

**NATIONAL WINNER  
AUSTRALIAN WARTIME  
EXPERIENCES**



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**THE MAN WITH THE DONKEY**

## ***National History Challenge***

*John Simpson Kirkpatrick, Gallipoli, and the development of the Anzac*

*legend*

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## ***The Man with the Donkey***

The legacy of Anzac participation in the Great War developed into a set of qualities known as the Anzac spirit, derived from the belief that Australian and New Zealand troops displayed a set of common characteristics such as courage, endurance,

initiative, and mateship<sup>1</sup>. An important aspect of the Anzac spirit is that this legacy is not based upon military success, but on the qualities displayed by individual soldiers whilst engaged in warfare<sup>2</sup>. The evolution of the Anzac legend within the Gallipoli campaign has become central to the concept of Australian identity, becoming part of the creation myth of Australia and an integral part of the development of the Australian psyche. Within the Anzac legend, a stretcher-bearer commonly known as John Simpson has come to embody the qualities of the Anzac spirit and, consequently, become the underlying narrative of the first days of the Dardanelles campaign. However, this presentation of a tragic hero has warped the true identity of both Simpson himself and the soldiers he has come to represent.

Amongst those who landed at Anzac Cove on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1915, Simpson appears a curious choice for the tragic hero of the Anzac legend. Born John Simpson Kirkpatrick in South Shields, Durham, England, on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1892<sup>3</sup>, Simpson was the son of Robert Kirkpatrick, a merchant seaman, and his wife, Sarah Simpson<sup>4</sup>. Simpson joined the British Merchant Navy on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1909<sup>5</sup>, but deserted in May 1910 in New South Wales<sup>6</sup>. Simpson wrote regularly to his family<sup>7</sup> and allocated a portion of his wages to his mother<sup>8</sup>. His letters portray a class-conscious social democrat<sup>9</sup>, quite distant from the man, “as redolent as a gum tree, as Australian as a kangaroo, a real colonial spirit,”<sup>10</sup> presented later.

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<sup>1</sup> Australia. Australian War Memorial. *ANZAC Day Tradition*. Web. <[http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac\\_tradition.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac_tradition.asp)>.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> "B2455, SIMPSON JOHN." *National Archives of Australia*. National Archives of Australia, n.d. Web. 25 Apr 2012.

<<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Imagine.asp?B=4028778>>.

<sup>4</sup> Walsh, G. P. "John Simpson Kirkpatrick." *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Australian National University Press. Web. 25 Apr 2012.

<<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kirkpatrick-john-simpson-6975>>.

<sup>5</sup> Adam-Smith, Patsy. *The ANZACs*. Melbourne, Victoria: Thomas Nelson Australia Pty Ltd, 1978: 122. Print.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> Simpson tried cane-cutting and station work in Queensland and worked his passage from Cairns to Sydney, before becoming a coalminer at Coledale, Corrimal, and Mount Kembla in the Illawarra district. In 1911, he briefly travelled to the Yilgarn goldfield in Western Australia, before spending the following three and a half years working as a steward, fireman, and greaser aboard vessels around the Australian coast. Simpson jumped ship at Fremantle in order to enlist.

*ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Walsh, G. P. *op. cit*

<sup>9</sup> Cochrane, Peter. *Simpson and the Donkey*. Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1992: 7. Print.

<sup>10</sup> Adam-Smith, Patsy. *op. cit* 122.

Once war was declared, Simpson enlisted in Perth, at Blackboy Hill Camp, on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1914<sup>11</sup> and was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance, Australian Army Medical Corps. As Simpson had previously deserted, he enlisted under the name John Simpson<sup>12</sup>. Simpson believed the AIF would initially head to England, and planned to desert upon arrival in England to enlist in the British forces<sup>13</sup>. On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1914, Simpson departed from Fremantle for Egypt<sup>14</sup>.

On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1915, Simpson landed on Gallipoli at dawn with the covering force<sup>15</sup>. Aid in the first days of the Gallipoli campaign was chaotic, as administrative staff capable of coordinating the evacuation of wounded were relegated to a slow ship<sup>16</sup>, resulting in stretcher-bearers holding an important role in the Dardanelles campaign<sup>17</sup>. These anonymous men received little praise; a Routine Order issued soon after the landing stated that no decorations were to be given to stretcher-bearers for acts of valour<sup>18</sup>. Stretcher-bearers were uniquely passive on the front lines of the Great War, as they aimed not to wound, but to save others.

