Reflections on War, Diplomacy, Human Rights and Liberalism

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Blind Spots

By

Adam Hughes Henry

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Part Three "Reflections on Liberalism"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this book to my brother Martin (1978-1986). He remains and will always be, *my only hero*.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC)
Australian Department of External Affairs (DEA)
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Australian Imperial Force (AIF)
Australian Labor Party (ALP)
Australia New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC)
Australian New Zealand United States Security Treaty (ANZUS)
Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS)
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO)
Australian War Memorial (AWM)
British Broadcasting Commission (BBC)
British Foreign Office (FO)
British Information Research Department (IRD)
Bushveldt Carbineers (BVC)
Defence Signals Directorate (DSD)
Final Report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation
    in East Timor (CAVR)
Indonesian Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
Indonesian Military (TNI)
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
International Force for East Timor (INTERFET)
International People's Tribunal 1965 (IPT)
Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA)
Papua New Guinea (PNG)
Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI)
Netherlands East Indies (NEI)
New South Wales Mounted Rifles (NSWMR)
Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI)
Responsibility to Protect (R2P)
Timorese Democratic Union (UDT)
United Kingdom (UK)
Unites States of America (US)
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR)
United Nations (UN)

West New Guinea (WNG)
Western Australian Mounted Infantry (WAMI)

Introduction

This book reflects on the intersections between war, diplomacy, genocide and liberalism. This work offers the author an opportunity to revisit several previously published articles along with new and ongoing research. A prominent theme in this book is the selective way violence and its consequences are filtered by ideological structures—political, cultural, and historical etc. Such selectivity aids in the avoidance of dissenting questions. It also helps to wilfully misrepresent the true reality of violence, war and human suffering. This book offers the author an extended space to reflect on such themes. Some theoretical elements inevitably emerge in the following pages, but the prime concern of this work is to raise questions and provide reflections. It cannot be an exhaustive study outlining all conceivable areas and, naturally, readers will have their own thoughts as to what should be covered. There are no easy solutions and all the broader topics surrounding the issues raised within this book are strongly and often hotly debated. Therefore, my chief focus is on highlighting, through themed arguments, how selective attitudes toward war and human rights abuses etc. have real and dire consequences.

Our reactions to mass violence are influenced by geography, politics, nationality, diplomacy, religion, language, indifference and concern. Massacres, war, colonialism, genocide and even acts of terrorism *do not* necessarily generate condemnation and censure, they are complex and multi-layered events. Indeed, some people may even applaud, dismiss, or defend such actions. This work will lean heavily on Australian-related themes and case studies, but its conclusions have much wider implications. There are many representations of mass violence that utilise carefully chosen words in their analysis. This is self-evident when examples of violence that are similar receive different styles of representations. This phenomenon has been outlined by Noam Chomsky and Ed Herman who argued that representations are not based on the *universality* of the violence committed, but according to ideology. Chomsky and Herman highlight that official enemies of the United States of America who are guilty of human rights abuses, genocide or war crimes are condemned by Washington using the universality of "human rights." Here, "morality" is strongly presented within the analysis of the US government and American media. In contrast, official allies of the United States that commit the same or similar violent

actions may be defended, supported and/or protected. There is also the possibility that violent episodes in faraway places considered *backwaters*, will be ignored by Washington and the American media.

Established mainstream attitudes towards mass violence permeate across a range of cultural structures, they infiltrate our political discourses, are often intrinsic to national history, and crucially, they can define the acceptable parameters of discussion about warfare, terrorism, torture or genocide. It is common to excuse and justify *our* own violence because it is intertwined with self-justifying nationalist narratives. This is evident in the moral relativism associated with foreign policy, human rights and warfare. The language of warfare and international affairs is full of technical jargon that obscures the human consequences. This language creates hierarchies of worthy and unworthy victims—those we reverentially know by name, those we do not, and those whose suffering and victimhood are seemingly of no importance. Among these we may consider the West Papuans, the Palestinians, the Kurds and many other groups. The language of military or diplomatic jargon eagerly adopted by the news media and politicians has enabled moral relativism to flourish in plain sight. Civilians incinerated through bombing or the use of white phosphorous become *collateral damage*; torture becomes *enhanced interrogation*; and outright military aggression becomes *pre-emptive retaliation.* In warfare, the deaths of civilians become excusable depending on the identities of the perpetrators and the victims. The current philosophical efforts supporting this type of moral relativism appear relentless. It is indeed time-consuming to defend or glorify warfare and mass death for ideological reasons.

