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Essay for Gallipoli Commemorations

Samuel Vincent

There is a saying that hard labour builds character. In much the same way, it is considered that in going to hell and back, New Zealand soldiers and in turn New Zealand society developed ANZAC character. Michael King termed this as a 'baptism of blood' for the nation. But was World War One a meaningful and important step in the development of New Zealand culture and identity? It seems that in reality it was little more than a gruesome, dehumanising bloodbath which involved unbelievable suffering for no reason at all, and which, if anything, resulted in an increase in British patriotism in New Zealand.

The impact of the First World War on New Zealand soldiers was enormous. Approximately 58 000 New Zealanders were killed or wounded in the war – an astounding and disturbing figure. Of these, 7 500 were killed or wounded in the Gallipoli campaign. The war was arguably the most ghastly and horrifying in human history. It appears that New Zealanders sailed off to training in Egypt before being hauled off into mass killing fields in Gallipoli and France where they were systematically maimed or slaughtered. As James Belich aptly put it, if aliens had looked down on the Western Front, 'they may well have concluded that the authorities on both sides had decided to eliminate their young single men by mutual agreement.'

The effects of these hellish conditions were devastating on the men. They became little more than robots, numbed into submission and apathy. Near the end of the war a British commander said: 'I was very much struck by the nonchalance of the men ... there was no life in them; their pulses were slower than usual.' Many New Zealanders began to resent the poor British leadership they had, and regarded this leadership as the enemy as opposed to the Turks or the Germans. This can be seen through the example of James Douglas Stark, who, after deserting from the Western Front, released seventeen German POWs from Le Havre in Normandy. He was regarded as a hero by his fellow New Zealand soldiers. While men of other countries such as France deserted en masse, New Zealand's soldiers did no such thing. Defying all reasoning, they stuck to their awful duty until the bitter end.

The Gallipoli campaign is often cited as the epitome of the hell which New Zealanders went through during the war, and not without reason. The cynical and reasoned distrust which New Zealand soldiers held of the British military leadership largely has its origins in the Gallipoli campaign. Organised by the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, the campaign was a resounding failure on his part, and New Zealand soldiers paid the price. The ANZAC soldiers were first of all landed three kilometres north of the planned spot. The location was terrible, with Turk soldiers being able to fire at will on the ANZAC soldiers from the cliff top above. The fateful campaign in Gallipoli accurately represents other aspects of the First World War as well. The losses from the campaign were appalling, with one in five soldiers dying on the first day of the operation. The conditions were unbelievably awful to the soldiers stationed there. The historian Ian McGibbon wrote that 'searing heat and the swarming flies (made worse by unburied corpses in no man's land) tormented the men, conditions exacerbated by water shortages. Disease, especially dysentery, flourished in the insanitary conditions among men already debilitated by weeks of inadequate food.'

The immediate effects of the war entailed massive psychological damage to servicemen and trauma to civilians. While New Zealanders never engaged in mass mutiny, following the Armistice, according to James Belich, the soldiers 'indulged in a bit of anarchy.' At Dunkirk on New Year's Eve of 1918, the Maori Battalion was engaged in violence which resulted in two lieutenants being shot, one fatally. New Zealand soldiers were also involved in the Surafend massacre, in which between 20 and 40 Palestinians were murdered with alleged rapes and castrations in December 1918. Although apparently provoked by a New Zealander who was supposedly murdered by a resident of Surafend, this incident clearly shows that New Zealand soldiers had become dehumanised and twisted by the war. As for the immediate effects on the rest of the country, a nation of less than a million had lost 17 000 of its best and brightest sons, with 41 000 wounded. This was massive. As Michael King put it, 'Scarcely a surname was not represented, and some small communities lost their entire crop of young manhood, some families all their sons.' The emotional effects of this disaster for the nation cannot be overemphasised, nor glossed over by the importance of supposed social and cultural change. Nothing could have hit our country harder than the pain of this horrific loss.

