

**Genre:** Australian History, New Zealand History, World War I

**Readership:** Mid to upper primary

## **Gallipoli: Reckless valour**

**By Nicolas Brasch**

### **About the book**

Gallipoli is seared into the national consciousness. It is said to have been a defining moment in our nationhood, helping to forge our national identity. The very word has become analogous with mateship, heroism and sacrifice. It is, therefore, important for primary students to have an elementary knowledge of the Gallipoli campaign in World War One and its enduring impact here in Australia. This picture book history of Gallipoli provides that knowledge.

The book's features include two-page chapters with information presented in highlighted break-out boxes, along with war photographs, maps, diagrams, enlistment advertisements, paintings and Anzac magazine covers. Additionally there is an excellent Gallipoli timeline and useful glossary.

This format, combined with the author's story-telling skills, is a valuable resource that is both accessible and engaging.

### **Learning Activities**

The learning activities below apply to the Literacy, Music, Art, Integrated Studies and Personal Development, with a great deal of subject matter overlap between the Key Learning Areas.

Other activities could include:

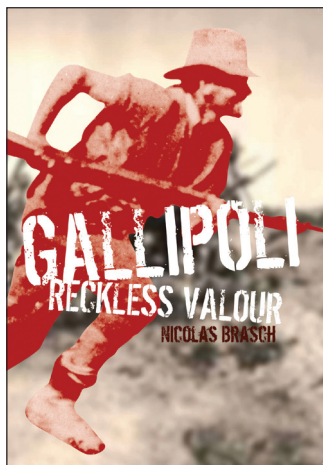
- Watching the 1981 film *Gallipoli* starring Mel Gibson
- Making Anzac biscuits
- An excursion to your capital city's war memorial
- A visit to the local cenotaph
- Participating in your community's Anzac Day or Armistice Day services

### **Literacy:**

#### **Book format and features**

#### **Before beginning to read Gallipoli:**

- Brainstorm: What do students know about Gallipoli?
- Discuss what **reckless valour** means.
- Have students familiarise themselves with the book's format and features, including the contents page, timeline, glossary and index at the back of the book.
- Have class read the blurb on the back cover.

***Reading the book***

As students read the book, have them answer the questions below chapter by chapter. For feedback and revision, have students share their answers in small groups.

**Introduction**

‘Chaos reigned at Gallipoli.’ What reasons does the author give for this state of affairs.

**Maps of Gallipoli:**

Look at the relief map of Anzac Cove p. 7. What does it tell you about the task the diggers faced?

**It Takes Just a Spark:**

Why did the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir of the Austro-Hungarian throne, by a Serbian, lead to Australia’s involvement in a World War?

**Australia and New Zealand in 1914**

Why did so many young men flock to enlistment centres to sign up for military service in World War I?

**Setting Off**

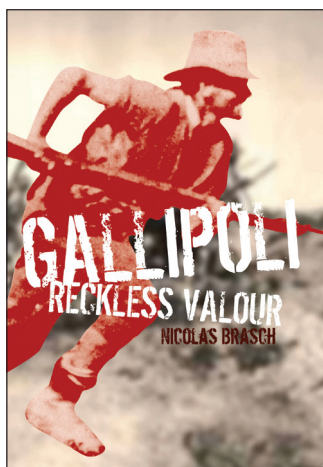
Re-read the break-out box headed: We are Britons. How would that statement be regarded by the Australian public today? Why?

**Why Gallipoli?**

What did Winston Churchill (a Prime Minister of Great Britain during World War II) have to do with the landing at Gallipoli?

**The landing**

Why did British military officers think the Anzacs were ‘undisciplined larrikins’.



### **Digging in**

What was the consequence of some Anzacs, unhappy with being ordered to wear British regulation hats instead of their own, taking the wire out of their hats and making them look out of shape?

### **Armistice**

What was the armistice agreed to by Turkish and Anzac soldiers?

### **Simpson and his donkey**

Do you think Simpson deserved the Indian name Bahadur? Why?

### **August offensive**

In Gallipoli during the northern summer of 1915, what were conditions like in the trenches?

### **Evacuation**

How did the Anzacs hide their evacuation from Gallipoli from the Turks?

### **Looking back**

If you were the parent of a soldier killed at Gallipoli, how would you have felt about what Ataturk had to say about them?

### **Letter writing**

Imagine you are in the trenches at Gallipoli. Write a letter home.

