



Anzac Day

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This 'Anzac Day Kit' has been compiled over a number of years by various staff members of the Parliamentary Library, and is updated annually. In particular the Library would like to acknowledge the work of John Moremon and Laura Rayner, both of whom contributed significantly to the original text and structure of the Kit.

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Introduction

On 25 April, the anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli in 1915, Australians and New Zealanders honour those of our men and women who have served and died in wars, peacekeeping and other operations. It is now 97 years since the landing, and 96 years since Anzac Day was observed for the first time in 1916.

The date of 25 April was etched into the national consciousness with the landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli. The Anzacs forged a tradition of service and sacrifice that has continued to this day. We remember that more than 1.5 million Australians have served their country in wartime, and more than 100 000 have lost their lives.

Anzac Day is Australia's national day of commemoration to remember those of our own who have fallen. Later in the year, on Remembrance Day, 11 November, we pause for a second time, sharing with other countries the tradition of observing a silence on the anniversary of the Great War's armistice to remember the dead of all wars.

What is this kit?

This kit is produced to assist Members and Senators with their representational and ceremonial duties on Anzac Day. It can be accessed by members of the public, but for copyright reasons many linked items are available to Members of Parliament only.

The kit comprises nine sections:

Section 1: Speeches

Section 2: The relevance of ANZAC

Section 3: Gallipoli

Section 4: The Western Front

Section 5: Remembering and honouring: memorials and heritage

Section 6: Anniversaries

Section 7: Statistics, links and further reading

Some readers will note that the sections on recent conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq have been removed from the 2012 edition of the Kit. The Parliamentary Library will update this material and publish it separately.

In conjunction with the Anzac Day Kit, in 2010 the Parliamentary Library published an online publication called [List of Victoria Cross recipients by electorate](#) which allows readers to identify

Australian [Victoria Cross](#) (VC) winners with ties to particular federal electorates. The publication also contains biographical information about each of the [Victoria Cross winners](#).

Another Parliamentary Library publication titled [Parliamentary involvement in declaring war and deploying forces overseas](#) considers the government's power to declare war and deploy troops overseas from a legal and parliamentary perspective.

Section 1: Speeches

['Possible speech notes: the significance of ANZAC'](#), prepared by the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Section, Parliamentary Library, April 2008 (reviewed and updated in April 2010). (Senators and Members only)

Previous Anzac Day speeches

25 April 2011—[Anzac Day commemoration address](#) by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC at the Anzac Day Dawn Service Hellfire Pass, Thailand.

25 April 2011—[Anzac Day Commemorative Service address](#) at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Thailand, by Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC.

25 April 2011—We remember them with our silence: [speech](#) at the ANZAC Day service, South Korea by the Hon. Julia Gillard MP

25 April 2011—Foreign Minister, Kevin Rudd, [ANZAC Day 2011 Speech](#) Villers-Bretonneux, France.

25 April 2011— [Anzac Day speech](#) by the Hon. Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Defence.

90th anniversary of the Anzac landings—25 April 2005

- message for Anzac Day and address at the Anzac Day Dawn Service, Gallipoli, by the Prime Minister John Howard.
- message from the Governor-General.
- address delivered by the Anglican Bishop to the Defence Force, Anzac Day Dawn Service, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.
- speech by the New Zealand High Commissioner, Her Excellency, Mrs Kate Lackey, at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

11 November 1993—transcript of the speech made by the Prime Minister, Paul Keating at the tomb of the unknown soldier on the occasion of the [Funeral of the Unknown Australian Soldier](#), Remembrance Day.

In ['The unknown Australian soldier'](#), Ashley Ekins discusses the symbolic significance of the return of the remains of an unknown Australian soldier. (*Wartime*, no. 25, January 2004, pp. 11–13)

Ataturk's words of comfort

In 1934 the Turkish President and Gallipoli veteran, Kemal Ataturk, wrote a tribute to the Anzacs killed at Gallipoli:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us. Where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours ... You mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away the tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace after having lost their lives on this land. They have become our sons as well.

This inscription appears on the Kemal Ataturk Memorial, Anzac Parade, Canberra.

Section 2: The relevance of Anzac

Anzac—legal protection

The use of the word Anzac is restricted and protected by legislation.

- text of the [Anzac Day Act 1995](#) (Act No. 21 of 1995).
- text of the [Protection of the word 'Anzac' Regulations](#).
- 4 February 2004—media release from the Hon. Danna Vale, Minister for Veterans' Affairs—['Protecting the unique meaning of Anzac'](#).

The history of Anzac Day

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 gave us the date and name of Anzac Day. News of the landing saw outpourings of national pride, and it became clear that its anniversary was the appropriate day for commemoration.

Anzac Day was first observed on 25 April 1916, as people came together to honour those lost at Gallipoli. In Australia, some state governments organised events to commemorate the occasion—but the Commonwealth did not. Acting Prime Minister Senator George Pearce viewed Gallipoli as a failure, and believed that a later battle might prove 'more worthy of remembering'. He clearly misjudged the importance to the people of this day.

The wartime Anzac Days were especially important for the bereaved. With so many killed, the pain was palpable. Anzac Day was a moment to recognise and acknowledge the sacrifice with services and simple acts of remembrance, such as women tying ribbons onto the gates of wharves where they last saw their sons, brothers or husbands alive.

Anzac Day was a fixture by the war's end. Politicians ([some of whom](#) had served, or lost loved ones and friends) forged bonds with the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia (now the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL)), which assumed responsibility for the day. Rituals such as dawn services and the march were developed, and gradually the families of the dead became quite marginalised. While all people were encouraged to remember, the day was in many ways for ex-servicemen to honour their dead. In Melbourne during the late 1920s, women, including mothers of those killed, were banned from the dawn service because of their wailing.

By the late 1920s, Anzac Day was a public holiday in every state and territory. In the 1930s, there was rhetoric about the need to pass the 'Anzac spirit' down to the next generation. This was partly politically motivated, as there was a feeling that people needed steeling for another war. In the Second World War, the 'sons of the Anzacs' were welcomed, and the day now honoured veterans of all wars. But despite greater numbers of veterans, by the 1960s its popularity had waned, and many wondered if Anzac Day would survive.

The resurgence started in the 1980s and 1990s. The RSL had been slow to welcome 'others'—notably those who did not serve overseas, including most ex-servicewomen, and veterans of the 'small' wars. With a younger leadership, it has relaxed the rules to be more inclusive. Governments have reinforced the day's significance with commemorative programs that reach out to the community. Anzac Day has evolved into a day for Australians to honour their war dead and veterans, and incidentally to show support for serving members of the Australian Defence Force. Dawn services have become a popular event. Time will tell whether, as veteran numbers dwindle, the march will continue in its present form.

The Australian War Memorial's (AWM) [Anzac Day](#) electronic encyclopaedia entry contains links to material on the history and tradition of Anzac Day, details and photographs of ceremonies, sound recordings of the Last Post and the Rouse, and educational resources.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs website includes information on the origin of Anzac Day, silence, poppies, unknown soldiers, national and state ceremonies and audio versions of the Last Post, Rouse and the National Anthem.

Further information on [wreaths and poppies](#) and [rosemary](#) is also available, as is the [New Zealand perspective](#) on Anzac Day.

Is it Anzac Day or ANZAC Day?

The [Anzac acronym](#) comes from the initial letters of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, into which Australian and New Zealand troops were formed in Egypt before the landings at Gallipoli in April 1915. What was once commonly 'Anzac Day' is nowadays often referred to as 'ANZAC Day' (in homage to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). Which is the more correct?

The official historian, Charles Bean, who knew more about Australians in the Great War than anybody, wrote of a day in early 1915 when a staff officer arrived at HQ seeking a code name for the

Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. Having noticed 'A&NZAC' stencilled on cases and also rubber stamps bearing this mark, a clerk suggested:

'How about ANZAC?' Major Wagstaff proposed the word to the general, who approved of it, and 'Anzac' thereupon became the code name for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. (CEW Bean, [*The Story of ANZAC from the outbreak of war to the end of the first phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915*](#) (11th edition, 1941) (Volume 1 of *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, pp.124–25.)

As a proper noun, as well as an acronym, 'Anzac' entered the vernacular of the Diggers and Kiwis. At Gallipoli, they called their position, simply, Anzac; and the famous cove, Anzac Cove. They started referring to each other as Anzacs too. Eventually, any Australian or New Zealander who served in the war could be called an Anzac—although to them a true Anzac was a man who served at Gallipoli (later issued a brass 'A' to stitch onto their unit colour patches).

On 25 April 1916, when people paused to observe the first anniversary of the landing and pay solemn tribute to those who had died at Gallipoli, by common accord it was Anzac Day, in honour of the men (not ANZAC Day, in reference to the corps.) The NZ Returned Soldiers' Association, for example, had an 'Anzac day sub-committee'; the King sent a message to be published 'on Anzac Day'; and songs and poems honoured 'Our Anzac Boys'. As many more died on the Western Front, the day evolved to honour all Australians and New Zealanders in the war (that is, not just those of the ANZAC, which actually ceased to exist after Gallipoli). Later still, Anzac Day encompassed every other conflict.

The ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 gave us a legend and a date of commemoration, but the day has long been about so much more of our history and so many more of our people. This day is for all Australians to honour all who have served and died for our nation in the Anzac tradition.

The modern penchant for 'ANZAC Day' may reflect the influences of the Australian War Memorial and the RSL whose websites and publications now consistently refer to 'ANZAC Day' and to 'the ANZACs'. Many people do not realise that the acronym is one which has only an initial capital and that this usage is enshrined in The Protection of the Word 'Anzac' Regulations. This is the word gifted to us by the men who forged the Anzac legend. 'Anzac Day' reflects the history of this special word and the true meaning of the day. What is important is that the remembrance continues to be observed.

Traditions and rituals of Anzac Day

While there were no specific traditions and rituals to begin with, by the late 1920s, most of those that we now associate with Anzac Day had developed in one form or another. The manner in which Australians and New Zealanders observe this day has continued to evolve, and will continue to do so as the veteran and wider communities change further.

The Dawn service

The first commemorative event of Anzac Day is the dawn service at 4.30 am. This is coincidentally about the time men of the ANZAC approached the Gallipoli beach. However, the origin is the traditional 'stand-to', in which troops would be woken so that by the first rays of dawn they were in position and alert, in case of an enemy attack in the eerie half-light. It is a ritual and a moment remembered by many veterans.

Some debate exists about the first [dawn service](#). Nevertheless early dawn services such as that held in 1923 at Albany, Western Australia, conducted by the Reverend Arthur White, Rector of St John's Church, and formerly a padre with the 44th Battalion on the Western Front were the forerunners of the modern tradition. Certainly, the dawn service quickly caught on, and the [first official dawn service](#) was held at Sydney's Cenotaph during 1928. The simple ceremony was for veterans to assemble before dawn for 'stand-to' and two minutes of silence. Nowadays, all are welcome, and the dawn service has grown in popularity and in meaning for the community.

The story of the dawn service and its origins is found in the article '[In honour of Anzac Day: Grave History of Dawn Service](#)'. (*Air Force News*, vol. 44, no. 7, 25 April 2002)

Kerry Neale, '[In the cold light of dawn](#)', discusses the significance of the dawn service continuing to grow while questions remain over its origin in Australia. (*Wartime*, no. 38, 2007, pp. 38–39)

History of the 'gunfire breakfast', held after the dawn service on Anzac Day

Many communities follow the dawn service with a 'traditional' gunfire breakfast.

'Gun Fire' is a British tradition and was

... the usual term for the early cup of tea served out to troops in the morning before going on first parade, whenever possible. In the War [WWI] recruits in training always had 'Gun Fire' supplied to them, the work before breakfast being found particularly trying. The morning gun in a garrison town suggested the name probably. (From Edward Fraser and John Gibbons, *Soldier and Sailor Words and Phrases including slang of the trenches and the air force; British and American war-words and service terms and expressions in everyday use; nicknames, sobriquets, and titles of regiments, with their origin; the battle-honours of the Great War awarded to the British Army*, Routledge, London, 1925, p. 113.)

The 'gunfire breakfast' seems to have evolved from the above, and comprises whatever is available at the time—it could be 'coffee and rum' or 'stew, sausage and bread', or even 'bacon and eggs' (which is served by the War Memorial for their 'gunfire breakfast' on Anzac Day).

A [Victorian Parliamentary Committee](#) investigating licensing laws in that State in 2002, made the following comments, indicating that alcohol is served at the breakfast:

The existing liquor licensing regime for ANZAC Day is, in effect, one that observes the sanctity of ANZAC Day morning, but provides for discretionary exceptions. The Committee received evidence that there are special circumstances where morning liquor trading is reasonable. In

particular, there are instances where liquor trading is complementary to the conduct of an ANZAC morning ceremony. A particular instance of this is the holding of a gunfire breakfast. (Victoria, Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, Parliamentary Review of ANZAC Day Laws, October 2002)

Anzac Day march

From cities to small towns, the march has long been the centrepiece of Anzac Day. Marches were held during the Great War, and became popular with veterans in the 1920s, to honour lost friends and publicly express comradeship. The RSL organises the marches. While it was traditional for veterans who saw active service, it was later relaxed to include those who served in Australia in the armed services or 'land armies', during the Second World War. It has been relaxed further, with some encouragement or acceptance of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren marching, to assist aged veterans or to represent those no longer with us.



Figure 1: Womens' compliment, Anzac Day march, Melbourne, 25 April 1919; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

Follow-on and Two-up

The march may be followed by reunions and lunches put on by local establishments. This is also the one day that the traditional Australian gambling game of 'two-up', or 'swy', may be legally played at venues. Bets are placed on how two pennies thrown into the air will fall. The 'Ringer' (in charge) will explain rules and betting procedures. Any persons of legal gambling age are welcome to participate. The entry on ['Two-up'](#) from the *Australian Encyclopaedia* describes the 'game' and its origins.

[Wearing medals](#)

Only the person awarded or issued medals may claim those medals as his or her own. He or she wears the medals on their left breast. Others (those who did not earn the medals) may honour the service of a relative by wearing medals on the right breast. Some veterans may be seen wearing medals on both breasts—their own on the left, and a relative's on the right.

An [ANZAC Commemorative Medallion and Badge](#) was issued in 1967 to surviving Gallipoli veterans.

Wearing rosemary

Rosemary is an emblem of remembrance. It is traditional on Anzac Day to wear a sprig of rosemary pinned to a coat lapel or to the breast (it does not matter which side, but left seems most common), or held in place by medals. [Rosemary](#) has particular significance for Australians on Anzac Day as it grows wild on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Laying a wreath or flowers

A wreath or a small bunch of flowers is traditionally laid on memorials or graves in memory of the dead. They might contain laurel, a traditional symbol of honour, and rosemary, or they may be native or other flowers. In recent years, it has also become popular to lay a wreath of red poppies—formerly associated with Remembrance Day, 11 November. Any of these wreaths or flowers are acceptable as a gesture of remembrance.

The Ode

The Ode comes from the fourth stanza of the poem ['For the Fallen'](#) by the English poet and writer, Laurence Binyon. It was published in London in *The Winnowing Fan: Poems of the Great War* in 1914. It was used in association with commemorative services in Australia by 1921.

The Ode

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

At the Anzac Day ceremony, an invited speaker often recites [The Ode](#) and upon his or her completion of the recitation, those present repeat the last words 'We will remember them'. After a short pause this is followed by 'Lest we forget'.

