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WAR, SPORT AND THE ANZAC TRADITION

Kevin Blackburn

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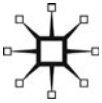

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Introduction

Abstract: *In contemporary Australia, sport and war are inextricably linked. Cricket and the different codes of football strongly associate themselves with the Anzac tradition, emphasising that the Australian national character is displayed in prowess on both the sporting field and the battlefield. This is most evident on Anzac Day when sport virtually appropriates the day and conducts its own rituals to commemorate the Australian war dead. The connection is not just a recent phenomenon.*

Blackburn, Kevin. *War, Sport and the Anzac Tradition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
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While it seems self-evident that sport is not war and war is not sport, the language of these two activities has become intertwined in contemporary Australian society, according to historians Jim Davidson and Robert Pascoe.[1] There is much evidence for this observation. Even Ricky Ponting, Australian Test Cricket captain (2004–2011), has lamented: 'There are often references to war and battles in sport but it is disrespectful to draw any comparison between the two.'[2] Other players of elite sport in Australia have been less reserved. Football clubs, to show that the sporting prowess of their players is similar to qualities required on the battlefield, have often had their players go through the highly challenging obstacle course at the Canungra army training base in the Australian State of Queensland. In 2015, Michael Rischitelli, of the Australian rules football team, the Suns, summed up his view of what he was doing: 'We don't get to experience the leadership qualities you need in war, but this is the closest we'll get.'[3]

The nature of how sports metaphors have been applied to the military has also been startling at times. One such sports metaphor was uttered on 8 July 2014 by Shinzo Abe, the Japanese Prime Minister, just before signing military and economic agreements with his Australian counterpart, Tony Abbott. Abe aimed to strengthen ties in order to balance a militarily assertive China in the Asia-Pacific. He told the Australian Parliament: 'We will now join up in a scrum, just like in rugby' in order 'to safeguard peace'.[4] Abe most likely knew that Abbott had been a keen rugby player in his youth when he played for Sydney University.

Perhaps, too, Abe was playing to a broader Australian audience. In Australia, this mixing of sport and war is best exemplified by what happens every 25th April, Anzac Day, the day to remember Australia's war dead. It marks the day in World War I when Australian soldiers first fought together as the troops of the Australian nation, which had been founded in 1901. They were part of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) which landed at Gallipoli in Turkey on 25 April 1915.

On Anzac Day, after the solemn ceremonies and marches of the morning, an Australian rules football match is played between Collingwood and Essendon, among the oldest clubs in the national football competition. Australian rules football is regarded by many Australians as 'the national game', and unlike other football codes, such as rugby and soccer, it is not played outside of Australia. The playing field for the Anzac Day game between the two rival teams is Australia's most well-known sports

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venue, the Melbourne Cricket Ground. A capacity crowd of over 90,000 spectators attends while the match is televised live around the nation.

Melbourne's most widely read newspaper, the *Herald Sun* regularly reinforces the connection between sport and war by publishing photographs of the Collingwood and Essendon Australian rules football captains flanking a veteran. The paper usually refers to all three as 'Anzac Day Heroes'. The photographs and the captions imply that the footballers are on the same level as the war heroes. In 2013, the two captains were shown in a large photograph on the front page of the newspaper in front of the Shrine of Remembrance with Corporal Alex Shain, the only woman serving on the frontline in Afghanistan at the time, and who also saw her friends killed in combat.[5]

Just before the start of the Anzac Day match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in the early afternoon, the rituals of the morning's dawn service are re-enacted on the playing field. Four armed Australian soldiers slowly march onto the ground from opposite directions at the beat of slow drumming. They then form a Catafalque Party, or guard, around the Australian and New Zealand flags, which are flown at half-mast. Next to the soldiers are the players from the two teams lined up in two opposing rows. The 90,000 strong crowd stands as the Ode to the Fallen is read out by the President of the Australian veterans' association, the Returned & Services League. The Last Post is played by a lone bugler. One minute of silence is observed for the fallen. Lastly the national anthems of both New Zealand and Australia are played, and then the game begins. Not surprisingly, when the Anzac Day match is played the commentary on the game at times becomes overblown with the use of military terms to describe the play on the field and references to 'heroes on the ground'. When the game is over, the losing side is said to be 'gallant in defeat'.

At the end of the game, the President of the Returned & Services League of the State of Victoria presents the Anzac Day medal to 'the player whose conduct and play during the game best exemplifies the Anzac spirit – skill, courage in adversity, self-sacrifice, teamwork and fairplay'. The Victorian State Returned & Services League also provides the Anzac Day Trophy which its president presents to the winning team. The trophy is made from wood and metal from the battlefields of Gallipoli and Villers-Bretonneux on the Western Front and is 'in dedication for those footballers who served in times of war'. The names of Victorian Football League players 'known to have sacrificed their lives during active service' are inscribed on the trophy. Robert Pascoe has

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documented how these particular rituals of sport and commemoration are new and invented, only dating back to no later than 1995 when the Anzac Day Australian rules game was introduced. However, Pascoe suggests that ideas that mix sport and war do have a long continuous history going back to World War I.[6]

This centrality of sport in the Australian notion of Anzac also has been illustrated in late twentieth-century Australian cinema. In director Peter Weir's 1981 film, *Gallipoli*, the character Archy sprints unarmed across no man's land at the Nek, having dropped his rifle, as if he is running in a track race. He runs into a hail of bullets as he makes his way towards the Turkish trenches. Inevitably, Archy falls after being shot, and the film ends. The story of the movie focuses on two Western Australian country sprinters Archy Hamilton and Frank Dunne who join up together. The final dramatic scene of the fictional movie seems to be based on a story told in the Australian official war history of the Gallipoli campaign written by C. E. W. Bean. In Bean's two-volume official history, *The Anzac Story*, published in 1921 and 1924, there is a description of Western Australian sprinter Wilfred Harper's own run towards the Turks' trenches at the Nek. Harper, according to Bean, 'was last seen running forward like a schoolboy in a foot-race, with all the speed he could compass'.[7]

This enduring link between Anzac and sport, which is evident in Peter Weir's film recreating in 1981 a scene that Bean conjured up in the 1920s, suggests that both the sporting field and the battlefield have been places for the construction of Australian masculinity. Archy's and Harper's sprints towards the enemy trenches are glimpses into how manhood was proven on the battlefield by overcoming the fear of death in order to make the ultimate act of self-sacrifice. According to Bean, for the Australian soldier, 'Life was very dear but life was not worth living unless they could be true to their ideas of Australian manhood.'[8] These scenes show how sport was employed to help overcome this fear.

The connection between sport and war provided by the story of Harper is far from an isolated occurrence in the Australian official histories of World War I. The volumes used many sporting analogies and metaphors to describe specifically the Australian male experience of war. Bean also described Australian soldiers watching their comrades attack at Lone Pine as 'a crowd not unlike that lining the rope round a cricket field'.[9] It was not just Bean who employed the sports metaphors in the Australian official histories. H. S. Gullett, who wrote the volume on the Australians in Palestine, felt compelled to write of 'the strong sporting instinct of the

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young men of Australia and New Zealand'.[10] In contrast, one can search in vain for similar metaphors in the British and New Zealand official histories of Gallipoli and, more generally, World War I.

Perhaps the absence of sports metaphors in the official war histories of other countries is due to these accounts of war being histories of military strategy and tactics. In contrast, Bean and his fellow authors focused more on the experiences of the ordinary soldier in order to sketch a national character: 'The first question of my fellow historians and myself clearly was: How did the Australian people – and the Australian character, if there is one – come through the universally recognized test of this, their first great war?'[11] Bean affirmed that 'the big thing in the war for Australia was the discovery of the character of Australian men. It was character which rushed the hills at Gallipoli and held out there during the long afternoon and night'.[12]

For Bean, this national character, which he saw as having been tested in war, originated from the male experience on the Australian frontier. Bean believed that 'the bushman is the hero of the Australian boy; the arts of the bush life are his ambitions'. He elaborated that the Australian male 'learns something of half the arts of a soldier by the time he is ten years old – to sleep comfortably in any shelter, to cook meat or bake flour, to catch a horse, to find his way across country by day or night, to ride, or at the worst, to "stick on." '[13] These characteristics, Bean felt, had made the Australians superior soldiers in endurance, ruggedness, resourcefulness, determination, practicality and independent mindedness. The Australians were also stereotyped as uniquely egalitarian and anti-authoritarian, sharing the comradely bonds of mateship.

Bean and his fellow war history authors, according to cultural studies critic Graham Seal, were conscious that they were fashioning an 'Anzac tradition' in their story telling.[14] The power of Bean's work and that of other writers who followed him meant that soldiers in later wars saw themselves as following in the Anzac tradition.[15] Australian historian John Barrett, in his survey of 3,700 soldiers who served in the Australian military from 1939 to 1945, concluded 'that the Anzac tradition influenced many young men in World War II'.[16]

What role did sport play in the Anzac tradition? Reflections on the experience of the Anzacs by one of their commanders, General Sir John Monash attributed what Bean saw as the outstanding characteristics of the Australian soldier to several factors, one of which was 'the instinct of sport and adventure which is his national heritage'.[17] Monash believed

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that this love of sport had contributed to 'creating a great national tradition'.[18]

In Australia, the work of historians such as Murray Phillips, Daryl Adair, John Nauright and Dale Blair has chronicled very well the entwining of sport and war during World War I when sportsmen were even urged to join up in sportsmen's battalions and rally around the cry of 'play up play up and play the game' – the game being the war.[19] Australia's mixing of sport and war from World War I, while distinctive, was not unique. American historian Wanda Ellen Wakefield has described how in the United States sport and war were seen as similar endeavours during World War I. From her study, she concludes that in America, 'The War itself was often referred to as a game, as despite the years of mass slaughter on the Western Front many still clung to a notion that participation in battle could be similar to participation in a game … thus meeting gender expectations that equated team play with masculinity since the end of the nineteenth century.'[20]

British historians working on the relationship between sport and war have also documented a similar trend. Britain, too, had its sportmen's battalions. Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi see the outbreak of World War I as a catalyst for the belief that war was like sport.[21] Cross-cultural studies of sport have tended to confirm the rise to prominence of sport in the military during World War I.[22] However, only Mason and Riedi in Britain and Wakefield in America have attempted to trace beyond World War I this connection between sport, war and the military.

This study sets out questions to be asked when investigating the role of sport in the Anzac tradition and how it has been constructed from World War I to contemporary times. What are the origins of the role that sport plays in the Anzac tradition? Does it begin with the experience of World War I? How has sport manifested itself in the Anzac tradition since World War I? Have similar cultures, namely Britain, also linked the two as emphatically as can be found in the Anzac legend and sustained such a connection across generations until the present?

Notes

1 Jim Davidson, 'Sport with Guns', *Meanjin*, Vol. 67, No. 4, Summer 2008, pp. 10–13; and Robert Pascoe, 'The AFL Anzac Day Match', *CCL Review*, May 2007.

2 Ricky Ponting, *Ponting at the Close of Play* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2013), p. 247.

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3 Michael Whiting, 'Gold Coast players join the army for a day', 2 February 2015 Gold Coast Suns, http://www.goldcoastfc.com.au/news/2015-02-02/gold-coast-players-join-the-army-for-a-day
4 Shinzo Abe, *Commonwealth of Australia, House of Representatives, Hansard*, 8 July 2014.
5 *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), 25 April 2013.
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7 C. E. W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918: Volume II: The Story of ANZAC from 4 May, 1915, to the Evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula*, 11th edition. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941), originally published in 1924, p. 618.
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10 H. S. Gullett, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918: Volume VII: The AIF in Sinai and Palestine* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1923), p. 18.
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12 Lack, *Anzac Remembered: Selected Writings of K.S. Inglis*, p. 19.
13 Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918: Volume I: The Story of ANZAC, From the Outbreak of War to the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4 1915*, pp. 45–46.
14 Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2004), pp. 63–84.
15 See Marilyn Lake, 'The Power of Anzac', in M. McKernan and M. Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988), pp. 331–335.
16 John Barrett, *We Were There: Australian Soldiers of World War II Tell Their Stories* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 138.
17 John Monash, *The Australian Victories in France in 1918* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1973), p. 290.
18 Monash, *The Australian Victories in France in 1918*, p. 290.
19 Daryl Adair, John Nauright and Murray Phillips, 'Playing Fields Through to Battle Fields: The Development of Australian Sporting Manhood in its Imperial Context, *circa* 1850–1918', *Journal of Australian Studies*, No. 56, 1998, pp. 51–67; Dale James Blair, 'Beyond The Metaphor: Football and War, 1914–1918', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, issue 28, April 1996; Murray George Phillips, Australian Sport and World War One, (University of Queensland, PhD thesis, 1991); Murray G. Phillips, 'Sport, War and Gender Images: The

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Australian Sportsmen's Battalions and the First World War', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1997, pp. 78–96; and Murray G. Phillips, 'The Unsporting German and the Athletic Anzac: Sport, Propaganda, and the First World War', *Sport History Review*, Vol. 27, 1996, pp. 14–29.

20 Wanda Ellen Wakefield, *Playing to Win: Sports and the American Military, 1898–1945* (New York: State University of New York, 1997), pp. 18–19.

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22 Thierry Terret, 'Prologue: Making Men, Destroying Bodies: Sport, Masculinity and the Great War Experience', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 28, Nos. 3–4, March 2011, pp. 323–328.

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1
The 'Race of Athletes' of World War I

Abstract: *Soon after the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915, the Australian soldiers were described as a 'race of athletes' in the first despatch to make it back to Australia. The use of this sports metaphor by British journalist Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett reflected the prevalence in both Britain and Australia of the late Victorian and Edwardian idea of masculinity which decreed that proving one's manhood on the sports field was preparation for the 'greater game' of proving manhood on the battlefield. The notion that Australian men, who excelled at sports before World War I, had at Gallipoli proven themselves and upheld the manhood of their nation found its way into Australian national identity.*

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This chapter explores the striking parallels between the discussion of war and sport in Australia with similar debates in Britain during World War I. It argues that these similarities suggest that the intertwining of sport and war in the public imagination had similar origins. However, in Australia because the Anzac tradition became central to the Australian identity this connection between sport and war was elevated to an aspect of national character. Australian historian Carolyn Holbrook in her study of the history of Anzac in public culture has briefly commented that 'Sport seems to have a particular affiliation with the Anzac tradition.'[1] In Britain, sport was also strong in military life, but the connection between war and sport did not become part of constructions of national character as it did in Australia.

'This Race of Athletes'

The first report describing in detail the landing of the Anzacs at Gallipoli reached Australia on 8 May 1915. The despatch was written by the distinguished British war correspondent Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett. He described the Australians as a 'race of athletes' scaling cliffs and hurling back the Turks with their bayonets. He recounted what happened when the Australians encountered sheer cliffs after the initial landing:

> Here was a tough proposition to tackle in the darkness, but those colonials were practical above all else and went about it in a practical way. They stopped a few minutes to pull themselves together, get rid of their packs, and charge their rifle magazines. Then this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliff without responding to the enemy's fire. They lost some men, but didn't worry, and in less than a quarter of an hour the Turks were out of their second position, and either bayoneted or fleeing.[2]

The description of Australian soldiers as a 'race of athletes' was emblazoned in the headlines of Australian newspapers and sports magazines in the week following 8 May 1915. The most popular sports journal of the Australian State of New South Wales, *The Referee*, used 'This Race of Athletes' as a front page headline. It further embellished the description on the front page with a banner that read: 'Deeds that Thrill by our Athletes and Sportsmen', expressing the assumption that the Australians who landed at Gallipoli were mainly athletes and sportsmen. Its subtitle below this front page banner compared Gallipoli to a football game, implying that the time spent by the sportsmen playing football had

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prepared them well for battle: 'Rushes of the Football Field Repeated with the Bayonet Against the Turks'.[3] On its front page, *The Referee* chronicled the life of the most well-known Australian sportsman who had been killed on the first day of the Gallipoli landing, a rugby union international for both Britain and Australia, Blair I. Swannell.[4] This use of the description of the Australians as a 'race of athletes' caught on. *The Referee* and other Australian newspapers used it repeatedly in the weeks that followed the release of Ashmead-Bartlett's despatch.[5]

Before Gallipoli, there was a perception that Australian manhood was seen to have proven itself on the sports field but not yet on the battlefield. Just before the outbreak of the war, writers such as Gordon Inglis, with the assistance of his fellow journalist C. E. W. Bean, helped popularise the perception that just as in sport young Australian males have 'proved equal to defeating the world's best', so too they would take equally well to 'the stern game of soldiering'.[6] Writers such as Inglis reflected a widely held view at the beginning of the twentieth century that Australian sporting prowess was perceived to have been due to the effects of the Australian climate physically improving the manhood of the British race.[7]

Australians, it was believed, had inherited and improved upon what was called 'the spirit of sport' that 'has always been inherent in the people of Great Britain and Ireland'.[8] Publicly endorsing Inglis' view, former conservative Prime Minister George H. Reid wrote the preface of his book, *Sport and Pastime in Australia*, and noted that 'the true sportsman learns to obey, exercise self-control, to subordinate self-interest', which were also perceived as good qualities for soldiering.[9] Liberal Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, when delivering a speech on 28 August 1908 marking 50 years of Australian rules football, proclaimed that Australians were a 'sporting people', who, when 'toscin sounds the call to arms', will 'play the Australian game of nation-making'.[10] Success in fighting at Gallipoli appeared to remove any doubts that Australian manhood was not an improvement on its British racial origins.[11] According to Ashmead-Bartlett's despatch, the Anzacs 'knew they had been tried for the first time, and had not been found wanting.'[12]

At the beginning of the twentieth century it was commonly accepted that a nation had to be 'blooded' in war to prove itself. Battle was the test of the manhood of a nation.[13] The Australian poet Edward Dyson had expressed this in his well-known poem, 'Men of Australia', that had been written in 1898 as the country moved towards the 1901 federation of the group of British colonies on the Australian continent into a nation.

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Dyson regretted that the Australian nation was not 'blooded' in battle: 'We are named to march unblooded to the winning of a nation.'[14] He hoped that soon the young men of Australia would 'crown her with a glory that may evermore abide'.[15]

The idea that a nation has to be 'blooded', and that Australia had been indeed 'blooded' at Gallipoli, was a theme in the Australian official war histories, which helped foster the Anzac legend after the war. The Anzacs were described by H. S. Gullett, an official Australian correspondent who worked with C. E. W. Bean, as 'children of a virgin unblooded country', who at Gallipoli 'fought with all the might and resource of their proud exuberant manhood'. Gullett extolled in the official history: 'By their work at Anzac would the world know them ... By their work would the standard of valour be set for all time' for Australian men to follow.[16]

The 'race of athletes' description of the First Australian Imperial Force of World War I would be repeated many times by the popular press during the war and in the interwar years. Ashmead-Bartlett was fond of comparing the Australians to athletes. On 19th April, before the Gallipoli landing, he had written in an early despatch that the Australians appeared to be 'a race of giants' of whom 'every man seems to be a trained athlete'.[17] Again on 16th July, he wrote that the Australians were 'big-limbed athletes' that 'no European nation possesses anything to compare with'.[18]

The fact that these first references to the Anzacs in battle were made by a British journalist rather than an Australian one is significant as it highlights that sports metaphors used to describe Australian soldiers in battle were expressions of a cultural background that had its origins in Britain rather than in life on the Australian frontier. Australian historian Kevin Fewster has noted that Ashmead-Bartlett, although no sportsman himself, had grown up in the English middle class public schools and had imbued the school culture that taught the boys that the playing field was good preparation for the battlefield.[19]

The connection between sport and war before World War I

Late Victorian and Edwardian ideas of masculinity created by middle class public schools for boys were the foundations of the connection

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between Anzac and sport that occurred during World War I. The link did not suddenly occur in World War I, but the experience of the war was crucial in moulding the Anzac tradition and sport together. Before World War I, Australia had no regular standing army so had no military traditions involving sport and war; it only possessed a militia force of part-volunteers or citizen soldiers.[20] In contrast, Britain had a large standing army, which, according to sports historian J. D. Campbell, had absorbed a tradition that extolled the principle that 'training for sport is training for war'.[21] This British military tradition, as Campbell documents it, emerged out of the background of the officers in the public schools, where the 'right character' was created and tested on the sports field. These young men went into the army and made sport integral to military training in the British army.

The raising of an Australian expeditionary force soon after the outbreak of World War I presented an opportunity to create military traditions whereas this had not happened previously. Oddly, state-based expeditionary contingents that were sent to fight in the Boer War in South Africa from 1899 to 1902 had not excited comparisons with contests on the playing field. Carolyn Holbrook in her study of Anzac attempted to explain why the Australian expeditionary forces fighting in the Boer War did not provide for connections to be made between war and sport. She wrote, 'The accretion of indeterminate engagements against an enemy that employed guerrilla tactics to great effect was incompatible with an ideal of war inspired by Waterloo, in which battle was frequently compared with cricket and rugby.'[22]

For the origins of the Anzac sporting tradition one should perhaps begin to look to the sporting traditions that already existed in the British military well before the First Australian Imperial Force was formed. How did such a tradition develop in the British army? Sports historian J. A. Mangan's classic studies on the role of sport in Britain's public schools, from which the officer class of the British army was drawn, have long provided the answer to this question in terms of what he called the 'games ethic'.

Mangan argued that a 'games ethic' had emerged among the young men who stepped out of Britain's public schools during the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Throughout their young adult lives they followed the British public school adage, 'Play Up Play Up and Play the Game', which was from Henry Newbolt's poem 'Vitai Lampada'. Mangan wrote that the late Victorian and Edwardian public

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schools when teaching their boys about having 'the right character' made full use of Newbolt's verses suggesting that the character qualities needed in a tight game of cricket were similar to those required for tight fighting in the infantry square of riflemen in the service of the empire.[23] Mangan's work also argues that the idea of 'Muscular Christianity' helps explain this connection between sport and war in the late Victorian and Edwardian Britain.[24] Meekness was not seen as a Christian virtue if it meant that what was wrong prevailed. If it took the use of force to make things right then young men had to be toughened up through physical games at school. Young men were taught they should test their character against physical challenges, such as those found on the sports field. In sport, ideas of duty, fair play, self-sacrifice and self-discipline were forged into masculine ideals. It was believed that such young men would be the first to answer the call of duty to fight.[25]

Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi, studying the use of sport in the British armed forces, have agreed with Mangan that 'the belief that sport and war were in some sense the same, that sport was the "mimic" of war and war the "greater game", was certainly firmly held in the late Victorian and Edwardian public school'. Mason and Riedi added: 'In the ideology of athleticism, expressed in school sermons and schoolboy verses, games produced not only the physical but the moral qualities required in a good soldier – courage and stoicism, quick-wittedness and quick decision, leadership qualities and loyalty to the team.'[26]

According to Campbell, sport 'occupied a place so central in the lives of Victorian British army officers that it is in some respects difficult for us to fathom today. The average officer spent the vast majority of his time occupied with sport, more so than any other single activity'.[27] He describes how 'as products of public schools, officers were as a group perhaps more influenced by athleticism than most other comparable groups in British society.'[28] Campbell concluded that the 'games ethic' was made into a British military tradition in the late Victorian and Edwardian period:

> Knowledge of the central role the games ethic played in officer culture is critical to an understanding of why sport and physical training became so crucial to the late Victorian Army. Aside from the social importance of sport and games for officers, these men carried with them into the Army their fundamental belief in the value of sports and games for building character

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> and 'manliness'. Strong character and physical prowess were then, and still are, generally accepted as essential parts of the successful combat leader's make-up, and so it followed that games and sport would be seen as crucial to the professional development of the British officer.[29]

These public school officers changed the culture of the British military. Campbell noted: 'By getting soldiers out of the barracks, canteens and brothels and into the gymnasium and onto the games field, officers believed they could improve the fighting capabilities of their men while also improving their minds, morale and moral fiber.'[30] He thoroughly documents how these officers in late Victorian times established many sports, such as rugby union, cricket and soccer, in the British army through such avenues as regimental competitions.