In Australia, there is a continued and growing nationalist romance related to the Australia New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) of the First World War (WW1) and the 1915 Turkish battlefield of Gallipoli. However, this romance is in the process of erasing the complexities of the period. There often appears to be a desire in Australia for the ANZACs to be exclusively "Australian" and the ANZAC industry continues to be increasingly sacrosanct about memorialising Australians at war. There are also certain questions about warfare and violence that are deemed unwelcome in this context. For example, there is continued resistance to any national recognition of Aboriginal opposition to European colonisation. The Australian War Memorial (AWM), the high church of Australia's military history, has no space within its grand buildings for that story. None of this stops it openly seeking donations from major arms manufacturers to support its operations. This gatekeeping of what concepts and ideas it will allow is quite deliberate. To downplay or ignore the implications of violence is often the result of deliberate decisions about what is worth celebrating and what

is not to be acknowledged.

Frontier conflict in Australia between indigenous clans and European settlers continued in varying forms from the 1790s up to the early twentieth century and is increasingly well-documented. For the AWM, this does not warrant inclusion because frontier conflict was not "official warfare" undertaken by the Australian nation state. There is perhaps another reason for its exclusion. First, there are obvious distinctions to be made between the attackers and defenders, but as the work of Tim Rowse or Raymond Evans highlight, the frontier story has other elements that do not fit neatly into the colonial perpetrator-victim paradigm. The Native Mounted Police (NMP) is increasingly being understood as playing a crucial role in numerous deadly clashes with Aboriginal clans. Second, the ANZAC themes of valour, heroism and national sacrifice within the AWM cannot be applied to frontier massacres or settler-colonial paramilitary activities (official or unofficial), the Native Mounted Police, or to examples of organised indigenous resistance. The AWM requires its warfare and violence to have a heroic and stylised historical narrative demonstrating admired Australian characteristics. Frontier violence is, in contrast, a much more complicated and ambiguous narrative.

The chapters of this book are organised around the themes of war, diplomacy and liberalism. The early chapters of this book reflect on the politics of nationalism, war and official remembrance. These chapters have been developed from published essays along with new or unpublished research. These reflections are offered at a time when the integration of "warfare" into Australian nationalist hagiography has arguably never been so celebratory. The twenty-first century nationalist embrace of ANZAC gallantry is a clear metaphor for "national character." The celebratory dimensions of the ANZAC soldier for twenty-first century Australia seem almost divorced from the historical context of the WW1 period. This historical context is no longer needed, WW1 gave Australians the opportunity to experience a major war, i.e. the birth of the "Australian nation" under fire at Gallipoli. On the one hand, participation in the violence of warfare must be venerated; but on the other, the reality of the violence including its wastefulness must be redacted for ongoing public and political consumption. The true face of war, its death, its horrific injuries, its killings, and atrocities are handled carefully by cultural and political gatekeepers. Otherwise, the relevance of a war narrative and its centrality to nationalism would diminish.

For many years, Australian political elites have normalised highly militaristic attitudes within security discourses to the extent that a future expeditionary deployment of Australian military forces in support of the

United States appears inevitable. As such, an absence of philosophical and moral questions about the reality of warfare and related violence in Australia and elsewhere is lamentable. For example, there are serious costs and consequences of these wars for the service people who return home suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSDs) and commit suicide. In addition, there have been unspeakably dire consequences for civilian populations in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq etc.

There are many questions about war that our mainstream media debates refuse to acknowledge. Do we view warfare and force as an acceptable extension of national ambition or as the option of absolute last resort? The modern experience of warfare is disproportionately destructive and horrific. The exponential explosion in civilian casualties directly or indirectly impacted by the technology of warfare has not diminished the appetite for war. The work of Richard Konigsberg outlines a direct connection between the mass mobilisation of "total warfare" in WWI and WW2 and the industrialised genocide of the Holocaust. Hitler extended the logic of total war to another front—the Jews. In the twentieth century, the mentality of total war is built on the growth of technology; but there is also a chronology of killing. Centuries of massacres, genocide and various genocidal consequences even in colonialism itself, can illustrate the complete destruction or subjugation of territory no matter the human cost. The elusive goal of *total victory* in warfare lays waste to entire armies, cities, civilians and even nations; total victory provides every opportunity to justify the continuation of horrific slaughter and as Hitler himself demonstrated, enthusiasm for the next war. Therefore, the use of warfare as an extension of national ambition rather than of last resort thinks little of the human consequences.