The Last Post

This is one of a number of bugle calls in the military tradition to mark phases of the day. Traditionally, it marked the ending of a day. The Last Post was incorporated into funeral and memorial services as a final farewell, and symbolises that the duty of the dead is over and that they can rest in peace. On Anzac Day, it is followed by one or two minutes of silence, then a second bugle call, Reveille (also known as The Rouse).

The story of the [Anzac bugle calls](#) is told in *Valley Voice*, 19 April 2002.

The Anzac Biscuit

The original [Anzac Biscuit](#), also known as the Anzac wafer or tile, was a hardtack biscuit or long shelf-life biscuit substitute for bread. These were not necessarily popular with soldiers at Gallipoli, but there are now recipes for more edible domestic versions.

The meaning of Anzac

The entries in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History* on [Anzac Day](#) and the [Anzac legend](#) provide good summaries of the importance of the day and of the legend.

In '[Bean's 'Anzac' and the making of the Anzac Legend](#)', the author, David Kent, argues that the image of the Anzac was the careful creation of the official historian, CEW Bean who, as editor of the enormously popular 1916 publication, *The Anzac Book*, acted as a prism through which Australians were presented with an oversimplified view of the realities of war and its effect on men.

In '[A possession for ever: Charles Bean, the ancient Greeks, and military commemoration in Australia](#)' Peter Londey argues that the Australian official war historian drew parallels between the deeds of the Australian Imperial Force and ancient Greece in the 5th century BC. (*Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 53, no. 3, September 2007, pp. 344–349)

In '[Re-reading Bean's last paragraph](#)', Martin Ball discusses the last paragraph of CEW Bean's official history which has 'long been appreciated as a concise yet effective statement about Australia's response to its war experience'. Although the volume which contains it was published in 1942, the last paragraph was actually the first to be written in 1919. (*Australian Historical Studies*, no. 122, October 2003, pp.231–247). Bean's last paragraph reads:

What these men did nothing can alter now. The good and the bad, the greatness and smallness of their story will stand. Whatever of glory it contains nothing now can lessen. It rises, as it will always rise, above the mists of ages, a monument to great-hearted men; and, for their nation, a possession for ever. (CEW Bean, [Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918, Vol. VI, Chapter XXII](#), Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1942, p. 1096)

In his 1988 article, ['Anzac and the Australian military tradition'](#), historian, Professor Ken Inglis, describes the essential meaning of the word Anzac, its early use, the Anzac tradition in schools between the wars, the relationship between the Anzac concept and social class and between the Anzac tradition and feminism, the continuity of the tradition from the second World War through to the Vietnam conflict, and the observations of writers, scholars, artists and film makers. (*Current Affairs Bulletin*, vol. 64, no. 11, April, 1988)

In ['ANZAC: the sacred in the secular'](#), Graham Seal argues that the resurgence of interest in Anzac Day has 'only served to emphasise the strongly secular nature of Anzac and its centrality to widespread notions of Australian nationalism'. (*Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 91, 2007)

In ['Reflections: a symposium on the meanings of Anzac'](#), to mark the 75th anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli, ten Australians discuss various aspects of the meaning of Anzac to indigenous Australians and Vietnam diggers, the place of Anzac in Australian society and the future of Anzac. (*Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 16, April 1990)

['Anzac's influence on Turkey and Australia'](#) was the keynote address given to the 1990 War Memorial History Conference by Bill Gammage. In it he explored the different ways in which Turks and Australians remember Canakkale (Gallipoli), and how they regard each other as a result of the campaign. (*Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 18, April 1991)

In ['Lest we forget the cult of the digger'](#) Nick Horden discusses how the memory of past wars continues to shape the Australian nation. (*Australian Financial Review*, 20 January 2000)

['What is Anzac Day? It is the embodiment of the national ethos'](#), retraces the history of 25 April and the traditions of Anzac. (*Stand To*, April-May 2002, pp. 4–5)

['Why we will never forget'](#). Graham Cooke talks about how, even after four generations since Gallipoli, the Anzac spirit is still alive. (*Canberra Times Magazine*, April 2003)

['They shall not grow old'](#), Ken Inglis discusses how the Anzac legend grows rather than recedes. (*Age*, 30 April 2004)

['The mystique of Gallipoli'](#), Les Carlyon explains what makes Gallipoli so important to Australians. (*Canberra Times*, 13 November 2004)

['History should respect realities'](#) by Craig Barrett and Martin Crotty

Argues that it is possible to balance a questioning approach towards the Anzac tradition with respect for the men who fought at Gallipoli. (*Australian*, 1 February 2006)

In ['The Anzac myth: patriot act'](#), Mark McKenna argues that 'since the early 1990s Australians have lost the ability (or inclination) to debate Anzac Day'. (*Australian Literary Review*, June 2007)

In ['Origins of the Anzac dawn ceremony: spontaneity and nationhood'](#) Robyn Mayes looks at three possible origins of the dawn service and discusses the sociological context of these.

Series on 'Our Anzac heroes' published in the *Daily Telegraph* in 2004:

['Heavy hearts when the Light Horse disbanded'](#) , 20 April 2004

['The living hell of a war that took so many lives'](#) , 21 April 2004

['Sporting greats who fought bigger battles'](#) , 22 April 2004

['The machines that brought destruction'](#) , 22 April 2004

['Keeping soldiers well fed was half the battle'](#) , 23 April 2004

In their 2010 book [What's wrong with Anzac?: the militarisation of Australian history](#), Henry Reynolds and Marilyn Lake criticise what they describe as 'the relentless militarisation' of Australian history and argue that it is no longer appropriate to have a military event playing such an important role in defining the Australian identity. H Reynolds and M Lake, eds, *What's wrong with Anzac?: the militarisation of Australian history*, Sydney, University of New South Wales Press, 2010.

In a review of *What's wrong with Anzac*, Geoffrey Blainey rejects many of the arguments made by the authors, and states that the popularity of Anzac Day has fluctuated, and in all probability will continue to do so. ([We weren't that dumb](#), *Australian*, 7 April 2010).

The Simpson Prize

The [Simpson Prize](#) honours John Simpson Kirkpatrick, '[the man with the donkey](#)', and encourages school students to consider what Anzac Day means to them and to Australia through writing an essay. The [2012 Simpson Prize winners](#) were decided on responses to the question 'Why has Australian commemoration of Anzac Day increased in popularity in recent years?'.

Poetry

A selection of four First World War poems by [Leon Gellert](#): *Anzac Cove* (written in January 1916) and three poems about life and death in the trenches, from Volume 1 of *Poetry in Australia*.

The text of [two famous First World War poems, *In Flanders Fields* and *For the Fallen* is here](#) :

- *In Flanders Fields* was written in 1915 by the Canadian physician and professor of medicine, John McRae, who fought on the Western Front in 1914 but was then transferred to the medical corps and assigned to a hospital in France. He died on active duty in 1918.
- *For the Fallen* was written in 1914 by Laurence Binyon who worked at the British Museum. The fourth verse of *For the Fallen* is now more commonly known as 'The Ode'. It was selected to accompany the unveiling of the London Cenotaph in 1919 and by 1921 was already in use in Australia as an ode read on Anzac Day. It has been used at commemorative services on Anzac Day ever since.

In '[They also served - and wrote](#)', Steve Meacham discusses a compilation of Anzac poetry, commenting particularly about Banjo Paterson and his association with the First World War. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 2002)

Centenary of Anzac

With the approach of the centenary of the First World War and in particular the 100th anniversary of the landing of the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, Prime Minister Rudd [announced](#) the creation of a National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary on Anzac Day in 2010. The Commission which included former Prime Ministers, Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke, was asked to advise the government on appropriate ways for Australia to commemorate the centenary. The Commission delivered its [report](#) on 28 March 2011. The government's response is [here](#).

The Commission recommended that a Centenary Advisory Board be established and in July 2011 the Prime Minister [announced](#) that the recommendation would be accepted and the Board would be headed by former Chief of the Defence Force Angus Houston. On 11 October 2011 the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac [announced](#) the members of the Board in a statement to the House of Representatives. The Board's website can be found [here](#).

Links to sites with details of commemorative ceremonies

- The following sites contain extensive information about commemorative activities.
- the Australian War Memorial Anzac Day [commemoration ceremonies](#)
- Department of Veterans' Affairs [Anzac Day](#)
- commemorative activities and projects from the Department of Veterans' Affairs with information for [schools on Anzac Day](#) and on [Anzac Day](#) ceremonies in Australia and overseas.
- the Returned and Services League's (RSL) [Anzac Day Commemoration](#) page and
- the Australian Government Information management Office [Anzac Day website](#)

Section 3: Gallipoli

Gallipoli: what happened on 25 April 1915?

It was at 4.29 am in the eerie pre-dawn on 25 April 1915 when a Turkish outpost signalled the alarm. Below, barely discernible on the dark waters off Ari Burnu, a small plateau jutting out into the Aegean Sea, steamboats towed rowboats carrying Australians to the Gallipoli shoreline. There are very few instances in which the [deeds of ordinary people](#) fashion a whole chapter in a nation's history and forge a national identity. This first wave of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) was doing just that. A minute later, the first boatloads reached the shingly beach and clambered out, under fire.

The plan

The landing was one of the more imaginative strategies of the First World War. In eastern Europe the Germans had delivered a series of blows to the Russians who, fearing a second offensive by Turkish forces from the south, appealed to their allies for assistance. Hard-pressed by the Germans on the Western Front and with Egypt threatened by the Turks, the British and French could not afford for the Russians to collapse. They agreed to attack Turkey. Their objective was to wrest control of the Dardanelles and re-establish sea communications with Russia through the Black Sea.

An attempt by warships in February 1915 to break through the straits was defeated. A plan to land troops at Gallipoli was then drawn up. It was actually a series of landings, originally planned for 23 April, but pushed back by bad weather:

- the main landing by British troops at Cape Helles, in the south, to seize forts and advance north
- across the strait, on the Asiatic side, a landing by French troops to destroy artillery batteries before withdrawing and going to Cape Helles
- at the northern end of the peninsula, near Bulair, where the peninsula is narrowest, a feint by British marines to confuse the Turks; and
- in the centre, the landing by Australian and New Zealand troops to block any Turkish troops retreating from the south and reinforcements coming from the north.

The [plan](#) was for the Anzac and British troops to link up for a final push across to the Dardanelles.



Figure 2: Unidentified men from the 1st Divisional Signal Company being towed towards Anzac Cove on the morning of 25 April 1915; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

The wrong beach?

Those who landed near Ari Burnu often commented on how they landed on 'the wrong beach'. The boats landed about a mile north of the loosely planned landing site. The reason is unclear, but most likely the naval ratings taking the troops ashore were disorientated and simply veered left.

This error gave the men a fighting chance. Had they landed on the 'correct' beach near Gaba Tepe, there would have been a slaughter (as at 'Y' Beach, one of the British landing sites at Cape Helles). Boats would have been shot up, and on the beach men would have been caught in barbed wire entanglements, against well-sited machine-guns. At Ari Burnu, the first wave came under fire from some of the 200 Turks in position at that time; some boats landing later were shot up, suffering heavier casualties. Most of the casualties on that first day occurred as men scrambled up the brush-entangled gullies leading off the beach, and over the ridges.

A long and terrible day

The objective was Gun Ridge, the third ridgeline inland from the beach. Troops pushed up and over gullies, ravines and spurs. It was hard-going under fire, and they broke into smaller groups to advance over tracks or through undergrowth. They crossed the first ridgeline, some reached the second and a few got to the third, but they were too scattered to hold on.

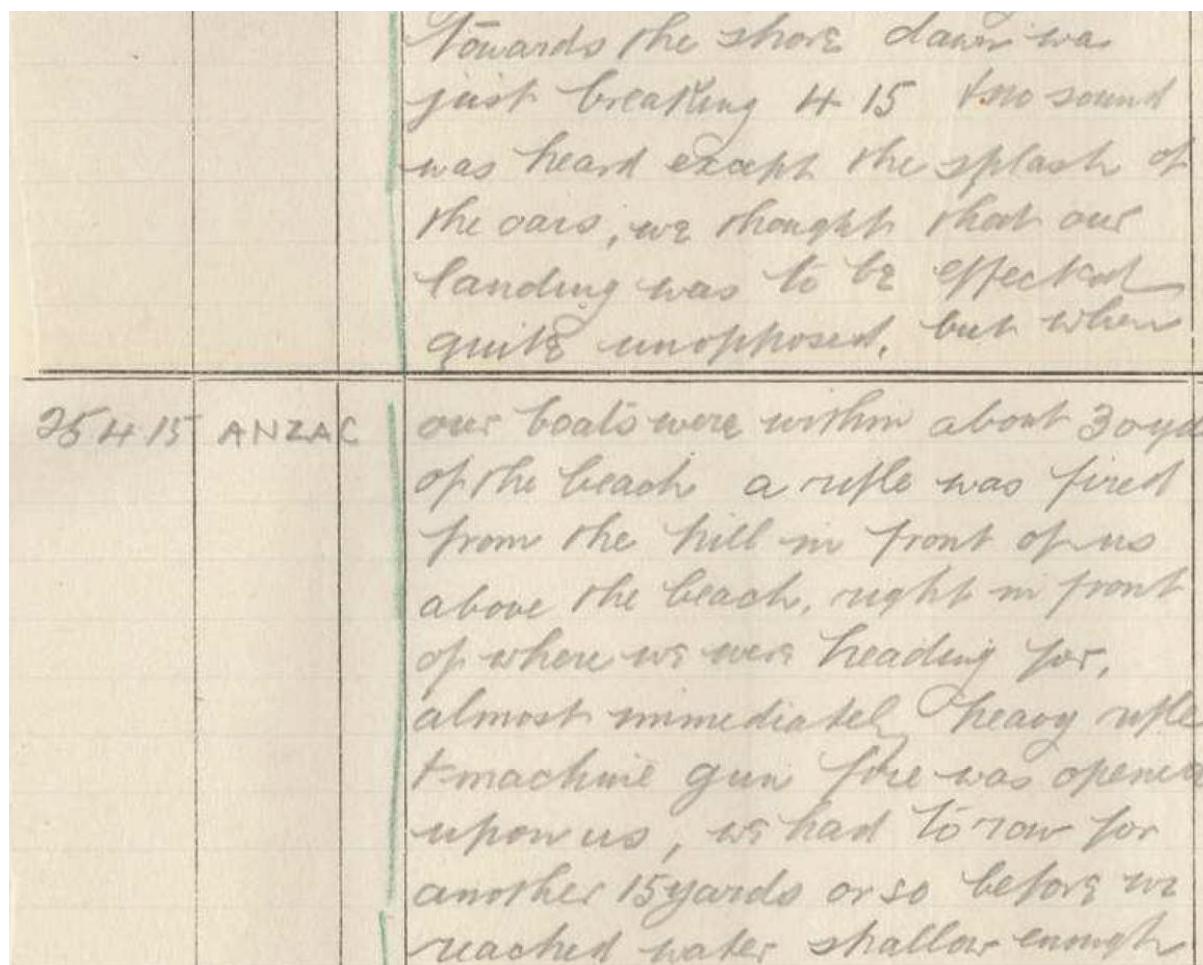


Figure 3: An excerpt from the 10th Infantry Battalion's War Diary describing the landing at ANZAC Cove on 25 April 1915. The 3rd Brigade, which included the 10th Battalion, made up the screening force for the landing and was the first ashore. This excerpt includes the line 'our landing was expected to be quite unopposed'. Image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

As the day wore on, the remainder of the ANZAC landed. There was confusion on the beach, as new troops and wounded men intermingled. 'Stragglers' (men separated from their units) were found at the beach or sheltering in the gullies, but officers led many of them back into action.