Australia, as part of the British Empire, during the late Victorian and Edwardian period mirrored what had occurred in Britain. Martin Crotty, following up the research work of Mangan in the Australian context, has observed that the construction of Australian middle class masculinity was a product of a similar 'games ethic' in its own public schools. Crotty has described how Australia's public schools elevated athleticism as 'the embodiment of the hegemonic ideal of masculinity' then 'reconciled' it with a growing militarism by 'discursively modifying the purposes of sport, investing it with the qualities of preparing boys for war, likening the battlefield to the games field and playing up the connections between loyalty to the team and loyalty to King, country and empire.'[31] He identified a definite turning point when war and sport became linked in Australian public schools:

> Before 1900 sport had primarily meant fair play, loyalty, acceptance of victory and defeat, fortitude, discipline and obedience. It did not lose those meanings after 1900 but the meanings were allied to militarism, and sport thus increasingly came to mean preparing for war.[32]

Crotty explains the development of the connection between sport and war in the public schools in terms of an 'increased emphasis on national and imperial loyalty from the start of the twentieth century', which 'permeated all spheres of education'.[33] Sport at school became more linked to its utility in preparing boys for war, rather than just a celebration of manliness and athleticism. Thus, when World War I broke out, Crotty noted the rise to prominence of the idea that 'sacrifice on the battlefield was held up as vindication of public school training.'[34]

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Sportsmen and the outbreak of World War I in Britain

In Britain, amateur sportsmen with a public school background, as indicated by the work of historian W. J. Reader, were prominent among the hundreds of thousands who flocked to the recruitment centres soon after war was declared.[35] In August 1914 298,923 men enlisted and in September there were 462,901 recruits; thereafter numbers dropped dramatically until 1916 when conscription was introduced. Niall Ferguson also confirmed Reader's point that the middle class public school-educated men were disproportionally caught up in the rush to enlist.[36] Sports historian Colin Veitch quoted from R. E. Vernede's poem, 'The Call' in *The Times* on 19 August 1914 to illustrate what motivated many of the public school boys who played in the various football codes to enlist. 'The Call' asked:

> You, who have counted the game the prize,
> Here is the game of games to play.
> Never a goal – the captains say –
> Matches the one that's needed now:
> Put the old blazer and cap away –
> England's colours await your brow.[37]

John Simon in his study of English cricket's reaction to the outbreak of World War I also came to similar conclusions that many amateur sportsmen believed that sport had prepared them both physically and mentally for war. Simon colourfully illustrated his point when he used from later in the war, James Norman Hall's poem, 'The Cricketers of Flanders', which compared throwing grenades to bowling cricket balls:

> Full sixty yards I've seen them throw
> With all that nicety of aim
> They learned on British cricket-fields.
> Ah! Bombing is a Briton's game!
> Shell-hole, trench to trench,
> 'Lobbing them over'. With an eye
> As true as though it were a game,
> And friends were having tea close by.[38]

British sports associations and clubs enthusiastically encouraged their players and members to enlist together to show their team spirit on the battlefield.[39] Thousands from the cricket clubs joined up very early in order to serve together: the coming cricket season was eventually

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cancelled.[40] Some rugby union clubs had all their players and members join up together.[41] The most well-known group of sportsmen to join up during the month of August was led by Edgar Roberts Mobbs, a former ruby union international for England, who persuaded 250 of his rugby union and sports friends to form 'D' Company of the 7th (Service) Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment.[42] The unit became known as 'Mobbs Army' or 'Mobbs Corps'. In September, it was decided by rugby union's governing body that its competitions would be scrapped for the rest of the war as most of its players had enlisted or were serving in the military.[43]

Amateur sportsmen from the public schools put pressure on their professional colleagues to join up and shut down their sport. The professionals tended to come from working class backgrounds and had not been exposed to the intense nationalism that their fellow middle class athletes endured in the elite public schools. Professional soccer, under pressure from members of other sporting codes and the loss of players to the military, eventually cancelled its planned 1915 season although it continued its 1914 season despite criticism of not being a 'patriotic sport'.[44] Rugby league followed a similar pattern to soccer with its 1914 season being its last because so many of its players had joined up. The predominantly working class rugby league showed how much it had assimilated the 'games ethic' of its middle class counterpart, rugby union. The governing body of British rugby league resolved that 'all clubs be asked to encourage their players to join the army for active service' as hundreds of players decided to go to the front.[45]

The active involvement of British sports associations in getting their players to join up brought forward a new idea in late August 'that a battalion might be raised from the ranks of the players and football supporters'.[46] The unit was first conceived of as an 'Athletes Volunteer Force', which was envisaged as being 'promoted to bring in cricketers, football players, rowing men, athletes, cyclists, golfers, swimmers, and all sportsmen'.[47] For this unit, 'Public school men' aged between 18 and 45 were particularly 'invited to apply' as they were looking for what they called 'the right man'.[48] At the end of August it was reported that over 1,000 club secretaries had approached their members about joining such a force. In September, advertisements started appearing in the British press asking sportsmen to 'Enlist in the Sportsman's Battalion', which was 'sanctioned by Lord Kitchener', the Secretary of War.[49] The 'Colonel-in-Chief' of the battalion was none other than the king himself. The quota for men in the Sportsman's Battalion had

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to be increased by an extra 500 from the originally proposed 1,100 men because of demand for places.[50] The Sportsman's Battalion was so well received that a second such battalion was soon launched. Public calls in the press for this second battalion in December 1914 proudly declared: 'the 1st Battalion attained its full strength in three weeks – all Varsity men, Old Public School Boys – men who are hardened to the soldier's life by strenuous pursuit of sport.'[51]

The first Sportsman's Battalion was officially known as the 23rd Royal Fusiliers' Battalion; the second Sportsman's Battalion became the 24th Royal Fusiliers' Battalion, the third was called the 30th Royal Fusiliers.[52] Other battalions comprised whole sporting clubs, such as 'McCrae's Battalion', the 16th Royal Scots, which was raised in Edinburgh soon after the outbreak of the war, and had as its core players and members of the Edinburgh soccer club, the Heart of Midlothian. The battalion was named after its Lieutenant Colonel, Edinburgh politician Sir George McCrae, who formed it. In December 1914, in response to the claim that soccer players were not doing enough for the war, the 'Footballers' Battalion', the 17th (Service) Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, was formed from professional soccer players; a second 'Footballers' Battalion' soon followed.[53]

Australian sportsmen and the call to join 'the Greater Game' before Gallipoli

While in Britain sports were quickly closed down soon after the outbreak of the war and sportsmen urged to turn their attention to the 'greater game', in Australia, it was apparent that there was little change to the sports calendar. In 1914, Australian sports associations and clubs were initially quiet about exhorting their members to join up compared to their British counterparts. The public school 'games ethic' seemed much stronger in Britain with its longer tradition of their boys joining the military, whereas Australia had no such cultural tradition in its midst because of the absence of a standing army. Australian sports historian Dale Blair in his account of Australian rules during World War I suggests that even into early 1915 'it seemed football would go on much as usual in spite of the war'.[54]

At the Collingwood Australian rules football club of Melbourne only two players enlisted in the First Australian Imperial Force for all of 1914. The Collingwood 'honorary historian' Richard Stremski acknowledges

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in his history that initially, 'World War I did not inspire the CFC to melodious heights, nor did a high percentage of Collingwood players enlist.'[55] On 29 August 1914, the official organ of the organisation that ran Australian rules football's Victorian Football League, *Football Record*, recommended that sport should be 'going about business as usual ... notwithstanding the war', claiming that the sports in Britain had not changed when clearly they had.[56] *The Farmer and Settler* journal of Sydney in September 1914 summed up the contrast between sportsmen in Britain and Australia that a few newspaper sports journalists made:

> Perhaps it is because Australia is so far from the seat of trouble that the war has made no serious difference to sport. In England, the imminence of national peril has had a different influence. Most of the prominent Rugby football unions have cancelled the whole of the season's fixtures, and it is being publicly discussed as to whether it is not advisable and expedient to abandon all forms of sport whilst recruiting is being carried on. If we had the old press-gang system in Australia, our football fields would furnish fine 'bags' for the recruiters.[57]

Nonetheless, there was a wave of patriotism for defending the British Empire that led to thousands of men flocking to the recruitment centres in Australia throughout August and September 1914.[58] By early September, the recruitment authorities had exceeded their target of 20,000 volunteers. However, in Australia, sport did not seem to play the same role that it had in Britain in the initial months when British sports clubs and associations publicly encouraged thousands of their players and members to join up, to the extent of shutting down their competitions. In Australia, there were only a very small number of sports that were exceptions to the idea that despite the war sport should continue. One such sport was rugby union, which was perhaps the closest to the elite middle class public schools. Rugby union cancelled its fixtures in New South Wales and 500 of its players joined up by the end of 1914.[59] In Victoria, 200 out of the 500 amateur soccer players, according to its sports officials, also joined up in the first recruitment drives.[60] Australian war historian Joan Beaumont has made the point that most Australians joined up in battalions and regiments that were drawn from the towns and districts in which they lived.[61] There were a few public schools that contributed to an 'old boys' unit, but their numbers were not as great as their counterparts in Britain. Thus, Australian sportsmen mainly joined up in 1914 because of these connections rather than the connections they had in their sports clubs and associations, which at the outbreak

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of World War I did not uniformly follow the rhetoric of their British counterparts.

In early 1915, after the first contingent of the Australian Imperial Force had arrived in Egypt but had not yet been in battle, Australian sports writers and clubs grew concerned when they noticed that there were still many sportsmen at home who had not followed the logic of the 'games ethic' and responded to 'the call of duty'. In January 1915, *The Age* of Melbourne, in what it called 'an appeal to athletes', described how the impact of the war on regular sporting events had been 'so infinitesimal as to be hardly worth consideration'.[62] It alleged that Australia's 'athletes, in a general sense, have not reflected on the seriousness of the position created by the war'.[63] Having learned of the success of Britain's battalions of sportsmen and footballers, *The Age* proposed that 'in order to popularise the "call" it is suggested that as far as possible those associated in sport should be drafted into one company or battalion, it being thought that such a step would be a stimulus to enlisting.'[64]

By early 1915, the Australian press and the sports associations were very aware of what was going on in Britain with regard to sports and recruitment. They began to ask why Australia could not be the same and also have a sportsmen's battalion. The press began to republish the rhetoric from Britain. The Adelaide *Register* reproduced the London *Sportsman*'s assertion in a full page cartoon: 'Already Britain has her Sportsman's Battalion, but that title might justifiably be applied to every body of soldiers and sailors in His Majesty's Forces, so numerous in the ranks are the men who have learned the rudiments of discipline and the way to take hard knocks on the playing fields. Truly, our sportsmen are Britannia's Best-Defenders.'[65] *The Referee*, of Sydney, drew upon the British sports magazine, *The Field*, when claiming that '"The Field" shows that footballers and cricketers have, played their parts nobly, and, indeed, that representatives of all games and sports in Great Britain have done magnificent work against the Germans.'[66]

The desire to have the First Australian Imperial Force as an army of athletes was strong in the Australian sports press once it learnt of sportsmen's units in the British army. In January 1915, *The Referee* even copied the British sports magazines and commissioned its own poem by George Shand with the title 'The Sportsmen's Brigade' to describe the First Australian Imperial Force – in reality a three-division corps, not a brigade. This piece of doggerel alluded to the First Australian Imperial Force as being composed of athletes and sportsmen:

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THE SPORTSMEN'S BRIGADE

Australian sports are marching,
Are marching to the war,
To prove Australia's valor
Amid the cannon's roar.

Trained in the sports arena
To strive with purpose sure,
They'll fight 'gainst odds, unflinching,
While life and strength endure.

The mettle of their pasture
Will be tested as they fight
On snowclad plains or sunscorched sands,
To uphold the Empire's might.

And the sum of brave deeds counted
When fighting days are o'er
Will show Australian sportsmen
Having made a winning score.

God-speed Australian sportsmen,
And help them play the game,
To fight for right and justice,
And extend Australia's fame.[67]

The poem received a wide circulation when other Australian newspapers also published it.[68] The tone of 'The Sportsmen's Brigade' helps explain the excitement in Australia over Ashmead-Bartlett's 'race of athletes' comments after the Gallipoli landing.

Stung by the poor comparisons made with the number of British sportsmen who had enlisted, sporting associations and clubs in Melbourne called a series of public meetings in February and March 1915 to get more sportsmen into uniform, and to follow Britain in forming a sportsmen's battalion. On 8 February 1915, at a meeting of the Victorian Cricket Association, its President Dr Donald Mackinnon observed that while 'Australian sportsmen ... were not as prominently identified with volunteering as the English confreres ... there is no earthly reason why we should allow English sportsmen to bear the brunt of the fight. It seems to me that sporting bodies have an obligation thrown on them of presenting that aspect of the case to their young members.'[69] The first public meeting of sports associations and clubs on the matter was called by the Melbourne Cricket Club and held at the Melbourne Town Hall on the night of 10 February 1915. Colonel Robert Wallace, the Military

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Commander for Victoria, told the audience: 'They would recollect that one unit in the First Expeditionary Force consisted of public schools boys and no doubt the Minister [For Defence] would consider favourably the question of the establishment of a unit of sportsmen.'[70]

At the follow-up public meeting on 24 February 1915 of 2,500 people held inside Melbourne Town Hall, the topic was considered important enough to have both the Governor of Victoria and the Minister of Defence address the gathering. Governor Sir Arthur Stanley told the audience that 'this meeting was called to invite more men to take part in what was the greatest game of all sports – to go to war, which had been called the great game. The soul of the sportsman did not lie in looking on, but lay in taking part in the game and in this great game you must either be a principal or nothing at all (Applause).'[71] Senator George Foster Pearce, the Minister of Defence in the Fisher Labor Government, appealed to the 'games ethic' that many in the crowd as amateur sportsmen educated in public schools held dear. He asked the crowd of sportsmen: 'Did they not think that the time might come when their Empire might call them to the sterner game, the greater and higher duty? (Applause).'[72] He went on with the metaphor: 'That time had come; the Empire had given the call. (Cheers) It was the sportsmen's turn to go in; their captain had called. Would they shirk, or go on to the field and play the game?'

The call for military units modelled on the British sportsmen's battalion was also voiced in other States of the Australian Commonwealth. In January 1915, the *Sydney Morning Herald* in an opinion piece entitled 'Playing the Game' discussed how British sport was good for churning out soldiers:

> It has been written 'Battles are won on the playing fields,' and we know what the Duke of Wellington said of the playing fields of Eton. In the field of sport we learn how to take hard knocks, as well as how to give them, and our footballers and our cricketers never play so well as when it is an uphill game. That is why British sportsmen make fine soldiers.[73]

The newspaper then suggested that what was needed in Australia was a unit similar to the sportsmen's battalions of Britain. It then highlighted the life of one rugby union player who had joined up, Scotsman, Lieutenant Lewis Robertson, who had caps for playing in international matches against England, Wales and South Africa. The paper concluded, 'But the cap which fits him best is that which he has won in the game against Germany.'[74]

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In Adelaide, E. E. Cleland, Chairman of the Australian rules South Australian Football League, gave his endorsement to the idea of a sportsmen's battalion:

> To knowingly stand shoulder to shoulder with comrades who have been weighed in the balance of the world of sport must be a great incentive to perform those deeds which have made the Empire ... I think the formation of such a battalion will greatly thin the ranks of our football players because, without making invidious distinctions, I know of no body of men more actively loyal than they.[75]

The sports associations and other community organisations of Queensland also held a public meeting to discuss the topic in Brisbane on 22 February 1915, which was presided over by the Liberal Party Premier, Digby Frank Denham. Several speakers addressed the question of a sportsmen's battalion 'along English lines'. One of the major resolutions of the meeting was 'That all Queensland cricketers, footballers, rowers, golfers, athletes, swimmers, and all sportsmen be invited to co-operate in this movement.'[76]

According to war historian Michael McKernan, there was a class division within Australian sport that emerged as early as 1914, which explains why many sportsmen had not joined up and indicates why many sports had viable competitions into 1915.[77] There was the 'games ethic' of middle class amateur sportsmen which saturated the press, but there was another view of many professional sportsmen, who could not afford to participate in sport unless they were paid. For them, sport was not preparation for a higher test of character but just 'entertainment and pleasure, an exciting break from the monotony of urban work; as such sport needed no further or more serious justification'.[78] These contrasting views of sport represented a class divide according to McKernan, who argued that 'most of the adherents of the professional view of sport were to be found among the Australian working class, while the amateur view prevailed in the middle class'.[79]

The middle class advocates of amateur sport were conscious of this divide when it came to the call to join up. Some such as the head of Melbourne's Wesley College L. A. Adamson tenaciously attacked the sports professionals who refused to join up because it would have meant financial ruin for their families if they lost the money from their job and their fees of professional sport. The likes of Adamson regarded them as 'slackers and shirkers', and the only way to get them into uniform, they

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believed, was to shut down sport.[80] They hounded Les Darcy, a champion from the working class sport of boxing, to enlist until finally he fled to America. The *Camperdown Chronicle* of Western Victoria was one of many newspapers which was very unsympathetic to professional sportsmen for not joining up. But writing soon after Gallipoli, the editor of the newspaper hoped: 'The gallant and brilliant deeds of our young braves around Gallipoli should stimulate the desire to enlist, and bring to bear irresistible pressure on those who, so far, have manifestly shirked a duty sacred in the eyes of all true Britons.'[81] Gallipoli did transform the situation for sportsmen as the pressure to join up became even greater and recruitments increased dramatically to their highest levels for the war.

The connection between sport and war at Gallipoli

Despite there being no interruption to the sports season, a considerable number of sportsmen joined the first contingent of the First Australian Imperial Force. As the troops in the first convoy left Australian shores in October 1914 to go to the war, there was some sense among the officers that they were in command of an 'army of athletes', as many sportsmen had joined up in large numbers with men from their local communities and neighbourhoods. On 20 October 1914, Lieutenant Thomas James Richards, who had represented Australia and Britain in international rugby union, wrote in his diary his impression of his men:

> It is surprising the number of sports followers there are on board and the present cricket season and the coming football season must suffer in consequence. When one looks over the troops as they stand around their height and physique are admirable, their age is thoroughly mature and their faces, though hard and weather-beaten, are very determined and strong looking.[82]

Expectations were high. For the men of the First Australian Imperial Force, what lay ahead in their first battle was seen by them as a test of their manhood. War historian Bill Gammage has documented from the Australian War Memorial's collection of diaries and letters the concerns of the soldiers of meeting the high expectations. Gammage quotes from the diary of one soldier of the First Australian Imperial Force the day before the Gallipoli landing: 'it is going to be Australia's chance and she makes a tradition out of this that she must always look back on.'[83] Captain Percy Wellesley Chapman, who arrived later in the year on the Gallipoli

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Peninsula, wrote in his diary that 25 April 1915 was 'the day that Australia arrived at manhood'.[84] From shifting through many letters and diaries, Gammage concluded that the men of the First Australian Imperial Force felt confident that they 'had answered a vitally important question at the landing. They fulfilled their expectations about their fighting prowess, and they had proved their country to the world: they passed the test of battle'.[85]

The Anzacs in their letters and diaries at Gallipoli made comparisons between their sport and war. Michael McKernan describes one young soldier writing to his parents in Victoria just before the 25 April 1915 Gallipoli landing noting with pleasure that he and his mates would be landing on the peninsula at about the same time that the Australian rules football season would begin. He was happy 'that the two campaigns, both for a flag, would kick off at roughly the same time'.[86] North Sydney and Manly rugby union player Herbert Andrew Mitchell landed on Gallipoli on the first day with his fellow club player Fred Aarons. Mitchell sent a well-publicised letter back from Gallipoli to his rugby mates praising the qualities that rugby fostered and their compatibility for battle. In his letter, Mitchell wrote, 'I met a number of fellows who played the old game, and all acquitted themselves well, which goes to show there is nothing like rugby to turn out the rugged and determined fellow.'[87] Proud that 'our boys are second to none', he wrote of other rugby players at Gallipoli as if they were playing a rugby game:

> As you know, Harold George and Fred Thompson are out of it. Each died a man's death. A bomb loaded Tasker's leg and ankle up with about 17 pieces of shot. It will be some time before he can do any of the sidestepping he used to do.[88]

Mitchell's published letter was representative of other letters sent back home by sportsmen that went unpublished. Writing home from Gallipoli, on 19 August 1915, Driver Archibald John Mychael, of the First Light Horse Regiment, told his sister Mary, 'One doesn't feel afraid you dash in just the same as on a football field … '.[89] Three days later Mychael was killed in action.[90]

Among many sportsmen, their experience of Gallipoli seemed to confirm their view that war was like sport, but often the rules of 'fair play' that they had been taught to cherish in sport were waived. Private C. Murray, of the Sydney suburb of Manly, when writing to friends in Melbourne described how, at Gallipoli, war seemed like hunting: 'On Monday a party of us went

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out hunting snipers – the best sport of the lot. We bagged a good few by night, although there were a few of us bagged as well.'[91] Murray told of how he and his comrades did not take the snipers prisoners, even if they surrendered. They simply shot them unarmed because they regarded the snipers as cowardly for hiding in concealed areas and picking off men, then quickly surrendering when Murray and his comrades got close to them. The snipers seemed to be not playing the game of war according to notions of 'fair play' and hence deserved no mercy. Another soldier writing back to his friends in a letter published in the Western Australian press also admitted his comrades did not take prisoners when engaged in the 'sport' of war. He believed 'there is no sport equal to it – chasing, shooting and bayoneting the Turks'.[92] In other diaries and letters of the Australian soldiers, the experience of war at Gallipoli could also be referred to as a grim sport. John McKenzie, a stretcher bearer bringing the wounded back, asked himself on 28 October 1915: 'When one sees a few of the sights which are to be seen out here one queries the old saying the "glories of war". To me this is a game of pathos.'[93]

The Anzacs were not the only ones to conflate sport with war on the battlefields of World War I. Their British counterparts went much further in making the battlefield seem more like the sports field. British troops brought rugby and soccer balls to the trenches on the Western Front and proceeded to kick them into no man's land to encourage the men to go over the top. The most well-known incidents were on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916. Two companies of the 16th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers followed out of the trenches a drop-kicked rugby ball. Only 11 men of eight platoons survived the machine fire they faced in no man's land.[94] 'B' Company of the 8th Battalion of the Eastern Surreys also went over the top at the Somme with its men dribbling to each other soccer balls across no man's land.[95] This was not the first charge of British soldiers in World War I following a football. The first had occurred earlier at the Battle of Loos on 25 September 1915 by the 1st Battalion of the London Irish Rifles Regiment. According to one eyewitness, the idea of dribbling soccer balls across no man's land was that of the men, not the officers.[96] In the ensuing melee, the footballers passed the soccer ball among themselves as they proceeded to successfully take two lines of trenches.[97] Despite the pride the Anzacs took in their sporting prowess and how this could be proven on the battlefield, there are no recorded instances of them doing what their British counterparts did in terms of following punted footballs into battle.

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Sportsmen's battalions and the connection between sport and war after Gallipoli

Inspired by the letters back home from sportsmen in battle and Ashmead-Bartlett's metaphor of the First Australian Imperial Force as a 'race of athletes' at Gallipoli, many sports clubs and sports writers began to use the lives of sportsmen who had fought in the First Australian Imperial Force as examples of how good sportsmen made good fighters. These examples were used to suggest that in the Anzac tradition sport was integral to the success of Australian soldiers on the battlefield. The sport that made the most conspicuous turnaround in terms of having few players enlist to having many was Australian rules football. It offers a good example of how sports seized upon their own 'soldier sportsmen' in the wake of the Gallipoli landing and eulogised them as expressing the qualities that the sport promoted. These men became new heroes who were held up for other players to admire and emulate. The official organ of the Victorian Football League, *Football Record*, which in 1914 had been keen to have its players stay and continue the football season rather than lose them to the war, started to espouse an Anzac version of the 'games ethic' of the British public schools:

> Corporal Vassy, an old South Yarra player, is in Gallipoli with our Gallant boys, making all the world wonder at their deeds of bravery and daring. People have said that Australians are given to too much sport. But that is all rubbish. It is their prowess in athletics that has fitted them for the rigors and requirements of war. They have proved their ability to fight a nation's fight as soldiers never before fought.[98]

In the same pages, Ashmead-Bartlett's 'race of athletes' metaphor was invoked as a vindication of the connection between Australian rules football and prowess on the battlefield. A sports writer for the *Football Record* observed at one Australian rules game when new recruits were playing during their leave time:

> I heard a man with war experience say at Collingwood, when Rowan came through with a dash, 'I pity the Turks when men like our footballers get at them.' I wonder what Mr Ashmead Bartlett, the famous war correspondent, will have to say when the new recruits go out and join their older campaigners in Gallipoli.[99]

A week after Ashmead-Bartlett's 'race of athletes' despatch from Gallipoli, the Melbourne Football Club held a Sportsman's Night at the Melbourne

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Town Hall attended by 2000 young men. Before the audience, the President of the club Dr W. C. McClelland told the members that it was 'the duty of many of our Footballers to enlist. Footballers should make admirable soldiers'.[100] The first Victorian Football League player killed at Gallipoli, Corporal A. M. Pearce, was given a eulogy by *Football Record* that praised him for possessing the sporting qualities that made him join up: 'His gallant dashes in defence of Melbourne's goal were indicative of the grand, game spirit that was in him.'[101] Australian rules football now had a number of 'soldier sportsmen' who had sacrificed their lives for their country to eulogise. Seventeen former Victorian Football League players were killed in the eight-month Gallipoli campaign. In World War I, 750 men who had played at this elite level of Australian rules football joined up, of whom 94 were killed.[102] The enlistment of many players after the Gallipoli landing had a major impact on the Australian rules football competition in Melbourne. In 1915, after Gallipoli, most of the Victorian Football League clubs wanted to shut down the competition altogether to encourage their players to join up. In 1916, the withdrawal of the clubs that wanted to suspend play so their footballers could join up meant that the competition went down from 10 clubs to just four clubs. However, by 1917, the number of clubs had risen to six and in 1918 the competition had eight clubs. The League's more amateur-based rival, the Victorian Football Association, ceased competition in 1916–1917.[103]

The reaction of other sports, such as rugby union, was similar: there was pride that their players had proven themselves on the battlefield and a desire to have more of their players in combat. Within two weeks of Ashmead-Bartlett's despatch, W. T. Parata, manager of the New Zealand Maori rugby union team, in a letter written to 'Billy' W. W. Hill, secretary of rugby union in New South Wales, affirmed the value of rugby in preparing men for war. Parata wrote: 'It is very pleasing to read how liberally your boys have offered their services to their country, and as I know how they have always played the game on the field, one can always rely on them playing it on the battlefield.'[104] Eight Australian rugby internationals, or Wallabies, were killed in the Gallipoli campaign.[105]

Elation at the news of the Gallipoli landing and its apparent 'vindication' for many sports that sportsmen made good fighters furthered interest in the idea of sportsmen's battalions.[106] The news of the Gallipoli campaign had an immediate impact on the number of men joining up in Australia whether they were sportsmen or not. In May and June recruitment intakes were double (10,526 and 12,505, respectively) what they had

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been in April with its 6,250 recruits. In July and August they jumped to 36,575 and 25,714, respectively.[107] The flagging recruitment numbers of early 1915 had been temporarily reversed. Michael McKernan provides a list of the mostly amateur sports which by the end of 1915 had voluntarily closed down in response to the call to arms. He includes the sports of rugby union, polo, interstate and interclub hockey, amateur athletics, cricket, interstate tennis, rowing and Australian rules football outside of Melbourne, both in the country and interstate.[108]

As in 1914 at the outbreak of the war, sportsmen who were caught up in this wave of euphoria enlisted in their own districts rather than trying to form a sportsmen's battalion for their sport or sporting club. Over a thousand men were required for a battalion and that was very hard to achieve for any sports club or even association. If several members of a sports club wanted to join up, which often did happen, it was easier to just enlist together in their own locality.[109] The history of the sportsmen's battalions in Australia during World War I, as documented by sports historian Murray Phillips, shows that they never had the kind of popular support they received in Britain nor did they have the same impact on the battlefield as the British battalions did because Australian sportsmen did not fight in designated sportsmen's battalions. After Australian sportsmen were recruited into a proposed sportsmen's battalion by their clubs and associations they were instead scattered by army officials across other battalions as reinforcements in order to shore up the dwindling numbers of the existing battalions on the Western Front.

