

# THE GALLIPOLI GAZETTE

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## Matron Vivian Bullwinkel honoured

The first sculpture at the Australian War Memorial site to commemorate the service of an individual woman has been unveiled.

The statue is of the Australian army nurse, Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Statham [nee Bullwinkel] AO MBE ARRC ED FNM FRCNA whose courage while a prisoner of war exemplified the bravery of Australian women in war. Her distinguished post-war career was marked by many humanitarian achievements.

Vivian Bullwinkel was born on December 18, 1915 in Kapunda, South Australia. She trained as a nurse and midwife at Broken Hill, New South Wales and was working as a nurse in Victoria before enlisting in the Australian Army Nursing Service in May 1941.

In September 1941 Bullwinkel was sent to Singapore as a staff nurse with the newly raised 2/13th Australian General Hospital. She served in Singapore from September 1941 until she was evacuated with 64 other Australian Army nursing sisters aboard a small coastal steamer, the *Vyner Brooke* on February 12, 1942, only three days before Singapore fell to the Japanese. On February 14, heading for Sumatra via Banka Strait, the ship was sunk by Japanese bombers.



She was with a group of survivors on Banka Island when a Japanese patrol arrived and ordered the 23 women in the group to walk into the sea. They were machine-gunned from behind. All except Bullwinkel were killed.

After two weeks in the jungle caring for Private Cecil Kingsley, a wounded British soldier, Bullwinkel gave herself up and re-joined 31 other nurses who had made it to shore. The surviving 32 nurses spent the next three and a half years as prisoners of war on Banka Island and Sumatra. Of the original 65 nurses evacuated from Singapore on the *Vyner Brooke* only 24, including Bullwinkel, returned to Australia. During their internment eight nurses died as a result of malnutrition and other easily treated diseases; tragically this occurred in the last seven months of their captivity. Among Bullwinkel's papers (recently donated to the Australian War Memorial) is the only postcard she was allowed to send home, in March 1943. Exemplifying the courage of the nurses, she made light of her situation. Bullwinkel wrote to her mother, "My roving spirit has been somewhat checked."

Bullwinkel gave evidence before the Tokyo war trials in December 1946 and was described as a model witness. After the war, she could not face working in Japan with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) and decided to return to being a civilian nurse. She retained her position at Heidelberg Military Hospital when it was taken over by Repatriation, and as assistant matron continued to care for Australian servicemen. From 1955 to 1970, Bullwinkel served as a lieutenant colonel in 3 Royal Australian Nursing Corps Training Unit (CMF). On retirement in 1977, she was Director of Nursing, Fairfield Infectious

Diseases Hospital, Victoria. While at Fairfield, she organised a rescue mission to evacuate Vietnamese war orphans from Saigon and supervised their convalescence before adoption to Australian families. She worked tirelessly for the Red Cross, ex-service, nursing and other voluntary organizations. In the 1970s Bullwinkel became the President of the Royal College of Nursing, Australia. An achievement close to her heart was the instigation of nursing scholarships so that Malaysian nurses could finish training in Australia. Bullwinkel received many honours and awards and was selected by the National Heritage 200 Committee for inclusion in the bicentennial publication *The people who made Australia*.

Bullwinkel was a great supporter of the work of the Australian War Memorial. From 1964 to 1969 she was the first woman trustee. On display in the Second World War gallery, her grey nurse's uniform with the trace of a bullet hole above the hip gives testimony to the loss of life on Banka Island. To coincide with the dedication of the Australian Service Nurses National memorial, she donated diaries with entries dated from August 1941 to February 1942 to the Memorial. These describe her life in Singapore before it fell and the desperate evacuation aboard the *Vyner Brooke*. Then in April 2000, she donated her collection of personal papers, a rich source of material for historians and a significant heritage acquisition for the Memorial.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PO1 344.001

*Portrait of nursing staff 2/13<sup>TH</sup> Australian General Hospital*

In the decades following the war, Bullwinkel received multiple honours and awards:

- Officer of the Order of Australia (1993)
- Member of the Order of the British Empire (1973)
- Associate Member of the Royal Red Cross (1947)
- 1939-45 Star
- Pacific Star
- War Medal 1939-1945
- Australian Service Medal 1939-45
- Efficiency Decoration (ED)
- Florence Nightingale Medal (1947) the highest international distinction a nurse can be

awarded for “exceptional courage and devotion to the wounded, sick or disabled or to civilian victims of a conflict or disaster”.

In 1977 Vivian married an old friend, Frank Statham in Perth. In 1999, despite both being in poor health, they flew to Canberra for the unveiling of the Australian Service Nurses National Memorial in October, Frank became seriously ill there, and was repatriated to Perth but died soon after.

Vivian died of a heart attack in Perth nine months later on July 3, 2000.

*“From a generation that produced so many remarkable Australians, Vivian Bullwinkel was a giant among them. She was a leader and an inspiration, a woman who embodied all that is good in us. She led from both position and principle.”*

The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson AO, former Defence Minister and Chairman of AWM.



*The first sculpture to commemorate the service of an individual woman or nurse in the grounds of the Australian War Memorial, Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel AO MBE ARRC ED FNM FRCNA.*



## Editorial

With August 6<sup>th</sup> marking the 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Lone Pine and the Club holding its usual commemorative lecture, this edition has the Gallipoli Campaign as its central theme.

Our Lone Pine Night was well attended with our Guest Speaker being New Zealand academic, Dr Ian McGibbon.

