ships moved slowly in after them until the water shallowed.

9. The sound of rifle fire, heard at seven minutes to four, showed that the Australians were close to the shore. They had almost reached it, when a party of Turks, entrenched on the beach, opened a fusillade with rifles and a Maxim. Fortunately, most of the bullets went too high.

10. The Australians rose to the occasion. Not waiting for orders, or for the boats to reach the beach, they sprang into the sea, and, forming a sort of rough line, rushed at the enemy's trenches. The magazines of their rifles were not charged, as they went in with cold steel. It was over in a minute. The Turks in the first trench were either bayoneted or they ran away, and their Maxim was captured.

11. Then, the Australians found themselves facing an almost vertical cliff of loose stone covered with thick scrub. Somewhere, half-way up, the enemy had a second trench, strongly held, from which they poured a terrible fire on the troops below and the boats pulling back to the destroyers for the second landing-party. Here was a tough position to tackle in the darkness, but the Australians, practical above all else, went about it in a practical way.

12. They stopped for a few minutes to pull themselves together, get rid of their packs, and charge their magazines. Then, this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliffs without responding to the enemy's fire. They lost some men, but did not worry. In less than a quarter of an hour, the Turks were out of their second position, either bayoneted or fleeing.

The School Paper, Grades VII and VIII, 1 June 1915, p.69



Major-General WT Bridges, CMG

On the next pages are examples of soldiers' letters that were distributed to primary school children in Victoria. Read the letters and beside each summarise:

- the details about what the fighting was like; and
- what the soldiers' attitudes to the war, to the fighting and to their experiences are.

Either read all the letters, or work in groups and divide the letters, with each group reporting back to the whole class.

At the end you will be asked to draw some conclusions about what Australians knew about the Gallipoli campaign.

Soldiers' letters from Gallipoli printed in the Victorian *Education Gazette***Source A** From Soldiers' Letters

One of the boys of the Second Brigade – A.J. Johnston, who, at the time of his enlistment, was lead teacher of School No. 1491, Gnarwarre – writes to the Director from the Mounted Military Police Headquarters, near Luna Park, Heliopolis, Egypt, under date 16.2.16: – “On behalf of one or two of my mates, I have been asked to write and thank you for the praise you and your colleagues are giving us boys out here. I can tell you, sir, that these little messages from our dear home across the sea do us more good than a square meal. God knows how we fought for right on that famous Twenty-fifth of April. We could not see the first lot land, but we heard them. Then there was a cheer went up for them from the men-of-war. That was the Third Brigade landing, and we were next, being the Second Brigade. Down we got into our boats and were towed in as far as the pinnaces could take us. The tow-liners were then cast loose, and each man took part in rowing to land. Some were shouting and urging the others to row faster. At last, we were told to ship the oars, and, before we got the order to land, men started to leap into the surf. Holding our rifles above our heads, we waded ashore. What a sight met our gaze when we were on dry land! There lay before us intermingled the bodies of dead Turks and of our own comrades. The shrapnel fell round us like big hailstones. Some men took off their heavy packs and dropped them where they stood. One party was sitting in a ring on the beach waiting for orders when a shell dropped right in their midst and left a heap of dead men. We then moved on up the beach till we could find a way to charge up to our comrades. (The spot where our boats should have landed, I found out afterwards, was a trap of barbed wire and bombs, but the tide, being a strong one, had carried us down to where we went ashore). We then got up on the heights and, but short rushes, reached out mates of the Third Brigade. O the sights we saw of men with their legs blown off and arms missing – some with an eye out, others with their faces blown off; companies of men without leaders, their leaders having been shot within an hour of the landing by snipers who had got in our rear. Then the fighting began. Shrapnel poured down on us, machine-gun fire was hurled at us, and rifles spat at us all that day. One could hear all around him groans and shouts of ‘stretcher-bearer!’ The stretcher-bearers deserve the highest of all praise for the way they worked day and night... Now that we are away from that gory scene, we are realizing the loss of our pals. But what a glorious death for one to die! I am in hospital and not feeling too well at present. I am visiting the famous sulphur baths at Helouan three times a week and deriving much benefit. I thank you once again, sir, for your praise and good wishes to my comrades, and remain one of Australia’s loyal sons.