Phillips' work also indicates that despite the call in 1915 for a sportsmen's battalion in Victoria it was not realised.[110] It was in New South Wales that a sportsmen's battalion was first raised. A recruiting drive began in August 1915. *The Referee* and 'Billy' W. W. Hill, the secretary of New South Wales Rugby Union, took the lead in publicising and organising the recruitment.[111] A public meeting was held at Sydney Town Hall on 13 August, and a Sportsmen's Battalion Recruiting Committee set up with representatives from the major sports associations. Hill, representing rugby union, was on the committee alongside Frank A. Iredale, secretary of the New South Wales Cricket Association, and H. R. Miller, secretary of New South Wales Rugby Football League.[112] Kicking off the recruitment drive, *The Referee* called for players who had not enlisted to repeat the feats of sportsmen from the various branches of sport who had already been in battle: 'Every branch, has given of its best, and since Australia has been thrilled on occasions, by the conspicuous gallantry of

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those men, sportsmen have been fired with the desire to have comrades in sport continue to be comrades in war. Their collective ambition is born of the British regimental tradition, and it is for a sportsmen's battalion.'[113] A letter from a well-known, but unnamed, sportsman in the trenches of Gallipoli, which was published by *The Referee*, had him declaring: 'We want players, not barrackers in this big test match.'[114]

More than a thousand men gradually joined up. However, in New South Wales, as in Victoria, many sportsmen seemed to have preferred to join up with their friends in their hometowns. Even players who joined the sportsmen's battalion of New South Wales tended to join with others from their local clubs, such as the swimmers and surf lifesavers from Manly who enlisted together at the August Town Hall meeting.[115] However, in the end there was no sportsmen's battalion. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted in December 1915: 'Since the Sportsmen's Battalion movement was inaugurated last August over 1100 men have enlisted for it. The objective of a united sportsmen's battalion, however, has not been achieved, the military authorities only meeting the organisers of the movement to the extent of allotting sportsmen's companies to various batches of reinforcements.'[116] The newspaper carried a large picture of the 300 strong sportsmen's company who formed the 7th Reinforcements of the 20th Battalion.

When the idea of a sportsmen's battalion was taken up again in 1917 feelings about the war were much more divided and mixed, but the same rhetoric that regarded sportsmen as ideal soldiers for war was repeated. By then the huge casualties on the Western Front were well known and volunteer recruitments had dwindled to very low numbers of less than 5,000 a month, which were less than the numbers needed to replace casualties on the front. Two referenda on conscription in October 1916 and December 1917 failed and divided the nation. Turning to the sportsmen's battalions seemed a desperate attempt to shore up flagging recruitments rather than an expression of 'the sporting instinct' or 'games ethic'. The February 1917 revival of the idea of sportsmen's battalions came from Victorian Cricket Association President Dr Donald Mackinnon, who had strongly advocated the formation of such a sports military unit during 1915. Mackinnon had been appointed by the Australian government as the Director General of Recruiting.[117]

The assumptions that upheld the 'games ethic' were again appealed to when raising the Sportsmen's Battalion for New South Wales and the Sportsmen's 1000, as its counterpart was called in Victoria. On the

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morning of the Sportsmen Recruiting Day, 27 July 1917, Prime Minister William Morris Hughes issued the following appeal when officially beginning the recruitment drive for the two battalions:

> Sportsmen of Australia, to you is given a great opportunity, upon you rests a heavy responsibility. As you have played the game in the past so we ask you to play the greater game now…. You are wanted to-day in the trenches far more than you were ever needed in the football or cricket oval .... I ask you to be true to yourselves, and to prove yourselves worthy members of the great brotherhood of sport.[118]

A Sportsmen's Recruiting Committee was formed in Sydney and Melbourne. The Committees went about organising rallies and processions of returned soldiers who had been boxers, cricketers, footballers and 'sportsmen generally', after which there was an 'appeal to be made to take their place in the firing line'.[119] The Sportsmen's Recruiting Committee of New South Wales appealed to individual sportsmen to become what it called a 'soldier sportsman' so they could take their 'place in the fighting forces of Australia'.[120]

There were direct appeals to sportsmen to demonstrate their manhood by joining the sportsmen's battalion. When appealing to a sportsman's sense of manhood, the recruiters were aided by women from the Amateur Sports Women's Association of New South Wales, which was active in shaming sportsmen to join the proposed battalions.[121] Their slogan was 'One Woman, One Recruit'.[122] The appeal for sportsmen to prove their manhood by joining up was also a persistent theme in posters and appeals from the Sportsmen's Recruiting Committee of New South Wales, such as 'Be a man, play a man's part. Don't sit at home and let your pal do your bit. Enlist in the Sportsmen's Unit.'[123]

It was a reflection of the divisions over the war, apparent in 1917, that recruiters reported experiencing at sporting events, sometimes exceptionally warm receptions and at other times being on the receiving end of downright antagonistic crowds, especially at some rugby league games.[124] However, the result of these appeals to join the sportsmen's battalion was that by the end of 1917 over a thousand sportsmen had joined the New South Wales Sportsmen's Battalion and another thousand had joined the Victorian Sportsmen's 1000. Despite reaching the numbers required for a separate battalion in each state, the sportsmen were formed into companies and sent as reinforcements to the seriously depleted existing Australian battalions on the Western Front.[125]

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Although the sportsmen's battalions failed, the recruitment drives for them played a role in helping disseminate the 'games ethic' from the middle class to the working class. According to Phillips, 'the Great War indicates some degree of working class exposure to, and relationship with the games ethic'. Phillips noted that 'the organizers of the Sportsman's Battalion frequently relied on the tenets of athleticism in their strategies to attract recruits and many of their targets were men from the working-class suburbs of Sydney and from the industrial steel town of Newcastle'.[126]

The experience of the sport most strongly identified with the working class, rugby league, bears out Phillips' point that the working classes during World War I were gradually assimilating the 'games ethic'. Rugby league was publicly attacked in Sydney for not shutting down its competition throughout the war. The work of Michael McKernan and Guy Hansen tends to see a class divide between the middle class rugby union supporters and the working class rugby league supporters. According to this perspective, the divide thus led to rugby union closing down its competition and most of its players joining up while rugby league continued with its mainly working class players.[127] Certainly, the eight-club First Grade Sydney rugby league premiership competition carried on as it was during the war.[128]

However, Rodney Noonan's study of rugby league during World War I demonstrates that there were a variety of opinions among its officials and players. Some officials did encourage players to enlist, particularly in the early stages of the war, and many players did join up.[129] Sergeant Ted Larkin, a former player, and secretary of the New South Wales Rugby League Football, as well as Labor Party politician, was killed at the Gallipoli landing with his brother. Larkin left behind a young wife and two children.[130] Hansen lists five 'rugby league greats' who were killed in action.[131]

Gary Lester's work on the history of rugby league corroborates Noonan's conclusions that many players did join up when he discusses the numbers of clubs affected by enlistments.[132] H. R. Miller, the secretary of New South Wales Rugby Football League, and closely associated with promoting the sportsmen's battalions of 1915 and 1917, compiled a list of rugby league players who had enlisted.[133] Miller's list indicated that by May 1915 almost 800 rugby league players had joined up.[134] The same survey revealed that there were 45 'A' Grade junior clubs in Sydney during

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the 1914 season, but by the 1915 season, because of enlistments, there were only seven such clubs and the competition had to be disbanded.[135] When examining the First Grade competition, Miller articulated the 'games ethic' of his middle class counterparts. He argued that sportsmen had an obligation to join up and fight during the war. Miller observed that 'the main reason why what seems comparatively few First Grade players have joined the forces is that so many of them are married, and have family responsibilities'. But he added that 'the fact remains that there are many who are not married, who would make ideal soldiers, and who are playing this season'.[136]

Miller's remarks tend to suggest a point that Phillips makes, that masculinity for both the working classes and middle classes was still very much defined by sport and fighting, which were seen as male preserves. Phillips notes that in the records and reports of the meetings of rugby league during the war, officials also held up their players as fine examples of being 'soldier sportsmen'.[137] These definitions of what it meant to be a man tended to cross the class divide and assume the form of the masculine national character that had been said to have been forged at Gallipoli – the Australian male as a 'soldier sportsmen', who prided himself on his abilities in sport and in battle.[138]

The rhetoric of the 'games ethic' in both Britain and Australia during World War I clearly manifested itself in letters and diaries from soldiers at the front, sports writing from newspapers and the sports associations, as well as the recruiting campaigns of the sportsmen's battalions. However, the battalions of 'athletes' image used to describe the Anzacs at Gallipoli could have equally applied to many British battalions, which were indeed comprised of athletes. Only in Australia did this rhetoric become part of national identity. The answer why this occurred lies in the impact of the Anzac landing at Gallipoli and the nineteenth-century notion that a nation's manhood had to be proven on the battlefield. There was a consciousness that the First Australian Imperial Force had proven itself at Gallipoli as a 'race of athletes', who possessed prowess both on the sports field and on the battlefield. During the war, the 'games ethic' of the middle class public schools that upheld these ideas of masculinity increasingly spread to the working classes. This notion of the Anzac tradition being closely associated with sport would only grow after Gallipoli and into the interwar years.

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2

Anzac Day and the Language of Sport and War

Abstract: *During World War I, sport became integral to not just military life, but to the marking of Anzac Day. On the day, the Anzacs would have a memorial service in the morning and celebrate the testing of their manhood in the afternoon by playing sport. This sporting tradition continued in the interwar years, but was considerably curtailed when half of the Australian States banned sport on Anzac Day because the day began to increasingly be seen as a 'sacred day' that was incompatible with the playing of sport. Despite the ban on Anzac Day sport, the language that had linked Anzac to sport persisted during the interwar years and the notion that the Anzacs were 'soldier sportsmen' grew more common when they were described on Anzac Day.*

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The language of sport and war that had emerged during World War I continued after the war and strengthened despite the horrific experiences that many sportsmen had endured. For many 'soldier sportsmen', sports organisations and sports writers, the experience of the war seemed to confirm their views that war was the 'greater game', or 'King Sport', rather than dispel them. After Gallipoli, sport became integral to military life in the First Australian Imperial Force, as it was seen as a proving ground for demonstrating what were perceived to be the superior physical abilities of the Anzacs. The most public expression of this relationship between Anzac and sport occurred on Anzac Day. Initially, Anzac Day followed what the soldiers practised in the war – a memorial service to the fallen in the morning and in the afternoon sport was played to celebrate their belief that they had not been found wanting in the test of manhood and nationhood at Gallipoli. However, in the interwar years whether Anzac Day was to be a day of both commemoration and then celebration through sport became contested, as the language of Anzac Day as 'sacred' grew more common.

Sport and military life in the First Australian Imperial Force

The movement of the Anzacs to the Western Front in 1916 after the end of the failed Gallipoli campaign created conditions which fostered the playing of sport as integral to the military life of the men of the First Australian Imperial Force, as it was in the British army. Units were rotated out of the trenches and away from the front more regularly than at Gallipoli and thus had more time to play sport. This change was well received by the First Australian Imperial Force. Many soldiers commented in their diaries how the static nature of trench warfare hardly resembled sport at all. Lieutenant Thomas James Richards, a rugby international, when watching from the trenches the individual dogfights up in the sky was moved to write on 23 April 1916: 'English planes were very daring and were for hours circling around. These airmen get all the sport there is in war nowadays. Nobody else seems to get a chance…'[1] Signaller Geoffrey Vaughan Rose when writing about his experiences in the trenches as a soldier in the Australian 30th Battalion commented on how living in the trenches with the maggots and rats was 'the side of war that isn't sport nor fun'.[2] However, the idea that war was akin to

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sport for the Australians still persisted on the Western Front, despite the reality. General John Monash was fond of referring to the connection when he argued that there was no acknowledgement for the Australian victories against the Germans. Monash wrote in a letter that Australians were 'by nature and instinct sportsmen, and that they would refuse to go on playing any game in which their scores were not put up on the scoring-board'.[3]

In the letters back home there were many comments by Australian soldiers that their lives as sportsmen had helped them as soldiers by either assisting their combat abilities or just keeping up their morale. On 2 August 1916, in a letter back to his mother from the Western Front, Lieutenant Robert James Henderson, of the 13th Battalion and a club cricket player, described how he believed his sporting abilities had helped prepare him for war. He expressed his dislike of the grim game of war, but took part due to his sense of duty. Henderson wrote that as far as throwing grenades, 'the line seems terribly short of bombers and it is very interesting work and I can throw as far if not further as accurately as anyone in the Battalion (thanks to cricket) ... shall be glad to get in and finish this show one way or another and getting fed up of this game but all the same sort of feel one is doing ones duty and should not like to be back in Sydney at present without reasonable excuse ...'.[4] Sergeant Archie Albert Barwick, a Gallipoli veteran like Henderson, wrote in his diary during his time in France in 1916 on how the regular playing of sport when being rotated out of the trenches helped keep up his morale and that of his comrades: 'We have football and cricket again, you can't beat a bit of sport to enliven things up a bit.'[5]

The day-to-day writings of the men of the First Australian Imperial Force on the Western Front from 1916 to 1918 reveal that there was a considerable amount of sport played. Even the men were pleasantly surprised that sport had become so institutionalised in the Australian military forces since they had been stationed on the Western Front. Lieutenant Albert Charles Cox of the 53rd Battalion also wrote of how sport featured prominently when his unit was spelled from the trenches. In letters back home to his mother he regularly expressed pleasure that 'we're having any amount of sport including inter-company competitions in cricket, football, boxing and swimming'.[6] C. E. W. Bean in his official history of the Australians on the Western Front, too, commented on how often sport was played, seeing it as part of the national character. He also contrasted it with war, which he referred to as 'King Sport'. Describing

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the Australians when they arrived on the Western Front in 1916, Bean wrote: 'A ball of some description was always prominent wherever our troops were gathered together and there was always a game of some sort in evidence. Games were played as close to the front line as possible, football, cricket, hockey', but 'King Sport reigned supreme behind the trenches.'[7]

Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi in their history of sport in the British military during the twentieth century have also noticed this trend of World War I entrenching the sport in military life more than ever before. Mason and Riedi argue that because almost three-fifths of an infantryman's time on the Western Front was spent on rotation out of the trenches, sport became institutionalised as an activity that built up morale and also kept the soldiers fit and ready for combat.[8] They conclude: 'The First World War marks the point at which sport, formerly all-pervasive, but largely unofficial in the British army, became an integral part of the military system.'[9] Mason and Riedi argue that sport became more than ever an important part of official training and more crucial as an activity for building up an *esprit de corps* among the men.

The First Australian Imperial Force while on the Western Front tended to copy its British counterpart's experience with sport. Within the Australian military, as in the British army, there were section versus section games, platoon against platoon sports, many company versus company matches, battalions playing against each other, as did divisions.[10] Private Verner Cocks, of the 6th Australian Army Medical Corps, when reflecting on all the levels of competition, observed in his diary for 14 March 1918, 'Our training while out of the line consists of a route march every morning and sport every afternoon.'[11] By 1918, Australian military manuals were indeed emphasising that because 'the love of games is inherent in the British race' soldiers 'after a spell in the trenches', when training, 'the morning should be devoted to technical training, and the afternoon to games'.[12]

Sport was also used to mark the commemoration of the Anzac landing. Anzac Day would usually begin with a church service or parade in the morning, which would be followed by sport in the afternoon. The letters and diaries of the men of the First Australian Imperial Force reveal that they looked forward to the Anzac Day afternoon sport more than the morning parade or church service.

In a letter to his mother on 26 April 1916, Lieutenant Albert Charles Cox, of the 53rd Battalion, stationed in Egypt and awaiting being sent to

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the Western Front, does not mention any ceremony or parade on Anzac Day, only sport. Writing on 26 April 1916 Cox says: 'The sports went through yesterday, without a hitch and provided plenty of amusement. Quite a large crowd turned up.'[13] He goes on to describe at some length the fun and antics of the sports day events along the canal, such as boat races, adding that 'the day could not have been better'.[14] It is clear that the first Anzac Day was hardly a solemn day for the veterans. Only a few diaries and letter collections mention the church service that started Anzac Day 1916 in Egypt, and even their focus is on the sport held on the day. Lieutenant Robert James Henderson of the 13th Battalion wrote of the day: 'Egypt – Anzac Day was a great success .... We had early morning church re fallen heroes of Gallipoli a swimming carnival in the afternoon shall enclose programme for your perusal.'[15] Henderson was an avid rugby and cricket player, who trained army sports teams and organised competitions.

Australian battalion histories also described Anzac Day 1916 in a similar manner that reflects the primacy of sport. The manuscript of the 55th Battalion noted: 'Ferry Post – Anzac Day – Devoted to sports, etc. Aquatic carnival on Canal during the afternoon.'[16]

On the Western Front in 1917, again, it was sport that most excited the Anzacs, which was on a company level all the way up to teams based on divisions. The morning parade and ceremony was often described in dull terms as just a morning drill, which suggests that the sports events were most used to mark the day. On Anzac Day 1917 at the Western Front, Lieutenant Harold Westaway wrote in his diary of the day, 'ANZAC DAY – Morning drill. Afternoon Windsor sports. 2nd and 5th Div. Football match Mononville. 5th Div by 5 pts. 2nd Division won pts for day.'[17] On the same day in 1917, Private Lawrence 'Snowy' Atherton also described the morning events as simply drill duty: 'Anzac day, fatigue duties in morning half holiday this afternoon match on, played the 14th F.Amb and were beaten 8 to nil, hard game went to bed early feeling very sore.'[18] Playing sport on Anzac Day was more important to the Anzacs than the ceremonial drills that marked the beginning of the day. Some soldiers reveal that on occasions there would be no drill or church service and that there would just be sport, usually football, played to commemorate Anzac Day. On 25 April 1917, Lieutenant Ronald Alison McInnis, serving in the 53rd Battalion, recorded in his diary 'Anzac Day – No parade. There were sports, in which B Coy won most of the events.'[19]

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This linking of Anzac and sport was also becoming part of the public discourse on what the Anzac tradition was seen as embodying. Marking of the anniversary of the Gallipoli landing could be publicly expressed as a celebration of both martial and sporting prowess of the Anzacs. On 25 April 1917, the Melbourne *Argus* published an Anzac Day editorial piece called 'Playing the game: The Anzac Spirit', written by Donald MacDonald, a former war correspondent from the Boer War. He was also a football reporter, who had played with the Essendon Australian rules football club in his youth, before the 1896 division of the code into the Victorian Football League and the Victorian Football Association.[20] In the opinion piece, MacDonald told his readers: 'When we try to discover how or in just what way the spirit of Anzac was born and baptised the answer may be "They played the game." ' MacDonald wrote of a 'legacy and message which the Anzacs have handed on, that under all horrors, all trials, the game must be played, and while men may still pay Death the compliment of fearing him, to yield to fear of Death when Duty calls "Play!" is the unforgivable sin. Surely there is something great in the sports which have bred such sportsmen – magnificent in life, imperishable in death.'[21]

Proving Australian sporting prowess after the War

The soldiers of the First Australian Imperial Force believed, as Donald MacDonald had articulated in 1917, that they were establishing a sporting tradition as well as a military tradition. Ironically, the idea that the Anzac tradition incorporated a sporting tradition was given considerable impetus with the conclusion of the war on Armistice Day, 11 November 1918. Hundreds of thousands of Allied soldiers now awaited demobilisation to be sent home. High command felt that sport was needed to keep the soldiers occupied until they could be sent home, which could be months away. The work of Murray Phillips has demonstrated that during the war Australian military propaganda both at home and on the frontline had portrayed the Anzacs as the finest sportsmen while their enemy was dismissed as the 'unsporting Hun', who did not prize fair play.[22] The Australian soldiers after the war wanted to prove their manhood on the sports field against their own Allies whom they had been fighting side by side and keeping 'a scoreboard' of their military achievements.

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The notion of the Anzac as embodying the concept of the 'soldier sportsman' was trumpeted in the Australian military's official account of the games played against other nations at the end of the war. The official book capturing this concept, called *Soldiers and Sportsmen*, was written in 1919 by Lieutenant G. H. Goddard, of the 59th Battalion, for the First Australian Imperial Force Sports Control Board. Goddard started, as Bean did, with the idea that ball games were 'always a big factor in the life of the A.I.F. in the field', 'wherever one or two were gathered together, there was always a game of some sort in evidence'. However, 'the ball that had the biggest vogue was that of the ".303 mark VII, S.A.A." ', Goddard observed. He lamented that 'the "game" played with that particular variety was not always the most enjoyable. In fact, the number of players who were hurt made it the most unpopular of all'.[23]

Goddard, like Bean, wrote that while many types of ball games were played behind the trenches, 'King Sport reigned during the whole of the time.' He recalled the change from playing the game of war or 'King Sport' with 303 rifles and artillery shells to playing games on the sports field: 'When the time came that the game with the "303 Mark VII." and other unpopular balls was banished from the day's curriculum it was found that there were plenty of others to fill the gap. Sport had been so greatly fostered and encouraged throughout the A.I.F. in France that a solid foundation had been laid for the successful carrying out of the programme which was laid down by the higher commands after the signing of the Armistice.'[24]

Cricket had been the 'ball game' that the men of the First Australian Imperial Force were particularly keen in proving themselves against a British Army side. During the English summer of 1917, it had been arranged that the sides from the Dominion armies would play in England. On 14 July 1917, for the first time, a First Australian Imperial Force side faced a British Army team at Lord's.[25] There were former Test players on both sides. Australian pre-war Test players included batsmen Charlie Kelleway and Charlie Macartney, as well as Test all-rounder Thomas James Matthews. In the British Army team, there were former English Test Captain Pelham Warner, pre-war Test batsman John William Henry Tyler Douglas and former Test bowlers Colin Blythe and Neville Alexander Knox. Among the young team members there were future Test players, Cyril Docker for Australia and Percy Fender for England. The one-day match ended in a British victory with the First Australian Imperial Force all out for 139 and the British Army finishing at 162 runs.[26]

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The cricketer players were indeed 'soldier sportsmen', as they quickly returned to the trenches after the cricket game. Sadly, Englishman Colin Blythe when he returned to Ypres was killed several months later from fatal wounds when a shell exploded near him.[27]

The First Australian Imperial Force and the British Army did not play against each other again for the rest of the war, but the success of the 1917 cricket match and further English versus Dominion games in 1918 encouraged the idea of putting together a First Australian Imperial Force XI when peace came.[28] Soon after the 1918 Armistice, the First Australian Imperial Force Sports Control Board was established to oversee the setting up of a cricket team and other sports for competition among the troops of the various Allied countries. For the Sports Control Board, these teams were to 'maintain the Australian reputation' as supreme sportsmen now that the war had finished.[29]

The Australian military's cricket team was organised to represent what were perceived to be the values of the Anzacs. Selection for the team, according to cricket historian Chris Harte, was based on trials of both enlisted men and officers which started in February 1919 'to ensure the best available players and, as the news spread, so applications poured in from many former first-class cricketers'.[30] The captaincy also seemed to be decided according to what were seen as the values of the First Australian Imperial Force rather than rank. Former Test player Charlie Kelleway had the job for only the first six weeks, returning to Australia after a team dispute. Future Test player Herbie Collins was then elected captain based on his form and suitability for the job – he had played for New South Wales before the war. Harte described the selection of Collins as captain: 'The team then ignored all considerations of rank, so that Lance-Corporal Collins was giving orders to a side which contained seven commissioned officers without anyone questioning his authority.'[31] Cricket writer Jack Pollard also has observed that 'the team deleted all reference to a man's rank'.[32]

The First Australian Imperial Force XI lost only four out of the 34 matches that it played in Britain from May to September 1919.[33] Much was made of the 'soldier sportsmen' ideal when the team played, for example the war injuries of the team members were often made public.[34] The Australian Imperial Force Sports Control Board wrote in its report of the team's tour in Britain as 'the triumphant march of the A.I.F. Cricket XI through the various English Counties'.[35] The team continued playing in England until September 1919 when they took the boat back

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to Australia. On the way home they played in South Africa from October to December 1919, and were undefeated in ten matches, of which eight were First Class.