The effects of the First World War and in particular the Gallipoli campaign on New Zealand society were undoubtedly profound, however deep sadness and reverence for the war dead can easily be mistaken for the advent of post-colonial New Zealand nationalism or collective Australasian identity. While the effects of the war were indeed devastating on New Zealand society, there is clear evidence to show that the Gallipoli campaign did not conjure postcolonial Kiwi nor ANZAC identity. In 'A Short History of New Zealand', first published in 1925, pro-British sentiment is extremely high. The book makes reference to 'the strong ties that bind us to the Homeland and the keen sense of the continuity of British ideals in this new land.' Britain is constantly referred to as 'home' or 'the mother-country'. With pride, it is claimed that 'there is more resemblance to the mother-country in New Zealand, and British customs and traditions are followed more closely here, than any other part of the commonwealth.' This does not sound anything like the rhetoric one would expect from a newly-assertive and independent nation or region. As for the idea of growing independent national identity, the author writes, referring to British dominions: 'They are no longer children, no longer mere dependencies of Britain; but take rank with her as partners in a great commonwealth.' This phrase implies nothing about New Zealand losing its British identity in favour of distinct New Zealand identity, only a growth in political muscle of the neo-British dominions. As late as the 1980s some New Zealanders maintained this view, for example Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, who passionately supported Britain in the Falklands War and wrote an article in *The Times* of London titled 'Why We Stand With Our Mother Country'. It seems that New Zealanders still regarded themselves as Britons after the war, only deeply scarred Britons. Over twenty years after the end of the First World War, when our young country was hurtled into the second, our Prime Minister Michael Savage, referring to Britain, said the famous words: 'Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand.' As for the idea of Australasian identity being fostered by the campaign, as James Belich said, 'Australians more or less ignored the 'NZ' in Anzac; New Zealanders, to a lesser extent, did likewise with the 'A.'

From as early as 1917, New Zealanders were participating in dawn services commemorating the landing of the ANZAC forces in Gallipoli. As the historian Maureen Sharpe said, Anzac Day quickly became 'the most solemn and most widely attended day of commemoration in New Zealand.' In almost every town and city in

New Zealand there stand war memorials, built in the aftermath of the war. Sharpe also wrote: 'The ritual of Anzac filled a psychological need ... and helped New Zealanders to cope with their losses, by making them feel part of a nation united in its determination to keep faith with the dead.' It appears that one of the impacts of the First World War and in particular the Gallipoli campaign on New Zealand society was to create a spirit of respect and remembrance for the war dead, born out of the intense emotional trauma which large numbers of New Zealanders went through. This, however, does not imply a growth in independent national identity nor Australasian identity through collective suffering, as has been explained.

We tend to look back on history with blurred spectacles; not caring for specific and unpleasant details, we search out the vague ideas, and then try to give them meaning or relevance to the present day. Anzac Day was not about Kiwi identity, nor partnership with our Australian neighbours. It was simply our country's way of howling at fate for snatching away 17 000 of our best and brightest young people, in the most gruesome and inhumane manner. It can be conceded, however, that as time has passed and the reality of the war has been numbed that Anzac Day has become a day centred on pride and identity as opposed to grief and despair. World War One, as historians now concede, was a virtually pointless war. In the emergence of New Zealand identity, in its time, it was just as useless. There is no way of finding a silver lining out of this horrific tragedy through supposed cultural, social or political change. Despite the cumulative effects of later interpretations, the true impact of this war and in particular the Gallipoli campaign on New Zealand society amounted to little more than massive pain and anguish in individual New Zealanders, and this kind of phenomenon becomes unimportant and uninteresting to society after a few generations.

'Using Gallipoli as a case study, illustrate the impact of World War I on New Zealand Society'

***"E kore ratou e koroheketia, penei i a tatou kua mahue nei...
They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old...."***

Keepa Hipango

Wanganui Collegiate School

Stop for a moment. Glance around. Absorb your surroundings. Watch as that stereotypical 'Kiwi bloke' swaggers confidently past, and smile at the way his wife keeps him in check. Listen closely for that rising intonation at the end of a sentence and that casual 'Kia ora', a greeting, a colloquialism, spoken now with acceptance. Shared with acceptance more than it has ever been. Perhaps signaling a transformation; an era of acceptance and embrace assimilated into New Zealand culture, like that of the Maori soldier bearing arms for the first time in a World War alongside their New Zealand comrades, at Gallipoli. Aotearoa, New Zealand. Take a deep breath of that fresh, clean air that envelops you; the air that is shared by a common, unified people; New Zealanders.

Prior to the First World War, New Zealand was merely a country; a self-governing political entity, strongly under the sword, pen and might of the British Crown. During this time, hostilities from significant racial conflicts were recurring and this was effectively cementing a divide between Maori and Pakeha. At the turn of the century beneath the façade of a country full of opportunity there were apparent social problems simmering. It would take a significant upheaval and battle to bring these tensions into a different perspective. Consequently, New Zealand's involvement in the First World War, and particularly the Gallipoli campaign was the catalyst required to remedy the situation, not only overseas on the battlefields, but at home where people were struggling to establish a sense of identity.

