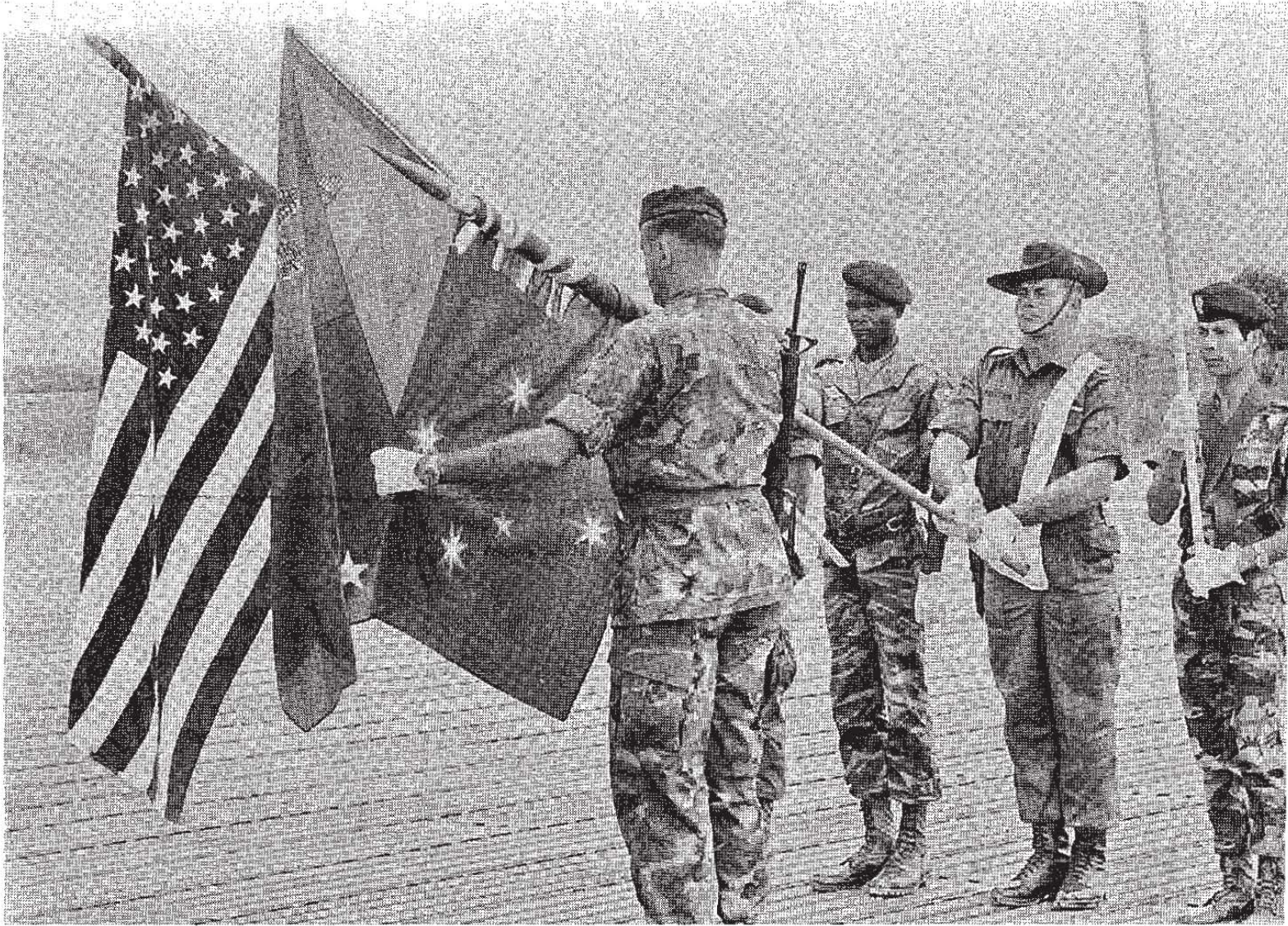


Australia's Vietnam War



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Australia's Vietnam War

Jeff Doyle, Jeffrey Grey, and Peter Pierce



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Frontispiece:

Australian, U.S., and ARVN personnel on parade
at Long Hai, South Vietnam, in January, 1972.