Upon returning back to Australia, the team was met by an appreciative Australian public that felt that the First Australian Imperial Force Cricket XI had established both an Anzac military and sporting tradition. In January 1920, when the team reached Sydney, they were given a welcome home chaired by the formidable Alderman 'Billy' William Percy McElhone, vice-president of the New South Wales Cricket Association and a founder and first secretary of cricket's Australian Board of Control. Representing the Mayor of Sydney, McElhone expressed the public's gratitude to the returning cricket team for having demonstrated both Australian sporting and military prowess:

> Sydney was proud of what they had done, not only on the battlefields of Europe, but on the cricket pitches of Great Britain and Africa. The members of the team took up bat and ball almost immediately after laying down the rifle, and it was exceedingly creditable to them that under such conditions and with practically no preliminary practice they had only been defeated four times. (Hear, hear.) The men of the A.I.F. were sportsmen out and out, in the truest sense of the term, and their action had been an important factor in the defeat of the Germans who, had they not been defeated, would probably by now have had the German national games introduced into Australia.[36]

Also present at the welcome home was Senator Herbert Edward Pratten, a member of the Nationalist Party, who used similar language when addressing the men of the First Australian Imperial Force Cricket XI:

> When an impartial history of the war was written it would be admitted that the A.I.F. were first on the battlefield, and the same men had shown they were also first in sport.[37]

When arriving in Brisbane, Herbie Collins, the Captain of the First Australian Imperial Force XI, voiced his own team's belief in this image when he told the people of the city about his team's effort since the end of the war: 'they had done what they thought was their duty to Australia in the war, and they also did what they could for Australia on the cricket field'.[38] After they arrived back in Australia, the team soundly beat both the Victorian and New South Wales States teams, while only rain saved Queensland from a similar defeat. Significantly, a core of the young members of the team who had not played Test cricket before the war and had experienced years of trench warfare rather than the cricket

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fields were later selected for Warwick Armstrong's 1921 Test side against England, which proved dominant. Members of that powerful Ashes team who had played in the First Australian Imperial Force XI included wicketkeeper 'Bert' W. A. Oldfield, batsmen Herbie Collins, Johnny Taylor and 'Nip' Pellew, and bowler Jack Gregory.[39]

In other sports besides cricket, the First Australian Imperial Force also went to considerable effort to select and train men who would prove the sporting prowess of the Anzacs in competitive sport. On 5 July 1919, a group of eight Australian soldiers won the King's Cup at the Henley Regatta, defeating an exhausted Oxford rowing crew.[40] The team that the First Imperial Australian Force sent to Wimbledon in 1919 won both the men's singles and the men's doubles. On 6 July, in the men's singles, First Australian Imperial Force's Gerald Patterson defeated Norman Brookes, the reigning Wimbledon champion before the war.[41] Brookes was an Australian working for the Red Cross during the war. In contrast, Patterson was unknown to English tennis. He had gone through the whole tournament with the loss of only one set. Patterson was just 23 years old and had spent two years in the trenches on the Western Front, where he had been awarded the Military Cross and promoted to lieutenant.[42] On 8 July two Australian servicemen, Ronald Thomas and Pat O'Hara Wood, also won the doubles final at Wimbledon.[43] Trying to explain these unexpected tennis victories by the Australian soldiers, *The Times* sports correspondent echoed First Australian Imperial Force propaganda about how the Australians were the 'British race' physically improved upon by a warmer and sunnier climate more conducive to outdoor sports.[44]

The First Australian Imperial Force also assembled a rugby union team, known as the 'Trench Team' because it came out of trials among the men in the trenches. Eight representatives were sent from the five divisions for a two-week trial to form a First Australian Imperial Force XV to first play a French Army rugby union team in Paris on 19 January 1919. The Australians defeated the French before a crowd of 15,000 people. The 'Trench Team' played 24 matches in Britain, France, South Africa and Australia, and recorded only four losses. However, the First Australian Imperial Force rugby union team never proved as dominant as the tennis players and the rowers. They were not able to win the King's Cup played between the different service teams during March and April 1919. Nonetheless, followers of rugby union in Australia regarded them as inspirations as soldiers and sportsmen. *Rugby News*, the official organ

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of the New South Wales Rugby Union's governing body, wrote of them: 'Not only as footballers, but as soldiers did they distinguish themselves. Both in France and England their excellent behaviour, fine physique and bearing were a splendid advertisement for Australia.'[45]

The post-war inter-service games played by the Allied armies in Paris from 22 June to 6 July 1919 also contributed to the impression that the First Australian Imperial Force was establishing a sporting tradition that future Australian soldiers would have to live up to. On 9 January 1919, General John Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, sent letters to the commanders of the armies of other Allied nations inviting them to participate in these games. Eighteen countries agreed. Accepting Pershing's offer on behalf of the First Australian Imperial Force, its Commander-in-Chief General William Birdwood wrote how 'every effort will be made to send the most representative athletes' of what he called 'warrior sportsmen'.[46] According to the inter-service games' official history, one of the 'star performers' of the games was boxer 'Digger' Albert Evans, who won the Bantamweight championship. Describing Evans, the official history commented on 'his good-natured sportsmanship, his winning and cheerful smile', which 'made him a decided favorite with the ring-side fans of all nations'. It added that Evans 'was far and away the cleverest boxer in the tourney'.[47] The First Australian Imperial Force's 63 contestants in the games did well, mainly in swimming and boxing. Military historian Marcus Fielding in his study of the Australians at these games has noted they were seen by the First Australian Imperial Force as a way for the Anzacs to 'make their mark again' in demonstrating 'their sporting prowess 'after having demonstrated their military abilities in the war.[48]

Sport and Anzac Day between the wars

After World War I, the strong connection between the First Australian Imperial Force and sport continued to be evident in the marking of Anzac Day by veterans. Just as sport had been part of the Anzac Day celebrations during the war, many veterans continued this tradition. After 1919, in Adelaide, the South Australian branch of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia annually organised an Anzac Day service and parade in the morning, while in the afternoon there would be a sports carnival, which was usually two football matches between

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the veterans. In 1920, the South Australian branch of the veterans' group believed that 'with the assistance which is anticipated from Battalion clubs, Anzac Day of the future should develop into a sports carnival of gigantic dimensions'.[49] On Anzac Day in Adelaide during the 1920s and 1930s, after the morning services and parades, at 1 pm and again at 3 pm on the Adelaide Oval there would be two football games played. These matches were between four sides representing South Australia's veterans from its Artillery regiment, its 10th Battalion, 27th Battalion and 43rd Battalion. During the interval between the games there were footraces organised by the local athletic organisations.[50] In the interwar years, the South Australian Branch of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia even had a veterans' State cricket team that regularly played against the organisation's Victorian branch and the Western Australian branch, but not on Anzac Day.[51] When World War II broke out the Western Australian branch debated whether to continue playing, but its President Alf Yeates affirmed in late September 1939 that 'sport is ingrained in our character'.[52]

When the soldiers returned from the war it was not just in South Australia that sport became part of the Anzac Day commemorations. In the first few years after the war, veterans organised afternoon sports carnivals for Anzac Day in their rural and regional communities across Australia. These sports carnivals were held from Cairns in Queensland to Darwin in the Northern Territory, from Cooma in New South Wales to Maryborough in Victoria and from Burnie in Tasmania to Kalgoorlie in Western Australia.[53] Sport and Anzac ceremonies were often mixed in the afternoon events. On Anzac Day 1921 at Cooma, battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Rutledge during the afternoon sports events presented the British war medals of 1914–1915 to local veterans.[54] Writing about Darwin's gathering, the local newspaper, the *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, saw the sports at the carnival as a way in which the Anzac 'spirit was manifest'.[55] This feeling was not uncommon.

A large number of veterans felt that sport was part of the Anzac tradition and should be played on Anzac Day. Their sentiments were reflected in the early post-war debates over how Anzac Day should be observed as a national holiday. In a submission to the prime minister in 1921 by Major Forrest, the general secretary of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, it was stated 'there was a very general feeling' that 'a fitting manner of observing it would be by memorial services, etc., in the morning, and various methods of jubilation (e.g. sports, etc.)

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in the afternoon'. The secretary noted that a service in the morning and sports in the afternoon was the 'procedure [that] was adopted by all Ranks with the A.I.F. whilst on Active Service'.[56]

The Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia passed a resolution at its 1922 Federal Congress that acknowledged the importance of sport in the celebration of the Anzac tradition, and called on sport to be held on the afternoon of Anzac Day:

> That the day be observed in such a manner as to combine the memory of the fallen with rejoicing at the birth of Australia as a nation.
>
> That the morning be observed in a strictly solemn manner, and the afternoon be devoted to Sports Carnivals of a national character designed to inculcate into a rising generation the highest national ideals.[57]

However, this resolution did not reflect the conflicting opinions among veterans and the broader public over whether to have sport played in the afternoon of Anzac Day as they had done during the war or to have the whole day as a period of solemn commemoration. During the 1920s, the Federal Congress of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia every year carried the resolution of all of its members that Anzac Day should be a public holiday, 'the morning to be observed in solemn manner and the afternoon to be devoted to national sports'.[58] However, the more conservative Federal Executive of the organisation preferred that Anzac Day be a 'closed holiday' on which hotels, horse racing, gambling, theatres and sports events were banned. A number of members of the 1929 Federal Congress resolved to break this deadlock between the membership and its elite leadership at the next Federal Congress to bring the executive in line with the wishes of the congress.[59] But in 1930 the Federal Executive of the veterans' organisation finally got its own resolution accepted resolving that there would be 'no commercialisation of the day, organised sport, or opening of hotels be permitted'.[60] This tends to suggest Australian historian Marilyn Lake's view that the leadership of the league became more politically conservative as its membership dramatically declined and more working class members left the organisation during the 1920s.[61]

The diversity of opinion over sport on Anzac Day was reflected in actions of the six Australian States, as only they, not the Commonwealth, could legislate concerning what would be allowed on public holidays, such as Anzac Day. South Australia was the most open about having commemoration in the morning and sport for celebrating the day in

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the afternoon.[62] In Tasmania, its 1921 Anzac Day legislation also allowed sport in the afternoon. At the Federal Congresses of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, Tasmanian delegates had suggested as early as 1922: 'That the day be observed in such a manner as to combine the memory of the Fallen with rejoicing in the birth of Australia as a nation.'[63] This meant commemoration in the morning and sports in the afternoon. However, by the late 1920s for the Tasmanians, there was a gradual reduction of sports to just children's sporting events as the League leadership became more conservative. For the League in Tasmania during the late 1920s, Anzac Day became a day on which 'the morning should be given over to the sacred celebration, and the afternoon to the inculcation into the minds of children what the day meant'.[64] Sporting bodies were pressured into not scheduling any events on the day, as 'the league was keenly opposed to the holding of general sports gatherings or race meetings on Anzac Day'.[65]

The Australian State of New South Wales also followed South Australia and Tasmania in not banning sport on Anzac Day. At the 1930 Federal Congress of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, which adopted a resolution banning sport on Anzac Day, P. A. Rushton, a New South Wales representative, refused to support the motion as his 'State thought that the whole day should not be given up to remembrance of the fallen, but that portion of it should be devoted to rejoicing for the deeds of the men, and the entry of Australia into full nationhood'.[66] New South Wales had passed laws in late 1924 making Anzac Day a public holiday with no restrictions on sport.[67] Thus, on the afternoons of Anzac Day, a major First Grade premiership rugby league match was played at the Sydney Cricket Ground, which attracted over 13,000 spectators, while rugby union also played its First Grade Sydney premiership games.[68]

The other three Australian States, at the behest of their State veterans' Leagues, enacted Anzac Day acts that prohibited sport. In the 1920s, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia passed legislation that made Anzac Day a 'close' day on which all entertainment, the opening of pubs, gambling and sport were banned. Queensland banned sports in its Anzac Day Act of 1921, at the request of its veterans, who remained staunchly against any forms of entertainment on Anzac Day. Finally, the opening of theatres was banned when the day was declared a 'sacred holiday' in 1930.[69] In 1925, the Victorian government acted to have Anzac Day as a 'close' day after a request by Victorian representatives of the

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League, who compared Anzac Day to Good Friday, arguing that 'Good Friday commemorated the greatest act of self-sacrifice the world had ever known. Anzac Day also represented a great sacrifice.'[70] In 1927, the Western Australian branch of the League wrote to the premier of the State setting out the case for a 'close' Anzac Day, 'asking the Government to declare Anzac Day a sacred holiday, ranking equally with Christmas Day and Good Friday'.[71]

The prohibitions on sport became so restrictive that even veterans from the First Australian Imperial Force were unhappy with them, especially when Anzac Day fell on a Saturday. Writing to the Perth *Daily News* in 1936, a letter writer calling himself 'Anzac' described how odd these bans were given what he had experienced while serving in the war:

> Anzac Day is the limit, especially when it falls on a Saturday. It seems to me that there would be no harm in having sporting functions conducted as usual. The Anzac is reputed to have been an inevitable gambler. It is said that he actually played two-up at Gallipoli, and anecdote has it that he conducted race meetings with fleas. It should be quite fitting, then, to hold race and trotting meetings and other sporting fixtures as usual when Anzac Day falls on a Saturday.[72]

However, by the 1930s, as cultural critic Graham Seal has demonstrated in his work, Anzac Day in the minds of many veterans, and in the broader public, had made a transition to being regarded as a 'sacred day'.[73] In Brisbane during 1938, a debate over having sport in the afternoon of Anzac Day was initiated by the Lord Mayor Alderman Jones. He was delivered a sharp rebuke by Cannon Garland, joint honorary secretary of the Anzac Day commemoration committee. Garland maintained that Anzac Day had become more like Good Friday, a sacred day on which there was no sport and all places of business and recreation were closed. He argued that 'hitherto the day has been regarded by all Queensland as one of solemn remembrance, which was to be in no way converted into a day of amusement or pleasure'. Garland added that the Queensland State 'Act governing Anzac Day has definitely prohibited racing, and public opinion has followed this lead by abhorring all manner of sport on Anzac Day, treating it more as Good Friday than a Sunday.'[74] A significant number of veterans felt the same. The council of the South-Eastern (Queensland) District of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia, in response to the proposal of having sport played during the afternoon in Brisbane, passed a resolution that Anzac Day 'should be kept sacred'.[75]

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The language of sport and war in the interwar years

Despite the eradication of sport from many commemorations of Anzac Day in Australia, as the interwar years progressed, the rhetoric connecting Anzac and sport that had been established during World War I was very much sustained. Sports metaphors to describe the Anzacs in war were common right up until the beginning of World War II. The use of sports metaphors by C. E. W. Bean and his fellow writers of the official histories, which started to be published from 1921 onwards, reflected this much wider phenomenon. One of the most well-known of Bean's sports metaphors was the description of how the Anzacs waited to begin the assault on Lone Pine: 'The men chaffed each other drily, after the manner of spectators waiting to see a football match,' while 'their officers gave a few last hints to their men they kept an eye on the minute-hand as though they were starting a boat-race'.[76] A former rower from a British public school, Bean had a fondness for rowing metaphors. When describing Major General Gellibrand's staff at the Battle of Pozieres in 1916, Bean observed how it was 'a team which pulled together like a crew in an eight-oared race'.[77] Literary critic Robin Gerster has noted Bean's regular use of sports metaphors and concluded that 'Bean's Newboltian Public School background and sensibility emerge in such analogies.'[78] Gerster is correct about Bean's school days accounting for the origins of the sports metaphors, but the use of the language connecting war and sport goes well beyond the odd metaphor found in Bean's writings.

The connection between war and sport appears in many other aspects of Australian popular culture during the interwar years. The *Sydney Sportsman* when writing on Gallipoli in November 1921 was quick to affirm: 'It was recognised that sport is one of the factors which made the Anzac a soldier.'[79] The link between sport and war can also be found in the interwar public views of Dr J. S. Purdy, Sydney's Medical Officer of Health, who urged the government to build more sports fields, as 'we must give certain facilities and opportunities to the rising generation to improve their physique and to develop their prowess in the field of sport as the elders proved the prowess in the field of war'.[80]

In the 1920s, often the connection between sport and Anzac was made on Anzac Day by sportsmen and sports writers, but conveyed to school boys by their teachers. Writing on the eve of Anzac Day 1925, the Sydney sports magazine *The Arrow* described the battlefield of Gallipoli as a test of the manhood of Australian sportsmen who died on it: 'Anzac

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Day reminds us all of the many great sportsmen who fell as heroes in their prime, and proof of their manhood on foreign fields of battle.'[81] This tradition of the Anzac as quintessentially a sportsman was portrayed as an ideal that school boys were taught to look up to during the 1920s and emulate on their own sports field at school. A Sydney high school essay competition on the topic, 'The Typical Anzac', was held for Anzac Day 1927. According to one teacher, the young boys wrote on how the qualities that had made the Anzac a good fighter were 'learned in the field of sport'. The teacher noted, 'my boys picture their hero as a sunburnt, tough, stalwart, and sturdy individual' who 'excelled in athletic exercises'.[82]

The ideal of the Anzac as the archetypal Australian sportsman remained strong going into the 1930s even as Anzac Day itself increasingly became devoid of the playing of sport because of claims that it was a 'sacred day'. On Anzac Day 1936, the Sydney sports magazine *The Referee* marked the 21st anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli with a rousing editorial piece called 'The Anzacs in Sport: If it made them athletes, they re-created sport'. The article was written by Sir Joynton Smith, a former president of the New South Wales Rugby Football League (1910–1928) and its official patron during 1929–1943. He was the owner of the two major Sydney sports magazines, *The Referee* and *The Arrow* (1930–1939). Smith also had a career, with Labor Party support, as a politician and Lord Mayor of Sydney.[83] In his 1936 article, Smith said he believed sport was responsible for the Anzacs' abilities in battle:

> The Anzacs were mainly bred upon the playing fields in this country and New Zealand. They were of the brand that in the football field dug in and dug in again as a pack, and fought with the might of one-man combination. Their training in every sort of sport made them real men. This stood to them physically and morally when the crucial tests came to strain the fibre of their morale.[84]

Smith reminded his readers of the early post-war sporting victories of the men of the First Australian Imperial Force in 1919. These victories, Smith believed, contributed to the sporting tradition of Anzac and helped 're-create sport' after the war. Smith noted that many of the elite athletes of the 1920s came from the First Australian Imperial Force's 1919 teams. He concluded: 'The Anzacs were wonderful men in war. They are wonderful men in peace. Sportsmen first, last and all the time.'[85]

Expressions of Anzac and its relationship with sport indicated that the 'games ethic' was alive and well in the 1930s despite an ever present

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awareness of the carnage and horrors of the war. The editor of *The Referee*, J. C. Davis, in the same issue for Anzac Day 1936 which carried the article by Smith, affirmed that the Anzac 'soldier comrades played the game' of war. In his editorial, Davis continually stressed the role of sport in the lives of the Anzacs and how it made them better soldiers. He evoked the image of the Anzacs as sportsmen as it had been done in the language of World War I: 'On the morning of April 25, 1915, 21 years last week, they stormed the shores of ancient Gallipoli, Australians and New Zealanders brothers in arms, as they were brothers in sport. They leapt from the boats with the instinct of free men, hardened by their field sports.'[86] Davis continued to refer to sport in his account of the Gallipoli landing: 'In the ardour of keen athletic nature, the men rushed ahead inland, and the penalty of death was again terrific. In that first rush and in the bloody chapter that was the Peninsula many of the most gallant sportsmen ever produced by Australia were swept to their doom.'[87] Davis concluded his piece by expressing his belief that there was a sporting tradition in Anzac that had to be passed down to younger generations: 'The example of those splendid soldier-sportsmen must mean something inspirational to younger and more fortunate Australians, who know not war.'[88]

Davis and other sports journalists when they wanted to give an example of this archetype of the 'soldier sportsmen' often evoked the memory of rugby union international player Major Blair I. Swannell, who was killed on the first day of the Gallipoli campaign. Swannell was a tall, massively built, square-shouldered English-born forward. He had played for both Britain and Australia before the war. Before Swannell joined up in 1914 at the age of 38, he had dominated the forwards in the North Sydney rugby club. Swannell was killed on the first day of the Gallipoli landing, leading his men up a hill with fixed bayonets against Turkish fire. When talking to his men, he suddenly fell down, shot through the head. In his description of the incident in the official histories of the war, Bean drew the analogy between the rugby field and the battlefield: 'Swannell had felt that he would be killed, and had said so ... before he landed, for he realised that he would play this game as he had played Rugby football – with his whole heart.'[89]

In rugby union, there were also players at the clubs who kept alive the memory of their fallen 'soldier sportsmen', such as Swannell. One of these returning sportsmen was Fred Aarons from North Sydney, who although missing an eye because of his service in France took to the field to lead his old team in 1919 and 1920.[90] Even Swannell's earnest critic in rugby

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union, Dr Herbert 'Paddy' Moran, captain of the 1908–1909 Wallabies, writing in 1939 still referred to Swannell's demise in terms of a rugby analogy. Moran, who had been a doctor on the Western Front during the war, said, 'In the end he wore an Australian uniform as stubbornly as he wore an Australian jersey.' He continued the rugby metaphor: 'He was early in the field, and found his end storming the goal on that April morning at Gallipoli.' Ever critical of what he saw as Swannell's overly violent play, Moran concluded: 'I can imagine him rushing forward with a frown on that ugly face with its scar from a New Zealand boot … . His hard-visaged comrades said he died with the ruling passion strong upon him, still putting in the boot.'[91]

Among the members of the sports clubs and associations the memory of their fallen fellow comrades whom they had played sport with as 'soldier sportsmen' reflected the mythmaking of Bean. In many sports clubs, from rugby, to rowing, to surf lifesaving, honour rolls and plaques listed their members who had served and indicated the men who had died in World War I.[92] Australian historian Robert Pascoe has noted that Victorian Football League clubs, such as Richmond, were places in the interwar years where memories of the Anzacs as soldiers and sportsmen were passed on to younger players by former players and officials who had experienced the war.[93]

The official organ of the executive of the New South Wales Rugby Football League, known as *Rugby League News*, when addressing its clubs and players on Anzac Day 1939 impressed upon them the connection between Anzac and sport by recalling Ashmead-Bartlett's 'race of athletes' metaphor. The editor of *Rugby League News* affirmed: 'From his apt phrase all sportsmen can take pride. It was not any other quality, but that given them through indulgence in athletic sports that caught the eye of that noted writer.' In particular, the magazine asserted that when the Anzacs stormed the beaches at Gallipoli 'the qualities they learned at football were still there to serve them better than military theory, which was not so hard to attain after their indulgence in ordered, manly sport'. The *Rugby League News* elaborated: 'Though these Anzacs were probably raw in the soldiery of text books, they had the fire, determination and endurance begotten of tough struggles on the football fields.'[94]

The intertwining of the language of war and sport in Australia when the war was remembered around Anzac Day or at sports events tends to confirm the point made by Martin Crotty about the 'games ethic' and Australian public schools during the interwar period:

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> At all the major public schools, there was little effort to retreat from the militarist ideals that had dominated these schools in the pre-war years. The public schools, public school sport, Australian manliness and Australia itself were held to have proven themselves worthy by their sacrifice in World War I, and the militarist ideology of manliness promoted by the schools could not easily be renounced. For many years after, therefore, the Australian public schools continued to uphold up the sacrifices of the war as glorious rather than tragic.[95]

In Britain, too, the connection between sport and war upheld by the 'games ethic' still remained strong. Sports historian Tony Collins in his study of rugby union during World War I and the interwar years has noted that 'for English rugby union and its supporters, the Great War did not mark the passing of the old world, but a living re-affirmation of the continuing validity of late Victorian and Edwardian ideology in a world where those values appeared to be seriously threatened'.[96]

In the aftermath of the war, it was believed by many in sports associations and the public schools system of the British Empire, as Mason and Riedi have suggested, that sport seemed to have proven its usefulness for war.[97] A headmaster of one of Britain's public schools when writing during 1919 in *The Times* observed that 'it was a common experience before 1914 to read attacks upon the excessive athleticism of the country in general, and of Public Schools in particular', but 'since then the war had come and gone, and the youth of the country has passed through the furnace of trial'.[98]

At the end of World War I, *The Times* also made a claim about the sport's value to the war which was repeated by rugby union clubs and associations in Australia during the interwar years: 'This war was won on the Empire's playing fields.'[99] The British Army believed this to be the case. During the interwar years it dramatically increased the playing fields for the barracks of its troops. By 1925, there were 336 football fields, 157 cricket pitches, 80 hockey fields and 59 running tracks and almost 500 lawn tennis courts. The growth from the pre-war situation was most evident at the Army's headquarters at Aldershot. In 1908 there were only 14 football and hockey grounds, whereas in 1925 this had grown to 100, with 26 cricket pitches, 30 running tracks and more than 70 lawn tennis courts. The army claimed that 'there is to-day no place in the British Isles where regular troops are quartered which has not its playing fields, either finished and in use or approaching completion, with football and cricket grounds, running track, well-equipped pavilions, and all other accessories of first-class athletic grounds.'[100]

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While in Britain sport became entrenched it in military life, in Australia, which returned to having no significant standing army at the end of hostilities, the role of sport became embedded in the masculine values of the national character that Anzac assumed after the war. The idea that First Australian Imperial Force had proven itself at Gallipoli as an army of 'soldier sportsmen' held a grasp on the public imagination and was expressed regularly on Anzac Day despite the gradual dropping of sporting activities held on Anzac Day, which had been so common among the men of the First Australian Imperial Force during World War I. While sport was slowly eradicated from many Anzac Day ceremonies during the interwar years, sport's role in the Anzac tradition only grew to the extent that it still exercised a strong influence over the minds of the young men who joined up in World War II.

