



The Gallipoli campaign

This year marks the 95th anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign fought between Allied forces from Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, France and her empire, India, and Newfoundland on one hand, and Ottoman Empire forces (generally known as Turks) on the other. The initial landings by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps – the ANZACs – occurred before dawn on 25 April 1915, when Australians came ashore around Ari Burnu. The men of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Force, were quickly off the beaches and engaging Turkish defenders on the ridges inland.

By midnight on 25 April, more than 16,000 Australians and New Zealanders had been put ashore, mainly in a little bay to the south of Ari Burnu that soon became known as Anzac Cove. More than 2000 Australians were killed or wounded during the first day and the opposing Turkish units are thought to have suffered similarly casualties.

The original intention of the landing had been to cut across the Gallipoli Peninsula and destroy the Turkish defences along the Straits of the Dardanelles. Strong Turkish counter-attacks made this impossible and the Anzacs were forced to dig themselves in along a ridge-line up to one kilometre inland. The area occupied by Australian and New Zealand troops became known as 'Anzac' until the evacuation of December 1915.

By the end of the eight-month-long campaign, over 8700 Australians and some 2720 New Zealanders were killed, died of wounds or missing; thousands more were wounded, sick or injured.

Main Anzac battles

On 8 May near Cape Helles, the British and French area of operations, an Australian brigade took part in the second assault on Krithia. The Australian attack, like those of the other Allies, was unsuccessful and over 1000 Australians and 750 New Zealanders were killed or wounded. At Anzac Cove, a strong Turkish counter-attack was launched on 19 May, with an estimated 42,000 Turkish troops attacking the Anzac positions in an attempt to drive them back into the sea. More than 3000 Turkish soldiers were believed to have died and some 7000 to have been wounded, while more than 620 Anzacs were killed or wounded in these attacks.

In August 1915, a major offensive was undertaken to try and break out of the 'Anzac' area in conjunction with feint attacks at Cape Helles and Lone Pine, and a further British landing at Suvla Bay to the north of Anzac. It was hoped this break-out would allow the Allied armies, composed of Australian, New Zealand, Indian and British troops, to carry out the aim of the original landings and capture the Dardanelles.

On the afternoon of 6 August, the Australians attacked the Turkish positions at Lone Pine as a diversion from the main Allied attack at Chunuk Bair. The enemy's front line trenches were quickly seized but there followed four days of some of the most terrible fighting of the whole campaign, much of it hand-to-hand involving bombs and bayonets, as the Turkish forces fought hard to regain their positions. The attack at The Nek on 7 August, where most of the Australians in the four attacking waves were cut down before they reached the Turkish trenches, was portrayed in the 1981 Australian film *Gallipoli*.

At Lone Pine, Australian units suffered more than 2000 casualties and the Turkish forces estimated their losses at more than 6900. The Australians hung on at Lone Pine but the main Allied assaults on Chunuk Bair and Hill 971 failed. The offensive collapsed and the campaign stalled.

Evacuation

In November 1915, the British decided to evacuate the peninsula. This was to prove the most successful phase of the campaign. The withdrawal was organised in three stages: reduction of troops to winter levels; withdrawal of all men and materiel not required to hold the position for the last two days; and the final withdrawal. The rules for the withdrawal laid down that the lives of the men were more important than saving weapons and equipment. Some Turkish commanders, it is now believed, suspected an evacuation was to take place and allowed it to proceed unchallenged to preserve the lives of their own men.

The last Anzacs departed before dawn on 20 December 1915, from the area that is now known as the Anzac Commemorative Site. Only two were wounded during the withdrawal. On 8-9 January 1916, the British evacuated their positions at Helles on the southern end of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Casualties

The eight-month-long Gallipoli campaign involved a total of about one million men from both sides, of whom between one-third and one-half became casualties. Precise figures are unavailable for some nations.

Approximately 469,000 British Empire soldiers served in the campaign (328,000 combatants and 141,000 non-combatants). About 120,000 became casualties, of whom over 34,000 died. The maximum British Empire strength at any time in the theatre was 128,000 personnel (85,000 combatants and 43,000 non-combatants).

About 500,000 Turkish soldiers are believed to have served on Gallipoli and their casualties are estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000, of whom (according to Turkish official sources) almost 87,000 died

Between 50,000 and 60,000 Australians served on Gallipoli and a total of 8709 were killed in action or died of wounds or disease. In addition, a total of 19,441 Australians were wounded (including those wounded more than once) and 70 Australians were captured; 63,969 Australian cases of sickness were reported in the Gallipoli campaign.

Of the 8556 New Zealanders who served in the campaign 2721 died and 4752 were wounded (including those wounded more than once). Total Anzac casualties (Australian and New Zealand) amounted to 11,430 dead and 24,193 wounded.

	Died	Wounded	Total
Australia	8709	19,441	28,150
New Zealand	2721	4752	7473
Britain	21,255	52,230	73,485
France			
(estimated)	10,000	17,000	27,000
India	1358	3421	4779
Newfoundland	49	93	142
<i>Total Allies</i>	<i>44,092</i>	<i>96,937</i>	<i>141,029</i>
<i>Turkey</i>	<i>86,692</i>	<i>164,617</i>	<i>251,309</i>

Anzac Day

In 1916, the first anniversary of the landings was observed in Australia, New Zealand and England and by troops in Egypt. That year, 25 April was officially named 'Anzac Day' by the Acting Prime Minister of Australia, George Pearce.

By the 1920s, Anzac Day ceremonies were held throughout Australia and all states had designated Anzac Day as a public holiday. Commemoration of Anzac Day continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Second World War veterans later joined parades around the country. In the ensuing decades, returned servicemen and women from the conflicts in Malaya, Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam and later conflicts, veterans from allied countries and those who served in peace-keeping operations joined the parades.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the number of people attending Anzac Day marches fell, as Australians questioned the relevance of Anzac Day. However, in the 1990s there was a resurgence of interest in Anzac Day, with attendances, particularly by young people, increasing across Australia and with growing numbers making the pilgrimage to the Gallipoli Peninsula to attend the Dawn Service.

Today, Anzac Day services are held around the world, as well as in almost every town and city in Australia. Hundreds of thousands of Australians gather to honour those who have served, and continue to serve our nation, in times of war, conflict and in peace time. Similarly in New Zealand, Anzac Day is observed as a day of commemoration for those who died in the service of their country and to honour returned servicemen and women.