Courtesy Australian War Memorial

Photo by William James Cunneen

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For Ian McNeill
(1933–98)
soldier, scholar, friend

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PREFACE

We first came to the study of Australia's Vietnam War in a concerted fashion in the late 1980s, and the results of that interest appeared in several volumes of essays from a variety of authors and scholarly perspectives published between 1990 and 1992. This was a high-water mark of public interest in the Vietnam War in Australia, bracketed by the "Welcome Home" march in 1987 and the dedication of the national monument to Vietnam veterans in 1992. At decade's and century's end that interest had plateaued, but after Gallipoli and the First World War, the Vietnam War remains the conflict best known to modern Australians and the only one of which the majority have any experience, however indirect.

As authors we have many debts and owe thanks in many quarters. A Large Grant from the Australian Research Council supported some of the original work on which these essays are based. Emeritus Prof. Harry Heseltine, then professor of English at University College, Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), and Prof. Alan Gilbert, then professor of history at the same establishment and now vice chancellor of the University of Melbourne, were early supporters of the work. In different ways and for different reasons we also acknowledge the support and assistance of Prof. Peter Dennis of the School of History, ADFA. Thanks are due as well to Prof. Joseph G. Dawson III of the Department of History at Texas A&M University. He first brought us together with Texas A&M University Press, and the rest is history.

Our two contributing authors merit special recognition. Peter Edwards, the Official Historian of Australian Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948–75, held that office from 1982 to 1996. As author of two seminal volumes in that series and editor of the series as a whole, he has made a sizable scholarly impact upon Australians' understanding of the subject—one with which students at all levels will have to grapple for decades to come. We are gratified by his agreement to publish in this volume a reworked form of his original essay on Australia's commitment to the war. Our saddest task is to acknowledge the work of our friend and colleague Ian McNeill. Author of several major works on the Australian Army and the war, he died suddenly and far too soon in late 1998, with his crowning achievement, a study of the Australian Task Force in Phuoc Tuy between 1967 and 1971, incomplete and unpublished at this writing. We are doubly grateful to his wife, Gwen, for

permission to present his lengthy summary essay on that topic between these covers.

Mrs. Margaret McNally assisted with word processing and John Connor provided advice and assistance, while Susan Cowan provided some last-minute help with references. Our families deserve our final thanks for putting up with us and with projects like this.

INTRODUCTION

Australia's Vietnam War

The history of the Australian-American relationship is a long and uneven one, and something of its course needs to be understood if we are to appreciate the context in which Australia went to war alongside the United States in Vietnam in the 1960s. In the nineteenth century, Britain's Australian colonies had periodically viewed the United States as a threat. In November, 1839, two U.S. warships threw Sydney into panic when they slipped into anchorage quietly and unannounced one night, to be discovered by the colonists at their breakfast the following morning, thus confirming the gravest fears for the vulnerability of the colony. During the last stages of the American Civil War the Confederate raider *Shenandoah* found safe harbor in Melbourne to refit before recommencing commerce raiding in the northern Pacific. It is said that she left port with a larger crew than when she had berthed. Some of these additional men were possibly Americans (or, at least, Southerners) who had sought a livelihood on the Victorian gold fields of the 1850s and 1860s, but the suspicion is that a few of them were sympathetic Australian colonists. The Australian colonies proved welcoming to defeated Confederates also, with perhaps a hundred or more emigrating to the distant Antipodes after 1865.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Australians undoubtedly knew more about America than the other way around. The visit of the Great White Fleet in 1907 when it circumnavigated the globe in celebration of American power brought near-delirious responses in a country then in the throes of a debate about the acquisition of a navy of its own. In the early years after the federation of the colonies in 1901, Australian governments continued to build a social welfare structure well in advance of anything in the English-speaking nations of the northern hemisphere (including the extension of the franchise to women), but Australian politicians knew enough of America's experience after the Civil War to oppose the extension of generous workers' compensation

provisions to members of the new nation's armed forces. By the time U.S. forces reached France in strength in 1918, the Australian Imperial Force had been at war for over three years and had passed some of the skills it had acquired to green American divisions in the spring and summer of that year through training and advisory missions specially attached to the American Expeditionary Force.