"...Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn..."

When Great Britain declared its intent for war, New Zealand as a colonised country followed its 'Mother Nation' heartedly and wholly aligning with 'Mother England' and gave her service of loyal duty and citizen in war. April 25, 1915. Today, this date, synonymous with Australia, is recognised as ANZAC day. April 25th marks and heralds in sadness the anniversary of the day in which members of the Australia New Zealand Army Corps stormed the beaches at Gallipoli Peninsula impassioned with fervour and fear, bravely and blindly under the controversial British orders to attack and weaken the tactical stance of Austro-Hungary, Turkey and Germany in the war.

***"...They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow..."***

The first commemorative ceremony was held in 1916 to remember the 2721 fallen New Zealand soldiers from the Gallipoli campaign. Today, the purpose of this day is to honour, still, the Gallipoli campaign and herald our soldiers, whilst also combining the spirit of feeling and commemoration with all those other Returned Service men and women who have fought for their country. Fallen or survivor of the Great War or any and all other wars that have followed, ANZAC day is the day that we as a nation,

young and old, ailing and robust, stand tall as a nation, remembering and honouring those New Zealanders who have lived, fought and died in the Great War and all other wars thereafter.

The Gallipoli campaign can be considered a failed one with regard to its military purpose in the war. Given hindsight, this failure was evident from the beginning of the campaign where a navigational error caused the ANZAC troops to beach in an area of overhanging cliffs. This not only rendered our troops vulnerable to offense, but gave their opposition a significant defensive advantage. As such, the Allied troops who landed at Gallipoli suffered serious casualties over the eight-month operation. In particular, 2721 New Zealanders died; nearly a quarter of all the New Zealanders who served at Gallipoli itself. This statistic is a significant contributor to the fact that New Zealand had one of the highest casualty rates per capita of any country who served in the war.

***“They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted.
They fell with their faces to the foe...”***

However, in its entirety, the Gallipoli campaign was not a complete failure; it was a military catastrophe, but it consolidated New Zealand as a country in its infancy, to foster and develop a sense of identity that allowed it to become a nation. With this, it is important to outline the distinct difference between a country and a nation. A country in its definition has no real depth; it is the mere geographic area of occupation. A nation by definition, however, is much more meaningful. A nation is a community; a group of people who share a common culture, language, history.

The 19th century brought about a lot of domestic conflict between the indigenous Maori and settling Pakeha. With this idea, the historical New Zealand Wars that occurred from 1843 onwards spring to mind. It is commonly suggested that the main causes of these wars involved colonial settlement of the British, land disputes and issues to do with the Treaty of Waitangi and contest of sovereignty. In its brevity, one historian argues that *‘New Zealand was no longer to be a place belonging to Maori, with space reserved for Pakeha. New Zealand was to be a place for Pakeha, and room now had to be found for Maori. This was contrary to what Maori had thought the Treaty was all about; and they said so.’* Following these conflicts, it is reasonable to assume that the general relationship between Maori and Pakeha remained relatively hostile and at this stage, the country of New Zealand did not have a situation whereby its inhabitants shared a common culture, language, or positive history. As unfortunate as it was, it took an event like the First World War to establish a sense of unity between the Maori and Pakeha. The First World War saw the first instance, (other than the Boer War) where New Zealand could contribute on a scale; and it took more than 100,000 independent New Zealand soldiers overseas. It is appropriate to refer to the soldiers as independent because for the first time, Maori soldiers were able to serve in a major conflict with the Pakeha in the army. This is significant because at one stage, it was British policy that an army was prohibited from having ‘native’ soldiers. Some Maori chose not to support the British Crown in the war effort because of the wrong-doings they felt had been bestowed upon them and their communities in the previous century; however, one thing is certain, the incorporation of Maori into the New Zealand army deputation for the First World War was effectively the first step to establishing unity between the two competing races of New Zealand.

The fact that these Maori and Pakeha under the delegation of the ANZAC were so far away from home, made them very aware of not only who they were but from where they derived. There was a realisation that they shared a common purpose, and the division that had previously occurred back home, was dispelled on the battlefields. One Maori soldier, Te Rangi Hiroa, who served at Gallipoli, recorded in his diary that the valour portrayed by the Maori at Gallipoli '*...earned them [Maori] the respect and admiration of the British troops.*' This union formed on the basis of a common derivation and purpose was also recognised and acknowledged by men from other nations. On the battlefield the colour of someone's skin is irrelevant; it is the uniform that distinguishes the comrade from the enemy. The uniform donned by all New Zealand soldiers fighting in the war, be they Maori or Pakeha, distinguished them as New Zealanders full stop. Furthermore, the New Zealanders' uniform bore an insignia portraying a Kiwi, which was not only a representation of the soldiers' origination, but a symbol that differentiated them from their foreign companions. The symbol was predictably recognised by their comrades and was essentially where the term 'Kiwis' for soldiers and eventually people of New Zealand originated. No longer was it externally recognised that the Pakeha and Maori fought at Gallipoli as separate entities; it was the Kiwis who fought together, and as one, they fought valiantly.

