

TEACHERS NOTES

Monash

The Forgotten Anzac



Synopsis

One of the most brilliant generals of World War I and an architect of Anzac Day, Sir John Monash helped create the Anzac legend by ensuring the courage of his men was enshrined in Australian history. Today he is all but forgotten.

Monash – The Forgotten Anzac explores the character and achievements of an extraordinary figure in Australian history, the battles he fought both on and off the battlefield, and the prejudice he overcame to help win a war.

It is the story of an unlikely hero; a middle-aged German Jew with great self-belief who fought not just the German army but those on his own side who used his heritage to undermine him.

To many, Monash's cultured European background made him unsuitable to command an army made up of egalitarian Australian volunteers, but his sophistication and ease with the British aristocracy allowed him to exhibit his skill as a military strategist. Defeating powerful opposition to become commander of the Australian Corps, Monash devised a plan that won key World War I battles and saved thousands of lives.

It was largely through his efforts during the war and its aftermath that the Anzac legend was forged and the soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps became famous for their qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice.

Monash – The Forgotten Anzac examines Monash's key military victories and the hidebound military culture he overturned to win them. And it introduces us to Monash, the man.

Curriculum links

This program will have interest and relevance for teachers and students at secondary and tertiary levels. Curriculum links include English, Media Studies, Journalism, History, SOSE/HSIE, Civics, and Politics.

Historical background and overview

Carry out the following activities on the important historical characters whose lives and deeds are featured during the program. Also carry out activities on Australia's entry, in 1914, into World War One (also known as the Great War, and the 'war to end all wars').

- From the program and any further research you have done, plan and construct a biographical timeline of Sir John Monash from birth to death, indicating events and dates of importance. Ensure you consider the layout, colour design and presentation of the timeline display, as you will require headings and possibly short, explanatory text (in 'breakout' text boxes), with illustrative material such as photographs where applicable.
- Carry out appropriate research then write 250-350 words on the historical significance and importance of each of the following men. Write each item as though you were aiming it at a readership of young teenagers, carefully selecting and fashioning the material for your audience.
 - Charles Bean (World War One journalist and historian)
 - Keith Murdoch (journalist and newspaper publisher)
 - William 'Billy' Hughes (Australian Prime Minister)
 - Douglas Haig (Field Marshal, British Army)
- After carrying out appropriate research, discuss in class then write a brief account of why Australia declared war on Germany in 1914. Why was the Australian Government's decision to enter the war in 1914 popularly accepted by the vast majority of the country's citizens and, in general, the main mass media of the era, the national daily newspapers? What was Australia's population in 1914? Did Australia have a permanent, standing army? Did it have a navy, an air force? What was the size of the Australian armed forces at the time war was declared, and what were the rates of voluntary enlistment in the days, weeks and months after war was declared? (You may wish to present this statistical information in graphical form.) Were there any protests against Australia's initial involvement in the war?
- Find out what Australian war campaign posters looked like in the early part of World War One. Discuss in class the range of messages portrayed by these posters. Who do they appeal to, men only, or women and children as well? What emotional responses are they attempting to extract from the general public? Either working individually or in pairs, devise your own enlistment 'call to action' or 'support the war effort' poster. Consider carefully who your poster is aiming at, what the specific message is, in both word and picture, and the feelings it is attempting to evoke, or provoke. (See website references to 'War posters'.)
- Examine the scene early in the program concerning Monash's German aunt. Discuss in class why she was told not to speak in German and not to visit Monash's home for the rest of the war.

- Following from the previous class discussion, find out what happened to Australian citizens of German origin during World War One. For example, were they treated as the enemy? Were they interned for the duration of the war? Did this apply to the large German population settled in the wine districts of the Barossa Valley? Were 'enemy aliens' treated fairly by the Anglo-Australian populace? Were they suspected of being spies and secret supporters of Germany? Carry out research on this issue then write an informative article as though for a popular history magazine. Include illustrations and captions as required.
- Plan, plot and write a fiction short story about an 'enemy alien' in Australia during World War One. You may wish, for example, to expand imaginatively on the incident portrayed in the program, concerning Monash's aunt.