Relations between the United States and Australia deteriorated between the wars, especially during the 1930s, as a result of the closed trade preference within the British Empire designed to keep American commercial enterprises out of Empire markets. The ominous strategic situation in the Pacific following the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 did little to ameliorate this condition. An increasingly anxious Australian government sought to interest the United States in the defense of the South and Southwest Pacific but received little comfort or reassurance from Washington. This was especially the case in 1941 with the Anglo-American decision in March to "beat Hitler first"—of which the Australian government was not officially informed—and the movement of part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet to the Atlantic in May to help bolster Britain. The deliberations at the Arcadia conference in Washington from December, 1941, to January, 1942, in which the strategic priorities and command relationships governing the war against Japan were resolved, had enormous implications for Australia. However, the views of the Australian government again were not sought; nor were Australian interests and priorities taken into consideration. This is frequently the lot of small powers in great power conflicts.

The Second World War marks one of a succession of watersheds in the Australian-American relationship in the second half of the century, most of them entirely dependent on circumstance. The collapse of the American position in the Philippines left Washington with a dilemma: A strategic base from which to prosecute the war with Japan was required, with neither the remaining American base in the Pacific, Hawaii, nor the West Coast of the United States entirely suitable for the purpose of relieving embattled U.S. and Filipino forces at Bataan and Corregidor. Australia, on the other hand, provided a more or less developed Western infrastructure and stable political framework, while strategically it posed a threat to the security of the newly acquired Japanese Southern Resources Zone in Southeast Asia—something that the Japanese recognized through their efforts in 1942 to isolate Australia and sever its communications with the United States. General Douglas MacArthur's arrival in April, 1942, to take command of the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) signified American commitment to that theater, at least until the Japanese were beaten.

Australia was the most important American ally in the Pacific War. China proved a broken reed, and until the war's last months the British engaged the Japanese Empire only on its peripheries (although the Burma campaign was vital to the defense of India). Australia fielded five divisions, plus air and naval forces; provided a vast base for the buildup of U.S. troops and supplies; and met many of America's needs in the theater by providing raw materials and foodstuffs. In addition, during the critical fighting in Papua New Guinea in 1942–43, in which the defense of Australian territory was at stake, Australian forces engaged in by far the larger share of combat, and they continued to outnumber American forces in the SWPA until well into 1943. Australia was one of the few belligerents to end up as a net creditor under the lend-lease scheme at war's end, but the traffic was by no means all one way. Australians were badly frightened by the speed with which Japanese aggression had triumphed in Southeast Asia, and particularly by the fall of Singapore in February, 1942, the defense of which had been the key to interwar military planning in the Far East. The influx of U.S. forces helped to reassure them, while MacArthur's presence and his close and mutually advantageous collaboration with Australian prime minister John Curtin gave the Australian government access to American strategic thinking previously denied it, and probably available in no other way. In the absence of local vehicle and aircraft industries, Australian forces were also dependent on the Americans for various kinds of heavy equipment, not least because the traditional source of supply for such items, Britain, was too busy meeting its own needs to have anything to spare for the Dominions.

By 1945, Australian and American strategic priorities had markedly diverged. With the defeat of Japan, the United States rapidly withdrew from the Southwest Pacific—an area in which it once again had little or no political, strategic, or economic interests, and certainly no compelling ones. In the late 1940s the Australian government attempted to reinterest Washington in the region, but with conspicuous lack of success. It thus sought once again a reinvigorated British Commonwealth system of cooperative military endeavor as compensation for the absence of the United States. This proved to be a fruitful partnership in the 1950s and 1960s insofar as it helped to defeat insurgency in Malaya and guaranteed Malayan independence against an internal communist threat, and subsequent Malaysian independence against an external threat from Indonesia. But Britain made it clear as early as 1957 that it would withdraw from “east of Suez” and, although this process was delayed far longer than originally intended, it was clear to Australia's leaders by the late 1950s that Australian security would not much longer be under-

written by London. For this reason if for no other, the treaty signed between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (ANZUS) in 1951 (flawed though it was and is) gained increased importance in Australian eyes as a security guarantee.

