

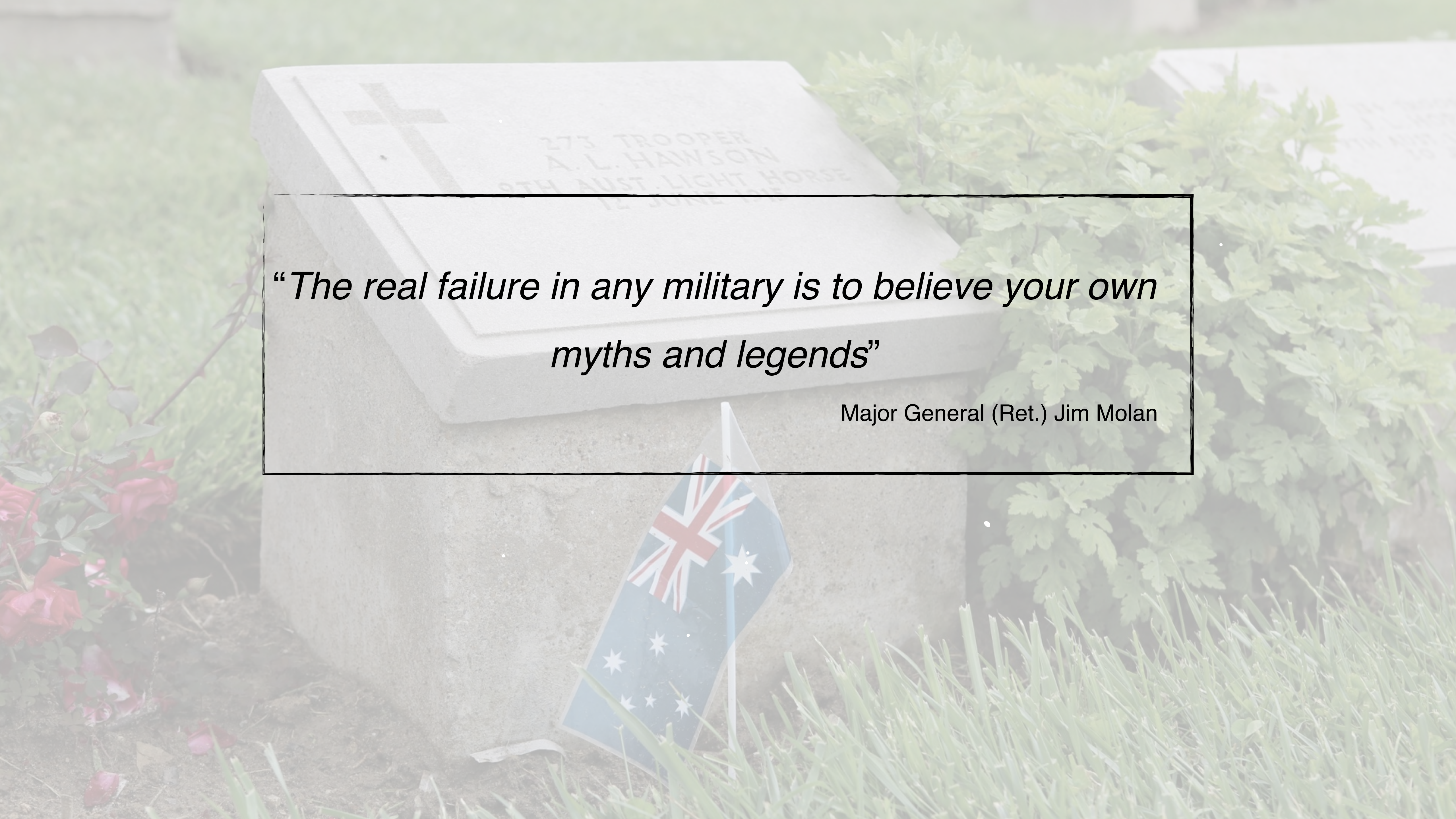


**LEST WE FORGET**

*WHAT?*

A Pony Films production





*“The real failure in any military is to believe your own myths and legends”*

Major General (Ret.) Jim Molan



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## SYNOPSIS

Ask yourself this question when Anzac Day comes about – lest we forget *what?*

Australia tells lies about WWI that serve no one. Not the men who enlisted. Not those who died. Not those left behind. Not those who returned. Not to mention those who came before or after.

