

## Introduction

The general experiences of Australian prisoners of war in World War I have been neglected in both official and general war histories and accounts of the Anzac tradition. Even more neglected however are the experiences of Australian soldiers captured in theatres of war throughout the Ottoman Empire, including those captured at Gallipoli. Most examples of prisoner of war (POW) writing have concentrated on World War II POWs and the Japanese experience in particular.<sup>1</sup> In the Australian War Memorial's (AWM) collection dealing with Australian war captivity, for example, almost two thirds are concerned with World War II prisoners of the Japanese. Only 'a tiny one percent' is devoted to prisoners of the Turks.<sup>2</sup> In the event that prisoners of war in Turkey are acknowledged, few sources are consulted. Selected memoirs and autobiographies are used uncritically without corroboration of other historical sources, particularly Turkish sources, to produce an overall picture of unrelieved brutality.

It has been suggested that this historical neglect of prisoners of war can be explained by their representations of military failure, creating a sense of national shame. The fact that they have been captured suggests failure of leadership and planning at the highest level and also calls into question 'the notion which has long been central to our national self-image, that our soldiers are especially competent fighters'.<sup>3</sup> It is noteworthy in this context that the source of the Anzac tradition – the Gallipoli campaign – has not produced a scholarly study of the

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<sup>1</sup> See the following for an assessment of writers on prisoners of war (hereafter POWs): R. Gerster, 'The Rise of Prisoners-of-War Writers', *Australian Literary Studies*, vol. 12, October 1985, pp. 270-274; R. Gerster, 'Hors de Combat. The Problems and Postures of Australian Prisoner-of-War Literature', *Meanjin Quarterly*, vol. 42, 2, 1983, pp. 220-229; P. Stanley in R. Reid, *Stolen Years. Australian Prisoners of War*, Canberra, Department of Veterans Affairs, 2002, p. 5; J. Beaumont, *Gull Force. Survival and Leadership in Captivity 1941-1945*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley in R. Reid, *Stolen Years*, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Beaumont, *Gull Force*, pp. 1-3.

prisoners captured there.<sup>4</sup> A random selection of both popular and scholarly texts on Gallipoli reveals no references at all to Australian prisoners of war.<sup>5</sup>

The aim of this thesis therefore is to draw upon a wider range of sources than has previously been used to establish the identity of the Australian soldiers captured at Gallipoli and to create a detailed and balanced narrative of their experiences, from captivity to repatriation. Historical documents from Australian, British and Turkish archives have been examined. The underlying theme of the thesis is to challenge the myths developed over the past ninety years that have shrouded the Gallipoli prisoners. These include the claims that few of the captured Australians survived incarceration and that their treatment in Turkey was equivalent to that under the Japanese in World War II. The stereotyped image of Australian war captivity is invariably the skeletal prisoners who emerged from Japanese camps in World War II. This is largely due to the overwhelming number of captives, the harsh conditions experienced by these prisoners, the large percentage that died and the vividness of commonly available print and film accounts. A simple assumption has been that the Turkish experience was similar.

These myths have accumulated since the Gallipoli landing of 25 April 1915 and have been fuelled by historians' use of a narrowly selected range of published memoirs, autobiographies, media reports and official British propaganda set in a broader historical context of Western bias towards the Turks. Seven field and research trips to Turkey have been undertaken by the author to access Turkish material, gather extant oral histories and to investigate relevant sites. Turkish documents

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<sup>4</sup> N. Brackenbury wrote an unpublished honours thesis focussing on the capture of the Gallipoli soldiers. However, he does not base his discussion on the full complement of prisoners and his source base is very limited. *Becoming guests of the unspeakable*, Macquarie University, 1983. AWM MS 974, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, J. Laffin, *Damn the Dardanelles! The Agony of Gallipoli*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1985; D. Winter, *25 April 1915. The Inevitable Tragedy*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1994; T. Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, Tempus, London, 2001; L. Carlyon, *Gallipoli*, Macmillan, Sydney, 2001; A. Moorehead, *Gallipoli*, Harper Collins, New York, 2003; R. Pelvin (ed), *Anzac. An Illustrated History 1914-1918*, Hardie Grant Books, 2004; J. King & M. Bowers, *Gallipoli. Untold Stories from the War Correspondent Charles Bean and Front-line Anzacs*, Doubleday, Sydney, 2005; H. Broadbent, *Gallipoli, the Fatal Shore*, Viking Books, Melbourne, 2005; R. Prior, *Gallipoli. The End of the Myth*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009.

concerning the POWs have been translated into English for the first time. Overall, the aim of the thesis is to present a coherent and detailed narrative about a much neglected aspect of Australia's war history.

To avoid confusion, I will generally refer to the overall forces of the Ottoman army as *Turkish*, despite the fact that the army was drawn from a wide area of the Ottoman Empire at the time of the war. Many participants would have identified themselves as Greek, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Armenian or other nationality that comprised the vast Ottoman Empire.

However, contemporary accounts generally refer to the armed forces overall as *Turkish*. I also refer to the capital city as *Istanbul*, rather than the earlier Greek *Constantinople* preferred by the Allies. The choice of name has political overtones, particularly for Western powers who may have subconsciously wished to eradicate 500 years of Muslim Ottoman occupation with the usage of the earlier name. When referring to place names, I will use firstly the Anglicised name commonly used by the prisoners followed by the Turkish name commonly today. The following pronunciation of Turkish letters is relevant for this study: the sounds approximate the following: ş =sh as in Taş Kishla; ç=ch as in Çankiri. When a POW is first mentioned in the text, his rank and full name will be provided. Henceforth, only the surname will be used.

### **Historiography of Australian POWs in Turkey**

There is very little historiography on the experiences of the Australian POWs captured in Turkey. Charles Bean's *Official History of the War in 1914-1918*, volumes I and II, presents the official Australian account of the war.<sup>6</sup> Writing in the post-war period, Bean had access to a variety of sources concerning the prisoners but paid scant attention to them. Repatriation Statements made by the soldiers at the conclusion of the war were accessible as were battalion

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<sup>6</sup> C. Bean, *Official History of the War in 1914-1918*, vols. I & II, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1938 & 1942 editions.

diaries, memoirs and official documents. Bean mentions approximately eleven instances of capture but does not refer to the actual experiences of captivity. Despite drawing on material from Private Daniel Creedon's diary for details of the capture of seven men on 28 June 1915, Bean does not name the individual soldiers, except for one. As the incident may be interpreted as controversial, it appears that Bean either self-censored material or official censorship was imposed. This example will be discussed further in Chapter 3.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the published memoirs which will be discussed later in the chapter, there is a considerable gap in time between the writings of Bean and other historical discussions of the POW experience in Turkey. The unpublished honours thesis of Brackenbury is the earliest research on the Turkish POW experience.<sup>8</sup> The title alludes to Tom White's colourful memoir, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, and Brackenbury takes his cue from White in his attitude to the Turks. His thesis is based on the work of British historian A. J. Barker who examined the generic experiences of prisoners in the period between capture and internment in camp, referred to as the 'first ordeal'.<sup>9</sup> With no reference to evidence, Brackenbury states in his Introduction that conditions in Turkish camps were far worse than in German camps. Brackenbury erroneously concludes that two-thirds of those who died of disease did so en route to captivity or within six months of reaching internment camps. Brackenbury also claims that some men returned from Turkey 'quite insane', yet provides no names or substantial evidence.<sup>10</sup> He accepts AE2 submariner Charles Suckling's statement that prisoners were nothing more than living skeletons on their release. This fits conveniently with the later images of skeletal POWs released by the Japanese in World War II. However, in the conclusion this claim is contradicted by the statement that on release 'most prisoners appear

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<sup>7</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. II, p. 301. In other instances, soldiers are named, for example, McDonald, Elston, Lushington, Ashton, Troy, Luscombe, Calcutt, Cliffe, Delpratt and King.

<sup>8</sup> Brackenbury, *Becoming guests*.

<sup>9</sup> A. J. Barker, *Behind Barbed Wire*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, London, 1975.

<sup>10</sup> Brackenbury, *Becoming guests*, p. 67.

to have been better fed and clothed than many of the Turkish populace'.<sup>11</sup> Contemporary photographs of the prisoners also challenge this claim. Brackenbury correctly concludes that the experiences in the POW camps were diverse yet he is one of the earliest of several historians to make the allegation that the POW experience in Turkey was similar to that under the Japanese in World War II. This argument is based on prisoners complaining of poor food, suffering the difficulties of cultural difference, unsophisticated medical care and labouring on the construction of a railway.

A 1988 British publication, P. Liddle's *Men of Gallipoli*, makes a fleeting reference to POWs in Turkey from a British perspective.<sup>12</sup> Liddle provides no statistics and bases his comments on the account written by French POW Marius Gondard. Reference is made to the two camps of Belemelik and Afyon and it is acknowledged that living conditions were reasonable. He pays no attention to the role of the Red Cross in providing aid but mentions the intervention of the American Ambassador.

In 1990, John Robertson's *Anzac and Empire*, provided more detail on the POW experience than previous histories and used a range of sources.<sup>13</sup> Several instances of capture are mentioned but the individual accounts of prisoners Driver Robert Griffiths and Private Patrick O'Connor are used uncritically and without corroboration from other sources. Hostility to two Australian prisoners by Turkish soldiers is mentioned, but not acts of kindness and consideration. Unsubstantiated claims are recounted such as the harsher treatment of Indian soldiers. It is correctly noted that many officers had a comfortable existence. However, Robertson's choice of sources tends to paint a picture of unrelieved misery for most prisoners

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> P. Liddle, *Men of Gallipoli*, David & Charles Publishers, London, 1988. Four pages out of 271 refer to POWs in Turkey.

<sup>13</sup> J. Robertson, *Anzac and Empire. The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipol*, Hamlyn, Australia, Melbourne, 1990.

and the more positive elements of camp life such as sports days, concerts and intellectual pursuits are ignored. Official British documents are used uncritically and claims that food shortages caused deaths are unproven. Robertson states that by the end of the war, only 33 Gallipoli soldiers were still alive and that the mortality rate was 30 percent. The treatment of prisoners in Turkey is closely compared to that of the Japanese and again memoirs such as White's are accepted uncritically. Despite attempting to use a broader source base, Robertson prefers to use sources that are critical of the Turks. Robertson does not engage with the historiography of POW war writing that was well established early in the 1980s and ignores the apparent need of many prisoner writers to justify their capture and to prove that they suffered as much as the men who went on to fight on the Western Front.

Patsy Adam-Smith's *Prisoners of War. From Gallipoli to Korea* focuses on World War II, although she provides accounts of the AE2 submariners drawn from the diary of John Wheat and other sources. However, once again the sources are used uncritically and Adam-Smith accepts Wheat's description of the camp at Belemedik as a punishment camp where prisoners worked harder and for longer hours than other camps. She refers to one soldier ('Beechie' of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion) and uncritically uses the Repatriation Statement of Lieutenant Stanley Jordan. She takes White's memoirs *Guests of the Unspeakable* at face value and accepts the statement that 'Turkish soldiers have traditionally been considered barbarous in comparison to German servicemen'.<sup>14</sup> She chooses one example of humane treatment in Germany to prove her argument, yet there are stories of German abuse of Allied prisoners that disprove her claims.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> P. Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War. From Gallipoli to Korea*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 22, 40. Her 'Beechie' is J. Beattie of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* See Footnote 36 on page 11.

M. Tracey's *Australian Prisoners of War* provides scant reference to those in Turkey. Photographs are not provenanced and place names are misspelt. Tracey also makes the claim that poor diet resulted in prisoners having their weight reduced by half. Conversely, the photographs published in the book certainly do not portray men who reflect this image. Again with no reference to a source, Tracey states that 232 Australians were captured by the Turks and that 25 percent died in captivity, including one unnamed officer.<sup>16</sup> Richard Reid's brief account of the Turkish prisoners included in *In Captivity. Australian POWs in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, mirrors that of Tracey. Both claimed that 232 Australians were captured by the Turks across all theatres of war and that 25 percent of those who worked on the railway died. Reid also claims that poor food and 'hard manual labour' accounted for many deaths and that one officer died. Again, no sources are referenced.<sup>17</sup>

Journalist Greg Kerr added considerable detail to the literature on POW experiences in *Lost Anzacs. The Story of Two Brothers*.<sup>18</sup> Drawing on his grandfather Corporal George Kerr's diary, Kerr made the POW experience accessible to the general public for the first time. Kerr's diary provides details of POW life at the two main camps of Afyon and Belemedik, and when the diary extracts are not embellished by unsubstantiated claims, it is a sound account. However, on several occasions, perhaps to heighten the sense of drama, Kerr inserts episodes that are not based on extant historical evidence. Private Brendan Calcutt is named as a prisoner bayoneted to death, yet he was captured elsewhere and sent to hospital in Istanbul.<sup>19</sup> Kerr continues by emphasising that 'the brutality continued as the battered men of C and D Companies were indiscriminately bashed and struck with rifle butts' and that

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<sup>16</sup> M. Tracey, *Australian Prisoners of War*, Australian Defence Force Journal Publications, Canberra, 1999, pp. 8-15.

<sup>17</sup> R. Reid, *In Captivity. Australian POWs in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Department of Veterans Affairs, Canberra, 1999.

<sup>18</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs. The Story of Two Brothers*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Calcutt was later sent to Belemedik camp where he died of septicaemia on 18/12/1916. Calcutt's Australian Red Cross (ARC) Wounded & Missing File, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

Australian rifles were thrown away.<sup>20</sup> Private Patrick O'Connor's Repatriation Statement, Kerr's main source here, does not support this description and no eye witness account of the men captured that day states this.<sup>21</sup> The inclusion of additional details, such as the story of the amputation of O'Connor's leg, is questionable. Kerr asserts that an orderly was seen to stamp on O'Connor's leg during the operation, but again no sources have been located that refer to this.<sup>22</sup>

More recently published are two popular histories written by journalists Elizabeth and the later Fred Brenchley. *Stoker's Submarine*, published in 2001, focuses on Irish Captain Stoker of the AE2 Australian submarine whose crew was captured in April 1915.<sup>23</sup> Based closely on the diary of the flamboyant Dacre Stoker and several diaries of submariners such as Albert Knaggs, the book remains uncritical of its sources and accepts Stoker at his word. The authors claim that the Turks did not allow any independent inspections of camps and again that life at Belededik was akin to Japanese World War II camps. Suckling's assertion that 'nearly all the submariners left Turkey as little more than walking skeletons' is again accepted without challenge.<sup>24</sup> *White's Flight* recounts the story of aviator Tom White, an Australian Flying Corps (AFC) officer captured in Mesopotamia.<sup>25</sup> Based on his memoirs *Guests of the Unspeakable*, the story relies on a very narrow source base and does not provide alternative interpretations. The difference between the treatment of lower ranks and officers is attributed to 'strict Turkish demarcation between officers and ranks' and not correctly to the Hague

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<sup>20</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 99

<sup>21</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, B2455, National Archives of Australia (NAA), Canberra.

<sup>22</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 108.

<sup>23</sup> F. & E. Brenchley, *Stoker's Submarine*, Harper Collins, Sydney, 2001.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, pp. 155, 158.

<sup>25</sup> F. & E. Brenchley, *White's Flight*, Wiley & Son, Queensland, 2004.