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning..."

An identity forged amidst the heat of battle, it became a lasting legacy of the Gallipoli campaign. Additionally, the tragedy of it all laid a foundation of a more united New Zealand than ever before. Brothers in arms, all other differences aside, when on the battlefield as Kiwi soldiers.

Before this all happened, there was some sense of nationalism and identity present in New Zealand; though dormant and undeveloped. In spite of our geographical isolation, World War I caused suffering on such a large scale that many, if not all New Zealanders were affected; be they on the front line, or alternatively, the home front. The war did many things for the New Zealand identity and ultimately its society: It inspired New Zealanders alike to search within themselves for an individuality that separated them from the rest of the world; and it encouraged New Zealanders to realise that in spite of their small population and geographical isolation, they were able to impact the rest of the world. The Kiwis at Gallipoli were the epitome of the latter; it was the New Zealand troops, the minority, who successfully captured Chunuk Bair, only to see it recaptured by the Turkish after a series of British mistakes. Incidents like this, combined with the tragic defeat at Gallipoli led New Zealanders to appreciate the fact that their sovereign country was fallible and subsequent to the war, New Zealanders admired the British less based on their own achievements in comparison. In summation, Gallipoli as part of the First World War created a reluctance for New Zealand to remain subordinate to Britain, and as the Kiwi soldier, Ormond Burton, who served at Gallipoli poignantly declared, '*...somewhere between the landing at Anzac and the end of the Battle of the Somme, New Zealand very definitely became a nation.*'

Henceforth, where do we stand? The Kiwis of the 21st Century. We are the legacy of the ANZAC. Gallipoli and the First World War in general were turning points in the history of our nation. Gallipoli was essentially the catalyst for the transformation of the country of New Zealand. However, the contribution of those who fought in subsequent wars cannot be overlooked, because although the First World War was the turning point, the Wars following built on the change and eventually developed New Zealand into the autonomous and respectable nation it is now. And it truly is a

nation when a people of diverse backgrounds share an experience of such adverse proportion and impact, that they put their differences aside to converge for that greater common purpose and good, in nationhood. Today, the New Zealand society is ever changing and continues to evolve. We abide peacefully not as the bicultural country of the past but as a multicultural nation of the future. As devastating as it is, it took an event like Gallipoli and the deaths of thousands of our people, for those at home to build in all senses of the word, and eventually bring our society in New Zealand to what it is today. This is aptly illustrated in the words of the author, Arthur Golden: *'Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are.'*

It is our duty now, to honour the sacrifice made by not only those who fought and died in the Gallipoli campaign, but those who contributed to subsequent conflicts. It is also our duty to carry the ANZAC spirit to the next generation so that the sacrifice of those who fought is not forgotten. This is our duty because although, as a generation distant from these time periods of warfare, we may not realise the significance of these sacrifices, the evidence is all around us: That 'Kiwi' bloke strutting past at the discretion of his missus, that rising intonation and casual 'Kia ora' and finally, that fresh New Zealand air that we as one true nation, share.

***"Ka maumahara tonu tatou kia ratou....
...We will remember them."***

GRANDDAD, GRANDMA AND ME

OUR WAR STORY

Daniel James Garry
Dunstan High School
Alexandra
Central Otago



Alphonso Garry 1916

On the 25th April 1915, New Zealand and Australian soldiers landed at a small bay on the Gallipoli coast, a landmark so small and insignificant that it had no name. The bay soon became known as ANZAC Cove. On the first day of the action New Zealand had 600 casualties, more killed and wounded than the 3 years of the Boer War. Although they weren't aware of it, through the confusion, muddle and mess, they had made history and created the birth of a legend.

The action was the first major battle for New Zealand in the First World War as part of a major Anglo-French operation against Turkey. The First World War was to end as one of the most disruptive social experiences in the country's history and certainly the most costly in terms of human life. Of the 8556 New Zealanders landed at Gallipoli, 2721 would be fatalities, 4852 were wounded and the remainder mostly sick.

