

# SINGABOUT

## APRIL 2017

### ANZAC

With Anzac Day approaching again, it is time to look back on the origins of the day and what better way than to visit some of the verse written at the time.

In doing so we get some indication of the attitudes and feelings that led our forces to participate in those distant battles, and to create a legend of bravery and capability in the face of a larger force defending their homeland against what they saw as the invaders that is still remembered with awe today.

The material for this issue is available on the National Library's Trove collection which is a goldmine of Australian history as recorded by the newspapers of the day.

The first poem here was published in a number of local papers, with varying degrees of acknowledgement of the source. It originally appeared in an English Paper, the "London Daily Express" according to the Bendigo Advertiser (14 Oct 1915, page 7). In "The Register" (Adelaide, SA, 13 Oct 1915, page 9), it was titled "To Our Gallant Boys", while the "Daily Herald" (Adelaide, SA, 13 Oct 1915, page 5) titled it ANZAC, and included the following preamble:

The following poem recently appeared in an English paper. Its reference to the Australian soldiers at the Dardanelles must be the most gratifying to those whose relatives took part in that historic landing:-

The final poem is an example of the type of pressure applied to those who didn't enlist for whatever reason. This was at least partly the result of the British *Order of the White Feather* which was setup to pressure young men into enlisting.

## To Our Gallant Boys

We know that you're sportsmen, with reason,  
At footer and cricket you're cracks;  
I haven't forgotten the season  
When we curled up before the "All Blacks."  
In the matter of wielding the "Willow,"  
We own, to our cost, that you're "it,"  
The ashes you've borne o'er the billow-  
Though they're home again now, for a bit.

There are weightier matters to settle  
To-day, amid bullets and shells;  
And the world stands amazed at the mettle  
You've shown in the far Dardanelles.  
The marvellous feat of your landing,  
Your exploits by field and by flood,  
Your charges that brooked, not withstanding,  
Though you poured out the best of your blood.

You left your snug homesteads "down under,"  
The prosperous life of your land,  
And staggered the Turks with your thunder,  
To give the Old Country a hand.  
For daredevil work we may book you,  
You're ready and keen to get to it.  
If a job is impossible, look you,  
The boys from "down under" will do it.

- Jessie Pope.

Table Talk (Melbourne, Vic, 9 Sep 1915, page 4) published the next poem, also expressing the sense of achievement. The verse was preceded by the following:

"I feel very proud of our Australian boys. .... I know we will win."- Miss Daphne Abbott, of Albert Park, to Sir Ian Hamilton.

"They want all the sympathy you can give them, for a real battle at Anzac is very different from a sham-fight at Lilydale, I can tell you."- Sir Ian Hamilton to Miss Daphne Abbott.

## The Boys Who Are Sure to Win

Oh, boys who face at the Dardanelles  
Shrapnel and gas and H.E. shells,  
With a spirit that never a hardship quells,  
You are digging your trenches In,  
And all for the sake of the girls who pray  
For the lives of their soldiers day by day,  
And still with a brave, bright smile can say:  
"We know they are sure to win."

There are heaps of letters in Hamilton's bag  
From Dolly and Daphne and Molly and Mag,  
And every one of them has this tag  
Before the P.S. comes in:  
"What splendid fellows you have to lead.  
You ought to be proud of our boys indeed,  
Though some must perish and most must bleed,  
We know they are sure to win."

The orderly officer holds the file  
And watches General Hamilton smile  
Above each letter, though all the while  
The big guns bellow their din:  
And wherever the Hamilton smile has shone  
The men who see it will all fight on  
Till the last lone glimmer of hope has gone—  
They know he is sure to win.

Above and ahead do the mountains frown,  
And the withering volleys are mowing men down,  
And the fellow who clambers to Achi's crown  
Will get some holes in his skin;  
Our brave and boisterous boys don't shirk;  
With jests and bombs to fling at the Turk,  
They leap from the trenches and yell "Get work,"  
And we know they are sure to win.

Our boys must leave wherever they roam  
Their blood on the field and blood on the foam,  
But a kiss and a cuddle when they come home  
Are waiting from Maisie and Min,  
And lots of others, when they get back.  
The lips that cling and the lips that smack,  
As they limp in from the Great Red Track—  
The boys who are sure to win.

Of course, the view from the battle lines was a little different. The Sunday Times (Perth WA, 1 Aug 1915, page 12) has the following:

Trooper T. Crowe, 10th Light Horse, writes from Heliopolis, Egypt, to "The Sunday Times," forwarding the under-given parody he has composed on the popular song "My Little Grey Home in the West":—

### **My Little Wet Home in a Trench**

I've a little wet home in a trench,  
Which the raindrops continually drench;  
There's a dead Turk close by  
With his toes to the sky,  
And he gives us a beautiful stench.  
Underneath in the place of a floor  
There's a mass of wet mud and some straw,  
And the Jack Johnsons tear  
Through the rain-sodden air  
On my little wet home in the trench.

There are snipers who keep on the go,  
So you must keep your napper down low,  
And their star shells at night  
Make a deuce of a light  
Which causes the language to flow.  
Then bully and biscuits we chew,  
For it's weeks since we tasted a stew,  
But with shells dropping there,  
There's no place to compare  
With my little wet home in a trench.

And finally, the Moora Herald and Midland Districts Advocate (WA, 16 Nov 1915, page 6) has the following view from Signaller Skeyhill of the 8th Battalion (there was considerable pressure to enlist and peer pressure was encouraged):

### **Me Brothers Wot Stayed at 'Ome**

I've picked up me old Lee-Enfield,  
An' I've buckled me web about,  
For I'm only a bloomin' private,  
An' 've gotter see it out.  
An' though 'e shames 'is manhood,  
An' stains 'is pedigree,  
Thank God, there's some of us old 'uns left  
An' we'll fight until we're free.  
But should ther foe o'erpower us.  
An' we gits overthrown,  
Then 'e'll know 'e 'elped ter kill me—  
Me brother wot stayed at 'ome.