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, Simpson began working with donkeys near Shrapnel Gully<sup>19</sup>. With them, he was able to transport conscious, slightly wounded men with leg wounds down to Anzac Cove<sup>20</sup>. Only two indisputable primary accounts of Simpson remain<sup>21</sup>, while many others are impossible to verify or contain references to Simpson

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<sup>11</sup> "B2455, SIMPSON JOHN." *op. cit*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

<sup>13</sup> Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 6.

<sup>14</sup> "B2455, SIMPSON JOHN." *op. cit*

<sup>15</sup> Australia. Australian War Memorial. *Forging the Nation: Simpson and his Donkey*. Web. <<http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/forging/australians/simpson.asp>>.

<sup>16</sup> Bean, Charles. *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 – 1918*. 11th ed. I. Canberra, ACT: Australian War Memorial, 1921: 567. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

<[http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/first\\_world\\_war/volume.asp?levelID=67887](http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/first_world_war/volume.asp?levelID=67887)>.

<sup>17</sup> Unarmed, stretcher-bearers walked into the line of fire to rescue their comrades and return wounded men to shelter. During the first month at Gallipoli, stretcher-bearers worked for thirty to forty hours without sleep. Torn hands and blistered feet were common, while no arrangements for wounded stretcher-bearers were made.

Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 94.

<sup>18</sup> However, Lance-Corporal Walter Parker of Portsmouth Battalion, Royal Naval Division, a stretcher-bearer, received the first Victoria Cross issued at Gallipoli, for courage under fire between April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1915 and May 2<sup>nd</sup>. He assisted dozens of men despite his own wounds.

"This Gallant Company: Bravery Awards at Gallipoli." *Gallipoli and the Anzacs*. Department of Veterans' Affairs, n.d. Web. 25 Apr 2012.

<<http://www.anzacs.gov.au/5environment/bravery.html>>.

<sup>19</sup> Simpson allegedly used donkeys previously used by Greek drivers who had been deported, but several variations of the story exist.

Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 94 – 95.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid* 6.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid* 42.

added at a later date<sup>22</sup>. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance war diary references seven men by name, the last of them Simpson,

“The behaviour of the men in view of their rude introduction to the circumstances of war was splendid ... No 202 Pte Simpson has shown initiation [sic] in using a donkey from the 26<sup>th</sup> to carry slightly wounded cases and has kept up his work from early morning till night every day since.”<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, Sergeant J. E. McPhee of the 4<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance references Simpson and his donkey, whom McPhee refers to as Murphy, on May 10<sup>th</sup><sup>24</sup>, before referring to the death of Simpson on May 19<sup>th</sup><sup>25</sup>.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915, Simpson died at the age of twenty-three. He was shot through the heart whilst assisting two wounded men<sup>26</sup>, providing a suitably tragic end for a tale to be developed into Australian legend. Charles Bean credits Simpson and his donkey with the rescue of 72 men<sup>27</sup>. It is evident Simpson was hardly a saintly depiction of the Anzac legend<sup>28</sup>. While certainly innovative, he was no more or less heroic than the average stretcher-bearer<sup>29</sup>. This loss was not a singular event. By the

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> The record for May 1<sup>st</sup> is actually found on the last page of the April record. *Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries, 1914 – 1918 War: 3rd Australian Field Ambulance, April 1915*. Australian War Memorial, Web. <<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/awm4/26/46/awm4-26-46-4.pdf>>.

<sup>24</sup> “10 May: Re – Simpson – English name, called Scotty and speaks with thick brogue –doing great work- bringing wounded from trenches, dressing stations etc., on little donkey which he calls Murphy- Deserves VC, during the first push he brought couple of men from beyond the firing line. Works by himself”

Sergeant J. E. McPhee, 4<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance

Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 42.