The Turkish local commander, Mustapha Kemal (later, Kemal Ataturk, President of Turkey) organised his force and counter-attacked. The Turks secured the high ground and pushed on. An evacuation of the ANZAC was suggested, but naval advice was that it would be impossible. With nowhere to retreat, the Australians and New Zealanders dug in. They fought tenaciously, with mounting casualties, to cling onto a small strip of land that came to be called Anzac.

The landing itself was a failure. The impossible had been asked of the men. There was no way that any troops could have landed, advanced four miles across hard terrain, taken a 4–5 mile stretch of ridgeline, and then withstood strong counter-attacks—all in the course of one day. What they did achieve was to secure a foothold and forge a legend.

The Gallipoli campaign cost the lives of more than 40 000 British Empire and French troops and 85 000 Turks.

Chronology of significant events during the remainder of the year

On 29 April 1915 [HMAS AE2](#) was sunk in the Sea of Marmara. AE2 was the first submarine to penetrate the Dardanelles. For five days the AE2 carried out orders to disrupt Turkish shipping. When her torpedoes were spent and she was attacked by Turkish gunboats, the submarine was scuttled and her crew captured.

On 15 May the Commander of the First Division AIF, [Major General WT Bridges](#) was shot in the leg by a sniper. He was evacuated immediately but died on 18 May while being transported to Egypt for treatment. His body was returned to Australia and [his grave](#) overlooks the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

On 18 May the Turks launched a major counter-attack, but by this time the Australian and New Zealand troops had had time to prepare proper defensive positions and the resultant slaughter of the Turkish forces is thought to have left 10 000 men dead or wounded. The stench of the dead bodies was so great that on 24 May a formal truce was declared to allow the Turkish dead to be buried. This was the last time that the Turkish forces attempted a major counter-offensive.

With the failure of the May counter-attack things quietened down until August, when British troops landed at nearby Suvla, and the Anzacs and Gurkhas made supporting attacks at Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair and the Nek.

In [The August Offensive at Anzac](#) Robin Prior takes a new look at the strategy underlying the series of attacks at places such as Lone Pine, Nek, Chunuk Bair, Hill Q and Hill 971. (*Wartime*, vol. 47, 2009).

[The Battle for Lone Pine](#) began on 6 August. The Lone Pine operation was planned as a diversion to draw Turkish reserves away from a major British attack to be launched at the northern end of the Australian and New Zealand position at Gallipoli. The Australians suffered more than 2200 casualties at Lone Pine and the Turks over 5000. Historian Peter Burness describes the battle and sets it in context in [this article](#) in *Wartime*.

Seven Australians were awarded the [Victoria Cross for their bravery at Lone Pine](#). They are: Alexander Stewart BURTON, William DUNSTAN, John (Patrick) HAMILTON, Leonard Maurice KEYSOR, Alfred John SHOUT, William John SYMONS and Frederick Harold TUBB. A full list of Australian Victoria Cross recipients can be found in the Parliamentary Library online publication, [List of Victoria Cross recipients by electorate](#), or on the website of the [Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland](#).

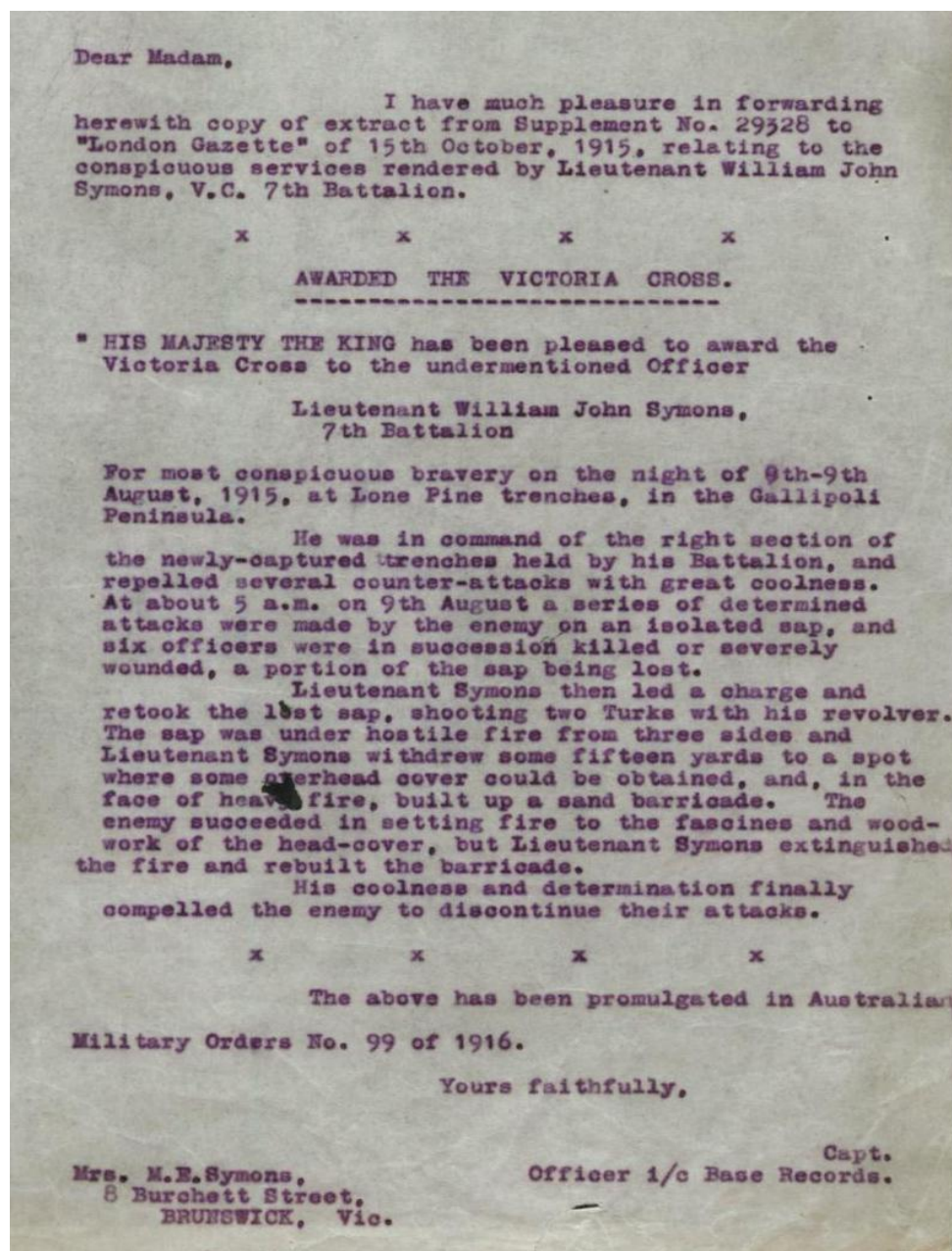


Figure 4: Lieutenant (later Captain) [William Symon's](#) Victoria Cross citation, for action during [the Battle for Lone Pine](#). Image courtesy of the National Archives of Australia.

On 7 August units of the 4th [Light Horse Brigade](#) fighting as infantry attacked the Turks at [the Nek](#) (also known as the Battle of Sari Bair) with horrific results. The pre-attack artillery bombardment had ceased seven minutes early and New Zealand troops scheduled to attack from a different approach were unable to do so. The result was that 234 men of the 600 strong force lay dead and little was achieved.

The fighting at [Hill 60](#) on 21 and 27 August in which Australian troops gave support to a larger British assault was the last major action of the Gallipoli campaign. The all-too-obvious stalemate of the

campaign and the deterioration of the weather as winter approached convinced the high command that it was time to evacuate the troops. The evacuation is universally regarded as the best planned part of the whole venture thanks to the work of Major-General Birdwood's Chief of Staff [Brigadier General CBB White](#).

[The evacuation of Anzac and Suvla](#) began on 7 December and was completed by 20 December.

On 20 April 2009 the Australian Broadcasting Corporation released an internet resource, [Gallipoli: the first day](#). In '[Anzac first: ABC relives Gallipoli online](#)', Lara Sinclair describes the new interactive website, outlining the sources and methods the ABC used to enable users to experience the first 24 hours of the Gallipoli campaign. (*Australian*, 20 April 2009)

Gallipoli: frequently asked questions

Why did the Anzacs land at Gallipoli?

They were part of a British-French force attempting to capture the Dardanelles and open a route to Russia through the Black Sea. They were selected because their training had progressed and being based in Egypt, they were readily available.

Who was first ashore?

We can never know for certain. An [article](#) by Peter Burness in the Australian War Memorial's *Wartime* magazine discusses the claims of three men. CEW Bean, official historian, concluded it was possibly Lieutenant Duncan Chapman, 9th Battalion. The Queenslander wrote home: 'I happened to be in the first boat that reached the shore, and, being in the bow at the time, I was the first man to get ashore' One of his men later confirmed this. Chapman was killed at Pozieres, France on 6 August 1916.

How many Australians died on the first day?

We do not really know. In bitter fighting after the landing, the details of many men's deaths were sketchy. *First to Fall*, a CD-ROM by the Australian Defence Force Academy, names 621 men. The Roll of Honour lists 749, although some of these are deaths administratively classified as 'on or about' 25 April 1915, and could have been later.

When did the Gallipoli campaign end?

The evacuation of Anzac and Suvla was completed on 20 December 1915, a few days short of eight months after the landing. The campaign ended on 9 January 1916 when British forces completed the evacuation of Cape Helles.

What other nationalities were at Gallipoli?

The British-French force included men from these countries and their colonies. The 'French' included French and also Senegalese and other colonial troops. The 'British' included Englishmen, Irishmen, Welshmen, Scots, Indians, Gurkhas, Australians, New Zealanders and Newfoundlanders.

The 'Turks' were mostly Turkish, but many were from other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Indeed journalist Robert Fisk [points out](#) that two-thirds of the 19th Division, the first to face the Anzacs, were Syrian Arabs.

Where else at Gallipoli did the Anzacs serve?

In early May the 2nd Infantry Brigade and New Zealand Infantry Brigade re-embarked and sailed to Cape Helles. They were thrown into the Second Battle of Krithia. More than 1800 Anzacs (about a third of the two brigades) were killed or wounded there. The survivors returned to Anzac. In August, the RAN Bridging Train landed at Suvla, north of Anzac, building wharves after the British landing there.

Were the British really 'drinking tea'?

When British troops landed at Suvla in August, the Anzacs were fighting and dying at Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair and the Nek. Peter Weir's 1981 film *Gallipoli* made famous a story that the Anzacs could see the British 'drinking tea'. This left a poor impression of British soldiers. The Suvla landing was poorly planned, and confusion on the beaches meant some units had no option but to congregate and wait for orders. Soldiers of any nationality would have taken this chance to 'brew up'. Meanwhile, further inland, British soldiers were fighting courageously. The loss of 1700 men killed or wounded in the first 24 hours is testimony to this.

Why wasn't Simpson decorated?

'The man with the donkey' actually was decorated. Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick, 3rd Field Ambulance, was killed on 19 May 1915 and posthumously Mentioned in Despatches for his transporting of wounded men. This was noted in *The London Gazette* on 5 November 1915, and in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* on 27 January 1916. This honour was rare. Other than the Victoria Cross, it was the only honour able to be granted to a man killed in action. Of the 60 000 Australians who died in the Great War, only about 220 were accorded this honour. Simpson's medals are held by the Australian War Memorial. They include his Victory Medal, with the Mentioned-in-Despatches rosette on its ribbon.



Figure 5: Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick assisting an unidentified soldier, Gallipoli, circa May 1915; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

Simpson and his donkey are still the subject of vigorous discussion. In ['The donkey vote; a VC for Simpson - the case against'](#), Graham Wilson argues that 'Simpson was no braver than any other man on the Gallipoli Peninsula', and that the campaign to have Simpson posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross or an Australian Victoria Cross is 'impossible and inappropriate'. (*Sabretache*, December 2006) In ['The man with the donkey: hero or fraud'](#), Dr Tom Curran challenges critics who have refuted aspects of the story of Simpson. (*Sabretache*, December 2008).

The Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal's [Inquiry into Unresolved Recognition for Past Acts of Naval and Military Gallantry and Valour](#) is inquiring into the adequacy of recognition for Simpson in addition to 12 other men.

How many Australians died at Gallipoli?

We do not really know. The [estimate provided by](#) the Australian War Memorial is 8141 but this number has varied somewhat over the years and slightly different figures are cited in other sources.

The 8141 figure is drawn from the War Office's [Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War, 1914-1920](#). This figure is for deaths up to 16 January 1916 and might not include deaths after this date which resulted from wounds received before the evacuation. On page 239, Australian deaths are given as 362 officers and 7779 other ranks (a total of 8141), but on page 286 a table of month-by-month deaths is stated as adding up to 371 officers and 8338 other ranks (a total of 8709). Examination of the War Office table reveals that staff got their tallying up wrong. The monthly deaths actually add up to 359 officers and 7800 other ranks, which equals 8159! Robin Prior in his book *Gallipoli: the end of the myth* (University of New South Wales Press, 2009) quotes the British Official History figure of 7825 killed.

Given that the War Office's lower number and the corrected sum of monthly deaths are close, that Australian official medical history statistics are reasonably close, and that the Roll of Honour for this period would be close too once unrelated deaths (from illnesses and accidents in Australia, at sea or in Egypt) are taken into account, then a revised estimate of the number of Australians who died in the Gallipoli Campaign could be around 8150.

The campaign

- a [summary of the Gallipoli Campaign](#) from *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*—includes maps.
- a [brief summary](#) of the Gallipoli Campaign from the 1990 media kit issued to assist Australia's 75th anniversary official commemorative visit.
- [visit Gallipoli](#) website—commissioned by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and developed by the Board of Studies, NSW. Here you can explore new and historical material on Gallipoli.
- the [Epitaphs of Gallipoli](#), a website developed by the Gallipoli Association detailing the headstone inscriptions of Australian and New Zealand soldiers with known graves on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

First-hand accounts of the Gallipoli Campaign

[CEW Bean's first report](#) of the Anzac landings at Gallipoli was published in the *Commonwealth Gazette* on 17 May 1915. At this point Bean was the official press representative with the Australian Expeditionary Force.



Figure 6: On 17 May 1915, C.E.W. Bean's first report from Gallipoli was published in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*. Image courtesy of the [National Library of Australia](#).

British War correspondent, [Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett's first-hand reports](#) on the Anzac landing at Gallipoli praised the courage of the 'raw' Australian and New Zealand troops. Ashmead-Bartlett became frustrated and disillusioned with the course of the campaign, and with the difficulties placed in the path of his reporting. In concert with the Australian journalist, Keith Murdoch, he attempted to [circumvent the military censorship](#) imposed by General Sir Ian Hamilton. Murdoch left Gallipoli with [Ashmead-Bartlett's letter to British Prime Minister Asquith](#) which contributed to the withdrawal of troops from the Peninsula and the downfall of Sir Ian Hamilton.