The last Gallipoli veteran passed away in 2003 and the generations of New Zealanders they returned to and lived with are becoming fewer each year.

Both my Grandfather, Alfred Garry and my Grandmother, Caroline Garry (nee Anderson), were born after World War I, but both were affected indirectly by its aftermath. Both of their fathers (my great-grandfathers) fought as soldiers in World War I, as did other members of my extended family. Many returned servicemen and their families did not talk a lot of their experiences, but it is important to have their stories passed on to my generation.

One of the young New Zealanders in action on the 25th April 1915 at Gallipoli was my Grandfather's Uncle, Private James McGregor from Upper Junction, near Dunedin. He had volunteered with friends and proceeded to Egypt with the Otago Infantry Battalion. My Grandfather said "*My Uncle talked to us about his time at Gallipoli. His action was short; he was shot through the hip by a Turkish bullet while still disembarking from the boat at Anzac Cove. He was evacuated to hospital and from that day always walked with a distinct limp. He was very proud to be one of the originals to land at Anzac Cove. Our family thought he was quite lucky; one family from Upper Junction lost 3 sons, killed during World War I.*"



Talbert Gordon Anderson 1916

One week after the initial landings at Gallipoli, the Otago Battalion assembled to find as few as 200 of the original 1000 men still standing. With 800 casualties, Otago was the first New Zealand battalion to be well and truly decimated.

My Grandfather's father, Private Alphonso Garry also volunteered for World War I service. Examining his army records, it is surprising to see he was just 19 years when he volunteered, not much older than myself.

One interesting article is a map of France, where my great grandfather placed a neat cross at each place he was billeted for the night. The last cross is at Bertincourt where they end abruptly, as he was wounded and evacuated to hospital. The final stamp in his war record

stated: DISCHARGED – NO LONGER PHYSICALLY FIT FOR WAR SERVICE.

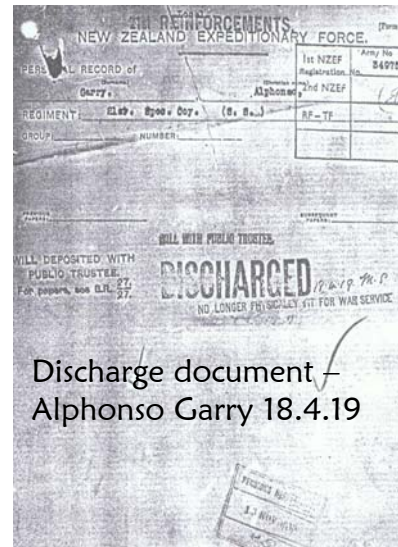
My Grandfather said *“He had trouble with his back for the rest of his life; although like many returned servicemen he did not like to talk about it and kept a lot of his war experiences to himself.”*

Private Talbert Gordon Anderson, my Grandmother's father, also volunteered for World War I and followed a different theatre of operation to many other New Zealand soldiers. Reading his personal papers, you see postings to Basra, Kut and Baghdad. All cities in modern day Iraq, but in 1917 Turkish occupied Mesopotamia.

In Baghdad, my Great Grandfather contracted malaria, then followed a series of hospital admissions. My Grandmother said *“when he returned from World War I, every time he was unwell, he would get a bout of malaria, and he eventually died a relatively young man.”*

My Grandfather also mentioned how World War I also affected other family left at home. His Aunt, Nellie McGregor; *“was engaged to be married to a soldier who left for service in France. He was later killed in action. She never married and wore her engagement ring proudly every day for the rest of her life.”*

War casualties throughout New Zealand were widespread; almost every street had soldiers who died. Nearly everybody was related to or knew one or more of these men. War memorials are so much part of our land that now we hardly take any notice of them, except on Anzac Day. Immediately after World War I they were known as Fallen Soldiers Monuments. When a community erected a monument it was for sons, fathers, husbands, brothers and uncles. The bodies of soldiers killed in



Discharge document - Alphonso Garry 18.4.19

action were not returned, monuments were headstones with no grave. This community of my grandparents is passing into history and in the 21st century New Zealand society, the War Memorials have a different meaning.