<sup>25</sup> “19 May: Poor old Scotty Simpson killed by machine-gun bullet in Shrapnel Gully this morning .... Scotty Simpson will be much missed with his mates from Shrapnel Gully – his cheery face and droll ways known to a great many – particularly ambulance men. His unit was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance (‘C’ Section)- but he worked by himself and appeared to have a roving commission. His donkeys Murphy and Duffy were taken charge of by some of our 4<sup>th</sup> Field stretcher-bearers who happened to be near him when he fell. Buried in cemetery to right of Anzac Beach.”

Sergeant J. E. McPhee, 4<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance

*ibid*

<sup>26</sup> Legend suggests that Simpson skipped breakfast that morning in order to attend to the wounded. “On May 19th he went up the valley past the water-guard, where he generally had his breakfast, but it was not ready. “Never mind,” he called. “Get me a good dinner when I come back.”

Bean, Charles. *op. cit* 554.

<sup>29</sup> “It was from the first an unvarying point of honour with Australian stretcher-bearers that, whenever and wherever the call “Stretcher-bearers!” was heard, they must go out to it. Almost every day for eight months during the shelling of the Beach, which came as punctually as afternoon tea in the cities, the cry would be raised somewhere.”

*ibid*

middle of May 1915, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance had five men dead and thirty wounded<sup>30</sup>. Simpson was also not the most promising young man to die in the Great War, nor at Gallipoli<sup>31</sup>. Despite the flawed nature of Simpson himself, however, the tragic ending to the tale made his story perfect for appropriation by propaganda<sup>32</sup>. From Anzac involvement in the Gallipoli campaign, there evolved a communal obligation to present the behaviour of troops, who had suffered tremendous losses, in terms of a tragic sacrifice; there became no place for anyone less than a hero. These men were perceived as having been sacrificed by their leaders in a futile campaign. It became necessary for Simpson to be portrayed as the martyr.

Simpson became the personification of the selfless soldier; an embodiment of the collective praise reserved for stretcher-bearers, unarmed men who would willingly walk onto the battlefield to save others. The first published account of his deeds was in the *Daily Malta Chronicle* on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1915, a paragraph at the end of an article concerning the storming of Gaba Tepe<sup>33</sup>. *The Argus*, a Melbourne daily, later reprinted the story. It referred to acclamation received by Simpson across Gallipoli. At the time of his death, however, acclaim for his actions was localised to Shrapnel Gully, where the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance served. On May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1915, the day following his death, Colonel Monash<sup>34</sup>, later General, wrote, "Private Simpson and his little beast earned the admiration of everyone at the upper end of the valley"<sup>35</sup>.

The account of Simpson by Charles Bean was published by the *West Australian* on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1915<sup>36</sup>, followed by the *Age*, a Melbourne daily, on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Once major newspapers caught the story, the legend became self-perpetuating. Upon

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<sup>30</sup> Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 95.

<sup>31</sup> Gordon Clunes Mackay Mathison, Alexander Phipps Turnbull, Tom Elliott, Ted Larkin, Carew Reynell, Geoff McCrae, George Challis, Gresley Harper, Wilfred Harper, and Edward Frederic Robert Bage are all considered part of a lost generation of Australian innovators who perished in the Great War. Mathison, Turnbull, Larkin, Harper, Harper, Carew, and Bage were killed at Gallipoli. McMullin, Ross. *Farewell, Dear People: Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation*. Brunswick, Victoria: Scribe Publications, 2012. Print.

<sup>32</sup> The tale of only one other stretcher-bearer, Lance-Corporal Walter Richard Parker, contained the necessary elements of ingenuity and mateship on the cliffs of Gallipoli to rival that of Simpson. Parker, however, was British and, crucial to the canonisation of Simpson as opposed to Parker, not in the Australian Imperial Force.

<sup>33</sup> Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 51.

<sup>34</sup> Monash was a soldier, engineer, and administrator. During the Great War, he commanded the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade.

Searle, Geoffrey. "Sir John Monash." *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Australian National University Press. Web. 25 Apr 2012.

<<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/monash-sir-john-7618>>.

<sup>35</sup> Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 44.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid* 51.

arrival at Gallipoli, newcomers would provide accounts of the apparently heroic exploits of Simpson, which would reach all men of the Gallipoli campaign<sup>37</sup>. Simpson became part of the collective consciousness, with memories adjusted accordingly. Simpson became synonymous with all acts of bravery and ingenuity by stretcher-bearers, propelling him into myth.