The middle chapters that follow the discussion of war and nationalism present a series of case studies on diplomacy and human rights. These chapters examine the experiences of East Timor and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine; Australian, British and American responses to the Indonesian massacres of 1965-66; and the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor (1975-1999). Like warfare, diplomacy addresses mass violence with its own selective language and approaches. The death and killing of warfare are often justified by diplomacy and politics. It is in the field of diplomacy and governance where propaganda techniques sanitising human suffering or demonising the "enemy" have arguably been perfected. In conjunction with the language of military strategy, the scholarly jargon of international relations (IR) routinely obscures the human consequences of aggressive foreign policy decisions.

The final chapters examine the broad concept of "liberalism" through two case studies. These chapters cannot reflect on the entire basis for this philosophical tradition, but they do explore how it is that liberalism and its advocates can justify and overlook its failures. The first case study explores Gough Whitlam, prime minister of Australia 1972-75. Whitlam is closely associated with the prestige of liberalism and human rights and remains a venerated left-wing hero in Australia. However, Whitlam's *own* policies toward Portuguese Timor as prime minister, the Indonesian invasion (1975) and the attitude he adopted towards the Indonesian occupation all threaten his "liberal" legacy. The final chapter explores the inability of liberal democracies, such as Australia, the UK, and the USA, to face their own historical pasts, particularly in relation to questions of war, imperialism, colonialism, genocide and crimes against humanity. In these Western democracies, the role of liberalism is strongly connected to notions of economic and moral progress. Indeed, it might be considered the very foundation of their attitude of innate moral superiority. The close association between liberalism, international law and human rights is one of the cornerstones of the United Nations (UN), its founding documents, and its treaty system. Ongoing debates surrounding universal human rights reveal hypocrisy on all sides and in all political systems, Western and non-Western.

The question of mass violence and its representations are important. Of equal importance is the *accuracy* of these representations by politicians, media, and so-called experts. When war is glorified, or the consequences of violence past or present downplayed, a blind spot is deliberately cultivated. In the case of modern warfare, the dire human consequences of the advanced weaponry routinely employed on land, sea and air are described with strategic jargon. In relation to systemic human rights abuses within the international system, these abuses may be condemned, ignored, or even defended depending on the economic and strategic gains at stake. This book considers such issues and reflects on the consequences of sanitising violence for ideological purposes.

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL   A05311

Studio portrait of Private Harry H. (Breaker) Morant, just before he left for South Africa with the 2nd Mounted Rifles from South Australia. Morant was executed at Pretoria Gaol on 27 February 1902 by the British for his involvement in the killing of Boer prisoners, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, www.awm.gov.au/collection/C809 (last accessed 27/12/2019).

PART ONE

"GLORIOUS DEAD:
REFLECTIONS ON WAR"

CHAPTER ONE

GLORIOUS DEAD:
IN SEARCH OF WARRIORS

The news correspondent Robert Fisk once told a story about the Reuters news agency (London office) after it had received pictures of Iraqi civilian deaths caused by British forces. Reuters called the pictures 'obscene' and they were neither broadcast nor published.[1] The gruesome reality of war and its consequences for Iraqi civilians caught in the crosshairs were not to be seen. In contrast, graphic violence is an integral part of all war or action films and children (and adults) will see thousands of simulated killings in television, movies and video games. In terms of *reality*, we are exposed to the war of nationalist or ideological sacrifice as memorialised by the national cemetery or museum, but we must not see real broken or mutilated bodies—this would be 'obscene.'

Those in power particularly the politicians who send their young men to fight, understand that the public perception of warfare is very different from the blood and guts reality experienced by those on the front-line. In 1917, Lloyd George (the British prime minister) neatly outlined this reality:

> I listened last night, at a dinner given to Philip Gibbs [British journalist] on his return from the [Western] front, to the most impressive and moving description of what the war really means, that I have heard. Even an audience of hardened politicians and journalists were strongly affected. If people really knew, the war would be stopped tomorrow. But of course, they don't know, and can't know. The correspondents don't write, and the censorship wouldn't pass the truth. What they do send is not the war, but just a pretty picture of the war with everybody doing gallant deeds. The thing is horrible and beyond human nature to bear and I feel I can't go on

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1 Robert Fisk, "State of Denial: Western Journalism and the Middle East," Centre for International and Regional Studies (CIRS), Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, 20 April 2010, 11:20 to 13:05, https://youtube/l6ASJA7fbcE (last accessed 27/12/2019).

with this bloody business.[2]