From the disasters of the Great War of 1914-1918, with its 18,500 dead and 50,000 wounded, out of a population of about 1.2 million came something distinctive, a national spirit and an emerging sense of nationhood. From the outset, following the landings at Gallipoli, public awareness of the battle invoked national pride, even if eventually there was no military victory. New Zealand and Australian soldiers showed courage in the face of adversity and sacrifice. The Gallipoli campaign showcased positive attitudes and attributes that helped New Zealand define itself as a nation, separate from Great Britain. After Gallipoli, New Zealand had a greater confidence in its distinct identity. The men who sailed off to Gallipoli may have gone as citizens of the Empire; those who voyaged home were unmistakably New Zealanders. Unfortunately the enormous casualties stripped us of our innocence and we still carry the scars of that experience to this day.

On ANZAC Day, New Zealand has acknowledged the sacrifice of all those who have died in warfare and the contribution and suffering of all those who have served. The word ANZAC is part of the culture of New Zealanders and Australians. The word represents a shared heritage between two nations. People talk about an ANZAC spirit, an intangible thing, born at Gallipoli through loyalty, sacrifice and courage, but still seen as values that live on, and are still relevant to young people in the 21st century.

Although the last World War 1 soldier has passed away and the generations they returned to and lived with are becoming fewer each year, ANZAC Day has undergone resurgence as more and more young people attend the services. For my generation the values inherent in the ANZAC spirit have found expression in a day that many people feel started as a distinct New Zealand identity at Gallipoli on April 25th 1915.

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Zoe Russell

The morning is icy, but we are well wrapped up. The crowd in its quiet has leant the darkness a sense of solemnity beyond the stillness of dawn. We can see little but the foggy shapes of those around us and the cenotaph, cold and shining, heaped with flowers.

“All we are and all we have are at the disposal of the British Government”

New Zealand Prime Minister William Massey, on the outbreak of World War One

World War One, and Gallipoli in particular, had a profound impact on New Zealand society. When war broke out in 1914 the mentality of the nation was unquestioningly colonial, despite having been a self-governing Dominion since 1907. New Zealand was bound to Britain not just by “sentiment, trade and debt” (in the words of one modern Prime Minister) but also by family ties and legal obligation. Thus, when a call to arms arrived from Britain, it was eagerly answered. 120,000 New Zealanders enlisted from a population of just over one million and 8556 of these served at Gallipoli. These soldiers were affected by the war; disillusioned by poor conditions and inept command, they realised their true loyalties lay with New Zealand. When they returned as veterans they returned with changed attitudes towards both their Maori comrades and New Zealand’s place in the world. We had taken our first steps on the road to becoming a nation.

New Zealand had officially recognised Britain’s sovereignty with the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. With the signing of this controversial document we tied ourselves to what was known by many New Zealanders at the time as ‘the mother country’. Many European settlers felt that this document conferred legitimacy on the young nation. By the end of the 19th century New Zealand had a distinct colonial culture of its own – Maori/Pakeha relations had settled down, communication networks linked the country and a formal education system was in place, based, inevitably, on the British model. In 1901 New Zealand opted not to join when the states of Australia were unified. Great pride was taken in the economy and in the highly successful 1905 All Blacks tour. It was during this time Prime Minister Richard Seddon coined the phrase ‘God’s own country’.

World War One was a primarily European war, stemming from complex origins and invoking ancient feuds. The motivations of the New Zealand Government were clear: to confirm New Zealand’s loyalty to the crown and to earn distinction in the service of the Empire. Previous experiences in the Boer War lead the majority to expect a short and exciting conflict, with opportunities for glory and few real casualties. Men signed up in their thousands, encouraged by communities and with various reasons. Some felt a sense of duty towards Britain. Some joined because of social pressure. Most, ultimately, joined for a sense of adventure and a chance to see the world – and, perhaps, to change it.

The trainees standing on the cenotaph steps are no older than me. Their bearing speaks of discipline – no shivers in the chill or craning of necks when the planes pass overhead. When they signed up, did they feel the echoes of those old dreams?

Maori attitudes towards the war were more complex. Maori had not been allowed to

enlist in the Boer War, as it was considered a 'white man's war', but this was not the case in World War One. Some Maori rushed to join the Native Contingent, supported by Maori MP's Apirana Ngata, Maui Pomare and James Carroll. Enlisting for many of the same reasons as their Pakeha comrades, they may have also held hopes for recognition and unification in a society that remained largely divided. However, a number of Maori opposed the war and specifically conscription. Those who belonged to tribes that had been at war with or mistreated by the crown in the land wars were often reluctant. They were organised by such leaders as Rua Kenana and Te Puea Herangi, who felt justifiably angry that the public dismissed their concerns. Maori were expected to do their bit 'for King and Country'.