The Great War was the first major war of the modern era, both in terms of military technological achievements and the use of mass media, specifically newspapers. Mass media had existed for barely twenty years<sup>38</sup>. The Great War involved the exploitation of these technological advancements in mass media through state-directed propaganda<sup>39</sup>, which had not previously been possible. As the death toll mounted on Gallipoli, censorship was introduced to maintain morale, both within the military and nationally.

For those on the home front, the deeds of Simpson provided a perfect example of the deeds of Anzac troops. Young men were encouraged to enlist, in order to prove themselves. His death personified the appeal for new recruits; completing the task begun by men such as Simpson was regarded as an inherently noble task<sup>40</sup>.

After this, tales of Simpson flourished<sup>41</sup>. Stories suggested that Indian soldiers called Simpson *Bahadur*<sup>42</sup>, that Anzacs risked their lives to gather flowers for his

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid* 135

<sup>38</sup> Williams, John F. *Anzacs, the Media, and the Great War*. Sydney, New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1999: 6. Print.

<sup>39</sup> As said the Deputy Chief Censor of Australia in August, 1915, "There is no better way of stimulating recruiting than the publication of spirit-stirring stories, fresh and unconventional, of the gallant lads now fighting at Gallipoli."

Fewster, Kevin J. *Expression and Suppression: aspects of military censorship in Australia during the Great War*. Sydney, New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1980: 135. Print.

<sup>40</sup> Gammage, Bill. *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*. Illustrated ed. Canberra, ACT: Australian National University Press, 1974: 14. Print.

<sup>41</sup> In *Glorious Deeds of the Australasians in the Great War*, written by Ernest Charles Buley, Simpson was the only man identified by name. Said Buley, "No Australasian ever speaks of him without saying 'He earned that VC a dozen times'". The book, first published in October 1915, was in its third edition by December. *Child's History of Anzac*, by the same author, dealt with the rescue of men near death, more than ten or twelve a day, by Simpson<sup>41</sup>. The donkey within the story softened the image of Simpson, appealing to schoolchildren. By November 1915, Simpson appeared in the Victorian *School Paper* for Years VII and VIII. The story contained a three-page account from the Melbourne *Herald*, in between a poem concerning heroes of Ancient Greece and a version of the speech made by Xenophon. The story also appeared in *Boy's Own Annual*.

Buley wrote the book based on interviews conducted with wounded soldiers evacuated from the Dardanelles to Britain during the Gallipoli campaign.

Buley, Ernest Charles. *Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War*. London: Andrew Melrose, 1915. Print.

Buley, Ernest Charles. *A Child's History of Anzac*. London: Andrew Melrose, 1916. Print.

Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 73.

<sup>42</sup> *Bahadur* literally means *brave*.

Walsh, G. P. *op. cit*

grave, that wounded soldiers knew Simpson by name, that Simpson wore out two pairs of shoes in three weeks, that all of Anzac Cove knew the name of the man with the donkey. The truth of such stories is unclear, but they are probably apocryphal.

After the final evacuation of troops from Anzac Cove, *The Anzac Book*, a compilation of work by soldiers at Gallipoli, was published. The stories referenced Simpson, specifically in relation to the death of Jenny<sup>43</sup>, the offspring of one of his donkeys. Alongside the exploits of Simpson and other soldiers were references to Greek legends, including the Trojan War, and biblical references. Among the latter was a parody of the Old Testament<sup>44</sup> concerning the landings at Gallipoli, with Gallipoli ascending to legendary status within the Anzac legend and the development of Australia<sup>45</sup>.

As the first anniversary of the dawn landing at Anzac Cove, approached, the Gallipoli campaign and Simpson were firmly entrenched in the national consciousness of Australia. The landing at Anzac Cove and, with it, Simpson had become part of the origin of Australian identity. A letter from Australian soldiers to Sir Ian Hamilton<sup>46</sup> read, in part,

“The day draws near that marks Australia’s first birthday.