Convention.<sup>26</sup> The myths that no independent body was allowed to inspect camps and that the staff of the American Embassy made only one camp visit are also repeated in this text.<sup>27</sup>

### **Captivity literature**

Many biographical writings of World War I ex-POWs incarcerated by the Turks revived and reinforced the many assumptions about captivity. The following discussion draws attention to the hazards of using published memoirs as historical evidence without sound corroboration from other sources. Many of these texts continued the stereotype of the cruel and depraved Ottoman Turk displayed in war-time writings and POW literature in particular. Over the years, these memoirs have been used by historians as major sources of evidence for the POW experience.

P. Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* emphasises the dangers of accepting the literary genre of war writing at face value without corroborating evidence. Features of war writing often consist of exaggeration, bias and deception. Writings reliant on memory, with its gaps, lapses and embellishments, are often an interpretation of events: 'the memoir is a kind of fiction, differing from the "first novel"... only by continuous implicit attestations of veracity or appeals to documented historical fact'.<sup>28</sup> Although Fussell does not refer specifically to captivity literature, his cautions about the constructed quality of war literature generally and the unreliability of memory equally applies to it.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, pp. 74, 93.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p. 93

<sup>28</sup> P. Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford University Press, London, 1975, p. 310.

<sup>29</sup> Prof. Don Thomson, a forensic psychologist who specialises in eye witness accounts in criminal courts, states that a 'memory is a record of a person's experience of an event, not a record of the event itself.' Memory is always incomplete, influenced by interpretation and bias and changes with time and retelling. He warns that memories are sometimes constructed about events that have neither been seen nor experienced. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 February 2009, p. 20.

In similar vein, Gerster's *The Rise of the Prisoner-of-War Writers* points out that it is a common and understandable trait in POW texts for the writer, once freed, to show vengeance towards his former captor in print. Gerster notes that some POW writers capitalised on the horror and hardship of prisoner life and argues that 'the customary depiction of foreign (especially oriental) barbarity appeals readily to the appetite of a xenophobic audience'.<sup>30</sup> It may be argued that this description fits the depiction of the Turks as readily as it does to the Japanese in World War II. Gerster also emphasises that racism is a common feature of Australian war captivity texts, with emphasis on the alleged baser nature and less civilised characteristics of the captor culture.<sup>31</sup> The prisoner of war writer will often attempt to depict himself as a hero and may attempt to justify his capture and to explain why he did not escape. Propagandist in nature, captivity memoirs often feature a Foreword written by a renowned military figure who may show more concern for the reputation of the AIF than historical accuracy.<sup>32</sup> Several World War I memoir writers were encouraged to publish accounts that supported official post-war British propaganda that focussed on the alleged barbarous treatment of the prisoners by the Turks, such as White's *Guests of the Unspeakable*.

Memoirs from World War I POWs appeared from 1919 onwards, petering out in the late 1930s. They tended to support nationalistic and chauvinistic themes. The RSL considered censoring books that did not reflect a nationalist stance and its Federal Executive discussed 'setting up censorship against authors of war books who defame Australian soldiers'.<sup>33</sup>

Various memoirs written by POWs interned in Turkey exhibit characteristics outlined by both Fussell and Gerster yet they have been accepted uncritically by historians whenever the subject of POWs in Turkey is raised. These memoirs often display a sense of cultural

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<sup>30</sup> Gerster, *The Rise of Prisoner-of-War Writers*, pp. 271-272.

<sup>31</sup> R. Gerster, *Big-noting. The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1987, pp. 2-3.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*, p. 125.

<sup>33</sup> *Reveille*, 1 March 1930, p. 48.

superiority and inherent racism. The Turks suffer from being too foreign, too Muslim, too incomprehensible and too poor. The prisoners certainly experienced a difficult situation, struggling to survive challenging and alien physical conditions in a society very different from their own. The terrible experiences of the men captured at the siege of Kut-el-Amara in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), however, have erroneously become regarded as the norm, skewing the picture of captivity under the Turks.<sup>34</sup> With no detailed study of the men captured at Gallipoli or elsewhere, it has become the norm to repeat inflated figures for casualties and time-worn statements about low survival rates. Examples of blatant sensationalism and ‘big-noting’ have taken precedence over more considered and balanced narratives. There is no comparable material about the experiences of Australians in German camps, possibly as the Germans, as Christian Western Europeans, were regarded as more civilised and less alien than the Turks. Gerster also notes that POW writers are not as scathing about German treatment in World War II as they were about the Japanese. Germans were regarded as ‘equals or at least white-racial cousins’.<sup>35</sup> The cultural gap was not so great, yet prisoners of the Germans were subjected in some instances to worse treatment.<sup>36</sup> There is need for more research in this field, especially into the experiences of Australians captured in Germany during World War I.<sup>37</sup>

Only a few of the Gallipoli POWs published their experiences. Thus accounts from both Australian and British prisoners captured in other Turkish theatres of war and imprisoned in the same camps have also been used to provide further details of the POW experience and in

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<sup>34</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> British division was besieged in the town of Kut-el-Amara from December 1915 to April 1916. 16,583 surrendered, with 1,506 immediately repatriated. 3,290 POWs dying and eventually 9,565 becoming prisoners. Over 2,000 remained untraced. *Report of the British Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British POWs in Turkey*. AWM 940 472 T784, pp. 10-11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>35</sup> Gerster, *Big-noting*, p. 233.

<sup>36</sup> An official Australian document in 1919 stated: ‘the Germans deliberately violated the provisions of the Hague Convention in compelling prisoners of war to work at enforced labour, both in Germany and close to the firing line, and that their treatment of the wounded was such as can only be classed as one of extreme brutality’. Foreword, T. Trumble, Secretary for Defence, *How the Germans Treated Australian Prisoners of War*, Defence Department, Melbourne, 1919.

<sup>37</sup> Aaron Pegram, a post-graduate student of the Australian National University is at present researching the experiences of prisoners of war in Germany in World War I.

some cases to challenge those memoirs that have been accepted as reliable sources by historians. At least seventeen Australian and British ex-prisoners published accounts of their experiences in Turkey on their return home. These included R. A. Austin's *My Experiences as a Prisoner*, E. H. Jones' *The Road to Endor*, T.W. White's *Guests of the Unspeakable*, J. Halpin's *Blood in the Mists* and G. Handsley's *Two-and-a-Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey*.<sup>38</sup> They are generally typical of the war captivity genre defined by Gerster.<sup>39</sup> Several of these works have been accepted uncritically as worthy historical accounts of the POW experience. Their accounts will be challenged in relevant sections of each chapter throughout the thesis.

E. H. Jones' popular account, *The Road to Endor*, is a 'boys' own adventure' where British cunning and racial superiority overcame the perceived stolid stupidity and gullibility of the Turks. The author and a friend feign madness and manipulate a ouija board to gain access to the prisoner exchange program. It reveals incidental details of officer experience but remains a racy imperial romance rather than an accurate historical account. Reprinted sixteen times by 1930, *The Road to Endor* was significant in shaping public perceptions of the Turkish POW experience.

In similar vein, another popular text, T.W. White's *Guests of the Unspeakable* plays to the public's long-standing prejudices with allusions to the sexual depravities of the Turks. Gerster refers to this text as 'a pretext for xenophobic propaganda'.<sup>40</sup> Designed as a tribute to those who died and claiming to be 'true to the best of my belief', with reported conversations

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<sup>38</sup> R. A. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner*, McCarron, Bird & Co., Melbourne, 1918; E. H. Jones, *The Road to Endor*, The Bodley Head, London, 1930; T.W. White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1935; J. Halpin, *Blood in the Mists*, The Macquarie Head Press, Sydney, 1934; G. Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half-Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey*, Jones & Hambley, Brisbane, undated. See Bibliography for all POW publications.

<sup>39</sup> Gerster, *Big-noting*, p. 231.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, p. 144.

differing 'in words though not in memory', it has the standard features of the captivity narrative outlined by Gerster. General Birdwood encouraged its publication and General Sir John Monash supplied the Foreword, praising White's 'sustained tension', 'thrilling situations' and 'unrivalled pathos' in terms more appropriate to a novel than a historical memoir. White claims that the Ottoman Red Crescent is 'imbued with the national trait of untruthfulness' and wrongly claims that inquiries about prisoners were 'either ignored or evaded'. White laments his unkempt state after only two weeks as a prisoner, yet reports on his visits to a Turkish bath and being housed in hotels. He explores bazaars, attends concerts, wanders the ancient ruins of Nineveh and generally enjoys the more comfortable conditions available to officers who were served by orderlies. White wrongly claims that Turkey was a closed book to all but the secret service for the greater part of the war and asserts that Turkey did not commence to exchange prisoners till 1918. He omits the role played by the Australian Red Cross POW Department, the American and Dutch Embassies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent and others in retaining contact with, and providing support for the prisoners.

As its title suggests, J. Halpin's *Blood in the Mists* exaggerates the brutality of captivity. Written fifteen years after his return from the war, it exemplifies Gerster's 'big-noting' narrative. The Foreword's insistence on 'truthfulness' requires the 'disclosure of [Turkish] depravities and bestialities' and the language employed throughout is self-consciously florid and riddled with exaggerated metaphors, such as the incomprehensible 'unyielding stem of virile manhood snaps the more suddenly, before the gnawing teeth of Turkish prisondom'.<sup>41</sup> The extended metaphor of 'mists' (of tears and blood) is designed to elicit a sentimental response, while the use of Christian symbolism highlights the 'godlessness' of the heathen

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<sup>41</sup> Halpin, *Blood in the Mists*, p. 203.

Turk. Inherent racism is obvious in the observations that Turkish officers, if fair and handsome, owed these characteristics to non-Turkish mothers who no doubt were kept in harems.<sup>42</sup> Gerster, however, unreservedly accepts Halpin's account of captivity in Turkey on the Berlin-Baghdad railway construction, 'deprived even of the redeeming bonds of Mateship', crediting it as equivalent to that of the captives on the Burma-Thai railway.<sup>43</sup> Halpin was always incarcerated with other Allied POWs and was never isolated from fellow contact.

Even more extreme is the narrative of G. Handsley in *Two-and-a-Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey*.<sup>44</sup> In keeping with many other POW narratives, the Foreword states that the story is 'of the hardships our fighting men had to suffer at the hands of a cruel and merciless enemy' and is unexaggeratedly 'true in circumstances and detail'. The text asserts that the prisoners were tortured in interrogations for information and emphasises the dangers of attempting to escape. Handsley finds excuses for his not having done so. Preferring to complain that he was often 'starving', he plays down his role as officers' cook and orderly and makes scant reference to attending concerts at the local theatre and drinking raki with one of the sentries at a local wine shop. When he gives rare praise to the Turks for their expertise in 'theatrical dressmaking and scenery effects', it is perhaps because he regards such activities as unmanly. He fails to divulge, however, that it was the British officers who sewed the costumes for the concerts and that he himself starred in one concert dressed as an Australian woman.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, p. 92.

<sup>43</sup> Gerster, *Big-Noting*, p. 144.

<sup>44</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years*.

<sup>45</sup> C. L. Woolley (ed), *From Kastamuni to Kodos. Being a Record of Experiences of Prisoners of War in Turkey, 1916-1918*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1921, p. 95.

*My Experiences as a Prisoner* by R. A. Austin, an AFC officer whose plane went down near the Dead Sea, is less chauvinistic than later memoirs.<sup>46</sup> Captured by a Turkish officer, ‘a decent sort of chap’ and held captive for eight months, he was well treated en route to Istanbul and in prison camp, his account corroborating other sources on the life of officers at Afyon.<sup>47</sup> As an officer, he had access to raki, Balkan wine, Smyrna beer and local brandy, declaring them ‘all remarkably bad’.<sup>48</sup> He was able to visit markets daily and together with fellow officers, accumulated a library of 500 books, learnt languages and built an open-air theatre. He treated his own captivity experiences with equanimity ‘having come safely through it I can look back on it with some amusement if not satisfaction’.<sup>49</sup> However, he noted that the rank and file had to work, often with poor food rations, little medical treatment and poor clothing.<sup>50</sup>

Leonard Woolley, later renowned archaeologist as the excavator of the ancient city of Ur, was a British officer captured in Mesopotamia and provides considerable detail of the lives of officers at the camps of Kastamuni (Kastamonu) and Kedos (Gediz). Several Australians were held at these camps. Woolley was circumspect about the treatment of prisoners, stating that the Turks ‘were not out to inflict on us systematic bad treatment’ and in retrospect the treatment was ‘more laughable than tragic’.<sup>51</sup> He too emphasised the terrible conditions of the lower ranks but knew little about their lives as he did not reside in any of the shared camps. He erroneously concluded that ‘from sickness and neglect, hunger and brutality, three-quarters of them miserably died’.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> R. A. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner*, McCarron, Bird & Co, Melbourne, 1918.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, p. 5.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*, p. 43.

<sup>51</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni to Kedos*, p. v.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, p. v.

### **Captivity literature of the Gallipoli prisoners**

Gallipoli POWs produced two published memoirs, two diaries, two collections of letters, an unpublished 'story' of captivity and sundry official documents. Kerr refers to a diary kept by Martin Troy but no evidence of its survival has come to light. This paucity of published accounts may have been due to the difficulty of keeping a diary in trying circumstances, lack of interest in literary pursuits or that writings may have been lost and not entered the public domain.

Lieutenant Leslie Luscombe, an Australian officer captured at Gallipoli, published the curiously titled *The Story of Harold Earl – Australian*, an autobiography spanning Luscombe's lifetime, not solely concentrating on his POW experience.<sup>53</sup> Unlike many other war memoirs, Luscombe understates his own role, reacts to the Turks without racial prejudice and is anti-war in sentiment. His straightforward manner avoids exaggeration and grandiose claims of heroism. Perhaps this is due to the nature of the man himself as it is not imbued with a sense of revenge. He writes kindly of a Turkish officer who accompanied the officers on the journey to Istanbul after capture. There are many instances of Luscombe's moderate and good-humoured assessment of the conditions of his captivity as an officer. In both Angora (Ankara) and Afyon, he provided a balanced description of conditions, neither exaggerating conditions nor drawing a picture of his own bravery. His account is that of a deeply thoughtful man, imbued with a sense of humour and critical of the futility of war. Lacking rampant chauvinism and corroborated by the writings of other officer prisoners including Leonard Woolley, it offers a valuable historical source for captivity as it lacks the extreme emotive bias of many others. It has not been used as a source for the POW experience in any published historical account.

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<sup>53</sup> L. H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl - Australian*, W. R. Smith & Peterson Pty. Ltd., Brisbane, 1970.

