

## *Anzac Day, 25 April 2015*



**Anzac Day** is a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand that broadly commemorates all Australians and New Zealanders "who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations" and "the contribution and suffering of all those who have served". Observed on **25 April** each year, **Anzac Day** was originally to honour the members of the *Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC)* who fought at **Gallipoli** against the Ottoman Empire during World War I.

### Casualties:

Gallipoli casualties (not including illness) <sup>1</sup>				
	Dead	Wounded	Missing & Prisoners	Total
<b>Ottoman Empire</b>	<b>56,643</b>	<b>107,007</b>	<b>11,178</b>	<b>174,828</b>
United Kingdom	34,072	78,520	7,654	120,246
France	9,798	17,371	–	27,169
Australia	8,709	19,441	–	28,150
New Zealand	2,721	4,752	–	7,473
British India	1,358	3,421	–	4,779
Newfoundland	49	93	–	142
<b>Total Allies</b>	<b>56,707</b>	<b>123,598</b>	<b>7,654</b>	<b>187,959</b>

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli\\_Campaign#Casualties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_Campaign#Casualties)

The date of **25 April** has been chosen as it was the opening day of the Gallipoli Land Campaign, after the failed Naval campaign of 198 March 1915 ensured that the only way to win the war, and reach Constantinople to topple the Ottoman Empire, was by capturing this Peninsular.

Because of the location of Turkey, it was fortunate for the British government that Australian and New Zealand forces were training in Egypt and that there was a growing supply of reinforcements en route. In addition it was sufficiently close to India to employ Indian forces.

In total, the Allies employed 489,000 British and Dominion men whilst the French provided 79,000 – with 2,000 labourers in addition, many from Egypt. The Ottomans defended their territory with 315,500 men.<sup>2</sup>

Not surprisingly the highest proportion of losses [c50%] was incurred by the defenders against c 33% for the British and Dominions and 34% by the French, whose role is usually understated.

**Tewkesbury** lost eight men in that campaign – **two** of whom were emigrants to Australia who immediately volunteered to fight for the “Mother Country” in its war, ostensibly against Germany.

<u>British</u>	<u>Australian Emigrants</u>
<b>W. W. Pittman</b> [drowned en route]	<b>J. G. Coleman</b>
<b>G. Eagles</b>	<b>W. B. Didcote</b>
<b>W. J. M. Parker</b>	
<b>W. G. Prosser</b>	
<b>T. J. Osborne</b>	
<b>W. A. Attwood</b> [died of wounds in Malta]	

The casualty figures include the wounded, of whom one was **Pte. Thomas Day** but does not include the vast numbers who succumbed to the second enemy of that campaign – **sickness**.

*“Conditions on Gallipoli defy description. The terrain and close fighting did not allow for the dead to be buried. Flies and other vermin flourished in the heat, which caused epidemic sickness. In October 1915, winter storms caused much damage and human hardship, and in December, a great blizzard - followed by cataclysmic thaw - caused casualties of 10% (15,000 men) throughout the British contingent, and no doubt something similar on the Turkish side. **Of the 213,000 British casualties on Gallipoli, 145,000 were due to sickness; chief causes being dysentery, diarrhoea, and enteric fever.**”<sup>3</sup>*

The most successful aspect of the Campaign was the evacuation of the troops in December 1915 which few casualties and in secrecy.

However British military prestige was seriously undermined and the Turks were emboldened to fight harder and successfully in **Mesopotamia**. It was not until late 1917 that the Turks were beaten in Mesopotamia and Palestine – the latter with the help of the Arab Revolt. Aided by Lawrence of Arabia, they were fighting for independence but were let down by the Anglo-French Sykes Picot agreement which carved up Arabia between the French and British Empires.

The soldiers had little respite – some including the 7<sup>th</sup> **Gloucesters** were sent to **Mesopotamia** whilst others fought in **Salonika, Egypt** – and, of course, back on the **Western front**. That is why the ANZACs had initially volunteered – but they found everlasting fame in **Gallipoli**.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli\\_Campaign#Allied\\_preparations\\_for\\_a\\_landing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_Campaign#Allied_preparations_for_a_landing)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.1914-1918.net/Gallipoli.htm>