With you on the 25 April last year we laid firmly the foundation of our Military History and in a few days we hope to celebrate a glorious anniversary.”<sup>47</sup>

On the first Anzac Day on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1916, large crowds watched 2,000 Australian and New Zealand troops, veterans of the Dardanelles, march to Westminster Abbey<sup>48</sup> in London. In Sydney, between 60,000 and 100,000 joined a commemorative

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<sup>43</sup> Bean, Charles, ed. *The Anzac Book*. *op. cit* 66.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid* 156 – 159.

<sup>45</sup> “No battleground so easily lends itself to retrospective sentimentality.”

North, John. *Gallipoli: the Fading Vision*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1936: 20. Print.

<sup>46</sup> Hamilton was the Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. He was made a scapegoat for the failure of the Gallipoli campaign, which effectively ended his military career. However, *Gallipoli*, by John Masefield, was published in 1916 and “dedicated with the deepest admiration and respect” to Hamilton and the men under his command.

Australia. Australian War Memorial. *Dawn of the Legend: 25 April 1915*. *op. cit*

<sup>47</sup> Sumner, Ian. *Anzac Infantryman 1914-1915: From New Guinea to Gallipoli*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2011: 62. Print.

<sup>48</sup> Australia. Australian War Memorial. *ANZAC Day Tradition*. *op. cit*

service<sup>49</sup>. Less than a year following the beginning of the Gallipoli campaign, Gallipoli, and with it, Simpson, had passed into legend<sup>50</sup>.

Throughout the Great War and the years shortly thereafter, the Gallipoli campaign and Simpson maintained their positions in the national consciousness. The first two volumes of *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 – 1918* dealt solely with the events surrounding the beginning of the war and the Gallipoli campaign, including the actions of Simpson<sup>51</sup>. Gallipoli and Simpson initially maintained their status as legendary<sup>52</sup>, providing a glorified, if misleading, representation of Australian involvement in the Dardanelles. While the human cost of the Gallipoli campaign and the Great War remained strong within national memory<sup>53</sup>, stories glorifying the events faded in the years following the Great War, and, initially, the years following World War II. Simpson appeared to have lost his appeal: using a donkey was perceived as a dodge from the strenuous work of stretcher-bearers<sup>54</sup>.

This reversal marked a change in Australian national identity, in which the familial Australian relationship with Britain was emphasised over the importance of Australia as a separate nation. The response was the antithesis of the original idea of Gallipoli as integral to the development of Australia. During this period, Remembrance Day, which commemorated the signing of the Armistice on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, took precedence over Anzac Day. Gallipoli was remembered as, according to one Gallipoli veteran, a place of “senseless horror and sacrifice”<sup>55</sup>. With the decline

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

<sup>50</sup> “The Australian and New Zealand troops have indeed proved themselves worthy sons of the Empire.”<sup>50</sup>

King George V

Bean, Charles, ed. *The Anzac Book*. 3rd ed. Sydney, New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1916: preface. Print.

<sup>51</sup> Bean, Charles. *op. cit* 553 – 554.

<sup>52</sup> “No army in history has made a more heroic attack; no army in history has been set such a task.” Masfield, John. *Gallipoli*. Chatswood, New South Wales: New Holland Published Pty Ltd, 1916: 31. Print.

<sup>53</sup> In 1933, an appeal for a memorial in honour of Simpson met with little financial support. Victorian RSL, Returned Army Nurses, the British ex-Service Legion, several churches, the Red Cross, the premier, sections of the Scottish community, several generals, and others all commended the idea for commemorating the sacrifice of Simpson at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne in 1933. Actual support, however, was minimal, as the nation was in the midst of the Great Depression and several other collections for various military memorials occurred concurrently.

Cochrane, Peter. *op. cit* 201.

In 1935, when deciding on the subject of a commemorative Anzac stamp, John Simpson Kirkpatrick was not even considered, while the Gallipoli campaign was rejected on the basis that there was “no valid reason” to select the campaign as opposed to other events of the Great War.

*ibid* 224.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid* 93.

<sup>55</sup> North, John. *op. cit* 17.

of the White Australia policy from 1943 onwards<sup>56</sup>, however, a vacuum was left in the narrative of national identity. The Australian psyche was no longer defined by its close relationship with Britain; instead, Australia was forced to reevaluate the development of a uniquely Australian identity. With this came the revival of the Anzac legend and Gallipoli. The Anzac spirit had been enhanced through World War II, which had its own contributions to the development of the Anzac legend in both Kokoda and Tobruk.