Published soon after the end of the war in 1923, Private Reginald Lushington's *A Prisoner with the Turks 1915-1918*, is an account of the regular soldier's experiences based on 'a prisoner's memory'. Lushington was one of the five men captured on the first day of landing on 25 April 1915. Lushington's account provides humorous glimpses of life as a war prisoner, illustrated by his surviving drawings, made possible as artistic materials were sent by the Australian Red Cross to support his hobby of sketching and painting whilst in captivity. Lushington is inconsistent in his attitude to the Turks. He can rail at them 'for all pure thick-headedness, give me the Turk ... an uneducated, unreasonable human being with a born heritage of innate cruelty', while conceding that prisoners would have been punished more severely for misdemeanours in Germany than in Turkey.<sup>54</sup> Lushington's attitude to the Turks may have shifted on his return home, influenced by the official stance that exaggerated Turkish brutality towards prisoners. He can question 'the good qualities of the Turks' based on unsubstantiated claims about 'the 11,000 missing on the Dardanelles' and the alleged slaughter of prisoners after capture.<sup>55</sup> Conversely, he mentions that several Turkish Commandants, particularly at the camps of Ismidt (Izmit) and San Stefano (Yeşilköy), treated the prisoners well and that prisoner complaints effected the removal of some other Commandants, including two Germans who were particularly harsh.<sup>56</sup>

Private Frederick Ashton, writing some time after World War II, provided an unpublished account of his experiences from enlistment to repatriation. Ashton, a clerk from Geraldton in Western Australia, provides detailed accounts of capture and life in various camps such as Afyon, Çankiri, Beledik, Ada Bazar (Adapazari) and San Stefano. His thoughtful reminiscing provides insights into the attitudes of prisoners throughout the ordeal and is the

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<sup>54</sup> R. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks*, Simpkin, Marshall, Kent & Co. Ltd., London, 1923, p. 29.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

only account to provide details of the journey back to Australia and his re-entry into civilian life.<sup>57</sup>

### Letters

A series of letters written by Private William Randall to his family in Victoria published in the local paper, *The Free Avoca Press* from 1 June 1915, together with official telegrams, correspondence, editorials and verses by Randall's father, reflects contemporary attitudes to war and the enemy.<sup>58</sup> His relatively comfortable captivity resembles the accounts of Luscombe and Lushington. At Belemedik camp, he worked on the railway and then in the store and felt 'better off than any of the sixty POWs here'. However, back in Australia he attended an official welcome that placed him last after the soldiers who had fought on the Western Front. When interviewed by the local newspaper, his views of his treatment by the Turks took a turn for the worse. He commented that a fellow Australian POW, Private Robert Kerrigan was a 'victim of Turkish brutality and starvation'.<sup>59</sup> Headlines in the paper signposted his reports with 'The Terrible Turk', 'Prisoner Fed on Wheat and Olive Oil', and 'Many Die From Bad Treatment'. The assertion that it was the kindness of the Australian ladies that saved him is contradicted by his Red Cross POW file that shows he only received one parcel from Australia.<sup>60</sup> He provided wildly inaccurate casualty statistics and complained that prison camp food was 'no better than we give the pigs at home'. Significantly, the complaints that Randall made on his return vary markedly from his earlier letters and the brief official statement he made in his Repatriation Statement on release from Turkey. He complained about the food but added: 'I have very few complaints against anyone'.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Frederick Ashton Papers, 973A, Batty Library, State Library of Western Australia, Perth.

<sup>58</sup> Randall Family Papers, 1 March, 1919. MSB 401 MSS 11287, Victorian State Library, Melbourne.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*, Interview, March 1919.

<sup>60</sup> ARC POW File of Randall, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 171, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>61</sup> Repatriation Statement of Randall, AWM 30 B1.29, AWM, Canberra.

Sergeant Maurice Delpratt wrote a series of letters home to his family, outlining aspects of life in camp such as sports days at Belemedik, Christmas lunches and working life.<sup>62</sup>

Generally optimistic and entertaining, his letters often provide an alternative perspective to more negative memoirs.

### **Diaries**

The diaries of Private Daniel Creedon and Private George Kerr provide vivid first-hand accounts of captivity and in the case of Kerr, provide examples of later interpretation and interpolation of material. Creedon, a 22-year old clerk from Maryborough, Queensland, was captured on 28 June 1915 at Pine Ridge. His diary was brought home and deposited in the Australian War Memorial. Creedon's matter-of-fact entries about his experiences challenge the more emotive accounts of others. He spent most of his time at Belemedik working on the railway, where he received regular Red Cross parcels and celebrated his birthday in a local restaurant.<sup>63</sup> Suffering from malaria and dysentery, he died in hospital in Angora in February 1917.

The diary of George Kerr was published by his grandson, journalist Greg Kerr in *Lost Anzacs* as discussed earlier. It offers a wealth of detail about conditions in the camps at Afyon and Belemedik with many keen and humorous observations of the petty annoyances and rivalries that develop among young men in a confined and monotonous environment. These conditions were often exacerbated by an excess of alcohol. Kerr provides a picture of a reasonable existence at the main railway camp of Belemedik. In a letter to Miss Chomley of the Red Cross POW Department, he wrote: 'circumstances are not as bad with me as my remarks from

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<sup>62</sup> M. Delpratt, *Letters Written While a POW in Turkey*. AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>63</sup> *Diary of Daniel Creedon*, AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

time to time seem to indicate. On the contrary, for a prisoner of war I am happily situated'.<sup>64</sup>

Diaries of AE2 submariners Albert Knaggs, John Wheat, Charles Suckling and Herbert Brown are available and provide details of camp life, though again these accounts require careful corroboration from other sources.<sup>65</sup>

### **Official sources**

Other documentation provides collaboration or challenges to published memoirs, diaries and letters. The National Archives of Australia (NAA) contain individual Service Records, a crucial set of records of personal and military data for each soldier and generally is the starting point for any research on individual soldiers. Enlistment papers, transfer records, statements of service, casualty forms and some personal letters and documents may be found within each.<sup>66</sup> Further details of incarceration, correspondence both official and personal and details of individual camp sites can be found in the Australian Red Cross Wounded & Missing Files (ARC W & M Files), deposited in the AWM and now available on-line. These files are invaluable, consisting of case files relating to soldiers wounded, captured or posted missing. Some are detailed with eye-witness accounts and correspondence with family and the Australian Red Cross. Some reveal insights into lives in POW camps and provide valuable data on the receipt of Red Cross parcels and allotments of money.<sup>67</sup>

The Australian Red Cross Department of Enquiry Bureau POW Files (ARC POW Files) provide case files for each prisoner, contain correspondence concerning the whereabouts of prisoners, requests for special provisions and family correspondence. The secretary, Miss

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<sup>64</sup> Kerr to Miss Chomley, 12 March 1918. The Red Cross POW Department, London, AWM 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>65</sup> The diaries are unpublished. See the diaries of Albert Knaggs, AWM PR 85/096, AWM, Canberra; John Wheat, AWM 3DRL/2965, AWM, Canberra; Charles Suckling, AWM 3DRL/6226, AWM, Canberra; Herbert Brown, MSS 57/594C, Mitchell Library, Sydney. The AE2 was an Australian submarine captured by the Turks in April 1915 in the Sea of Marmara.

<sup>66</sup> See Service records for individual soldiers, B2455 NAA, Canberra. These are now all digitised.

<sup>67</sup> AWM 30 1DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

Elizabeth Chomley, was a particularly concerned and prolific correspondent to the prisoners during the war.<sup>68</sup> Based in London, her actions in mobilising parcels and payments to the prisoners made a positive impact on their lives.

On repatriation from Turkey, soldiers provided information about their capture and incarceration. Repatriation Statements are available in Service records files or are located in the Australian War Memorial.<sup>69</sup> Not all Repatriation Statements have survived.<sup>70</sup> Charles Bean, whilst composing the *Official History*, also compiled biographical cards on individual soldiers, though not all who fought at Gallipoli. These cards often provided a date of death or post-repatriation addresses.<sup>71</sup> The AWM is also a treasure trove of private letters, photographs, diaries and drawings. The NAA houses a collection of miscellaneous official records dealing with allowances, mortality rates, payments and repatriation. Department of Veteran Affairs files are available for some of the returned POWs and often contain details of their health and pension claims once back in Australia. It is disappointing that few family records have been located for individual soldiers.

British sources were also consulted for this thesis. The Public Records Office (PRO) in London contains all post-1906 Foreign Office general correspondence about prisoners of war. It contains the files of the POW and Alien Department established in 1915 which dealt with all questions relating to treatment of prisoners, repatriation and general policy. The records are arranged by date and country with a general and miscellaneous section, and cover the

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<sup>68</sup> AWM 30 1DRL/428, AWM, Canberra. See also J. Kildea, 'Bridging the Divide', *Wartime*, Issue 41, 2008, pp. 50-51.

<sup>69</sup> AWM 30 B18.1, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>70</sup> Still to be located are the statements of Cahir, Cliffe, Kerr, Kilmartin, Lushington, Masterton, Matthews, McLean, Pasmore, Rawlings, Samson, Stringer, Wiffen and Williams.

<sup>71</sup> Official History Biographical Cards, AWM 43, Canberra.

years 1915-1919. Few files relating to individuals have survived.<sup>72</sup> Also available are the British Foreign Office's general political correspondence and Colonial Office correspondence relating to Dominion POWs from 1917 to 1919.<sup>73</sup> Records of the Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British POWs, 1914-1919 are also located in these archives.<sup>74</sup> The Committee Report published at the end of 1918, written in highly emotive language, was published to depict the worst possible view of the Turkish experience. It promoted the beliefs of Turkish brutality, inflated death rates and exaggerated descriptions of POW life and repeated blatant untruths, such as the Turkish prohibition of any official visits to camps. Several official British documents of the time indicate the desire for the British to punish Turkey for their role in the war and did considerable damage to the reputation of the Turks. Other relevant official documents include various reports on camp conditions from the International Red Cross, Red Crescent and Dutch Embassy.<sup>75</sup>

Turkish sources have been utilised in this thesis for the first time in the discussion of the Gallipoli POWs, but overall are difficult to access. The Ottoman Archives, Istanbul, hold most of the documents accessed for this thesis. Permission was not granted to access the Military Archives in Ankara, as a researcher needs to be both a postgraduate student and fluent in the Ottoman language. Requests from other scholars for material on POWs were refused. Turkish official correspondence and files, such as the *Manual Regarding the Treatment of POWs*, memoirs of Turkish officers, official correspondence and newspaper accounts have been consulted.<sup>76</sup> Two volumes of sources from Allied POWs have recently

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<sup>72</sup> PRO FO 383, PRO, London.

<sup>73</sup> PRO FO 371 and PRO CO 693, PRO, London..

<sup>74</sup> PRO HO 45/10763 -4, PRO, London. Also available in AWM 940-472, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>75</sup> *Report of the Conditions of POW Camps by Rikfi Bey*, April 1918, A11803/1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra; *Dutch Delegation Report, 1918*, A11803/1/1918/891 453, NAA, Canberra; *International Red Cross Delegates Report 1917*, PRO FO 383/187/19/7, PRO, London.

<sup>76</sup> The Ottoman archives are housed in Istanbul and the archives of the Department of Military History and Strategic Studies are in Ankara.

been published by the Military Archives.<sup>77</sup> Included are forty interrogation reports from the Gallipoli POWs that have corroborated the verified list of prisoners presented in this thesis. Other material was gained from oral history accounts, particularly in the town of Gediz, old photographs located at Afyon and private collections in Istanbul.<sup>78</sup> Documents still in the original Ottoman script are difficult to translate as the intricate Arabic script and archaic Persian vocabulary allows much room for error. I have used a Turkish translator who is accredited in Australia and has the academic qualifications to translate Ottoman, thus allowing access to a range of Turkish documents translated into English for the first time.

### **Challenging the myths**

Various myths that have developed over the past ninety years will be challenged throughout the thesis. The belief that few Gallipoli prisoners returned safely began as early as 1918 and has been solidly supported ever since. Austin was told officially when repatriated to Egypt that 80 percent of prisoners with the Turks had died, mostly due to neglect.<sup>79</sup> These inflated figures were often repeated when prisoners returned home. Randall announced at his welcome home celebration in his home town of Avoca, Victoria, that ‘to my knowledge 102 out of 130 that joined us died, and I was living on the same food as these men. I am telling you the truth – old Bill will always tell you what is true. There is no need for me to exaggerate in any way’.<sup>80</sup> White estimated that out of 14,000 Allied POWs, only 3,000 survived, thus claiming that 79 percent of all prisoners died.<sup>81</sup> Halpin stated in a letter to *Reveille* that ‘I say, with

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<sup>77</sup> Colonel A. Tetik (ed), *Çanakkale Muharebeleri'nin Esirleri-İfadeler ve Mektuplar*, (Prisoners of War at the Çanakkale Battles. Testimonies and Letters), vol. II, Military History and Strategic Studies Department Publications, Ankara, 2009.

<sup>78</sup> I wish to thank Mr W. Ugural Vanthoft, Istanbul, for drawing my attention to several Turkish documents.

<sup>79</sup> Austin, *My Experiences*, p. 32.

<sup>80</sup> Randall Family Papers, 1 March 1919. BSB 401 MSS 11287, Victorian State Library, Melbourne.

<sup>81</sup> White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, p. 84.

some knowledge of fact, that probably 85 percent of British prisoners captured by Turkish arms died of starvation, cruelty and neglect'.<sup>82</sup>

Contemporary media also played a role in exaggerating the mortality rate of the prisoners. A newspaper published for both a British and Australian readership, *The British-Australasian*, reported towards the end of the war that 'more than 50 percent are known to have died in captivity' and that those who survived 'are living in unspeakable conditions, suffering every sort of bodily and mental torture'.<sup>83</sup> These inflated figures remained unchallenged in later publications. Kerr writing about his grandfather in *Lost Anzacs* and Adam-Smith in *Prisoners of War*, both concluded that few returned.<sup>84</sup> Adam-Smith added 'few of the wounded Anzacs left with the Turks survived' yet conceded that 'there has never been an authoritative figure given for Australian soldiers taken on Gallipoli'.<sup>85</sup>

It was impossible to arrive at correct percentages of returned POWs when the actual number of captured prisoners remained unknown. Joan Beaumont, editor of the *Australian Centenary History of Defence*, vol. VI, rightly draws attention to the fact that there was no comprehensive study of the Gallipoli POWs. However, she still added, '232 Australians captured by the Turks, in particular, suffered great privations, with about 25% of them dying'.<sup>86</sup> As noted earlier, Tracey and Reid also state that 232 Australians were captured in all theatres of war by the Turks but do not provide a source for these figures.<sup>87</sup> In this study, 67 Gallipoli prisoners have been verified with 36 percent dying. However, 18 percent of prisoners died almost immediately of their battle wounds in Turkish field or military

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<sup>82</sup> J. Halpin, *Reveille*, 1 August 1934.

<sup>83</sup> *The British-Australasian*, Thursday 1 August 1918.

<sup>84</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs* and Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War*.

<sup>85</sup> Adam-Smith, *ibid*, pp. 29, 31.

<sup>86</sup> J. Beaumont (ed), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics. The Australian Centenary History of Defence*, vol. VI, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 337.