In '[Anzac: Nationhood, Brotherhood and Sacrifice](#)', chapter four of Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, the author has used first-hand accounts of the Gallipoli

Campaign by Australian soldiers to explore their attitudes to the war; to the fighting; to their British allies and their Turkish opponents; and to the death of comrades.

In this extract from *The Story of Anzac, Volume 1 of the Official history of Australia in the war of 1914–1918*, CEW Bean, the official historian, summarises the course of [the Gallipoli campaign from the landings to the end of the first phase](#) in early May 1915 when the advance of the British forces at both Gaba Tepe and Cape Helles had been brought to a standstill. Bean discusses Australian successes and failures in the early phase of the campaign up to Sir Ian Hamilton's decision that the next thrust of the battle should be at Helles rather than at Anzac.

Australian women served as [nurses](#) in the Australian Army Nursing Service. The women served on hospital ships close to the shore at Gallipoli and also on the Greek islands of Lemnos and Imbros as well as back in Alexandria. Like the men, for most of these women this would have been their first experience of war and they worked with [inadequate conditions](#) and equipment.

Jan Bassett, writing in her book *Guns and Brooches: Australian Army nursing from the Boer war to the Gulf War* (Oxford University Press, 1992) quotes Sister Ilma Lovell about conditions on the hospital ship *Formosa* off Suvla Bay in early August 1915:

We were receiving wounded all night and terrible wounds they were—the majority of them were fly blown and septic. All were operated upon on admission and the little theatre was kept busy all night, —limbs, had they been able to have been treated before and would have been saved, had to be amputated.

Gallipoli—legend versus myth

An article by Robert Manne, '[A Turkish tale: Gallipoli and the Armenian genocide](#)' explores possible connections between the two events (*Monthly*, February 2007, pp. 20–28).

The following articles are from *Wartime*, a journal published by the Australian War Memorial:

Nigel Steel, '[What if...? Imagine the Gallipoli landings on 25 April 1915 had succeeded - what then?](#)', (*Wartime*, no. 38, 2007, pp. 34–37).

Nigel Steel, '[Heroic sacrifice](#)', (*Wartime*, no. 38, 2007, pp. 22–27).

Harvey Broadbent, '[Gallipoli from the Turkish perspective](#)', (*Wartime*, no. 38, 2007, pp. 18–21).

Rhys Crawley, '[Lone Pine: worth the cost?](#)', (*Wartime*, no. 38, 2007, pp. 14–17).

Peter Hart, '[War is Helles: the real fight for Gallipoli](#)', (*Wartime*, no. 38, 2007, pp. 10–12).

In '[Gallipoli: a Turkish view](#)', David Cameron examines the first hours after the landings from the viewpoint of a company of 250 Turkish soldiers who opposed the ANZACs. (*Wartime*, no. 42, 2008)

In '[Gallipoli's first day: Turkish documents separating myth and reality](#)'. Harvey Broadbent looks at the first day of the campaign using material in Turkish archives. (*Wartime*, no. 46, 2009, pp. 44–47).

Chris Roberts, '[Turkish machine-guns at the landing](#)'. The author asks whether Australian troops landing at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915 were subject to Turkish machine-gun fire. (*Wartime*, no. 50, April 2010, pp. 14–19).

Peter Pedersen, '[Burning Bridges](#)'. A profile of Major-General WT Bridges, (*Wartime*, no. 50, April 2010, pp. 20–25).

Peter Burness, '[First man ashore](#)'. It is generally accepted that the 9th Battalion was the first ashore at Gallipoli but who was the first man to reach dry land? (*Wartime*, no. 50, April 2010, p. 30).

Robyn Van Dyk, '[The evacuation of Anzac](#)'. Uses unit war diaries to describe the evacuation of Gallipoli, (*Wartime*, no. 50, April 2010, pp. 32–36).

In '[The first casualty](#)', Les Carlyon argues that the truth bears more eloquent witness to the heroics of Gallipoli than the myths that have grown up around it. (*Bulletin with Newsweek*, 7 August 2001)

'[The lure of Gallipoli](#)', by Les Carlyon, is an article on the myth, the pride and the nostalgia evoked by the campaign and its commemoration. (*Australian Women's Weekly*, 1 August 2001)

In '[A terrible beauty](#)', the final chapter of his book, *Gallipoli*, Les Carlyon summarises the importance of Gallipoli and sketches the fates of a number of the key protagonists.

In '[When myth makers go over the top](#)', Ray Cassin argues that the prominence of the Gallipoli myth has served to obscure the sacrifice of soldiers who served in other campaigns. (*Age*, 24 June 2001).

In '[The last Anzac: the fatal shore that defines a nation](#)', Tony Stephens discusses where Gallipoli ranks in Australia's historical picture (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May 2002).

In '[First casualty](#)', Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson give a summary of the Gallipoli Campaign and correct ten myths about it (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 2002).

'[Exploding the myths of Gallipoli](#)' by Ashley Ekins (*Bulletin with Newsweek*, 27 April 2004, pp.30–33.)

In '[The wrong place](#)', W Refshauge examines the continuing debate about whether the original landing at Anzac Cove was made at the wrong place. (*Sabretache*, September 2007)

In *Gallipoli: the end of the myth* (University of New South Wales Press, 2009), Robin Prior provides some forceful commentary on the planning and conduct of the campaign, reaching the conclusion that, even if it had been successful, the Dardanelles Campaign would not have shortened the war.

Gallipoli—military resources

- [list of Anzac units](#) which served in the Gallipoli Campaign
- [Anzac unit organisation chart \(1915\)](#)
- brief summary of the [casualties incurred](#) by other nations as part of the Gallipoli Campaign.

Gallipoli—biographies

[Gallipoli biographies](#) contains brief sketches of the most prominent officers and ordinary soldiers who were involved in the campaign. The Australian War Memorial's online encyclopaedia provides a [list of Gallipoli biographies](#) including those of [CEW Bean](#), [Ataturk](#), and [John Simpson Kirkpatrick](#) (the man with the donkey).

Brief biographical details of Mustapha Kemal (later known as Ataturk) are available [here](#). These are the frequently quoted words of comfort to Australian mothers which appear on the [Ataturk Memorial](#) near the Australian War Memorial in Canberra:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us. Where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours ... You mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away the tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace after having lost their lives on this land. They have become our sons as well.

In '[First Anzac heroes](#)', Barry Clissold discusses the men who were awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal at Gallipoli and how they 'set a high standard of courage for a young nation in its first major engagement'. (*Wartime*, no. 25, 2004)

Gallipoli—geography, then and now

- short descriptions of [points of significance on the Gallipoli Peninsula](#), including Lone Pine, the Nek and Hill 60, Quinn's Post, Gaba Tepe and many others
- a [relief map](#) of the Gallipoli Peninsula showing the main features in 1915
- [map](#) of Gallipoli
- Google [map](#) of Gallipoli, with [satellite](#) imagery revealing the contours of the coastline
- the [Department of Veterans' Affairs](#) webpages include the Anzac landing at Gallipoli, visiting Gallipoli today and the [Anzac Commemorative Site](#), built at Gallipoli with the cooperation of the New Zealand and Turkish Governments. The Department also has a website with information and advice for those [planning to attend Anzac Day commemorative services](#) at Gallipoli, and
- [North Beach Gallipoli 1915](#) is a Department of Veterans' Affairs publication which describes the Anzac Commemorative Site as it was in 1915.

Section 4: The Western Front

The AIF on the Western Front

[The Western Front](#) entry in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History* provides a useful summary of the two and a half years the Australian Imperial Force spent fighting in France and Belgium. (Peter Dennis, et. al., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, 2nd ed., OUP, South Melbourne, 2008, pp. 586–598)

[The fight that changed Australia](#)—an article by military historian David Horner on Australia's role on the Western Front between 1916 and 1918. (*Australian Magazine*, 7–8 August 1993)

In '[The end of the Great War: Australian soldiers and the armistice of November 1918](#)', Ashley Ekins describes the reaction of Australian troops to the end of the war, and the massive task of demobilisation. (*Wartime*, no. 4, Summer 1998)

[Australian Battles on the Western Front during World War I](#), a Parliamentary Library Research Paper (16 August 1993) by David Anderson, which includes maps and short descriptions of the major battles in which Australian soldiers fought.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs website, [Australians on the Western Front 1914-18](#) has links to pages describing the major battles of each year of the war.

1916

After the Allied withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915, five Australian infantry divisions were formed to fight in France and Belgium. Four of them, the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Divisions arrived between March and June 1916 (the 3rd Division was formed in Australia and trained in England in the second half of 1916). Initially the four divisions were in 'a relatively quiet sector' around Armentieres known as the 'nursery' sector, although there were periods of 'sharp fighting, shelling and some heavy raids' resulting in more than 600 deaths by the end of June. (Peter Burness, '[1916: a terrible year](#)', *Wartime*, no. 36, 2006, pp. 10–16)

The 5th Australian Division which remained in French Flanders, took part in 'an ill-planned diversion at Fromelles on 19 July and lost 5533 men', including 1917 killed. Over seven weeks from late July 1916, three other Australian Divisions, the 1st, 2nd and 4th which had been sent to join the fighting on the Somme, launched 19 attacks in fighting around Pozieres and Mouquet Farm taking their objectives, but at a cost of 23 000 casualties. (David Horner, [The fight that changed Australia](#), *Australian Magazine*, 7–8 August 1993)

Battles

Fromelles

In ['The battle of Fromelles'](#), Ashley Ekins describes the fighting on the late afternoon of 19 July 1916 as the 'worst day in Australian military history'. Ekins argues that 'the battle of Fromelles was a model of how *not* to attack on the Western Front. It reflected the lowest point of military incompetence in the Great War...'. The major failing was not the inexperience of the Australians who fought gallantly, but 'the piecemeal planning of the attack, which in turn stemmed from the ineptitude of senior commanders'. (*Wartime*, no. 44, 2008, pp. 18–23)

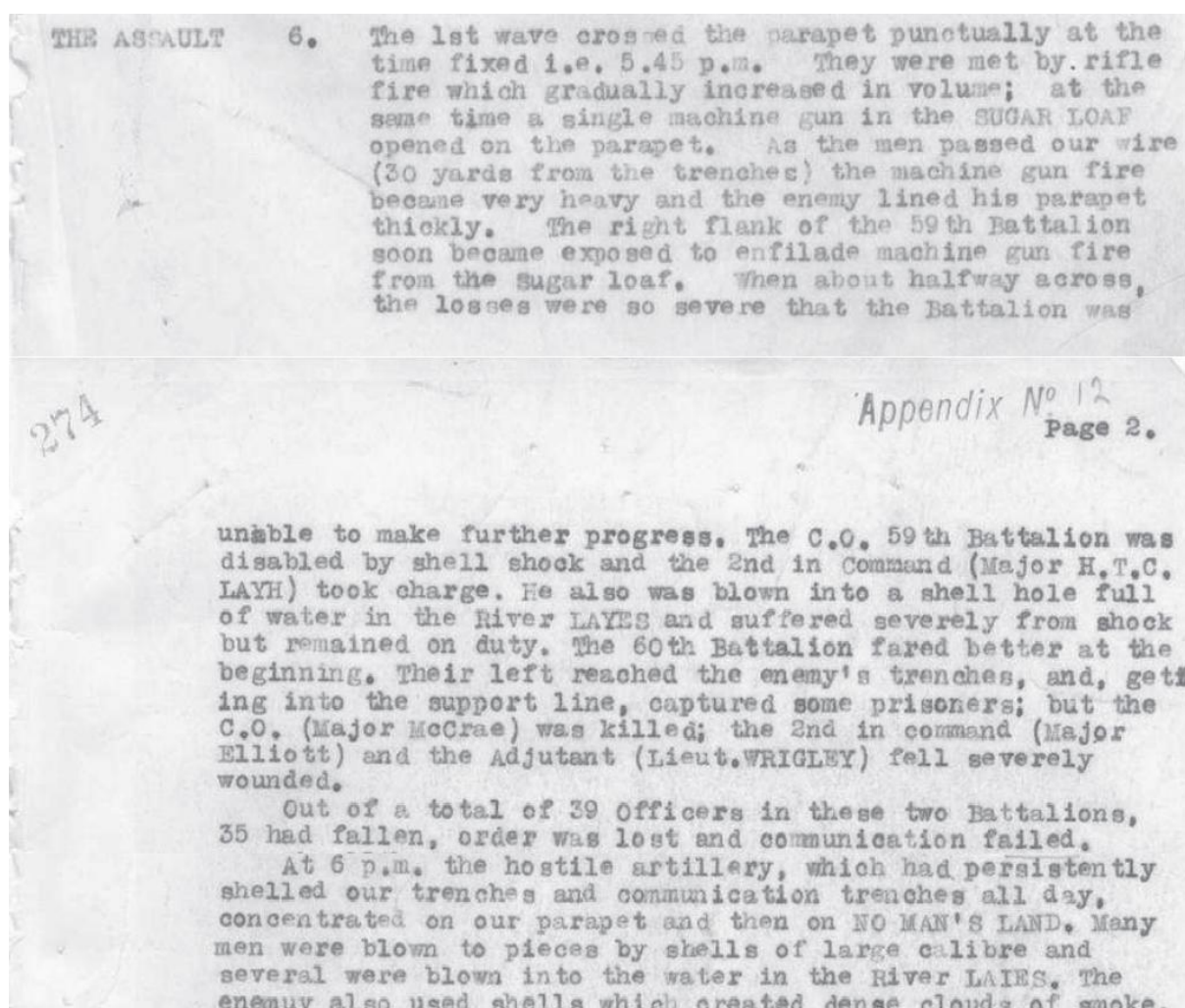


Figure 7: Written on 23 July 1916, these excerpts were drawn from the 15th Australian Brigade's report on the Battle of Fromelles.. The 15th Brigade suffered huge casualties during the battle. From 21–22 July 1916, two of the Brigade's four Battalions—the [59th](#) and [60th](#)—suffered around 1450 casualties, this out of a strength of at most 2000 officers and men. Image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

Up to 400 Australian and British soldiers, missing and presumed dead after the battle of Fromelles, were believed to have been buried in a mass grave by the Germans at Pheasant Wood, near the battlefield. The possible burial site was located in 2008 due to the efforts of a Melbourne group, the Friends of the Fifteenth Brigade Association, led by a school teacher, Mr Lambis Englezos.

In May and June 2008 [archaeological excavation work](#) was carried out on the site of the [mass grave](#) confirming that it contained human remains, likely to be those of a number of the 170 [Australian soldiers](#) and 327 British soldiers missing after the Battle of Fromelles in 1916. The Army History Unit re-engaged a team from Glasgow University's Archaeological Division which had conducted a non-invasive survey at Fromelles in May 2007. This earlier survey revealed underground anomalies matching five pits seen in aerial photographs after the battle.

The Australian and British Governments [announced on 4 October 2008](#) that the remains would be recovered and re-interred in a new cemetery and work to exhume the soldiers' bodies began on 5 May 2009. Plans for a [new cemetery](#) in an open field in Fromelles were subsequently unveiled. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission began construction of the new walled cemetery in June 2009.

On 2 April 2009 the Australian Government [published a list](#) of the names of 191 Australian soldiers whose remains may be among those recovered from the site. On 17 June 2009 a contract was announced for the [analysis of viable DNA](#) from the site. The Department of Defence has a [website](#) containing details of the project.