Battles of World War One

John Monash commanded troops during some of World War One's most famous battles, and gained a reputation as a great military planner, tactician and strategist which not only led to battlefield victories in France and Belgium, but also a knighthood on the field of battle. These successes, however, were preceded by the terrible defeat and carnage suffered by the Australian and New Zealand forces under British command at Gallipoli, Turkey, which is commemorated every 25 April as Anzac Day.

- From the program, and from further research, discuss in class Monash's views as to why the Gallipoli military campaign was a disaster, and what might have been learnt from it. What effect did Gallipoli have on Monash for the remainder of the war, in terms of his views on the effectiveness and suitability of the British military officers in command of the campaign? Do you think he was merely being anti-British and overtly pro-Australian? What was there in Monash's education and professional experience, in the years before the war, that may have been of benefit to his later position and rank as a commanding army officer during the war? (See website references on Sir John Monash.)

- On a single sheet of poster paper draw two maps. One will be a small-sized map of France and Belgium, showing the boundaries of the two countries as they were during World War One. In order to place the geography of the region into human perspective, on the map mark the prominent cities, such as Paris and Brussels, and indicate along the eastern side of the map where the borders with Germany were. Carry out appropriate research to mark on the map generally the region in the north-west where the Western Front military action took place over most of 1916-1918.

On the same poster paper draw a larger map of the general region of the Western Front, showing the locations of the important battles in which Monash and his soldiers took part: Messines (June 1917), Amiens (August 1918), Mont St Quentin (August-September 1918), and the breaking of the Hindenburg Line (late September 1918).

Ensure you include an appropriate title heading for the poster's contents, and add illustrations where appropriate.

- Following from the previous activity, write an appraisal in 400-500 words on why Monash was a successful military commander on the Western Front in 1917-1918 (and why he was knighted). Explain what he actually did that led to military victory over the Germans. Provide a detailed example from the program and from any further research you may have done.
- During the program, in an historical reconstruction scene portrayed by actor Robert Menzies, Monash says, 'I've always found that it pays to consider the psychology not merely of the enemy but also of my own troops. It is because we do not consider psychology enough that we are taking so long to win the war'. Discuss in class then write your own notes on what you think Monash means by this comment. From the program, and perhaps from further reading, provide an example of where Monash considers the psychology of his own troops.
- Discuss in class the 'battles' Monash had with Australian war correspondent Charles Bean. Explain the essential differences in opinion and attitude between the two men over the way Monash's command and the successes of his armed forces were being reported in British and Australian newspapers. Do you think Monash was merely attempting to promote and to advance fame and glory for himself? How might the troops under his command benefit from positive newspaper publicity? (See website references on Charles Bean.)
- In pairs plan, draft and edit two newspaper reports of 250-350 words each. Both will be about one of either the battles of Messines, Amiens or Mont St Quentin. One report will be written following the approach that Bean might have taken to the military victory, while the alternative report may take the less austere and objective line favoured by Monash. Using desktop publishing software, format the reports in newspaper column style, with headlines to suit each type of report. Even visually, at a glance, the reports should look different from each other in presentation, as though designed for completely different types of newspapers, each with their own specific readership.

An alternative approach may be to present the two reports as though for an imagined radio news broadcast; in this case you may need to devise and practise an appropriate style of voice delivery for each report. When ready, rehearse and record your reports for playback.