Dr McGibbon enlightened us on the myths about the Gallipoli Campaign that prevail in New Zealand that include misconceived beliefs that one leader was drunk, that arguments occurred among the commanders about the timing of attacks and even a bravado myth that sees the

number of New Zealanders on Gallipoli wrongly lowered to make it seem that the percentage of fatalities and injuries is inflated, possibly to allow claims of a greater degree of commitment and loss than by Australian forces.

Denis Moore of the *Friends of Gallipoli* group, who attended the Lone Pine Night, has provided his history of the Gallipoli Campaign with explanatory maps to give us the abridged story of the landings and aftermath.

Patrick O'Neill has supplied an opinion piece of saga of Ben Roberts-Smith VC and his tribulations with the Australian media.

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## Lone Pine Lecture 2023

The myths that abound about Gallipoli are a source of amazement to New Zealand historian, Dr Ian McGibbon, as he outlined to Club members in his 2023 Lone Pine address. The myths he addressed were;

1. Did New Zealand's Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone refuse an order from Brigadier-General Earl Johnston to attack Chunuk Bair, one of the peaks of the Sari Bair range on the Gallipoli Peninsula in the Lone Pine campaign?
2. Was Brigadier-General Johnston drunk at the time?
3. Just how many New Zealand soldiers fought in the Gallipoli campaign?

Dr McGibbon explained that these myths had found an unjustified place in the mythology about elements of the New Zealand involvement in the Gallipoli campaign and he was keen to dispel them in favour of truth based on known facts.

Dr McGibbon said that on Anzac Day 2015 at Chunuk Bair, on the centenary of the battle, New

Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, falsely stated that "The Auckland Battalion tried to take Chunuk Bair but was forced back by heavy casualties. Next in line was the Wellington Battalion, but its commanding officer, Colonel Malone, refused to send his already weary men to their certain deaths in a daylight attack up steep hill. They waited until night fell."

"I heard Mr Key say those words and they grated on me – it's a myth" Dr McGibbon told the thirty Club members that night.

He said this battle on Rhododendron Ridge had been an attempt to breakout to the north of the stalemated Gallipoli offensive. At 10.30 on the night of August 6 three battalions of men had commenced their uphill advance, but that number of men walking single file up tracks delayed plans so it was not until 5.15am that the Wellington Infantry battalion under Lt Colonel Malone emerged from Chailak Dere onto Rhododendron Ridge.



*Club President John Robertson (right) welcomes speaker Dr Ian McGibbon to the Lone Pine commemoration*

Dr McGibbon said the myth was initiated in 1982 when 93 year old Charlie Clark stated, “So the Wellington Battalion, all lined up and ready, was called to go next by two British commanders. It seemed we was (sic) just a few seconds from following the Aucklanders into that fire. ‘Stop where you are,’ Colonel Malone told us. I was standing just near Malone when the British gave the order. He was very stern and strong faced. Malone told the British commanders “No, we are not taking orders from you people. Wellington is not going up there. My men are not going to commit suicide.’ There was a big row when he refused their orders. ‘These men, the Wellingtons, are under my orders. Not yours. I take all responsibility for them not going up there. I will take all risk and any punishment. We will take Chunuk Bair tonight, in the dark, not daylight.

‘These two English men threatened to arrest Malone for insubordination. I reckon if they tried arresting him we would have shot them. Malone just ordered Wellington Battalion come back from that ridge. So we did,’ Charlie Clark recalled.

Dr McGibbon said the reality is that there is a number of reasons why this incident couldn't have taken place as Key stated. It rests on an uncorroborated statement by a 93-year-old veteran who was remembering back 67 years. He was almost certainly remembering an incident that happened just after dawn (not five hours later after the Auckland Battalion's attack at 10.30 am). Malone at that stage ignored exhortations by a British officer — but not an order — to immediately advance to the summit of Chunuk Bair in accordance with the ANZAC commander's plan.



*Tanya Codd, Sonia McGibbon, Dr Ian McGibbon and David Wilson*



The reasons why Malone's refusal couldn't have taken place at 10.45 am include: a refusal by Malone to carry out an order to attack would never have been accepted by the Brigade Commander and was a death penalty offence; an order for the Wellington Battalion to attack would have been a monumental tactical error on the part of the Brigadier-General; the Canterbury Battalion was the battalion supporting the attack, not the Wellingtons, and would have been the one ordered to attack; the Wellington Battalion was not deployed in a manner that would have allowed it to attack at 10.45 am, since it had been placed in perimeter defensive positions shortly after dawn and was still so deployed; and finally no officer of the battalion or any of its surviving rank and file mentioned such a possible Wellington attack in their later accounts of the day's proceedings, ensuring that there is no corroboration for the veteran's statement.

The claim that Brigadier-General Johnston was drunk at the time was made in the 1930s by his Brigade Major, called Temperley, in conversation with a junior New Zealand officer, William Gentry.

Dr McGibbon conceded that Johnston was noted for being a drinker, but there is no evidence that he had any supply of alcohol with him on Rhododendron Ridge. "Anyhow, he would have needed' a considerable amount of alcohol to



*Club Directors Ted Codd and Marc Higgins*

remain drunk for more than 12 hours, more than rum in his water bottle' (as has been claimed by his detractors)."

Dr McGibbon stated, firstly, that had Johnston been drunk Temperley and his fellow officers were duty bound to report this fact to the Divisional Commander, but clearly did not and, secondly, that this claim 20 years later had never been corroborated.

However, Dr McGibbon suggests that Johnston appears to have suffered mentally from having to order the Auckland Battalion to make an attack that was certain to fail with heavy loss of life.