The ANZUS treaty was the second major development in the relationship and as unexpected as the wartime alliance of convenience had been. In short, the Australian government of Sir Robert Menzies managed to secure in 1950–51 that which its predecessor under J. B. Chifley had been unable to bring about despite strenuous efforts from 1946 to 1948. The objective circumstances in the Southwest Pacific had not changed; the United States still possessed no significant national interest in that region. The ANZUS treaty was the price the United States was willing to pay in order to moderate continuing Australian antagonism to the idea of a revived Japan in a period when Americans were discovering that their vital interests in Northeast Asia were being challenged by the triumph of mainland Asian communism in China and North Korea. The treaty subsequently became a key document in the Cold War relationship between the three signatories, but that was not how it began.

These were the contexts, both general and more narrowly defined, in which Australia's commitment to the American intervention in Vietnam took place. In the opening essay in this book, Peter Edwards shows that Australian decision making in the early 1960s was fashioned both by the Cold War in Europe and Asia and by the decolonization of the European empires, principally in Asia. While fear of communist expansion was of concern, it was not only or mainly its manifestation in Indochina that occasioned consternation in Canberra. Rather, the growth and influence of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and its influence on an ailing President Sukarno in Jakarta were the goads to an Australian policy that looked for a reemphasized American capacity to intervene on our behalf against an Indonesian attack, together with the willingness to do so. The Vietnam commitment was the price Australia paid to secure that countercommitment from Washington, or so it thought.

That commitment saw an army training team sent in 1962 to work within the U.S. advisory and Special Forces systems, aiding the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and forces formed from the Montagnard tribes in the interior in their fight against the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese forces being infiltrated south. The trainers were followed by ground combat troops beginning in early 1965, and the Australian force in Vietnam reached a peak strength of eighty-three hundred men, including air and naval units working with the U.S. Fifth Air Force and U.S. Seventh Fleet. Ian McNeill's essay concentrates on the deploy-

ment and operations of the 1st Australian Task Force, which operated in Phuoc Tuy Province in the III Corps Tactical Zone/Military Region 3 from 1966 to 1971. He demonstrates the differences in operational methods and assumptions that the Australian force brought to Vietnam, which were based on tactics and techniques refined in a decade of counterinsurgency warfare in Malaya and Borneo beginning in the mid-1950s.

Although initially, and for some time thereafter, the government's commitment of Australian forces received widespread support at home, there was always opposition to Australian involvement. Over time this grew in both size and intensity in common with the experience in the United States and much of the rest of the Western world. There are two points of focus in considering the ways in which popular dissent expressed itself. The first involves a more generalized discussion of the idea of "the Sixties" as a socio-cultural and political phenomenon. Peter Pierce shows that in its Australian manifestation much of the alleged radicalism in Australian culture so often associated with the impact of the Vietnam War in fact predates it, often by a significant margin. In keeping with Eric Hobsbawm's notions of "the long Nineteenth century" (c. 1789–1914) and "the short Twentieth century" (c. 1914–89), we can see that the 1960s was a period that may have lasted less than the ten years common to the standard division by decades and that it does not conform to the same time span in different countries. To put it another way, depending on one's viewpoint, one might, as an American, consider that the 1960s began with Pres. John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 or with the civil rights disturbances and troop commitments to Vietnam in 1964–65. Many Americans would end the 1960s in 1973–74 with Watergate and Pres. Richard M. Nixon's resignation, although others might point to 1968 and the violent confrontations at the Democratic National Convention. These observers might in turn argue that the 1960s began in 1961 with Kennedy's election, the end of a long period of Republican rule, and the beginning of the whole "Camelot" fantasy. In Australia, the cultural and political signposts are quite different. Although Australia's commitment of troops began in 1962 and escalated in 1965, many commentators would agree that the 1960s really only began with the retirement of long-serving conservative prime minister R. G. Menzies in 1966 after seventeen years in office. The height of anti-Vietnam War protests on the streets of Australian cities came about in 1970–71, while the agitation on major university campuses only really subsided after 1974. It might further be argued that the political end of the 1960s is best marked by the vice-regal dismissal of the Whitlam government in 1975 and the return of the conservative

parties to office in December of that year. Pierce charts these cultural processes, while Jeffrey Grey discusses the forms taken by protest and dissent during this period.