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3
The 'Army of Athletes' of World War II

Abstract: *Australian sportsmen joining up from 1939 to 1945 believed they had to demonstrate that they possessed the sporting and battle prowess of the Anzacs of 1914–1918. There was a commonly accepted notion that the Anzacs had established a sporting tradition as well as a martial tradition which Australian soldiers of World War II should uphold. There was pressure on sportsmen to join up because of the belief that in some way playing sport had prepared them with the right physical and mental qualities to fight on the battlefield.*

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During World War II, Australian soldiers felt that they had to live up to the traditions that they believed had been established by the Anzacs of World War I. One of these traditions was the strong belief that the Anzacs were superior in physical strength, manliness and sporting prowess. Military sporting competitions and playing in games against other nationalities were proving grounds for Australian soldiers to live up to this sense of manhood. Also, the pressure for men who excelled in their sport to join up was just as great in World War II as it had been in World War I. In both wars it was assumed that sportsmen should be among the first to volunteer for the armed forces because as fit young men they could do as much, if not more, for their country on the battlefield than they had on the playing field. What was the relationship between war, sport and Anzac in World War II?

The idea of an Anzac sporting tradition in early World War II

There was an assumption at the time of the formation of the Second Australian Imperial Force in the early years of World War II that the men joining it were inheritors of a sporting tradition begun by the First Australian Imperial Force of World War I. Excelling at sport was perceived to be part of an Anzac tradition at the outbreak of World War II.

In July 1940, Kenneth Slessor, an official Australian Commonwealth war correspondent, drew upon the 'race of athletes' imagery of World War I to describe the Second Australian Imperial Force as an 'Army of Athletes'. In a despatch back to Australia, he elaborated at length on this theme as men of the Second Australian Imperial Force prepared for battle after having arrived in England:

> Obscured for the time being by the steel helmets and marching equipment of the A.I.F. in Britain are many fine Australian athletes made even tougher by simple eating, early rising and benevolent austerity of army life.
>
> Some of them, such as the swimming champion, Bill Fleming, have names which are already known in the world of sport, and there are hundreds more so far unknown whose promise at running, boxing, football and cricket lifts them above the ordinary.
>
> A bigger job than sport faces them to-day, but when the chance comes it is possible that they may achieve the same fame as the A.I.F. Eleven, the King's Cup rowing winners, Digger Evans and the boxing champions who came out of the last war.[1]

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In 1940, Slessor led a chorus of Australian war correspondents who reflected the views of the ranks of the Second Australian Imperial Force in the Middle East. One Australian war correspondent wrote that 'not only in the battlefield but also on the sporting field members of the new A.I.F. have a glorious tradition to uphold. Both in Europe and the Middle East, their predecessors in 1914-18 proved their sporting prowess ...'[2] Another war correspondent repeated the idea that the soldiers had inherited a sporting tradition: 'New A.I.F. has traditions in sport as well as war to uphold.'[3] Slessor, in particular, described how 'Sports meetings and boxing tournaments on the trip from Australia and camp life ever since has kept the men fit, and the A.I.F. to-day is a team of trained athletes as much as an army of trained soldiers.'[4] He wrote how the men of the Second Australian Imperial Force expressed 'hopes that an opportunity will be found to arrange matches between the A.I.F. and suitable opponents'.[5]

While Slessor and other Australian war correspondents wrote of the eagerness of the Australian troops to be involved in sporting competitions and compared this to the sporting achievements of the First Australian Imperial Force, propaganda films also projected the same imagery. A propaganda film, *We of the A.I.F.*, described how 'they continue to uphold and glorify the traditions entrusted to their keeping by their fathers'. *We of the A.I.F.* extolled the men of the Second Australian Imperial Force's martial and sporting abilities together: 'Watch them on manoeuvres in the desert. Watch them at sport and at play and see them in the role of modern beach athletes, introducing the art of surfing on the seashores of the Old Testament.'[6]

Historians Gavin Long and Peter Charlton, from their surveys and interviews done with the men who joined the Second Australian Imperial Force in the early years of the war, tend to confirm that these men saw themselves as inheritors of the Anzac tradition of their fathers and often expressed a strong desire to emulate them.[7] Sport was undoubtedly part of this tradition. Lawson Glassop, a journalist on the *A.I.F. News* in the Middle East, wrote that a question that the men of the Second Australian Imperial Force often pondered was: what 'our fathers of the First A.I.F. would think of us'.[8] When answering the question, Glassop wrote, the men assured themselves that they make 'good' soldiers 'because we play so much sport and get so much sunshine, we're always fit, and because we've still got the initiative and spirit that helped the pioneers to fight drought, fire and flood'.[9]

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The values behind the Anzac sporting tradition were espoused early in the war by 'soldier sportsmen'. 'Bert' W. A. Oldfield was a former Australian Test cricket wicketkeeper from the 1920s and 1930s who had also been in the First Australian Imperial Force XI. He joined up again when World War II started in September 1939. On British radio in August 1940, Oldfield articulated the same values that sport had been seen to represent in World War I, in particular that sportsmen should be among the first to answer the call to duty of defending the British Empire. Oldfield wondered why so many sportsmen had joined up. He listed six cricketers from the last Ashes team to tour England in 1938: Don Bradman, Australia's Test captain, Charlie Walker, Syd Barnes, Leslie O'Brien Fleetwood-Smith, Ben Barnett and Ted White. Oldfield was also impressed that 17 members of Australia's rugby union international team from the cancelled 1939 tour of England had quickly enlisted. He asked:

> Is this to be wondered at? It is because of our belief in the principles of freedom and fair play, so strongly inculcated in our various games, that we find with pride the example of 1914-18 being emulated.[10]

Cricket, in particular, was singled out by Oldfield as upholding the values of the Empire and setting a tradition for others to follow:

> These are days which call in the sternest degree, not only for the highest standard of physical, but also of moral courage. These attributes are not confined to cricket, but to most of our team games. If, however, I seem to confine my remarks mostly to cricket, it will readily be understood that it was as a player of this grand game I saw such attributes fully exemplified.
>
> Thus cricket has been more than a game to me, because of its powers as a character builder, and the same characteristics which still make the British Empire respected and feared throughout the world – which made our soldiers what they were in 1914–18 and what they are to-day are those characteristics which cricket engenders – the spirit of unselfishness, self-reliance, determination, co-operation, initiative, and the will to win.
>
> Cricket and our Empire both call for grimness and honesty of purpose, modesty in victory, courage under adversity, and the will to win.
>
> By virtue of these same traits of character many British and Dominion soldiers won distinction and decorations on the battlefield.[11]

To demonstrate that the sportsmen of the First Australian Imperial Force were handing down a tradition to the younger men of the Second Australian Imperial Force in World War II, Oldfield arranged a cricket

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match on 4 January 1940 in Sydney between the veterans of the First Australian Imperial Force XI and cricketers joining up in World War II. The seasoned World War I Test cricket players defeated a team of mainly club players. One sports journalist wrote of the match: 'The old A.I.F. players gave their younger opponents a lesson which may be used on a sterner field.'[12]

The pressure for sportsmen to join up during World War II

In the Australian press, sporting prowess was held up as indicating the likelihood of similar success on the battlefield, as it had been believed to be so in World War I. This again put public pressure on sportsmen to enlist in the military. In early May 1940, noting the growing recruitment of sportsmen, The *Cairns Post* wrote how 'the Anzac spirit continues, Sportsmen adopt sterner game'. The newspaper elaborated on how sportsmen embodied the Anzac tradition:

> The spirit which found many Australian sportsmen among the ranks of the Anzacs in the last war is still alive and daily reports are being received of prominent figures in the athletic and sporting arena taking on the sterner avocation of war. Ability gained in the competitive field should enhance their usefulness in the game in which Mars handles the whistle.[13]

The Hobart *Mercury* in March 1940 was also full of praise for sportsmen who in its view had done what sport had prepared them for on the playing fields and gone to war: 'True in the spirit they have displayed on the sporting field sportsmen have responded readily to the call of colours in Australia.'[14] In July 1940, the newspaper described how the sportsmen of Tasmania and the Australian mainland had responded to its call: 'Daily the field of sport is being forsaken by prominent athletes for the field of war service.'[15] Newspapers, such as the Brisbane *Courier-Mail*, published lists of sportsmen who had enlisted.[16] Even the trade union-run left-wing Brisbane *Worker* printed articles listing sportsmen who had joined up. The *Worker* wrote in May 1940, 'Day after day there is evidence that sportsmen are doing their bit in defence of their country, and during the last few weeks several prominent athletes have joined the colours.'[17]

Sport was integral to the construction of masculinity for many of the men who joined the Second Australian Imperial Force. Sports clubs and

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associations, where this sense of manhood was constructed, were active in encouraging their players to enlist. Sports from which not enough players had enlisted were criticised. In August 1940, P. B. Wald of the Australian Lawn Tennis Association at its monthly meeting attacked its national champions because not one of them was in uniform.[18] Wald had served as a lieutenant and company commander in the 43rd Battalion during World War I, and was awarded the Military Cross. Wald's criticism arose when the New South Wales branch applied for permission to hold its State championships and informed the national body that all its title holders would be able to defend their titles. In response to Wald's critique, the Victorian branch was quick to point out that five of their leading players were doing war work, while the New South Wales and South Australian branches named three top players who were in uniform. However, members of the Queensland branch objected that some members of the association, such as Wald, were engaging in 'moral conscription' by putting so much pressure on members to join up and unfairly criticising the top ranked tennis players who were not in uniform.[19]

In the same month as Wald's attacks on the top tennis players for not joining up, other sports were also criticised, such as Australian rules football, for not having enough of its players in uniform. This was despite over 60 Victorian Football League players having enlisted by April 1940.[20] By the end of the war, 1,500 current and past players from the League would have enlisted, with 60 being killed.[21] The Victorian Football Association, the Victorian Football League's more amateur-based counterpart in Australian rules football, also lost a steady stream of players to the war. Eventually, from 1942 to 1944 the Association shut down its games and allowed its few remaining players to join the Victorian Football League competition.[22] The debate over whether sportsmen should enlist revealed that in some sports, such as rugby union and hockey, whole teams had joined up together.[23] The Commonwealth Department of Information even conducted a survey in early 1940 that revealed that almost all sports in Australia had contributed players to the recruitment drive.[24]

Sports associations took very seriously the call to arms. As in World War I, so too in the war of 1939–1945, it was the sport of rugby union that exerted the most pressure on its players. In 1939, the New South Wales Rugby Union Executive Council proposed a sportsmen's battalion, which was rejected by the army as impractical. The Executive Council noted with regret that the 'formation of a new unit of rugby union players (or sportsmen generally) would not be acceptable to Military Authorities

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whose plans are based on completing the strength of existing units'.[25] While there was no repeat of the sportsmen's battalions of World War I in 1939–1945, rugby union tended to repeat its World War I rhetoric on its relationship with war. This started from the day war was declared. The Australian Wallabies rugby union team's boat arrived in England on 2 September 1939 just before war was declared the following day. Rugby officials promptly cancelled their planned tour of Britain, Europe and North America. On 12 September 1939, Dr Walter Frederick Matthews, the team manager, then exhorted them all to join up, which they soon did. He told them: 'we had one job in front of us now, vis. to return and get into Australian uniforms without delay'.[26] Matthews had been an army surgeon during the Gallipoli campaign and on the Western Front during World War I. He even had been manager of the First Australian Imperial Force's 1919 rugby team.[27] That night Matthews' speech was not the only one encouraging the team members to join up. Matthews recalled there were a number of 'informal speeches all referring to bitter disappointment and necessity of cancelling tour and the stern job in front of all R.U. people and nation'.[28]

In 1940, rugby union's governing council went on to compile a list of all players and members down to the club level who had enlisted.[29] The council assisted the New South Wales State Recruiting Committee in getting players, members and spectators to enlist at rallies it held in Sydney.[30] However, in contrast to what happened in World War I, officials did not shut down the sport for the duration of the war. The enlistment of many of the First Grade rugby union players into the armed forces did not stop First Grade competition among the clubs, as many could still play for their clubs as members of the armed forces stationed in Australia.[31] Rugby union officials and players had often expressed their belief during the interwar period that shutting down rugby union during World War I had considerably weakened support for the sport, as spectators and players switched to other codes of football.[32]

The rhetoric rugby union used in World War I that connected the sport strongly to late Victorian and Edwardian ideas of masculinity was heard again. These values were far from forgotten or discredited by memories of the horrors of World War I. They were found in the editorials of the *Rugby News*, which was the mouthpiece of rugby union's governing council of New South Wales. In its Anzac Day editorial of 1941, the *Rugby News* expounded to its readers that when it came to Newbolt's notions of playing the game of war, and his injunctions to 'set the cause above the

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renown' and 'to love the game beyond the prize' that 'no code of sport more rigidly observes that precept' than rugby union. Players were told to heed the call of duty and not just put the team above themselves but their country and empire. The *Rugby News* proudly observed: 'hence it naturally follows that, faithful to the traditions of the game from every Club playing Rugby Union football most of the members have gone forth to serve on sea, on land, and in the air'.[33] The *Rugby News* elaborated that rugby as a sport saw itself as developing values upholding the idea that the sporting field and the battlefield were linked:

> The fundamental principle of our Code is that the Game is always in the centre of the field. Hence the members of those years 1914-18 had considered that place as being the scene of battle and hence the Field of Honour.[34]

In an open letter to all rugby 'Football Fans' the *Rugby News* combined with its counterpart the *Rugby League News* in September 1942 to urge them all to see the war as the 'greater game' and to exert themselves fully in it:

> The season is ending, Soon we will put the ball away
> But there is another game on, and you know it.
> It is grim and bitter. It has no seasons. Our opponents
> know no rules. And there is no umpire but our own
> consciences.
> Also, there are no spectators – and there can be no
> Passengers. We are all players in this other game. Each
> of us has a part to play. Because we must win this game or lose every
> thing.[35]

The *Rugby News* singled out Lieutenant General Iven Mackay as the best example of what it called 'soldier-sportsmen', describing his cricket and rugby exploits in the position of five-eighth when he had played in the First Grade competition representing the University of Sydney before World War I.[36] Mackay, commander of the 6th Division of the Second Australian Imperial Force in the Middle East, was a Gallipoli veteran who had been involved in hand-to-hand fighting at the Battle of Lone Pine. Between the wars he was a headmaster of a Sydney public school, Cranbrook. Mackay seemed to be the living embodiment of the ideals that he had absorbed from his public school background in late Victorian and Edwardian Australia, lived during combat and propagated as headmaster. His troops in the Middle East 6th Division nicknamed him 'Mister Chips' after the headmaster of literary of fame.[37]

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Australian rules football officials were also keen to draw the connection between their game and the war. A June 1941 editorial of its journal, *Football Record*, entitled 'Football and War', described the utility of Australian rules to fighting the enemy in terms of preparing young men for battle. It argued: 'We can learn from our grand winter game the essential qualities for defeating the foe.'[38] *Football Record* outlined the characteristics it believed Australian rules possessed to do so:

> Football properly played, demonstrates the value of solid training, co-operation, fast action, forceful methods of attack and determined defence. It shows, too, the necessity for loyalty, unselfishness and unity of purpose, as well as that strongly developed fighting spirit which overcomes adversity and turns impending defeat into victory.[39]

The *Football Record* was elaborating on the advice of Like H. McBrien, the Secretary of the Victorian Football League, who in 1941 had told Australian rules players and officials at the organisation's annual meeting that 'the history of the British race is replete with evidence of the value of sport to prepare men for the fighting front'.[40] Hec de Lacy, when commenting upon Australian rules football in the *Sporting Globe* of Melbourne during May 1944, reiterated this point: 'It has become a national boast that the Australian's fighting spirit inherited from sturdy pioneers has been developed on our playing fields…. There had been a tough code of behaviour and of personal expression demanded in Australian games.'[41] To foster on the battlefield what Australian rules officials had believed had been gained on the sports field, in April 1941 they sent a thousand footballs to the Middle East and Malaya for the Second Australian Imperial Force with the promise of sending further supplies.[42] Lieutenant Colonel Gowand of the Australian Comforts Fund was reported as commenting that the troops in the Middle East were 'football mad' and keen on laying their hands on footballs. The troops of the Second Australian Imperial Force were even reported to have started their campaign in Libya by kicking an Australian rules football into the battlefield.[43]

Whether to shut down sport during wartime

The enthusiasm for sport on the battlefield mirrored support for it on the home front. Michael McKernan's analysis of how sports organisations and the Australian government tackled the question of how much to

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curtail sport during World War II reveals that Australian attitudes were different from those held in World War I. Then the question divided both sport and the nation. In World War II, although sport received criticism from some middle class 'patriots' for not shutting down, there was greater recognition that sport had a role to play in providing valuable recreation time for wartime workers and troops stationed in Australia when the continent seemed to be threatened itself. There was more unity over this issue than in World War I. McKernan concludes that 'many sportsmen refused to be ruled by memories of the last war' and sports carried on.[44]

Australian rules football, in particular, felt the criticisms that it should curtail its major competitions and tell its players to join up. Despite such criticisms, the football code never did, but continued to strongly justify its role in assisting the war effort, mainly through donating proceeds of the games to the war funds, but also through the number of players who did join up. The official organ of the Victorian Football League, *Football Record*, argued that 'Footballers and supporters will probably do more for their country than many of the critics who are clamouring for a premature decision to discontinue or curtail the game.'[45] Australian rules and other sports, such as rugby league, endorsed the words of conservative Prime Minister Robert Menzies, Carlton Football Club's number one ticket holder. Menzies told sportsmen throughout 1940 and 1941 that in war 'let nobody decry our sporting tradition' because 'the attitude of the sportsmen is one of the vital things in winning and, indeed, in our great cause', so 'sportsmen can best help by carrying out their football games'.[46]

When Labor Party leader John Curtin became Australia's wartime prime minister and Japan had entered the war, the *Football Record* quoted Curtin's endorsement of football continuing at the opening of Canberra's 1942 football season. Curtin said that football was good 'tonic' for the public as 'football is a fine means of relaxation' as 'those who are too old to play benefit from watching others playing as sportsmen'.[47] Curtin himself had played in the Victorian Football Association for Brunswick, and he supported Footscray in the Victorian Football League.[48] From his youth, when he played competitive football and cricket, Curtin had a lifelong interest in sport.[49] He was fond of using sports metaphors and analogies in politics. According to his Labor Party colleague and biographer Lloyd Ross, 'Curtin often returned to his sporting days for inspiration or illustration.'[50] In December 1941, when the two British battleships defending Malaya and Singapore, the *Prince of Wales* and the

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Repulse, respectively, were devastatingly sunk by Japanese planes, Curtin remained calm and remarked: 'Nobody squeals about being a few goals down at half-time.'[51]

Curtin's nephew, Claude Curtin, even played for Fitzroy during the war, becoming the club's top goal kicker in 1940 and 1942.[52] Claude Curtin's story highlights how Australian rules football was able to keep going during the war when many of its playing fields were taken over by the military and clubs found it hard to enter teams into competition because many players had joined up. Claude joined the Citizen Militia Force in August 1941 at the end of the football season, and because he was in Melbourne he was still able to play for his club. But he missed the seasons of 1943 to 1945 when he transferred to the Second Australian Imperial Force and was stationed in the operations area of the Northern Territory for the rest of the war. Claude returned to his club in 1946 and played until he retired from the game in 1948.[53] Sport in wartime Australia tended to follow what sports historian Tony McCarthy has documented in wartime Britain. While many players joined the military, many national sports continued because players were still able to play in either military teams or would be given leave to play with their old teams.[54] The rationale was that sport on Saturday afternoon kept up the morale of the population which was working long hours in war industries and needed some recreation.[55]

Curtin had a keen sense of the opinion of the majority of the Australian public when it came to the role of sport during worsening war conditions. As war clouds loomed over the Pacific in November 1941, Curtin affirmed that sport was an integral part of the life and character of the British Empire that should be continued. Curtin optimistically asserted: 'It would be a demonstration to the world of the spirit of the British race if Australia and England resumed test matches immediately after the war.'[56] He elaborated on his belief on the role of sport in the British Empire: 'I think that sport, such as cricket, is important to the future of the British race as the performance of Shakespeare. I think the two things go together in making us what we are.'[57] Curtin observed that 'it was also a matter of great satisfaction that so many men prominent in sport had enlisted'.[58] He disagreed with the calls to shut down sport during the war, saying: 'I cannot agree that participation in games and sports in moderation, either as players or spectators, need be in any way detrimental to our war effort.'[59] He argued: 'Reasonable participation in sport not merely improves the physical well-being of persons working

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strenuously through the week, but it also improves their morale.'[60] Curtin added that 'those who are working through the week have at least as much to gain by spending their afternoon off at a sporting contest as they have by spending a night at the pictures. In the balance they are probably better occupied at an open-air sports meeting than at an indoor entertainment'.[61]

However, after Japan entered the war, Curtin's government banned from 1 January 1942 all mid-week sport but had no problems with Saturday afternoon sport.[62] Cricket was mostly affected by this new rule, which had games that last several days. Within a week after Japan declared war, cricket's State governing bodies had themselves already decided to cancel interstate competitions.[63] In February 1942, when Singapore fell and Australia seemed under threat, Curtin momentarily deviated from his view expressed in November. Describing the fall of Singapore as 'Australia's Dunkirk', he suggested that 'we can put playtime aside' as the 'hours previously devoted to sport and leisure must now be given to duties of war.[64] Given the gravity of the war situation, executive committees of many sports associations anxiously awaited clarification from Curtin on whether he would ban sport altogether or settle for just curtailing it more in addition to the existing restrictions. They were prepared to accept a complete ban if Curtin demanded it.[65]

However, despite the alarmist nature of his speech, in the months following his February speech, Curtin took no action against sport, leaving that to the State premiers if they wished. The State premiers did not act, and waited for action from the Commonwealth. In March 1942, Curtin made a statement clearly saying that he was 'not asking that football should cease'. Instead, he argued, using a sports analogy, 'We have to score points against the Japanese with a gun and all our activities, including sport, must have that as our objective.' He added, 'I have no objection to men in the forces, or those engaged in essential work who can obtain leave playing football but obviously they cannot spend time during the week in training which hitherto was always a condition of inclusion in a first-class football team.'[66] Curtin left the curtailment of sport up to the States, but when the South Australian Premier banned Saturday afternoon horse racing, he was quick to distance himself from the decision, saying that State 'Premiers may prohibit, restrict, control or regulate any race meeting' according to National Security Regulations, but 'there was no justification for Mr Playford saying that he was acting as he (Mr Curtin) desired in imposing a complete ban'. Curtin's view was

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that what was needed was only a 'modification of the peace-time scale of racing', as he 'realised there should be some form of relaxation for war workers especially those in heavy industries'.[67] He stressed that 'while he had pressed for restrictions in all sporting fixtures he had never urged prohibition', adding that 'the government, for instance, had no objection to football at week ends provided players did not waste valuable time training during the week and provided that there was no attempt to retain the peacetime atmosphere'.[68]

Despite the restrictions some sports coped well. The military had its own teams, and tried to release players for football games, and kept many key players from overseas service if possible. According to rugby league sports historians Gary Lester and John Ellicott, 'rugby league blossomed and record crowds came to watch games at the SCG [Sydney Cricket Ground], some of the biggest since the sport started', and 'by war's end in 1945, rugby league was stronger than ever' as the 'remarkable aspect of rugby league during the war was that the code continued to grow'.[69] The Annual Report of the rugby league Sydney premiership winning club from 1942, Canterbury reported that 'owing to the extraordinary support of the general public ... the financial returns to the club created a record. The 1942 season shattered all previous records for the NSW Rugby Football League.'[70] The patron of New South Wales Rugby Football League was none other than Dr. H. V. Evatt, the Australian Minister for External Affairs.[71] In 1942, the Australian military even included rugby league with rugby union and Australian rules as an official military game in its Military Recreation Programme. This was the result of lobbying by John Larcombe, the Queensland Minister for Transport and President of the Queensland Rugby League.[72] Previously the sport had not been an official game in the Australian military and thus was not played officially by the soldiers. Playing rugby league in the military also contributed to the spread of the game, as more soldiers became familiar with the code of football from former players serving in the ranks.[73]

Sport played by the Second Australian Imperial Force

Sport was a common feature of life in the Second Australian Imperial Force, as it has been among Australian soldiers during World War I. When playing sport against other battalions and nationalities, Australian soldiers believed they were following the sporting tradition that was part

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of Anzac. Writing somewhat self-consciously about this ethos, the veterans of the 24th Australian Infantry Brigade, which served in the Middle East and then New Guinea, described the surprising number of elite sportsmen they had in their brigade throughout the war and how they comprised what veterans called a unit of 'soldier sportsmen'. Veterans of the brigade asserted:

> It can be truthfully, and with all due modesty, be said that the Australian soldier sportsmen have made their mark in the world. Wherever they have gone they have indulged their inherent craving for sports and their playing fields are dotted over North Africa, Australia, New Guinea, in ancient Palestine, on Syrian heights and in Borneo swamps.[74]

It is hard to gauge how many soldiers were sportsmen. A 1980s survey done of 3,700 veterans of the Second Australian Imperial Force by Australian historian John Barrett suggests that 75% were involved in some sport at some level before they joined up and that half of the sample were engaged at a competitive level in sport.[75] Sport was seen as one of the characteristics that the men of the Second Australian Imperial Force thought helped make a good soldier.[76]

Unlike in World War I, the Second Australian Imperial Force was not content to wait till the end of the war to prove themselves on the cricket field against the other cricket playing countries of the British Empire. In the Middle East during October 1941, Slessor lionised Australian soldiers in the cricket matches played between the Second Australian Imperial Force and the British, New Zealand and South African forces. Slessor described the team as following in the Anzac sporting tradition that he believed originated in World War I. He wrote how the Second Australian Imperial Force's cricket team 'brings back memories of the famous A.I.F. side which grew out of the last war'.[77] The Anzac tradition was affirmed in these matches of the Middle East as the Australian players asserted their identity against the other sides of the British Empire. Of the cricket teams of the Middle East only the team of the Second Australian Imperial Force played as a national team, while their opponents were often a mixture of players from Britain and the Dominions.

