



Airdate: General Monash and Me

ABC journalist Peter Greste re-evaluates the story of Sir John Monash, and the main battles that made him famous.

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ABC journalist Peter Greste will present a 2 part history documentary on Australia's Greatest Anzac.

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Walkley award-winning investigative journalist and war correspondent Peter Greste embarks on a journey to demystify the story of Australia's Great War hero, Sir John Monash. While examining the battles that made Monash famous, Peter also discovers his own family's previously unknown role in Monash's First Australian Imperial Force. For Peter, Monash's war becomes personal.

Sir John Monash is a towering figure in Australia's story of the Great War.

The ANZAC canon celebrates him as a larger-than-life hero whose new and highly innovative battle plans and strategies broke the stalemate of a war bogged down in the mud and massacres of the Western Front.

Today a raft of contemporary biographies build on this mystique: Monash was the 'outsider' who single-handedly showed British High Command how

to win the war in a superbly timed rush of brilliance. Monash himself was a great writer of his own history, but how accurate are these glowing accounts of him as commander of the Australian Imperial Force?

Was he, as his critics claim, vain, impulsive, egotistical, and prone to exaggeration? And how did he – a colonial German Jew and a civilian soldier – come to lead the Australian Imperial Force at the Western Front and be the first commander in 200 years to be knighted on the battlefield?

War correspondent, Peter Greste embarks on a journey through the ANZAC canon to re-evaluate the story of John Monash, and the main battles that made him famous.

By shining a fresh light onto Monash's triumphs and tragedies, Greste will offer up his assessment on Monash's legacy for contemporary Australia, and the wider impact – then and now – of his multiple achievements. A complex, talented and enigmatic man, fiercely intelligent and a brilliant tactician, Monash's engineering background put him in a unique position to see and solve problems on the battlefield. This approach saved thousands of lives on the Western Front, and also set the stage for how war is still conducted today.

Beginning at the Shrine of Remembrance, Greste discovers his own family's hitherto unknown role in Monash's Army corps, and through these moving stories Monash's war becomes close and personal.

Across two episodes Greste plays detective and military analyst, unearthing private letters, diary entries and unit histories from Monash and protagonists on each side of the conflict. These intimate accounts reveal a much richer and more detailed picture of the man himself, and this terrible conflict in which 60,000 Australians were killed.

Part I 8:30pm Tuesday April 24 on ABC.