- Write a commentary on the circumstances that led to Prime Minister Billy Hughes disagreeing with Keith Murdoch and Charles Bean that John Monash should be replaced as Corps commander.
- From the program and after carrying out further research, discuss in class why Prime Minister Hughes instigated a referendum of the Australian electorate in 1916, then another in 1917, to introduce conscription of Australian troops to the battlefield in France. What were the results of these referenda, and why? Why did Australian troops already serving at the front vote against conscription? (See website references on William 'Billy' Hughes.)
- Examine the views for and against conscription in the referenda campaigns of 1916 and 1917, the heated arguments that arose throughout Australian society as a result, and look at examples of how to vote posters on the issue, then, working in pairs, plan and create two referenda posters—one in favour of conscription and one against. Your aim is to use text, colour and image in the most effective way to create a particular viewpoint and to evoke a particular emotional response.
- Following from the previous activity, plan and write a short fiction story in which the conscription issue features either in the background or as a central aspect of the plot. The story may be set at home in Australia during the war, or at the front in western Europe, or both. Consider the characters, both male and female, their relationships to each other, and the ways in which the narrative and general themes will unfold. You may wish, for example, to experiment with telling your story through a set of letters or diary entries, or entirely from the viewpoint of a third-person narrator.
- We are informed during the program that Charles Bean had a particular view as to what kind of image an Australian military officer should conform to. From the program, and from further reading, discuss in class then describe in writing Bean's opinions about the 'typical' Australian military commander. Why do you think Bean held to this view? Explain whether Monash conformed to Bean's image of an Australian military commander.
- This next activity raises the vexed issue of historians offering value judgements and interpretations about people from the long-gone past, the times in which they lived, and the cultural values and assumptions that formed their daily lives. Following from the previous activities about John Monash and Charles Bean, explain in writing whether Bean's views were a reflection of generally prevailing Australian perceptions of the era, and whether these perceptions have changed over the years and, if so, what may have caused this change throughout Australian society. Taking into account Bean's general views about Australian military commanders, and his views about Monash, should we argue, and do we have the right to argue from the perspective of our own times many decades later in another century, that Bean was therefore racially prejudiced?

Note that there are more activities in the Media Studies section (page 5) on the relationship between history and documentary film.

Armistice

By mutual agreement of the antagonists, with Germany being forced into retreat eastward towards its own borders, the guns stopped firing and World War One concluded on 11 November 1918. Thousands of Australian troops had to be transported back home from Europe, a major logistical undertaking. (For more, see 'Armistice and non-military employment', in website references.)

- On poster paper draw a map showing the extent of the advance of the Allied (including Australian) military eastward across France, and the retreat of German forces, during October-November 1918, up to the time of Armistice Day. Add relevant hard statistical facts on death tolls suffered by the various national forces, including those of Australians.
- What happened to 200,000 Australian soldiers in England and France the day the war ended? From the program and from additional research, discuss in class the purpose and necessity of the scheme of non-military employment that was introduced after Armistice Day. Why was the Australian military not required to join the post-war Allied occupation of Germany? What was General John Monash's role in the implementation of non-military employment? If such a scheme had not been organised, what may have been the possible consequences both in the short and long term? At this late stage in proceedings, why did Charles Bean's attitude towards Monash change? Why did he support Monash's appointment to oversee and manage non-military employment and the repatriation of Australian military forces?
- Following from the previous activity, plan and construct an illustrated double-page spread of items about the various aspects of non-military employment for a popular history magazine designed for young teenagers.

Look at how, why and where the scheme was organised, Monash's role, the types of activities that were offered by the scheme, who offered these activities, and who took part in it. How was it funded? Was it a success? What did the soldiers think of the scheme? Why did they refer to it as 'non-military enjoyment'? You may wish to include direct quotations of existing material such as letters and diaries written by participating soldiers, available on websites and in published books.

- Write a short story that takes place during the non-military employment scheme undertaken by demobilised Australian soldiers awaiting repatriation during 1919.

After the war

As we see in the program, after the war Monash was publicly 'feted' in both England and Australia, and in later years was instrumental in ensuring that the Anzac legacy was not forgotten. His personal and family life, however, remained complex.