A further myth referred to by Dr McGibbon relates to the number of New Zealand soldiers who were on Gallipoli. He believes the number has been understated thereby allowing a myth to develop that New Zealand had a far higher rate of casualties than Australia on Gallipoli. He noted that New Zealand film producer, Peter Jackson, has been among those perpetuating this myth in their public statements.



*Roger Manning and Tony Le Brun talking after the lecture*

# National Hero or Tall Poppy. Should Ben Roberts-Smith keep his Victoria Cross?

*Patrick O'Neill looks at the controversy following the Roberts-Smith defamation case and advises us of the wise words of King George V in 1920.*

There is no doubt Ben Roberts-Smith is tall; 2.02 metres according to his biography. But if the



Brereton inquiry is any guide, as well as recent controversy in the civil courts about alleged battlefield brutality, he may also be a 'tall poppy' ripe for the ripping down. So, is one of our national heroes about to be stripped of his Victoria Cross?



There seems to be a 'woke' mood in high places to tear down heroes. Ben Roberts-Smith is Australia's most decorated living soldier, having won another medal for gallantry in Afghanistan, as well as the V.C. He is also accused of war crimes, allegations yet to be tested in a criminal court.

Dr Samantha Cromptvoets a sociologist who has undertaken an inquiry, has called upon the Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, to strip medals off soldiers who committed war crimes, including those who oversaw them in Afghanistan. That includes Ben Roberts-Smith.



"If the medals are removed," says Cromptvoets, "it sends a message that leaders are accountable and responsible for what happens below them. There's no honour

being associated with war crimes," she said. "While Ben Roberts-Smith is not the worst offender, it reflects poorly on us as a nation'.



The prospect of revoking military honours has already attracted a backlash from veteran groups such as the RSL and the Australian SAS Association, with SAS chair Martin Hamilton-Smith saying it sets an extraordinary precedent. "We strongly disagree with punishment of any kind, including the removal of medals, before the soldier in question is found guilty by a court of law," he said.



So concerned was Australian Defence Force Chief, General Angus Campbell AO, DSC, that he wrote to several Afghanistan war-veterans to inform them that if Richard Marles accepted these recommendations, their medals for distinguished service could be cancelled. He has also tried to hand back his own distinguished service medal. That offer was refused.



So cancel-culture has finally caught up with the Defence Force. There is now a very real possibility that as a result of 'woke' pressure, a Victoria Cross, the most revered 'gong' for bravery on the battlefield in our honour system, could be revoked – or as one veteran caustically remarked: 're-woked'!



The Victoria Cross is the highest medal for bravery *in the face of the enemy* in the Australian military honours system. On June 10, 2012 in Tizak Afghanistan as Taliban rebels attacked 2<sup>nd</sup> Commando Regiment, Cpl Ben Roberts-Smith faced the enemy when he personally assaulted two Taliban machine gun posts, while his patrol was pinned down by their withering fire.



Roberts-Smith earned an Australian gallantry medal in 2006 for exposing himself to great personal danger. But in Tizak, as he stormed the enemy

position, he drew heavy fire away from his patrol. Having 'neutralised' the enemy his companions could escape unharmed. It was for this selfless act under fire that he was given Australia's highest military award.



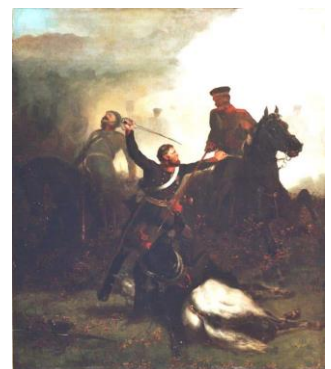
With that, Roberts-Smith became a member of the V.C. club with quite a tradition to uphold. The V.C. is so distinguished that it takes precedence over the Order of the Garter, the highest order of knightly chivalry in the British Commonwealth. Roberts-Smith was not only gallant, but he was alive. So great is the danger faced by many V.C.'s that they often have to be awarded posthumously. Roberts-Smith's V.C. was pinned on his chest by the Governor-General Quentin Bryce. Later he would be received by the Queen at Buckingham Palace.



Back in 1857 the Victoria Cross was the creation of Queen Victoria. It was to be awarded for: *the most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice, or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy*. It was to be awarded to all ranks. At the time this was revolutionary. Until then most medals went to senior officers, not normal 'squadies'. And that applied throughout the Commonwealth. Altogether 101 have been won by Australians. But today it is awarded as an Australian medal. Identical in shape to the British V.C. it is made of the same bronze. Only four of these Aussie V.C.s have been issued to date.



The original V.C.s were said to have been minted from a melted down bronze gun; a Russian cannon captured at the siege of Sevastopol in the Crimean War. Queen Victoria was so inspired by the many acts of bravery in that war, that she wanted to create her own medal. Indeed some of the first VC's were awarded to participants in the ill-fated 'Charge of the Light Brigade' at the battle of Balaclava. It was a time when valour and self-sacrifice were immortalised by the poet Alfred Lord Tennyson in these famous lines:



