

What was the anzac
legend was about
history essay



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Quoting two different sources establish what the ANZAC legend was about. A rising nation after federation in 1901, Australia wanted to make an impression to the other countries of the world and they were able to do this on the international stage fighting side by side with the English, the French and other Allies in World War One. It was in this 'Great War' that the young nation of Australia took its place in the world.

The Australian lifestyle during the very early 1900's was arduous and tough on the working class. The birth rates were a lot higher than the current day, with families having up to seven children. Many of these kids did not live past the ages of fourteen and fifteen and so the average age in Australia was lower than that in the Allied countries. This provided the AIF with an army of fit, 'bronzed' youths who had gained strength through their daily labours. It was the events at Gallipoli which created the ANZAC legend. In the course of the war, the qualities that made up the true Australian spirit were revealed. These qualities set them apart and defined them as Australian troops, nicknamed 'diggers'. The loss and failure in the war had no effect on the ANZACs due to qualities such as; bravery, humour even in the most life-threatening situations, mateship, a belief in equality and the ability to utilise whatever resources they had to great effect, which became second nature for the 'boys from the bush' in their daily struggles in their rugged landscape, shone through under the struggle of the battles. In the aftermath of the Battle of Epehy, it was reported that German officers 'no longer wanted to face Australian soldiers'.

Sources:

<http://skwerk.com>.

au/p-c_s-14_u-42_t-46_c-136/the-anzac-legend/nsw/history/australia-and-world-war-i/gallipoli-and-the-anzacs

Experience of Nationhood by KJ Mason

When did the legend develop, how was the legend spread and discuss the accuracy of the legend. How has the legend changed over time?

The ANZAC legend was developed during the time that Australian and New Zealand troops were fighting at Anzac Cove in Gallipoli. It was a costly struggle for the ANZACs and from the day that they had landed (25th of April, 1915), they had been slaughtered. However, the characteristics which we now associate with the ANZAC legend shone through and with their unique qualities they were able to hold their position despite the constant gunfire and heavy losses surrounding them. When faced with death, their strength and courage prevailed and as a result established their nation's reputation.

The legend was spread through the writings of the 'war correspondents' that were based on the battlefield. Experienced English correspondent, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett was one of the first to praise the heroism of the Australian troops. It was through his newspaper articles that people back in Australia were informed of how their countrymen were going in the war. Another reporter at Gallipoli, war historian Charles Bean had first-time experience with the soldiers and expressed their 'unique' qualities in his writings. Bean

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wrote various works documenting the life of the men in Gallipoli, an example being his 'The Anzac Book' which was published in 1916.

Whilst the ANZAC legend pointed out the positive aspects of the Australian and New Zealand troops, it was not the case all the time. Statistics have shown that the ANZACs were the worst cases of STDS with admission for infection in 1916 being 137/1000 men.

A notable source, Professor Manning Clark, published in his work 'A History of Australia' a contrasting image to the one of the legendary ANZAC. His work includes evidence of troops being a part of violent scuffles before going off to war and sources of troops in Egypt getting caught up in brawls and riots, drunk behaviour, burning the belongings of locals and spending time in local brothels with some troops being infected with venereal diseases.

Another scholar, Dr Dale Blair claims that correspondent C. E. W (Charles) Bean "advanced an idealised view of sacrifice to provide the nation with higher meaning and comfort as compensation for the death of its soldiers".

Sources:

[http://www.bhiva.](http://www.bhiva.org/documents/Conferences/Manchester2010/Presentations/100420/Bingham_James.pdf)

[org/documents/Conferences/Manchester2010/Presentations/100420/Bingham_James.pdf](http://www.bhiva.org/documents/Conferences/Manchester2010/Presentations/100420/Bingham_James.pdf)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anzac_legend#Criticism

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What impact did the legend have on ANZAC military activities later in the war?

The ANZAC legend or ANZAC Spirit created a sense of fear within the opposition with some German generals refusing to fight the Australian troops. The Anzac legend began almost immediately after the landing at Gallipoli in 1915. It had a major impact on Anzac military activities later in the war. The Anzac troops had gained a reputation as dogged fighters and they gave hope to the British and French troops who they were fighting alongside. The allied troops were gradually getting tougher and confident in his offensive task. The Anzac troops were ordered in for support by the British and the French for three battles over the period from 1916 to 1918.

In March 1916, the war along the Western Front had settled into a stalemate. Therefore, the British and French troops called in the Anzac troops for the great Battle of Somme that took place in Fromelles. They were ordered into battle in an attempt to break the German line at Pozieres. The reputation of the ANZACS had pressurised and made the German generals a lot more cautious and with this psychological advantage the allies were able to gain 12km's on the Western Front. However, the number of allied casualties was enormous with the Australians suffering ' more casualties in six weeks in France than they had in the eight months of the Battle of Gallipoli' [1]. The final number of casualties (Australian) was 42000.

