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“Hung on the wire”, to be in “cold storage”, or “pushing up daisies” was characteristic diggers talk in the trenches at Gallipoli or the Western Front and meant that a person was dead. To kill the enemy was to put “fresh faces in Hell”; a fatal wound was a “bellyache”<sup>1</sup>; to be thrown into water was to “be in the drink”.<sup>2</sup> And as my great grand-father explained, to ‘kick with the wind’ meant that you have the advantage<sup>3</sup>.

So why was the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps in Gallipoli so significant that it has been remembered ever since?

One answer is the fact that the landing was a separate action in the war. People in Australia knew their ‘boys’ were training for their ‘baptism of fire’ and when it came, the Australians were an identifiable body of troops. So what happened could be isolated and analysed as a heroic action by Australians.<sup>4</sup>

Another reason was the fact that Australia went to war a mere 14 years after the creation of the Australian commonwealth. Australians saw their new nation as not yet being a true and identifiable country. In this sense the Gallipoli campaign stood for the beginning of true Australian nationhood.<sup>5</sup>

The Australian qualities were expressed in the myth of the ‘digger’. This was widely understood to be a democratic and larrikin hero, a free and independent spirit, bold and ferocious in battle, whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship in times of challenge and the demands of necessity.<sup>6</sup> The word had its root in the gold digging fields of places such as Kalgoorlie. The ANZAC legend is not of sweeping military victories so much as triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. The ANZAC Day celebrates the unique Australian story that makes heroes of noble failures, such as the defeated Eureka rebels, the Burke and Wills expedition, and Ned Kelly. Gallipoli fits this pattern well.<sup>7</sup>

The development of 1914 suited Western Australians particularly. Geoffrey Bolton writes in his History of Western Australia: "*With more single males of military age than the Australian average, more recent British migrants, and more farmers and rural workers experiencing difficulty or unemployment because of the severe 1914 drought, it was not surprising that Western Australia's rate of recruitment was higher than in the rest of Australia.*" (2008, pages 102/103).<sup>8</sup> This may explain why Western Australians voted Yes in the conscription referenda in 1916 and 1917 with more enthusiasm than the other states.

However, the cost was immense. "*Proportionally, Western Australia had made the greatest sacrifice.*" Nearly half of the Western Australian servicemen became casualties and one in five were either killed or died of wounds.<sup>9</sup>

The Margaret River community was deeply affected by the Great War. In her book just released, Penelope Ransby<sup>10</sup> discusses the effect it had on the first settlers. Chris and Lance Andrews exemplified the British pioneers referred to by Bolton. Like later arrival Evelyn Wilton, they were English born and served in the British Navy before acquiring land in Margaret River. By the time the war started, they had just established themselves on their farm. Both brothers fell in the war, and Evelyn, unable to cope with post-war stress and expectations to continue the work, was unable to stop the demise of the property and his family.

The War had a lasting effect on the history and shaping of my community. Premier Mitchell wanted to build up a self-sufficient dairy industry by using British soldiers who survived the war. He stated that "*they deserved a land fit for heroes to live in.*"<sup>11</sup> Between 1920 and 1924, over 23,000 British migrants, mostly ex-servicemen arrived in Western Australia of whom many worked as group settlers in the South-West.

On ANZAC Day my community of Margaret River also commemorate these silent casualties of the war, and their efforts and determination in building our community. War is an ugly thing, but giving up everything for the good of all is

a strong message. Respect, solidarity and mateship are lessons worth considering at ANZAC Day.

Reflecting on the wars of the past, we have to make every effort to educate people and to try to resolve conflicts by means of negotiation and mediation. The names of Chris and Lance Andrews, and nineteen comrades engraved into the polished granite in Margaret River's ANZAC memorial are silent reminders to do this within ourselves and our community, and to work for a future free of conflict.

So, almost 100 years after the conflict, the human cost of the war is finally met - the 'butcher's bill is paid' - no Gallipoli veterans remain.

However, the legacy of ANZAC is still...

**'KICKING WITH THE WIND'!**

## Bibliography

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- <sup>7</sup> Information taken from the following website:  
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- <sup>8</sup> Bolton, Irwin Land of Vision and Mirage. Western Australia Since 1826 (2008).  
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