The cricket games in the Middle East theatre of war resembled Test matches played by former Australian Test cricket players who had joined up. Prominent among them were Gunner Lindsay Hassett and Lieutenant Ted White, both batsmen who toured England in 1938 with Donald Bradman. Included in the same Second Australian Imperial Force team

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were also Gunner Alexander Hurwood, who played as a pace bowler in Bill Woodfull's team that toured England in 1930, and Private Ray Robinson, a batsman who played against England in Australia during 1936. Accompanying these Test players were over a dozen cricketers who had played for their State in the Sheffield Shield competition.[78] Playing against the Australian team in what was called the 'Alexandria Area' team were also three former South African Test Cricketers – batsmen Bob Catterall and Eric Dalton, and wicketkeeper 'Billy' W. W. Wade.[79] Slessor wrote evoking memories of the Sydney Cricket Ground: 'There was a little good-humoured barracking, just to bring back memories of "The Hill," but it was done by Australians, at the expense of Australians.'[80]

The seriousness in which the Australian commanders took the effort to display their 'soldier sportsmen's' prowess was demonstrated publicly and behind the scenes. In keeping up with the appearances of Test matches, the Australians had gone to greater trouble than the British and other Dominion troops they were playing against. Slessor observed that the 'Australians took to the field in white, with dark green caps and blazers, embroidered with golden rising suns' while the Alexandria Area team were dressed 'mostly in khaki'.[81] Thomas Blamey, the Australian Commander-in-Chief of the Middle East, had personally intervened to make sure the cricket team was as strong as possible. He over-ruled General Sir Leslie Morshead of the Australian 9th Division to get former New South Wales State player Captain Albert Cheetham out of the siege of Tobruk so that he could play for the team. Morshead was said to have replied to the order from Blamey's headquarters with the question: 'Don't you know there's a war on?' Blamey said that he wanted Cheetham for the team despite the war.[82]

Australian rules football was also played extensively in the Middle East among Australian troops. In June 1941, the governing body of the Victorian Football League received an Australian rules football accompanied by a letter from a Lance Corporal E. Fitzgerald of an engineering unit in the Middle East. The letter described how the ball had first been used in games when the unit began its military training at Puckapunyal in Australia, and then later in Palestine and Libya. The football had been kicked around Tobruk when the Italians were shelling the area. Officials described how the 'ball was almost snow white from constant contact with the African sandy desert'. On it were the autographs of many of the men from the games who also wrote the places they had played, which included Lete, Gracia, Driana, Fort Vale Bordere, Bardia, Sollum, Sidi

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Barani, Amiriya, Soluk, Derna, Benghazi, Chemines, Benina, Palestine, Cerine, Berke, El Martine, Fort Capuzzo, Tobruk, Tocra and Berka.[83] The executive of the Victorian Football League expressed its pleasure that 'many games under Australian National Council rules have been played by our lads, and that the spectacular features of our game have, as they did in the last war, greatly impressed the British, French and other Allied soldiers'.[84] It added that in order to encourage the playing of the game among Australian soldiers, 'it is intended by the League to contribute towards the supply of further footballs'.[85]

The pervasiveness of Australian rules football among the Australian troops in the Middle East was described in 1942 by a returning veteran, Victorian Football League ex-umpire Warrant Officer Alf Miller, who had also served in World War I. He said he had 'umpired in matches in many lands and never missed the opportunity to advertise the Australian game of football by arranging matches under all sorts of conditions.'[86] For many soldiers in the Middle East, football and sport were so intertwined with war that the Australian 9th Division adopted the football cry, 'Up there, Cazaly', as its war cry shouted by soldiers going into combat in places such as Tobruk.[87] Among the soldiers in the Middle East there appear to have been a number of supporters from player Roy Cazaly's old club, the South Melbourne Football Club. They seemed to have been to the fore in promoting the sport's cry as a battle cry.[88]

The Victorian Football League even received correspondence from captured Australians in German prisoner of war camps telling them of games of Australian rules played in the camps. One letter from a Corporal George Thompson in September 1942 expressed his pride in Australian sporting prowess among the prisoners of war. Thomson wrote that the 'Aussies were well to the front at a sports meeting held here.' He expressed his pleasure that Australian rules football was played in the camp and mentioned two prisoner of war players who had previously played in the Melbourne football competitions, Alfred Ludlow and Frederick William Pascoe. His letter ended with him expressing the desire for the Victorian Football League to keep playing its major competitions: 'Tell the boys to carry on, as we are keeping our tails up.'[89]

The Victorian Football League went to even considerable lengths to demonstrate the connection between the Australian rules competition and the Anzac tradition. In May 1942, Squadron Leader Keith 'Bluey' Truscott was on leave in Melbourne from flying with the Royal Australian Air Force in Britain. He was asked to play for his old team

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in the Victorian Football League, Melbourne. A player in the 1939 and 1940 Melbourne Grand Final winning teams, Truscott joined the air force in 1940. He had since shot down 15 German planes. At the game between Melbourne and Richmond, Dr William C. McClelland, the President of the Victorian Football League, presented Truscott with one of the gold medals given to the winners of the 1941 premiership, his own team, Melbourne. McClelland said that 'though on active service abroad, the League had decided that he should be included as a member of the premier team'.[90]

Truscott led his players onto the Melbourne Cricket Ground to a roar of cheers and handclapping. Even the supporters of Richmond were wildly enthusiastic about seeing one of Australian rules football's own 'soldier sportsmen'. Ivan Southall, also a pilot in Britain with Truscott, described the acclaim he received:

> Bluey played that afternoon in the old sweater he used to wear. They kept it in mothballs for him. The thousands rose as one to honour him … . Hundreds of excited schoolboys and men and women engulfed him. Dyer [the Richmond captain] paraded him into the heart of the Richmond team and towards the great block of Richmond supporters, and the reception was a vast human roar and very nearly overwhelming.[91]

The mouthpiece of the governing body of the Victorian Football League, the *Football Record* used Truscott's return to play Australian rules to affirm the connection between football and war:

> Altogether it was a gala day for 'Bluey,' and a splendid recognition of the magnificent way in which he had upheld the high traditions of the Australians' fighting qualities against the Huns. He had shown, too, that football brings out prominently those tenacious qualities needed by our intrepid airmen and those in the other fighting forces. Many league footballers fought gallantly in the last war, and quite a number are showing the same self-sacrifice and bravery now.[92]

The reality of the event was quite different to the 'soldier sportsman' mythmaking. Truscott was out of condition after having not played for two years. His body frame had visibly gained extra weight. He did not have a good game, nor did his team, which was soundly defeated by Richmond by a record margin.[93] Southall, who was less interested in 'soldier sportsman' mythmaking, described how the Richmond team, the 'Tigers', and their captain, Jack Dyer, helped the out-of-form heavier Truscott score his one goal. Truscott, according to Southall, pleaded for

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the players to slow down and cried, 'Let's have a go at the ball'. Dyer and the Richmond players obliged:

> The Tigers did slow down, bless them, but if they had slowed down anymore when the ball was near them they would have stopped, and thousands thought he was clowning and laughed until they could laugh no more. At last Jack Dyer dropped the ball in the goal-mouth and Blue captured it and put it through. He kicked his goal and the multitude cheered until it was hoarse.[94]

Sadly, within a year, during March 1943, Truscott was killed in an accident when his Kittyhawk crashed in the Exmouth Gulf, Western Australia.[95]

Although there was a tendency for Australian sports associations to try and find exceptional men such as 'Bluey' Truscott as 'soldier sportsmen', many ordinary soldiers, too, fitted into this image. When the Second Australian Imperial Force's 8th Division first arrived in Singapore during February 1941, army publicists spread the idea that the Australians were natural athletes as well as fighters. The works of C. E. W. Bean were recycled for propaganda purposes by these army publicists. When introducing the Australian soldiers to its readers, the local Malayan and Singapore press took the words given to them from Bean's descriptions of the First Australian Imperial Force and applied them to its World War II counterpart, reporting: 'it was a certain quality of Australians that, having lived a largely outdoor life, many of them were half soldiers before enlisting'.[96]

Much was expected of the Australians in sport as well as in battle. Major General Gordon Bennett, the commander of the 8th Division, in his first address after having arrived in Singapore on 21 February 1941 told reporters that 'only a day or two had elapsed' since disembarking and his men 'were so anxious to keep fit they had already started playing football'. He boasted that the 8th Division 'could raise a very fine cricket eleven, probably not as good as a State eleven, but not far short of it', and added, 'I think they will look forward to playing against a Malayan team.'[97] Sport was designated as essential in the training routine of the Second Australian Imperial Force. Matches were regularly played under military supervision rather than haphazardly by men on leave.[98] Sergeant Charles Price of 2/10th Australian General Hospital wrote home of the endless amount of sport:

> Sport played a big part in the existence over here, racing, polo, football, tennis, cricket, hockey and badminton all had most enthusiastic supporters, but of all sport, soccer football reigned supreme. Most games commenced at 5 or 5.30 pm, so avoiding the trying heat of the day…. During my stay in

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> Malacca I played in as many as three Soccer matches a week, never less than two, played cricket on the Padang at the Rest Home and drank Stingahs at half time on the verandah, had tennis and afternoon tea regularly with many European residents, in short lived like a Lord ... [99]

About 120 Australian nurses stationed in Malaya also devoted considerable time to sport, in particular to tennis on their hospital court that belonged to their British civilian counterparts.[100]

Among the ranks of the Australians stationed in Malaya and Singapore both the men and the women attempted to demonstrate Australian sporting prowess vis-à-vis their British counterparts. The most public expression of this sporting rivalry in Malaya and Singapore was in rugby union and cricket.

The Australian cricket team that played against the British sides was led by Ben Barnett, who was Bradman's wicketkeeper on the 1938 tour of England. When Captain Barnett arrived in Singapore in August 1941 with the second major Australian troop convoy to Singapore he was greeted with much acclaim and gave an address over the radio back to Australia at the docks.[101] It was almost as if he was about to take over command of the Second Australian Imperial Force in Malaya and Singapore. Within two weeks he was in command. Barnett was quickly made captain of the Australian cricket team playing against an English XI. The Australian press took particular pride in the seven-wicket victory with headlines that proclaimed the sporting prowess of the Second Australian Imperial Force over its British counterparts.[102]

The end of the sporting season in November 1941 culminated in two rugby games between players from the Second Australian Imperial Force and the British Army. There were expressions of Australian national pride in winning these rugby matches and other sports events, namely the cross-country run and the Scottish Highland dancing. These events were all won by soldiers of the Second Australian Imperial Force over the same weekend. The press in Australia followed the events closely and reported the results with headlines, such as the Adelaide *Advertiser*'s 'A.I.F.'s Athletic Prowess'.[103] The tendency to talk up the Australians as 'soldier sportsmen' was evident upon the return to Sydney of Mrs G. J. O'Grady at the end of 1941. She had been the secretary of the Anzac Club in Singapore, which was set up as a recreational club for Australian soldiers. She told the Australian public, 'Australian soldiers are considered awfully good sports in Singapore ... the Australians always draw a crowd when they are taking part in any sports.'[104]

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After the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942, sport remained an established part of military culture in captivity. At the Changi prisoner of war camp, Barnett organised cricket matches between the Australian and the British prisoners of war. These were often referred to as Test matches, and players came wearing cricket flannel whites to recreate the atmosphere of the sporting life of the British Empire before the war. Sport, cricket in particular, was important in upholding what were thought to be superior masculine values that were tied to notions of empire, such as fair play. These were the very same values that Bert Oldfield, Barnett's mentor and predecessor as Australia's Test wicket-keeper, had told the men of the Second Australian Imperial Force to uphold in his 1940 radio broadcast from England that went around the British Empire. The enemy for Oldfield and Barnett was viewed as not upholding sporting values and to be 'unsporting', just as the Germans had been perceived in World War I.[105] Australian nurses held at prisoner of war camps in Sumatra, despite their weakened state and poor health, also played cricket to lift the morale of themselves and their fellow prisoners who were mainly British civilians. The nurses also aimed to prove that despite their captivity under the Japanese they held superior values, as demonstrated in cricket.[106] Barnett was also involved in organising games of Australian rules football that were arranged into a formal competition modelled on that in Melbourne with the same names of the clubs used for the teams of the Changi camp.[107]

However, it was cricket that proved the most enduring sport in the prisoner of war camps under the Japanese. Even on the Burma–Thailand Railway, where conditions were much more horrendous than at Changi, there were games of cricket billed as 'Tests' between the Australians and the British. These matches occurred despite the very primitive conditions. Cricket player and commentator E. W. Swanton described these conditions in his memories of the Burma–Thailand Railway. The men, who were reduced to walking skeletons, used over-sized pieces of wood for bats and worn out tennis balls.[108]

Given the prominence of cricket in Australian and British military life, it was little surprise that at the end of World War II the idea of what was called a Second Australian Services Team modelled on that of the First Australian Imperial Force XI of 1919 was resurrected. Going into the war, many of the men of the Second Australian Imperial Force had remembered the sporting tradition that the men of the First Australian Imperial Force had created for them to follow. At the end of World War

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II memories of that tradition among the Australian and the British servicemen began to encourage the demand for the creation of an Australian Services XI.

At Lord's cricket ground, the main cricketer behind the idea was Sir Pelham Warner, who had played against an Australian services side in 1918 when he was a soldier in World War I. On 27 May 1944, Prime Minister John Curtin, while in London for an imperial conference, went to Lord's to be among a crowd of 30,000 to watch the Royal Australian Air Force play a British Empire services side.[109] Warner put the idea to Curtin of 'Victory Tests' of services cricket teams to be held immediately after the war ended in Europe. The idea reflected a belief that both Australia and Britain were bound together by the values and traditions that Curtin believed cricket upheld. Curtin told the cricketers at Lord's: 'You Englishmen will always be able to find enough Australians to defend those twenty-two yards of yours out there. Lord's and its traditions belongs as much to Australia as it does to England.'[110]

These 'Victory Tests' began at Lord's within two weeks of the end of the war in Europe during May 1945. England was able to assemble a side that included Test greats Walter Hammond, Les Ames, Denis Compton, Bill Edrich and Len Hutton. In contrast, the Australian side only had one former Test cricket player, Lindsay Hassett, who was made the captain of the Australian team. Most of the team had played cricket at a State level, but surprisingly there were players who had only played for their clubs in Australia. What distinguished the team was that all had been on active service and had seen combat. They all seemed to fit the image of 'soldier sportsmen' that Australian sporting associations were interested in projecting to the public during the war.

Notable soldiers on the Australian team included fast-medium paced bowler Albert Cheetham, a former 'Rat of Tobruk' from the 1941 desert cricket team captained by Hassett. Cheetham, like Hassett, was in early 1945 fighting the Japanese in New Guinea. Another fast-medium paced bowler Robert Graham Williams had been a prisoner of war after being shot down by the Germans near Tobruk during June 1941. Williams spent almost four years in prisoner of war camps teaching blind prisoners to read Braille until his camp was liberated in April 1945 by Allied troops.[111] Batsman Squadron Leader Keith Carmody had been shot down in early 1945 while attacking German ships off the coast of Holland. Carmody was captured by a German boat and imprisoned in several prisoner of war camps and forced-marched 250 kilometres.[112] One of the Australian

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servicemen in the team was all-rounder Keith Ross Miller, a young pilot who flew long-range night fighter Mosquitoes in bomber raid support over Germany.[113] It was said of this future post-war Test great that he was 'capable of crash-landing at 11a.m. and joining in a game of cricket at noon'.[114]

Flight Lieutenant Keith Johnson, the manager of the Second Australian Services Team, in his public statements was keen to emphasise that his team members had been very much involved in fighting and combat as soldiers. He argued: 'It must not be forgotten that ours is purely a services team and has been selected from men who have done a good job of work in the war effort. In the case of the A.I.F. men in the team each of them had a fine war record.'[115] The team arrived back in Australia after winning two out of the five 'Victory Tests', drawing one and losing one. Johnson argued that in representing Australia at a 'Test' level, 'there may have been stronger and more talented teams than this one but no other team deserves more from the country than this one, the members of which have been worthy ambassadors of Australia wherever they have gone – Tobruk, Greece, Crete, El Alamein, New Guinea, Germany or any part of Europe'.[116] By citing the battles that they fought in Johnson was making the case that the cricketers were 'soldier sportsmen' who were living up to the sporting tradition in the Anzac legend.

Upon their arrival back home, the members of the Second Australian Services Team were appropriately dubbed 'cricketing soldiers' by the Australian press. The sporting pages of the *Australasian* newspaper of Melbourne proclaimed that 'they have fought beside Englishmen on the field of battle, and they will play against them when Tests are resumed'.[117] The connection between the First Australian Imperial Force XI and the Second Australian Services Team was played up and the team portrayed as continuing the sporting tradition. After winning the first 'Victory Test' from 19 to 22 May 1945 against their English counterparts at Lord's, the team received letters from the old members of the 1919 team congratulating them. One of the 1919 veterans, A. W. Lampard even sent Hassett his old cap so that he might wear it when playing against England. After their win at Lord's, the *Australasian* proclaimed, 'for the second time, Australian soldiers have proved their worth as cricketers'.[118]

The idea of the cricket players carrying on a tradition was strongly present in the minds of many Australians. Just before the Lord's match, Curtin himself had sent his message of greetings 'to all those gracious people who will assemble at Lord's where tradition so richly nourishes

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and perpetuates our great game'.[119] Stanley Christopherson, President of the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord's, replied to Curtin saying that the cricket club, the two teams and the fans 'hope to maintain the great tradition of a game which means so much to England and Australia'.[120] The Australian press also tended to see the 'Victory Tests' as a celebration of a sporting tradition that exemplified the shared values of the British Empire of which Australia was an integral part. This sporting spirit was connected to how they had won the war. For the sports writer of the *West Australian*, the 'Victory Tests' were proof of the Duke of Wellington 'declaring that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton'. When writing about the first 'Victory Test' at Lord's, the *West Australian* asserted, 'There is no doubt, however, that the Germans and also the Japanese, have reason to regret the spirit which finds expression at Lords and on other cricket fields of the far-flung Empire.'[121]

The 'Victory Tests' at the end of the war in the English summer of 1945 as they were played and talked about reflected the belief that there was an Anzac sporting tradition which had been strongly felt at the beginning of World War II, and expressed in cricket by 'Bert' Oldfield. Its advocates certainly believed that sport had become integral to Anzac in World War I and that the men of the Second Australian Imperial Force were the inheritors of what they saw as the Anzac sporting tradition. Sport both in the armed forces and outside of them continued to reflect late Victorian and Edwardian ideas of the 'games ethic', although heights of the rhetoric in World War I were not reached in World War II.

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4

Anzac and Sport after World War II

Abstract: *In Australia after World War II, sports associations saw their returning players as having gone through the test of battle and again proven themselves. The Korean War confirmed the belief that sport could create 'soldier sportsmen' who were perceived as superior fighters. But conscription during the Vietnam War challenged the notion that there existed an Anzac 'soldier sportsman' who volunteered when he heard the 'call of duty' to take up the 'greater game'. Throughout the post-war period increasingly the relationship between Anzac and sport became even closer as the playing of sport on Anzac Day was adopted by all Australian States. By the twenty-first century sports associations had invented rituals and ceremonies for the sport played on the day.*

Blackburn, Kevin. *War, Sport and the Anzac Tradition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
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How were war and sport discussed after World War II? Were the conversations little changed from the language that emerged after World War I? In Britain, the rhetoric of linking sport and war receded after World War II, according to Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi. They concluded that 'the generation of officers who had been brought up by the Victorian and Edwardian public schools had been replaced by one whose childhood and youth had taken place against the background of the slaughter on the Western front'. This new generation had been conditioned by the notion that 'a war that involved both the serious risk of invasion and the mass bombings of civilians on both sides was clearly in no sense "sporting" '.[1]

Mason and Riedi's observation may not be applicable to Australia. There is evidence that the remnants of the rhetoric of the 'games ethic' still influenced the way sport was discussed despite dreadful wartime experiences. In rugby union, it can be seen that just as the sacrifices of World War I were too great to relinquish the connection between the patriotism of war and the team spirit of sport, so too were the sacrifices of World War II of a similar magnitude that prevented a complete rethinking of the 'games ethic'. *Rugby News*, the official voice of the New South Wales Rugby Union Executive Council, wrote proudly in its August 1946 editorial how the fathers of the new young players returning from World War II had in 1914 'flocked in their thousands to the call of Empire, placing for the time being the lesser game behind them'. Their sons were described as having been similarly 'tested in fire and not found wanting, steeped in traditions made honourable by their forebears'.[2] The weekly guide to rugby union listed the war dead of the decimated Australian Wallabies and the New Zealand All Blacks teams and affirmed the 'games ethic': 'Rugby Union players, as always, flocked to take up arms for their country and Empire. Their deeds and sacrifices won imperishable fame and helped towards a glorious victory.'[3] Rugby union's working class counterpart, the New South Wales Rugby Football League executive committee, was of the same opinion. Its official organ, the *Rugby League News*, wrote in 1947 that during the war 'football heroes became heroes in another much tougher sphere'. It affirmed that war had tested its players: 'Every club has a large portion of players who have seen active service and who come back to the game all the better for their experiences.'[4] The connection between sport and war in twenty-first-century Australia displayed on Anzac Day every year, too, suggests that while the late Victorian and Edwardian period has long since passed, there are remnants of this language that bound war and sport together.

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This chapter traces the discussion of war, sport and the Anzac tradition from the end of World War II to these present-day Anzac rituals that incorporate sport.