Whatever their reasons, on April 25 the first ANZACs landed at Gallipoli. Under the command of British Major General Sir Alexander Godley, The New Zealand Expeditionary Force, along with Australian, British, Indian and French Forces were to open a pass through the Dardanelles Straits of the Ottoman Empire (now Turkey). The aim was to capture Constantinople and secure a sea route through to Russia. The campaign, though a costly failure, had impacts that would continue to be felt far beyond that fated cove.

Gallipoli was New Zealand's baptism of fire in every way that truly mattered. Heated by the burning sun and hammered by relentless Turkish shelling, a new nationalism was forged on the Peninsula. To quote Sinclair, speaking on New Zealand society of 1890 "The educated and wealthy were conscious of British intellectual and social leadership. A sense of nationality arose first among the inarticulate majority". Through their experiences at Gallipoli (and later Passchendale and the Somme) the soldiers of the "inarticulate majority" were irrevocably changed. Across the rugged plains of the Old World they found that they were fighting, not for an intangible dream of 'Empire' but for New Zealand. Pakeha and Maori soldiers came to know each other better as individuals. Australian and New Zealand soldiers fought together as ANZACs, but while this formed a bond between the nations, the creation of separate headquarters was symbolic of the reality: despite British misconceptions, we were not all 'Australasians'. In 1916 the New Zealand Division was formed and was supported by the framework of experience provided by those who had served at Gallipoli.

We hear the stomp of approaching feet and turn slowly to watch the veterans march in. They have their heads held high and walk with pride, medals glinting in the muffled glow of the streetlights. Their eyes are distant; I do not know what they see.

In 1918 the soldiers of World War One returned to New Zealand as veterans, changed in many ways by their experiences. They were disillusioned with the British high command "Godley was measured by the New Zealand corpses lying forward of Quinn's and Pope's on Chunuk Bair" and had learned at the Dardanelles Commission that criticism of these inadequacies was possible. Most came back hoping simply to resume their old lives – they were sick of war and all it had brought them. For many, their return was not what they had imagined.

New Zealand, too, had been changed by the years of war. It had been a time of fear and uncertainty as communities closed ranks to look after their own. Foreigners were treated with suspicion, especially those with German-sounding names. The rural/urban divide grew as each questioned the war efforts of the other. For the majority of the population, their part in the war had been limited to sending parcels

and waiting for news. War propaganda, while well intentioned, had given civilians an idealised view of soldiers. As more veterans returned, those who had remained at home began to see the truth – their heroes were not glorious victors but wearied men, unwilling to discuss an experience their families could not hope to comprehend. Many were still suffering from the effects of war, either physically or mentally. The nurses who came back after becoming accustomed to a degree of freedom found women's roles in New Zealand had changed very little in the intervening years. One of the main impacts of the war was that it highlighted New Zealand's existing problems while allowing them to be discussed.

The men who never returned from the battlegrounds of World War One had just as much of an impact as those who did. Especially in small settlements where enlistment rates were high, communities felt keenly the loss of brothers and sons. Memorials were erected and became centre points of towns, immortalising in stone the respect and honour the reserved nation found so difficult to express. On April 25 1916 the first ANZAC Day was held, commemorating not only those who had landed at Anzac Cove but all of those who had fought for New Zealand. The veterans saw it as a day to remember, in beer and in story, the camaraderie they had found together in the trenches. Those who had never been saw it as a day to pay homage to a terrible experience they were glad to never have been a part of. For all, it marked, and marks today, the date on which we became a nation.

The white light of a new dawn is shining softly as the ceremony ends. The soldiers leave first and the crowd follows after, walking quietly. The last strains of 'Reveille' drift hauntingly through the early autumn air.

It's not a Patch on the real thing

Christian McSweeney-Novak,

Harry Patch, the last British soldier to fight in the trenches in WW1 trenches died last year. He was aged 111. His death and his legacy of pacifism got me thinking You see Patch chose not to share his wartime experiences with anyone until he reached the ripe old age of 100. He believed the war was simply 'not worth it' and that the bravado and pomp of ANZAC day was just glitzy glamour. The early morning marches along with the glistening of medals made Harry Patch remember all too clearly the horrors he faced as a young man. Harry Patch's death got me thinking of what we do on this side of the ditch on Anzac day; and of how the war affected my great grandfather who also fought in the 'great war'.

For many New Zealanders, Anzac Day is a special time, and it is heartening in a country so young that we continue to pay tribute to those who have served and died on foreign fields. We are not mere antipodeans ignorant of world events. We know our history and we know how to commemorate it. We know about the Passchendaele campaign that began on October 17, 1917 and how in just a few hours 1084 NZ soldiers died or were mortally wounded. Less than two weeks later the death toll had reached a staggering 3700. It was a military catastrophe that ranks as our darkest day.