- Write a short commentary about Monash's relationship with Lizette Bentwich, offering reasons why (as suggested in the program) he refused to divorce his wife, Victoria. After Victoria died in 1920, why did he not then marry Lizette, but remained a widower? Discuss whether his 'unconventional relationship' with Lizette was a possible factor in Monash never attaining the honour of becoming Australia's Governor-General. Do you think such an arrangement would, or should, be taken into consideration today when nominating someone for higher honours? (See website references to both 'Sir John Monash' and 'Book review' - 2nd reference. Note that the review is of a book about Monash, written by Roland Perry, who also appears in the program. Also see the book references section, where Perry's book is cited.)
- Drawing on the details presented during the program, plan and write a set of personal diary entries as though written by someone in Lizette's situation. In your writing, examine her feelings about Monash and his family (Victoria and Bertha).
- In pairs, carry out research and write a 400-word history about Monash's role in the development of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria in the 1920s. Include photographs and other illustrative material as required. (See 'SEC of Victoria' in website references.)
- Write a commentary in 250-350 words on Monash's participation in the development of Anzac Day, as an important day on the Australian calendar.
- Discuss in class, then write your own argued commentary, on whether the importance and relevance of Anzac Day to Australians is founded more on a mythical vision, a construction of what a 'true Anzac' and what the 'Anzac spirit' is supposed to be, rather than on the historical reality of the events at Gallipoli. (You may wish to compare or contrast this visionary attitude to Charles Bean's vision of what made a true Australian military officer.)
- In small groups plan and write a short play, in one or more scenes, about a contemporary Anzac Day. With other members of the class rehearse a play reading, and revise the script as required. Present either the reading or a performance to the rest of the class. (An alternative may be to construct the play for sound only, and to record and edit it for playback on your school's intranet.)

Media studies

- Discuss in class why the title of the film refers to Sir John Monash as 'forgotten', when in fact several biographies have been written about him (see examples in the book references, below). What impression does the title give us, and is it an adequate title, under the circumstances?
- What is a 'hagiography', in both the literal and the contemporary, secular or non-religious meaning of the word? What are the weaknesses and dangers of a hagiography (in the contemporary sense), particularly when presented as a work of documentary history? Discuss in class then write a commentary providing evidence from the program, as to whether *Monash – The Forgotten Anzac* is a hagiography of Sir John Monash as an Australian military commander. (See website reference to 'Hagiography'.)
- Following from the previous activity, discuss in class then write your own analytical commentary on *Monash – The Forgotten Anzac* as an objective, unbiased history of events and of people. For example, does the program present a particular argument and viewpoint, with evidence in support? Does it present opinions as facts through the authorial, or even authoritative, voice of the narrator? Are the claims of the Australian historians who speak on-camera during the program questioned, held to scrutiny and verified? Is the program nationalistic and Australian-centric to the point of ignoring alternative viewpoints, especially on points concerning the perceived failures and weaknesses of the British and American military? Is there more, within the usual one-hour television time constraints, that the program could or should have included?

- Comment in writing on the necessity and purpose of scripted and filmed ‘reconstructions’ using actors to portray real historical personages, alongside actual archival footage. Are these reconstructions a valid form of documentary presentation, or a distraction and a hindrance? Do they raise concerns about interpretation and accuracy? Provide examples from the program. Examine the sequences, for example, concerning war correspondent Charles Bean: look at the ways in which details such as framing, editing, lighting and camera distance and angle, as well as dialogue, voice delivery and acting technique, may colour our attitude and opinions, our emotional responses, to the characters whose lives are being enacted.

Also look at reconstructed scenes where the actor playing Monash speaks directly to camera. Who is he speaking to, and why? Is it an effective filmic technique? Why aren’t other characters portrayed in the program accorded the same expressive ‘freedom’?