While Gallipoli returned to prominence following World War II, several decades passed before Simpson received the same treatment. Sir Clarence Irving Benson<sup>57</sup> published letters written by Simpson as *The Man with the Donkey* in 1965<sup>58</sup>. These letters were censored to accord with his ideal of an Anzac hero<sup>59</sup>. Thus, while the original letters are important to understanding Simpson, the omissions are equally integral to understanding the development of the Anzac legend. Simpson and his ilk were idealised beyond recognition<sup>60</sup>. The legend re-emerged, poised for mobilization in the name of nationalism against the perceived Communist threat and anti-war protests. Simpson had died in service to the Anzac legend; this selective, heroic interpretation provided a modern fable. By the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli had returned to the forefront of national identity. In part due to the views presented by Benson, Simpson was at the forefront of this revival. Other heroes of the Great War, such as Albert Jacka<sup>61</sup>, were generally forgotten. When interest in Anzac Day fell due to anti-war protests, in the wake of the Vietnam War, the nonviolent role of the stretcher-bearer again rose to prominence.

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<sup>56</sup> Australia. Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Fact Sheet 8 – Abolition of the 'White Australia' Policy*. 2009. Web.

<<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition.htm>>.

<sup>57</sup> Benson was a Methodist clergyman, journalist, and enthusiastic Anglophile.

Howe, Renate. "Sir Clarence Irving Benson." *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Australian National University Press. Web. 25 Apr 2012.

<<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/benson-sir-clarence-irving-9493>>.

<sup>58</sup> Benson, Irving. *The man with the donkey: John Simpson Kirkpatrick, the good Samaritan of Gallipoli*. London: 1965. Print.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*

<sup>60</sup> "I was rather disconcerted to find that I appeared to know more about their experiences [of Gallipoli] than they cared to remember; that this imaginative realization of the campaign ... was more intense than actuality."

North, John. *op. cit* 14.

<sup>61</sup> Jacka was the first Anzac to receive a Victoria Cross, for "conspicuous bravery" while under fire at Courtney's Post the night of May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915. Jacka won his Victoria Cross the day that Simpson died. *London Gazette* 23 July 1915, n. pag. Web. 26 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/29240/supplements/7279>>.

Today, the Gallipoli campaign remains an important aspect of the Anzac legend, the legend of Simpson and his donkey persisting due to its broad appeal. In contrast to men such as Monash, Simpson was an everyman with, as the current incarnation of the legend accepts, imperfections; the bland version of Simpson presented by Benson is no longer valid. The flaws present in the current incarnation of the modern legend, however, continue to portray Simpson as a uniquely Australian character, despite his being British. The modern legend is no closer to approaching his true character than that presented by Benson.

Through this revival of the Anzac legend in association with the Gallipoli landings, there has been some criticism of the glorification of war. This was particularly evident in 2005 where 20,000 people packed Anzac Cove and popular music was broadcast on giant screens before the dawn service<sup>62</sup>. Popular culture, including film and music, have both propelled the legacy of Gallipoli<sup>63</sup> and attempted to deal with the ramifications of the idealized Anzac legend in modern conflict<sup>64</sup>. Important to his enduring popularity, Simpson personifies the attributes of Anzac troops despite his role as a nonviolent participant. Simpson appeals to those who oppose the militarization of the history of Australia and the glorification of war associated with Anzac Day, despite the military background of his story. As the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gallipoli landings approaches, there are calls for Simpson to receive a Victoria Cross<sup>65</sup>. While he has become synonymous with the sacrifice of all who attempted to protect their mates in the line of fire – and, indeed, all soldiers – his legend has transcended historical accuracy. What Simpson has come to represent, however, is that which has altered the face of Australia. Because he has consistently been a reflection of current sentiments towards warfare, he has retained his appeal as a personification of the Anzac legend and the 60,000 Anzac troops lost in the Great War.

Introspection within Australia is necessary as to the nature of the Anzac legend, specifically Simpson, and its relevance to modern Australia. With the loss in

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<sup>62</sup> Jackson, Andra, and Doug Conway. "RSL chiefs dismayed by Gallipoli rubbish." *The Age* [Melbourne, Victoria] 27 Apr. 2005. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Anzac forces, particularly those involved in the Gallipoli campaign, have been glorified through features such as the film *Gallipoli* (1981), the TV series *Anzacs* (1985), and the song *The Anzac*, by Adam Brand.

