

# Frank MacDonald MM Memorial Prize

**The Last Post**  
♩ = 152

The image shows a musical score for 'The Last Post' in 2/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a tempo marking of '♩ = 152'. The music is written in a single melodic line. The score includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. At the end of the piece, there is a 'rall' marking and a fermata over the final notes.



**Question 1: Every year since 1916, Australia has commemorated the first of the landings at Gallipoli - 25 April. How relevant is the national significance of Anzac Day nearly 100 years on? Why was this event considered so important and so powerful that it has endured beyond the lifetime of anyone who was there at the time?**

**Liam Grieve  
Burnie High School**

“Like all cultural constructs, Anzac is a conflation of history and myth.”<sup>1</sup>

“The 25<sup>th</sup> of April was officially named Anzac Day in 1916. It was marked by a wide variety of ceremonies and services in Australia, a march through London and a sports day at the Australian Camp in Egypt.”<sup>2</sup> One hundred years on, the significance of Anzac Day remains as strong as it was in 1916. Anzac Day survives because of a range of historical and social forces that have aligned to ensure its relevance. In recent years “there has been a strong swing back to the popular observation of Anzac Day, not only in Australia but also in such originary locations as Gallipoli and the Western Front, on the Kokoda Track and at Long Tan.”<sup>3</sup>

WW1 saw 416,809 Australian men enlist to fight, of those volunteers over 60,000 were killed and a further 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner. Although the war was fought in Europe the effect was also felt in Australia. Families and communities grieved the loss of many young men; women felt the strain of the physical and financial costs associated with caring for a family. Social divisions grew that culminated in two, bitterly fought, unsuccessful conscription referendums. At the end of the War thousands of ex-service men, many with physical and emotional wounds, had to be incorporated back into society and resume normal life.<sup>4</sup> From the outset, many not directly involved in the conflict stopped to remember WW1 and its aftermath.

At the outbreak of WW1 my hometown of Burnie had a population of just 2,927, from which 272 men enlisted to fight and 57 were killed<sup>5</sup>. Their loss was not to be forgotten. The friends and family of the fallen soldiers gathered around commemorative structures from 1918 for dawn requiems. One such structure was the Burnie War Memorial unveiled on February 17 1924; the ‘*Advocate*’ ran a story on the event:

“An important event in the history of Burnie eventuated yesterday afternoon, when a memorial to commemorate the memory of district soldiers who laid down their lives in the Great War was unveiled. The ceremony was a most impressive one, and the earnest words that were spoken should long be remembered by all who were present. The monument itself is a granite obelisk. The foundations are of columnar basalt, obtained from the quarry in the vicinity of the Burnie wharves. It is interesting to note that there are very few places in the world where rock of this formation has been found.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Seal, Graham. *n.d.*, “Anzac – The Sacred in the Secular”, *Journal of Australian Studies* [online], No. 91, 2007: [135]-144, <http://informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=778969403167813;res=IELHSS>, (accessed 19 August 2014) p. 136

<sup>2</sup> *n.a.*, *n.d.*, *The Anzac Day Tradition*, Australian War Memorial [online], <http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac-tradition/>, (accessed 14 August, 2014)

<sup>3</sup> Seal, Graham. *n.d.*, “Anzac – The Sacred in the Secular”, *Journal of Australian Studies* [online], No. 91, 2007: [135]-144, <http://informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=778969403167813;res=IELHSS>, (accessed 19 August 2014) p. 135

<sup>4</sup> *n.a.*, *n.d.*, *Fist World War 1914-18*, Australian War Memorial [online], <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/ww1/>, (accessed 17 August, 2014)

<sup>5</sup> Broinowski, L. 1921, “Tasmania War Record 1914-1918”, Tasmanian Government, Hobart p. 210

<sup>6</sup> *n.a.*, 2014, *Burnie war memorial*, Monument Australia [online], <http://monumentaaustralia.org.au//search/display/70089-burnie-war-memorial>, (accessed 27 August 2014)

The first Dawn Service was held at the Sydney Cenotaph in 1928<sup>7</sup>. Since then the meaning of Anzac has become engrained in the public psyche as communities throughout the country strove to build physical reminders of the loved and fallen whose bodies were interned in foreign soil. The magnitude of this human loss is poignantly expressed in foreign fields such as France.