Kate Aubusson is 27. She grew up in the suburbs of Sydney and started working as a journalist a few years ago. She is part of the generation that saw the resurgence of the Anzac legend in the 90s as a defining story of what it means to be Australian. For her, it's all about Gallipoli, the Anzac Spirit. Boys from the bush, sacrifice, mateship and being born as a nation the day the Diggers landed at Anzac Cove. Surely all this sounds admirable at best, or harmless at worst. What's wrong with it?

In the next 4 years we'll spend over \$300 million to remember the First World War – more than any other nation. This is important to her. She had relatives who fought in WWI.

When she was a kid she would stand for the minute's silence and say 'Lest We Forget', but in that silence she never knew exactly what she was supposed to remember... and in many ways she still doesn't. Now she is going on a quest that follows the path of the Anzacs. What she wants to find out is...When we say, "lest we forget" - Lest we forget what?

From Australia to Gallipoli and across the Western front Kate travels chronologically and thematically through the past: from the piss-ups in Istanbul en-route to Anzac Cove on Anzac Day, to discussions with serving soldiers, to the battlefields of the Western Front. She meets descendants of soldiers and visits unexplored and confronting archives. She travels with eminent historians to see firsthand the lands the ANZACs fought and died upon and learns from those tasked with training the next generation of Australian soldiers. It is a journey that will change what we all think about the Anzac legend and ourselves.





THEIR NAME LIVETH  
FOR EVERMORE



**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

The inciting incident that compelled me to make *Lest We Forget What* was reading General Jim Molan's comment "the failure in any military is to believe your own myths and legends" in 2013. With the juggernaut of the Anzac centenary rapidly approaching, this comment from one of Australia's most decorated living soldiers seemed to be completely at odds with the popular WWI remembrance that most Australians have (including me at that point) that is so saturated in myth and legend.

After some initial research it became completely obvious there was a great collision between the sort of vigorous and clear eyed WWI military history taught to our Australian soldiers – living Anzacs – and the kind of anecdotal sepia tinted notions of Anzac spirit that the many Australians have and receive.

The question for us was - if Australian soldiers need and want to learn the truth about the past why don't the rest of us? I believe passionately that powerful, evidence based history – the good, the bad and the ugly - is fundamental to our understanding of who we are as Australians. If are going to honour those who fought and sacrificed so much in that long war then when we say 'Lest we forget' we need to remember the truth - that is what is being asked of us.

This launched us on a journey with Kate that took us around the world to discover what it was we had indeed forgotten and what we need to remember – what we found was an far richer and awe–inspiring story much greater than the sentimental Anzac fairytales many of us grew up with. Something to be truly proud of – an extraordinary history (not mythology) we can take with us into the next 100 years.

*Dr Rachel Landers (Director)*

## PRESENTER'S STATEMENT

I grew up on the ANZAC legend: Simpson and his donkey, diggers from the bush, mateship, larrikins, the bloody British, and 'Lest We Forget'. But I realised I never knew exactly what I was supposed to remember, and I wondered, who decides what we forget?

Why is it so difficult to challenge the official version of our history? I can't be the only one asking these questions. Isn't that what makes us quintessentially Australian? Irreverence for authority? Challenging the status quo? Surely our national story can stand up to a bit of robust questioning - that is what spurred me on this epic quest. But I was terrified. I dread being called 'unAustralian'. Because what kind of monster would question the sacrifice of these brave men?

Over the last year I've traversed the cemeteries of Gallipoli and the Western Front. In many places I found idealised, cartoon soldiers that bore no resemblance to flesh and blood diggers as humans who fought, who made mistakes, who trained hard, some who died, and were eventually victorious. These real soldiers of the War are betrayed by our feeble understanding of the complexities of the First World War.

It was an adventure full of discoveries and unlikely friends. Young pilgrims on their way to Anzac Cove for the dawn service, dependent on Peter Weir and Mel Gibson for their history lessons, just like me. Brilliant military historians tearing down the myths and replacing them with a far greater, more powerful story to be told about Australians in the First World War. But what touched me most, was the total surprise and visceral emotion that hit me when I discovered my own personal connection to those original diggers, who were my age when they set off to war, propelled by their own stories of adventure and glory.

This is incredibly important to me. If we're going to continue to send soldiers to war, we need to know what that means. Not the cartoon version of history, but the unvarnished truth, the debate, the dissent - guts and all.

*Kate Aubusson (Presenter)*







## DISCOVERIES

Have you ever heard of Bellenglise? Pozieres? Polygon Wood? Mont Saint Quentin? Sailly-le-Sec? These are the places the AIF chose to memorialise their victories, yet they have been largely forgotten:

***“1915 and Gallipoli is so dominant that these huge campaigns towards the end of the war, which involve casualties on a similar if not greater scale, have been pushed to the margins of national memory.”***

– Prof. Joan Beaumont

It is estimated that there were **200 000 Ottoman casualties** at Gallipoli – it’s too hard to gauge and exact number of dead. These men successfully defended their country and it led to the birth of the Republic of Turkey.

