



ANZAC DAY MEMORIAL EDITION

GENERATIONS OF SACRIFICE



Picture: Alan Pryke

Their sacrifice spans almost a century: from World War I veteran 104-year-old Marcel Caux's service in France to 20-year-old Able Seaman Susan Christensen's preparation for action in the war in Iraq. But these veterans of eight conflicts do not resile from their duty served and on this Anzac Day, all are proud to remember their mates who were there with them and those who did not return. From left, Ken Shephard, 79, World War II; Ron Cashman, 70, Korean War; Marcel Caux, World War I; Tim White, 39, the Gulf War; Aundry Beck, 53, Vietnam; Geoff Lloyd, 31, East Timor; David Barnes, 34, Afghanistan; Susan Christensen, on standby for Iraq

From the Great War to Iraq, we remember

THE young faces seem to have been gone forever. Those who are left have, indeed, grown old, and with each decade fewer in number. Mortality has finally caught up with many of Australia's ageing war survivors.

And yet, as a nation wakes to commemorate its war dead once more, this Anzac Day is possibly more poignant than ever. Today, as always, we will remember. But we are also at a critical moment.

Once, April 25 was embodied almost entirely by those who had died young, on a day set aside to remember Australia's 102,000 war dead. More recently it had come to be symbolised by those who had survived: the young men and women who had made it home, and who had grown visibly older, greyer and slower with each annual parade.

And then there were none. All the Gallipoli

As we mark Anzac Day for the first time since the passing of the last original Anzac, the cycle of generations touched by war continues, writes **Fiona Harari**

veterans — the original Anzacs — are gone now. Alec Campbell's death last May means that we mark this year's parades for the first time, as we will forever henceforth, with the Anzac legacy consigned entirely to second-hand memories.

Eighty eight years since troops first went into combat as Australians, first-hand accounts of the Great War have all but gone. On this Anzac Day, only nine Australians, all of them now centenarians, can recall the harrowing realities of World War I's distant battlefields.

Their successors on the war front, the thousands of men and women involved in World War II, are also diminishing. Nearly 50 years since the end of that conflict, most of its veterans are well into their 70s.

So the medal-holders age. And still the conflicts persist. Korea was followed by Vietnam. And now Iraq. For the first time in 31 years, significant

numbers of Australian troops have been involved in combat. As we embark on the national day of commemoration, young Australians once again have been fighting under the national flag.

What is special about this Anzac Day is that it takes place on the cusp of a generational change. The first waves of Australian combat troops are old. Many have died. But Anzac Day continues to strengthen — and to evolve.

A lifetime has now passed since that first Anzac Day, yet in 2003 it is still about youth. It is a day tinged with ghosts, and they become more numerous as the years pass, but the impact of youth also endures: through old photographs of young men and women captured as they were before they were killed so many years ago; through the young survivors who were lucky enough to return home and grow old; through the 2000 young men and women sent to Iraq. And

through the scores of youthful faces who will join today's marches in memory of their predecessors, and line parade routes bearing flags and inquisitive looks about these conflicts that have always been someone else's nightmare.

"In some ways wars in Australia for the past 30 years have been in the past," concedes the Australian War Memorial's principal historian, Peter Stanley. "Wars are things that happened a long time ago." Or so it seemed until the next conflict occurred.

So for some, this remains primarily a day to remember the nation's war dead. "Anzac Day gives us an opportunity to think about what war has meant to Australia and what the costs of war have been," says Dr Stanley. "Remembering the dead in the world wars, that to me is (most) important."

The RSL's national president, Peter Phillips,

sees it above all as a day of commemoration — despite recent approaches to make this year's event a peace protest or to include blank columns within each march in recognition of the troops serving in Iraq.

"To me, it's all about family because I had five uncles in the war as well as my father," he says. "I was nine years old when my father died so for me Anzac Day always brings back a flood of memories of families, and ladies coping without their husbands through the war."

Just as many are doing today. And thus the cycle continues — although in recent years, since Vietnam veterans were welcomed back in from the cold, Anzac Day has also been imbued with nationalism, to become, as Dr Stanley sees it, almost a de facto national day.

This one begins with yet another generation of young Australians at war — and still no sign of the day's importance diminishing.

THE AUSTRALIAN

Home delivery
1 800 022 552

Home delivery
1 800 022 552

ISSN 1038-8763



9 771038 876523

www.theaustralian.com

HELLFIRE PASS

At dawn today, Kevin Ward will tie a poppy to a tree branch in Hellfire Pass as an act of remembrance

Page 2

THE DESCENDANTS

More and more grandchildren and great-grandchildren are marching in the place of veterans from the old wars

Page 10

REMEMBER THE SOMME

With the death of the last Anzac, the battle of the Somme can now take its rightful place as the conflict we should remember

Page 9

INSIDE