“‘INCONNU...INCONNU...INCONNU...’ On thousands of little white crosses, the single French word for ‘Unknown’. It’s repetition on row upon row of graves in hundreds of cemeteries in northern France conveys a sense of something beyond death. It suggests annihilation, as though a whole people had been wiped out, obliterated, made extinct.”<sup>8</sup>

Memorable beyond the ‘annihilation’, the Gallipoli landings and the other WW1 battles proved to be a defining moment for a fledgling nation. Federation, whilst a crucial point in our country’s history centred on uniting the colonies into a system of federal and state governments. The Federation parade held in Sydney on January 1 1901 “was overwhelmingly British: British Empire Troops...British gentry and religious representatives. Federation represented the culmination of a successful British colonisation.”<sup>9</sup> It was therefore not surprising at the outbreak of WW1, that the then Prime Minister Andrew Fisher announced that “Australia would defend Britain to the last man and the last shilling”<sup>10</sup>. When Australia pledged its support to Britain most Australians saw themselves as part of the British Empire and considered it their duty to protect the ‘mother country’. However, by the end of the War Australians emerged with a keener sense of their national identity. Former Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello when speaking from Gallipoli in 2003 verbalised this notion:

“Until the Anzacs, the story of Australia had been one of settlement, colony and federation...Anzac gave the nation a consciousness of itself, the knowledge that Australians were distinct and different and now proud, with their own feats of courage and their own history on the international stage.”<sup>11</sup>

In effect, “WW1 – and the Gallipoli campaign, in particular, – was widely represented as the birth of a nation. Amongst the catastrophic destruction of total warfare we found the profound act of national creation.”<sup>12</sup> The Anzac experience and subsequent stories joined a nation at every level. The blacksmith, the lawyer and the doctor were united in the atrocities of battle and the bonds of mateship, courage and sacrifice. Therefore “the Anzac Legend has had a nation building and nation sustaining effect”<sup>13</sup>. The stories as told by war diaries,

<sup>7</sup> *The Anzac Day Tradition*, *op cit.*, <http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac-tradition/>

<sup>8</sup> Ham, P. 2013, *1914 – The Year the World Ended*, Random House Australia, Sydney, p. 575

<sup>9</sup> Ihde, E. *n.d.*, “1 January 1901 Australia federated, Australia celebrates”, in *Turning Points in Australian history*, Crotty, M. & Roberts, D. (ed), 2009, 87-99, University of NSW, Sydney, p. 93

<sup>10</sup> *n.a.*, *n.d.*, *Australia’s Prime Ministers*, Australian War Memorial [online],

<http://www.awm.gov.au/pm/fisher/>, (accessed 10 August, 2014)

<sup>11</sup> Ihde, E. *op cit.*, p. 92

<sup>12</sup> Crotty, M. *n.d.*, “25 April 1915 – Australian troops land at Gallipoli: trial, trauma and the ‘birth of a nation’”, in *Turning Points in Australian history*, Crotty, M. & Roberts, D. (ed), 2009, 100-114, University of NSW, Sydney, p. 107

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 113

journalists, photographers and personal accounts when overlaid with the human sacrifice have meant they have endured well beyond 1916.

The importance of Anzac Day was immediately evident to the Federal Government of the time. The term 'Anzac' was originally the acronym 'ANZAC' which was used in telegraphic code for "Australian and New Zealand Army Corps". The word quickly became a widely used term because of the values that were associated with it, such as: egalitarianism; courage; ingenuity; sacrifice and mateship. The Australian Government moved quickly to 'enshrine' its usage in law, thus protecting it from everyday use, "effectively imbuing it with a special status that further impelled its ascent to the sacred"<sup>14</sup>. Regulations were put in place from the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1916 which forbade the use of the term 'Anzac' or anything resembling it in any trade, business, calling or profession.<sup>15</sup> These actions enshrined the term, further strengthening its capacity to endure to the extent it has today.

Prior to the War's end, the official war correspondent, Charles Bean was contemplating suitable ways to commemorate the great sacrifices and gallantry shown by the Australian troops. Politicians also turned their attention to this challenge. Western Australia was the first State to declare Anzac Day as a public holiday and all returned soldiers were given a day off work with full pay in 1919. At the 1923 Premiers' Conference in Melbourne it was suggested that Anzac Day become Australia's National Day. By 1930 all States had turned April 25<sup>th</sup> into a 'close' public holiday similar to Good Friday and Christmas Day. "Since then, Anzac Day has continued as an event that is at once a celebration and a commemoration."<sup>16</sup>

WW1 was erroneously perceived to be the 'war to end all wars.' However, by 1939 the world once again found itself in the midst of conflict. The challenge for the next generation of Australian soldiers who fought during WW2 was to 'carry the flag' and uphold the values of Anzac that their forefathers had displayed at Gallipoli and the battlefields of Europe. Wherever Australian servicemen and women put the service to their nation before their personal safety the Anzac spirit is continued, the Korean War, the Malayan Emergency, the Vietnam War, the Iraq War, Afghanistan and various peace keeping roles that Australians have been involved in since 1914. These soldiers, like their predecessors, have returned annually to march on Anzac Day thereby guaranteeing its relevance.