Education Gazette, 18 May 1916, pp.127-28

1.29 What do we learn here about this soldier's attitude to the war?

1.30 What are we being told about what the fighting was like?

1.31 Is this soldier presenting a realistic or a ‘glamourised’ picture of the fighting?

Source B From Private Rutherford, of the Education Office, writing from Gallipoli: –

Just a scribble to let you know that I'm keeping well, and hope you are all the same. We arrived here on the 13th, after staying four days at Lemnos. We had a good trip across from Alexandria, dodging submarines. No lights allowed on board at night. Well, we landed at Anzac Beach at 9 p.m., and then marched to join our battalion. It was a march, too, with full pack, up through gullies and over ridges. The road from the beach to the position we are holding is about a mile as the crow flies, but about five miles through the sap. I can tell you we don't have much fun. We when arrived at 12 o'clock midnight, we had to sleep out in the open, and it was worse that St Kilda on a wintry night. While we were anchored off Anzac, we heard the guns, but, when we came here, we got a sight of the real things. At present, all is pretty quiet, except for a few shells landing round the cookhouse when we are getting our meals. It's really annoying to be disturbed at dinner. We are all in dugouts at the front of our trenches, living in the ground as they used to do in prehistoric ages; but the dugouts are very comfortable. The Turkish trenches are about 50 [metres] away, and I've seen only about half a dozen Turks since I've been here, bar a couple of dead ones that I saw the other night when I went out on patrol. We left our trenches about 3.30am, and went out about 300 yards towards the Turkish trenches, and it's the only time I did a bit. When you are going stealthily along and can see dead men in the pale moonlight, it does give a man the creeps; it is worse than a charge. Our guns blew up a couple of Turks the other night. They went up like a balloon, I nearly got a trip back yesterday morning. It was like this: – The Turks were sending over a few shells, and, of course, we dived into the dugouts. Well, there were four in mine, and we were a bit crowded, and my legs were out, and a couple of shrapnel bullets landed about three inches from my foot. We are getting pretty cold weather now, and the other night, we had a very heavy thunderstorm, and I got flooded out, and then had to roam about and look for another home. It was pretty bleak. To-day is Sunday, but we don't know it, and the work continues all the same. I am doing pick and shovel work now, so I suppose I'd better close and get on with it. Remember me to all the boys.

Education Gazette, 18 February 1916, p. 44

1.32 What is this soldier's attitude to his involvement in the war?

1.33 What aspects of the way the war is being fought are stressed here?

1.34 What are we being told about what the fighting was like?

1.35 What is the tone or mood of this letter?

1.36 Is this soldier presenting a realistic or a ‘glamourised’ picture of the fighting?

1.37 What is this soldier's attitude to his involvement in the war?

Source C From the Chief Inspector's son, Captain Leslie G Fussell

We had quite an incident this morning. Jokingly I told one of our bombers that he did not know how to throw a bomb, and, to show him, I picked up a tin of bully beef and landed it dead into the Turks' trench. That seemed to start the ball rolling, as it was not long before packages containing cigarettes and tobacco came flying back, accompanied by a note written in French, addressed to the Australian comrades of the Turkish soldiers, asking for souvenirs and a good knife and more meat. I concocted a reply in French thuswise: "To our friends the enemy, we present our compliments and thank you for the tobacco. Glory be to Allah that you are unable to throw your bombs with the same precision. We have sent you a knife – it may come in useful for cutting our throats on "Der Tag". We have given the Huns a hiding in France – 23,000 prisoners and 81 guns. See you in Constantinople shortly. Bomb follows. Your Australian friends." They wrote back, congratulating us on the capture of 23,000 Germans and asked us somewhat naively when we expected to get to Constantinople, and how many Australians we had here. Needless to say, we told them. One of the Turks got out of the trench and picked up a package that had fallen short, saluted, and got back again – of course nobody shooting at him. He took a risk, however, of being potted at from a distance of 200 to 300 yards by our fellows on other positions who would not know anything about the joke. I got up on our parapet, and rescued one of theirs that had fallen short. They are fair enough fighters. One of them sang out that they did not want to fight us, but that they had to – this with a shrug of the shoulders that plainly said "The Germans are the trouble." Bomb throwing was resumed shortly after, and we are as you were once more. It was a pleasant break for us. I should like to get permission for a short armistice to bury a major and two privates who have been lying dead in front of our parapet for 8 weeks.

Education Gazette, 18 January 1916, p. 15

Source D From a Soldier's Letter

"It was my birthday yesterday. I made myself a present in the shape of a shave and a freshwater wash. I had five or six weeks' growth on, so I can tell you it was a real luxury to be clean again. It was nearly a case of being born and buried on the same date. About 2.30, I went with some others for a swim on the beach. There were already about 30 chaps in swimming, and I remarked that here was a great target for 'Beachy Bill' – a Turkish gun that sweeps the beach with shrapnel at intervals during the day... After about five minutes, bang goes Beachy, and lands shrapnel all around us – I was about 50 yards from the sand. I'll guarantee that Frank Beaurepaire never swam so fast in his best of form. Bang goes Beachy again. This time, he killed one of the boys. You ought to have seen me get over the rock bed that separated me from the shore; I never felt the stones on my foot at all. Bang goes Beachy again. This time, he wounded a chap about two feet away from me. Beachy got one killed and two wounded for his trouble."

