

Notes on *Gallipoli*

09.06.15

The film focuses on two young Western Australians—athletes, runners—who enlist as part of the ANZAC forces, training in Egypt, then fighting at Gallipoli. The principal battles occur in 6 August (Battle of Lone Pine) and 7 August (Battle of the Nek) in 1915. These battles purportedly serve as diversion so the British can land at Suvla Bay. Main themes involve loss of innocence—amongst the young men and in Australia, just recently (1901) a unified dominion; the end of dreams for athletic success and military prowess; significance of friendship (in Australia, *mateship* which includes equality, loyalty, and friendship).

After Archie Hamilton and Frank Dunne compete in a race, which Archie wins, they agree to enlist and travel across the desert to Perth—despite Dunne’s doubts about fighting for the British since he himself is Irish. They do enlist and, though separated on the troopships, reach Egypt, train, and reconnect. As infantrymen, they and their friends, Bill, Barney, and Snowy, reach Gallipoli; although Archie is offered a post as a runner, he wants only to fight and suggests Frank Dunne for the job, which takes him out of the front lines.

At the Battle of Lone Pine, one friend dies, another is wounded, and the third lives to describe the horrors. The next day, Archie’s and Frank’s units are at the Battle of the Nek. While Archie waits to participate in the third or fourth wave, the artillery bombardment stops short, and the first and second waves of soldiers are simply mown down by Turkish machine guns. Meanwhile, Frank carries messages from Major Barton (who wishes to halt the attack as useless) to Colonel Robinson, to General Gardner. Ultimately, despite the carnage, Col. Robinson chooses to continue. When Archie is called, he runs forward and dies just as his friend Frank Dunne returns to the forward trenches.

We will see mainly the interviews, special features, with director, producers, actors. Then, we will watch the last half hour or so of the film.