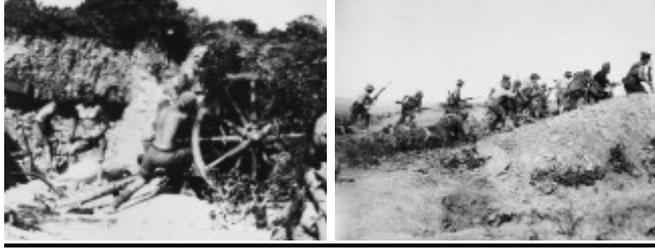


Gallipoli Medals:

Teacher Notes



Synopsis:

The story opens when Major Peter Romsey contacts Jaxson's dad to ask if some medals he found in an op shop could possibly belong to the Donoghue family. Jaxson and Dad visit Great Uncle Timothy. Timothy's memory is vague about present day events, but confirms that the medals had belonged to Jack. He talks about his older brother as if the events of the past happened only yesterday. Seems that Jaxson very much resembles his great, great uncle as Timothy says, 'Jack, you always hated farm life. That's why you enlisted. But what you said would be a jolly decent adventure didn't turn out that way. You came home so shell-shocked, the rest of your life was ruined.'

Intrigued by the story of his great, great uncle being part of the Great War, and what happened to him after that, Jaxon starts looking up details. As he reads about Australian soldiers being slaughtered, his friendship with Abi and Abi's family wavers. Even if this conflict took place ninety odd years ago, aren't they Turkish? Doesn't this make them his enemy? Jaxson meets a young woman who recently visited Anzac Cove and she describes how this felt for her.

After Abi finds out why Jaxson has become distant, he takes him to talk to Grandpa Nachbar. Though Grandpa was born 20 years after Gallipoli, he remembers his own father describing this war. Seems that Abi also

feels insecure about his background. This gives the boys another slant on the event. War is bad for everyone, but aren't they all Australians? Shouldn't past conflicts be brought to some resolution? The story ends with Dad suggesting that Jaxson marches in the next Anzac Parade wearing great, great uncle Jack's medals, and Abi wearing his Uncle's as to watch the parade.

Major Characters:

Jaxson Donoghue aged 11 is keen on football and all sport. An only child with two working parents, he is in Year 5 at the local primary. His best subjects are math and science. This is Jaxson's journey of discovery, not just about Gallipoli but also about friendship and his relationship with Abi.

Abi Nachbar: Jaxson's best friend, Abi is a 2nd generation Turkish-Australian. He lives within an extended family. Jaxson often stays with the Nachbars when Emma and Murray are late home from work. It is Abi's grandfather who remembers his own father talking about the conflict at Anzac Cove. He tells the story from the Turkish perspective.

Major Peter Romsey: A member of the regular army whose hobby is buying discarded war medals from auctions and op-shops and then finding the appropriate descendants. He contacts Jaxson's Mum and Dad (Emma and Murray) in an effort to find Jack's family and return Jack's medals.

Great Uncle Timothy Donoghue: A long term nursing home resident, he has major lapses of memory, but can identify the medals as once

belonging to his oldest brother, Jack. He describes Jack as returning from the war to live a hermit's existence until his death just before WW2.

John (Jack) George Donoghue: His 1914 notes. Aged fifteen, Jack runs away from the family farm and six siblings to enlist. Lying about his age he is sent to Gallipoli. Though he survives this conflict, he loses his best friend Tommy, and comes home broken in body and spirit. This story contains excerpts from his lost journal.

+++++++

RATIONALE:

The concept behind Gallipoli Medals is to present history in an accessible and interesting format. One way to do this is to imagine what life might have been like at a particularly interesting time in Australian history and then viewing it from the present.

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION.

In a fiction based on history, the trend is that it

- starts with the premise 'what if you were there at the time'
- describes a society which is based on fact
- is set in the past
- has total internal logic

RESEARCH:

1. Any newspapers and diaries of the time. You can view some of these on the net.
2. As well as using posters the government dispatched specially inscribed postcards to the homes of men who had not as yet enlisted. What might being sent a 'white feather' mean?