Some facts and figures:

**British Dead**— — — — Approx. 20 - 30 000 (more than any other country)

**French Dead**— — — - Approx. 10 000

**Indian Dead**— — — — Approx. 1 500

**Australian Dead**— — — Approx. 8 000

**New Zealand Dead**— Approx. 2 500

(SOURCE: *Gallipoli: The End of The Myth* Prof. Robin Prior 2009)

There is a huge divide between the military history taught to our Defence Force as opposed to the soft military history we, the general populace, are taught:

*“There’s lots of myth about Anzac. Everything you know about Simpson is largely myth. The story about how troops went ashore in the face of thunderous machine gun fire is rubbish. The biggest myth about Anzac is that it probably would have succeeded.”*

– **Dr Roger Lee (Head, Australian Army History Unit)**, speaking about the Gallipoli Campaign in a lecture at RMC Duntroon

Over 1 000 Aboriginal soldiers fought in the First World War. Despite this, they returned home to face the same discrimination that they encountered when they had departed.

***“On the battlefield they were mates. They fought together, they bled together, they died together. When they got home, it was black and white. Mick had come all the way over here, fought on the battlefields, got wounded twice, was gassed, got back to Collarenebri, was allowed in the RSL club one day of the year: Anzac Day.”***

– **Joe Flick**, descendant of Indigenous WWI Veteran



**BIOGRAPHY: DR RACHEL LANDERS— —Director**

Rachel completed a PhD in history at the University of Sydney and a post-graduate directing diploma at the National Institute of Dramatic Art. Working in theatre after graduation, she then moved into film as a writer/director and producer of drama and documentary.

Her films have screened at numerous international festivals, been broadcast all over the world and have won and been nominated for a number of awards.

Recently, she made the feature documentary *A Northern Town* nominated for the prestigious UK Grierson Innovation award, a United Nations media award and was a finalist for best documentary in the Dendy's and the Film Critics Circle of Australia. *A Northern Town*, which Rachel also shot, won an AACTA/AFI for Best Cinematography and the Premiers Multimedia History Award and was in competition at FIFO. Rachel produced and shot the feature documentary *The Snowman* selected for competition at IDFA; nominated for an AACTA award for Best Feature Documentary and won the Foxtel Australian Documentary Prize. Rachel's documentary *The Inquisition* screened on the ABC and France 1 and was in competition at FIFO.

At the end of 2011 Rachel was awarded the 2011 NSW Premier's History Fellowship and appointed Head of Documentary at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. In 2012 she relaunched the AFTRS Documentary Department with a ground breaking curriculum, offering world-class training in non-fiction filmmaking. In 2013 Rachel was the keynote speaker for the NSW Premier's History Awards.

In 2014/15, in addition to working at AFTRS, she completed production on the ABC/Screen Australia funded documentary *Lest We Forget What* for the Centenary of World War I and is completing her first non-fiction book for New South Books that will be published in 2015.



**BIOGRAPHY: KATE AUBUSSON --Presenter**

Kate is a reporter with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, radio journalist and film critic. Kate graduated with a Bachelor of International Communications at Macquarie University in 2011, having completed a heavy course load in modern and ancient history.

Kate's work has been published by national and international media outlets including Time magazine, Fairfax and News Ltd, the UK's Monocle24 and is a regular film critic and commentator on ABC radio. She spent several months in working as a journalist in Accra, Ghana for the national newspaper *The Ghanaian Times*, travelling throughout West Africa to report on regional, political and social affairs including the Ghana's first oil drill and the plight of Liberian refugees.

Having worked as a researcher at the University of Technology, Sydney during her studies, Kate went on to become a medical journalist for Cirrus Media most recently as senior journalist for *Australian Doctor* magazine. Kate was also the youngest founding committee member of the national Women in Media initiative that aims to empower Australian women in the industry.

She joined the Pony Films team in 2014 to embark on an epic journey across continents to discover: when Australians say 'Lest We Forget', what are we supposed to remember?



**BIOGRAPHY: DYLAN BLOWEN—- Producer**

Award winning filmmaker Dylan Blowen began his career in Los Angeles working at Paramount and Universal.

Later, he moved to New York to produce live television before moving to Sydney in 2002 where he formed Pony Films with Rachel Landers to produce successful, award-winning high impact films.