<sup>87</sup> Tracey, *Australian Prisoners of War*, p. 14; Reid, *In Captivity*, p. 9.

hospitals. Thirteen and a half percent died of disease in hospitals attached to convalescent camps and 4.5 percent died in the camp hospitals attached to the railway. It is simplistic to argue that all prisoners thus died of neglect and brutality in the railway camps.<sup>88</sup>

There is also an untested assumption that prisoners under the Turks suffered more than those in German prison camps. Both suffered inadequate and crowded transport, poor food, disease and inadequate medical supplies at times but to date no comparative study has been conducted. Those held in Turkey were not forced to work in war industries or in the front-line as were some prisoners in Germany.<sup>89</sup> However, according to Reid, of those prisoners forced to work on the railway in the Taurus Mountains, 25 percent died of privation and by comparison, those in Germany were better off.<sup>90</sup>

Poor food, disease and inadequate medical supplies certainly existed in some circumstances but could just as well describe the conditions created by the Allied authorities for soldiers on Gallipoli itself. Peter Stanley compared the experiences of those captured in Turkey to those under the Japanese during World War II. He noted that there were 217 Australians in total in Turkey:

with 62 of these men, or nearly 1 in 4, died, many of ill-treatment and outright brutality comparable to the prisoners of the Japanese. The myth propagated in celebrations of Australia's and Turkey's special relationship dating from Gallipoli, which includes the belief that "Johnny Turk" was actually a "decent chap", has generally clouded investigation of those who suffered at the hands of an inefficient, negligent and often outright brutal regime.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> By October 2009, a total of 206 Australian POWs of the Turks had been confirmed from all theatres of war.

<sup>89</sup> '...the Germans deliberately violated the provisions of the Hague Convention in compelling prisoners of war to work at enforced labour, both in Germany and close to the firing line, and their treatment of the wounded was such as can only be classed as one of extreme brutality'. T. Trumble, Secretary of Defence, *How the Germans Treated Australian Prisoners of War*, Defence Department, Melbourne, 1919, Foreword.

<sup>90</sup> Reid, *In Captivity*, pp. 10-11. As stated, 4.5 percent died in camp hospitals attached to the railway.

<sup>91</sup> Stanley in Reid, *ibid*, p. 94.

Robin Gerster also claimed that one of the Australian prisoners, John Halpin, suffered the same degree of starvation, disease and cruelty 'endured by the prisoners of the Japanese'.<sup>92</sup> Yet Turkish prisoners were not subjected to the same systematic brutality experienced by many POWs in Japanese camps. Japanese prisoners lacked any protection from international conventions or aid agencies such as the Red Cross and some were subjected to torture and execution. The imagery of the skeletal prisoner on release does not represent the physical reality of the prisoner held in Turkey. The captor's attitude to the prisoner also varied; unlike the Japanese contempt for the surrendered soldier, the Turks were often bewildered by the behaviour of their prisoners but were not contemptuous towards them.<sup>93</sup>

The myth has continued that life in the Turkish camps was one of unrelieved brutality, constant ill-treatment, with the virtual absence of medical treatment and the refusal of the Turkish Government to allow independent visits to the camps. These aspects of the POW experience will be examined and challenged in subsequent chapters of this thesis. Thus although there is a wealth of sources on the POWs from Turkey, historians have paid scant attention to them. Many of the texts dealing with captivity under the Turks feature the blatant sensationalism and big-noting of Australian POW writing outlined by Gerster, yet there are also more considered and balanced accounts, such as those of Luscombe, Delpratt, Austin, Creedon, Ashton and Woolley. Researchers cannot necessarily draw historical conclusions from literary works without sound and detailed historical analysis and source corroboration. In dealing with this particular period, it is also essential to be aware of the orientalist and imperialist attitudes underpinning Western views of non-European captors. This aspect will be examined further in Chapter 1.

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<sup>92</sup> Gerster, *Hors de Combat*, p. 225.

<sup>93</sup> The range of literature on the Japanese POW experience is extensive. A good starting point would be H. Nelson, *Prisoners of War. Australians Under Nippon*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2001 and J. Beaumont, *Gull Force. Survival and Leadership in Captivity 1941-1945*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990.

## Research methodology

The first research task was to create a verified list of Gallipoli POWs.<sup>94</sup> This has taken several years, with one prisoner coming to light in 2007. Prisoners captured in other theatres of war such as Palestine are included in most official lists and had to be excluded from the Gallipoli search.<sup>95</sup> Having gained eight names of prisoners from the Haydar Pasha cemetery in Istanbul, there began the time-consuming activity of cross-referencing extant lists and official documentation. Names mentioned by other POWs in letters, memoirs, diaries and published accounts were followed up. Generally the same names appeared in most lists of prisoners. However, there are often inclusions of names that do not exist in any other document, misspellings and erroneous listings. *The Nominal Roll of POWs – Turkey* listed 58 prisoners from Gallipoli and 111 from elsewhere, totalling 169.<sup>96</sup> *Captain Hall's List of POWs in Turkey* created at AIF Headquarters in Egypt, lists 46 from Gallipoli and 40 from elsewhere.<sup>97</sup> This list includes names, rank, serial number and battalion. However it does not include those who died soon after capture or prisoners such as Goodwin and Griffiths who were captured in unusual circumstances.<sup>98</sup>

Other checks for verification include *The Roll of Honour* listing all of those who died as a result of active war service. It includes name, rank, serial number and unit at the time of death, date and brief circumstance of death, place of birth and enlistment. It does not include

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<sup>94</sup> See Appendix 1 for the complete list of Gallipoli POWs.

<sup>95</sup> Several Australians enlisted in Britain and thus would have been included in British statistics. Captain T.H. Piper was an observer and pilot in the British Royal Naval Service and was captured on the peninsula when his plane crashed. T.W. Piper, *Prisoner of War in Turkey in WWI. An Autobiography*, 1986. 940. 472561 P.665, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

<sup>96</sup> AWM 30 B18.1.AWM, Canberra. This list did not contain names of those who died soon after capture in Turkish field hospitals or hospitals in Turkey such as Francis, Shelton, Wood, Sherlock, Leyden and Brooke. O'Connor spent most of his time in hospitals and was not included.

<sup>97</sup> AWM 30 B18.1, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>98</sup> Those not listed included Calcutt, Creedon, Francis, Goodwin, Griffiths, Kerrigan, Hodsdon, Jenkins, Jones, Kelly, Mathers, Nelson, New, O'Callaghan, Shelton, Wilson, Wood, Hennessy, Sherlock, Leyden and Brooke.

all prisoners of war.<sup>99</sup> *The Nominal Roll for World War I* provides a similar alphabetical list detailing regimental number, latest rank, latest unit, date of enlistment, date of death, discharge abroad or return to Australia.<sup>100</sup> *Embarkation Rolls* of the World War I AIF provides details of soldiers as they embarked from Australia. Usually the names of the troopship, date of embarkation, regimental number, name, rank, age, trade, marital status, address, next of kin, religion, date of joining, unit of service and rate of pay are provided.<sup>101</sup> For those soldiers who died in service, the *War Graves Register* contains the names, personal details and descriptions of relevant war cemeteries and individual graves.<sup>102</sup>

Once a verified list of prisoners was collated, the gathering of data on the nature of capture, camps, life in camps, medical treatment and repatriation commenced, using the sources previously discussed. The most time consuming aspect was the location of relevant documents in archival collections such as the AWM, NAA, various State Archives, and State Libraries, the British PRO and various Turkish archival collections. The collation, synthesis and evaluation of such disparate material was both time consuming and challenging. Sources vary in detail and veracity and accounts of events had to be corroborated from as wide a range of evidence as possible. Locating and translating Turkish material was also laborious, requiring many trips to Turkey. Information gleaned from oral sources and site visits was gathered during a four months trip to Turkey in 2006, travelling over 8,000 kilometres to locate the sites of the camps throughout Turkey. This visit made possible the opportunity to challenge some myths of distance and corroborated local oral traditions about life in the camp at Eski Gediz and elsewhere.

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<sup>99</sup> AWM 131, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>100</sup> AWM 133, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>101</sup> AWM 8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>102</sup> See the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website: [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

This thesis has been structured into ten chapters, including an introduction and conclusion.

Chapter 1 examines the development of Western attitudes to the Ottomans as this was a contributing factor in the failure of the Gallipoli campaign and helped to construct the attitude of the Australians towards the Turks. It also provides the historical context to the development of the international conventions governing prisoners of war in World War I.

Chapter 2 examines the statistical profiles of the Australian Gallipoli prisoners and compares this statistical profile to that of the wider World War I Australian cohort. Chapter 3 considers the experience of capture for the prisoners. It places the actual instances of capture into historical context and examines the often conflicting evidence for this early period of captivity. Chapter 4 discusses the interim period between capture and actual incarceration in a camp, including experiences of hospitalisation in Istanbul. Chapter 5 provides evidence of each of the major camps that housed the Australians and categorises individual camps as either work, convalescent or officer camps. It focuses on the location and administration of each camp and experience of working life. Chapter 6, the largest chapter, considers life in the camps themselves, social activities, the crucial nature of contacts and the role of the Australian Red Cross. Chapter 7 focuses on the medical provisions in the camps and the mortality of the prisoners, challenging both official and personal documentation. Chapter 8 is concerned with the repatriation of prisoners on their release from Turkey and their return to Australia and subsequent experiences.

## Chapter 1: ‘The Lustful Turk’ and International Conventions.

An examination of contemporary British and Australian attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire helps to explain why the Australians so readily believed the rumours of maltreatment and mutilation allegedly perpetrated by the Turks on Allied soldiers and their obvious fear of capture. This analysis also helps to explain official British propaganda during and immediately after the war. International conventions governing conduct on the battlefield and treatment of prisoners of war in World War I are also discussed in this chapter and comparisons are drawn between these and official Turkish POW regulations.

A narrow Western view of the Ottomans had been developing for centuries before the outbreak of the war. E. Said in his seminal work, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* argued that Western concepts of the East were a construct to support a sense of Western superiority and to justify the domination of the Middle Eastern world by the West. Part of this discourse is the inherent belief of the moral superiority of Christianity over Islam. It also encouraged an image of the East as one imbued with exotic and erotic intrigue and languid excess, unequal to the cultural and intellectual rigour of the West. Said argued that such a dogmatic and unchanging construct has for centuries skewed and limited Western views of the East.<sup>1</sup> These stereotypes included the Ottoman Empire and impacted on the Gallipoli campaign. One of the major flaws in the planning of the Gallipoli campaign was that the British High Command ‘assumed that the enemy was utterly inferior’.<sup>2</sup> The underestimation of the calibre of the Turkish troops was one of the underlying errors made by the British in planning the Gallipoli campaign and stemmed from an ingrained prejudice against the Ottomans.

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<sup>1</sup> E.W. Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin Books, London, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> C.E.W.Bean, *The Official History of the War of 1914-1918*, vol. 1, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1939, p. 231.

With the expansion of the Ottoman Empire into European territory from the mid-fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, Western powers came to view the Ottomans with suspicion and fear. Turkey came to represent Oriental despotism just as Persia had done in Classical Greece in the fifth century BC. The spread of the Ottoman Empire into former European spheres represented a challenge to the Western European status quo:<sup>3</sup> ‘Islam came to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic hordes of hated barbarians’.<sup>4</sup>

Historian J. Salt examined the fluctuating attitudes of the British and European powers to the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century and concluded that they shifted ground according to prevailing political circumstances. British politicians’ views of the Ottomans were often strongly expressed in the decades leading up to the war. British foreign policy at the time was a driving force in shaping these attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire, driven by its rivalry with other imperial European powers, particularly Russia. The issue of, and clashes over, the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire in particular, became known as the ‘Eastern Question’ in British political circles in the period leading up to the war.

Initially, Britain was willing to support the Ottomans against the possibilities of Russian expansion into the Black Sea region. If Russia gained control of Istanbul and thus the Bosphorus, it could thwart British imperialist ambitions for expansion in the Middle East, made more vulnerable with the challenges to Ottoman power in the region.<sup>5</sup> Britain and France joined forces against Russia during the Crimean War (1853-1856) and Turkey sided with Britain. Thus at the time, Turkey was regarded as a firm ally of Britain.<sup>6</sup> However, in the following decades,

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<sup>3</sup> J. Goody, *The Theft of History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 100-105.

<sup>4</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, p. 59.

<sup>5</sup> J. Salt, ‘Johnny Turk before Gallipoli: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Images of the Turks’, in R. Akçelik (ed), *Before and After Gallipoli*, Australian-Turkish Friendship Society Publications, no. 2, Melbourne, 1986.

<sup>6</sup> S. J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. II, Cambridge University Press, London, 1977, pp.138-140.

relationships fractured and the Ottomans were no longer seen as British allies. The Bulgarian nationalist movement against Ottoman control in the 1870s provided British statesman W. E. Gladstone with an ideal moral platform from which to berate the Turks. He called for them, 'one and all, bag and baggage', to clear out of 'the province they have desolated and profaned'.<sup>7</sup> The alleged massacres of Christian Bulgarians reported in the British press prompted the publishing of a pamphlet written by Gladstone titled *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*. It contained a scathing attack on the Ottoman character:

It is not a question of Mohammedanism simply but of Mohammedanism compounded with the peculiar character of a race. They are not the mild Mohammedans of India, nor the chivalrous Saladins of Syria nor the cultured Moors of Spain. They were, upon the whole, from the first black day when they entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity. Wherever they went a broad line of blood marked the track behind them: and as far as their dominion reached, civilisation disappeared from view.<sup>8</sup>

The Ottoman government attempted to point out Christian atrocities against Muslims during this period but to no avail. European interest was also focused on Christian minorities within the Ottoman Empire. Any perceived changes to the status of the Christian minorities came to be regarded as reflecting a change in the relative standing and influence of European powers. Thus European imperialism developed hand-in-hand with a strong sense of religious and cultural superiority over the Islamic world. Strong Christian missionary presence was obvious throughout the Ottoman world and was evangelical in nature. Reports of alleged oppression of Christian minorities were frequently sent back to Britain and Western Europe by missionary societies.<sup>9</sup> This produced considerable anti-Islamic and anti-Turkish propaganda, particularly in Britain and

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<sup>7</sup> G. D. Goodlad, *British Foreign and Imperial Policy, 1865-1919*, Routledge, London, 2000, p.16.

<sup>8</sup> W. E. Gladstone, 'Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East', 1876, quoted in Akçelik, *Before and After*, p. 20. For a full discussion on the 'Eastern Question', the Bulgarian crisis and the role of Gladstone, see R.W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, Frank Cass, London, 1962 and J. Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914*, Frank Cass, London, 1983.

<sup>9</sup> Salt, in *Before and After Gallipoli*, pp. 15-16. For further reading on the influence of missionary groups, see K. S. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1937 and J. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions in the Near East*, Revell, New York, 1910.