The excavation of the site was completed in early September 2009 with the remains of 250 soldiers being exhumed. The remains were sent to LGC Forensics in London for testing in an effort to identify as many individual soldiers as possible. In his [announcement](#) of the completion of the excavation, the Minister for Defence Personnel, Materiel and Science stated that 'a large number' of the remains belonged to Australians, but cautioned that it would take many months, and in some cases years, for proper identification to be completed. A Joint Australia/UK Identification board [began considering](#) the forensic findings in early March 2010.

In mid-2010 construction of the new Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) cemetery was [completed](#) at Fromelles. This was the first new CWGC cemetery to be established since the end of the Second World War. Further details can be found on the CWGC [website](#). The cemetery is not located on the site of the grave pits but is set further up the slope overlooking the original site. It was decided to place the cemetery in a new location due to concerns about flooding and easier access for visitors (the original site is further down the slope and flooding is a regular occurrence). A small car park has also been built adjacent to the cemetery.



Figure 8: Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery; image courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](#)

The CWGC carried out the re-interment of the majority of the 250 sets of remains in individual graves during February 2010, with headstones which list the person buried as 'unknown'. Names will be added to the headstones as a result of the information gained from the results of the DNA testing program. On 17 March 2010 the Minister for Veterans Affairs [announced](#) that the DNA testing had identified 75 of the men and that relatives had been informed. The Australian Army website carries [a list](#) of the men who have been identified. As at 8 April 2011 when the Minister [announced](#) the identification of 14 more sets of remains, the total number of men now identified stands at 110. However, this process is ongoing and nine more soldiers have recently been [identified](#).

The cemetery was officially dedicated on 19 July 2010. In order to mark the completion of the project, a commemorative event took place at the cemetery at which the last of the 250 soldiers was buried and the Governor-General, Ms Quentin Bryce AC, delivered an [address](#). The 94th anniversary of the battle of Fromelles was also commemorated by a ceremony in the Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial where [Ashley Ekins](#), Head of Military History at the Australian War Memorial, gave a special [closing address](#).

Two months earlier the Royal Australian Mint issued a special twenty cent coin to commemorate the Battle of Fromelles. The coin carries an image of the statue by Peter Corlett which depicts Sergeant Simon Fraser carrying a wounded soldier over his shoulder.

The website of the Office of Australian War Graves contains links to [overseas memorials](#), with information on current projects on overseas and Australian memorials.

Pozieres

In '[Men of Pozieres](#)', Peter Burness describes Australia's first fighting on the Somme which began in darkness on 23 July 1916 when the 1st Australian Division took the village of Pozieres in a costly but successful attack. (*Wartime*, Issue 34, 2006, pp. 38–42). In '[Pozieres hell](#)', Burness examines the human cost of the battle on those who survived. (*Wartime*, no. 22, 2003, pp. 14–19)

According to the Australian Army History Unit's description of the [battle of Pozieres](#), during which four Australians won Victoria Crosses, Australian casualties comprised:

1st Australian Division	5285 officers and men
2nd Australian Division	6846 officers and men
4th Australian Division*	4649 officers and men

(*as at 16 August when relieved.)

The National Film and Sound Archive working in collaboration with the Australian War Memorial have made [available online](#) actual footage of the Australians at Pozieres. The original filming was carried out under the direction of Charles Bean, and shows the Australians building trenches and preparing for the battle as well as British and Australian artillery shelling the German trenches.

Mouquet Farm

According to the [Australian War Memorial](#):

[Mouquet Farm](#) was the site of nine separate attacks by three Australian divisions between 8 August and 3 September 1916. The farm stood in a dominating position on a ridge that extended north-west from the ruined, and much fought over, village of Pozieres. Although the farm buildings themselves were reduced to rubble, strong stone cellars remained below ground which were incorporated into the German defences. The attacks mounted against Mouquet Farm cost the 1st, 2nd and 4th Australian Divisions over 11 000 casualties, and not one succeeded in capturing and holding it. The British advance eventually bypassed Mouquet Farm leaving it an isolated outpost. It fell, inevitably, on 27 September 1916.

The Australian Army History Unit's description of the fighting at Mouquet Farm lists the casualties as:

1st Australian Division	2650 officers and men
2nd Australian Division (6th Bde only)	896 officers and men
4th Australian Division	7158 officers and men

1917

The year 1917 started with the armies bogged down in the frozen trench lines that stretched virtually from the North Sea to Switzerland. In February, the Germans began withdrawing to newly prepared positions called the Hindenburg Line. In pursuit Australians occupied Bapaume on 17 March—the objective originally set for the Somme offensive of 1916.



Figure 9: One of the best known images of Australians on the Western Front: artillery men walk along a duckboard track at Chateau Wood, Belgium, during the final stages of the Third Battle of Ypres (Battle of Passchendaele); image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

The British and French high command agreed to a Spring offensive. Australians were not allotted to the main operation, but the 4th Division was selected for a supporting action, to attack the fortified village of Bullecourt. This was a fiasco. As tanks were being used for the first time, the troops were ordered to attack without artillery support. They went 'over the top'—the term for attacking by climbing over the trench parapet and moving across no man's land—early on 11 April, but the tanks had not arrived. Some units breached the Hindenburg Line, but were cut off and bombarded. The 4th Division lost more than 3000 men, including more than 1000 captured—the largest number of Australian POWs in a single action during this war.

Although the [Arras](#) offensive also had failed, the 2nd Division and British 62nd Division were ordered to attack Bullecourt again on 3 May. The Australians breached the Hindenburg Line, but lost heavily against counter-attacks. On 8 May, the 5th Division took over, making more ground, and on 17 May British troops took the objective. It was a hollow victory: 7000 casualties for ground not needed.

The 3rd Division—the last of the five Australian divisions to arrive on the Western Front—entered the fray in April 1917, in the Ypres Salient, Belgium. This area was to dominate the Australian experience of 1917. On 7 June, the 3rd and 4th Divisions, with New Zealand and British troops, attacked at Messines. They suffered nearly 7000 casualties, many from gas and 'friendly' artillery fire, but it was a clear victory. Unfortunately, high command hesitated in ordering a follow-up attack. British troops fought courageously against a now well-prepared enemy, but faltered.

In September, the Third Battle of Ypres started. On 20 September, the 1st and 2nd Divisions attacked at Menin Road; on 26 September, the 4th Division at Polygon Wood; on 4 October, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions at Broodseinde; and on 12 October, the 3rd and New Zealand Divisions at Passchendaele. Ground was made in all places, but the front became bogged down after heavy rains. The mud was said to be 'incomprehensible to anyone who has not experienced it'. In those two months, more than 8900 Australians lost their lives, and nearly 24 000 were wounded or gassed.

Battles

This year is the 95th anniversary of two major battles in which Australian forces participated in 1917: The battles of Bullecourt and the Third Battle of Ypres (Battle of Passchendaele).

Bullecourt

During the broader [Arras Offensive](#) (April–June 1916) Australian forces played a central role in the [First](#) and [Second Battles of Bullecourt](#). Between February and April 1917, German forces on the Western Front withdrew to a defensive line known to British forces as the [Hindenburg Line](#).

On 11 April 1917 the Australian [4th Division](#) and British 62nd Division attacked German positions either side of the village of Bullecourt, attempting to capture Hindenburg Line trenches. This attack was made with the support of a small number of British tanks, rather than with the customary preliminary artillery barrage of enemy positions. All the tanks were out of action within a couple of hours, and while some trenches were captured, they could not be held, and Australian troops were driven back by midday. Casualties were very high—the 4th Division suffered 3300 casualties on this day alone.

A second attempt was made to capture Hindenburg Line trenches around Bullecourt between 3 and 17 May. Australian troops [seized and held](#) some parts of the Hindenburg Line and the British 62 Division captured the village of Bullecourt. Three Australian Divisions (the [2nd](#), [1st](#) and [5th](#)) took part in the two weeks of fighting at Bullecourt, and suffered a total of 7000 casualties. Bullecourt is now the home of the [Australian Memorial Park](#).

In '[The battles for Bullecourt](#)', Peter Burness describes the horror and devastation experienced in April and May 1917 by Australian soldiers who fought battles around the French town of Bullecourt. Heavy Australian casualties were incurred in an attempt to capture a strongpoint in the Hindenburg Line. (*Wartime*, no. 18, 2002, pp. 24–29)

Passchendaele (Third Ypres)

The other major Western Front campaign with Australian involvement in 1917 was the [Third Battle of Ypres](#) in Belgium, and its precursor the [Battle of Messines](#).

The purpose of the Battle of Messines was to capture a German held ridge that bulged into the Allied lines. If the ridge was not captured prior to the main battle (Third Ypres), German forces would be able to rain artillery fire down on the British flank as it moved forward. For more than a year prior to this attack, British, Canadian, New Zealand and Australian engineering units had been tunnelling under the German trench system at Messines. The mines laid in these tunnels were detonated on the morning of the battle, resulting in one of the most powerful (and certainly most deadly) non-nuclear explosions ever created. It is estimated that 10 000 German troops were killed when the mines were detonated. More information on the Australian role in the tunnelling and mine detonation is available in [a chapter from the Official History](#).

The preliminary artillery barrage at Messines was also significant: in the week prior to the attack British artillery fired more than 3.5 million shells of various sizes onto the ridge at Messines.

Following the mine detonation, and advancing behind a [creeping artillery barrage](#), nine divisions attacked the ridge from three sides. By mid morning on 7 June all objectives had been taken in the limited offensive, although Australian, New Zealand and British troops fought off German counterattacks for about a week. Australian participation in Messines consisted of the [3rd](#) and [4th Divisions](#); the [New Zealand Division](#) also played a key role in the battle, being the Division that actually took the village of Messines. The two Australian divisions suffered 6800 casualties in the two-week battle.

Messines was startling success compared to the Third Battle of Ypres (July–November 1917). One of those huge, costly and largely unsuccessful battles of the Western Front, Third Ypres cost hundreds of thousands of British, Australian and Canadian casualties (and hundreds of thousands of German casualties), with little change in the strategic situation. At the end of the battle, and after three months, the Allies had gained just few miles of ground; German forces would subsequently retake this ground over a couple of weeks in April 1918. Of the [eight or so sub battles](#) that made up Third Ypres, Australian forces were most heavily involved in the following:

- [Menin Road](#), 20–25 September
- [Polygon Wood](#), 26 September–3 October ([The Fifth Division Memorial](#) is located at Polygon Wood)
- [Broodseinde](#), 4 October and
- [The first attack on Passchendaele](#), 9–12 October.

Between the start of August and end of November 1917 the Australian forces suffered about 38 000 casualties, of which 11 200 were killed in action or died of wounds. In October alone the Australian

divisions lost 6405 men—with a total casualty figure of 26 000—making it the bloodiest month in Australian military history. More Australians were killed during Third Ypres, not including Messines, than were killed in the entire Gallipoli Campaign.

In '[Byways to hell: Australian soldiers in the Battle of Passchendaele](#)' Ashley Ekins describes the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917 which cost 38 000 Australian casualties over three and a half months. (*Wartime*, no. 1, 1997, pp. 7–13)

1918

In [1918](#), the First World War entered its fifth calendar year. The strength of national pride and of the fighting capacity of Australia's forces had been acknowledged in late 1917 with the formation of the Australian Corps, comprising the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Divisions. However, casualties made it difficult to keep the Australian divisions at strength. In May 1918 Lieutenant General John [Monash](#) was made the first Australian commander of the Australian Corps.

During 1918 the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) consolidated their '[reputation for reliability, competence and skill](#)'.

On 21 March 1918, Germany, freed in the East by the defeat of Russia, launched [Operation Michael](#), an initially successful final offensive on the Western Front in France aimed at splitting the Allied forces in the Amiens area and driving towards the English Channel. After the German offensive stalled, the stalemate on the Western Front began to turn in favour of the Allies with their more effective use of combined infantry, artillery, tanks and aircraft. During the final months of the war, the AIF was involved in a number of significant battles leading up to the Armistice on 11 November 1918.



Figure 10: Members of the 54th Infantry Battalion in Peronne, the day after the battle, 2 October 1918; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

Battles

Villers-Bretonneux

The [First \(4 April\) and Second Battles of Villers-Bretonneux](#) were fought in 1918, the second battle taking place on 24 and 25 April and involving a night-time counter-attack by the 15th Brigade of the AIF under Harold 'Pompey' Elliott in a desperate attempt to recapture the town of Villers-Bretonneux. The successful counter-attack by the Australians during the second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux was described by Brigadier General Grogan VC as 'perhaps the greatest individual feat of the war'. The words '[Do not forget Australia](#)' are on a sign in the playground of the Victoria school in Villers-Bretonneux that was rebuilt after the war with money raised by donations from Victoria, Australia.

In '["Perhaps the greatest individual feat of the war": the battle of Villers-Bretonneux, 1918](#)', Ross McMullin describes the AIF's 'daring night assault [which] saved the city of Amiens and decisively checked the German advance'. (*Wartime*, no. 2, April 1998)

'[ANZAC Day at Villers-Bretonneux](#)', by Brad Manera, also describes the fighting, featuring the actions of two Western Australian soldiers. (*Wartime*, no. 22, 2003)

Peter Burness describes the hard fighting in [Villers-Bretonneux on Anzac Day 1918](#), quoting a sergeant's description: 'The moon sunk behind clouds. There were houses burning in the town throwing a sinister light on the scene. It was past midnight. Men muttered, 'it's ANZAC Day'. It seemed there was nothing to do but go straight forward and die hard'. (*Wartime*, no. 42, 2008)

In 2008, to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the battle on Anzac Day 1918, an Australian-led Dawn Service was held on Anzac Day at the [Australian National Memorial](#) near Villers-Bretonneux. This was the first official Australian Dawn Service to be held at the Memorial in Villers-Bretonneux.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs has a website with [information and advice](#) for those planning to attend Anzac Day commemorative services on the Western Front.



Figure 11: The ruined Church in Villers-Bretonneux after the second Battle; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#)

Hamel

The Allied operation to capture the town of Hamel and the surrounding area on 4 July 1918 was under the command of [Lieutenant General John Monash](#) whose planning and careful arrangements led to what Monash himself described as a 'brilliant success'.

The Australian War Memorial summarises the battle on its '1918 Australians in France' website: '[Hamel the textbook victory – 4 July 1918](#)'. Another [summary of the battle of Hamel](#), by Chris Coulthard-Clark, argues that this 'model of [a] completely successful all-arms battle ... set new standards of generalship which were emulated subsequently by other commanders on the Western Front'. (Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Where Australians fought: the encyclopaedia of Australia's battles*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1998, pp. 148–149)

In ['Hamel: winning a battle'](#), the authors argue that Monash applied the principles of war, including 'sound administration, meticulous planning, maintenance of morale, [and] concentration of force ... with flexibility ... Monash was an outstanding corps commander, with the ability to coordinate a wide range of available technology to form a coherent plan ... Hamel reveals his complete mastery of the set-piece battle'. (*Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 18, April 1991)

The Battle of Hamel, fought on American Independence Day, was the first significant instance of Australian 'Diggers' fighting alongside their newly-arrived American 'Doughboy' allies. The [relationship between Australian and US troops](#) on the Western Front is described in an article by Dale Blair. (*Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 35, December 2001)

In ['Independence Day at Hamel'](#), Mitchell Yockelson describes how the successful first Australian-American battle alliance happened despite the objections of the American Expeditionary Force's commander, General John Pershing. (*Wartime*, no. 28, October 2004)

Amiens—the Third Battle of the Somme

The quote in the title of Ross McMullin's article, ['The black day of the German army: 8 August 1918'](#), was the German strategist General Ludendorff's description of the Allied offensive aimed at ending the enemy threat to the French town of Amiens and its vital railway network. The battle involved meticulous planning by the Australian commander, General Monash, and for the first time all five Australian divisions fought together. (*Wartime* no. 3, Spring, 1998)

In ['8 August 1918: the battle won'](#), Peter Burness quotes from General Monash's message to his troops:

Because of the completeness of our plans and dispositions, of the magnitude of the operations, of the number of troops employed, and the depth to which we intend to over-run the enemy's positions, this battle will be one of the most memorable of the whole war.