Australian forces were withdrawn slowly but progressively from Vietnam beginning in 1970, when the third battalion in the task force was not replaced on rotation, and by December, 1971, the majority of Australia's forces had left the theater in line with the American draw-down and in keeping with the policy of Vietnamization. The fall of Saigon elicited little response in Australia in 1975, and for almost a decade after the Australian withdrawal Vietnam disappeared from the public sphere. By the early 1980s, however, a section of the veteran community had begun to agitate in an organized manner around a number of issues on which it felt aggrieved or disadvantaged. This aspect of Australia's Vietnam involvement has closely paralleled American behavior and experience in the same sphere of activity. (The term *veteran* is an Americanism and had little or no popular application in Australia before Vietnam, the "Australianism" of choice and common usage being "returned serviceman" or simply "returned man.") Extraparliamentary political activism; a heavy public campaign on the issues of herbicide exposure, birth defects, and post-traumatic stress; the disparagement of traditional veterans' organizations; and governmental veteran welfare structures are common themes in the two national experiences. So too is the distinctly minority status of the disaffected within the total of Vietnam veterans and the process of gradual reintegration of that group within the broader community. In the Australian case, the enveloping national martial myth of Anzac has made this a somewhat less traumatic process than in the United States, but the timing and the staging posts of that process in Australia have taken their cue from the American experience, as Jeff Doyle's first essay makes clear.

In keeping with the broad theme of the second half of the volume, which examines the impacts and outcomes of the national experience of Vietnam, Grey and Pierce look in successive chapters at the ways in which the war has been dissected and disseminated in the national literatures of Australia, with a sideways glance at American practices as appropriate. Australia has a long tradition of distinguished nonfiction writing about the nation's war experience, one that has transcended national boundaries on occasions. This is especially the case with the writing of the official historian of the First World War, C. E. W. Bean, whose notion of "democratic history" was clearly influential elsewhere in the English-speaking world when the official histories of the next world war came to be written after 1945. Australia's Vietnam War is still imperfectly and unevenly understood, which reflects the state of the his-

torical writing, and it is still capable of exciting occasional controversy along lines familiar to those who witnessed the politics of the war experience itself. The response to early volumes of the official history is an excellent case in point.¹ Fictional writing is in many ways a less satisfactory case. Many of the fictional narratives of the Australian war were written by people who were not there or who saw no combat, in marked contrast to the participant-novelists in the United States. The latter have greatly enhanced our understanding of the experience of men, and especially of young men, in a conflict that has helped to redefine ideas about war in the English language in the twentieth century.

Following from the discussion of the response to veterans after 1972, Doyle's second chapter picks up on the ways in which Australia and the United States have chosen to memorialize the Vietnam War by looking at each national monument, both individually within its own context and comparatively. In the Australian case, the Vietnam monument and its associated memorializing attempts to fit with a tradition of public commemoration and celebration associated with the national martial myth of Anzac. It also operates within long-standing practices of public commemoration at the national level, epitomized both by the Australian War Memorial and the memorial avenue, Anzac Parade, in the heart of the national capital, Canberra.

Australia is an outrider of an English-speaking empire whose symbolic capital once was London and is now Washington. In cultural terms, the received view of the Vietnam War, its nature and course, is overwhelmingly an American one. While there were a number of film and television versions of Australia's war produced in the 1980s, the ideas that shape Australians' understanding of the war are heavily influenced by *Rambo* and *China Beach*, neither of which has anything much to do with the Australian war. The issues that continue to wrack the public and private spheres of American life, such as the alleged role of the media in losing the war; the racial, disciplinary, and drug problems within the U.S. military that the war accentuated; and the long-festering wound of the missing-in-action (MIA) issue have no Australian equivalents. In the 1990s the focus of Australian memorializing has shifted to more specifically Australian sites—August 18, the date of the battle of Long Tan in 1966, is now observed as Vietnam Veterans' Day—but the images this conjures up often have more to do with homogenizing the Vietnam experience along the lines of earlier wars, to make it comprehensible in terms other than those that actually applied in Phuoc Tuy at the time.