<sup>64</sup> The repercussions of the idealised Anzac legend are present in songs such as *And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda*, by Eric Bogle, and *I Was Only 19*, by Redgum.

<sup>65</sup> Welch, Dylan, and Mike Carlton. "Simpson's Gallipoli deeds listed for Victoria Cross." *The Age* [Melbourne, Victoria] 16 Apr. 2011. Web. 26 Apr. 2012.

2002 of the last Anzac who served at Gallipoli<sup>66</sup>, Simpson and the other troops from the Dardanelles have achieved an ethereal quality. They have been rendered unrecognizable to their contemporaries, but their appeal has been solidified in the creation saga of the Australian nation, presenting a fabricated incarnation of the Anzac legend. As time distances the Australian population from the horrific human cost of the Gallipoli campaign, the legendary appeal of Gallipoli has waxed and waned, but ultimately strengthened. The death of Simpson, less than a month after arrival at Anzac Cove, epitomises the senseless tragedy and loss, while also allowing the story of the Anzac troops to ascend to mythical proportions.

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<sup>66</sup> Alec William Campbell died on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at the age of 103. Campbell enlisted at the age of sixteen, two months after the initial landing at Anzac Cove.  
Shaw, John. "Alec Campbell, Last Anzac at Gallipoli, Dies at 103." *New York Times* [New York City, New York] 20 May 2002, n. pag. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.  
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/20/world/alec-campbell-last-anzac-at-gallipoli-dies-at-103.html>>.

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<<http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/records/awm4/26/46/awm4-26-46-4.pdf>>.

This contains the war diaries of Simpson's unit, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Field Ambulance. It provides relevant information concerning the importance of Simpson in relation to the other men of the unit, and provides a first-person account of his actions.

"B2455, SIMPSON JOHN." *National Archives of Australia.* National Archives of Australia, n.d. Web. 25 Apr 2012.

<<http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/scripts/Imagine.asp?B=4028778>>.

This contains Simpson's original service records, and, while there are obvious errors within it, such as Simpson's name being given as John Simpson, it provides relevant information concerning Simpson's history, both pre-enlistment and a basic outline of his deeds while in the AIF.

Bean, Charles, ed. *The Anzac Book*. 3rd ed. Sydney, New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1916. Print.

This book was compiled by Charles Bean from submissions from Anzac troops stationed at Gallipoli, and was published shortly after the evacuation of troops. While Bean censored any especially negative portrayals of the campaign, the book continues to vividly portray the experiences of troops stationed in the Dadanelles.

Jackson, Andra, and Doug Conway. "RSL chiefs dismayed by Gallipoli rubbish." *The Age* [Melbourne, Victoria] 27 Apr. 2005. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

*London Gazette* 23 July 1915, n. pag. Web. 26 Apr. 2012.  
<<http://www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/29240/supplements/7279>>.

A relevant recount of how Albert Jacka gained his Victoria Cross. However, it was censored in accordance with wartime necessity.

Shaw, John. "Alec Campbell, Last Anzac at Gallipoli, Dies at 103." *New York Times* [New York City, New York] 20 May 2002, n. pag. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

<<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/20/world/alec-campbell-last-anzac-at-gallipoli-dies-at-103.html>>.

Welch, Dylan, and Mike Carlton. "Simpson's Gallipoli deeds listed for Victoria Cross." *The Age* [Melbourne, Victoria] 16 Apr. 2011. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

A modern account of the resonating impact Simpson holds on Australian culture.

## *Secondary Sources*

Adam-Smith, Patsy. *The ANZACs*. Melbourne, Victoria: Thomas Nelson Australia Pty Ltd, 1978. Print.

This book provides interesting information concerning Simpson and other Anzac troops, but is unable to provide a balanced view of Australian involvement in the Great War, fawning over the deeds of Anzac troops.

Australia. Australian War Memorial. *ANZAC Day Tradition*. Web. <[http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac\\_tradition.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac_tradition.asp)>.