- Working in pairs, plan and draft an additional short reconstruction scene that could be included in the program, involving at least two characters. The scene must be relevant to the program’s overall approach to the subject, and consistent with style and theme. It does not necessarily have to feature Monash as one of the on-screen characters. Consider the content of the scene, the aims, the setting and the dialogue. You may wish to draw a storyboard for the scene, indicating camera shots and angles, lighting, dialogue, sound effects and music where applicable.
- Design and create a promotional display to advertise *Monash – The Forgotten Anzac* on a public billboard. Carefully consider your construction of layout, text, illustration, use of colour and visual space and size, emotional impact and message.
- Plan and write a review of the program in 300-400 words for a popular TV magazine or newspaper liftout section.

References and Further Resources

Books:

CEW Bean, with selections and annotations by Kevin Fewster, *Gallipoli Correspondent: The Frontline Diary of C.E.W. Bean*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983

Les Carlyon, *The Great War*, Pan MacMillan Australia, Sydney, 2006

TT Hollway (foreword), *Three Decades: The Story of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria from its Inception to December 1948*, Hutchinson, Melbourne, 1949

Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front, 1914-1918*, Harper Perennial, London, 2005

John Laffin, *Guide to Australian Battlefields of the Western Front, 1916-1918*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 1992

John Laffin, *British Butchers and Bunglers of World War One*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1989

Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, Nelson, West Melbourne, 1980

Michael McKernan, *Here is Their Spirit: A History of the Australian War Memorial 1917-1990*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1991

Sir John Monash, *The Australian Victories in France in 1918*, Duffy & Snellgrove, Sydney, 2002

PA Pedersen, *Monash as Military Commander*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 1985

Roland Perry, *Monash: The Outsider Who Won a War*, Random House, Milsons Point, 2004

Geoffrey Serle, *John Monash: A Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2002

Peter Stanley, *Quinn’s Post: Anzac, Gallipoli*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005

Film/TV:

Documentary series:

The Great War 1914-1918, Tempo, 2007

Feature films:

Lewis Milestone (director), *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Universal, 1930

Peter Weir (director), *Gallipoli*, Fox, 1981

Websites:

Anzac:

www.anzacsite.gov.au

Armistice and non-military employment:

www.firstworldwar.com/features/armistice.htm

www.ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/explore-history/australia-wwi/abroad-wwi/returning-soldiers

www.awm.gov.au/wartime/44/page47_hart/

Australian military, France 1918:

www.awm.gov.au/1918/

Charles Bean:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Bean

www.awm.gov.au/histories/ww1/intros/6.asp

Book reviews:

www.theage.com.au/news/Reviews/Monash-The-outsider-who-won-the-war/2004/11/25/1101219665809.html

<https://www.hitpages.com/doc/5660593923031040/71#pageTop>(Scroll down to page 69.)

Hagiography:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagiography>

Field Marshal Douglas Haig:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Haig

William 'Billy' Hughes:

www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090395b.htm

<http://billyhughes.moadoph.gov.au>

Sir John Monash:

www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100533b.htm

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/did-an-aussie-general-john-monash-actually-win-the-decisive-battle-of-the-western-front-not-the-british-who-hogged-all-the-glory-20160421-gobrqz.html>

Keith Murdoch:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Murdoch

www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100610b.htm

SEC of Victoria:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Electricity_Commission_of_Victoria

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yallourn,_Victoria

War posters:

www.pictureaustralia.org (Note: Search for a combination of terms such as war, posters, 1914.)

<https://anzacday.org.au/recruiting>

www.worldwar1.com/posters.htm

War veterans interviews, searchable database:

<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/>

Monash – The Forgotten Anzac

A Screen Australia Making History Production in association with 360 Degree Films. Produced with the assistance of Film Victoria. Developed and produced in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Executive Producer: **Mark Hamlyn**

Producer: **John Moore**

Director: **Malcolm McDonald**

Writer: **Mick Cummins**

Year: **2008**

Duration: **56 minutes**

Teachers notes written by Roger Stitson. Images courtesy of Australian War Memorial and ITN.

For further information, contact:

National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

Sales and Distribution | PO Box 397 Pyrmont NSW 2009

T +61 2 8202 0144 | F +61 2 8202 0101

E: sales@nfsa.gov.au | www.nfsa.gov.au

