

# Gang-gang 100 Years Ago: 'The procession of naked warriors to the beach'

-Ian Warden

Readers, you may think there's a discrepancy between what you can see in our picture of bare men of the Dardanelles having a swim and British journalist Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett's description of the same blokes.

Their physiques may look rather average to us but to the impressionable reporter seeing them in the flesh (as reported in Melbourne's *Age* 100 years ago today), these are "GREAT BIG-LIMBED ATHLETES".



Swimming soldiers in World War I.

"The colonials are of amazing physique. No European nation possesses anything to compare with them. The Prussian Guard consists of picked men, but they are fat and ungainly. The colonials are great, big-limbed athletes, with, not a pound of superfluous flesh among the lot.

"AUSTRALIANS SHED THEIR CLOTHING."

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pair of shorts, and probably these are only due to a feeling of decency, kept alive by lingering memories of mixed bathing at Sydney.

"First their coats went, then their shirts, underclothes and boots. Their huge frames and giant limbs are burnt a brick red. A learned anthropologist, suddenly discovering them, would probably classify them as a surviving branch of American Indians. The excellent sea bathing has alone rendered the campaign tolerable. The procession of naked warriors towards the beach does not cease from sunrise to sunset, regardless of snipers and bursting shrapnel."

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