Now that the last WWI soldier has died, we have entered a period in our history where we glorify the deeds and acts that took place in World War One. Medals of forgotten soldiers are paraded and battles such as Gallipoli and Passchendaele are held in high regard "as our boys did their best against all odds and served their country well". The endless tales of heroism and a public display of patriotism make every person young and old proud to be a New Zealander, and proud to be associated with our country's greatest heroes.

Marching to the silent sound of feet on the pavement and the promise of toddy of rum afterwards, we gallantly and with much decorum commemorate Anzac Day. The RSA rooms are full, wreaths are laid at war memorials and poppies are sold and worn as a badge of honour. Woe betide you if you are mean-spirited and don't wear one. The specially chosen leaders of our schools with the war veterans of old march through the streets of cities and small towns alike. It has become fashionable to talk of the heroics of one's ancestors and to parade their medals as if they were the latest accessories on the catwalk. The News on the 25th of April broadcasts clips of those who attend the dawn parades and we proudly acknowledge the growing number of people who attend. However, for Harry Patch these celebrations symbolised a war that was simply 'organized murder'.

New Zealand has been involved in many wars with many lives lost, but none have the status and even oddly the 'appeal of Anzac day. It has become the trendy commemorative event of the 21st century, held up as a symbol of our nationhood; the pomp and splendour having as much appeal as the event itself. It is an all out 'kiwi do' - especially the bacon and eggs at the RSA afterwards.

Many New Zealanders describe Passchendaele as "our finest hour". For many New Zealanders that is their perception of The Great War. However, it only takes a little delving beneath the surface and to read the graphic first hand experiences of

soldiers like Harry Patch to realize that this was nothing that a good RSA fry up could ever be a salve for.

For many of the young men like Harry Patch, who left in 1914 to fight, the thrill of adventure and comradeship was soon swamped by the fear and loathing of the front line. This was a war in which the elements were as cruel as the enemy and as callous as some of the commanders who gave orders from their safe bunkers. This is no more evident than the Gallipoli and Passchendaele campaigns where from the very beginning nothing went to plan and thousands of men needlessly died. Do you believe for one moment Harry Patch would want to remember this? For Harry Patch the war brought anguish, despair, and permanent mental scars. As Siegfried Sassoon wrote; "I died in hell, they called it Passchendaele". It's this 'hell' that we remember on ANZAC day. So let's get it into perspective, do we really want to remember this hell?

The reality is that for many, war is just too painful to remember and an annual public outing is not appropriate -especially when you are solemnly grieving for those of a generation past or in what is now so often the case three generations past. My great grandfather fought and was wounded in Passchendaele, and as a POW he received the British war and victory medals. But would I, like so many others march on Anzac day and wear his medals? I think not. For his story, like so many others is neither romantic, nostalgic, brave, nor particularly memorable. He did fight for his country, he did get wounded, he did get captured by the Germans at Passchendaele, but the moral high ground is quickly forgotten. For him, like Harry Patch, war was a terrible experience, and not one family member of his generation would want to remember him for his war efforts. They only remember a bitter and broken man.

My great grandfather isn't remembered for his talents and funny side. My great grandmother would remember him for his alcoholism and for his inability to communicate. His children, especially my grandfather, would remember him for his brutal beatings. His grandchildren would remember him for his distance and his bad temper.

My great grandfather, like Harry Patch, came back from war never to talk about it again. It was simply too painful and there is the old adage that *'humility is the better part of valour'*: 'Oh how times have changed. He suffered post traumatic stress disorder and had a break down. He lost all his hair overnight and it never grew back. The war well and truly affected my great grandfather, both physically and emotionally. Harry Patch outlived every single soldier of his generation and survived into the new millennium. For a man like Harry Patch, it must have angered him to see the way Anzac day is now celebrated. If my great grandfather was alive, he too would be saddened to see the way ANZAC services have changed.

World War One was a disgrace and should not be remembered in the way it is. We, like the romantic poets in the Georgian tradition dramatise and romanticize 'our boys' exploits'. Thousands of men died in World War One. Many however, died not facing the enemy in the eye, but were killed by disease, malnutrition, and due to the complete stupidity of their commanding officers. ANZAC day should be remembered in a humbler, quieter way; in a way more befitting of the human sacrifice [hat men like my great grandfather and Harry Patch gave to the war effort.