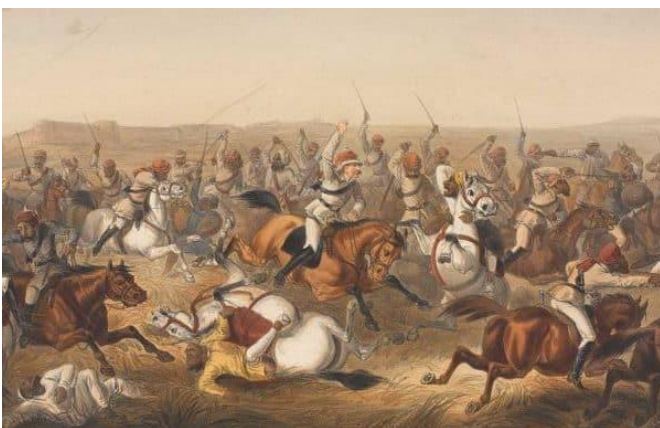
*Half a league, half a league, half a league onward,  
All in the valley of death rode the six hundred.  
'Forward the Light Brigade. Charge for the guns' he said.  
Into the valley of death rode the six hundred.*

It may have been one of the greatest military blunders in British history, but it was the stuff out of which heroes were made; and many regiments honoured their heroes; as did mine. Ours was Trooper Samuel Parkes VC. As a young officer, I used to see this painting daily in the Officer's Mess of the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars. He saved the life of a fellow soldier whose horse was shot from under him, during that fateful charge. Attacked by six Cossacks; they were all fought off by Parkes. Indeed, seven V.Cs were won at Balaclava that day.

Altogether 111 V.Cs were awarded to the war heroes of Crimea, all of them personally presented by Queen Victoria. While the Victoria Cross had been actually created in 1856, its issue was backdated to 1854 so the heroes of Crimea could be included. There soon became a new aspect to these awards. Pinning medals on heroes proved to be good publicity, not only for the Queen, but for the War Office and the Generals. Thanks to the Victoria Cross presentations, the public focused less on the causes of that disastrous charge, and more on the derring-do implicit in Tennyson's famous words:

*Forward the Light Brigade,  
was there a man dismayed?  
Not that the soldiers knew someone had  
blundered!*

Another year, another war, and this time Britain found herself embroiled in the Indian mutiny. November 16, 1857 was when the highest number of VC's were won in a single day – twenty four. Again, Public Relations was involved. The Generals



needed to divert attention from the causes of the Indian mutiny.

Once again, the focus was on swashbuckling valour: sword on sword, lance on lance, hero on foe. And there was no Geneva Convention. No focus on war crimes or atrocities, no one to determine if all of those killed were soldiers or civilians dismissed as 'co-lateral damage'. Also, there were few war correspondents, and certainly no sociologists! Neither were there body-cams or armchair warriors, dissecting every detail of an engagement. Back then what happened on the battlefield, stayed on the battlefield - but not anymore! Today, feelings trump facts. Virtue trumps heroism - and it's all retrospective.

Indeed, few soldiers have had to face so many accusations of war crimes and alleged breaches of the Geneva code. So, while the virtuous bay for Ben Roberts-Smith's blood, it is worth asking if a Victoria Cross can actually be forfeited?

Of the 1,358 V.Cs awarded since its creation, only 8 recipients have been stripped of their medals.

The first was Valentine Bambrick in 1863. He won his in India in 1858, for bravery during the mutiny. Bambrick clearly had a problem with alcohol. He lost his V.C. by Royal Warrant after repeated confrontations with the law.



Another to be stripped of his VC was James Collis who won his during the 1880 Afghan war. He forfeited his in 1895 when found guilty of bigamy. While this was a civil not a military offence, he still lost his V.C. Another to be stripped of it, was Edward Daniel, who won his V.C. at the battle of Inkermann. In 1861 his sin was 'desertion', lack of courage clearly not being one of the reasons!





Five other recipients were similarly stripped of their VC's. James Maguire after being convicted of stealing a cow. Michael Murphy VC for theft, George Ravenhill because he couldn't afford a 10 shilling fine; all forfeitures for petty crimes, the sort of minor transgressions, which had seen so many convicts transported to penal colonies in NSW or Van Diemen's Land!



So, in 1920, King George V who had been petitioned many times for V.C's to be reinstated took a stand. He issued a statement through his official secretary Lord Stanfordham:



*'The King feels so strongly that, no matter the crime committed by anyone on whom the V.C. has been conferred, the decoration should not be forfeited. Even were a V.C. (holder) be sentenced to be hanged for murder, he should be allowed to wear his V.C. on the scaffold.'*

With that all those stripped of their VC's, had their medals reinstated. Here George V's views are instructive. Indeed, current Australian Defence Minister, Richard Marles, may need to consult history. He too will soon be under intense pressure to do a bit of medal-stripping.

It would be an understatement to say that Ben Roberts-Smith's post-military life has been eventful; and it will probably become more so in the future. In these judgemental days, he is seen as a 'tall poppy'. Certainly, there is no shortage of noisy 'virtue-seekers', keen to tear him down.

But what is not in dispute is that after June 10, 2012 in Tizak, Afghanistan, some of his mates are still alive because of what he did.

Faults he may have, but he put his life on the line for them. So should a VC won for one heroic act by one person be cancelled, just so another person can try and prove another point, about another issue, that took place at another time in another place? I hope not!



Nic Macoun and Simon Paterson talk with Club Senior Vice President, David Ford and Board Member Scott Heathwood



## GALLIPOLI, BEFORE, THEN AND NOW

Lt Col. Denis Moore, Royal Australian Artillery (Ret) who attended the Lone Pine Night commemoration provided this history of Gallipoli

In 1915, Australia, with Britain, France, and New Zealand, engaged Türkiye in fierce battle on Turkish soil. While Australia became an independent nation in 1901, it is often said that it was on the battlefields of Gallipoli that it became of age. Similarly, Turkish elders take their grandchildren to Gallipoli, pointing out that this is where the modern Türkiye was born.