His films have screened all over the world and won many prizes including the Foxtel Documentary Prize at the Sydney Film Festival and the NSW Premier's History Prize as well as nominations for a Grierson Innovation Award and AFI for best feature documentary.







**FILMOGRAPHY -- PONY FILMS**

2003 **A Girl, A Horse, A Dream** (Documentary TV hour SBS) Rachel Landers Writer/Director - Dylan Blowen/Producer.

2004 **Missing** (Documentary series SBS ) Rachel Landers Writer/Director - Dylan Blowen/Producer.

2006 **The Lost Tribe** (Documentary TV hour ABC) Rachel Landers Writer/Director - Dylan Blowen/Producer.

2008 **A Northern Town** (Feature Documentary) Rachel Landers Writer/Director - Dylan Blowen/Producer. Nominated for the prestigious UK Grierson Innovation award, a United Nations media award and was a finalist for best documentary in the Dendy's and the Film Critics Circle of Australia. *A Northern Town*, which Rachel also shot, won an AACTA/AFI for Best Cinematography and the Premiers Multimedia History Award and was in competition at FIFO.

2010 **The Snowman** (Feature Documentary) Rachel Landers/Producer - Dylan Blowen/Producer. *The Snowman* selected for competition at IDFA; nominated for an AACTA award for Best Feature Documentary and won the Foxtel Australian Documentary Prize.

2011 **The Inquisition** (Documentary TV hour ABC) Rachel Landers Writer/Director - Dylan Blowen/Producer. *Inquisition* screened on the ABC and France 1 and was in competition at FIFO.

2015 **Lest We Forget What** (Documentary TV hour ABC). Rachel Landers Writer/Director - Dylan Blowen/Producer.



**CREDITS**

Presenter— — — — — **KATE AUBUSSON**

Writer / Director— — — — **RACHEL LANDERS**

Producer— — — — — **DYLAN BLOWEN**

Cinematographers— — **SIMON SMITH & LUCAS TOMOANA**

Editor — — — — — **ZAC GRANT**

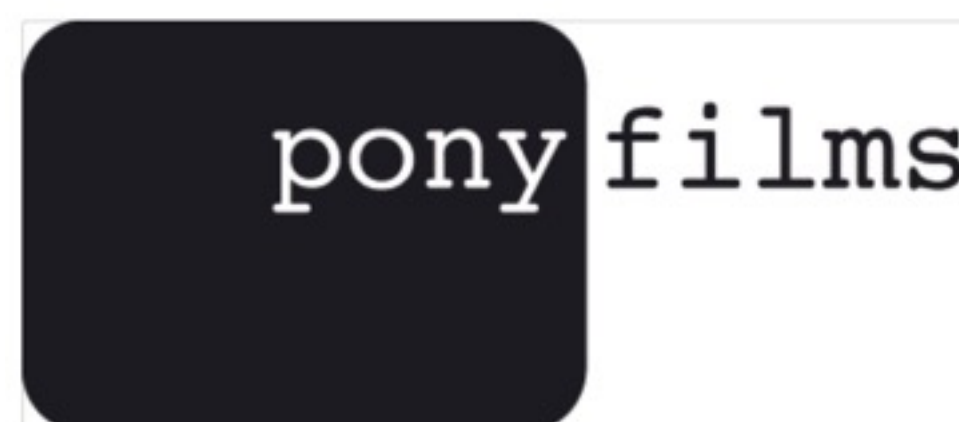
Composer— — — — — **BENJAMIN SPEED**

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**Official Website** — — — — — — — — — — [lestweforgetwhat.com](http://lestweforgetwhat.com)



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black blazer over a white shirt, is smiling and looking towards a group of soldiers in camouflage uniforms. The soldiers are also looking towards her. The scene appears to be outdoors, possibly at a military base or a public event. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the woman and the soldiers in the foreground.

## **BROADCAST DATES**

**ABC2— -Sunday 19 April 2015, 8:40pm**

**ABC— —Wednesday 22 April 2015, 9.30pm (Encore)**



"Never believe the propaganda rubbish that people give you about the quality of your opponents. And don't make the same mistakes. Learn from it. If you get yourself killed then you can't blame anybody but yourself.

So when you hear about Gallipoli and all the brouhaha that's going to happen next year and trust me, there's an absolute tidal wave of rubbish coming down the media lines at you for next year, most of it will be garbage”.

**Dr Roger Lee** – Head of the Australian Army History Unit. 2014 history lecture at Duntroon for Officer Cadets.





1914

2014

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The Great Pyramid at Giza