To hide this "bloody business," the dead become casualties, the fallen become patriots, dead civilians become collateral damage, and the enemy is dehumanised. As Lloyd George well understood, we sanitise war for ideological and political reasons. This also enables the violent reality to be hidden and the war to be justified. Would any national war memorial in Australia, the UK or the US present graphic visual displays highlighting the sheer carnage of war—not only for soldiers, but also for the civilian populations affected? It is doubtful that this display would be tolerated by powerful political and cultural gatekeepers. The suggestion would likely be made that such a display lacked respect for the dead, would upset visiting children, or was unpatriotic.[3] The psychological protection of children particularly in developed nations is in stark contrast to what poorer children in Africa and elsewhere endure and see in warzones. Any focus on the horrific results of warfare particularly its impacts on soldiers and civilians would threaten the standard narratives of nationalist sacrifice, brotherly comradery, and courage under fire. Graphic images of warfare are easily located and viewed—all being legitimate historical artefacts—but real images of death and killing must be erased from official war remembrance. Death, then, becomes a more passive phenomenon, rather than the obvious consequence of deliberate acts of killing and violence. There can be certain exceptions. The sacrifice of soldiers can be shown, but in a controlled and sanitised manner—a flag-draped coffin, proud comrades, grieving families, and grim-faced politicians. The loss of civilians can be shown, but their worth seemingly depending on who they are. Their deaths can always be excused, downplayed and ignored. Our acceptance of *total war* can be seen by repeated air-based massacres of civilians since WW2.

The once clearer lines between combatant and ordinary citizen have been obliterated by the indiscriminate power of military technology. Even when the one-sidedness of this type of killing is obvious, air-based massacres of civilians are routinely presented as *defensive measures* or *unintended consequences*. These deaths are often rationalised by the doctrine of military/political necessity or as unfortunate accidents; however,

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2 Lloyd George as quoted by C. P. Scott, Manchester Guardian Newspaper, 27 December 1917. See Trevor Wilson (ed.), *The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott 1911-1928*, (London: Collins, 1970), 274.
3 Paul Boyer, "Whose History is it Anyway? Memory, Politics and Historical Scholarship" in Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, (eds.) *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 115-139.

these actions are neither necessary nor unexpected. The decapitated, mutilated, incinerated, eviscerated bodies of civilians need to be almost completely censored, and the reality of their slaughter sanitised.

When the horror of war is revealed to us in images or on film, it might come with a warning of distress or be censored to protect people from feelings of horror. Yet nations continue to glorify in the deeds of warfare; it validates their worthiness and sense of national pride. There are very legitimate questions about whether such glorification and pride are misplaced, exaggerated, or even dangerous. Such questions, however, are not welcomed by cultural gatekeepers. Sanitised remembrance offers good camouflage for political elites to continue using the military for political purposes. The reality of war remembrance in nations like Australia and many others is that it requires the intellectual and cultural sanitisation of citizens who must be shielded, as far as possible, from the consequences of war. Furthermore, citizens are encouraged to be deferential before official acts of memorialisation and ceremony while political elites often use such events to bolster themselves politically.[4]

In Australia, WW1 (and Gallipoli) serves as a pivotal moment in the cultural expression of Australian nationalism. The Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was initially sent to Egypt to support British imperial interests in the Middle East. After four months of training, the AIF were sent to the Gallipoli peninsula. Here, along with British, French, and New Zealand forces, it was to support a naval operation forcing The Dardanelle Strait and capturing Constantinople. The brainchild of Sir Winston Churchill (First Sea Lord of the Admiralty), the operation aimed to remove the Ottoman Empire from the war, free up allied supply lines in the Middle East, and break a growing stalemate with Germany. The campaign achieved none of these objectives. After eight months of bitter fighting, the Allies clung to tenuous footholds unable to break through Ottoman defences on higher ground, while the Ottoman troops were unable to drive the Allied Forces from the peninsula. The most successful operation of the campaign from the Allied perspective was the withdrawal of troops (19-20 December 1915): the troops leaving as discretely as possible and rigging guns to fire so as to give the impression of soldiers still in their trenches. In all, the AIF suffered 26,111 casualties, including 8,141 deaths. The campaign, in terms of its objectives, execution, and loss of life, was a disaster for all involved.

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4 Adrienne Francis, "'All commemoration is political': Historians lead charge against Gallipoli 'myth,'" *Australian Broadcasting Commission*, 14 April 2014, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-11/war-and-memory-australians-experiencing-commemoration-fatigue/5081544 (last accessed 27/12/2019).

The 41st Battalion marching, Brisbane, Anzac Day, 1916,
https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/first-anzac-day
(last accessed 27/12/2019).

Although ANZAC Day was proclaimed in 1916, and commemorations were held in Australia and abroad, there were often variations in observance. For example, it was not until 1927 that it became a national public holiday in Australia. By the later 1920s and on into the 1930s, a more uniform style of commemoration with wreaths, dawn services, marches, and silences etc. was being used. After a period of declining interest, the 1980s saw a renewed enthusiasm for the ANZAC legend. In recent decades, ANZAC Day has developed into a celebration of Australian nationhood with distinctly jingoistic and celebratory overtones.