Much has been written about the Gallipoli battles, but who were the Ottomans and why did they enter the First World War? Why were Australians fighting them? What led to the Gallipoli Campaign? What were the conditions on Gallipoli under which ANZACs and Turks fought? How did the Campaign end? What role on Gallipoli did Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first President of the Republic of Türkiye, fulfill? What happened to Türkiye after the end of that War? What led to it becoming a firm friend of Australia?

Türkiye's location has considerable strategic

significance. Lying between Asia and Europe, it forms a bridge between them; however, straddling the maritime choke points of the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles Narrows, it also forms a potential barrier to those countries to its north that desire sea passage from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Russia has desired security of this passage for centuries.

The original Ottomans were a clan of Turks living in the state of Seljuk in the Sultanate of Rûm, a Turco-Persian state in Anatolia that had disintegrated into small principalities following a Mongol invasion in 1243. They were named after their founder, Sultan Osman 1.

Under Osman 1 and his successors, Turkish lands grew significantly, largely through seizure from the Byzantine Empire. This enabled the establishment of the Turkish Empire, which the Ottomans ruled as an Islamic Caliphate from 1299 until 1922.



Map of Türkiye

Between the 14th and early 20th centuries, Türkiye controlled much of Southeast Europe, Western Asia, and Northern Africa. It was the pre-eminent Islamic state and was ruled from Constantinople (now Istanbul) following its capture from the Byzantines in 1453. It reached its peak in the 16<sup>th</sup> century under Suleiman the Magnificent and its territory was at its largest in 1683 (*see map*).

Ottoman Administration was headed by the Sultan's advisory council, which oversaw a complex system of separate political, civil, and military elites. It was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that the Empire had a noble class, until then all religious and secular power was vested in the Sultan.

Under the Ottomans, culture was rich and diverse. Cannon, public baths with running water, charitable foundations and vaccination against smallpox were developed. Meritocracy and

excellence in engineering, science, architecture, art, music astronomy and higher education prevailed in major centres; however, the Empire was mainly agrarian and regional people were largely under-educated. Regions within the Empire were divided into administrative areas, based on tribal, religious, and geographical boundaries.

From the late 16th century, Türkiye began to decline in power and territory due to military, economic, social, political and technological challenges. Militarily, having failed to capture Malta, it lost territory in wars against Austria, Poland, and Russia. It also faced rebellions in what is now Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and the Balkans. In the 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it fought a series of wars with Russia, largely due to Russia's desire to establish a Black Sea warm water port. These led to Russia gradually acquiring what had previously been Turkish territory, beginning with Ukraine. These defeats were attributed to Türkiye's failure to adequately fund its armed forces.



*The Ottoman Empire 1683*

Economic decline resulted from Türkiye's loss of its spice trade-routes to competition from France and Britain, an over-dependence on agriculture, high taxation, inflation, and corruption. Social unrest was caused by nationalist, ethnic, and religious movements seeking change. Political instability was caused by internal power struggles with the various Sultans, some of whom lacked decisive leadership, and between various groups vying for influence.

Lastly, while Türkiye contributed significantly to the fields of science and technology, it faced strong resistance to modernising, when Europe was undergoing rapid industrialization. This has been attributed to the conservative nature of society that valued tradition and stability over innovation and reform; the Empire's geographical isolation from the industrialising areas and a lack of cultural exchange with them; a lack of incentive for the privileged and comfortable to accept change; and difficulty in implementing technology reforms due to the vast size and diversity of the Empire, bureaucratic inefficiency and a widespread lack of education in areas other than the major centres. Despite efforts to improve education during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in 1914 it was estimated that only 5-10% could read.

In 1876 the Sultan converted the Caliphate to a constitutional monarchy with a constitution and an elected parliament. However, he subsequently reimposed autocracy to counter dissatisfaction with him over Türkiye's defeat in the 1877-78 war with Russia.

While still powerful, from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the rate of economic, military, and cultural decline in Türkiye increased.

Revolutionary movements were rife and with several failed revolts against Ottoman rule. In 1908, the Young Turk Revolution successfully reinstated the constitution and constitutional monarchy, this leading to the resumption of elections and the emergence of political parties. A member of the Young Turks was Mustafa Kemal a junior Army officer who sought democratic,

secular rule and a less unwieldy, ethnic Turkish homeland.

In 1912, a military coup overthrew the elected Turkish government. This was followed in 1913 by another coup that led to single party dictatorship under the Committee of Union and Progress.

Despite some modernisation, the Turkish fleet was in a suboptimal state, being outmatched in the 1912-13 Balkan wars. Knowing that it was not fit for war, Türkiye made several attempts to negotiate non-aggression pacts with England, France and Russia; however, these were rebuffed. At the same time, wishing to establish at least parity with Greece, Türkiye ordered new warships from Britain, including two, highly capable, dreadnought battleships, much of their cost being met by Turkish public donations. None of these ships were delivered, the dreadnoughts being confiscated by the Royal Navy and the British shipyards keeping Türkiye's money. This outraged the Turkish people and was material to Türkiye's subsequent alignment with Germany.

In early 1914, Türkiye, yet again concerned by perceived threats from (Tzarist) Russia, received repeated overtures from Germany offering warships, an anti-Russian pact, and territorial gains. On June 28, 1914, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated, triggering a chain of events that rapidly escalated into the First World War. On July 28, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and on August 1, Germany declared war on Russia after the latter mobilised in support of Serbia. On August 2, Türkiye signed, in secret, a security treaty with Germany that obliged Germany to protect Türkiye, unaware that this would soon lead it to war against Britain and France, against which it had no great desire or capability to fight. Mustafa Kemal expressed grave misgivings at this alliance, correctly expressing the opinion that Germany would lose the war. Nevertheless, throughout the war he fought for Türkiye with great skill and integrity, excelling at military strategy and inspirational leadership.