America. Islam was regarded as a sensual and depraved religion and one that was based on violence, relying on ‘the killing and plunder of infidels as being as much an act of worship as prayer’.<sup>10</sup>

The political influence of the missionary societies cannot be underestimated. A manual for potential missionary students published in 1907 set out to present Islam as ‘a challenge to the faith and enterprise of the church’ and aimed ‘to evangelise the whole Mohammedan world in this generation’. It outlined how various Christian denominations had carved up the Ottoman Empire as areas for evangelism. It listed a total of 637 missionaries in the Ottoman Empire and outlined methods for converting Muslims. It emphasized the importance of setting up schools and hospitals, distributing Bibles and active preaching. It noted with satisfaction that on studying a world map, ‘we see nearly every strategic Moslem centre occupied by Protestant missions’. It saw its mission in militaristic terms: ‘It is a fight for life. We have got to conquer them or they will conquer us’. The Manual speaks of ‘the enemy’ and ‘a Holy War with the Sword of the Spirit’.<sup>11</sup>

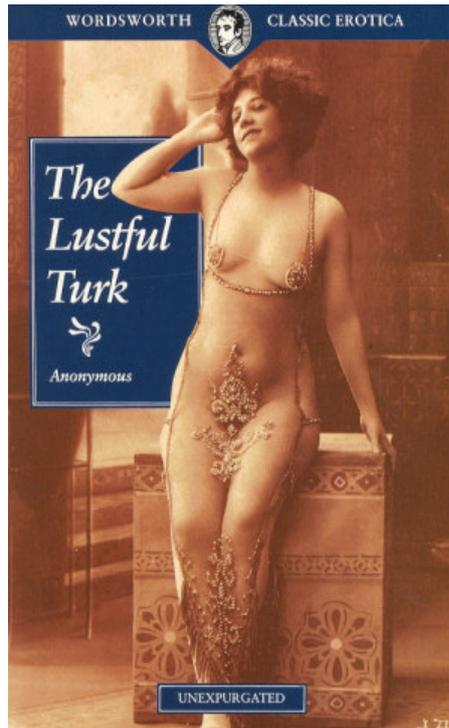
Political attitudes were clearly enmeshed with religious beliefs. During the Armenian agitation in the 1890s, the British journal *Punch* portrayed Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll as crusaders, riding forth on chargers with lance in hand, a reminder of the former Crusader conflicts between the Christian West and the Islamic East.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Salt, *ibid*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> *Islam: A Challenge to the Faith*. New York. Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1909. [www.muhammadanism.org/Zwermer](http://www.muhammadanism.org/Zwermer). Retrieved 8/11/2007. This movement began in 1886 in the USA and sought to recruit American college and university students for missionary work abroad, targeting non-Christian faiths.

<sup>12</sup> *Punch*, 18 May 1895. Both Gladstone and Argyll were determined anti-Ottoman campaigners.



**Fig 1:1: 'The Lustful Turk'.**

The same characteristics attributed to Islam in general were applied to the Turks, including the accusations of cruelty, sensuality and depravity. A description in a British Parliamentary paper discussing 'Turkish misrule' in 1877 said of the Turks that when they ceased fighting, 'they seem to fall into a normal state of sloth, sensuality and decay'.<sup>13</sup> It was a commonly held British belief that sexual depravity was common amongst the Ottomans. Rev. W. Denton in 1876 thundered that the 'cities of the Plains [Sodom and Gomorrah] were destroyed for sins which were the normal everyday practice of this people'.<sup>14</sup> Small sectors of the Victorian reading public were also familiar with this theme in pornographic tomes such as *The Lustful Turk*, Fig.1:1.<sup>15</sup> T.W. White, an Australian captured in Mesopotamia, published his memoirs after the war and

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<sup>13</sup> H. Richard, 'Evidence of Turkish Misrule', *Eastern Question Papers*, no.1, London, 1877, quoted by J. Salt in Akçelik, *Before and After*, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Rev. W. Denton, 'The Christians of Turkey. Their Conditions under Mussulman Rule', London, 1876, quoted in Salt, *Before and After Gallipoli*, p. 23. This comment refers to the act of sodomy.

<sup>15</sup> Anonymous, *The Lustful Turk*, Wordsworth Classic Erotica, London, 1997. Published in 1828, subtitled *Scenes in the Harem of an Eastern Potentate*, this pornographic piece focuses on the debauchery of an innocent British maiden by a depraved Ottoman governor.

continued this tradition in naming his book *Guests of the Unspeakable*, in reference to the ‘unspeakable’ act of sodomy believed to be the normal sexual practice of the Turks.<sup>16</sup> A conclusion could be drawn that many of the statements and publications emanating from Britain appeared to be part of a concerted attempt by the British to denigrate the Ottoman Empire to facilitate its own imperialist ambitions. Similar emotive language and racist attitudes were later evident in official British documents dealing with the treatment of POWs by the Turks.

### **Australian attitudes to the Turks**

With little migration from Ottoman lands to Australia in the nineteenth century, apart from Afghans in rural areas, few Australians would have had much knowledge of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish people. However, it is likely that contemporary attitudes would have mirrored those prevailing in Britain as suggested by a description of Turks in an Australian primary school textbook written in 1899:

a cruel and ignorant race ... one of the most fanatical of the Mohammedan race, the ferocity of the ‘unspeakable Turk’ in gaining converts being unsurpassed by any other race.<sup>17</sup>

In 1915, the danger posed by the ‘fanatical’ Turk was brought closer to home in Australia on New Years Day in Broken Hill. Two ‘Turks’ opened fire on a picnic train, killing three and wounding several others. They were later cornered and shot by police. Both assailants were Afghans, not Turks, but one had been previously enlisted in the Ottoman army. The cause of this tragedy may have been from a misdirected sense of patriotism or the culminations of personal grievances.<sup>18</sup> Oddly enough, the next morning, *The Barrier Daily Truth* firmly warned its readers

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<sup>16</sup> T.W. White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1928.

<sup>17</sup> S.G. Firth, ‘Social Values in the NSW Primary School, 1880-1914: an analysis of school texts’, *Melbourne Studies in Education*, 1970, Melbourne, p.130, quoted in K. Fewster, V. & H. Basarin, *Gallipoli. The Turkish Story*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2003, p. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Fewster & Başarin, *ibid*, pp. 47-48.

‘not to judge the Indian and the Afghan according to the measure set by the Terrible Turk’.<sup>19</sup>

News of this tragedy was well publicised throughout Australia and no doubt found its way to the training camps of Egypt prior to the assault on Gallipoli in the following April.<sup>20</sup>

Thus many Australians landed on Gallipoli with preconceived attitudes towards the enemy. Bean himself revealed a stereotyped view when he showed surprise that many Turkish officers were ‘white’ and that this explained why Australians first believed that there were more German officers than was the case:

The Turkish prisoners’ latrines are not far in front of our ridge, on the next ridge, and I have excellent grounds for saying that many Turks are as white as Europeans. That accounts for all officers being put down by our men as German officers.<sup>21</sup>

References to Australians shouting Arabic phrases no doubt learnt in Egypt, assuming that Turkish troops would understand, displayed an ignorance of Turkish language and culture. At Quinn’s Post in May, ‘the linguists among Perry’s men exhausted their Arabic in the endeavour to entice the Turks to give themselves up’.<sup>22</sup> Doubtless, this misguided attempt at communication failed. Thus even before setting foot on Gallipoli shores, centuries of Western prejudice and propaganda had shaped Allied attitudes to the Ottoman Empire.

### **The Battlefield and the Hague Convention**

By the time of the outbreak of the war, international conventions were in place to deal with ‘modern’ warfare and the internment of POWs. However, one of the major issues affecting the

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<sup>19</sup> B. Kennedy, *Silver, Sin and Sixpenny Ale. A Social History of Broken Hill 1883-1921*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1978, p. 131. An interesting statement considering the assailants were Afghans.

<sup>20</sup> Headlines from Sydney included ‘Fanatical Turks’ (*Sydney Mail*, 13 January 1915, p.12); ‘Fighting the Turks’, (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 January 1915, p.10); ‘The Barrier Battle’, (*The Sun*, 8 January 1915).

<sup>21</sup> K. Fewster, *Gallipoli Correspondent. The Frontline Diary of C.E.W. Bean*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983, p. 131.

<sup>22</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 221.

attitudes of Australians towards the Turks was that the British encouraged the belief that the Turks did not recognize, nor practise, the laws enshrined in the Hague Convention on the battlefield.

The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed several attempts to formalise, regulate and codify issues of warfare, treatment of the wounded on the battlefield and prisoners of war. A Red Cross Convention held on 22 August 1864 convened in Geneva, attempted to address the humane treatment of wounded and sick on the battlefield and to recognise the neutrality of medical staff. It also proposed that the sick and wounded be cared for no matter what their nationality.<sup>23</sup> The insignia of the red cross was adopted at this convention as a symbol of neutrality and protection of wounded soldiers and those who cared for them. It was, in fact, the reverse of the Swiss flag. In 1868 the Ottoman Empire decided to use the symbol of the red crescent instead of the red cross for the protection of the wounded on the battlefields during the Russo-Turkish war fought in the Balkans. This was due to the perceived link of the red cross with the historical Crusaders' cross, with its negative historical connotations for Islamic peoples of the Middle East.<sup>24</sup>

Further European initiatives in international warfare regulation followed.<sup>25</sup> These earlier initiatives laid the groundwork for more ambitious attempts at the regulation of international warfare. The First Hague Peace Conference was held on 18 May 1899, convened by Russian Tsar Nicholas II and attended by 108 delegates. Drawing upon the previous initiatives, its aim was to

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<sup>23</sup> *Laws of War: Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded on the Field of Battle* (Red Cross Convention), 22 August 1864, [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/geneva04.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/geneva04.htm). Retrieved 16/10/2000.

<sup>24</sup> *International Humanitarian Law Association Newsletter*, Australian Red Cross, March 2001, no.5, p.2. For further reading on the development of the Red Cross and Red Crescent refer to C. Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream. War, Switzerland & the History of the Red Cross*, Harper Collins, London, 1998 & J.F. Hutchinson, *Champions of Charity: War and the Rise of the Red Cross*, Westview Press, Colorado, 1996.

<sup>25</sup> G. Aldrich & C. Chinkin, The Hague Peace Conference, *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 94 (1) January 2000, p. 1. [www.asil.org/aldrich.htm](http://www.asil.org/aldrich.htm). Retrieved 16/10/2000. The St. Petersburg Declaration of 1868, instigated by the Russian Tsar Alexander III, had prohibited types of explosive devices. The draft project of an International Declaration Concerning the Laws and Customs of War was produced by the Brussels Conference of 1874. Four years later, the Oxford Manual on the Laws of War of 1880 was adopted unanimously by the Institute of International Law.

create laws concerning conflict and warfare, to limit the financial burden of armaments, improve prospects for the peaceful settlement of international disputes and to codify the laws of war. The 1899 conference did not completely address the Tsar's main concern of arms limitation but it did successfully develop and codify laws on the peaceful settlement of disputes and warfare.<sup>26</sup>

President Theodore Roosevelt of the United States of America, together with Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, convened the Second Hague Peace Conference from 15 June to 18 October 1907.<sup>27</sup> It was attended by representatives from forty-four nations and Turkey was a signatory to this convention.<sup>28</sup> The convention recognised that these international initiatives concerning the humanitarian aspects of warfare were an on-going process and that there was still further work to be done. Unfortunately, the proposal to meet again seven years later was abandoned due to the commencement of World War I, ironically the most destructive European war in history to date.

As stated previously, the British encouraged the belief that the Turks did not recognize, nor practise, Hague conventions on the battlefield. This belief must have affected Australian attitudes to the Turks before capture and affected their own behaviour in taking prisoners themselves. Bean noted the ready development of rumours or 'furfies' on the battlefield and many of these were concerned with the alleged barbarity of the Turks. Bean recognised that rumours were always a part of warfare. One of the earliest and most prevalent rumours circulating at Gallipoli amongst the Australians involved the alleged Turkish mutilation of wounded and dead bodies. It appears that British officers had warned Australian soldiers that this was a common practice

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, p.1. Three conventions were adopted: the peaceful settlement of disputes through mediation and arbitration establishing the Permanent Court of Arbitration; a codification of the laws and customs of war; and adoption of the principles of the 1864 Geneva Convention on the treatment of wounded on land for those also wounded at sea.

<sup>27</sup> P. Weiss, *A Background Paper for the Hague Appeal for Peace*, [www.haguepeace.org/about/bkgnd.html](http://www.haguepeace.org/about/bkgnd.html). Retrieved 16/10/2000. It was convened 'for the purpose of giving a fresh development to the humanitarian principles which served as a basis for the work of the First Conference of 1899'.

<sup>28</sup> University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, *Final Act of the Second Peace Conference*, 3 Martens Nouveau Recueil (Ser. 3), 205 Consol. T.S. 216. [www.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/1907a.htm](http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/1907a.htm). Retrieved 16/10/2000.

amongst Ottoman troops: ‘The men had been constantly warned, on the authority of officers with experience of the Kurds and less disciplined Turkish troops, that the Turks mutilated men whom they captured or found wounded, and in the early days the Australians nursed a strong suspicion and hatred of the enemy’.<sup>29</sup> When a Turkish soldier was captured soon after landing, the only response from the men following was ‘Shoot the bastard!’<sup>30</sup>

Bean expanded on this theme in his diary entry for 29 April, providing a well known example. He related that soldiers returning from advanced positions brought back stories of mutilated bodies. The best known example was that of Sergeant Larkin of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion – a Member of Parliament in NSW. It was alleged that he had been left wounded and was later found mutilated. ‘Our men – the Australians – will not (for this reason) if they can help it take prisoners’.<sup>31</sup> Bean also relates this story in the *Official History*. However, he also adds that Larkin’s body was identified during the armistice of 24 May and that ‘it was ascertained that the wounds had been caused by machine-gun bullets’. However, the refutation of this story was not widespread.<sup>32</sup>

Initially believing these rumours, the Australians were naturally fearful of being captured.

Australians went to great lengths to retrieve wounded colleagues and to return them to Allied lines. Lieutenant-Colonel Carbery, the New Zealand medical historian, noted:

the gratitude of those taken off from the accursed beach, obsessed by the dread of mutilation by the Turks ... Why this wholly unreasonable fear of maltreatment should have existed amongst the wounded is inexplicable, because the Ottoman soldier was always irreproachable in his adherence to the Geneva Convention.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol.1, pp. 258-259.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, pp. 258-259.

<sup>31</sup> Fewster, *Gallipoli*, p. 82. Editor’s note: ‘No instance of mutilation, Larkin included, was ever proven, but Bean and most of his companions remained sceptical regarding Turkish treatment of prisoners’.

<sup>32</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 1, pp. 420-421.

<sup>33</sup> A.D. Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service in the Great War 1914-1918*, Whitcombe & Tombs, Auckland, 1924, p. 51.

In his study of medical conditions at Gallipoli, Tyquin concluded that stories of mutilation were without substantiation and were invariably caused by fauna, machine-gun fire or decomposition of bodies left in the open. He quotes Major J. Gordon, who wrote: 'The Turks have played quite fairly and there is no truth at all in the stories of mutilation etc. They treat the dead and wounded with all respect'.<sup>34</sup>

Other rumours circulated at Gallipoli about various ruses and examples of trickery employed by the Turks to lure Allied soldiers to their doom. One such story was that the Turks masqueraded as Indian troops. This 'furphy' emanated from the experience of Captain McDonald of the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion on the very first day of landing. According to McDonald, knowing that Indian troops were nearby and hearing men talking, he went to consult with them. However, he soon discovered they were Turkish troops and he and two other Australians were subsequently captured. There is no evidence that the Turkish troops were attempting subterfuge; it was simply mistaken identity by the Australians.<sup>35</sup>

However, the story was relayed in the patriotic publication *Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War*, published in 1915. The tale was embellished to describe the soldiers being 'equipped with undeniable Australian uniforms and spoke with the same accent as the average Australian officer'.<sup>36</sup> This unlikely tale does not explain how Australian uniforms were procured on the first day, nor the more challenging acquisition of an Australian accent.

Another rumour involved Turkish or German officers acting as spies in the midst of Allied troops. According to Bean, this was quite a common rumour whether in Gallipoli or France and

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<sup>34</sup> Letter home dated 10/11/1915. M. Tyquin, *Gallipoli: the Medical War*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 1993, p. 26.