The sea-based invasion of The Dardanelles turned into a bloodbath and was a complete military failure; but for Australians of the period longing for *their own* Agincourt or Waterloo, the invasion provided the nation a necessary mass grave. In 1915, Banjo Patterson, one of Australia's great literary figures and nationalist iconographers, wrote a poem for the Australian soldiers at Gallipoli called 'We're All Australians Now.' The poem outlines the nexus between the nation, warfare and death.

Australia takes her pen in hand
To write a line to you,
To let you fellows understand
How proud we are of you.
From shearing shed and cattle run,
From Broome to Hobson's Bay,
Each native-born Australian son
Stands straighter up today.
The man who used to "hump his drum,"
On far-out Queensland runs
Is fighting side by side with some
Tasmanian farmer's sons.
The fisher-boys dropped sail and oar
To grimly stand the test,
Along that storm-swept Turkish shore,
With miners from the west.
The old state jealousies of yore
Are dead as Pharaoh's sow,
We're not State children anymore --
We're all Australians now!
Our six-starred flag that used to fly
Half-shyly to the breeze,
Unknown where older nations ply
Their trade on foreign seas,
Flies out to meet the morning blue
With Vict'ry at the prow;
For that's the flag the Sydney flew,
The wide seas know it now!
The mettle that a race can show
Is proved with shot and steel,
And now we know what nations know
And feel what nations feel.
The honoured graves beneath the crest
Of Gaba Tepe hill
May hold our bravest and our best,
But we have brave men still.
With all our petty quarrels done,
Dissensions overthrown,
We have, through what you boys have done,
A history of our own.
Our old-world differences are dead,

Like weeds beneath the plough,
For English, Scotch, and Irish-bred,
They're all Australians now!
So now we'll toast the Third Brigade
That led Australia's van,
For never shall their glory fade
In minds Australian.
Fight on, fight on, unflinchingly,
Till right and justice reign.
Fight on, fight on, till Victory
Shall send you home again.
And with Australia's flag shall fly
A spray of wattle-bough
To symbolise our unity--
We're all Australians now.

The idea of Patterson's poem still remains the core lesson of the episode, namely that Gallipoli was Australia's first true national test and that here *Australia* was "born," the validity of the nation legitimatised by the deaths of young soldiers at Gallipoli.

To criticise the modern Australian obsession with Gallipoli is often considered to constitute an attack on *all* those who have served or are currently serving in the military. Every year the official ceremony in Gallipoli itself, ANZAC Cove, is swarming with politicians and dignitaries from Australia and New Zealand, and thousands of young Aussies and Kiwis; they all make the pilgrimage to the place of the nation's birth wrapped in flags and soaking up the *sacred* atmosphere.[5] There are, though, legitimate questions to be asked. Australian forces participated in an invasion of Turkey—a country that certainly posed no direct threat to Australia. The campaign itself was often ineptly executed by the Allied commanders. Officers ordered their men into wasteful battles; the shooting of prisoners by both sides is documented; and the entire campaign ended with inglorious defeat for the Allies. All this is true. Yet, according to the official nationalist narrative, this was the *birthplace* of the Australian nation: nothing from the end of the eighteenth century, through the entirety of the nineteenth century, and all the way up to the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901, matters anywhere near as much.

The questions that need to be asked can hardly be considered

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5 See Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places*, (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2008). Inglis highlights how the war shrine acts as the focal point for a type of 'secular' religion.

disrespectful. These include, for example, what exactly did this carnage really symbolise for those who participated in it and what exactly did these young Australians believe they were killing and dying for? The basis of Australian participation in WW1 was clearly membership and for many kinship of the British Empire. While these connections no longer matter that much to mainstream Australian nationalism, Gallipoli remains the *birthplace* of the nation. We therefore remember Gallipoli—but not the historical context, the imperial politics of the period, or the wasteful human carnage. To appreciate the glorification of Gallipoli, we as Australian citizens must not see or ask about the twisted and broken bodies, the soldiers who died screaming in agony, or those who came back psychologically damaged—we must just 'remember them.'

There are other problematic, if not simply delusional, elements related to the official acts of remembrance at Anzac Cove in Turkey. For example, in order to secure access to this "Australian" sacred site, Australia must ignore even more horrific violence and killing. The Australian government officially accepts the Turkish government position that the slaughter of the Armenians and others in the Ottoman Empire by the Young Turks was not *genocide*. The anniversary date for the Armenian Genocide is April 26, 1915—only one day after ANZAC Day.[6] To celebrate its own national birth, the Australian government must turn its back on the reality of killing and dying at Gallipoli and the Armenian genocide. To acknowledge the reality of the Armenian genocide would jeopardise Australian access to the sacred *national place* of Gallipoli for ritual acts of war commemoration.