Education Gazette, 9 December 1915, p.576

Shrapnel = a shower of small metal pieces blown from an exploding shell and designed to shred flesh
Frank Beaurepaire = an Australian swimming champion

1.38 What aspects of the way the war is being fought are stressed here?

1.39 What are we being told about what the fighting was like?

1.40 What is the tone or mood of this letter?

1.41 Is this soldier presenting a realistic or a 'glamourised' picture of the fighting?

1.42 What is this soldier's attitude to his involvement in the war?

1.43 What aspects of the way the war is being fought are stressed here?

1.44 What are we being told here about what the fighting was like?

1.45 What is the tone or mood of this letter?

1.46 Is this soldier presenting a realistic or a 'glamourised' picture of the fighting?

1.47 What is this soldier's attitude to his involvement in the war?

Drawing conclusions

Taking all four letters into account:

1.48 What were the main messages for school students about the Gallipoli campaign?

1.49 Do you think the image of the war being presented was realistic, or do you think it was being 'softened' or glamourised for the young audience? Explain your reasons.

1.50 How might such school materials have influenced students' attitudes to the war and Australia's involvement in it?

The Victorian students were also provided with the poem *Farewell* about the evacuation of Gallipoli.

1.51 What is the attitude being presented in this poem to:

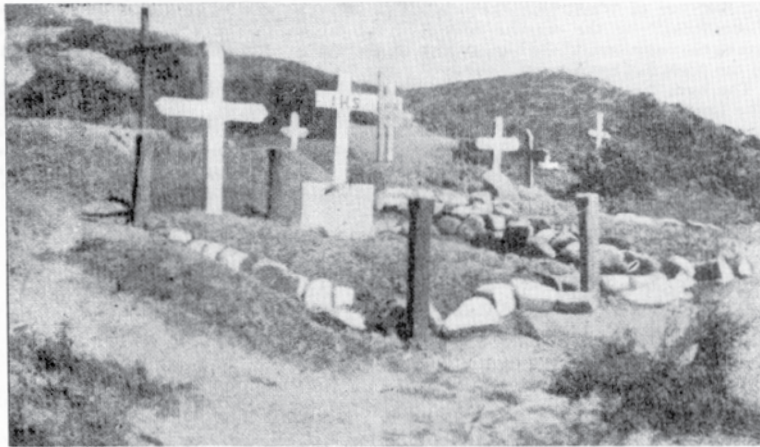
- the military outcome of the Gallipoli campaign
- death in war
- the significance or achievement of the campaign for the Anzacs and for Australia?

Source E

FAREWELL!

Con-tempt, disregard ; scorn.
Va-cant, empty.

Barred, shut off.
Glo-ry, radiance.



From *Ours*, the quarterly magazine of the Melbourne High School.]

GRAVES AT ANZAC.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Good-bye, old mate! We did
our best,
And leaving it is hard to
bear ;

And I could envy you your
rest
Under the little cross up
there.</p> <p>2. What did we gain the long
months through
For such a price as you have
paid,
And thousands more who fell
like you,
The gallant boys who came
and stayed ?</p> <p>3. Not much, perhaps, in guns or
ground,
But just the sort of name
that clings,</p> | <p>For "Anzac," all the world
around,
Stands for a lot of useful
things.</p> <p>4. You helped to make it, though
your breath
Is still for ever, and your
fame
Shall speak of high contempt
of death
To those who never heard
your name.</p> <p>5. Good-bye, but, while the
Turkish shells
Fall harmless on our vacant
lines,
From hills that barred the
Dardanelles
It seems to me a glory
shines.</p> |
|--|--|

—Abridged and slightly adapted from a poem by "TOUCHSTONE" in the
Daily Mail, London.

The School Paper, Grades V and VI,
1 April 1916, pp. 44-45

How did an Anzac legend develop during the Gallipoli campaign?

An image of the Anzac soldier emerged from the Gallipoli campaign. The image was basically that the Anzac was tough, inventive, loyal to his mates and to officers who had proved themselves, and a bit undisciplined when not fighting. He was chivalrous, gallant, a good fighter but not a good parade-ground soldier. He was brave, able to endure discomfort with a grin, casual about dangers, accepting of the probable consequences of combat, good-natured, humorous, irreverent towards officers who insisted on military discipline. He thought himself better than the soldiers of most other nations, and was democratic and egalitarian.

