

GOD ON THE BATTLEFIELD

When WW1 broke out, 44 year old William McKenzie was quick to volunteer as a military Chaplain to the A.I.F.

En route to Gallipoli with 2,500 men, he held prayer meetings, Bible studies, sing-a-longs and sporting events. At Gallipoli, he spent most of his time in the trenches. He accompanied the Aussie troops to battlefields in Egypt, France and Belgium, including Pozieres, Passchendale and the Somme.

"Mac" did much more than what was expected of a military chaplain. He held services in the midst of battle, with bullets and shells whistling all around him. He carried heavy packs for exhausted diggers. He carried water and stretchers, and tended the wounded with both comfort and first aid. He often went without food or rest himself, putting the needs of other brave men before his own, but being Jesus to these frightened soldiers. On many occasions, he would say the sinner's prayer with a soldier one night, and bury him the next day. In all, he led around 3,000 men to faith in Christ on the battlefield, and buried hundreds of them.

At the Battle of Lone Pine, Mac took part in the charge. Forbidden by regulations to carry a weapon, he charged the Turkish trenches armed with a shovel. His men had begged him to stay behind, out of their incredible respect for him, but he insisted, out of his incredible respect for them, saying, "Boys, I've lived with you, I've preached to you and I've prayed with you. Do you think I'm afraid to die with you?"

This is just one of hundreds of stories of brave chaplains who were, and still are, God on the battlefields to brave Aussie Diggers, loving and serving the Lord and the soldiers, willing to lay down their lives as Christ did. As we remember them today, let us also remember that God is wherever we need Him the most.