The obsession with the ANZAC legend obscures other implications that should be closely considered. The first of these is the Australian military tradition of *expeditionary warfare* disconnected from any direct self-defence of the Australian mainland. The Australian government has consistently sent its military to fight in faraway wars as a smaller partner of much larger military coalitions. This expeditionary pattern was first established as part of the British Empire. From the 1950s on, a growing military and intelligence relationship with the United States gradually replaced a retreating British Empire. The ANZAC story is born not in Australia, but through expeditionary warfare in Turkey. That arguably the most sacred manifestation of Australian military nationalism and official remembrance now takes place in Turkey should certainly be pause for

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6 Tess Lawrence, "Turkey returns Gallipoli tickets as Hockey capitulates on Armenia," *Independent Australia*, 26 April 2015, https://independentaustralia.net/article-display/exclusive-turkey-returns-gallipoli-tickets-as-hockey-capitulates-on-armenia,7630 (last accessed 27/12/2019).

critical thought. To clarify, in relation to the Dardanelles campaign, the Allies were *invaders* and not defenders. This important fact is almost totally irrelevant to the ANZAC legend. The ANZAC story has no use for indigenous people who died fighting European colonisers, or for Europeans who also died. Whatever the semantics about "colonial settlement" or "invasion," indigenous people were often defending the land they had occupied for thousands of years. Such a basic acknowledgement is apparently beyond the political and cultural remit of the Australian War Memorial (AWM); in contrast, Australia's first major expeditionary experience with the Boer War (1898-1901) continues to receive ongoing acknowledgement.

The core representations of the ANZAC legend can never emphasise the concept of direct national self-defence based on the WW1 experience; instead, the legend emphasises sacrifice, courage and a national character forged under fire. In other words, it enshrines participation in warfare *itself* as being the highest level of national experience for citizens. Proving oneself worthy on the battlefield has eliminated with one or two exceptions, any deep desire to question expeditionary warfare, or the continuing alliance with the USA. Currently, it appears that Australian participation in warfare validates itself irrespective of the context—we have national significance because of the soldiers, and they are venerated because they were on the battlefield.

Gallipoli and WW1 provided a gift to Australian nationalists by enabling warfare to strongly define the national character. However, there is an important precursor to the ANZAC story, now largely forgotten, which demonstrates an earlier Australian thirst for validation through warfare: the Boer War of 1899-1902. It also demonstrates why Gallipoli and WW1 so quickly came to dominate Australian civic spaces.

"Australian" warriors

The Boer War (1899-1902) was Australia's first major war, but it held no direct self-defence concerns for the Australian colonies, or the Australian nation state formed in 1901. It was an imperial war on two fronts: first, it was a war of British imperial domination in Southern Africa, and second, it was a war between two European settler colonial populations for control of African land, borders, and resources. The fate of black Africans remains largely irrelevant to any British imperial, Australian or Afrikaner reading of the conflict. The realities of this war were stark: the conflict is associated with guerrilla warfare, scorched earth tactics, and grim political consequences for black Africans. The racism of the period from both European sides was also often blatant. The Australian nationalist reading of the war largely

ignores these contexts and instead focuses on the idea of "Australians" proving themselves on the battlefield and perfidious British commanders. The war helped to establish a cultural prototype for the veneration of Australian soldiers—a prototype that would be expanded on by the ANZACs in WW1.

Sixteen thousand Australian soldiers served in the British imperial forces that fought in the Boer War. Although New Zealanders and Canadians volunteered in numbers, approximately half of the colonial fighting force came from the Australian colonies. There were those in the United Kingdom and elsewhere who questioned the wisdom and ethics of this war, but the conflict also generated great imperial enthusiasm in the United Kingdom and the settler colonies. Australians volunteered to fight in Southern Africa based on ideas of kinship, ideology, adventure and loyalty—none were forced or coerced to fight or to support the British Empire. On 28 October 1898, over 200,000 people turned up to watch the troops march from Victoria barracks to Circular Quay in Sydney while it poured down with rain. As they marched "the troops were greeted with wild cheering. Sections of the crowd joined in spontaneous singing, when the passing bands played 'Rule Britannia' and 'Soldiers of The Queen.'"[7]

The Australian colonies offered the British government 2,500 mounted soldiers, but infantry was preferred, and the Australians soon obliged. Along with the 2,900 regular troops sent during the first 18 months of the war, there were also 3,637 'Citizen Bushmen.'[8] These men represented many aspects of the idealised *Australian*—a tough, independent, adaptable, skilled and courageous individual who was at home in the backcountry. The emphasis on the importance of the bush or outback was not accidental: by the late nineteenth century it had been routinely romanticised by Australian writers, and by poets such as Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson, as the location of the *real* Australia. The settler colonial war against the unforgiving Australian environment and landscape was used to validate the masculinity of a European population that clung to the metropolitan centres and coastlines. As such, it is worth considering at least some of the ideas that influenced concepts of race and national identity at the time of the Boer War.