The reasons that led Türkiye to choose to enter the First World War are disputed, but it is certain that it was ill prepared. Never-the-less, in October 1914, in a surprise attack planned by Türkiye, the Turkish warships, *Goeben* and *Breslau*, which Germany had gifted to Türkiye and were commanded and crewed by Germans, attacked Russian ports on the Black Sea. Russia then declared war on Türkiye, Britain and France, which were allies of Russia, following suit.

In November 1914 the Sultan, Mehmed V, declared Jihad against Britain, France and Russia, and on the same day a fatwa with similar wording was issued by a Turkish religious scholar.

### THE AUSTRALIANS

In 1914, Australian citizens were British nationals and most viewed Britain as the mother country, taking great pride in being part of the British Empire. When defensive alliances drew Britain into war against Germany, Australians rallied patriotically to defend British interests, as had happened in the Boer War.

Although there had not been prior enmity between them, Australia and Türkiye were thus at war.

### THE DARDANELLES NARROWS

To counter German and Turkish pressure on the Russians in the Balkan Caucasus, the British High Command sought to open a new front in south-eastern Europe. A plan was developed to use naval power to force passage through the Dardanelles and bring fire onto Constantinople (Istanbul). There was speculation that, if successful, this strike might force Türkiye out of the war, safeguarding the Suez Canal and possibly persuading the then neutral states of Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania to join the war on the Allied side.

Ostensibly, the primary objective of this attack was to relieve the Russians; however, the British had a particular motive to defeat Türkiye and seize its Middle East possessions. The Royal Navy, which was a vital component of British military might,



*Marmara and Dardanelles Narrows.*

needed to change the fuel that powered its fleet from coal to oil to assure its superior performance. This was hampered by Britain's restricted access to oil supplies. Türkiye controlled most of the Middle East's oil reserves and its capture would be of huge advantage to the British. This was achieved after the Turkish capitulation in 1918.

Many of the Allied ships in the Dardanelles force were aged battleships deemed relatively expendable, sufficient for this task but no longer fit for battle at sea against the German fleet.

The defence of the Dardanelles was based on shore batteries and the flexible use of sea mines, and in 1913 Mustafa Kemal was involved in its development.

The naval attack led to heavy losses on both sides, six British and French capital ships being destroyed by mines, and major damage inflicted on Turkish shore batteries. In the face of strong Turkish resistance, Churchill, the civilian British First Lord of the Admiralty, urged that the attack continue, offering to supply more old ships. However, the Allied naval commander became concerned that, even if he were able to force a passage and attack Constantinople (Istanbul), he might have great difficulty suppressing fire from shore positions as there were no ground troops in his force.

It is now known that battle damage to the shore batteries inflicted by Allied ships and landing parties, disruption to the communications between the batteries plus ammunition shortages had weakened Turkish defences to a much greater extent than then realised. However, even if it had been continued, it is unlikely the attack could have reached Constantinople (Istanbul) as significant Turkish defences, particularly including the sea mines, remained in place.

The naval attack was abandoned, causing great reputational damage to the British High Command and Churchill.

The Turks celebrate March 18, 1915 as the date of a great naval victory.

In Mustafa Kemal's biography it is stated that when Allied landing parties were put ashore to attack a fort at the southern tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula, a Turkish sergeant, whose rifle had jammed and armed only with a rock, charged a British sailor. Kemal published the bravery of this curious incident to enhance moral.

The British High Command ordered a land offensive to seize the Gallipoli Peninsula, to silence shore batteries and clear sea mines from the Dardanelles so as the naval thrust towards Constantinople (now Istanbul) would be resumed.

As the land offensive commenced, the Australian submarine, AE2, successfully breached the Dardanelles, entered the Sea of Marmara, and attacked enemy shipping. It was subsequently scuttled after being holed by a Turkish torpedo boat. The submariners were rescued by the torpedo boat crew and spent the war as prisoners.

## **THE PENINSULA**

The Gallipoli amphibious assault on April 25 was at two landing sites. The British and French landed at Cape Helles on the peninsula's southern tip and the ANZACs at an Aegean coast cove.

The accepted version is that an uncharted current swept the ANZACs landing craft several kilometres north of their intended landing place in Ariburnu to an inhospitable, crescent-shaped beach that was backed by steep bluffs cleft with deep, tangled ravines. This became known as Anzac Cove.

A later theory suggests that Colonel Brudenell White, while planning the invasion, had flown over the area identifying that the area around Anzac Cove was only lightly defended, while the planned landing point further south was well defended with cannon, machine guns, barbed wire in the sea and more than 1,000 Turkish



*The Peninsula*

troops. Consequently, he changed the planned landing site.

The unintentional or intentional choice of Anzac Cove was fortuitous as the landing was opposed by only light Turkish forces and initial Allied casualties were light.

Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal was in command of the 19<sup>th</sup> Division, held in reserve on the eastern side of Gallipoli and then comprised of only the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment of some 3,700 men. The ANZAC's initial April 25 advances were checked by Kemal who, being the closest to Anzac Cove, rushed the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment to secure the northern end of the Turkish line and gain control of the heights around noon. Of the 16,000 ANZACs in the initial landing, by evening 2,000 of them were dead or wounded.