Burness also quotes an Australian captain who expressed what would have been in the minds of many Australian soldiers at this stage of the war: 'Wouldn't it be delightful if one could get home and start the new year as a civilian', a hope which Burness says, would have been unthinkable six months previously. (*Wartime*, no. 33, January 2006)

[A summary of the fighting around Amiens](#), Lihons, Etinehem and Proyart between 8 and 12 August 1918, by Chris Coulthard-Clark, demonstrates that progress on subsequent days was not as spectacular as that of 8 August, although the action fought around Chuignes on 23 August 1918 'was a stunning success'. (Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Where Australians fought: the encyclopaedia of Australia's battles*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1998, pp. 151–155)

In ['The capture of the Amiens gun'](#), Robert Nichols outlines the story of the capture of the large ex-naval gun which the Germans had been firing at Amiens, and the subsequent controversy over competing claims to its ownership based on involvement in its capture by the 31st Australian

Infantry Battalion, British and Canadian Cavalry, a British Sopwith Camel aircraft and the French nation. (*Wartime*, no. 23, July 2003)

Mont St Quentin

The summary of the Australian fighting on the heights overlooking Peronne between 31 August and 2 September 1918 by Chris Coulthard-Clark, describes [the Mont St Quentin action](#) as a 'brilliant operation ... [which] to many minds ... was the crowning achievement of the AIF, if not of the entire war'. (Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Where Australians fought: the encyclopaedia of Australia's battles*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1998, pp. 157–158)

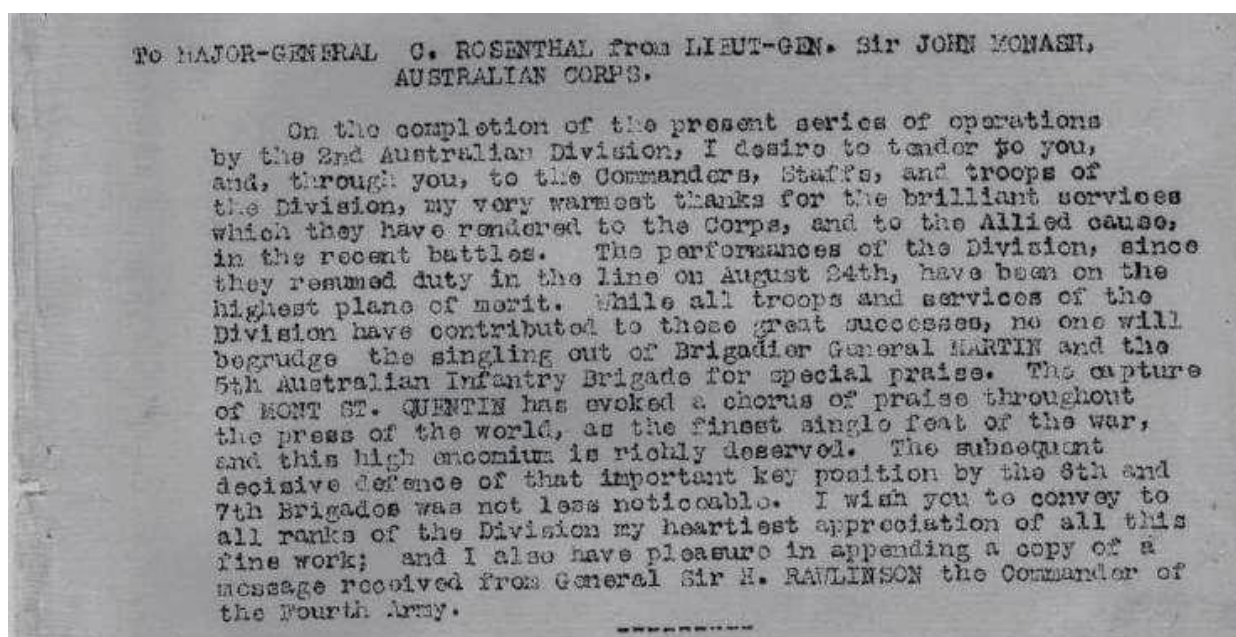


Figure 12: Special congratulatory wire sent from [General John Monash](#) to the 2nd Australian Division in early September 1918, noting that 'the capture of Mont St Quentin has evoked a chorus of praise throughout the press of the world'. Image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#) [page 29].

The [Australian War Memorial's summary](#) points out that once the Germans were forced out of Peronne they had to 'retreat to their last line of defence – the Hindenburg Line'.

The [Official History](#) describes the capture of Mont St Quentin and Peronne as having 'dealt a stunning blow to five German divisions'.

Hindenburg Line

On 29 September 1918 Australian and US forces spearheaded the attack on the German Army's last and strongest line of defence, [the Hindenburg line](#). This second attack followed the breaching of the line by the 1st and 4th Australian Divisions on 18 September. On 3 October 1918 Australian troops broke through the final defensive system of the [Hindenburg Line](#). This was followed on 5 October 1918 by the last Australian Western Front action in which Australian infantry captured [Montbrehain](#)

village. Australian divisions were withdrawn from the front in early October for a period of rest and refitting.

People

The entry on [General Sir John Monash](#) in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History* sums up Monash's character:

He had a cool head, an ability to make rapid decisions, a facility for logical exposition, a warranted obsession with detail and the determination and ruthlessness to obtain the maximum effort from his troops. His reputation as Australia's greatest field commander is secure.

(Peter Dennis, et al., *Oxford companion to Australian military history*, 2nd ed., OUP, South Melbourne, 2008, pp. 369–372)

'[Master at arms](#)' is a biographical article by Peter Pedersen on General Sir John Monash who, as commander of the Australian Corps in the last months of the war, oversaw successful Australian actions at Hamel, Amiens, Mont St Quentin and Peronne. (*Australian Magazine*, 7 August 1993)

'[Pompey Elliott: true leader](#)', profiles the commander of the AIF's 15th Brigade on the Western Front. (*Wartime* no. 19, 2002)

'[Front-line angels](#)' by John Laffin describes the role of nurses in the Australian Army Nursing Service who worked on the Western Front. (*Australian Magazine*, 7 August 1993)

In '[The last hours of the Red Baron](#)', Thomas Faunce examines the role played by Australian airmen, soldiers and medical officers in the shooting down of the German flying ace on 21 April 1918. (*Wartime*, no. 32, October 2005)

Section 5: Remembering and honouring: memorials and heritage

Remembrance Day

[Remembrance Day](#) (11 November) is the anniversary of the armistice which ended the First World War (1914–18). It is set aside as a day to remember the sacrifice of those who have died for Australia in all wars and conflicts. It was originally known as Armistice Day.

For a history of how Armistice Day became Remembrance Day see Jennifer Amess, '[A day of remembrance: 11 November](#)', *Sabretache*, vol. 24, April–June 1983, pp. 25–26.

The [Flanders poppy](#) (a bright red poppy) has been part of Armistice or Remembrance Day since the early 1920s. Wearing a red poppy is a sign of remembrance for the servicemen and women who have died in war.

For further information see the Background Note, '[Remembrance Day 2008—the 90th anniversary of the end of World War I](#)', published by the Parliamentary Library in November 2008.

War memorials and cemeteries overseas

More than 90 000 Australians who fought in the First and Second World Wars are buried overseas. Australia commemorates each of these war dead through either a memorial headstone at a gravesite, an inscription on a Memorial to the Missing (if the service person has no known grave), or a memorial plaque at a crematorium. Their names are also inscribed on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Australia's war dead from the two world wars are buried in more than 80 countries, in close to 800 cemeteries worldwide. The Department of Veterans' Affairs website has a [list](#) of First and Second World War Australian war dead by country.

The HTML version of this publication contains two maps which plot the geographic location the main Australian overseas cemeteries, Memorials to the Missing, and war (or 'battle') memorials and provide some brief information on each site.

Kevin Blackburn discusses the restored [Changi Murals](#) originally created in a chapel (St Luke's) within the huge prisoner of war camp established in the Changi area by the Japanese after the fall of Singapore in February 1942. Between September 1942 and May 1943 five near life-size murals of scenes from the New Testament were painted by a British prisoner, Stanley Warren, on two of the chapel's walls.

The [Hellfire Pass Memorial](#) in Thailand is dedicated to those Australian and other allied prisoners of war (POWs) and Asian labourers who suffered and died at Hellfire Pass (Burma-Thailand Railway) and elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region during the Second World War. It was officially opened on 24 April 1998 by the Prime Minister, John Howard and the Prime Minister of Thailand, Chuan Leekpai.

The [Australian War Memorial in London](#) was dedicated on the morning of 11 November 2003 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister John Howard, in the presence of HRH The Duke of Kent, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, and a party of 27 Australian Second World War veterans. The Memorial features a long, curving wall of West Australian green granite, reflecting the sweep of the Australian landscape. Inscribed on the wall are the names of many of the [battle sites](#) where Australian and British military personnel fought, superimposed upon the names of thousands of home towns of Australian men and women who served during the two world wars. The periodic flow of water across the wall highlights these names and is designed to evoke memories of the suffering and loss felt by all.

The [Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux](#) in northern France was unveiled on 22 July 1938 by King George VI. It lies within the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery and was erected to commemorate all Australian soldiers who fought in France and Belgium during the First World War, and their dead, especially those with no known grave. The servicemen named on [the memorial](#) were Australians who died 'in the battlefields of the Somme, Arras, the German advance of 1918 and the Advance to Victory'.

[The Park of the Australian Soldier at Be'er Sheva](#) in Israel, commemorating the [charge of the Australian Mounted Division's](#) 4th Brigade against Turkish positions at [Beersheba](#) (now called Be'er Sheva) on 31 October 1917, was dedicated in Israel in April 2008.

The website of the Office of Australian War Graves contains links to [overseas memorials](#), with information on current projects on overseas and Australian memorials.

War memorials in Australia

In addition to the [Australian War Memorial](#) (opened on 11 November 1941), there are a number of other sources of information about war memorials in Australia:

In '[War Memorials in the Australian landscape](#)', Ken Inglis describes the importance of local memorials to Australian communities.

The [Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial](#) located in Ballarat, Victoria, honours more than 35 000 Australians who were held prisoner during the Boer War, the First World War, the Second World War and the Korean War.

The National Capital Authority's website has information about the [memorials lining Anzac Parade](#) in Canberra. New memorials planned for positions on or near Anzac Parade are: the [Australian Peacekeeping Memorial](#), the site of which was [dedicated on 29 November 2007](#), with the [winning design](#) announced on 19 December 2008; the [Boer War Memorial](#) the site of which was [dedicated on 31 May 2008](#); and [twin memorials to the First and Second World Wars](#) on Rond Terrace at the opposite end of Anzac Parade to the Australian War Memorial.

The Queensland Anzac Day Commemoration Committee's website has the history, descriptions and photographs of the [State war memorials](#) in each State capital. State and city websites include those of [Western Australia](#), [Queensland](#) (and [Brisbane City](#)), [New South Wales](#) (including the [Centotaph](#) and [Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park](#) and [Anzac Memorial history](#)), along with national memorials in [Canberra](#).

The [Australian-American Memorial](#) was dedicated by Queen Elizabeth II on 16 February 1954. It stands 73 metres high in the forecourt of Field Marshal [Sir Thomas Blamey](#) Square at the Department of Defence Offices, Russell, in Canberra. It is one of the city's most prominent and distinctive landmarks. The [press release](#) from Senator Robert Hill on the 50th anniversary of its unveiling contains further details.

[War Memorials in Australia](#) is a private website which contains information on locations, descriptions and images of war memorials in the states and territories of Australia, while the Department of Veterans' Affairs also has information on [memories and memorabilia](#).

[Remembrance Driveway](#), which runs between Sydney and Canberra, was suggested by the Garden Club of Australia. Over fifty groves have been planted alongside the Hume and Federal Highways. The Driveway is a memorial to those who served in the Second World War and subsequent wars.

The first of its trees—at [Macquarie Place](#) in Sydney (a plane tree), and the War Memorial in Canberra (a snow gum)—were planted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1954. It was intended to have a variety of trees, each selected for its suitability to local soil and climatic conditions. Each of the trees honours a serviceman or woman and some bear a plaque with his or her name. During the 1990s the Remembrance Driveway Committee and the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority worked together to develop 'Victoria Cross' rest areas along the highway—Gordon VC, Mackay VC, Kingsbury VC, Chowne VC, Derrick VC, French VC, Kibby VC, Edmondson VC, Wheatley VC and Gurney VC.

The Australian War Memorial maintains a program of [travelling exhibitions](#), often visiting [regional Australia](#).

Gallipoli websites

The [Visit Gallipoli](#) website includes history and educational resources, and for those planning a visit there is also a guided walk that takes trekkers to 14 locations including North Beach, Anzac Cove, Shrapnel Gully, Lone Pine, Quinn's Post and The Nek.

[Gallipoli and the Anzacs](#), a site hosted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, contains a range of educational resources.

Western Front

The [Office of Australian War Graves](#) (within the DVA) have stepped up activities to [enhance commemoration](#) of Australian service in France and Belgium. In response to an increasing number of visitors to the battlefields and war cemeteries, eighteen interpretive panels have been erected in France and two in Belgium to explain the significance of each battle site. In 2009 the Australian Government announced plans for an [Anzac Trail](#) to commemorate the achievements of Australians on the Western Front, and a [dedicated gallery](#) on a website [commemorating Australia's wartime heritage](#) is now available.

The [Australian Corps Memorial Park at Le Hamel](#)—one of [several memorials on the Western Front](#)—was closed to visitors in February 2008 for rebuilding, after the original memorial deteriorated due to environmental damage and vandalism. The work was completed by August 2008 and the memorial was [re-dedicated by the Governor-General on 8 November 2008](#).

Remains of war dead

Bodies of service personnel are often discovered on old battlefields or in wrecked ships or aircraft. When such discoveries are made, the standard practice is to inter bodies in a [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#) cemetery.

Veterans

Veterans farewelled in recent years

Claude Stanley Choules—1901 to 2011

Claude Choules, [who died](#) on 5 May 2011, was believed to be the world's [last surviving First World War combat veteran](#). Mr Choules began serving with Britain's Royal Navy on board the *HMS Impregnable* at the age of 15. In 1926 he was seconded to the Royal Australian Navy and remained with the RAN serving in various capacities until after the Second World War.