<sup>35</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol.1, pp. 468-469. See also the Repatriation Statement of McDonald, AWM 30, B1.22, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>36</sup> E.C. Buley, *Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War*, Andrew Melrose Ltd., London, 1915, p. 72.

there were no grounds to substantiate it. Buley also published this story in 1915, adding that the enemy had dressed up as an Australian officer.<sup>37</sup> Bean again reveals a stereotyped view of the 'typical' Turkish soldier in refuting this story:

But it is more than doubtful if any one of these 'spy messages' was really started from a hostile force. It is one of the ordinary effects of battle strain that men attribute to their enemies an almost superhuman cunning. The Turk is a brave soldier, but a very dull one – boorish, uneducated, stupid and infinitely less capable of such cleverness than his opponents ...<sup>38</sup>

Australians also believed that the wounded were intentionally killed off, contravening the Hague Convention.<sup>39</sup> Stories circulated amongst the Allies of the brutish Turkish killing of the wounded. One incident occurred on 25 April on Pine Ridge where it was believed that the Turks had killed some wounded Australians. Bean later explained the incident as related by a Turkish officer:

The Turkish version was given a month later by one of the party which came in to arrange the armistice of May 24<sup>th</sup>. When the Turks attacked, he said, they passed Australians who seemed to be dead, but who fired on them afterwards. 'We were forced to kill all those', he added.<sup>40</sup>

However, this action was not confined to the Turks alone. Bean's diary entry for 25 August mentioned that some Turks shammed death 'and we have shot all bodies within sight to make sure.'<sup>41</sup>

Bean provided further details in his diary that are not mentioned in the *Official History*.

Apparently the Allies distributed pamphlets to the Turks encouraging them to surrender, presumably written in Turkish and not Arabic. Some who took up the offer paid the ultimate

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid*, p. 73.

<sup>38</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol.1, pp. 470-471.

<sup>39</sup> Hague Convention Article 23, which prohibited the killing or wounding of 'an enemy who, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defence, has surrendered ...'

<sup>40</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 1, p. 420.

<sup>41</sup> Fewster, *Diary*, p. 152.

price. Bean's diary entry for 1 June explained that some Turkish soldiers who attempted to surrender were shot.<sup>42</sup> Bean provided further examples of the Allies killing those who had either been captured or wounded. His diary entry for 26 September related an incident where British soldiers shot a captured German officer on Imbros island. Bean was horrified and displayed more personal revulsion than he could have done in the *Official History*: 'if this is the way some of our ignorant English Tommies fight – well, Australians have boasted of killing the wounded too. But that was in the heat of battle'.<sup>43</sup>

Denis Winter refers to an incident when soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion shot approximately sixty Turks who had surrendered at Shrapnel Gully. The Turks 'threw their rifles down and wanted to surrender but there were too many of them and they were shot'.<sup>44</sup> It is probable that both sides were guilty of killing wounded or surrendered soldiers, generally as Bean pointed out, in the heat of battle. It was not solely a Turkish atrocity, but one shared by both Allies and Turks. Bean noted a change in attitude to the enemy after the futile Turkish charge of 19 May when 10,000 Turks died. The Australians recognized their bravery under fire and Bean explained:

After that morning the fierce hatred of the Turk, which had possessed them since the Landing, disappeared. Until then he had been an unseen enemy ... all bitterness faded.<sup>45</sup>

The carnage of 19 May resulted in the organization of a temporary truce to bury the dead. Bloating bodies were strewn about the battlefield, creating a potential health hazard for both sides. On 20 May, two Turkish medical officers displaying a Red Crescent flag approached Pope's Hill

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, p. 122.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, p. 156.

<sup>44</sup> D. Winter, *25 April 1915. The Inevitable Tragedy*, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1994, pp. 174-175. Winter also refers to another incident where approximately one hundred captured Turkish soldiers were shot.

<sup>45</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 162. Articles 36 & 37 of the Hague Convention allowed the organisation of temporary truces by mutual agreement between opposing parties.

trenches and two Australian medical officers met with them.<sup>46</sup> During negotiations for the truce, a Red Cross flag was hoisted and instantly fired upon from the Turkish trenches. A Turkish messenger was immediately sent to apologise, explaining that a soldier had not understood its significance. Misunderstandings occurred on both sides. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Brigade, unaware of the temporary truce, fired on Turkish stretcher parties advancing with white flags. The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion also opened fire, believing it was a Turkish ruse. A formal truce was negotiated on 24 May for both sides to bury their dead.<sup>47</sup>

On the day of burial, many Australians had the opportunity to converse with and observe the Turks. They swapped gifts, observing that they were just normal men like themselves. They also had the opportunity to witness the terrible wounds inflicted by their own weapons, realising that many wounds that they had believed were ‘mutilations’ were caused by regular bullets, particularly machine-gun fire, and not the ‘explosive’ bullets they at first believed Turks were using.<sup>48</sup>

Other aspects of the Hague Convention were also pertinent to the Gallipoli campaign, particularly in relation to the unlawful bombing of civilian or medical buildings.<sup>49</sup> Prior to the landing at Gallipoli, British naval bombardments destroyed fortifications along the ‘narrows’, including the towns of Çanakkale and Maidos. As the campaign progressed, villages were bombarded, with a substantial loss of civilian life. O’Connor saw the bombing of a village ‘which started a fire there’.<sup>50</sup> Drake witnessed the bombardment of a small township by the British navy and an attack

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<sup>46</sup> Tyquin, *Gallipoli: The Medical War*, p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, pp. 165-166.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, p. 162.

<sup>49</sup> Article 25: ‘The attack or bombardment ... of towns, villages, dwellings or buildings which are undefended is prohibited’.

<sup>50</sup> Repatriation Statement of O’Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

on other parts of the peninsula by an Allied plane.<sup>51</sup> A photograph in the Australian War Memorial shows the ruins of the town of Krithia, confirming the severity of Allied attacks.<sup>52</sup> Direct and intentional firing on medical installations was also prohibited by the Hague Convention. Turkish documents record repeated bombings of hospitals at Maidos and Ezine and field hospitals at Akbaş and elsewhere on the peninsula, killing and wounding Turkish soldiers. All buildings were clearly marked by the Red Crescent symbol.<sup>53</sup> One Australian prisoner of war, Private Bert Wood, was wounded by Allied fire whilst being treated for injuries at a Turkish medical dressing station soon after capture.<sup>54</sup> Lance-Corporal Vivian Brooke, a patient in the Maidos Hospital when it too was bombed, had his arm torn off by the splinter of a shell from Allied naval guns in May 1915.<sup>55</sup>

The German Foreign Office made complaints about an Allied submarine torpedoing Turkish hospital ships in the Sea of Marmara and the burning to death of ten wounded Turkish soldiers in the bombed Maidos hospital.<sup>56</sup> The continual Allied bombardment of civilian targets created a diplomatic incident when the Turkish War Office planned to place Allied civilians in strategic places on the Peninsula to draw attention to this practice. It was called off at the last minute but the Turkish command was incensed at this indiscriminate bombing. The US Embassy outlined Turkish concerns to the Allies and also enclosed an enraged letter from the Turkish War Minister Enver Pasha to the US Ambassador, expressing the need to protect Ottoman citizens from the

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<sup>51</sup> Drake, Repatriation Statement, AWM 30 B1-11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>52</sup> AWM GO 2057, AWM, Canberra. The photo was taken in 1919 by the Australian Historical Mission.

<sup>53</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Çanakkale Muharebeleri, (Çanakkale Wars in Ottoman Documents)*, vol. 2, State Archives, Ankara, 2005. #1934/1408, 2088/1806.

<sup>54</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>55</sup> ARC W & M File of Brooke. Statement by Rawlings, 15/1/1919. 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>56</sup> Letter to the US Embassy, Constantinople, from the German Foreign Office, Berlin, 12 May 1915. PRO FO 383/99. Prisoners: Turkey Files 82649 / 107776, PRO, London.

Allies. Enver Pasha accused Britain of ‘trampling under foot the Law of Nations’ and of never taking into consideration the innocent non-combatant population.<sup>57</sup>

The Turkish army attempted to adhere to the Hague Convention prohibiting the bombardment of medical installations. Several sources noted that they refrained from firing on Allied hospital ships and medical staff: ‘he [the Turkish military] always refrained from shelling hospital ships, and sometimes from firing on parties carrying wounded men, quickly won the respect of his adversaries’.<sup>58</sup> Tyquin also concluded that the Turks did not fire on dressing stations or medical units but sometimes these sites were caught in cross-fire. Sir V. Vyvyan, Royal Navy Beach Master at Anzac, noted:

The enemy was scrupulously observant of the rules of the Geneva Convention and never fired on the boats etc, engaged in the transport of the wounded, although the Red Cross flag was not always conspicuously displayed.<sup>59</sup>

The Turk did not use gas, again prohibited by the Hague Convention, in contrast to common practice on the Western Front.<sup>60</sup> However, a minor offence committed by the Turkish soldiers and objected to by the Australians, was the removal of articles of clothing, particularly boots, from dead (and sometimes captured) Allies. The uniforms and boots of some of the Turkish soldiers were in a pitiful state and this practice occurred throughout the campaign. Bean noted that this happened quite often and that ‘in France the boots were often taken from Australian dead by the Germans’.<sup>61</sup>

Other stories circulated at Gallipoli involved individual acts of friendship and courage observed between Australians and Turks. In a footnote, Bean narrated a story of almost apocryphal

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<sup>57</sup> Letter to Ambassador Morgenthau, 5 May 1915. PRO FO 383/99. Prisoners: Turkey File 82649 / 107776, London.

<sup>58</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p.162, 358.

<sup>59</sup> Butler Papers, AWM 41 (Box 5), File 5/13 quoted in Tyquin, *Gallipoli: The Medical War*, p. 27.

<sup>60</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 322.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, Footnote 45, p. 196.

standing. He does not supply his source for this story. It allegedly occurred on 30 May at Quinn's Post when a Turkish soldier had been captured by the Australians. After supplying him with water, cigarettes and biscuits, on evacuating the trench, the prisoner was free to leave. However, on observing a Turkish soldier attempting to bayonet a wounded Australian, the Turk shot the attacker, only to be shot by his own side.<sup>62</sup>

### **Attitudes to Turkish prisoners**

Bean's diary entry for 8 August throws light on the attitudes of some Australians to Turkish prisoners. It is an aspect of the Anzac tradition that is not noted in the official account of Gallipoli but is recorded by Bean in his diary in considerable detail.<sup>63</sup> Approximately one hundred Turkish prisoners were placed in a wire compound. Kerosene had been spilt nearby and an Allied soldier ignited it dangerously close to the prisoners, who attempted to flee before the flames. The onlookers merely laughed and Bean commented:

I have just seen as caddish an act as I ever saw in my life ... There were both Australians and British amongst the onlookers. I wondered someone hadn't the decency to hit the man who did it straight in the face. The same thing exactly was done yesterday. The treatment of these prisoners makes you blush for your own side.<sup>64</sup>

Bean also lamented the treatment of three captured Turkish officers, who were left for most of the day without food or water. The *Official History* does not relate this story. A poem written by Bean dedicated to the Turkish soldier displays two attitudes to the Turks. Firstly, it mirrors the changed attitude after May 24 with its more sympathetic treatment and secondly, the accompanying drawing portrays the stereotyped view of the Turkish soldier – the swarthy Anatolian peasant. This stereotype helps to explain the confusion of not recognising that many of

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, Footnote 48, p. 227.

<sup>63</sup> Fewster, *Diary*, pp. 149-150.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, pp. 149-150.

the Turkish officers in particular were European in appearance and were often mistaken for Germans.<sup>65</sup>



**Fig. 1:2: Turkish prisoners inside a compound, Gallipoli. (AWM POO166-021).**

### **The Hague Convention and prisoners of war**

The evidence suggests that the Turkish command generally attempted to meet Hague Convention regulations concerning behaviour on the battlefield and treatment of POWs. The Hague Convention of 1907 was based on the earlier version of 1899. It outlined the necessity for humane treatment and suitable places for internment, regulated conditions of work and pay, food and clothing, discipline, possible parole conditions, freedom of religious worship, availability of mail and supply of materials from relief societies. Additionally, it provided for officers to receive the same pay as those of the captor nation.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The full text of this poem and accompanying drawing may be found in K. Fewster, *Gallipoli*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>66</sup> *Laws of War: Laws and Customs of War* (Hague II), 29 July, 1899, (The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School). [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague02.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague02.htm). Retrieved 16/10/2000. For the purpose of this study, the most important inclusion of the codification of the laws in 1899 was Chapter II of the 'Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs on Land'. It constituted Articles 4-20, regulating the conditions and treatment of POWs. Articles 14 and 17 in the Second Hague Convention of 1907 were specifically concerned with POWs. The full text of this convention is provided in Appendix 2.

As previously mentioned, Turkey had been a signatory to the Hague Convention of 1907. The Turkish War Ministry published a document in 1914 outlining the regulations concerning treatment of POWs in their care, based on the Hague Convention.<sup>67</sup> This thesis reproduces the document in English for the first time. How far the terms outlined in this document were adhered to in reality in the actual POW camps will be considered in subsequent chapters.

The Ottoman document mirrors the Hague Convention in a number of ways. The POWs were to remain in the power of the captor nation, were to be humanely treated and their personal belongings were to remain the property of the prisoner. A range of accommodation was to be provided, differentiating between lower ranks and officers. The lower ranks could be required to work, were to be paid on release and received the same rations as the equivalent army rank of the Ottoman army. Both sets of regulations provided a broad range of suitable accommodation for prisoners, with the Turkish instructions outlining clearly that officers be provided with accommodation in hotels and private houses. Officers were to be paid the equivalent of Ottoman officers. Both documents decreed that prisoners were to be subjected to the laws, regulations and punishments determined by the captor nation and that escape attempts were to be punished. Both recommended the creation of a Committee to supervise POW matters, to provide free postal services and that prisoners were to be free to practise their own religion.

The two documents vary in minor ways. The Turkish regulations do not address the matter of writing wills, nor the repatriation of prisoners after the war. There was no legal equivalent to a will in Turkey, thus it was not considered. Even though not specified in the Manual, the repatriation of prisoners was speedily executed by Turkey at the end of 1918. However,

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<sup>67</sup> *Usura Hakında Talimatname Mat-baa-i, Askeriyye, (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War)*, Military Printer, Istanbul, 1914. Turkish War Ministry. Ottoman Archives, 1332/1914, Istanbul. Translated by Sedat Bulgu, September 2001. A full translation of this Ottoman document has been provided in Appendix 3.

additional regulations not found in the Hague Convention make reference to censorship of correspondence, the cooking and preparation of food by prisoners themselves, the use of French to register prisoners' names and the right of a Commandant to remove a prisoner to another camp for inappropriate behaviour.<sup>68</sup> Despite the Hague Convention not referring to censorship of prisoner correspondence, both Allies and Turks availed themselves of this practice. French was used in Turkey to record names and to correspond with the International Red Cross as there were many possibilities for mistakes. Ottoman Turkish script does not include vowels, so the scope for errors was considerable, particularly for names. French was more the common language of educated prisoners and Turkish administrators and officers, so was a practical inclusion considering the linguistic differences between English and Ottoman Turkish.

