

When we think of the Australian Defence Force we usually consider the military activities of the Army, Navy and Air Force. It is only in recent history that the vast array of occupations within the services has come to be recognised. When we reflect on significant events of the Australian military services, it is the ANZAC campaign that most readily comes to mind. It was this campaign where the “spirit of ANZAC” came to be known and Australian service personnel became renowned for it. The qualities that were associated with this “spirit of ANZAC” were bravery, persistence and camaraderie combined with an optimistic perspective. These qualities, whether myth, reality, or a combination of the two, have helped define the Australian Defence Forces and serve as important underlying values for all those who serve.

The legend of the ANZAC spirit is accepted world-wide and often we think about those brave patriots who went off to fight in the *War to end all Wars*, why they went and what feats they achieved. Rarely do people think about those who spread the word and helped create the legend. These people were definitely apparent, but like the rest of the ANZACs, War correspondents were often too modest to make bold claims about themselves. They showed bravery, tenacity, mateship and heroism, all of which characterise the ANZAC spirit<sup>1</sup>. These War correspondents were treated like any soldiers; they received an army rank and some were wounded by enemy fire. They put their lives on the line, not just as fighters, so the public could know what was occurring overseas. Even with censorship, there was realism in all their reports despite the emphasis on glory and achievement rather than losses.

Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean, Phillip Schuler and Charles Patrick Smith were all Australian correspondents for the First World War but by no means the only ones. While Sir Keith Murdoch, the father of Rupert Murdoch, was only in Gallipoli for four days<sup>2</sup> he wrote The Gallipoli Letter, a letter that was of great impact back then and is now one of the most important artefacts from the First World War<sup>3</sup>. Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett was Britain’s correspondent to the First World War and although he was not an ANZAC he is recognised as the writer who “sparked” the ANZAC legend<sup>4</sup>. These men certainly had strong voices during the War but never for themselves; they always spoke for *King and Country*, consequently, their individual voices are missing from the ANZAC legend.

Charles Bean is “best remembered for the official histories of Australia in the First World War” as he wrote 6 volumes and edited the others<sup>5</sup>. He had previously been picked as the official War correspondent through a ballot and his articles gave readers at the time a firsthand account. Even before he left for Gallipoli he had a minor battle to fight - in the battle of Australia, Melbourne versus Sydney. Sir Keith Murdoch was a writer for The Age in Melbourne and was Bean’s main competitor for the placement; however, Bean had an advantage from the start as he was 5 years older than Murdoch and thus more experienced<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ANZAC\\_spirit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ANZAC_spirit), viewed: 26/08/2010

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-2-1-murdoch.html>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-2-3-ashmead.html>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.awm.gov.au/people/20388.asp>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>6</sup> <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070225b.htm>, viewed 26/08/2010

Bean landed at Gallipoli with the first ANZACs, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1915, before travelling with the first convoy from there to Egypt<sup>7</sup>. They were immediately exposed to great dangers and on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1915 Bean was shot in the leg. Even this wound did not stop him reporting. Instead of being taken to a hospital ship he limped to his dugout where he stayed until the 24<sup>th</sup> of August, having his wound bandaged every day. Additionally, earlier that year (8<sup>th</sup> of March) he accompanied two Australian brigades in an unsuccessful attack ending in a large loss of ANZAC forces<sup>8</sup> during which he gave help to wounded soldiers. For his efforts then Bean was recommended for the Military Cross but was ineligible for the award as he was classified as a civilian<sup>9</sup>. If Bean had been eligible he may not have even accepted it. After the War he was offered a knighthood but refused as he “could not bear the thought of his wife going to the butcher and asking for meat for Sir Charles Bean”<sup>10</sup>! This modesty could also be seen as Bean believing that he deserved no special accolades for simply doing what was required and this is a classic example of the spirit of ANZAC.

Bean’s main rival for the Official Australian War Correspondent post, Sir Keith Murdoch, is renowned for The Gallipoli Letter, an 8000 word letter to the Australian Prime Minister, his friend, Andrew Fisher<sup>11</sup>. Over four days in Gallipoli, Murdoch learned firsthand of the Allied shortcomings but was also heavily influenced by Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, a British War correspondent. Before Murdoch left Gallipoli for London as head of the United Cable Service he had been given a letter from Ashmead-Bartlett to circumvent the overzealous media censorship. Frustratingly, Sir Ian Hamilton learnt of their plan and had Murdoch arrested in France. Murdoch was quickly released but only after handing over Ashmead-Bartlett’s letter<sup>12</sup>. The Gallipoli Letter focused on the huge loss of ANZACs and likened to murder the bad coordination and leadership of the British command<sup>13</sup>. The Gallipoli Letter was proof the ANZAC losses in that now infamous conflict were not caused by their poor soldiering. This Letter significantly reinforced the legend of the ANZAC spirit, as media manipulation was instrumental in its creation.

While Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett was neither Australian nor New Zealander, his reports augmented the ANZAC legend. Ashmead-Bartlett was the first Gallipoli<sup>14</sup> correspondent to be published in both England and, six days later, in Australia. Ashmead-Bartlett’s account was both poetic and graphic and if bad intelligence and leadership by the British may have been censored it would have only made the ANZAC legend stronger<sup>15</sup>. His reports told of “A Worthy Feat” and “Heroism of the Wounded”<sup>16</sup>. Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean later observed “the tradition of the ANZAC landing is probably more influenced by that first story than by all the other accounts that have since been written”<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-heroes/bean.htm>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>8</sup> <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070225b.htm>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/beanbio.html>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-heroes/bean.htm>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-2-1-murdoch.html>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-2-3-ashmead.html>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>15</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Bean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Bean), viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-2-3-ashmead.html>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

Phillip or Peter Schuler was the son of the editor at The Age, Fredrick Schuler<sup>18</sup>. Phillip Schuler was The Age's War correspondent and enlisted in October 1914. Going via Egypt he met Charles Patrick Smith from a rival Melbourne newspaper, The Argus<sup>19</sup>. In Egypt they joined the Australasian troops at the Mena training camp. Unfortunately, Schuler and Smith remained on the Egyptian island of Lemnos for most of the Dardanelles campaign. This meant they were reliant on propagandist military reports and old or inaccurate second-hand reports (coming mostly via wounded soldiers)<sup>20</sup>. In July 1915 the two obtained authorization from Sir Ian Hamilton to visit Gallipoli. For a month (20<sup>th</sup> of July to 20<sup>th</sup> of August) they remained in Gallipoli and wrote numerous despatches which were published in Australasia<sup>21</sup>. In 1916, after the Gallipoli campaign had concluded, Schuler wrote a book titled *Australia in Arms* which was another account that strengthened the ANZAC legend<sup>22</sup>.

These War correspondents appear to have a presence in the ANZAC legend; the information they despatched was possibly only marginally less influential than that released by the military (and its propaganda). They rarely received recognition, however, because they wrote about the ANZACs and not about themselves; they believed it was the heroic efforts of the former that deserved recognition. These men were soldiers but with the additional task of disseminating information to Australasian audiences<sup>23</sup>. Without intending to do so, they created a legend of the ANZAC spirit that shall not be forgotten. What helped make them voiceless is often their despatches were published without their names<sup>24</sup>. They tirelessly went about not only fighting in a War but also enlightening Australian and New Zealand readers. People often believe those War correspondents were not at peril themselves and did not count as soldiers or even as ANZACs; this is to belittle their contribution and their legacy in their own right. Certainly it was the ANZACs who created the story yet it was the War correspondents who gave life to the legend, and even represented the ANZAC spirit in some of their own heroic actions.

While the Australian Defence Force has only been established since 1976, its predecessor, the Australian military forces, established since federation in 1901<sup>25</sup>, are what evolved into the current Australian Defence Force. It is hard to think of the Australian Defence Force without making reference to the ANZAC spirit. Indeed our own ANZAC Day has come to recognise all forms of service in Australia's military forces. In this way, all those who have served in Australia's defence forces are now associated with the ANZAC spirit. However, those early War correspondents who were there, at ANZAC Cove and other campaigns, as reporters in the line of fire with the other troops, were both participants and creators of the ANZAC legend. Their experiences, actions and despatches showed that they truly represent the ANZAC spirit.

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<sup>18</sup> [http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith\\_schuler.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith_schuler.html), viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith\\_schuler.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith_schuler.html), viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith\\_schuler.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith_schuler.html), viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-1-1-bean.html>, viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith\\_schuler.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/2-3-1-smith_schuler.html), viewed 26/08/2010

<sup>25</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian\\_Defence\\_Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Defence_Force), viewed 26/08/2010

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# DEFENCE 2020

Is the Spirit of ANZAC relevant to the ADF today?

Profile an individual or group serving in the ADF in the present or past. You must clearly show the extent to which you think the actions of this person or group symbolize the Spirit of ANZAC as you understand it.

Edward Pitt  
1504 Words