The Anzac Book

The Anzac Book was a popular publication by which people learnt more about Gallipoli. It was a collection of stories, photographs, reports, cartoons, poems, jokes and sketches produced by soldiers at Gallipoli in late 1915. It sold in large numbers among troops, and among the general public in Australia. By 1916, it had sold 100,000 copies (in a population of five million).

The soldiers' contributions were organised by CEW Bean, who also edited the book. Bean was the Australian war correspondent at Gallipoli, and later became the official war historian.

The book did not appear until after the evacuation of Gallipoli, but it still provided people in Australia with an image of the soldiers and the campaign. What was the image that it provided? And does the image that you identify in *The Anzac Book* fit the general outline of the Anzac legend provided above?

Your task is to look at some of the images of the Anzac that they presented of themselves, and compare them to the legend.

2.1 Look at the images on the next three pages and identify what they present as the qualities and characteristics of a typical Australian and New Zealand soldier.

For each of these images of the Australian soldier presented in *The Anzac Book* decide:

- what it shows; and
- what message about the Anzacs it presents to the reader.

You will find that some images provide more information and ideas than others. Write the key words you identify beside the image. For example, you might write that image A represents loyalty, patriotism, nobility, dedication, achievement, pride and commitment.

2.2 After you have looked at the images, decide what image of the Anzacs you think readers of *The Anzac Book* would have received from these sketches, and how that fits (or does not fit) the Anzac legend.

Image A Cover of *The Anzac Book* 1915



How did an Anzac legend develop during the Gallipoli campaign?

Image B The ideal and the real



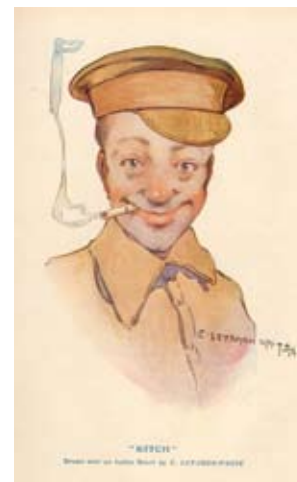
The Anzac Book, Cassell & Co, London, 1916, page xv

Image C At the landing and here ever since



The Anzac Book, page 23

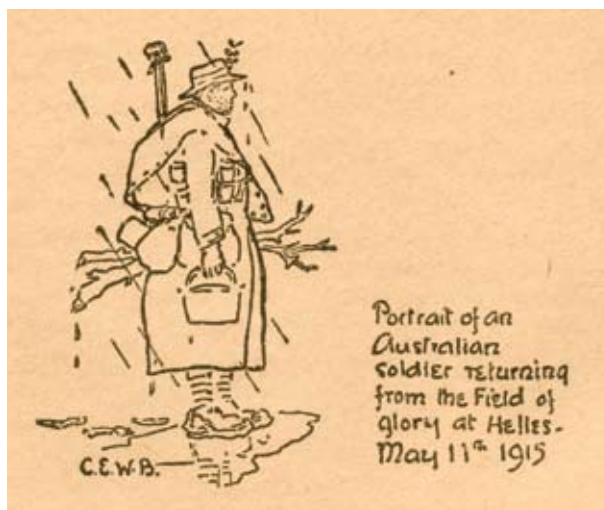
Image D 'Kitch'