Sport and the Korean War

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 demonstrated that even in a limited war, rather than a total war, as in World War I and World War II, sport remained strong in military life and the way war was talked about. Soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, the Australian government in August began a recruiting campaign for just 1000 men to beef up the one regular army battalion that it was sending to Korea in September.[5] The role that sport played in the process of recruitment and socialisation into the military was surprising. Many of these men joining up in the early days of the Korean War had served in the Second Australian Imperial Force and were also accomplished amateur sportsmen.[6]

The most well-known of the returning Second Australian Imperial Force men was the Aboriginal Lieutenant Reginald W. Saunders, who had served in Greece, Crete and the Middle East in the 7th Battalion, before becoming a platoon sergeant in New Guinea, and eventually rising through the ranks to end the war as a commissioned lieutenant. Saunders was a well-regarded country sportsman in Victoria who had played the Australian rules football position of centre half-forward with the Wallacedale Football Club.[7]

Enlistments for Korea reflected the influence of country sports clubs on the young men in them. At the Truro Football Club in South Australia, the first man in the country town to enlist was Doug Hanley, the secretary and most consistent player the club had on the field. Hanley, though only 25 years of age, was also a veteran of World War II, having served in Borneo.[8] Also enlisting in August was Dick Spencer, the playing coach of the Swanpool Football Club in the Benalla District League of Victoria. Playing his last game, a semi-final match, on the Saturday before he went into camp, he was said to have 'displayed true sporting spirit'.[9] Joining up with Spencer was his mate Val Chester, whose father, Alan, a popular community leader, was blind from his combat experience in World War I.[10]

At the farewell given to Spencer by the Benalla Returned & Services League, its President Jack Pennington arranged the presence of two Australian Test cricketers, Lindsay Hassett and Ian Johnson, both of

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whom had been in combat in the Middle East and New Guinea during World War II. Pennington had known Hassett during the war when he was a radar instructor.[11] Their special presence and mingling with Spencer and the veterans implicitly evoked the idea that going off to Korea was yet another expression of the Anzac sporting tradition. A veteran at the club, H. Hossick drew the connection between the 'soldier sportsmen' of the Second Australian Imperial Force and the desire to enlist again to fight in Korea when he said 'it was some wonder that those who had a taste of war should want to go back but it was the Digger spirit that made them answer the call'.[12]

The army's public relations branch made much of these connections between the new recruits, sport and the Second Australian Imperial Force when they were being trained for the Korean War. In its press releases on early training at Ingleburn in New South Wales, the army quoted one senior officer as saying that because so many recruits were 'soldier sportsmen' from World War II, the 'standard of physical fitness was remarkably high', adding that 'for some of the troops softened by civilian life, the settling in had been hard but most of the men are very fit'. The senior army officer affirmed: 'Most of the boys have been playing football since they left the army after World War II and have kept in good condition.'[13] In the small regular Australian army that came into existence after the Second Australian Imperial Force had been demobbed sport was a regular part of daily life. Buck Buchanan, who was in the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment stationed at Puckapunyal in northern Victoria, recalled, 'We played everything. Tennis, cricket, softball in summer and all codes of football in winter.'[14]

Australian military commanders at the outbreak of the Korean War seemed as fond of the language entwining sport and war as they had been in World War II. Lieutenant General Sir Horace Robertson, who had been schooled in the 'games ethic' of the late Victorian and Edwardian public schools, suggested that during the Cold War sportsmen had a duty to prepare themselves for war by engaging in military training. Robertson had served in the 10th Light Horse Regiment at Gallipoli and in World War II led the 19th Infantry Brigade at the Battle of Bardia in the desert campaigns. He later commanded the 5th Division in New Guinea. At the time of the outbreak of the Korean War he was the commander of the Allied occupying force in Japan known as the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. He was crucial in quickly sending armed Commonwealth forces from Japan to Korea in the early days of

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crisis when North Korean troops had pushed the South Korean forces into 'Pusan Pocket', threatening to overrun the whole Korean peninsula.

Robertson returned to Australia and was made Director of Recruiting. He was quite scathing of Australian military preparations for the Cold War, which according to him had let the Australian army dwindle to the point where in 1950 it was struggling to field just a battalion in the Korean War. He argued that 'this country of Australia has never learnt that its permanent insurance is its armed forces. It makes a wild rush to raise a force after war breaks out and destroys it as soon as war stops'.[15] Robertson suggested skimming off the cream of Australia's suburban sportsmen to form several additional battalions as the basis of a sizeable permanent military in order to be prepared for the Cold War:

> That's all it wants. Three or four hundred to each of those three units and you would be pretty right. What about setting about finding these young men? The sporting bodies have all the fit young people about the place. What about getting them to come in and join your units. This is your problem. In the suburbs where you live there are all these units. You should interest the football clubs, the cricket clubs, all of these. If they each provide a section or a platoon you would have your units filled in no time.[16]

Lieutenant General Iven Mackay, of the same generation as Robertson, also encouraged young men to join at least the part-time voluntary militia. He believed they should receive military training so that they could be ready if the Cold War suddenly became a worldwide hot war as the Korean War threatened to become in its early days. Mackay told an audience in the Murrumbidgee town of Leeton: 'It was the same as football or cricket. They would not put an untrained man into a football or cricket team as he would be practically useless and would be in the way of others.'[17]

Similar sentiments were heard from the same generation at Anzac Day ceremonies when veterans of World War I expressed their views. At the Anzac Day ceremony of 1952, Lieutenant Colonel K. W. McKenzie reiterated the idea that Anzac had a sporting tradition. McKenzie was a senior official in the Returned & Services League, and had in World War I joined the 17th Battalion in January 1915 and served in the Gallipoli campaign, rising to the rank of a captain, and later served on the Western Front commanding a company. On Anzac Day during the Korean War, McKenzie spoke of a continuing Anzac sporting tradition that had originated with the Anzacs at Gallipoli and that was expressed in World War II and in the Korean War: 'When they went ashore at Anzac Cove they

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were back on the football or cricket field, or in the boxing ring. They were on their mettle' … . That's it that's the old Digger spirit.'[18] Some veterans echoed the call from the two World Wars that fit sportsmen should be the first to join up, and that sport had somehow helped prepare them for military duty. John Gunn, the president of the Launceston sub-branch of the Returned & Services League, explicitly said he was 'at a loss to understand why young men held back. Those fit enough to play football and cricket should be prepared to do their bit'.[19]

The mixing of the language of war and sport was less noticeable in reports from the battlefield in the Korean War than in World War II because there was a rise of new generation of war correspondents and military public relations personnel, but the sport metaphors for battles still did appear. Thus, newspapers in Australia could sometimes carry a headline such as: 'It's not Cricket but … Enemy hit for six.'[20] Flight Lieutenant Ross Alexander, a Public Relations Officer of the Royal Australian Air Force, wrote reports using overblown sports metaphors rivalling those of Bean and Slessor in the two World Wars. In the Korean War, No. 77 squadron was using British Meteor jets in attacking enemy ground positions to push back the enemy on the battlefield. The squadron was formed in 1943 and had been stationed in Japan after the end of the war as part of the Commonwealth occupying forces. An article that Alexander wrote was picked up and used by regional newspapers in Australia. It was given the title: 'An Australian Team is winning this Test.' Alexander elaborated:

> Australia has sent many great teams abroad. Cricket teams, Rugby teams and tennis teams are among those that have had outstanding success, but no team the country has sent overseas has had more sustained success in harder competition than No.77 (Fighter) Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force. It is an all-weather team that has been in the field for ten years, the last 2 $^{1}/_{2}$ of them in Korea. The ashes it has won have been prestige for Australia and a part in the United Nations unity that is halting Communist expansion.[21]

No. 77 Squadron provided the Victorian Football League with its Korean War 'soldier sportsman', just as 'Bluey' Truscott did in World War II. Geoff Collins was a Royal Australian Air Force pilot who played in the Victorian Football League for the Melbourne Football Club before he was sent to 77 Squadron in Korea during late 1952, missing the 1953 season. His career stretched back to Melbourne's 1948 Grand Final victory.[22] Collins was the only Australian sports star who served in Korea, as recruits came from the ordinary clubs rather than the

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elite teams of sport. However, the Victorian Football League was keen in associating itself with sportsmen on the battlefield and described Collins' achievements in its official organ the *Football Record*. When reporting on Collins' farewell to his squadron at the end of the Korean War in July 1953, the Victorian Football League hoped Collins would be able to return to play for the Melbourne Football Club before the 1953 football season concluded, commenting that 'he would be assured of a great reception'.[23] Collins, perhaps aware of Truscott's appearance in 1942 when he was clearly out of shape, wisely chose to return to playing at the elite level for the Melbourne Football Club in the following season after he had played minor games for the Royal Australian Air Force in 1953.[24] He came out onto the field to much acclaim as the new captain for Melbourne in 1954.[25]

In Korea, Australian rules football was viewed by its followers as expressing an Australian national identity. In late August 1950 as the 'Pusan Pocket' was collapsing in the face of onslaughts from the North Korean attacks, in brief moments of respite, Australian naval ratings played games of Australian rules to show their American comrades their 'national game'. The Victorian Football League officials were quick to praise such an early exhibition of sporting prowess: 'It hasn't taken long for our Aussie boys to kick a football around in Korea ... two teams booted a ball around on the cobblestones and rail tracks to the amazement and curious glances of Korean labourers and American troops.'[26]

Australian soldiers played impromptu games of sport close to the battlefield. In November 1950, a company of the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, when entering the battle-damaged town of Pakchon, which had been shot by United Nations aircraft, staged what it called 'probably the first game of cricket ever seen in Korea'. The pitch was a mud patch, while an oil drum served as a wicket. The cricket bat was a plank carved into the shape of a bat by Alan Young, a professional tennis coach before joining up. The men played with a rubber baseball that had been 'souvenired' by Young to take home to his fellow sportsman, the New South Wales baseball star player, Ken Oliver.[27]

These men in the frontline voraciously devoured two-week-old newspapers for news of the cricket Tests in Australia, and asked their drivers for news from the broadcasts of the cricket on their truck radios.[28] Another group of Australian soldiers around Pakchon in October 1950 played cricket using a tank as a wicket when they had to wait for two hours while the position was being reconnoitred, and continued playing

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on in the following days as the position continued to be reconnoitred. The local Koreans called the game 'hittee ball'.[29] As in World War II, these games were well reported in the press back in Australia because they reinforced the image of 'soldier sportsmen' that upheld the Anzac sporting tradition which the military wanted to project. The soldiers, too, tended to embrace this imagery, using the language of sport to describe what they were experiencing on the battlefield. Maurie Pears, a lieutenant in Company C of the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, described how Chinese mortar bombardments came in cricket bowling 'overs', wreaking havoc the platoon behind his in the taking of Kowang San Hill during the Battle of Maryang San in October 1951.[30]

Afternoon sport among the Australian troops to celebrate Anzac Day was a feature of the Australian experience in the Korean War, as it had been during the two World Wars. On Anzac Day 1951, Australian troops had intended to mark the day with an afternoon soccer match against Turkish troops in the United Nations force before the Battle of Kapyong broke out a few days before and it had to be cancelled.[31]

Sport appears in the letters and memoirs of veterans of the conflict as much as it does in similar records of the veterans of the two World Wars.[32] After the July 1953 truce that ended the Korean War, the troops had much more time on their hands, and there was a significant increase in sports activities, as there had been in 1919 and 1945. Private Leslie 'Wayun' Rayner of New South Wales, who had volunteered for a third tour of duty in the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, wrote back home in November 1953 describing how the men were 'not browned off' by 'endless parades' to fill in time, but on the contrary, 'We played cricket until it got too cold, and now we are playing football, basketball, volleyball and other games.'[33]

The enthusiasm for sport in the Australian military was further entrenched by the experience of the Korean War and became formalised in the early 1960s as Australia formed a small regular army, which developed an 'official army policy on sport'.[34] However, the Korean War was the last conflict that Australia was engaged in which raised a force from recruitment drives for volunteers. It was the last time there were calls for fit young men from sports teams to join up in order to use in war qualities they had developed in sport. After Korea, the Australian military had a standing regular army for conflicts, or in the case of Vietnam, conscripts as well.[35] What impact did these changing circumstances have on the relationship between sport and war?

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Sport and the Vietnam War

In 1964, as the Cold War threatened Australia's security with both Indochina and Indonesia leaning towards communist control, the Australian military felt that ideally it should have a standing army of 40,000 men, or nine battalions.[36] Conscription was seen as the only viable way of raising such a sizeable force, as full employment existed and average weekly wages were high. Australia was not officially at war with any nation so the types of mass recruitment campaigns seen before were inappropriate. A 'birthday ballot' was suggested as the way to implement conscription. Dates of birth would be plucked out of a lottery barrel and all young men turning 20 years old on that day would be conscripted. In April 1965, Australia began its increased commitment to Vietnam by sending a battalion of the regular army. Several more battalions were needed and conscription began to be used.

The use of conscription to force fit young men to go to war, among whom there would be sportsmen, marks out Vietnam as different from the recruitment campaigns that had often put pressure on such young men to join up. Sportsmen now had no choice. Conscription removed young sportsmen involuntarily from their sports for two of the best years of their careers. The way sports associations, clubs and players reacted to the Vietnam War and conscription is worth studying given the existence of an Anzac sporting tradition and the divisiveness of the war in Australian society.

The dilemmas for sports associations and players over conscription arose quite quickly. By late 1965, among sports writers there was concern that the 20-year-old cricket 'Test star' Doug Walters may well be conscripted. When Walters made his Test debut during early December 1965 in Brisbane against England he was hailed 'the star of the first Test' after he batted for 155 runs. There were no celebrations in the press of Walters as a potential 'soldier sportsman' in the Anzac tradition about to join the likes of Oldfield and Hassett, as had occurred in the two World Wars and on a smaller scale with the Korean War. On the contrary, reporters quizzed an army spokesman about whether Walters would be exempted from national service as he was so valuable to the national team playing what many considered the national sport. The army spokesman was adamant that 'Walters would not be exempt from the ballot simply because of his prowess on the cricket field.' He affirmed: 'You can't make exceptions like this…. Once you start where is it going to end?'[37]

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Doing National Service added to Walters' popularity, as one fan wrote in April 1966 when it was possible that Walters could be sent to Vietnam (he remained in Australia for his national service): 'Congratulations to Doug Walters for his refreshing attitude toward National Service. This fine young man, with a brilliant cricket future, is willingly putting aside his personal ambition for the welfare of his country.'[38] Cricket journalist Jack Pollard also commented that Walters 'won many admirers by the manner in which he accepted Army service without complaint'.[39]

Conscription undermined the idea that sportsmen would be among the first to hear 'the noble call' of their country in a time of war because their sporting prowess had prepared them for the physical and mental challenges of battle. There was also little that was noble about birthdates being pulled out of a national lottery barrel. Conscription proved a divisive issue, among the public and among sportsmen. Geoff Daly was an infantry platoon commander of the 7th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, who was conscripted in January 1969. He recalled a five-eighth of the South Sydney 'A' grade rugby league team 'had gone to the doctor with a sore knee', and ended up convincing a specialist that he needed to have a major operation, and thus failed the army's medical test. But according to Daly 'he came straight from the specialist appointment, virtually with his boots in the back of the car, to training. And he failed. I said to myself that if that bastard can fail – so can I'. However, despite Daly's efforts he did not manage to fail the medical test.[40] Mark Dapin in his study of national service during the Vietnam War has revealed that many sportsmen and their clubs were unhappy about players being conscripted although they publicly never said so at the time. There were other players, too, who were surprisingly pronounced 'medically unfit'. A large number were not sent to Vietnam but remained in Australia, and some players were able to defer national service for several years because of their sports.[41]

Sports associations and clubs tended to be conservative and not take an anti-war stand even though they were losing some players in the prime of their careers to national service. One of the earliest of the Australian rules football players to be conscripted and sent to Vietnam was Essendon fullback Lindsay McGie, who missed both the 1966 and 1967 football seasons because of his national service. In Vietnam, he was a reinforcement with the 2nd and 6th Battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment, seeing action against the Viet Cong as an infantryman. McGie might have had every reason to feel bitter about conscription. He had

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first played for Essendon in 1964 and again in 1965 when the club won the Grand Final. His last game before entering the army was the Grand Final win. When he returned from Vietnam, McGie played for the 1968 and 1969 seasons before retiring from the game.

Upon his return from Vietnam, McGie spoke in favour of Australia's participation in the war and criticised the anti-Vietnam War demonstrators, believing that 'few of the anti-conscription demonstrators know what the Vietnam war is about'. McGie was 'strongly against their demonstrations' and stated that he believed 'that 99.9 per cent of other national servicemen share' his view, 'particularly those who have served overseas'. He said, 'I wasn't happy about my call-up', adding, 'but once my name was drawn out of the barrel I realised I had a duty to do and I did it. I have no regrets'.[42]

Essendon perhaps had greater reason than other sports clubs to be against conscription. Ian Payne, one of the club's star players, missed the 1968 and 1969 seasons because of his tour of duty in Vietnam. In 1968, Essendon narrowly lost the Grand Final by three points.[43] In total, Essendon lost six of its First Grade players to national service, but players and officials never uttered a word of complaint.[44]

Among the Victorian Football League players there was one player who publicly spoke out against conscription and Vietnam War. Brent Crosswell was perceived by football fans as an extremely talented but showy centre of the Carlton Football Club. Carlton won the 1968 Grand Final with the aid of his football prowess. 'One of the most flamboyant footballers of the modern era,' was often a description used to describe him.[45] Crosswell himself acknowledged this label saying that the public tended to think of his style of play as 'ostentatious', but added, 'I do it because I feel like doing it.'[46] In April 1969, Crosswell first publicly discussed his views on Vietnam, when he was aged 19, and thus eligible to be conscripted in the following year.

When asked how he felt about being conscripted to fight in Vietnam, Crosswell told the football world: 'I loathe the idea of doing national service and the thought of going to Vietnam gives me no joy whatsoever.' He hastened to add: 'It's not that I am frightened of war; of the chance that I may lose my life. Of course I certainly don't want to do that but my hate of the whole situation is based on something else.' He steadfastly opposed the Vietnam War and aligned himself with the anti-war movement: 'As for Vietnam itself my objections are similar to those that have been aired. I can see it was a war that will not end; and as such

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surely it is futile fighting for something endless.'[47] He aligned himself with the counter-culture and New Left of the students on the university campuses. Crosswell even clashed with his coach Ron Barassi over the length of his hair. In 1970, a marble with Crosswell's birthdate on it did not come out of the National Ballot barrel and he was not conscripted. He was, however, part of the Carlton's Grand Final win that year.

The Vietnam War divided Australian society and challenged the assumptions about sport and war, but the notion that sporting prowess translated into a better battle performance proved remarkably resilient. Vietnam veteran, sportsman and historian of the conflict, Gary McKay upholds this connection in his own personal account of being conscripted and sent to Vietnam as a platoon commander in the 4th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment. When McKay was conscripted into the army on 8 March 1968, he noticed that unlike in previous wars when whole sports teams had joined up together 'there were very few of my mates from the surf club or my rugby club in St. Ives in Sydney who had been called up'.[48] Nonetheless, McKay as a young officer absorbed ideas from older officers who believed that sport can prepare a man for the battlefield by teaching him how to face and overcome tough physical challenges. McKay writes:

> There is no doubt that a man will face some physical danger on the sporting field. So, apart from the obvious team building and bonding that results from a team contact sport, there is something to be said for exposing men to danger and preparing them in some way for what may lay ahead on the battlefield. Many officer training institutions have used (and some still use) boxing as a means of testing whether officer aspirants had the desired mettle to get into the square ring and slug it out with another person.[49]

In McKay's battalion, Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel James Curnow Hughes admired what he called McKay's 'football prowess', which he considered desirable for an officer about to go onto the battlefield. For him, a former rugby player, war and sport required similar qualities, arguing that 'real Australian mateship stands out in surfing, football and military environments'.[50] Hughes had begun his service in the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment in the Korean War, where he was awarded a Military Cross, before going on to serve in Malaya and Borneo.

On the battlefield in Vietnam, the idea that war was in some sense akin to sport sometimes appeared in macabre forms. Vietnam veteran and historian Robert Anthony Hall, who was a captain in the 8th Battalion

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of the Royal Australian Regiment's tour of Vietnam from 1969 to 1970, wrote about one of the more ghoulish examples of treating war as sport in his battalion history. He described how in the 8th Battalion 'some platoons started their tour with scoreboards' with running totals written in chalk of enemy killed and their own comrades killed. But he added, 'these soon lost favour when casualties mounted and combat ceased to be a game'. Hall highlighted the 5th Platoon scoreboard which had an enemy skull above it. He noted that the scoreboard was 'ripped down following a mine incident which killed two and wounded several others' and 'the skull was quickly removed and buried'.[51]

During the Vietnam War, as in previous wars of the twentieth century, sports metaphors were used both on and off the battlefield to describe the war. The idea that war was being fought in an 'unsporting' way was given a unique twist and used by both proponents and opponents of the war. In the debate over the war, D. L. Brownbill from Canberra wrote into the press during October 1968 to describe how 'unsporting' the Viet Cong were by engaging in revolutionary guerrilla warfare rather than democratic elections: 'this tactic would seem to contravene the rules of the game. If the game was akin to cricket we could look to a meeting of the MCC [Marylebone Cricket Club] to declare this tactic illegal, after the manner applied to "bodyline" bowling.'[52] The idea that the war in Vietnam was 'unsporting' could be skilfully employed by anti-war protestors too. When the Australian government's Attorney General Thomas Eyre Forrest Hughes in September 1970 gave a lecture at the Australian National University putting the case for conscription, anti-war students turned up dressed in cricketing whites holding their bats at 'present arms' to give him a guard of honour after a mock cricket match. Possessing an appreciation of university student satire, Hughes turned the tables on his guard of honour by signing their cricket bats.[53]

Just as in the two World Wars and the Korean War, sport was widely played in Vietnam by the Australian military. Mark Dyson, an Australian war correspondent reporting on the Australian base in Vietnam, Nui Dat, located in Phuoc Tuy Province, noticed that 'volleyball courts dot the area, and there is a grassy clearing Diggers can be seen playing all codes of football'. Dyson also recorded 'unit rugby teams play competition games at the nearby province capital of Baria', and 'the standard is remarkably high'.[54] In October 1966, rugby games between Australian and New Zealand army teams began at the Baria Sports Stadium. Games were played over lines marked out with mine tape.[55] Australian troops

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in the Vietnam War went to extraordinary lengths to play sport. No. 9 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force carried around its own eight Australian rules goal posts when playing against 14 army teams.[56] Following in the Anzac sporting tradition of both World Wars and in the Korean War, the Australian military marked Anzac Day in Vietnam with a service in the morning but with the afternoon devoted to a sports carnival, which included games of Australian rules football, soccer, basketball and volleyball.[57]

The amount of sport being played resulted in the military making to the Australian sports associations and clubs what they called 'Sportsmen's Appeals' for sporting equipment.[58] Australian sports associations and clubs were very eager to demonstrate their patriotism and their connection with the spirit of Anzac that they saw the Australian troops in Vietnam embodying. The Victorian Football League sent footballs and all twelve of the football club pennants of its League to Nui Dat.[59] The Sydney Roosters, Eastern Suburbs Rugby League Club, sent its jerseys to the base.[60]

C. V. Ridgeway, President of South Melbourne Football Club, suggested at a meeting of the Victorian Football League in 1966 that the Australian government have 'an All-Australian team play the Rest of Australia in battle areas where Australian troops were engaged'. Ridgeway was eager that 'two first-class teams play demonstration matches in the theatres of war'.[61] However, no sponsor could be found to send exhibition teams to Vietnam and it seemed uncertain how Ridgeway's idea would work in a war zone and with Australian rules having a long schedule of regular club fixtures throughout the season.

Only the sport of soccer was able to send its elite national players to Vietnam to give support to Australian troops and the shaky South Vietnamese government. Johnny Warren, the captain of the national team, recalled in his autobiography that 'soccer was considered the perfect public relations vehicle because it was the most popular sport in Vietnam, adored by the public'. He added that 'there was certainly never any suggestion of tagging a rugby or cricket tournament that may have better suited Australia's sporting tastes because those sports were simply unheard of in the Asian region'.[62] The Australian national team did three tours to Saigon during the Vietnam War, in October 1967, April 1970 and November 1972, which were funded by the Australian government.[63] While in Saigon they played several Asian national teams and New Zealand, as well as the South Vietnamese national side. Members of the

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team recalled it as 'a strange and frightening experience' being 'pitched into the middle of an ongoing war'.[64] Warren remembered that when among the Australian soldiers, 'while they went off to fight, we went out to play football. It was a surreal experience'.[65] *Soccer World*, the voice of Australian soccer, when sending off the players in 1967, thoroughly endorsed support for the Vietnam War: 'Together with the USA our troops are there, fighting for a cause believed to be vital and proper.'[66]

Australian soccer's very public and dangerous involvement with sport in Vietnam reflected a desire present in many sports in Australia to align themselves more closely with the Anzac sporting tradition, even during the divisiveness of the Vietnam War. This trend had been strengthening since the end of World War II and gathered more momentum throughout the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and was also demonstrated in Anzac Day's changing relationship with sport.