In 1917, the Allies launched a new offensive in Flanders and the ANZACS were called in again. There was a set of battles/attacks that took place with the aim of breaking the German line near the town of Ypres. The first of these attacks was on the strategically important Messines Ridge. This

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particular attack was planned by General John Monash who had been recently been promoted to the rank of major general and was in charge of the new Australian 3rd Division. In this particular battle, the ANZACS were victorious and suffered a smaller amount of casualties, only 10000 Australians and 5000 New Zealanders. The presence of the ANZACS gave hope to the allies and this ANZAC Spirit would have had an effect on the outcome of the battle - a win for the Allies.

The ANZACS were requested one last time for the final battles in Flanders from 1917 to 1918. The Battle of Paschaendale carried for approximately five months and the final battle of Flanders, the ' Battle of the Lys' which went for 22 days. Rainfall throughout the month of October, 1917 had caused the battlefield to turn into a mud lake. Fighting under wet and muddy conditions, the Australians suffered over 76000 casualties.

From the above summary of the great battles of the last three years of WII, it can be inferred that the ANZACS were often called in for the tougher military campaigns and tended to be reinforced in later battles due to the effect of their presence not only on the men beside them but also the opposition.

Many generals rose in rank over the course of these three years, an example being John Monash. Monash was a civil engineer who became the Australian Military Leader in the First World War. Known as the mastermind behind the victory in the Battle of Hamel, Monash rose from being Commander of the 4th Infantry in Egypt to the position of Lieutenant General and commander of the Australian Corps in 1918.

Sources:

Experience of Nationhood by KJ Mason

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Passchendaele

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Monash

Quote [1]: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Somme

Discuss the impact on the Australian and other civilian populations as the war dragged on.

The Anzac legend was described as the possession of the following five characteristics: sense of humour, resourcefulness, mateship, equality and bravery. This is what was known as the 'true spirit' of the Australian soldiers however this was somewhat flawed with many Australian troops being sent home diagnosed with STDs. The ANZACS weren't totally pure.

The Anzac Legend had brought many advantages to the Australian military and the population back home. The Legend kept up people's spirits even after huge allied losses; it built a reputation for the troops and also put pressure on the enemy. Australia was a very young country, only 13 years old and we were already 'hitting above our weight' and making a mark on the international stage. The Legend and the efforts of the men brought heart and great self-belief to the young country. In the aftermath of the war, there was a minor negative effect of the ANZAC Spirit with people, especially men, who hadn't enlisted to fight were looked badly upon beneath the light of the 'ANZAC legend'.

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The Australian Forces also gained the respect of the allied forces of France and Britain. They found that the presences of the ANZACS instilled a sense of fear within the German opposition with some German Generals refusing to fight in any battle against the Australians. This presence also lifted the hopes of the French and British onlookers of the war back at home. After the Battles of Sommes, where there were a large number of allied losses, there was a feeling of pessimism in France and Britain but the ' boys from Aus' managed to lift their spirits. The Legend also had a negative effect upon the German population. The parents of these German troops were reluctant to send their boys into battle against the boys from Australia. War correspondents aided in the spread and promotion of this ANZAC Spirit and also lifted the spirits of the civilian populations.

The Australian contribution to the war had been enormous. Over 416 000 men had volunteered, of these 330 000 had fought over seas. Sixty thousand Australians died and 150 000 were wounded. Australia had the most number of casualties during the WWI compare to the others in per head of population. Throughout the course of this Great War, the ANZACS performed many courageous feats which really made the ANZAC Spirit. One of these incidents was the recapture of the town of Villers-Bretonneux.

On the 24th of April 1918, the small town of Villers-Bretonneux was the site of the first battle between two tank forces. Three German A7Vs took the town on the first day but it was recaptured the next day by the 4th and 5th Division of the AIF with losses totalling 1200 Australian troops. The community of Villers-Bretonneux still remembers the feats of the Australian troops to this day. The graves of over 770 Australian soldiers can be found <https://assignbuster.com/what-was-the-anzac-legend-was-about-history-essay/>

today in front of the Australian War Memorial located in Villers-Bretonneux. The school in Villers-Bretonneux was rebuilt using donations from school children of Victoria, Australia (many of whom had relatives perish in the town's liberation), and above every blackboard is the inscription ' N'oublions jamais l'Australie' Never forget Australia).

Sources:

<http://skwerk.com>.

[au/p-c_s-14_u-42_t-46_c-136/the-anzac-legend/nsw/history/australia-and-world-war-i/gallipoli-and-the-anzacs](http://p-c_s-14_u-42_t-46_c-136/the-anzac-legend/nsw/history/australia-and-world-war-i/gallipoli-and-the-anzacs)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villers-Bretonneux>

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