The full consequences of Australia's Vietnam involvement have yet to be properly identified, much less understood. In domestic politics, the

Western failure to prevail in Indochina challenged the conservative parties' presumption of moral authority—their semblance of a natural right to govern—for twenty years, and their resurgence in the mid-1990s at the federal level is owed to quite different external and globalizing factors. No Australian prime minister can now claim the quietly assumed authority that was Menzies's natural and customary position. Nor is the American alliance viewed with the same implicit confidence that it was accorded before 1965. In matters of defense, although the official position has been enunciated as one of "self-reliance within an alliance framework," the Vietnam experience makes it still politically sensitive to talk of force projection in the region, of expeditionary forces, or of "forward defense." Veterans' issues remain unresolved, and a portion of that group at least remains unreconciled to the broader Australian community. If the issues that attach themselves to glib headline usage of terms like "Agent Orange" and "PTSD" appear to have lost something of their intensity, at least in public in the 1990s, it is because they are now being pursued in a more systematic manner through the legal and appellate processes of the veterans' benefits system, the Repatriation Commission. This, too, provides an echo of other, older wars and their aftermaths.

The Vietnam War divided both countries, although the divisions were less deep and less lasting in Australia than in the United States. Involvement in Vietnam characterized an older way in which Australians looked at the world. We no longer think about the world or the Asian region in that way, and both the world and the region are vastly different now from what they were then in any case. Australian relations with the United States survived the defeat of Western aims in Indochina, perhaps even were strengthened by it; but we no longer think about that relationship in the same way, either. In Australia, though not the United States, the Vietnam War is increasingly firmly consigned to history, but it is a history that retains the power to influence the present.

A Note about the Anzac Legend

At the level of popular culture in Australia, the "Anzac legend" and its heritage would be in little need of explanation, however (arguably) imperfectly understood. For a U.S. audience it is perhaps worthwhile to offer a summary of the salient features of the legend because it is not without a substance large enough of itself for several volumes and because it is, like so many "well trammeled" beliefs, malleable if not universally accommodating. In brief, then, the Anzac legend is hardly fixed, as recent events with the Australian involvement in the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) have shown from 1999

to the present. This ongoing commitment of troops has as much adapted as it has used the Anzac legend as its implicit template of behavior and results. Not dissimilar modifications to Anzac have also been conjured up during the celebrations and analyses of the Centenary of Australian Federation throughout 2001. But while Anzac is hardly fixed, there is a core or axis around which the historically differing people and events of the twentieth century Australian armed services constellate. It is this core that is outlined here.

C. E. W. Bean wrote his multivolume history of Australia's participation in the First World War with an eye to setting in place the idea of a new kind of armed service commensurate with the ideas and ideals of the newly federated state of Australia. Much was and is still made of Australia's origins in 1901 as a constitutional democracy founded in a series of legal acts rather than in acts of rebellion and warfare. Yet the new nation seemingly felt the need to be "blooded" and was anxious to aid the Empire in its time of need. It may be curious then that such anxieties also gave rise to the first signs of uneasy relationships with the mother state. Among many abiding concerns with its own possible identities when nineteenth-century Australia measured itself against the ideals of empire, it often found the core culture lacking or inferior. As a frontier culture, predicated on seeing itself as pioneering the conquest of an antagonistically harsh land—summed up in the notion of "the Outback" or "the Bush"—Australians saw themselves as better men than those bred by the urban and industrialized ghettos of the mother country. The Australian "bushman" as fabricated in the writings of Henry Lawson, Banjo Paterson, and others in the pages of the magazine *Bulletin* and elsewhere, is still discussed critically. The precise origins and meanings are not totally clear, but the trajectory through the late 1880s and 1890s, the Boer War, the 1914–18 war, and into the 1920s is well traveled. When called upon to defend the Anglo-European culture, the margins, the edge of the Empire, provided the best troops and showed the Empire how to fight. In the Boer War the Australians provided quantities of horsemen—allegedly excellent irregular cavalry that predate and predict the famous Light Horse of the First World War.² When the Australian and New Zealand governments sent forces to fight in World War I, the tradition was born in the combined acronym of ANZAC: Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Characteristically, the Anzacs were excellent and natural fighters. Taller, stronger, more rugged than the British "Tommy Atkins," and with long, lean, chiseled features, "Aussies" also possessed a strong sense of individualism, laconic personalities, and ironic dry humor and were spare with words.³ These men were also spare with hierarchy. It was not so much that they