Anzac Day and sport after World War II

In the wake of World War II and throughout the Korean and Vietnam Wars, sport was becoming more integrated into the ceremonies of Anzac Day. This continued into the twenty-first century. Tracing this emerging trend reveals much about how central sport has been to Anzac and the particular rituals that sport has followed in order to be publicly linked with Anzac Day.

In early post-World War II Australia, each State had its own rules for how Anzac Day should be marked. South Australia had a long tradition of following what the soldiers had done for Anzac Day on the battlefield: solemn services of commemorating the war dead in the morning were followed by sport in the afternoon. On Anzac Day in Adelaide there would be horse racing at the Morphettville track and football matches at the Adelaide Oval. The football was usually a game between the two Australian rules football teams of Glenelg and Port Adelaide, but with a curtain-raiser game between teams of veterans and servicemen.[67]

New South Wales also followed a similar tradition of Anzac Day afternoon sport. Rugby league, the dominant football code of the State, had integrated itself into the ceremonies of Anzac Day. Since the end of World War I, to mark Anzac Day, the full committee of the New South Wales Council of Rugby League would march from its office in Sydney to lay wreaths at the Cenotaph in memory of the war dead. For Anzac

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Day, the full committee of the Rugby League Council split the round so games could be played between four different clubs on Anzac Day afternoon, while the rest of the games for that round would be played on the previous Saturday. The Last Post would be played before the start of all the main matches on Anzac Day and two minutes silence was observed, then Reveille was sounded to close the ceremony.[68] Clubs would publicly honour their players who had died in the wars. In 1950, the Balmain Club announced on Anzac Day, 'Today reminds us of those Balmain players who paid the supreme sacrifice for King and Country. "Lest We Forget" – Jack Redman, Sid Christensen, Maurice Fitzgerald, Fred McKay and Jack Madge.'[69] Other rugby league clubs in post-World War II Australia made similar announcements for Anzac Day.

Affirmations of a connection between sport and the Anzac tradition were made on Anzac Day by rugby league officials. Dr. H.V. Evatt, leader of the Federal Labor Party and a former player and administrator of rugby league, made the 1951 Anzac Day statement on behalf of the governing council of rugby league, saying that 'today in the innocent enjoyment of playing and witnessing keen football the deeper significance of Anzac Day must abide in our hearts'. Evatt added that 'like all other sportsmen, rugby league players' have 'contributed much to our common heritage. It is certain that that tradition will never die'.[70]

In contrast to expressions of an Anzac sporting tradition in South Australia and New South Wales, the other States of Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania observed Anzac Day as a complete day of mourning with no sport or entertainment in the afternoon. However, in the post-World War II period, veterans of Second Australian Imperial Force in the State of Victoria wanted to have an afternoon of Victorian Football League matches as New South Wales had with its own rugby league competition.[71] In March 1953, the Thirty-Niners' Association of World War II veterans in Victoria openly called for the Returned & Services League to have a 'brighter Anzac Day' on which there would be sport played in the afternoon. In 1953, Anzac Day fell on a Saturday, which meant that there would be no sport that weekend in Victoria. Every six years when this happened there would be some debate about whether sport should be allowed on Anzac Day. The Thirty-Niners kept pushing their case in the 1950s. At the 1956 Returned & Services League State conference, A. V. Juratwitch, of the Thirty-Niners' Association, told the members that 'by keeping the day "closed" ' the 'R.S.L. was depriving the people of Victoria of what the R.S.L members enjoyed.' Juratwitch

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added: 'Let's have fun after the march. Let's celebrate that we became a nation at Gallipoli in 1915.'[72]

In Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania there was also questioning among veterans over whether there should be sport on Anzac Day.[73] In Tasmania, although there were no legal restrictions on the holding of sports events on Anzac Day, pressure from the Returned & Services League had prevented all but children's sport being played for decades. In the 1950s, even L. R. Lucke, the Tasmanian Returned & Services League president, 'favoured some form of organised sport in the afternoon'.[74] In Western Australia, a few veterans demanded 'Let's Play on Anzac Day', noting that the veterans' 'reunion is, generally speaking, a bright occasion, for the solemnity of the morning becomes the good fellowship of the afternoon'.[75]

By the early 1960s, the views of the Thirty-Niners had prevailed. In Victoria during February 1960 a proposal for sport and opening hotels and theatres on Anzac Day afternoon was put forward to the Victorian State Cabinet by the Returned & Services League State Executive Committee. The idea of 'a brighter Anzac Day' was quickly accepted by the Victorian government.[76] During 1960, in Western Australia, the State government also agreed to alter its Anzac Day laws after a referendum of Returned & Services League members resolved to have sport played after 1 pm on Anzac Day.[77] In Victoria, the Returned & Services League negotiated with the Victorian Football League to have two premiership games played on Anzac Day in 1960: St Kilda versus Melbourne at St Kilda's grounds and Fitzroy versus Carlton at Fitzroy's grounds. Initially, the veterans were more keen on having the games while the Victorian Football League was not as enthusiastic because the spilt round disrupted their usual schedule.[78]

The Victorian Football League experimented with different types of rituals for the Anzac Day games. In 1961, the games were Richmond versus South Melbourne and Essendon versus Melbourne. A siren sounded just before they commenced to signal a period of silence to observe Anzac Day. There was a one mile footrace as half-time entertainment.[79] To mark Anzac Day 1967, the Victorian Football League distributed at the games a special souvenir magazine that gave a history of Australian rules football during World Wars I and II, highlighting the players from the League who were 'soldier sportsmen', and paying tribute to those players killed in war.[80] In 1968, the Victorian Football League again emphasised the connection between football and war in a special

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Anzac Day issue of its match of the day magazine, *Football Record*. After going through its archives and records, the League proudly boasted in the magazine that in World War II more than 600 players from the First and Second Grades joined up. The League republished a photograph of 'Bluey' Truscott leading the Melbourne Football team at his famous 1942 reappearance at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The story that went with the photograph affirmed: 'Victorian Football League is very proud of the fact that it has played its part in helping Australia when it has been at war', as 'hundreds of our senior footballers exchanged their black and white, blue and white, red and black or whatever those of their club happened to be, for uniform khaki'. Calling Anzac Day 'the day Australia became a nation', *Football Record* connected Anzac Day to Vietnam, saying that 'Anzac Day is not an occasion reserved only for those who gave their lives in World War I so that we may live in a better world. Anzac Day is also a day when we pay homage to the men and women who paid the supreme sacrifice in World War II, in Korea and Malaya ... and of course in Vietnam.'[81]

The Victorian Football League reflected the desire of many sports bodies during the Vietnam War to link their sport closely to Anzac as they had done since World War I. Its counterpart, the New South Wales Rugby Football League, expressed similar sentiments at its Anzac Day matches. For Anzac Day 1971, its official organ, *Rugby League News*, juxtaposed veterans marching with rugby league players running with the ball at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The editorial proclaimed that the afternoon game was 'a reminder' of 'Freedoms we enjoy and of all we owe to the Spirit of Anzac, as shown through two World Wars and subsequent hostilities including the grim campaign in Vietnam, when young men of all walks of life have gone forth at the call of their country.' In an obvious reference to how the conflict had divided the nation, the editor, using a sports metaphor, urged: 'We should determine that we will be part of the great Australian team, combining to ensure that our country shall continue to prosper.'[82]

According to sports journalist Rohan Connolly, officials of Australian rules football were more concerned than their rugby league counterparts that they were lacking a grand game of football to match the occasion of Anzac Day that they extolled in their official announcements.[83] In the 1970s and 1980s, occasionally there would be a game that drew large numbers, such as the 1977 Richmond against Collingwood Anzac Day game which had 92,436 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. However,

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in the 1970s and 1980s, having several matches on Anzac Day usually split the crowd that one game might have had to itself. Most clubs also had smaller membership numbers than a few very big clubs.[84] In 1984, Carlton and Collingwood played in front of a crowd of 68,082 fans, while the next year only 20,489 people watched St Kilda and Fitzroy play at the same Waverley Park stadium.[85]

Historian Melissa Walsh has concluded that the strong increase in the commemoration of war had by the early 1990s made the desire for such a big Anzac Day game even greater than before.[86] In 1995, Essendon's coach Kevin Sheedy devised a format that seemed to solve the problem. He got together with his Collingwood counterpart and came up with the concept of just one Anzac Day match to be played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground between Collingwood and Essendon. These were the two clubs with by far the largest numbers of supporters, and were seen as being engaged in a fierce rivalry with each other. It helped that the head of the Returned & Services League at the time, Bruce Ruxton, was an enthusiastic Collingwood supporter. Sheedy was particularly enamoured with the Anzac tradition and how sport was part of the tradition. When he was a Richmond player he had been conscripted into national service, but not sent to Vietnam. He had also been impressed when he played for Richmond against Collingwood in the 1977 Anzac Day game which, as mentioned earlier, had 92,436 spectators at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.[87]

The first Anzac Day Collingwood versus Essendon game played in 1995 tapped into a resurgence of interest in Anzac Day and war commemoration in Australia that historians of Anzac, such as Carolyn Holbrook, have well documented in other areas apart from sport.[88] The popularity of the first Anzac Day match caught even Sheedy and the promoters of the event by surprise. The number of people who attended was the second highest ever at the Melbourne Cricket Ground for a home and away game, with 94,825 people in the grounds. Over 20,000 people waiting outside had to be turned away and dispersed by mounted police as the gates were closed. Such was their desire to be part of the event that many went over to the nearby park at Fitzroy Gardens and followed the game over their small radios.[89] The 1995 Anzac Day match itself lived up to the hype as a thrilling game, which changed direction three times and ended in 111 points draw. Eddie McGuire, the president of the Collingwood Football Club, when discussing the success of the Anzac Day game commented: 'I might be biased, but this is why Collingwood

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and Essendon have to do this game. It brings glory to the day that there are no seats available. No other clubs can do that.'[90]

The first game contained many of the rituals that have come to characterise it, such as the playing of The Last Post with representatives of the military and veterans on the field while players and umpires are lined up in a 'V' formation. Sheedy believed that the success of the Anzac Day Australian rules game was due to its ability to cater to the growing popularity of Anzac Day as well as public demand for new ways to commemorate the fallen in sport.[91] During his time as Essendon coach in the first 13 of the Anzac Day games to 2007 he regularly used the Anzacs as motivation for his own team. Sheedy gave his players and staff copies of the book, Jim Main and David Allen's *Fallen: The Ultimate Heroes. Footballers Who Never Returned from War*, a collection of stories published in 2002 about the 115 Victorian Football League players who lost their lives in war.[92]

Historian Robert Pascoe has chronicled how the Melbourne *Herald Sun* writes about the Anzac Day game at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. He highlighted in particular how the *Herald Sun* for the first game in 1995 wrote the next day that 'the MCG had become a field littered with heroes'. Again in 1996, the newspaper ran the headline: 'Magpies show true Anzac Day spirit: Victory in Crucial Midfield Battle.'[93] This overblown rhetoric of the *Herald Sun* illustrates that within the Anzac tradition there is the continuing existence of the remnants of the 'games ethic' rhetoric that sporting prowess is similar to prowess on the battlefield.

The significance of Kevin Sheedy establishing what was called by Australian rules officials an 'Anzac Day football tradition' between Collingwood and Essendon at the Melbourne Cricket Ground went well beyond just the Australian rules game itself and its assertion of the sporting values of the Anzac tradition.[94] Its success encouraged other sports to articulate what they saw as the values of Anzac in their games with similar invented rituals, and similar rhetoric.

In 1997, the Super League of rugby donated to the Returned & Services League $20,000 for the right to hold what it called an annual Anzac Test between Australia and New Zealand national rugby league teams.[95] As with Australian rules on Anzac Day, rugby league was quick to make comparisons between their players and the Anzacs. The controversial publicity campaign for the first 1997 rugby league Anzac Test between Australia and New Zealand evoked the idea that sport was like war and that its players were like fighters in a war. This connection was

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surprisingly made by the national deputy of the Returned & Services League, Bruce Ruxton, who featured in advertisements for the game saying: 'Mark my words, Australia is still in grave danger from one of our so-called neighbours. The Kiwis were once our allies and now they're on the other side – at least for 80 minutes.'[96] This evoking of such imagery has long been seen by its critics as equating war as sport. Sports journalist Douglas Jamie when encountering this imagery critically wrote in the lead up to the 2007 Anzac Test: 'Those referring to next Friday's rugby league test in Brisbane as an Anzac test should take some time to really think about just what the connection is between a sporting contest and a war zone where young people were shot and killed, their disfigured, bloated bodies visited by flies and maggots before being retrieved and buried with little fanfare.'[97] However, there has been no shortage of veterans and military figures who have embraced these Anzac Day sporting events and given credence to the link between sport and war in the Anzac tradition. In 2000, Major-General Peter Cosgrove, an enthusiastic rugby league supporter, took the salute at the Anzac Test in Sydney soon after returning from leading the mainly Australian United Nations peace keeping force in East Timor, Interfet.[98]

In 2002, the National Rugby League initiated a second Anzac Day sporting event, the Anzac Day Cup held at the Sydney Football Stadium between traditional rivals, Sydney Eastern Suburbs Roosters and St George Illawarra Dragons. The game has often featured theatrics that put war and sport on an equal footing. At the 2010 Anzac Day Cup, the guest of honour was rugby league fan Trooper Mark Donaldson, who was awarded a Victoria Cross in Afghanistan for his bravery in 2008 – the first Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross since the Vietnam War. Symbolising the support of the military for the event, the Anzac Day Cup itself arrived by a Blackhawk helicopter, which landed on the sports field.[99]

At the Anzac Day Cup for 2010, Wendell Sailor and Adrian Lam, two well-known players with Torres Strait Islander and Papua New Guinean ancestry, were chosen to present a Papua New Guinean rugby league jersey to Dickson Hango. He was one of the 'fuzzy wuzzy angels' who assisted wounded Australian soldiers in the New Guinea campaign of World War II. There was an honour lap in an open military car for Bill Collier and Ferris Ashton, former players for St George and Eastern Suburbs, respectively, who were both veterans of World War II. The lead up to the actual game featured messages from Australian troops in Afghanistan on the

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big screens around the stadium, followed by a military marching band, which played the Last Post after a recitation of the Ode to the Fallen. The Australian and New Zealand national anthems were then played. After all these rituals, a rugby league game then commenced.[100]

With twenty-first-century Australia involved in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan there has been a focus on getting war heroes who are football fans to attend the Anzac Day Cup as guests of honour in order to provide a tangible link between sport and war. In 2011, rugby league filled the role of serving military hero at the Anzac Day Cup with Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith. He had been awarded the Victoria Cross in January 2011 for his bravery in Afghanistan for single-handedly charging a Taliban machine gun nest to help his comrades who were pinned down by enemy fire. Roberts-Smith arrived by Blackhawk helicopter to deliver the Anzac Day Cup. In the crowd welcoming him there were hundreds of other invited serving military personnel as well as veterans. In the coverage of the event, sports journalists were quick to try and dub Roberts-Smith with the 'soldier sportsman' label. The *Daily Telegraph*, the most popular newspaper of Sydney, wrote: 'By the look of his enormous frame, standing at over two metres and weighing about 110kg, he could be playing the game. He should be playing in the front row.' The newspaper went onto to play up Roberts-Smith's sports background, highlighting how he has 'played rugby league while serving in the regular army and has represented the army in rugby union and Aussie Rules'.[101]

Roberts-Smith gave his endorsement to the Anzac Day Cup, saying: 'As sport forms a large part of our culture and Australian way of life. I think it's great for sports of all codes to play commemorative games on Anzac Day as a show of respect to past and present generations of Defence personnel.'[102] When asked about the often made comparisons between sport and war around the time of the Anzac Day games, Roberts-Smith affirmed the connection in an account that stretched back to World War I and the 'games ethic':

> It takes the same amount of heart. You've got to be realistic about it.
>
> It's fair to make those comparisons when you've got the right intention, and they are similar in a way.
>
> You've got that competition. It's a battle. Obviously there's a much more serious consequence in war, and it's a much more serious topic.
>
> But it takes the same amount of heart. You have the same type of bloke out there wanting to win ...

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> They go hand and hand.
>
> If you go back to World War I, the way they used to recruit. All the elite sportsmen used to volunteer because they thought it was their duty.
>
> They're fit lads, they wanted to do their bit.[103]

Sports journalists covering the Anzac Day Cup have also tended to play up the conflating of war, sport and Anzac in one game of football. Daniel Lewis writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* opened his column up with the often used apocryphal quote: 'Rugby league is war without frills.'[104]

Players seem to also be influenced by the parallels between the contests of sport and war in the Anzac tradition. Benji Marshall gave an interesting account of how he felt like an Anzac storming the beaches of Gallipoli when he played rugby league in the 2015 Anzac Day Cup during heavy rain, hail and lightning. Marshall described how he felt after watching a movie on Gallipoli the night before, which featured a scene with Anzacs fighting in pouring rain at Gallipoli: 'It was quite emotional and I almost lost it out there, to be honest. Standing out there in the conditions I just thought "this isn't bad at all, look what they had to do".'[105]

Other football codes, too, have also had this identification of players with Anzacs. In 2000 when the Australian soccer club of South Melbourne, coached by Ange Postecoglou, qualified for the World Club Cup in Brazil, they were hailed in team posters as 'Ange's Anzacs ready for battle.'[106] Soccer also has its own Anzac Day games in the afternoon and rituals to mark the day. For Anzac Day 2015, in rugby union there were a number of commemorative matches in what the Australian Rugby Union called its 'Anzac Round'. These games all incorporated Anzac Day rituals. On the Anzac Day Saturday afternoon, the Melbourne Rebels played the New South Wales Waratahs for the Weary Dunlop Shield. This shield was established in 2011 to honour the prisoner of war leader and surgeon on the Burma–Thailand Railway, Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop. He was a former rugby international and player for Victoria. The trophy was inaugurated by General Peter Cosgrove.[107]

The 2015 Anzac Day rugby union game with the most elaborate theatrical rituals was that between the Queensland Reds and the New Zealand Hurricanes from Wellington. Publicity for this game had the Reds Captain James Slipper in his jersey flanked by two soldiers from the Brisbane 7th Brigade at the city's Shrine of Remembrance to the war dead. At the game itself in addition to the playing of the Last Post and a minute of silence, there was a marching Australian army band and

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mounted horses of the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry) historical recreation society. They were marching with Reds fans who had served in the military. Over the same weekend, there was a special exhibition on players who had served in Australia's wars at Sydney's Rugby Club. Rob Clarke, the Australian Rugby Union's General Manager of Marketing, Operations and Professional Rugby, summed how he saw rugby, war and Anzac: 'Rugby was part of the Anzac story with many players giving up their boots and jerseys for a uniform and a bayonet.'[108]

While Mason and Riedi have described a waning influence of the 'games ethic' in Britain after World War II, this does not seem to have happened as much in Australia as can be seen in response to the Korean and Vietnam Wars when the connection between sport and war was still extolled by the military and sports associations. This nexus even met and overcame the challenges of the divisive Vietnam War, with sports associations and clubs tending to keep up the 'soldier sportsmen' ideal of Anzac that had been established in the two World Wars. The role of sport in the Anzac tradition, with its ties to notions of national identity, has meant that this connection between war and sport has been sustained and celebrated on Anzac Day into the twenty-first century.

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Conclusion

Abstract: *The history of over one hundred years of the relationship between war and sport in Australia reveals that there has been an Anzac sporting tradition which has been affirmed, challenged and reinvented through the wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Recent connections between war and sport in Anzac are the remnants of the distant 'games ethic' of late Victorian and Edwardian times. These were raised to national character traits when Anzac became part of Australian national identity.*

Blackburn, Kevin. *War, Sport and the Anzac Tradition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
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Surveying the relationship between sport, war and the Anzac tradition reveals that there is truth in both the declarations of the promoters of recent Anzac Day sporting events who say they are continuing an Anzac sporting tradition and their detractors' claims that these particular ceremonies are a contemporary phenomenon. In concluding this study it can be seen by taking a long historical perspective of over one hundred years that these new rituals are clearly what Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have called a reinvention or reworking of a tradition.[1]

World War I marked the beginnings of this historically strong association between the Anzac tradition and sport. War was seen as a test of national character. The 'games ethic' of the early twentieth century upheld the notion that prowess on the sports field led to prowess on the battlefield. An Anzac sporting tradition emerges out of this 'games ethic' that originated in the middle class public schools, but took hold over the popular imagination in World War I. Interestingly, during World War I, the connection between sport and war was much stronger in Britain than it was in Australia because the public school system was more dominant and the middle class which attended these schools were also larger and able to provide tens of thousands of amateur young sportsmen for recruitment. In the British army there were many sportsmen's battalions, whereas in Australia the sportsmen were dispersed as reinforcements. Yet, when British war correspondent Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett gave the 'race of athletes' description to the First Australian Imperial Force at Gallipoli in 1915 the notion of the sportsman as soldier soon became a trait in the Australian national character. In Britain, which already had a well-defined national identity, this did not happen. The act of enshrining Anzac as national identity elevated to the level of national character traits the late Victorian and Edwardian ideals of masculinity that connected prowess on the sports field to prowess on the battlefield. However, the notion of an Anzac sporting tradition that rendered the Anzac as a 'soldier sportsman' was clearly something not foisted upon the ordinary soldiers of the First Australian Imperial Force, but an image that many seem to have embraced and saw themselves as having laid down as part of the Anzac tradition.

The horror of the trenches during World War I certainly challenged the 'games ethic' and its central the idea that war was like sport. But in both Britain and Australia the sacrifices appeared so great that it could not be easily dismissed and was affirmed in the interwar years when World War I was remembered. During World War I, there emerged an Anzac Day

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tradition of Australian soldiers marking its anniversary by commemorating the war dead in the morning and celebrating the Anzacs passing the test of manhood at Gallipoli by playing sport in the afternoon. After the war, this became the way half of the six Australian States marked Anzac Day. The day was also commemorated using language that entwined sport and war, with the Anzacs being hailed as having superior qualities in both sport and war. The other half of the Australian States eradicated sport from Anzac Day as it was seen as incompatible with the idea that the day was 'sacred' like Good Friday and Christmas. Whether sport should be part of Anzac Day was thus contested during the interwar years.

When World War II broke out sports associations, sports magazines and the press were adamant there was an Anzac sporting tradition passed down from the Anzacs of World War I to the new generation enlisting in the Second Australian Imperial Force. The men of the Second Australian Imperial Force thus were expected to live up to the achievements of the Anzacs not just on the battlefield but also on the sports field. Sport was well integrated into the military life of both Australia and Britain and often was an expression of common masculine values that were evident even in the darkest days of the prisoner of war camps under the Japanese.

World War II is viewed as a turning point for the notion of the 'games ethic' that war was like sport. Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi in their study of sport in the British military and wider society argue that this idea faded after this last total war as a new generation of military leaders arose who were not educated in the ideas of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain.[2] Australia, with the Anzac tradition embedded into its national identity, took a different path. After the war, the idea that sport contributed to making Australians better soldiers persisted in Australian sports associations from the middle class game of rugby union to the working class game rugby league. During the Korean and Vietnam Wars there were challenges to the notion of the Anzac 'soldier sportsman', particularly the use of conscription in Vietnam, but many military figures and sports people still affirmed their faith in this idea. Perhaps this is not unusual as the research work on Australian masculinity by Martin Crotty demonstrates that there remains what he calls 'a residue' of the notion of masculinity originating from the early twentieth century.[3] The remnants of the 'games ethic' still, too, resonant in the heady mixture of sport and Anzac that is expressed at sports events every Anzac Day in twenty-first-century Australia.

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The 'residue' of these ideas can be seen in the 2012 Anzac Day reflections of Michael Clarke, Australian Test Cricket captain (2011–2015). Clarke spoke about former captain Steve Waugh (1999–2004) taking the team to Gallipoli on the way to an Ashes Tour in England just after Anzac Day 2001. Waugh wanted the team to connect with the Anzac tradition by re-enacting a photograph taken by C. E. W. Bean showing Australian soldiers playing cricket on the shores of Gallipoli on 17 December 1915. Looking back, Clarke (who was not in the 2001 Australian team) commented, 'There's a huge difference I think when you look at the soldiers fighting at war compared to us walking on a field, but in saying that, that culture, that environment, that mateship the soldiers have created, we try and follow in a team sport. We talk about being in the trenches with your mates knowing you can turn to them, and that all came from the Anzacs before us.'[4]

Notes

1 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
2 Tony Mason and Eliza Riedi, *Sport and the Military: The British Armed Forces 1880–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 257.
3 Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870–1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), p. 233.
4 Wayne Davis and Craig Norenbergs, 'Cricketing greats soak up the Anzac spirit', 24 April 2012. http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-04-20/anzac-day-cricket-special/3962992

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