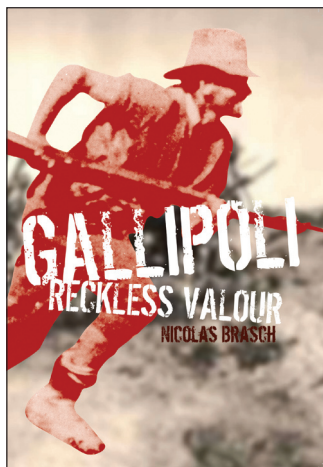
### **Poetry**

The Ode, below, is read at Anzac services throughout Australia every Anzac Day.

What type of poem is an ode? (One that expresses noble feelings.)

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.



At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them

*(from For the Fallen by Laurence Binyon, 1914)*

Write your own four-line ode to honour those that have died in war.

**Visual literacy: Anzac symbols**

- What is a symbol? (Something that stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract).
- Look through the book and find two enduring symbols of Gallipoli and the Anzacs.

***The Red Poppy***

Read the poem below (author unknown). What does the red poppy symbolise? (sacrifice)  
In the poem, do you think the mother's fears for her child and the future were justified?

***The Inquisitive Mind Of A Child***

Why are they selling poppies, Mummy?

Selling poppies in town today.

The poppies, child, are flowers of love.

For the men who marched away.

But why have they chosen a poppy, Mummy?

Why not a beautiful rose?

Because my child, men fought and died

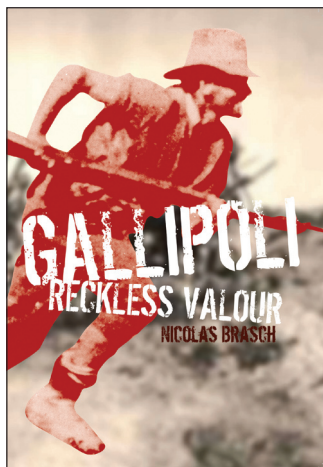
In the fields where the poppies grow.

But why are the poppies so red, Mummy?

Why are the poppies so red?

Red is the colour of blood, my child.

The blood that our soldiers shed.



The heart of the poppy is black, Mummy.

Why does it have to be black?

Black, my child, is the symbol of grief.

For the men who never came back.

But why, Mummy are you crying so?

Your tears are giving you pain.

My tears are my fears for you my child.

For the world is forgetting again.

### **The slouch hat**

What has the slouch hat come to symbolise? (The Aussie digger, courage).

- Refer to p. 31. What type of soldier wore the slouch hat with emu feathers? (Men of the Light Horse brigade, a cavalry unit).
- What is the badge on the upturned brim of the slouch hat called? (The Rising Sun badge).
- What is on the badge currently worn by the Australian army?

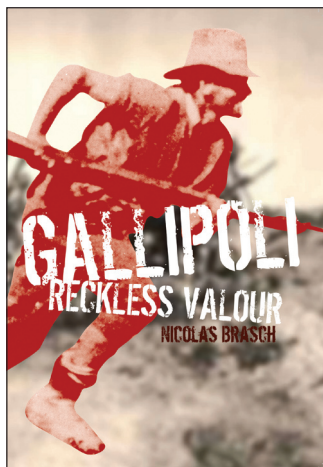
### **Oral Presentation: A family member's war service**

Teachers: have a large map of the world for this exercise.

### **Oral presentation**

Talk to your family then prepare a history of a family member or family friend (living or dead) who has fought in a war. It may be any war in any part of the world, including a civil war. Bring along any memorabilia such as old photos, war medals etc. and share your stories.

Note: If any students have themselves been caught up in a civil war, for example, Sudanese or Somali immigrants, ask if they would be prepared to share their own experiences of war with the class.



### Art

1. Create an A4-sized poster, either hand-drawn or using computer graphics, urging men to sign up for military service in World War One. Include a picture with a catchy heading or slogan (for inspiration see pp. 10, 11 & 15). Display in class for comment.
2. In pairs, using paper machè or other appropriate material, create a relief map of Anzac Cove like p. 7. Include labels.

### Music

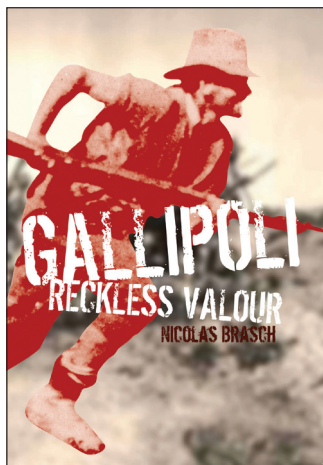
*And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda* by Eric Bogle (written in 1979 after Bogle had watched an Anzac Day parade)

Available for streaming or downloading on the Internet.

