

In search of heroes

[John Torode]

Growing up in Melbourne in the 1970s I have distinct memories of my brothers and me being woken up at the crack of dawn to attend the early morning Anzac Day service.

Of course we all knew that Anzac Day was originally set up to remember the men who died at Gallipoli and the other battles of World War One.

Back then it was almost completely unheard of to make the 10,000 mile journey here, to the actual site those bloody events took place that we were commemorating.

That all changed when Peter Weir's evocative movie Gallipoli hit cinema screens in 1981. It told the story of the war from the point of view of young, rural, Australian men. Hugely successful, it captured public imagination and helped reinforce many of the myths associated with this disastrous campaign.

The film has however been attacked for a number of historical inaccuracies, including the indifferent British soldiers sat drinking tea on the beach whilst the Anzacs fought in the heights above. It was instrumental though in perpetuating the image and the story of the brave Anzac that is now sitting in the national consciousness.

But the film had another surprising consequence: it led to more and more people visiting Gallipoli to see the site of the great sacrifice for themselves.

Today over 30,000 of my countrymen make this journey every single year with 10,000 of them visiting for Anzac Day alone.

[Mark Wellington]

It's ground zero I guess you'd say because my understanding is this is where the Anzac spirit was forged you know? The never give up sort of attitude.

[John Torode]

What do you feel when you stand here like this?

[Mark Wellington]

I will enjoy it but yeah, I'm sure there will be some tears and stuff along the way as well.

[John Torode]

Us Aussies consider ourselves probably the butchiest nation on Earth, but to shed a tear on Anzac Day seems a right, almost an honour. When I think about this place 100 years ago I've also got to consider my two sons – the

same age as many a young man who came here and fought, who lost their lives here, so far away from their home.

So in a way it doesn't really matter whether the Anzac myth is truth or exaggeration because then, and now, our nations need heroes and legends. And in the Anzacs, we found them.

Filmed at Gallipoli, Turkey