were not given to following orders, but that they were indifferent to the, as they saw it, class-ridden superfluities of the British system and the poor, if not ludicrous, leadership skills of the British. They were gifted with superior fighting skills allied to the democratic talent of skilled individual initiative, something lacking from the cowed underclasses forming the imperial soldiery. Where British society was structured vertically by class, the colonies were decidedly horizontal. The individual was supreme, but he also valued his cohort, his friends, emphasizing the idea of the mate and mateship. Allegiance to the nation or the state was important, but *the* most important feature was one's mates. It was almost inevitable, and in a way necessary, for the legend that there were to be major disasters on the battlefields, as well as regular clashes of rank and class behind the lines. The most significant event, the 1915 Gallipoli campaign, occurred early in the First World War and acted then and throughout the twentieth century as a defining moment against which all others are measured and seems likely to continue as such.

On 25 April 1915, Anzac troops, part of a larger imperial force, undertook amphibious assaults along the Dardanelles coast at Gallipoli in Turkey in an attempt to remove a German ally from the war and secure the Bosphorus and Middle East. The assault was a disaster since the Anzac landing took place at the wrong beaches, leaving the infantry to assault enfilading positions on the cliffs above them. To add to the legend, British forces at a later landing at Suvla in August sat down to "tea" while the Anzac attacks were being shot up by the Turks. A long period of modified trench warfare followed and the campaign was finally terminated with a brilliant Australian withdrawal. The foundations of the Anzac legend are riven thereafter by a sense of loss, waste, and betrayal. To compound this Australian version of the "we was robbed" syndrome during the ensuing months of near-futile siege, the Australians often suffered withering casualties during bayonet charges against Turkish trenches supposedly neutralized by British artillery barrages. The most famous, or rather infamous, example is the charge of 7 August at the Nek, a diversion that cost two thousand Australian lives. In Peter Weir's 1981 film *Gallipoli*, this incident is presented as typical of British incompetence—and worse—callous disregard for Australian troops. The barrage lifted early and the men were ordered to assault even though the Turks were ready for them. In this version, historical accuracy gives way to the legend of the betrayal of superior troops, courageous even under suicidal orders.

By 1916 the Anzacs were fighting on the western front, often used as shock troops but still with a reputation for indiscipline. There they became known as "diggers," a term applied to the miners on the goldfields

of the 1850s and which presumably stuck to the Anzacs as apposite for soldiers fighting in trench warfare.

In the 1920s, Bean wrote this legend into his official history, and, if that was not enough, aided those who made it concrete, almost literally, in the design, building, and contents of the Australian War Memorial, which is more a combination shrine, archive, and museum. Briefly, both edifices, the official history and the War Memorial, presented a soldier's-eye-view of the First World War. Grand strategy—the hierarchical war of the imperium—was seconded to the individual digger, the Anzac soldier, as *the* central image.

The Second World War and the Korean actions followed, and in both conflicts Anzac commitments were substantial in comparison to their nations' populations and resources. More importantly, in both wars Australian soldiery hit harder than its weight. The legend of the natural fighting man and of certain levels of "larrikin" indiscipline continued, and the Anzacs thrived on it. Indeed, Lord Haw Haw's naming them the "rats" of Tobruk merely reinforced the digger identity. Put against the First Anzacs, the actions at Tobruk, El Alamein, and in Greece measured up. Kapyong and other Korean actions likewise were taken into the fold, though in less publicly spectacular fashions.⁴ When Singapore fell, the Second Anzacs had their large-scale betrayal, too. The New Guinea and Pacific campaigns, especially the battles of the Coral Sea and the Kokoda Trail only reinforced the imagery of the natural soldier and of the political need to stand alongside other major powers, albeit with due care to their potential for inconsistency and betrayal.

That sense of one or another empire cutting Australia adrift profoundly affected the national identity from the middle of the Second World War to the end of the Cold War (and even to the present) and influenced the way Australia viewed the Vietnam conflict. Indeed, that war saw the Australian military designated by itself and the state as the next generation of Anzacs. As the essays in this volume show, the transformation of the Anzac legend through and in the aftermath of the Vietnam War is still active and still central to the national identity. For many, the congruencies of the Anzac legend and the diggers who served in Vietnam were slight, too slight, and the legend seemed unable to accommodate them. That failure raised many issues, not the least about the timeliness of the Anzac legend itself in the later part of the twentieth century. This volume is one product of that incongruence.