

# GALLIPOLI

Sited at the Geebung RSL, Geebung, a suburb north of the Brisbane is an extraordinary memorial for Gallipoli like no other in Australia in the forecourt to the club entrance.

The narrative of a young Australian boy full of dream joining the AIF mid 1914 at the age of 15, surviving Gallipoli and WW1, returning to Australia, starting a family and his legacy 100 years later recounting his story through the lens of object and memory.

The project started two years before the 2015 centenary of the Gallipoli landing with committees, design briefing, design, presentation and costing before the first hammer was struck nine months before April 15 2015.

The forecourt zigzagged in plan with low concrete walls leading up to the entry level provoked imagery or signature Gallipoli topography and the initial idea to wrap these walls with material similar in colour and texture dreamscaped and contextualized the geology of Anzac cove whilst anchoring its heritage in local stone.

The forecourt at his stage had a World War 2 canon as a 'feature' and a flagpole for daily flag raising and lowering ritual with basic floor paving and concrete pathways and two rock memorials.

The memorial is in four components, floor (sea), plinth (altar), wall (cliff) and shard (ship) each distinctly relating to each with different roles and experiences.

## **Floor**

The floor coloured to represent the sea and bays with geometric lines as traces amplifying the geometry creates a series of definitions through tones of blue hinting at depth, shallow and deep. The zigzag graphic reflects the wall elevation vertigo.

## **Plinth**

At the base of the 'cliff' wall is a plinth and trench for both laying wreaths and the insertion of poppies. It also has covered all Australia's conflicts.

## **Wall** *before during after*

The wall sandstone in material, broken and randomly placed, laid in mortar with cut back flat jointing connecting and making as 'one' composition, soldier and army, stylistically silhouettes the topography of Anzac cove and the jarring emotional lines of conflict.

The wall followed the original zigzag plan of the building and evokes the headlands and bays of Gallipoli and refers to the silhouette of the cliffs... The sandstone is a similar in colour to the landscape of Gallipoli and is our iconic local material, Queensland Helidon sandstone.

The wall is sliced, layered graphically in horizontal lines acknowledging sequence, chronology, equality and level.

The etched black granite tiles graphically evoke a historic film reel silently narrating the story of Gallipoli starting at 'home' August 1914 with the call for adventure chronologically noting the Gallipoli campaign week by week ending in April 2015.

The stories on the 'black granite reel' include the landing, battles, particular people like Simpson, Chapman, Sin, the Light Horse, the Indigenous, the Nurses and the home effort, our mothers, everyday life in the trenches, letters from home, the Turkish and the evacuation in etched into black granite and our psyche.

Below the granite reel are ceramic coloured campaign ribbons from the Waikato war 1863 to current Afghanistan and Iraq. In this chronological line, a first for a memorial to see all the campaigns as one lineal line concludes with a line of white signifying and hoping of peace.

Above the granite are impressions in white clay noted as objects of hope.... Styled on the postcards sent home.

In the design and early part of the build I asked many of the local community what would they send if they were back in 1915 to their loved one in the trenches and some of the most extraordinary answers came back, like the babies tooth they missed out on, the front door key for when they return, my favourite knife and fork, a wedding ring, objects of the familiar, the home and domesticity.

The objects were curated like artifacts, sorted and impressed into the clay creating 'ghosts', object or memory fossils. In addition to this idea of object and hope, actual elements and objects from the campaign were used to curate actuality, pebbles, a 'going over' whistle, a bugle, a camera, nurses instruments, sox, medal, pencils, rings, utensils and many others from that period and local artifacts, leaves, nuts, berries, toys, broaches and then the future of hope, renewal and family.

This idea of object and hope was inspired by talking to an indigenous elder who told me a story of an aboriginal soldier taking and caring for a pebble from his land, homed in his pocket in battle and rest as a connective symbol and physical object from home and when he returned he replaced it where he found it.

The wall in three 'chapters', before, during and after, the first chapter explores Australia before the war, the narrative a young boy joining the call up, leaving Albany and the journey to Gallipoli via Egypt.

The second chapter describes the landing, the boy into soldier, the tragedy, the battles and life at Gallipoli with short stories on particulars of Anzac life.

The final chapter the 'peace' wall refers to this soldier, his survival and travels to being a father, a grandfather and great grandfather effecting the cycle. His legacy and its relationship to 100 years post Gallipoli.

The upper areas of the wall exhibit an 'honour gallery' of pictures in photo ceramic tiles set into the framed stone of the famously known and unknown.

### **Shard**

The shard represents the bow of one of those ships arriving at Gallipoli, the violent act of war wrapped in steel pushing into the space with a cruciform attached and projected relating to the military crosses in the battlefield burials where a simple white cross with a name identified the place and person.

### ***Today***

The memorial is visited by school students in vast numbers and on ANZAC Day many thousands pay their respect with curiosity and interest in recounting the story through object and engagement. This is Australia's most engaging narrative inspired Gallipoli memorial.