Unable to penetrate much beyond their beach-head, the ANZACs chipped out kilometres of trenches, making what was to be their home for the next eight and a half months. In many places,

the opposing trenches were only a few metres apart.

After the landing, the ANZACs were reinforced by Indian infantry and artillery, the latter including Punjabi-Muslim forces - the only Allied Muslim troops to fight the Turks on Gallipoli, and the invaluable Indian Mule Corps that delivered ammunition and supplies under fire to the forward trenches.

About 81 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers fought on Gallipoli in the Australian force. At that time, they were not recognised as citizens of Australia and their enlistment was illegal. In the trenches, they were paid and treated no differently to other soldiers, some showing great heroism; however, on returning to Australia they reverted to their former status. Thirteen of them died in action.

On April 25, Irish Fusiliers, as a component of the British force, landed near Cape Helles where a considerable number of them were killed.



Subsequent Irish Reinforcements also suffered heavy casualties in a manner that led the Irish people to believe that their soldier's lives had been wasted, fuelling anti-British sentiment, and dispelling the belief that support of the British would lead to home rule.

The British were also reinforced by the New-foundland Regiment, from the British dominion that is now part of Canada. The Newfoundlanders, as proud members of the British Empire, had become involved in the campaign under the same circumstances as the ANZACs.

For much of the campaign, the Turkish forces that effectively and tenaciously opposed the ANZACs were commanded by Mustafa Kemal, firstly as commander of the 19<sup>th</sup> Division, which was brought to full-strength, and later as the commander of six divisions.

Fierce fighting under appalling conditions resulted in heavy casualties, particularly on the Turkish side. Living conditions for both sides were squalid. In summer, the temperature was high, and flies instantly covered exposed food and the dead. Dysentery was rife and throughout the battlefield there was an overwhelming stench of death. Charging troops, of necessity, ran across decomposing bodies. In winter, it was freezing. A violent snowstorm coinciding with Lord Kitchener's visit was material to his subsequently ordering a general withdrawal. Deaths from disease far outweighed battle casualties.

At least in the ANZAC Sector, the tragic conflict was characterised by mutual respect between opposing forces, a strong sense of honour, both in battle and during a truce on May 24.1915 to recover the dead and wounded, and even comradeship during lulls in fighting. During such lulls, the better nourished Turks would throw fresh fruit and tobacco from their trenches into the ANZAC trenches and the ANZACs would in turn throw bully beef and biscuits to the Turks. Mock range practices were not uncommon. Enmity was not personal, both sides being aware that their opponents suffered as did they; however, battles

fought were intense as each side strove to achieve its objectives.

There were many similarities between the Turkish and Australian soldiers on Gallipoli. On both sides they were honourable men, legally deployed by their respective governments to fight, which they did with courage and determination. They all endured the same privations and equally would have preferred to have been at home with their families.

## **THE WITHDRAWAL**

With the Allied offensive at a stalemate and the prospects of achieving its objective appearing bleak, a general withdrawal was ordered.

With subterfuge to deceive the Turks as to ANZACs intentions, including observable, incoming resupply by day and a cricket match at Shell Green that the Turks could see from a distance, a particularly well executed withdrawal of some 41,000 ANZACs was undertaken over several nights. This was achieved virtually without loss and against expectations of heavy casualties. For Australia and New Zealand, the Gallipoli campaign ended on December 20, 1915, the successful withdrawal subsequently being deemed a military triumph by Australia.

When the withdrawal took place Mustafa Kemal was in Istanbul due to ill health. On being appraised of it, he apparently observed that he had suspected it was about to occur, but that his proposal to launch an offensive had been refused, and that had it taken place while he was at the front, he would have been greatly upset.

Of the about 393,000 casualties on Gallipoli, some 251,000 were suffered by the Turks and Australia suffered 8,709 killed and 19,441 wounded. Despite these losses, militarily, little was achieved.

## **POST WAR TÜRKIYE**

Having been on the losing side, Türkiye lost its empire on the European sub-continent and the Arabian Peninsula. In anticipation of this, in 1916 Colonel Sir Mark Sykes, a British diplomat and his French counterpart, François Georges-Picot,

planned the division of the Ottoman Empire according to European interests (the Sykes-Picot Agreement). This took little notice of tribal, religious, and geographical boundaries, contrasting sharply with the previous Ottoman model and creating the nations that today teeter on the brink of being failed states. After the war, under the Armistice of Mudros, British, French, Italian and Greek forces occupied much of Türkiye's former territory; however, the Allied Powers continued to seize land in today's Northern Iraq not ceded under the Armistice, implementing the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

The greatest military threat to the stabilisation of Türkiye came from Greece, a small country with a large ex patria population and expansionist aspirations. Its claims to western Anatolia, eastern Thrace and Constantinople (Istanbul) were reinforced by the large ethnic Greek populations in those areas. Greek was commonly spoken by the locals at ANZAC Cove and there are suggestions that Greek speakers in the region of the former Troy were descendants of the Greek Army that had fought and stayed after the Trojan Wars.

From May 1919, with encouragement from the Allied Powers, Greek troops progressively penetrated deeply into west Anatolia. At the same time, Italian troops landed in south-western Anatolia to reinforce their claim on that area. These opportunistic actions were inconsistent with the terms of the Armistice of Mudros and led to the death of a great many civilians, mostly Turkish at the hands of the occupying Greeks.

Turkish military commanders consequently refused to obey orders from the Allied Command and the Ottoman Government to surrender and disband. The Sultan directed General Mustafa Kemal to restore order; however, Kemal instead became the leader of a Turkish national resistance that opposed both the Allied Powers and the Ottoman Government.