This is a very beautiful, sad, evocative song, especially the version recorded by the songwriter himself, about Gallipoli and Anzac Day, indeed, pretty much everything covered in the book.

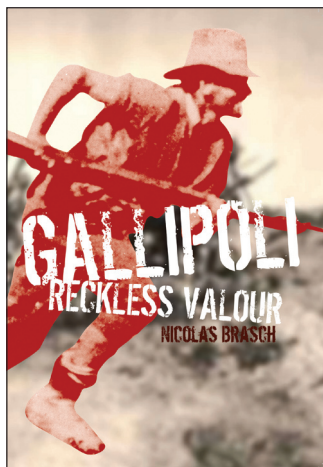
Make sure each class member has a copy of the words. Play the song once, then the second time have the class sing along.

Now when I was a young man I carried me pack  
And I lived the free life of the rover.  
From the Murray's green basin to the dusty outback,  
Well, I waltzed my Matilda all over.  
Then in 1915, my country said, "Son,  
It's time you stop ramblin', there's work to be done."  
So they gave me a tin hat, and they gave me a gun,  
And they marched me away to the war.  
And the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"  
As the ship pulled away from the quay,  
And amidst all the cheers, the flag waving, and tears,  
We sailed off for Gallipoli.  
And how well I remember that terrible day,  
How our blood stained the sand and the water;  
And of how in that hell that they call Suvla Bay  
We were butchered like lambs at the slaughter.  
Johnny Turk, he was waitin', he primed himself well;  
He showered us with bullets, and he rained us with shell —  
And in five minutes flat, he'd blown us all to hell,  
Nearly blew us right back to Australia.  
But the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"  
When we stopped to bury our slain,



Well, we buried ours, and the Turks buried theirs,  
Then we started all over again.  
And those that were left, well, we tried to survive  
In that mad world of blood, death and fire.  
And for ten weary weeks I kept myself alive  
Though around me the corpses piled higher.  
Then a big Turkish shell knocked me arse over head,  
And when I woke up in me hospital bed  
And saw what it had done, well, I wished I was dead —  
Never knew there was worse things than dying.  
For I'll go no more "Waltzing Matilda,"  
All around the green bush far and free —  
To hump tents and pegs, a man needs both legs,  
No more "Waltzing Matilda" for me.  
So they gathered the crippled, the wounded, the maimed,  
And they shipped us back home to Australia.  
The armless, the legless, the blind, the insane,  
Those proud wounded heroes of Suvla.  
And as our ship sailed into Circular Quay,  
I looked at the place where me legs used to be,  
And thanked Christ there was nobody waiting for me,  
To grieve, to mourn and to pity.  
But the band played "Waltzing Matilda,"  
As they carried us down the gangway,  
But nobody cheered, they just stood and stared,  
Then they turned all their faces away.  
And so now every April, I sit on my porch  
And I watch the parade pass before me.  
And I see my old comrades, how proudly they march,  
Reviving old dreams of past glory,  
And the old men march slowly, all bones stiff and sore,  
They're tired old heroes from a forgotten war  
And the young people ask "What are they marching for?"  
And I ask meself the same question.  
But the band plays "Waltzing Matilda,"  
And the old men still answer the call,  
But as year follows year, more old men disappear  
Someday, no one will march there at all.  
Waltzing Matilda, waltzing Matilda.  
Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?  
And their ghosts may be heard as they march by the billabong,  
Who'll come a-Waltzing Matilda with me?



**Discuss:**

- How does the song, words and music make the students feel?
- Why did Bogle refer to Gallipoli as the 'forgotten war'?
- Is Gallipoli a forgotten war today?

(The early 1970s had been dominated by the Vietnam War. Maybe people then were quite happy to forget about war for awhile. However, times have changed since then. Gallipoli is very much remembered as rising numbers at Anzac Day parades and visitors to Gallipoli attest.)

- Bogle predicted that soon no one would march at all? Was he correct?
- Who are the ghosts Bogle refers to in the last two lines?
- Is it an anti-war song or does it glorify war?

**Integrated Studies*****The Nek and Lone Pine*****Reread p. 25**

The Nek (the battle featured in the film Gallipoli).

Explain to class: The Nek was a series of trenches held by the Turks, which British commanding officers wanted to control. Roughly 18 metres separated the Turkish and Australian trenches. The Australians were ordered to charge across this space and overtake the Turkish trenches. They came in four waves and were mown down. In just minutes, 800 Australian soldiers lay dead or wounded on ground about the size of two tennis courts. The attack was then called off.