John (Jack) Campbell Ross—1899 to 2009

Jack Ross enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in February 1918 as a wireless operator, but the war ended before he saw active service. On 11 March 2009 he celebrated his 110th birthday in Bendigo, Victoria, making him Australia's last remaining First World War serviceman and Australia's oldest man. The [Australian Government paid tribute](#) to Mr Ross on the occasion of his [110th birthday](#). Mr Ross [died](#) on 3 June 2009. The passing of Mr Ross was noted in the Parliament by the [Prime Minister](#) and the [Leader of the Opposition](#).

William Evan Crawford Allan—1899 to 2005

'[Last of our Great War fighters fades away](#)' by Stuart Rintoul (*Australian*, 19 October 2005).

Peter Casserly—1898 to 2005

'[Last survivor of western front carnage dies at 107](#)'—obituary for Peter Casserly (*Sunday Canberra Times*, 26 June 2005).

Gilbert Edward Bennion—1898 to 2005

'[Veteran of two wars did not fire a shot in anger](#)' by Greg Stolz (*Courier Mail*, 1 February 2005).

Marcel Caux—1899 to 2004

'[Au revoir, Marcel, we hardly knew you](#)' by Tony Stephens (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 August 2004).

Edward (Ted) David Smout—1898 to 2004

'[Last hurrah for people's hero](#)'—obituary for Edward (Ted) David Smout by Emma Chalmers and Brian Williams (*Courier Mail*, 1 July 2004).

Section 6: Anniversaries

70th anniversary of Australia's perilous year

This year, 2012, is the 70th anniversary of some of the most important, and perilous, events in Australian military history. On 16 February 1942, in the immediate aftermath of the [fall of Singapore](#), Prime Minister John Curtin told the nation:

The fall of Singapore can only be described as Australia's Dunkirk. It will be recalled that Dunkirk initiated the Battle for Britain. The fall of Singapore opens the Battle for Australia.

...

The protection of this country is no longer that of a contribution to a world at war but the resistance to an enemy threatening to invade our own shore.... Our honeymoon has finished. It is now work or fight as we have never worked or fought before[.]

The Parliamentary Library has recently published two short articles outlining the major 70th anniversaries occurring in 2012:

- [*The 70th anniversary of the Second World War events of 1942— 'Australia's perilous year': February and March*](#), FlagPost, 10 February 2012 and
- [*The 70th anniversary of the Second World War events of 1942— 'Australia's perilous year': April to December*](#), FlagPost, 23 March 2012.

Some of the events mentioned in these articles are expanded on below.

The fall of Singapore

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill [described](#) the Commonwealth [defeat at Singapore](#) on 15 February 1942 as 'the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history'. In just over two months Japanese forces had managed to defeat Commonwealth forces along the Malaysian peninsula and invade and occupy the 'Gibraltar of the East', the British Empire's main base in South-East Asia.

In Singapore alone 80 000 Commonwealth troops (the vast majority of which were British, Indian and Australian) became prisoners of war, and when this is combined with the 40 000 Commonwealth troops captured in the fighting on the Malay Peninsula, the poignancy of Churchill's statement becomes clear.

Approximately 15 000 Australians (most of the 8th Division) were captured in Singapore. As many as [7000](#) of those personnel taken prisoner would die before the end of the war.

More detailed information on the Malayan and Singapore campaigns can be found in the digitised version of Australia's Official War History; see chapters 7 through 17 of [Volume IV—The Japanese thrust](#).

On the 70th anniversary of the fall of Singapore the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, [travelled](#) to Singapore with six veterans of the campaign for a memorial service at [Kranji War Cemetery](#).

The bombing of Darwin and the Bombing of Darwin Day

A few days after the fall of Singapore, with Australia reeling over the loss of that island and the 8th Division, [Darwin was bombed](#) by Japanese aircraft. On 19 February 1942, approximately 240

Japanese planes attacked Darwin in two separate raids, killing at least 243 civilians and Australian and US military personnel, and sinking eight ships in Darwin Harbour.

This was the first, and most damaging, attack on the Australian mainland during the war. It was the first of some [97 air raids](#) that occurred over northern Australia during 1942 and 1943. Prime Minister Curtin said at the time of the initial bombing that a 'severe blow has been struck on Australian soil'.

The largest loss of life was on the American destroyer [USS Peary](#)—of its crew of 144, [91 lost their lives](#). The [USS Peary Memorial](#) in Darwin commemorates the US personnel that went down with the *Peary*.

On 18 November 2011 Prime Minister Julia Gillard [announced](#) that 19 February would be proclaimed as 'Bombing of Darwin Day', to 'ensure the attacks across Australia's north are appropriately remembered and commemorated every year'. The first Bombing of Darwin day was held on 19 February 2012, and the Prime Minister and Minister for Veterans' Affairs attended the commemorative services.

The Kokoda Track Campaign

The iconic [Kokoda Track Campaign](#) began when Japanese forces landed unopposed at Gona, on the northern coast of Papua, on 21 July 1942. Having had its plans to attack Port Moresby by sea disrupted by the [Battle of the Coral Sea](#), Japan sought to test the overland route from Gona to Port Moresby, utilising the [Kokoda Track](#).

As the Japanese forces advanced towards the village of Kokoda, they were met initially by the Papuan Infantry Battalion and the Australian [39th Infantry Battalion \(Militia\)](#). Outnumbered, the Australians and Papuans basically fought a fighting retreat over the Owen Stanley Ranges for the next two months, fighting delaying actions at [Kokoda](#), [Deniki](#), [Isurava](#), [Efogi](#), and [Ioribaiwa Ridge](#).



Figure 13: Personnel from the 39th Infantry Battalion (Militia) withdrawing towards Imita Ridge, after the Battle of Isurava, circa late August—early September 1942; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

Australian forces, now being reinforced by experienced Australian Imperial Force units, retreated as far south as Imita Ridge, just 40 kilometers from Port Moresby. Here they dug in, expecting a Japanese assault. The attack never came, and the tactical situation had swung in the Australians' favour: their artillery at Owers Corner could now fire on the Japanese positions, and Australian supplies could be trucked most of the way to the front, while Japanese supplies had to be carried almost the entire length of the Trail.

Japanese forces began to retreat along the Kokoda Trail at the end of September 1942. They were pursued by Australian soldiers mostly of the [25th](#) and [16th Brigades](#), and the Australians won battles at [Eora](#) and [Oivi-Gorari](#). Following their defeat at Oivi-Gorari, Japanese forces withdrew to the beachheads at Gona and Buna, effectively ending the Kokoda Track Campaign and paving the way for the Australian and American [attacks on Buna, Gona and Sanananda](#).

The number of Australians killed during the Kokoda Campaign is [generally estimated](#) to be about 600. Peter Williams [provides](#) more precise figures, breaking the casualties down by service.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs website '[The Kokoda Track](#)', written by military historian Peter Williams, provides detailed information on the Kokoda Campaign, including interactive maps of the main battles.

Formation of the Australian Women's Land Army

The following information is based largely on a number of parliamentary speeches made by Senator John Faulkner; see for example [10 November 2011](#) and [13 September 2011](#).

During the Second World War, four major women's auxiliary services were set up: the [Australian Women's Army Service](#), the [Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force](#), the [Women's Royal Australian Naval Service](#) and the [Australian Women's Land Army](#). With the exception of the Australian Women's Land Army, which was established on 27 June 1942, these services were established during 1941.

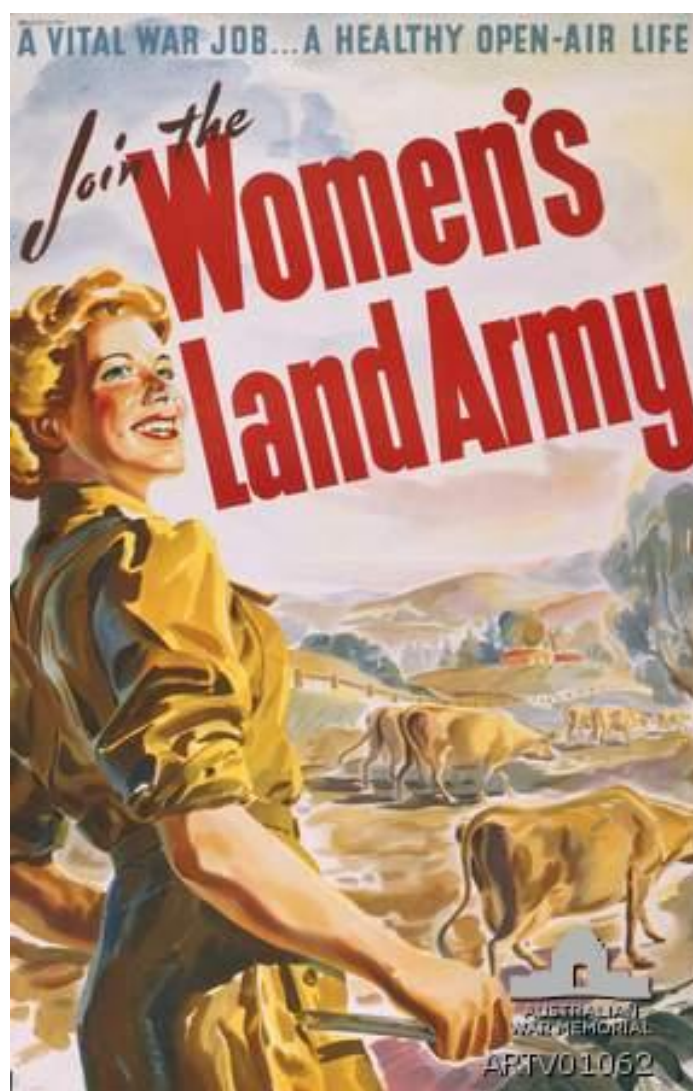


Figure 14: Recruitment poster for the Australian Women's Land Army; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

The outbreak of war (and, after February 1942, the threat of invasion) had caused many male agricultural workers to enlist. The production of food and material for Australia and its allies remained crucial, however, and State-based women's 'land armies' were set up. In July 1942 the Minister for Labour and National Service approved the creation of a national Women's Land Army, which would recruit mostly city women to perform a range of agricultural work. Women already engaged in rural work were not eligible to join the AWLA.

At its peak in late 1943 the AWLA consisted of more than 3000 members, both permanent and part-time.

Since the end of the war there has been some controversy surrounding the lack of recognition of AWLA service, due to the fact that the AWLA was not constituted under national security regulations, and hence members did not receive the same benefits granted to the other three women's auxiliary services. Reportedly, a proposal to recognise AWLA as an official fourth military auxiliary service was supported by Cabinet in January 1943, but the legislation was never introduced into parliament. Former ALWA members have campaigned since the war for recognition, and have so far gained:

- the right to march on Anzac Day (1985)
- the right to join the RSL (1991) and
- access to the Civilian Service Medal 1939–1945 (established as part of the Australian Honours System in 1994)

AWLA veterans and their supporters continue to campaign for recognition, and the Australian Government is currently considering ways to further recognise the service of AWLA members on the occasion of its 70th anniversary in July.

The sinking of the *Montevideo Maru*

On 1 July 1942 an unmarked Japanese transit freighter, the *Montevideo Maru*, was taking 1051 Australian soldier and civilian prisoners of war to Hainan Island. Most of those on board had come from [Rabaul](#). The vessel was torpedoed and sunk by the American submarine [USS Sturgeon](#) on that day, and there were no Australian survivors. This represents the greatest loss of Australian lives at sea in either war or peace.

The story of the *Montevideo Maru* has been covered in some detail in a previous [Parliamentary Library Background Note](#).

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the *Montevideo Maru* a [new memorial](#) to the tragedy will be dedicated at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Battle of Milne Bay

The August-September 1942 [Battle of Milne Bay](#) is regarded as the first time a Japanese land operation was [decisively defeated](#) during the Second World War.

Australian infantry and American engineers began building airfields at Milne Bay, on the south eastern tip of Papua, in June 1942. Expecting a Japanese attack, the airstrips were protected by 9000 Allied troops, including the [7th \(Militia\)](#) and [18th Australian Brigades](#) and [75](#) and [76 Squadrons](#) of the Royal Australian Air Force.

About 2000 Japanese marines, along with two light tanks, landed on the night of 25 August 1942. For the next few days Australian troops fell back as the Japanese headed for the airfields. On the night of 30 August Japanese troops launched a major attack to capture one of the airstrips, but the attack was repulsed. The next morning Australian troops counter-attacked, and pursued the retreating Japanese units. On 4 September, the Japanese forces began withdrawing from Milne Bay.

Demonstrating the significance of Milne Bay, the anniversary of the Allied victory there was selected as the date for the 'Battle of Australia Day', [proclaimed](#) in June 2008.

[Second Battle of el-Alamein](#)

In volume four of his six volume *The Second World War*, Winston Churchill wrote that 'it may almost be said, "Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat"'.

Australians played key roles in the early stages of the Western Desert or North African campaign. During the early success of Commonwealth forces in [Operation Compass](#) from December 1940 to February 1941, the [6th Australian Division](#) had spearheaded many of the attacks. The 6th Division captured [Bardia](#) on 3 January 1941, in the first battle fought by the Australian troops in the Second World War. Three weeks later, on 22 January 1941, the 6th was again at the forefront in the capture of Tobruk. These two operations resulted in the capture of more than 60 000 Italian soldiers, along with large quantities of arms, rations, and alcohol.

When General Erwin Rommel's Africa Korps went on the offensive in March 1941, the [9th Australian Division](#) was left to defend the besieged city of Tobruk. It was here that the Division earned fame as the '[Rats of Tobruk](#)' during the 240-day siege.



Figure 15: A 25-pounder field gun being fired by Australian gunners from the 2/8th Australian Field Regiment, el-Alamein, July 1942; image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

After being withdrawn from Tobruk in September 1941, the 9th Division was sent to Palestine and Syria, returning to North Africa in June and July 1942. After fighting at [Tel al-Eisa](#) and [Ruin Ridge](#), the Division formed a key part in the decisive [Second Battle of el-Alamein](#) in late October-early November 1942. The 9th Division infantry attacked on the British 8th Army's northern flank as the battle opened on 23 October. The Division made the most significant gains of any force in the first few days of the battle, suffering heavy casualties.

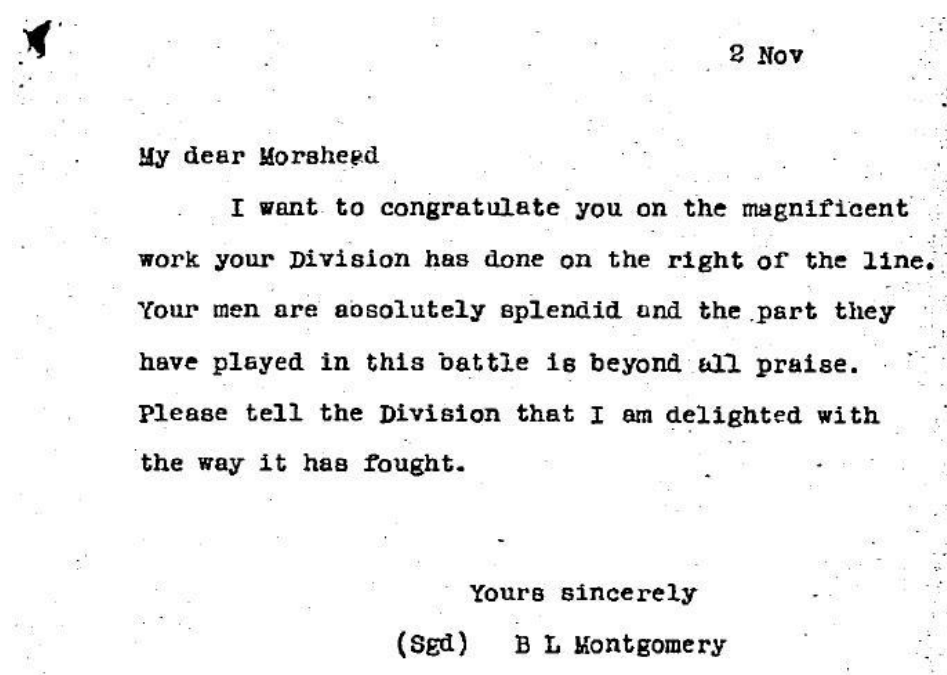


Figure 16: Letter from Lieutenant-General [Bernard Montgomery](#) to Lieutenant-General [Leslie Moreshead](#), praising the 9th Division's actions at the Second Battle of El-Alamein. Image courtesy of the [Australian War Memorial](#).

