

PREMIERES TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER AT 8.30PM ON ABC1

# Monash

## The Forgotten Anzac



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.

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### Key Credits

*Monash - The Forgotten Anzac* is 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. © Screen Australia and Film Victoria 2008.

Producer **JOHN MOORE**

Writers **MICK CUMMINS, JOHN MOORE, MAC GUDGEON, MALCOLM MCDONALD**

Director **MALCOLM MCDONALD**

Director of Photography **JAEMS GRANT ACS**

Editor **STEVEN ROBINSON**

Composer **PETER MILLER**

Production Designer **NEIL ANGWIN**

Sound Recordist **MARK TARPEY**

Executive Producers **MARK HAMLYN, ALEX WEST**

Narrated by **JENNIFER VULETIC**

Duration **55 minutes**

### Key Cast

General John Monash **ROBERT MENZIES**

Victoria Monash (wife of John Monash) **HEATHER BOLTON**

Bertha Monash (daughter of John Monash) **LUCY HONIGMAN**

Lizette Bentwitch **ZOE BERTRAM**

Billy Hughes (Australian Prime Minister) **DENNIS COARD**

General Rawlinson **NICHOLAS BELL**

Charles Bean (War Correspondent) **IAN BLISS**

Keith Murdoch (Australian Journalist) **STEPHEN BALLANTYNE**

King George V **WILLIAM GLUTH**

British Commander in Chief Field Marshall Haig **JAMES SHAW**

Lieutenant-General Godley **IAN SCOTT**

Major Blamey **MICHAEL ROBINSON**

Tante Ulrike **JACKIE KELLEHER**

### Interviewees

**Michael McKernan** Historian

**Peter Pedersen** Author *Monash as Military Commander*

**Roland Perry** Author *Monash: The Outsider Who Won a War*

**Peter Stanley** National Museum of Australia

*Monash - The Forgotten Anzac* was produced under the Making History initiative of the Government-owned production company Film Australia which merged with the Australian Film Commission and Film Finance Corporation on 1 July 2008 to become Screen Australia. Making History will continue through the Commissioned Production unit of Screen Australia.



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### 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.



Photography by David Johns. © Screen Australia

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Photograph by David Johns. © Screen Australia

### Production Story

Talk to the filmmakers of *Monash - The Forgotten Anzac* and a common theme emerges: none knew much about Sir John Monash when they first became involved in the project and each was amazed by what they learnt.

The complete antithesis of what most Australians imagine as an Anzac, John Monash was a slightly overweight, middle-aged German Jew, a philandering former engineer who loved music, the arts and theatre.

Yet historians argue that without him as commander of the Australian Corps, the Allies may have lost the First World War.

"A lot of people say he's the greatest Australian who has ever lived and that places an enormous responsibility on the filmmakers to get the story right," producer John Moore of 360 Degree Films says.

"The First World War was this great big problem. Countries, people and machinery were being chewed up by this war that they couldn't figure out how to fight. It's the first time modern machinery—machine guns and artillery—had been available on that scale and attacking troops were at a huge disadvantage because they were just getting mown down."

Monash developed a strategy to fight the war with the minimum number of casualties, leading the Allies to victory on the blood-soaked Western Front.

But the Australian-raised son of German Jews had to fight every step of the way—and not just on the battlefield. Among his powerful opponents were Prime Minister Billy Hughes, incompetent British generals, and Australia's official war correspondent Charles Bean who, along with the Prime Minister's representative, Keith Murdoch, campaigned hard to remove him as commander.



Photograph by David Johns. © Screen Australia

Much loved by his troops, Monash overcame them all and, with his immense intellect and meticulous planning, silenced his critics to become one of the most significant figures in world history.

It didn't stop there. After fighting for recognition of the achievements of his troops during the war, Monash rallied to support them upon their return, campaigning to establish Anzac Day and cement it as a national day of remembrance.

"When he came back to Australia he was really important in keeping the legend of what had actually happened at Gallipoli and during the First World War alive," Moore says. "He was also responsible for building the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne."

While the popular perception of the Anzac legend is that it was forged on the battlefields of Gallipoli, history suggests this was just the start.

"The Western Front is where it came into its full embodiment, where the spirit of it really came alive," Moore says. "All of the things that are really worthwhile to Australians, support for your



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Photograph by David Johns. © Screen Australia

mates, courage and sportsmanship, helped those men to achieve what they did on the Western Front. The other Allied forces learnt from and admired what the Australians did.”

When he was offered the role directing the biopic, Malcolm McDonald was intrigued by how little people knew about Monash.

“I asked all my friends and it was exactly the same response, ‘Oh yeah, Monash University’, and that’s it. No one knew further than that. And yet he is this extraordinary guy who some attribute with basically winning the First World War, and who was up against it the whole way. His crucial role in the Allies victory on the Western Front can’t be denied—the Aussies punched well above their weight.”