Go out into the school yard and mark out an area roughly the size of two tennis courts. Divide the class into two groups representing Turks and Australians. Have them stand 18 metres apart.

Consider: What hope did the diggers have of surviving their charge?

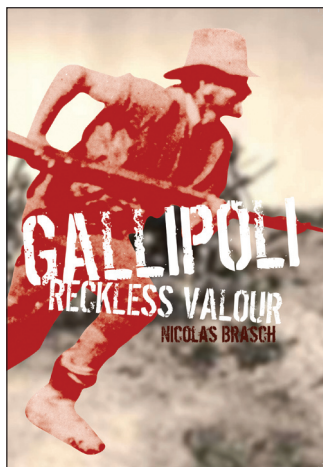
***The Battle of Lone Pine***

The battle of Lone Pine was a diversionary tactic — 2200 Australian and 7000 Turkish soldiers were killed or wounded.

Have the class find out more about this battle:

- Where did the actual fighting take place? (A series of log-covered trenches).
- What type of combat did the soldiers engage in? (Largely hand-to-hand).
- Why was the battle called 'Lone Pine'?





### ***Mateship***

1. The mateship of diggers is legendary. Discuss why mateship was, and is, such a crucial element of a soldier's experience.
2. Is there a difference between mateship and friendship?
3. Write one sentence, in large bold print, that describes what you think mateship means. Stick each contribution on a large sheet for display in the classroom. Invite comment on the contributions.

### ***History: Roll of Honour in your school for ex-student war dead***

Look around your school to find the honour roll of past students killed in war. Choose one past student soldier and see what you can find out about him.

1. Build up a profile — name, theatre of war, dates of birth and death, any other information such as school achievements — are there any old school reports in the school archives?

2. Keep a diary of your efforts.

Seek help from the librarian, the Internet, the local RSL and local historical society.

### ***Gender studies: Women in wartime***

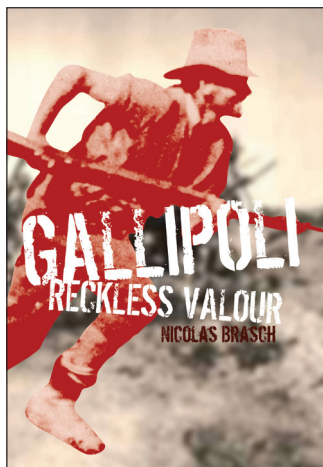
Although they do not appear in Brasch's book, there were Australian women at Gallipoli and other theatres of war in World War I.

One nurse, Sister Narelle Hobbs was with the Australian forces at Gallipoli. She wrote: 'I've been a soldier now for nearly three years, and, please God, I will go right to the end...if anything happened and I too passed out, well, there would be no finer way, and no way in which I would be happier, than to lay down one's life for the men who have given everything.'

She died five months later in May 1918.

Reference: Women in action - nurses and serving women <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/womeninaction/>

- As well as nursing, what other activities were Australian women involved in overseas during World War I?
- Women were also active on the home front. What activities were they involved in to help the war effort?

***Red Cross care parcels for diggers***

The Australian Red Cross was formed in 1914 just nine days after the outbreak of World War I. Its main task during the war was to prepare care packages for the diggers.

- Imagine you are preparing a care package to send to a digger in Gallipoli. In groups, make a list of the essential items you would include. Refine the list until everyone is in agreement. Compare lists with other groups in the class, adding and subtracting items until the class settles on one list of contents for a care package.
- In choosing items for the care parcel remember that during wartime, parcels could take up to six months to reach their destination and be distributed.

***Personal development***

Failure is not something to be ashamed of if we have done our best. The Anzac campaign at Gallipoli was a complete failure and yet, as a nation, we feel great and enduring pride in the efforts of the diggers who fought there.

Most of us, at some time in our life, fail in an important endeavour and suffer great disappointment. But failure is sometimes a good thing — as long as we learn from it.

- Think of a time when you failed at something. Had you really prepared yourself for success? How did you react to the disappointment?
- Discuss how you can turn failure into a positive learning experience.

***About the author***

A prolific author, Nicolas Brasch has written over 250 books for the education, trade and library markets both in Australia and overseas.

He has also presented workshops and seminars on writing and story-telling and is the founder of Writers in Residence, a company that provides writing services to the corporate sector.

Brasch's book titles reflect his diverse interests — sport, politics and history, not to mention *101 Cool Ways To Make Money* and *Keeping Chickens: An Australian Guide*.