## **Conclusion**

Prejudiced Western views of the Turks were firmly entrenched by the outbreak of the war. The initial hatred and vilification of the Turkish troops by Australians was partly due to prior Western views and official propaganda as well as the belief in the various rumours of mutilation and non-adherence to the Hague Convention that were rife from the earliest days at Gallipoli. Both sides have documented cases of flouting international conventions, though there are more documented examples of British transgressions, particularly in the bombing of hospitals and civilian targets. Ignorance of, and misunderstandings about Turkish culture were also part of the Gallipoli experience and was particularly pertinent to the men who were captured. This is an important point as it helps to explain the trepidation felt by the POWs on capture and their reaction to an alien culture during their internment. The extent to which these conventions were adhered to in Turkish camps will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

## Chapter 2: Profiling the 'Gallipoli 67'

Between September 1914 and June 1915, thousands of young men sailed from Australian shores to an unknown destination to join British Empire forces in what became known as the Great War of 1914-1918 (World War I). Sixty-seven of these men were destined to be captured at Gallipoli. Twenty-four men of the 67, or 36 percent, would not return, dying in Turkey from a variety of causes. Appendix 1 provides the names, regimental number, battalion, date and place of enlistment, age, birthplace, marital status, occupation, date and place of capture and eventual fate of each soldier. This is the first time that a verified list of Gallipoli POWs has been compiled.

It is not possible to say whether the experiences of the documented 67 soldiers captured at Gallipoli were typical of the overall Australian prisoner of war experience in Turkey during the war.<sup>1</sup> The experiences of the lower ranks were different from those of the officers. The experiences of men captured in the Middle East campaigns, including those captured at Kut-el-Amara, varied from the men captured earlier at Gallipoli. It would be beyond the scope of this study to include all Australian prisoners captured by the Turks throughout the war and conclusions will only be drawn from the experiences of the 'Gallipoli 67'. However, memoirs and diaries of Australian captives from other theatres of war are occasionally used when they provide further evidence of the experiences of the Gallipoli POWs at specific camps.

This chapter contains a brief overview of the statistical data of the Gallipoli POWs, gathered from service records, including attestation papers held by the NAA, Canberra.<sup>2</sup> A comparison of the statistical data will be made of place and date of enlistment, place of birth, age,

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<sup>1</sup> See reference to the overall numbers of Australian POWs held captive in Turkey in the Introduction, footnote 88.

<sup>2</sup> Service records including attestation papers are readily available from the National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA), Series B2455. All service records have now been digitalised.

occupations, marital status and religion with other more general statistical data available on the men of the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF) to provide a comparative context.

### **Statistical Data of the First AIF**

There is considerable research based on the statistical data of the recruits of the first AIF. E. Scott writing in the *Official History of the War of 1914-1918*, provides enlistment data for each month from each state, occupations and overall casualty rates of members of the AIF.<sup>3</sup> More recent studies by L. Robson, B. Gammage and J. McQuilton amongst others, provide more detailed and specific discussions of the demographic and sociological aspects of the AIF cohort. Robson's study in the early 1970s of approximately 0.5 percent of the 417,000 extant attestation papers, reveals further and more specific detail than that provided in the *Official History*. His study constructs a social and demographic profile of the men of the AIF, including enlistment patterns, occupations, birthplaces, religion and marital status. He also traces changes in age distribution as the war progressed, noting that as time wore on the age range lowered, with increasing numbers of 18 to 19 year old young men enlisting. Robson also observes that over time more married men offered themselves for enlistment.<sup>4</sup>

Gammage's research, based on the diaries and letters of approximately 1,000 soldiers who fought in World War I, adds personal depth and human perspective, drawing from the soldiers' experiences. He also provides valuable statistical data on occupations, religion and places of birth drawn from his sample, comparing these with statistics from the 1911 census.<sup>5</sup>

McQuilton's more recent study, based on data drawn from 3,500 volunteers from north-eastern Victoria, provides further material from a rural perspective. He queries whether

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<sup>3</sup> E. Scott, *The Official History of the War of 1914-1918*, vol. XI, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1938, pp. 871-874.

<sup>4</sup> L. Robson, 'The origin and character of the First AIF, 1914-18: some statistical evidence', *Historical Studies*, vol. 15, October 1973, pp. 737-749.

<sup>5</sup> B. Gammage, *The Broken Years. Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1990.

enlistment responses varied between a rural or urban setting and concludes that his sample was younger than the national average, that married men tended to be from urban areas and that rural unemployment and increased mechanisation played a role in encouraging rural recruits to join up. He found that his sample reflected a higher proportion of labourers and a smaller proportion of farmers than would be expected from the overall population profile. McQuilton concludes that a large percentage of labourers responded in the country due to being either under or unemployed. The small percentage of farmers in relation to their numbers in the overall population could be explained by the fact that they tended to be older and more tied to the land.<sup>6</sup>

Two young men representative of the Gallipoli cohort who were destined to become POWs will feature throughout the thesis, representing experiences of both the lower ranks and officers. Private Frederick Ashton, born in 1893 in Sydney, was raised in Geraldton, Western Australia, the son of a British migrant. He was a clerk in a local firm at the time of his enlistment, was unmarried and living with his parents. Lieutenant Leslie Luscombe born in 1891 in Victoria, the son of a Cornish miner and Irish mother, had gained a scholarship as a child to Geelong Grammar School. However, due to financial hardship, Luscombe left school at the age of 17 to become a clerk. By 1913 he had been promoted to the head office of the Railways Department in Melbourne. He too was unmarried. Both proved to be articulate and thoughtful young men and both left written records of their experiences.<sup>7</sup>

## **Enlistment**

When Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, Australia automatically became involved as a member of the British Empire. In 1914 Australia's foreign relations were

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<sup>6</sup> J. McQuilton, 'Enlistment for the First World War in rural Australia: the case of north-eastern Victoria, 1914-1918', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 33, 2000. ([www.awm.gov.au/journal/j33/mcquilton.htm](http://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j33/mcquilton.htm)) Accessed 3/10/2003. See also J. McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: from Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Ashton Papers, 973A, Batty Library, State Library of Western Australia, Perth. L. H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl, Australian*, W.R. Smith & Paterson Pty Ltd, Brisbane, 1970.

controlled by Britain and when war was declared, it was done so on behalf of the whole British Empire.

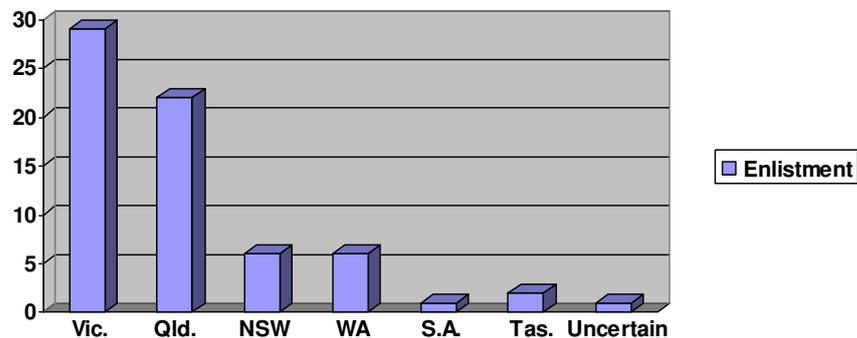
Fig. 2:1: Lt. Leslie Luscombe

The Commonwealth Government was quick to assure Britain that Australia would provide support in the form of an expeditionary force of 20,000 men. Australian enlistment did not begin until 11 August 1914 and by the end of December 1914, 52,561 men had enlisted from across Australia.<sup>8</sup> These early recruits were described by Gammage as ‘the fittest, strongest, and most ardent in the land’.<sup>9</sup>



The 67 soldiers destined to be captured by the Turkish army came from across Australia. The majority enlisted in Melbourne (18), Brisbane (8) and Townsville (4), thus Victoria and Queensland were strongly represented.

Table 1: Enlistment of the Gallipoli POWs by States



Source: Service records of the 67 POWs, B2455, NAA, Canberra. See also Appendix 4.

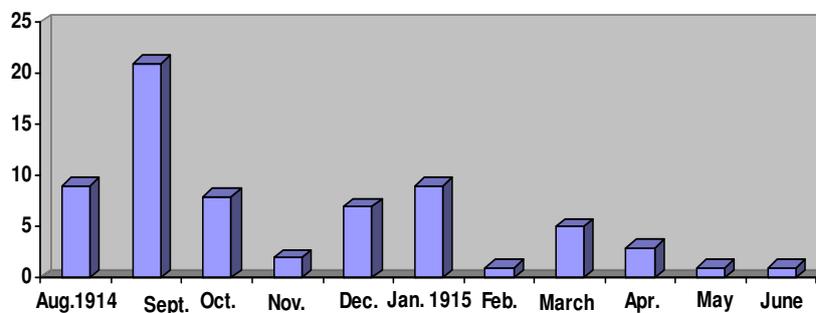
<sup>8</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. XI, Appendix 3, p. 871.

<sup>9</sup> Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 8.

As the Gallipoli campaign was Australia’s first military involvement in World War I, the POW cohort was amongst the first wave of enthusiastic and patriotic recruits. As shown in Table 2, the largest contingent enlisted in September 1914.

This pattern reflects overall enlistment figures, with a peak in August and September,<sup>10</sup> and coincides with Robson’s analysis of the first wave of recruits from August 1914 to June 1915, which accounted for 24 percent of all World War I recruits.<sup>11</sup> Two officers of the 16th Battalion embarked on the same ship on 22 December 1914 and were both destined to be captured on the first day of landing at Gallipoli. Lieutenant William Elston, a 45 year old farmer from the Pilbara region of Western Australia and Captain Ronald McDonald, a 24 year old professional soldier from Caulfield, Victoria were to spend most of the following four years together in the same POW camps.

**Table 2: Enlistment Dates of the Gallipoli POWs**



Source: Service records of the 67 POWs, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

Both Ashton and Luscombe reflect the majority by enlisting in 1914. There are only a few examples of statements concerning individual motives for enlisting. Ashton explained that his decision to enlist was made immediately, seemingly with little thought:

<sup>10</sup> Joan Beaumont (ed), *The Australian Centenary History of Defence, vol. VI, Australian Defence : Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p.108.

<sup>11</sup> Robson, *Origin and character*, p. 738.

As soon as possible, without even waiting for the necessary permission from my employer – I presented myself at the local recruiting hall, and was taken on almost immediately.<sup>12</sup>

It was only on reflection after the war that Ashton was able to understand the impact his decision to enlist must have had on his mother:

When I think of the casual way I had gone home, that day in August 1914, and calmly announced that I had joined up, and would be leaving for camp in 24 hours, and the shock it must have been to her maternal heart, I can only admire, in retrospect, the calm and matter-of-fact way she took the blow ... Her first thought was for my material comfort, packing warm singlets, socks etc for my immediate use, in case I did not get issued with the military equivalent as soon as I got to camp...<sup>13</sup>.

Luscombe thought carefully about volunteering, taking a week to consider the implications. He had previously joined the part-time Citizens Military Forces (CMF) and in 1914 was an officer. He finally decided to enlist, explaining:

I was single and I had no special ties. I was deeply concerned however, about undertaking the responsibility of leading men into battle. Eventually I concluded that I was at least equal to many young officers who had already volunteered.<sup>14</sup>

A letter written by William Randall, a 32 year old labourer from Avoca, Victoria to his father outlined his reasons for enlisting:

I mean to have a good time while I can. Things will no doubt be rough enough out yonder, but I feel fit for any hardship. If a fellow does fall, his people will have the consolation of knowing that he gave his life for the grand old Empire. When the time comes for fighting I will do my best to uphold the honour of sunny Australia, the land of the Southern Cross.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Papers of Frederick Ashton, 973A, Battye Library, Perth, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, pp. 158-159

<sup>14</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>15</sup> Randall Family Papers, MSB 401 MS 11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Quoted in the *Avoca Free Press*, 28 November, 1914. This was the local newspaper of Avoca, Victoria, Randall's home town.

The motives of G.W. Handsley, an Australian captured in 1916 in Palestine and imprisoned in Turkish POW camps together with the Gallipoli captives, was typical. He recorded his memoirs on his return to Australia and perhaps with the benefit of hindsight recalled:

When I enlisted at Toowoomba, Queensland, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August, 1915, I had no idea that my response to the call to arms would land me a prisoner of war in Turkey ... Always a wanderer, I accepted with eagerness the opportunity of adventure, experience and travel, which the prospect of active service afforded.<sup>16</sup>

No doubt the motives of the men reflected the myriad of reasons that were provided at the time for enlisting. A study by L. Robson and J. Dawes draws on the recollections of two hundred returned veterans of the AIF and categorises the stated motives for enlistment as patriotism, a sense of duty, social pressure, a spirit of adventure, self-interest and hatred of the Hun.<sup>17</sup> Australian privates were the best paid in the world, receiving six shillings a day. Recruitment posters also enticed recruits with the promise that they would gain free travel to Britain and Europe, an aspect that must have appealed to many of the British born recruits.<sup>18</sup>

Other more personal reasons for enlistment may have played a part such as unemployment, family problems, enlistment of mates, social pressures and attractions of the substantial pay offered by the army.<sup>19</sup> Private Alfred Nelson, a 23 year old labourer originally from Glasgow, stated that he had been unemployed before enlisting. Sergeant Niven Neyland, a 36 year old married farmer from Victoria, admitted to his Turkish captors that 'my stupidity led me to this war'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> G.W. Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey*, Jones & Hambly, Brisbane, undated, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> J. Dawes & L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier, Australia Before the Great War. Recollections of Members of the First AIF*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1977.

<sup>18</sup> Beaumont, *Australia's War*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Gammage, *The Broken Years*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>20</sup> A. Tetik (ed), *Çanakkale Muharebeleri'nin Esirleri. İfadeler ve Mektuplar. (Prisoners of War at the Çanakkale Battles. Testimonies and Letters)*, vol. II, Military History & Strategic Studies Department Publications, Ankara, 2009, p. 881, 926. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2009.

R. White's study of motives for enlistment acknowledges that surprisingly little is known of individuals' motives for enlisting in the AIF.<sup>21</sup> He draws attention to the problem of the sources as providing little data on this issue, as generally the men only began to write letters and diaries *after* the decision to enlist had been made. He also draws attention to the fact that public declarations are often very different to that of private motives. He argues that the educated middle class tended to emphasise the public motives of empire and patriotism and the working class, more private motives of self interest. Perhaps the middle class recruits merely enunciated these 'virtues' more clearly than the lesser educated soldiers. He also notes that working class recruits acquired tangible gains from enlisting, including social mobility, steady employment, substantial pay, freedom from unsatisfactory relationships and a chance to travel. White thus concludes that there were two main motivational categories: respectable public motives such as the concepts of empire, glory, honour, duty, patriotism and adventure and private motives including a range promoting self-interest. White also questions the reliability of the oral recollections made fifty years after the event used in the study of Robson and Dawes and draws attention to the fact that explanations of motives change over time and are often contradictory.<sup>22</sup> The writings of the POWs in particular are much more concerned with the immediate everyday issues of life as a prisoner, rather than their motives for enlistment, an issue which was of little interest at the time of writing.

The cohort of 67 recruits joined a number of battalions depending on the state in which they enlisted. The majority enlisted in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Battalions. Overall, there were 46 privates, one driver, five corporals, three lance-corporals, six sergeants and six officers (five lieutenants and one captain).