My maternal grandfather fought during WW2 as a Rat of Tobruk. Private Lawrence M. Fahey never ceased to honour Anzac Day as an opportunity to commemorate the fallen and enjoy the comradery of the living.

Anzac Day has not always enjoyed the current level of public support. Indeed "a generation brought up on the notion 'make love not war'"<sup>17</sup> was vocal in its opposition towards Anzac Day. Yet, Australia's involvement and sacrifice in subsequent theatres of war and the dwindling numbers of surviving WW1 and WWII veterans has seen an enduring resurgence of national interest, typified by the internationally acclaimed film 'Gallipoli' (1981). David Williamson's and Peter Weir's film retold the Anzac narrative for another generation. Events

<sup>14</sup> Seal, Graham. *op cit*, p. 136

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, pp. 136-137

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p. 139

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, p. 135

such as the, AFL's Anzac Day football match, between Essendon and Collingwood, and popular tours of Gallipoli, the Western Front, and Kokoda have further cemented the significance for another generation.

My mother and uncles have marched in their father's honour since his death in 1975. Part of our family's personal Anzac ritual is for Private Lawrence Fahey's grandchildren to participate in the Dawn service. This year, I played the Last Post at Burnie High School's official Anzac service. In keeping with my ten year history of attending the Dawn service, I experienced mixed emotions whilst playing this iconic piece; admiration, respect and sympathy for the men and women who have fought and died for our country – most especially for my grandfather.

Therefore, the reason Anzac Day remains so powerful and enduring can be traced back to the magnitude of the loss, the resultant desire to remember the fallen and the demonstration and emergence of a sense of national identity and pride. Australia's involvement in successive wars has perpetuated the personal and collective relevance of Anzac Day. Charles Bean when writing about the Gallipoli Landings stated. "In no unreal sense it was on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1915, that the consciousness of Australian nationhood was born. Anzac Day – a national celebration held on the anniversary of the Landing – is devoted to the memory of those who fell in the war."<sup>18</sup> Anzac Day is built on the essence of the Anzac Legend which is never to forget the courage and sacrifice which gives enduring meaning to the national promise; Lest We Forget.

Word Count: 1, 198

---

<sup>18</sup> Bean, C. 1941 *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra p. 910

# Bibliography

---

## Books:

Bean, C. 1941 *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra

Crotty, M. *n.d.*, “25 April 1915 – Australian troops land at Gallipoli: trial, trauma and the ‘birth of a nation’”, in *Turning Points in Australian History*, Crotty, M. & Roberts, D. (ed), 2009, 100-114, University of NSW, Sydney

Ham, P. 2013, *1914 – The Year the World Ended*, Random House Australia, Sydney

Ihde, E. *n.d.*, “1 January 1901 Australia federated, Australia celebrates”, in *Turning Points in Australian history*, Crotty, M. & Roberts, D. (ed), 2009, 87-99, University of NSW, Sydney

Broinowski, L. 1921, “Tasmania War Record 1914-1918”, Tasmanian Government, Hobart

## Websites:

### Last Post Music

*n.a.*, 2014, *Bugle calls Last Post*, Wikimedia [online], [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bugle\\_Calls\\_Last\\_Post.svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bugle_Calls_Last_Post.svg) , (accessed 21 August 2014)

Seal, Graham. *n.d.*, “Anzac – The Sacred in the Secular”, *Journal of Australian Studies* [online], No. 91, 2007: [135]-144, <http://informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=778969403167813;res=IELHSS>, (accessed 19 August 2014)

*n.a.*, *n.d.*, *The Anzac Day Tradition*, Australian War Memorial [online], <http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac/anzac-tradition/>, (accessed 14 August, 2014)

*n.a.*, *n.d.*, *Fist World War 1914-18*, Australian War Memorial [online], <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/ww1/> , (accessed 17 August, 2014)

*n.a.*, *n.d.*, *Australia’s Prime Ministers*, Australian War Memorial [online], <http://www.awm.gov.au/pm/fisher/>, (accessed 10 August, 2014)

*n.a.*, 2014, *Burnie war memorial*, Monument Australia [online], <http://monumentaaustralia.org.au//search/display/70089-burnie-war-memorial> , (accessed 27 August 2014)

## Details of Private Lawrence, M. Fahey:

**Date of Birth:** 18 July 1912  
**Date of Enlistment:** 10 April 1940  
**Place of Enlistment:** Brighton TAS  
**Rank:** Private, 2/33 Battalion  
**Service Number:** TX1162