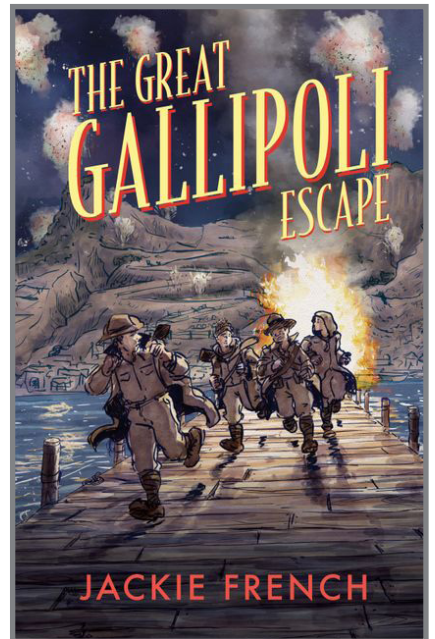


# The Great Gallipoli Escape



AUTHOR

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**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Upper Primary

## SYNOPSIS

Sixteen-year-old Nipper and his Gallipoli mates Lanky, Spud, Bluey and Wallaby Joe are starving, freezing and ill-equipped. By November 1915 they know that there is more to winning a war than courage. The Gallipoli campaign has been lost.

Nipper has played cricket with the Turks in the opposing dugout, dodged rocket fire and rescued desperate and drowning men when the blizzard snow melted. He is one of the few trusted with the secret kept from even most of the officers: how an entire army will vanish from the Peninsula over three impeccably planned nights.

Based on first-hand accounts of those extraordinary last weeks of the Gallipoli campaign, this is the fascinating 'lost story' of how 150,000 men—and their horses and equipment—were secretly moved to waiting ships without a single life lost. An unforgettable story told through the eyes of a boy who lied about his age to defend his country.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jackie French AM is an award-winning writer, wombat negotiator, the 2014–2015 Australian Children's Laureate and the 2015 Senior Australian of the Year. In 2016 Jackie became a Member of the Order of Australia for her contribution to children's literature and her advocacy for youth literacy. She is regarded as one of Australia's most popular children's authors and writes across all genres—from picture books, history, fantasy, ecology and sci-fi to her much loved historical fiction for a variety of age groups. 'A book can change a child's life. A book can change the world' was the primary philosophy behind Jackie's two-year term as Laureate.

Find out more about Jackie at: [jackiefrench.com](http://jackiefrench.com) or [facebook.com/authorjackiefrench](https://facebook.com/authorjackiefrench)

## THEMES

- WWI and WWII
- War and Conflict
- Resilience
- Belonging

**STUDY NOTES****BEFORE READING**

- What other Jackie French books have you read or seen?
- In what way/s does she make history more interesting and engaging for readers?
- Why is it important for us to read historical fiction or learn about history?
- How does reading historical fiction help us to understand past events and people?
- With a partner or in a small group brainstorm all you know already about Gallipoli and/or the ANZACs. Share your thoughts with the class.
- ANZAC is an acronym, what does it stand for?
  - When and why was the term ANZAC used?
- Where is Gallipoli? In what country? Use Google Maps to locate and explore ANZAC Cove and the surrounds. What geographic features do you notice?
  - After looking at the map image, list some points that you think contributed to the difficulties faced by the ANZACs eg. what sort of terrain is it?

**WHILE READING**

- The main character, Nipper, is only 16 years old. The legal age for joining the army in Australia then was 21 (or 18 with parental permission) but there were many younger boys on both sides who joined the services for many different reasons. The youngest of all was a boy called Momčilo Gavrić who fought in his Serbian army from the age of eight. You can find more information about Australian boy soldiers from the Australian War Memorial website. Imagine you are one of these boys and write a letter home to your family describing what it is like at Gallipoli.
- Australia has had a long history of using slang. Many of the words used and thought of as classically Australian actually derived from English or Irish words brought by immigrants from these places, eg. tucker (for food). Like all language, slang evolves over time and words go out of use. Jackie French includes words in *The Great Gallipoli Escape* that were very commonly used in the past but are rarely heard now. The below words and meanings are mixed up. Match the below words from the book with their correct meaning. Then find three more examples and research their meaning.

Drongo	Small tent or shelter
Cobbers	Food
Dinky-di	Celebration, party or other enjoyable time
Malarky	Genuine or true, authentically Australian
Beano	Mild intensifier (adjective), expressing irritation
Grub	Slow-witted or stupid person
Coot	Person of importance
Blanky	Foolish or eccentric fellow
Bigwig	Used to express annoyance
Bivvy	Mate or friend
Flaming	Nonsense/rubbish

Can you think of slang words that are used today that convey some of these same meanings?

- Choose one of the following people or inventions, and research and compose a one page overview of their involvement/importance in the Gallipoli Campaign:
  - Sir John Monash
  - Charles Bean
  - General Sir Ian Hamilton
  - Mustafa Kemal Attaturk
  - Furphy water tank
  - Howitzer gun
  - ANZAC Drip (or “pop off”) rifle

**AFTER READING**

- How does Jackie French convey the dreadful horror of the ANZACs' situation using the 'show, don't tell' technique? You might like to start by looking at p 47, p 71 and p 118.
- Jackie includes primary source material at the start of each chapter. What do you think is the purpose of this?
- Much of the humour in *The Great Gallipoli Escape* is what we describe as 'black humour'. Why do you think this was such a feature of the ANZAC experience?
- Identify the qualities of mateship depicted in the novel. How does Jackie French convey these qualities?
- The cricket match incident is based on fact and is not the only example of the strangeness of two enemies briefly setting aside war to enjoy time together. Why is the description of this so important to the narrative?
- What is the purpose of the epilogue?
- Plot the key events of the novel onto a narrative arc/framework.
- Read Jackie's notes on 'The Failed Campaign'. Do you agree that 'Gallipoli still matters'? Why or why not? Explain your response.
- How do you define the spirit of Gallipoli? As a class, create a 'Spirit of Gallipoli' display with individuals or events that represent what this means.
- Create a model or draw your impression of one of the following:
  - ANZAC Cove
  - Nipper's trench
  - The cemetery
  - The cricket match.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

**SUE WARREN**