McDonald set about making an entertaining and informative film, weaving archival footage, expert interviews and narration with dramatised scenes to take the audience on Monash’s incredible journey, while painting a picture of a showy, organised and cultured philanderer.

“Monash had to constantly fight for what he wanted—against the British generals, Billy Hughes, Keith Murdoch, Charles Bean—and using these personal battles as drama scenes keeps the story engaging.”



Photograph by David Johns. © Screen Australia

Drama sequences were shot using hand-held cameras as if a documentary crew had been present on the Western Front. Actor Robert Menzies, as John Monash, talks directly to the camera on key issues.

While there are no known recordings of Monash’s speech, Menzies read extensively about his life and met with members of his family.

“I didn’t know much about him, but the more I read the more fascinated I became,” Menzies says.

“He’s a truly fascinating man; complex, highly intelligent and literate. Steeped in European culture, wrote extraordinary letters, very articulate. Not the sort of person that you’d expect to become a soldier, but it had been a passion of his from his

very early years. All of these seemingly contradictory elements come together in this amazing man.

“I want to do justice to the person who I’ve discovered through reading. I’d feel bad if I diminished him in some way,” Menzies adds.

On this, the filmmakers agree.

“In many ways he’s contributed to our sense of who we are as Australians,” says Moore. “I think we all have got a little bit of that Anzac spirit in us and a lot of that is due to Monash.”

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Image courtesy of the Monash University Archives.

### The Anzac Legend

The Anzac legend was forged on the tough battlefields of World War I where the men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps became famous for their qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice.

This was particularly apparent during the ill-fated campaign on Turkey's Gallipoli Peninsula during which more than 8,000 soldiers died and 18,000 were injured. All were volunteers. The landing on 25 April 1915 told a story of courage and endurance among death and despair, in the face of poor leadership from London.

The Australians built a reputation for their courage in attack and doggedness in defence and the Anzac legend was born.

But the Anzac legend only began at Gallipoli—the diggers' true worth was proved on the Western Front.

Led by General John Monash, they became a crack fighting corps of the British Army. While making up only five per cent of the Allied forces, the Anzacs played a crucial role in winning the "war to end all wars". Their efforts were instrumental in Allied victories in numerous key battles, including Messines, Hamel, Amiens, Mont St Quentin and the Hindenberg Line.

Monash, as their commander, was determined that his men should get the recognition they deserved and campaigned tirelessly on their behalf.

It is largely due to his efforts that Australians commemorate Anzac Day on April 25 each year, reflecting on the meaning of war during dawn services held at war memorials across the country.

And the Anzac spirit lives on.

As former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating said at the Entombment of the Unknown Soldier at the Australian War Memorial in 1993: "It is a legend not of sweeping military victories so much as triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. It is a legend of free and independent spirits whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship and the demands of necessity."



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### The Making History Initiative

*Monash - The Forgotten Anzac* is one of 10 dramatised documentaries financed under the Making History initiative, which is committed to making high quality history documentaries. The initiative was first implemented by the Government-owned production company Film Australia which merged with the Australian Film Commission and Film Finance Corporation on 1 July 2008 to become Screen Australia. Making History will continue through the Commissioned Production unit of Screen Australia.

Introduced in 2005 when the Australian Government committed \$7.5 million over three years to fund quality history documentaries, and extended this year, the Making History initiative is run in association with ABC Television to produce films that inspire, surprise and enthuse viewers with rich, exciting, and challenging stories, connecting Australians with their past.

The histories investigate Australia's origins and development and explore Australian identity. They tell of ordinary Australians in extraordinary circumstances, covering subjects such as Australia's convict beginnings and European settlement in the two-part miniseries *Rogue Nation*, its early engineering and exploration achievements in the three-part *Constructing Australia* series, and its identity, through a collection of biographies of 20th century leaders, including Robert Menzies, Harold Holt and Ben Chifley.

The documentaries use innovative filmmaking techniques including dramatic recreation of original sources and high-level computer animation to bring engaging and significant historical stories to audiences, drawing on exacting research and made to the highest standards of international programming.

"The continuation of 'Making History', beyond the original Australian Government commitment of \$7.5 million over three years, allows filmmakers to contribute to a growing body of landmark documentaries that explore who we were and what we have become," says Mark Hamlyn, Screen Australia's Director of Commissioned Production.

A hit with Australian viewers, the initiative has produced high rating and critically acclaimed documentaries including the *Constructing Australia* series—*The Bridge*, *A Wire Through the Heart* and *Pipe Dreams*—and *Mawson: Life and Death in Antarctica*.

Upcoming Making History documentaries that will screen on ABC Television include: *The Prime Minister is Missing*, *Rogue Nation*, *Infamous Victory: Ben Chifley's Battle for Coal* and *Menzies and Churchill at War*.