From 1919 to 1923, Turkish Nationalists engaged in two overlapping conflicts. Firstly, they fought a war of independence against the occupying

powers, subsequently achieving in July 1923 the, more equitable, Treaty of Lausanne and the withdrawal of allied forces. Secondly, they fought what amounted to a civil war to overthrow government by the Ottomans, achieving victory and the overthrow of the monarchy in 1922.

In 1923 a population exchange between Türkiye and Greece was agreed as a means of normalising relations. Over a million Ottoman citizens professing Greek Orthodoxy were resettled from Türkiye to Greece and between four and five hundred Muslims living in Greece were moved to Türkiye. This act had profound implications in that it used religion to define ethnicity and set a legal precedent for population management based on religion or race. The commission that agreed on these arrangements was chaired by Norwegian, Fridtjof Nansen.

On October 29, 1923, the Republic of Türkiye was proclaimed and Mustafa Kemal, who adopted the name Atatürk, or Father of the Turks, became the first president of a modern, democratic, secular nation. From the upheaval in Türkiye both during and after the First World War, President Atatürk emerged as one of the truly great statesmen of that era. He was an inspirational leader who enjoyed a worldwide reputation for integrity and his high level of military and diplomatic expertise was material to establishing peace and stability in the region.

Ottoman influence in Türkiye ceased when the Caliphate was abolished in March 1924.

In 1934, Eleftherios K. Venizelos, the Prime Minister of Greece, nominated President Atatürk for the Nobel Peace Prize for bringing lasting peace to the region. That act provides evidence that the relationship between Türkiye and Greece had improved greatly.

Also in 1934, Atatürk famously reached out to Australia and New Zealand, undertaking to treat the remains of their dead the same as the Turkish dead; his statement is recognised as a hand of friendship that formed the catalyst for the warm relationship now existing between Australia and Türkiye.

## THE NOW

Those countries that fought on Gallipoli now deem it to be sacred ground, wherein lie the remains of so many fallen, both in formal graves carefully tended by the people of Türkiye, and in the ground yet to be discovered.

Having forebears that suffered on Gallipoli and now inspired by their deeds, both the peoples of Türkiye and Australia are now firm friends flourishing in the peace made possible by those that sacrificed their youth and innocence.

On October 29, 2023, The Republic of Türkiye will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its formation.

## COMMEMORATION OF THE END OF THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN

Annual commemorations of the end of the Gallipoli campaign commenced at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park in Sydney in 2022; similar commemorations having been held in Victoria for about 12 years. These are conducted by *The Friends of Gallipoli Inc* with the aim of remembering the sacrifices made during the Gallipoli campaign, recognising the friendship that

Australia now enjoys with its former enemy, Türkiye, and celebrating the peace. They commence at 12:00 noon Sydney time, each year, that time equating to 4:00 am Gallipoli time, when it is believed that the last boats were paddled in darkness from ANZAC Cove to the awaiting ships.

December 20, 2025 will be the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ANZACs withdrawal from Gallipoli and a major event is planned for that date. Significant overseas representation will be sought from those countries that fought on Gallipoli and are now at peace with Türkiye.

## CONCLUSION

It is loyalty, courage, integrity, love of country, steadfastness and compassion that define the nobility of the profession of arms. Those who have served are among those Australians most acutely aware of these values. Perhaps we are thus in a unique position to be proactive in contributing inspirational leadership to influence the nation's psyche. Surely this would be a fitting acknowledgement of the legacy established by those ANZACs who sacrificed so much while embracing these value

The author, Denis Moore, extends an invitation to readers to join the NSW section of *The Friends of Gallipoli Inc* by contacting him on [deniswmoore@outlook.com](mailto:deniswmoore@outlook.com).



*New Zealand Consul General, Bill Dobbie, Denis Moore, Una Lawrence (behind) and Turkish Consul, Ali Seven, listening to the Lone Pine lecture.*



## *"Pride In Our Heritage"*



*"The Landing" 25th April, 1915*

### **THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN THE BEGINNING – "THE LANDING"**

Men of the 1st Australian Division A.I.F. (Australian Imperial Force) landing under heavy Turkish fire at ARI BURNU, 4.30am on 25th April, 1915. The beach was later named ANZAC COVE.

The name "ANZAC" originated in Egypt early in 1915 where the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps were training. The Corps Commander, Lieut. Gen. William Birdwood, used the abbreviated title of the Corps, A.N.Z.A.C., as the code word for the Corps in preparation for the Gallipoli Campaign – a word that was to make history and be revered by Australians and New Zealanders for all time. An "ANZAC" was an Australian or New Zealand soldier who served in the Gallipoli Campaign. The term "an Original ANZAC" identified those men who participated in the initial landing on the 25th April, 1915 – the 1st Australian Division, A.I.F.

The Campaign ended on the 18th December, 1915, following the evacuation of all Allied troops from the Peninsula.

In the 8 months period of the Campaign, Australian casualties were:

Killed in action and died of wounds	8,079
Wounded in action and missing	<u>17,924</u>
Total	<u>26,003</u>

Our Club was originally "The Gallipoli Legion Club" until November, 1967 when it became "The Gallipoli Memorial Club" – a memorial where the legend of GALLIPOLI would be firmly entrenched as an inspiration to future generations of Australians.

It was founded and developed by the GALLIPOLI LEGIONS OF ANZACS, those "ANZACS" who survived the Gallipoli Campaign and following that, the Campaigns of France and Belgium until the Armistice on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.