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7 Helen Simmelhaig and G. S. R Spencely, *For Australia's Sake—A History of Australian Involvement in Nine Wars*, (Australia: Nelson Melbourne, 1984), 18.
8 Simmelhaig and Spencely, *For Australia's Sake.*

1901 Another Country

The Commonwealth of Australia became a unified nation state in 1901; like many other nations, it was born in war. Unlike other nations, the war in which it fought the Boer War held no connections to its establishment, i.e. it had no bearing on its ability to achieve or protect its independence. By 1901, the European population of Australia was approximately 3.8 million people with about 96% of this population being born in Australia, New Zealand, or the United Kingdom; and of this approximately 77% of the population was born in Australia.[9] The politics of Australian settler nationalism meant that a new national identity had to be created, one that was based on being Australian born and/or being "British" or Protestant. While some republicanism was evident with the growth of Australian nationalism in the nineteenth century, loyalty to the British Empire was widespread at most levels of society.

The first pieces of legislation of the new Federal Parliament of Australia were the Immigration Restriction Act and the Pacific Islander Laborers' Act, which were designed to exclude others from the possibility of citizenship and even residency. This reflected a political desire to ensure the cultural hegemony of Anglo-Australians and solidify a monolithic cultural identity for the new nation state. The idea of establishing the principle of a white "British" Australia was supported on all sides of mainstream politics and even by radical labour groups who saw cheap Asian or Pacific labour as a threat to Australian working conditions. However, these pieces of legislation were also the

> …product of a century of slowly developing government policies, pseudo-scientific beliefs [particularly social Darwinism] and popular fears about the future of Australia, peopled by British stock, but isolated from Europe at the southern extreme of the world.[10]

A new "Australian" identity co-existed alongside the idea that they still remained "British." In retrospect, this appears somewhat like the English, Welsh, Irish, or Scots who also identify as being British. However, white Australia was an entirely new national grouping in the process of inventing new symbols of nationhood. A common unity outside of British and imperial symbolism was lacking. Not even the federation of the Australian colonies could erase such cultural problems. For example, while far less

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9 Bryce Fraser (ed.) *Macquarie Book of Events—10,000 events that shaped Australia*, (Sydney: Macquarie Australia, 1986), 68.
10 Fraser, *Macquarie Book of Events*, 187.

rigid than England, European-Australian society displayed class hierarchies and sectarianism. Irish Catholics and later Irish Australians had to be tolerated due to their well-established presence in Australia. Although, sectarianism between Protestants and Catholics could be fierce well into the twentieth century, Irish Catholics were Europeans (albeit of "inferior" character) who could be transformed (eventually) into loyal "Australians."

Europeans of non-British Isles origins, far from uncommon migrants to the Australian colonies, had to prove their *worth* as *Australians*.[11] German migrants would discover during WW1 that "citizenship might confer equal rights, but it could guarantee neither equal treatment nor equal opportunities and benefits."[12] Indigenous people and most non-white migrants had little to no legal hope of becoming an "Australian" in 1901. Pacific Islanders lured to the Queensland and Northern New South Wales sugar fields by a combination of recruitment, indentured labour, kidnapping and deception offer one such example.[13] This abhorrent practice, known as 'blackbirding,' was used during recruitment drives in the Pacific Islands and gave rise to the development of a 50,000 strong islander workforce in Queensland and New South Wales between 1863 and 1904. Their working conditions, at various times, were little better than slavery.[14] They, like Asians, "would not even be permitted to stay on as residents" in the newly federated nation. The Commonwealth Franchise Act (9 April, 1902) made sure that those that did manage to stay in Australia would not have the right to vote.[15] Adult British subjects of only six month's residence in Australia could vote, but "lunatics and certain types of criminals" could not.[16] Of course, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Africans, and Aborigines were all denied the Commonwealth Franchise. In contrast, in terms of social welfare the new Australian nation was at the cutting edge of developments—secret ballots, unions, legislation for workers and women, workers' rights and later even a minimum wage. Yet these benefits excluded many and were not necessarily distributed evenly to others.