The Anzac Book, page 33

Image E

Portrait of an Australian soldier returning from the field of glory at Helles



The Anzac Book, page 40

Image F Alternative cover for *The Anzac Book*

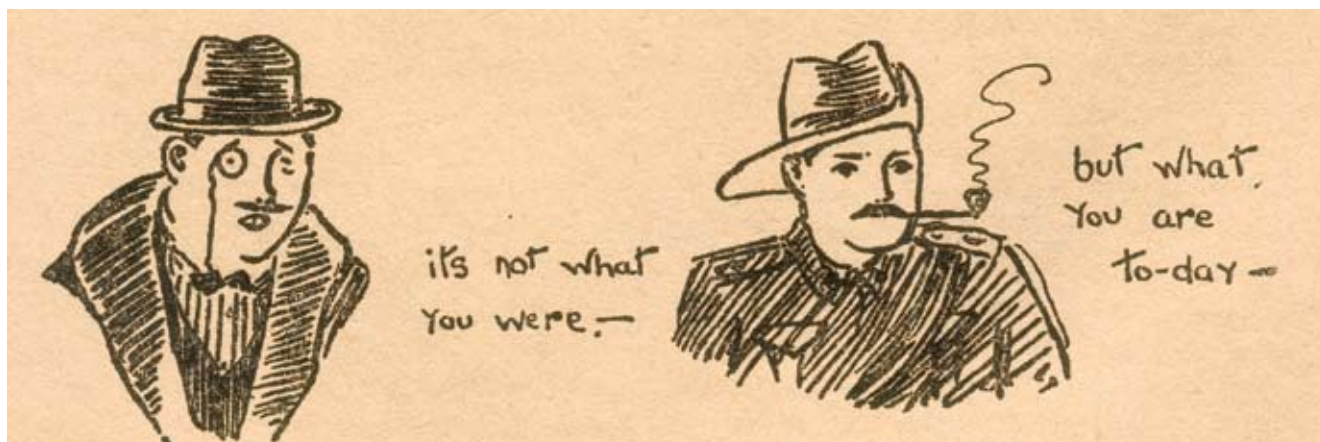


The Anzac Book, frontpiece

Image G The never-ending chase



The Anzac Book, page 30

Image H 'It's not what you were — but what you are today'

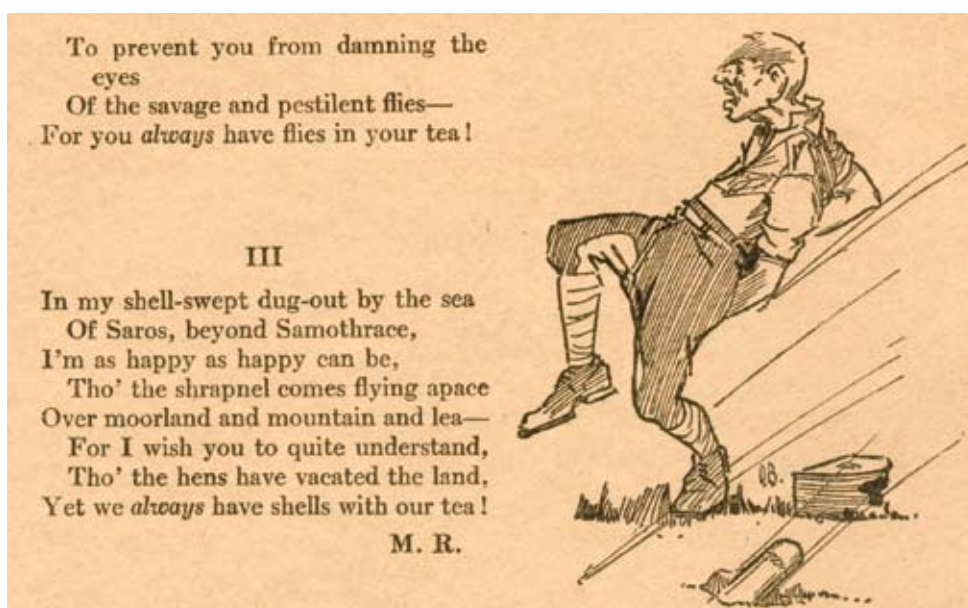
The Anzac Book, page 42

Image I The new star

The Anzac Book, page 96

Image J Anzac Types — Wallaby Joe

The Anzac Book, page 45

Image K The Happy Warrior

The Anzac Book, page 34

Connections



DVD-VIDEO connections

Australians At War

Episode 2

'Who'll come a fighting the Kaiser with me'

There are several segments where the film shows the reactions in Australia to the Gallipoli campaign:

- 24:30-26:20 (Chapter 5)
- 30:55-32:35 (Chapter 7)
- 44:10-46:18 (Chapter 9)
- 48:40-49:30 (Chapter 11)
- 52:15-52:40 (Chapter 12)

Look at these segments and as a class discuss:

- How did people react to the deaths?
- Was it a shared reaction, or confined to those who suffered a personal loss?
- Did casualties change the reactions of people to the Gallipoli campaign?
- Was the nation as a whole affected by the Gallipoli campaign?
- Did the Gallipoli campaign change Australians' view of themselves?

DVD-ROM interactives connection

- *The Anzac Legend over time* — How has its popularity changed over time?
- *Community memorial board* — How do you commemorate and represent the campaign?
- *Listening to the headstones* — What do epitaphs at Anzac tell us about people's attitudes and responses to the death of their family members?

Website connections

Gallipoli and the Anzacs website

www.anzacsite.gov.au

- War Correspondents Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett and Charles Bean
[www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/- Anzac: A National Heirloom](http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/-Anzac:A%20National%20Heirloom)
www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/anzac/anzac.html
- Gallipoli and a Country Town: Yass
www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/homefront.html