3. What is conscription?
4. Who joined the Australian army and why?
5. Describe WW1 belief in the superiority of the British Generals and army.
6. What were some of the *real* reasons for the Great War? You will need to do a lot of historical research to answer this question.
7. Can you find any more historical material on the landing at Gallipoli?
8. Here is a list of some famous poems written during WW1.
 - Siegfried Sassoon: 'How to Die'
 - Wilfred Owen: 'Anthem for a Doomed Youth'
 - Wilfred Owen: 'Dulce et Decorum Est'
 - Herbert Read : 'The Happy Warrior'
 - W.N.Hodgson : 'Before Action'
 - Wilfred Gibson: 'Back'

You can look these up on:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1914warpoets.html>

9. Why, so many years later, are some WW1 soldiers still in need of a 'formal burial'?
10. Why do we use poppies to remember our Anzacs?

DISCUSS:

- Describe Australia in 1914.
- To any visitor from 1914, 21ST Century Australia would be almost unrecognisable. Why?
- So many years later, we are still troubled by those who died at Gallipoli. Why?
- Why is this sad event viewed by Australians as 'the making of a nation'?

ACTIVITIES:

- Make a story-board or collage to convey WAR.
- Mock up an interview with Great Uncle Jack with you as the interviewer.
- Then change roles.
- Illustrate a cover for this story.
- Write more lyrics for the song called 'Gallipoli'.
- You are a TV producer who has just bought the rights to this novel. Your budget allows for four settings. What are they?
- Just about every Australian city, town and village has a memorial to these brave Anzacs. Why not organise a class or family excursion to look at the names on these memorials? You might research:
 1. How many soldiers had the same surname? (brothers, cousins?)
 2. Their background (mostly English, Scottish, Irish, but there are other nationalities as well. What can you find?)
 3. The age of these fallen men.

WRITING EXERCISES:

- Research and write a short non-fiction piece called *WORLD WAR ONE*.
- Now write it as fiction
- Create a second cover for this story.
- Find another title.
- As Great Uncle Jack, write a letter to your family describing the conflict at Gallipoli.

SOME EXTRA NOTES:

The First World War began when Britain and Germany went to war in August 1914, and Prime Minister Andrew Fisher's government pledged full support for Britain. The outbreak of war was greeted in Australia, with great enthusiasm.

The aim at Gallipoli was to assist a British naval operation capture the Turkish capital, Constantinople. The Australians landed at what became known as **ANZAC Cove** on **25 April 1915**, to establish a foothold on the steep slopes above the beach. During the early days of the campaign, the allies tried to break through the Turkish lines and the Turks tried to drive the allied troops off the peninsula. Unsuccessful allied attempts to break through in August included attacks at Lone Pine and the Nek. All attempts ended in failure for both sides, and continued for the remainder of 1915.

The most successful operation of the campaign was the evacuation of the troops on 19–20 December under cover of a comprehensive deception operation. As a result, the Turks were unable to inflict more than a very few casualties on the retreating forces. The whole Gallipoli operation, however, cost **26,111 Australian casualties, including 8,141 deaths**. Following Gallipoli, Australian forces fought campaigns on the Western Front and in the Middle East.

+++++

Goldie's other historical novels include:

- MAVIS ROAD MEDLEY is set in Melbourne 1933.

Named as a Notable Book by the Victorian State Library.

- MY AUSTRALIAN STORY: SURVIVING SYDNEY COVE.

A story about our first fleet now in its 10th edition.

- BODY AND SOUL: Lilbet's Romance.

1938 Melbourne from the perspective of a disabled young woman.

- THE YOUNGEST CAMELEER.

Follows the finding of Ayer's Rock by William Gosse in 1873 when Afghans and their camels were openly congratulated for their efforts.