The politics of Australian identity as elsewhere in British settler colonial societies and the USA, often revolved strongly around the idea of

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11 Raymond Evans, Clive Moore, Kay Saunders and Bryan Jameson, *1901—Our Future's Past*, (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1997), 22.
12 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 22.
13 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 183.
14 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 183.
15 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 36.
16 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 36.

being a white nation.[17] At the turn of the twentieth century, indigenous people were viewed through the pseudo-scientific lens of social Darwinism—a lens where elite Anglo-Australians, like their Anglo-American and British counterparts, placed themselves atop a racial pyramid. It was believed by more imperially minded social Darwinists that *Britishness* was a "fixed chain of being."[18] According to such logic, Anglo-Australians "could be no more be independent of Great Britain … than they could be separated from the blood running through their veins."[19] A poem at the turn of the twentieth century has an Australian father explaining this idea to his son: "Oh yes, we're owned by England, but we own England too; As you are part of me, son, and I am part of you."[20] Sir Arthur Berriedale (a British social Darwinist) argued that

> …racial appearances were like the uniforms worn by competing football teams—not transferable jerseys, but uniforms of human flesh—[therefore] racial prejudice was merely nature's way of promoting team spirit and ensuring that an ongoing sense of antagonism was maintained against rival racial players in the game of life.[21]

Social Darwinism had great political and cultural appeal in justifying British global supremacy. In Australia, like elsewhere, it justified scientific racism towards indigenous people; so much so, that it was commonly accepted in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century that Australian aborigines were a *dying race*. Their unfortunate fate was not ascribed to inequality, disease, potential moments of genocide, or white prejudice, but *scientific* "natural selection."[22] According to social Darwinism, the millions of Asians surrounding Australia would corrupt the bloodline, undermine standards of living, or even take over the entire continent. At the beginning of the twentieth century, white Australians "lived in a world where Europeans were [almost] totally dominant and had colonised most of the world."[23] However, they were also anxious about their geographical isolation and insecure about establishing a truly "national" identity. The idea of White

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17 Henry Reynolds, Marilyn Lake, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2018), 1-15.
18 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 187.
19 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 24.
20 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 24.
21 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 25.
22 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 187.
23 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 187.

Australia was presented as a "sensible and attainable task"[24] for the new nation. This provided a framework for unity around a central idea of common identity; after all, Australia was hardly one dimensional or equal. Differences between Australians who were English, Welsh, Scottish, or Irish Protestant and Irish Catholics or British working-class Catholics etc. reflected this reality.[25] Wealth and social status organised by class were exacerbated by the economic hardships of the 1890s caused by drought and depression.[26] In conjunction with the romanticised literary ideal of the outback as the location of the *real* Australia, concepts such as Britishness, white Australian nationalism, the Empire, even anti-British republicanism etc., could all integrate fears and prejudices into a shared goal of a white Australia. The construction of Australian national identity might well have called on other events within the Australian or even the European past as possible sources of inspiration for an independent identity, but these events often lacked the desired message. While the settler colonial war against the Australian environment could be portrayed as a grand and ongoing struggle, it was hardly unique. The convict past was a source of embarrassment to political elites, free immigrants, and respectable society, while frontier conflict with indigenous people was often, with some exceptions, a localised and paramilitary style phenomenon. There was no civic inclination to celebrate these confrontations; indeed, the political and social response to frontier violence against indigenous people including colonial massacres was a combination of horror, indifference and silence. There were two colonial rebellions, Castle Hill (1804) and Eureka (1854), neither of which could be celebrated on a national scale. Castle Hill was an armed uprising of Irish who had been transported to New South Wales following the Irish Rebellion of 1798 by the Society of United Irishmen. Eureka was an armed

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24 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 187.
As Reynolds and Lake highlight, at the elite levels these ideas were hardly fringe and found support amongst liberals in America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand etc. See Reynolds and Lake, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*. Noam Chomsky highlights how Anglo-Saxon 'racial theory' or mythical 'Aryanism' found support among the highest progressive echelons in the US and elsewhere. See Noam Chomsky from 46:00 in "History of US Rule in Latin America," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKwJI9axblQ (last accessed 31/08/2019). See also "Noam Chomsky on the Roots of American Racism" Noam Chomsky interviewed by George Yancy in *The New York Times*, 18 March 2015, https://chomsky.info/20150318/ (last accessed 31/08/2019). See also James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War*, (USA: Little, Brown and Company, 2009).
25 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 23.
26 Evans, Moore, Saunders and Jameson, 23.