Between July and November 1942 the 9th Division suffered almost 6000 casualties, including 1200 killed. On visiting the el-Alamein battle site in 1967 the commander of the British 8th Army, Charles Montgomery [said](#):

The more I think back, the more I realise that winning was only made possible by the bravery of the 9th Australian Division in holding the road against counter-attacks and slowly pushing forward despite increasing casualties. I do not know of any [other] Allied Division who could have done it.

Other anniversaries in 2012

Vietnam

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of Australia's involvement in Vietnam. On 24 May 1962 Minister for Defence [Athol Townley](#) announced that on the invitation of the South Vietnamese Government, Australia would commit 30 military instructors to assist in the training of South Vietnamese ground forces.

The [Australian Army Training Team Vietnam \(AATTV\)](#) arrived in South Vietnam on 3 August 1962. The number of AATTV advisors grew to 100 in 1965, [peaking](#) at 217 members in 1970. Until 1964 AATTV personnel were prohibited from joining the units they trained on operations. After this restriction was lifted AATTV personnel served in operations throughout South Vietnam, and would

be Australia's most highly decorated unit in that conflict (receiving the [four Victoria Crosses](#) awarded to Australian personnel in Vietnam).

On 29 April 1965 Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced Australia's commitment of an infantry battalion to Vietnam. The commitment of a battalion represented a major step in Australia's involvement. Menzies [said](#) in Parliament at the time:

We have decided—and this has been after close consultation with the Government of the United States—to provide an infantry battalion for service in South Vietnam.

...it is our judgment that the decision to commit a battalion in South Vietnam represents the most useful additional contribution which we can make to the defence of the region at this time. The takeover of South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South and South East Asia. It must be seen as part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The task of holding the situation in South Vietnam and restraining the North Vietnamese is formidable. But we are conscious of the magnitude of the effort being made by the Government and people of South Vietnam in their own defence. In recent months the United States has taken historic decisions to extend further military assistance to South Vietnam.

The [1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment](#) (1RAR) was deployed to Vietnam in June 1965 and on its first tour, served with the US 173rd Airborne Brigade in Bien Hoa province.

On 8 March 1966 the Holt Government [announced](#) (on page 27 of the linked text) that it was increasing Australia's commitment in Vietnam. 1RAR would be replaced with the 'self contained' [1st Australian Task Force](#) (1ATF), [consisting](#) of two infantry battalions (this would be increased to three after 1967), a Special Air Services Squadron, a field regiment, No. 9 Squadron RAAF, as well as some New Zealand personnel and support units. Notably, 1ATF would also include conscripts drawn from Australia's [national service scheme](#). 1ATF established its base at Nui Dat in the heart of Phuoc Tuy province, and despite being officially under the control of the US II Field Force Vietnam, a degree of operational independence was maintained.

In all, almost 60 000 Australian personnel served in Vietnam. This includes those deployed with the [Royal Australian Navy](#) and [Royal Australian Air Force](#). At the height of Australia's commitment in 1969 and 1970, up to 8500 Australians were deployed in Vietnam at any one time. Some of the key battles involving Australians were [Long Tan](#), [Bribie](#), [Coral/Balmoral](#), [Tet Offensive/Operation Coburg](#), and [Binh Ba](#).

The Australian Labor Party had long opposed Australian involvement in Vietnam—see for example page 32 of the 1967 [Labor Party Platform](#)—and on the election of the Whitlam Labor Government in December 1972, the last of Australia's troops were withdrawn (with the exception of a platoon guarding the Australian Embassy in Saigon, which left in June 1973). Australia's deployment was officially declared to be at an end when the Governor-General issued a proclamation to this effect on 11 January 1973.

However, using either December 1972 or January 1973 to mark the end of Australia's involvement is problematic, as the vast majority of Australian troops had been withdrawn earlier, and it was only the remaining personnel from AATTV who were pulled out by the Whitlam Government in December 1972. The vast majority of Australian combat troops, including all the infantry battalions, were withdrawn prior to the 1972 election. On 18 August 1971, Prime Minister William McMahon [announced](#):

...the Government has decided to withdraw all remaining Australian combat forces from Vietnam. The forces will begin withdrawing in the next few months, giving the Vietnamese time to adjust their force dispositions.... Most of the combat elements will be home in Australia by Christmas 1971. Shipment to Australia of stores and equipment will be completed in the early months of 1972.

Section 7: Statistics, links and further reading

Australia's wars and warlike operations

Since the 1850s, when the Australian colonies became self-governing ahead of Federation in 1901, Australians have served in at least 21 wars and warlike operations (Note: 'Warlike operations' is the modern term for those operations qualifying for the Australian Active Service Medal. Date ranges noted are for Australian warlike service within these conflicts).

North Taranaki War 1860–61

Victoria dispatched HMCSS *Victoria* to New Zealand, with some of its sailors attached to the Imperial Naval Brigade.

Sudan War 1885

New South Wales dispatched a contingent of 758 men, who reached the Sudan just as the war was winding up.

Boer War 1899–1902

The Australian colonies and, after Federation, the Commonwealth sent about 16 500 troops to South Africa.

Boxer Rebellion 1900–01

New South Wales and Victoria dispatched about 560 naval and military personnel to China.

First World War 1914–18

About 425 000 enlisted, with about 340 000 (army and navy) serving overseas, mostly in Europe or the Middle East.

Second World War 1939–45

Nearly one million served (about 560 000 overseas) in the Middle East, Europe, Atlantic, Asia-Pacific, and Australia.

Malayan Emergency 1948–60

About 7000 served, a few with British forces early on, then with a RAAF deployment from 1950 and Army from 1955.

Korean War 1950–53

More than 17 000 served, with Australia the second country (after the US) to commit to the defence of South Korea.

Thai-Malay Border (or Malay Peninsula) 1960–66

Several hundred troops patrolled the border area against insurgents during 1960–64, with RAAF flights until 1966.

Vietnam War 1962–73 and 1975

About 50 000 served 'in country' and about 10 000 in logistic support during 1962–73. A small group was involved in the emergency airlifts of 1975.

Confrontation (or *Konfrontasi*) 1963–66

About 3500 served against Indonesian forces in southern Malaysia and its Borneo states (Sabah and Sarawak), and Brunei.

Thailand (Ubon) 1965–68

A few hundred airmen and troops served in and around Ubon, north-east Thailand, in a Vietnam War-related defence role.

Namibia 1989–90

More than 300 served with the UN Transition Assistance Group.

Gulf War (Kuwait) 1990–91

Nearly 1800 (mostly naval) personnel served during the liberation of Kuwait, after the Iraqi invasion of 1990.

Cambodia 1991–93

About 600 served as UN peacekeepers in signals, mine clearance, policing and support roles, and others in non-warlike periods.

Former Yugoslavia (Balkans) 1992–97

A small number, mostly on exchange with British forces, served in UN and NATO forces; others later in non-warlike periods.

Somalia 1992–94

A small number served in UN units, and a further 1500 served with the US-led Unified Task Force during 1993.

Rwanda 1994–95

More than 630 peacekeepers served during the two rotations classed as warlike; others in non-warlike periods.

East Timor 1999–2003

More than 5000 served in the Australian-led International Force East Timor and later operations; others in non-warlike periods.

Afghanistan, 2001–present

Approximately 1500 personnel are based in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). There are a further 800 personnel deployed to the broader Middle East Area of Operations.

Iraq, 2003–2009

More than 20,000 personnel served in Iraq as part of Australia's contribution to the United States led force.

Statistical information

[Gallipoli facts and figures](#) is a compilation of statistics which includes:

- the number of enlistments in 1914, and per month for 1915 and 1916
- information on the recruiting marches carried out between October 1915 and January 1916
- the number of Anzacs who served at Gallipoli and the number of Australian casualties per month from April 1915 to January 1916 and
- the number of fatalities for each nation involved.

'[Prisoner-of-war death rates: some comparisons](#)' contrasts the number of Australian prisoners of war (POWs) in the First World War and the Second World War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It also compares the death rates among the prisoners of the Japanese from different allied nations.

The Australian War Memorial's [Australian military statistics](#) webpage has links to a number of statistical surveys of Australia's involvement in war and peacekeeping.

The Australian War Memorial's information sheet, [Australian war casualties](#), is a tabular summary of casualties in all theatres of war, derived from the Roll of Honour at the Memorial.

Useful links for further information on Australia's military history

The 2010 Parliamentary Library online publication [List of Victoria Cross recipients by electorate](#) allows readers to identify Australian Victoria Cross (VC) winners with ties to particular federal electorates and contains biographical information about each of them.

Australia's [First and Second World War Official Histories](#) have been digitised and are available on the website of the Australian War Memorial, as are a selection of [Australian Army war diaries](#) for both world wars, the Korean War and South-East Asian conflicts.

Department of Veterans' Affairs: [Commemoration](#) pages and links to their other commemorative websites; the [Australians at War film archive](#)—'designed to film and record the stories of over two thousand war veterans as a permanent asset for posterity'; the [Australians at War](#) website—dedicated to those Australians who have served their nation during the past one hundred years.

The [Australians at War](#) pages on the Australian War Memorial's website have links to an overview of Australian military history, information on military organisation and structure, and an online encyclopaedia.

The three services have webpages devoted to their histories: the [Royal Australian Navy](#) page includes historical information, feature articles and the history of former ships; the [Australian Army](#) has a page which includes links to army history information and unit associations and a traditions page; and the [Royal Australian Air Force](#) has a page with links to the history of the RAAF.

[Firstworldwar.com](#) is a website that provides an overview of the First World War.

[Australia's War 1939–1945](#) provides an overview of key areas where Australians served during the Second World War.

The website of the National Archives of Australia has links to [defence service records](#).

Roll of Honour

The Australian War Memorial maintains the [Roll of Honour](#) which commemorates members of Australia's armed forces who have lost their lives in wars and warlike operations. A common misconception is that the Roll of Honour is only for those killed in action. Names are, and always have been, inscribed on the roll irrespective of the cause of death, be it battle, illness, accident, captivity, or other causes.

There are currently 102 809 men and women recorded on the roll. The following figures have been taken from the Australian War Memorial's information sheet, [Australian war casualties](#):

Sudan War	9
Boxer Rebellion (China)	6
Boer War	589
First World War	61 520
Second World War	39 653
Malayan Emergency	39
Korean War	340
Confrontation	16
Malay Peninsula	2

Vietnam War	521
Thailand	2
Somalia	1
East Timor	2
Afghanistan	32
Iraq	2
Total	102 734

Note that [updates to the Roll of Honour](#) occur every year on Remembrance Day, and as a result the statistics above may not align with other sources of casualty figures.

As well as any new death, the Council of the Australian War Memorial is able to approve the addition of names from earlier conflicts that are revealed through new research or become eligible for inclusion if a conflict is reclassified as 'warlike'.

Other lists can be found below.

[First World War Nominal Roll](#)—those who served overseas in the Australian Imperial Force, 1914–18.

[Second World War Nominal Roll](#)—an index of servicemen and women who served during the Second World War.

M Lumb, [Commonwealth Members of Parliament who have served in war](#), Research Brief, no. 10, 2006–07, Parliamentary Library, Canberra 2007.

Books on 'Anzac' held in the Parliamentary Library

Members, Senators and Parliamentary staff may arrange to borrow any of the following books:

A Staunton, *Victoria Cross: Australia's finest and the battles they fought*, Prahran, Vic., Hardie Grant Books, 2005.

ANZAC: *an illustrated history 1914–1918*, edited by Richard Pelvin, South Yarra, Vic., Hardie Grant, 2004.

J Robertson, *Anzac and Empire: the tragedy & glory of Gallipoli*, Port Melbourne, Vic., Hamlyn Australia, 1990.

Anzac Day: past and present, compiled by Georgina Fitzpatrick, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, Education Service, 1992.

S Braga, *ANZAC doctor: the life of Sir Neville Howse, Australia's first VC*, Alexandria, NSW, Hale & Iremonger, 2000.

A Thompson, *Anzac memories: living with the legend*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Anzac remembered: selected writings by KS Inglis chosen and edited by John Lack; with an introduction by Jay Winter, Parkville, Vic., Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1998.

J Williams *ANZACS, the media and the Great War*, UNSW Press, 1999.

J Moses and G Munro, *Australia and the 'Kaiser's war' 1914–1918: on understanding the ANZAC tradition: argument & theses*. St. Lucia, Qld, Broughton Press, 1993.

R Reid, *A 'duty clear before us': North Beach and the Sari Bair Range, Gallipoli Peninsula: 25 April–20 December 1915*, Canberra, Department. of Veterans' Affairs, 2000.

Echoes of ANZAC: the voice of Australians at war, edited by Graham Seal, South Melbourne, Lothian Books, 2005.

G Seal, *Inventing ANZAC: the Digger and national mythology*, St Lucia, Qld, University of Queensland Press, 2004.

T Stephens, *The last Anzacs: lest we forget*, Fremantle, WA, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003.

P Stanley, *Quinn's Post, Anzac, Gallipoli*, Allen & Unwin, 2005.

T Frame, *The shores of Gallipoli: naval aspects of the Anzac campaign*, Alexandria, NSW, Hale & Iremonger, 2000.

A Hill, *Soldier boy: the true story of Jim Martin the youngest Anzac*, Ringwood, Vic., Penguin, 2001.

M Tracey, *The spirit of ANZAC*, Canberra, AGPS, 1990.

A Thompson, *Stragglers or shirkers: an ANZAC Imperial controversy*, London, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1991.

P Thompson, *Anzac fury*, North Sydney, Random House Australia, 2011.

J Hopkins-Weise, *Blood brothers: the Anzac genesis*, Kent Town, Wakefield Press, 2009.

D Cameron, *25 April 1915: the day the Anzac legend was born*, Crows Nest, Allen & Unwin, 2007.

J Taylor, *Last out: 4RAR/NZ (ANZAC) Battalion's second tour in Vietnam*, Crows Nest, Allen & Unwin, 2007.

R Prior, *Gallipoli : the end of the myth*, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2009.

DW Cameron, *'Sorry, lads, but the order is to go': the August offensive, Gallipoli 1915*, University of New South Wales Press, 2009.

M McKernan, *Gallipoli: a short history*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 2010.

P Hart, *Gallipoli*, London, Profile Books, 2011.

I Sumner, *Anzac infantrymen 1914-15: from New Guinea to Gallipoli*, Oxford, Osprey, 2011.

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