Australia. Australian War Memorial. *Dawn of the Legend: 25 April 1915*. Web. <<http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/dawn/>>.

Australia. Australian War Memorial. *Forging the Nation: Simpson and his Donkey*. Web. <<http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/forging/australians/simpson.asp>>.

Australia. Australian War Memorial. *People profiles: Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick*. Web. <<http://www.awm.gov.au/people/234.asp>>.

The four previous citations are all official pages concerning either Simpson himself or the Anzac legend. While each seeks to be historically accurate, they are all heavily focused on Australia and the positive aspects of Simpson and the Anzac legend.

Australia. Department of Immigration and Citizenship. *Fact Sheet 8 – Abolition of the 'White Australia' Policy*. 2009. Web. <<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/08abolition.htm>>.

This provides the necessary background information concerning the decline and ultimate demise of the White Australia Policy.

Bean, Charles. *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914 – 1918*. 11th ed. I. Canberra, ACT: Australian War Memorial, 1921. Web. 25 Apr. 2012. <[http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/first\\_world\\_war/volume.asp?levelID=67887](http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/first_world_war/volume.asp?levelID=67887)>.

Bean was a witness to many of the atrocities of the Great War, reporting and recording numerous events, including the Gallipoli campaign. This official history, while biased towards the Australian government and people, seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of Australia's involvement in the Great War.

Benson, Irving. *The man with the donkey: John Simpson Kirkpatrick, the good Samaritan of Gallipoli*. London: 1965. Print.

This compilation of Simpson's letters is heavily edited and responsible for many of the misconceptions surrounding Simpson. A fawning portrayal, Simpson is reduced to a two-dimensional character. It was, however, written with assistance from Simpson's sister.

Buley, Ernest Charles. *A Child's History of Anzac*. London: Andrew Melrose, 1916. Print.

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A short, readily comprehensible biography of Sir William Throsby Bridges.

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This is one of the best books on the subject of Simpson and the evolution of his legend. It examines primary sources and interprets them through the context of the modern Anzac legend.

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<<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/benson-sir-clarence-irving-9493>>.

A short, readily comprehensible biography of Sir Clarence Irving Benson.

Masefield, John. *Gallipoli*. Chatswood, New South Wales: New Holland Published Pty Ltd, 1916. Print.

This was written shortly after the final evacuation of Gallipoli, providing a perspective and analysis contemporary to the events that occurred, even if it does miss important background information that was not readily available during wartime.

McMullin, Ross. *Farewell, Dear People: Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation*. Brunswick, Victoria: Scribe Publications, 2012. Print.

A compilation of details, heartfelt biographies of promising young men lost in the Great War. It provided fantastic perspective in relation to the loss of Simpson.

North, John. *Gallipoli: the Fading Vision*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1936. Print.

This book was written just as Gallipoli was fading from the national consciousness, shortly before its revival following World War II. It includes interviews from soldiers, who have had twenty years to reflect upon the events.

Serle, Geoffrey. "Sir John Monash." *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Australian National University Press. Web. 25 Apr 2012. <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/monash-sir-john-7618>>.

A short, readily comprehensible biography of Sir John Monash.

Sumner, Ian. *Anzac Infantryman 1914-1915: From New Guinea to Gallipoli*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2011. Print.

This explores the history of Anzac troops and, with it, the development of the Anzac legend.

"This Gallant Company: Bravery Awards at Gallipoli." *Gallipoli and the Anzacs*. Department of Veterans' Affairs, n.d. Web. 25 Apr 2012. <<http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/bravery.html>>.

An official source that provides context for the apparently heroic deeds of Simpson in relation to other men involved in the Gallipoli campaign.

Walsh, G. P. "John Simpson Kirkpatrick." *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Australian National University Press. Web. 25 Apr 2012. <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kirkpatrick-john-simpson-6975>>.

A short, readily comprehensible biography of Simpson. It provides what appears to be the general opinion concerning Simpson, that of a national hero.

Williams, John F. *Anzacs, the Media, and the Great War*. Sydney, New South Wales: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 1999. Print.

This provides a fascinating account of the influence of mass media upon our current interpretation of the Anzac legend. Within it, the evolution of Simpson and our current opinion of Gallipoli are explored.