Photography by Simon Cardwell, Mark Rogers, David Johns and Ian Barry . © Screen Australia

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### About the filmmakers and cast



Photograph by David Johns. © Screen Australia

#### Malcolm McDonald — Director

Writer and director Malcolm McDonald has a passion for telling stories about new people and new places, something that is reflected in his work. His 20-year career as a documentary maker includes *Tribal Life*, *Six Degrees*, *Family Footsteps* and the SBS TV living history series *The Colony*, which transported English, Irish and black and white Australians families into the past to experience the unforgiving toughness of NSW colony life. McDonald wrote and directed *Gumshoe*, for ABC Television, and *Watch the Watch*, a documentary about hypnotism. He also directed second unit on the blockbuster feature *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*. Prior to *Monash - The Forgotten Anzac*, McDonald wrote and directed the feature-length documentary *Mawson - Life and Death in Antarctica* (shot on location in Eastern Antarctica) also produced for Film Australia's Making History initiative.

#### John Moore — Producer, Writer

A partner with Sally Ingleton in the Melbourne production company 360 Degrees Films, John Moore has made programs for ABC Television, SBS, Channel 4, ARTE, the Canadian History Channel and TV Ontario. John has worked in the film industry for more than 20 years, producing many award-winning films and series. His many awards include an Australian Film Institute Award for Best TV Documentary for *Guns & Roses* (1991), best documentary at the Melbourne and Sydney Film Festivals for *Black Man's Houses* (1993) and a United Nations Peace Award for *Barefoot Student Army* (1994). In 2001, John produced and directed *Thomson of Arnhem Land* for Film Australia, which won the NSW Premier's History Award, an AFI Award for editing and was nominated for awards at both BANFF and Shanghai TV Festivals. Another Film Australia project, *Abortion, Corruption & Cops – The Bertram Wainer Story* was nominated for an AFI award in 2005. John has produced two history documentaries for Film Australia this year—*Menzies and Churchill at War* and *Monash - The Forgotten Anzac*.



Photograph by David Johns. © Screen Australia

#### About 360 Degree Films

360 Degree Films is an energetic new company based in Melbourne, Australia.

At the heart of the philosophy of 360 Degree Films is the belief that it is possible to make insightful, entertaining films that inform, empower and inspire people to make better decisions about their lives and to understand a world beyond the headlines.

The company is driven by a belief in the basic principles of democracy, equal opportunity and a secular approach to politics and government.

360 Degree Films use history as a vital way to understand the past and better predict the future and science as a method for identifying and solving social and environmental problems. In essence the company produce programs to surprise, entertain and provoke audiences to think and care.



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### Mark Hamlyn — Executive Producer

Mark Hamlyn has worked as an executive producer on a slate of programming. His credits include the Australian Biography series; the three-part AFI Award-nominated series *Air Australia*; the ATOM Award-winning docu-drama *The Floating Brothel*; *Road to Tokyo*; the four-part epic *Captain Cook – Obsession and Discovery* (winner of the 2007 Manning Clark House National Cultural Award); *The Winners' Guide to the Nobel Prize* (winner of the Gold Dragon Award at the Beijing Scientific Film Festival) and Gillian Armstrong's multi-award winning *Unfolding Florence – the Many Lives of Florence Broadhurst*, which premiered In Competition at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival.

His latest project was the much-anticipated documentary *The Hunt for HMAS Sydney*, which he followed the world's top shipwreck hunter, David Mearns, as he found the sunken wreck of HMAS Sydney II.

As Screen Australia's Director of Commissioned Production, Mark oversees the Making History initiative—10 dramatised history programs to be screened on ABC. Upcoming Making History programs include *Menzies and Churchill at War*, *Infamous Victory - Ben Chifley's Battle for Coal*, *The Prime Minister is Missing* and *Rogue Nation*.



Photograph by David Johns. © Screen Australia

### Robert Menzies — plays John Monash

Robert Menzies has performed in a long list of productions with every major Australian theatre company including the Sydney Theatre Company; Melbourne Theatre Company; State Theatre Company of South Australia; Queensland Theatre Company; Playbox/Malthouse Theatre and Sydney's Company B.

Recent performances include roles as Oedipus in *Seneca's Oedipus* (STC); John Peachman in *Three Penny Opera* (Company B); Defoe in *The Journal of the Plague Year* (Malthouse Theatre); Brutus in *Julius Caesar* (STC); and the double-billing *Reunion/A Kind of Alaska* directed by Andrew Upton/Cate Blanchett (STC).

He has been nominated for two Green Room Awards, three Helpmann Awards and an AFI Award for his role in the feature film, *Three Dollars*. He has a leading role in the 2008 ABC telemovie, *Blood in the Sand*, directed by Rowan Woods.

## References

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Monash - The Forgotten Anzac <http://www.filmaustralia.com.au/monash>