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<sup>21</sup> R. White, 'Motives for joining up. Self-sacrifice, self-interest and social class, 1914-18', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* vol. 9, 1986, pp. 3-16.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, p. 10.

**Table 3: Battalions of the Gallipoli POWs**

<b>Battalion</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> Battalion (Victoria)	28
15 <sup>th</sup> Battalion (Qld & Tas)	19
16 <sup>th</sup> Battalion (SA & WA)	7
9 <sup>th</sup> Battalion (Qld)	7
1 <sup>st</sup> Australian Field Artillery; 6 <sup>th</sup> Australian Field Artillery; 5 <sup>th</sup> Australian Light Horse; 2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion; 11 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, 12 <sup>th</sup> Battalion.	1 each

**Source: Service records of the 67 POWs, B2455, NAA, Canberra.**

### **Previous military experience**

Prior to the outbreak of World War I, Australian military forces were made up of mostly part-time citizen soldiers involved with local defence. These forces were voluntary until 1911 when young urban males became liable for compulsory military training.<sup>23</sup> In this year, the Australian government accepted Lord Kitchener's proposal for a 'new army' system. Australia was divided into 224 training areas and boys drawn from these areas were compulsorily trained as cadets from the age of 12. At 18, they were to pass into the 'active' battalions and regiments of the Commonwealth Army where they were to receive short annual training for a further seven years. However, by 1914 the new system had not yet reached its full potential, so a decision was made to raise a separate army. Thus the 'Australian Imperial Force' or AIF was created, led by General William Bridges. The AIF was to be drawn from the citizen army and from men previously experienced in warfare, such as in South Africa (1899-1902).<sup>24</sup> However, there were substantial numbers of young men who attempted to avoid this compulsory training. In the 30 months before the outbreak of the war, 28,000 prosecutions were made for training avoidance.<sup>25</sup>

Attestation papers completed at enlistment for World War I required the applicants to state if they had had any previous military experience. Of the Gallipoli POW cohort, 28.3 percent

<sup>23</sup> Beaumont, *Australian Centenary History*, p. 102.

<sup>24</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 1, pp. 33-35.

<sup>25</sup> White, 'Motives for joining up', p. 14. For further information on pre-war military training, see J. Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1990 and J. Barrett, *Falling In*, Hale & Remonger, Sydney, 1979.

noted that they had previous experience in the Australian militia or cadets and 13.4 percent reported experience in the British army or militia, making a total of 41.7 percent. This compares with 60 percent of the total AIF cohort who stated that they had previous military experience. Of the POW cohort, 2.9 percent had been regular soldiers compared to the national average of over 10 percent.<sup>26</sup> Thus our small sample of 67 had less previous military experience than the total AIF cohort.

### **Age at enlistment and place of birth**

At the commencement of recruitment in 1914 the age limit was set from 19 to 38 years of age.<sup>27</sup> Only senior officers and some non-commissioned officers were older than the limit.<sup>28</sup> The Gallipoli POWs ranged from 18 to 45 years old, with the average age being 24.4 years old. Both Ashton and Luscombe were close to the average age, at 21 and 23 years of age respectively. Lieutenant Elston was the oldest at 45. Overall, POWs were slightly younger than the overall AIF cohort, with 84 percent under the age of 30 years in comparison to the national figure of 78 percent.<sup>29</sup>

Robson's study concludes that there was a change in age distribution as the war progressed. He argues that the first period of recruitment, which included the POW cohort, reflected the policy that recruits should ideally include those who had had some military training in the citizen forces and were mainly in their twenties.<sup>30</sup> The POW sample reflects this age range but does not reflect the national average for previous military training. Young men under 19 years of age had to provide parental consent for enlistment. Permissions were generally simple consent letters from parents or guardians. Examples included those for Edwin Foster, a printer

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<sup>26</sup> Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol.1, p. 60.

<sup>29</sup> Beaumont, *Australian Centenary History*, p. 115. See Appendix 5 for the full list of ages.

<sup>30</sup> Robson, *Origin and character*, p. 743.

from Lismore and Harold Samson, labourer from Macorna, Victoria, both 18 years of age at enlistment.<sup>31</sup>

An examination of places of birth from the 67 attestation papers reveals that the majority (67.6 percent) was Australian born and 21 were born overseas (31.3 percent). Those born overseas were from England (15), Wales (2), India (2), Scotland (1) and Ireland (1). Thus all were from Australia, Britain or regions of the British Empire. This is a much higher percentage of overseas born than in the population in general as indicated in the Australian Census of April 1911, which shows the overseas born figure for males aged 15-64 as 15.87 percent.<sup>32</sup> It is also a higher percentage than that of Robson's study which concluded that nearly 25 percent of all recruits up to June 1915 were British born.<sup>33</sup> It is not possible to determine from military documents how long each had been in Australia before enlisting. However, the possibility of visiting Britain and family must have been a compelling incentive for some to enlist. This is borne out by all but one British-born soldier visiting Britain before returning to Australia after the war. Both Ashton and Luscombe expressed excitement at visiting 'the mother country', both having British-born parents.

### **Occupations**

A range of occupations is represented amongst the Gallipoli POW cohort, mirroring social and economic conditions of the time. The majority were labourers (34.3 percent), tradesmen (29.8 percent), rural workers (19.4 percent), miners (7.5 percent) and clerks (7.5 percent). Two were professional soldiers and other occupations included an accountant, cook, drover, station overseer, tailor and railway time-keeper. These figures reflect the general occupation patterns of the AIF in total, with slightly more labourers, rural workers and clerks. With slight

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<sup>31</sup> Service records of Edwin Foster and Harold Samson, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>32</sup> Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p. 312.

<sup>33</sup> Robson, *Origin and character*, p. 744. Between 1905-1913, 874,673 immigrants settled in Australia, with approximately 93 percent from Britain. J. Dawes & L. Robson, *Citizen to Soldier*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1977, p. 5.

adjustments to the categories, both Robson and Beaumont's groupings of occupations were similar.<sup>34</sup>

In the *Official History*, Bean emphasised typical 'bush' characteristics and skills that he believed characterised the AIF soldier. He stressed that the 'open-air life' and greater abundance of food developed healthier physiques and an 'independence of character' that was not a feature of the British soldier.<sup>35</sup> From Bean's description, it could be implied that the majority of Gallipoli soldiers were from the country. However, data drawn from the attestation papers indicating enlistment locations, shows that the 67 POW recruits were drawn almost equally from the city and country. As well, the range of occupations does not vary markedly between the city and the bush. What is interesting is the range of white-collar and service industry occupations from rural areas, such as the only accountant, clerks, printer, painter, draper and stenographer. Thus, the 67 recruits do not all reflect the 'bush' characteristics eulogised by Bean.<sup>36</sup> However, a note of caution should be added here in using the place of enlistment as an indication of the rural or urban origins of the cohort. The place of enlistment may not necessarily reflect the place of habitation or workplace. Men may have travelled considerable distances to enlist, so the 'city/country' divide may not be entirely accurate. The city data includes Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth. The rural data is drawn from country towns and district recruitment centres.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Robson created separate categories for transport workers and for miners. For comparison here, transport workers were integrated into the category of labourers and miners were integrated with tradesmen. Robson, *Origin and character*, p. 738; Beaumont, *Australian Centenary History*, p. 115.

<sup>35</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 1, p.5.

<sup>36</sup> Robson reached the same conclusion drawn from his data. 'Those engaged in primary production formed only a small part of the AIF ... the highest single occupational/state group in the AIF was industrial workers from NSW...'. Robson, *Origin and character*, p. 745.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix 7 and 8. There were a large number of itinerant workers throughout Australia at the time. See N. Wise, 'The lost labour force: working-class approaches to military service during the Great War', *Labour History*, No. 93, November 2007, pp. 161-176.

### **Marital status and religion**

The majority of the POW cohort was single men, including Ashton and Luscombe, with only six of the 67 being married. Thus over 90 percent of the POW cohort was single, in comparison to 81.6 percent of the total AIF.<sup>38</sup> However, two soldiers did not admit to being married on their enlistment papers; Private Bert Wood, a 32 year old driver from Collingwood, Victoria and Private Robert Kerrigan, a 29 year old miner from Ballarat, Victoria. Following his death from wounds in a Turkish hospital, Bert's mother Annie Wood, received his medals as she was nominated as next-of-kin. However, Bert's service records contain a letter to military authorities dated 1 March 1921 from Hannah Conway, indicating an obvious rift between herself and Mrs. Wood over his medals:

In reference to the late 1177 Private B. Woods medals. You may as well hand them over to his Mother. I do not think I need anything more to remind me of the cursed war, as my two brothers and a nephew fell over there. I thought if there were a few pounds coming, that it would be something to bank for Edna his Daughter, as it is his mother may as well have all,  
P.S. If his mother felt so disposed I would like a photo sent along as all my photos were lost on the railways.<sup>39</sup>

The Service record also includes a copy of their marriage certificate. Bert Wood and Hannah Louise Woodgate were married on 28 September 1906 at Fitzroy. Unfortunately the official records do not reveal the human story that lies behind these documents. However, as late as November 1967, Hannah claimed Bert's Gallipoli Medallion as his widow.<sup>40</sup> Was the enlistment of Bert Wood an example of a recruit fleeing an unhappy marital situation?

Robert Kerrigan of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, also stated in his attestation papers that he was not married. He listed as his next-of-kin his sister Miss K. Kerrigan of South Melbourne. However, included in his service record is a letter dated 6 October 1915 from Mrs. E. Hussey inquiring about Kerrigan's personal details as his possible 'only sister'. Another letter of 18

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<sup>38</sup> Beaumont, *Australian Centenary of Defence*, p.116.

<sup>39</sup> Service records of Bert Wood: B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

March 1916 acknowledged that indeed Robert was her brother who 'hasn't heard or seen from any of us for 12 or 13 years'. His stated next-of-kin, Miss Kerrigan, had been dead for 9 years. It thus appears that Robert had not seen his family since he was approximately 17 years old. Mrs. Hussey officially became his next-of-kin from 22 March 1916 and enquired whether she was entitled to any payment. After his death, on 15 February 1917, she was requested to choose an inscription for his grave. However, by 27 September 1920, the Public Curator had located a wife and daughter, Mrs Jane Ellen Kerrigan and Ruby Grace:

It has come to my knowledge that you, on 14<sup>th</sup> August last, wrote to Mrs. E. Hussey, sister of the above named deceased, enquiring if there were any nearer blood relations than herself living, and I would inform you that although perhaps Mrs. Hussey may not be inclined to admit it, yet I have ascertained that the deceased left a widow, namely, Jane Ellen Kerrigan, residing at Gulargambone, New South Wales, and a daughter, Ruby Grace Kerrigan.<sup>41</sup>

The war service medals were sent to the widow on 5 October 1920 and the request for the memorial plaque was also signed by the widow. Mrs Hussey was eventually told of this turn of events on 28 August 1922. There is no more correspondence from Mrs Hussey yet a letter from his daughter Ruby 47 years later indicates that she still retained her father's medals and applied for the Anzac medal issued in 1967:

As sole surviving member of my family, I hereby make application for the Anzac Badge. I am the daughter of No.1510 KERRIGAN ROBERT, Private 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, age 39. Born Ballarat. Husband of Jane Ellen Kerrigan of Gulargambone, NSW. I at present hold his 1914/15 Star Allied Service and General Service Medals.<sup>42</sup>

The majority stated in their attestation papers that they were of a particular religious denomination, with only five not registering any religion. Approximately half said that they were Church of England, fourteen Catholic, five Presbyterian, five Protestant, three Methodist

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<sup>41</sup> Service records of Robert Kerrigan, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* Letter from Ms Ruby Jeboult, dated 11/5/1967.

and one Wesleyan. The percentage recording Church of England as their denomination was very similar to the total AIF figures, with fewer Presbyterians and Methodists.

**Table 4: Stated Religion of the Gallipoli POWs**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>POW Cohort</b>	<b>Total AIF (Beaumont)</b>
Church of England	50.7 %	49.2 %
Roman Catholic	20.8 %	19.26 %
Presbyterian	7.4 %	15%
Methodist	4.4 %	10.19%
Other	7.4 % not stated	5.96 %

**Source: Service records of the 67 POW Cohort, B2455, NAA, Canberra. Total AIF figures: Beaumont, 2001, p. 116.**

### **Physical characteristics and health prior to capture**

Attestation papers do not provide much detail as to the physical characteristics of recruits, apart from complexion, hair and eye colour and any physical distinguishing marks. However, height is provided with quite a range represented. At the commencement of recruitment, height requirements were 5 ft 6 inches (167 cms) or over. However, by July 1915, the minimum height was lowered to 5 ft. 2 inches (157 cms).<sup>43</sup> The tallest of the men, Boyle and Elston, stood six feet tall (182 cms) and both had been accepted for early enlistment in 1914. Wiffen and Francis were the smallest at 5 ft. 3 ½ inches (161 cms), both enlisting in 1915 and embarking for overseas in June 1915, and probably mirroring the authorities' acceptance of shorter men as recruitment declined. The average height of the POW cohort was 5 ft 7 inches (170 cms).

The health of the soldiers at Gallipoli prior to capture is an important issue as many suffered failing health on the peninsula as a result of several months of fighting. This may have contributed to them being more vulnerable to capture and affected their subsequent health as POWs. Tyquin's study of medical conditions at Gallipoli provides a relevant context. Tyquin is very critical of the overall British administration of medical supplies and treatment of the

<sup>43</sup> Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p.14.

sick and wounded at Gallipoli. He noted that there was a shortage of stretchers to transport the wounded and sick, a lack of communication in transporting the wounded, a lack of hospital ships, insufficient supplies and minimal medical staff.<sup>44</sup> Bean noted that as early as 3 July, the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Field Ambulance reported that 'dysentery is becoming very acute, and cases of extreme collapse are occurring'.<sup>45</sup> He provided a further vivid description of the decline in health of the men during June and July:

The great frames which had impressed beholders in Egypt now stood out gauntly; faces became lined, cheeks sunken. Several warnings were sent in by medical officers pointing out the increasing weakness of the men.<sup>46</sup>

Bean added that on July 29<sup>th</sup>, Colonel Howse wrote to General Walker, commanding the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division:

It is with regret that I am compelled to report that the officers and men of your division are suffering a great deal from the type of diarrhoea which is producing anaemia, and considering the food and environment under which they are living, I shall expect a general deterioration of their physiques.<sup>47</sup>

Bean attributed the poor health of the men to the hot weather, flies, constant diarrhoea and dysentery, poor sanitation, dental problems, body lice and fleas, lack of rest and limited diet, especially the lack of fresh fruit and vegetables.<sup>48</sup> By August 1915, when the majority of the men were captured, Tyquin provides eye-witness accounts of the poor state of health of the men in general: 'Thin, haggard, weak as kittens and covered with suppurating sores. Practically every man had dysentery'.<sup>49</sup> The impact of ill health on the campaign was enormous: 'In the case of one battalion on 27 August, 180 men out of a total strength of 220 appeared on sick parade'.<sup>50</sup> Bean noted that on 6 August, prior to the attack on Lone Pine and Hill 971, that officers were very concerned about the sickness and general poor state of the

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<sup>44</sup> M. Tyquin, *Gallipoli: the Medical War*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 1993.

<sup>45</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol 2, p. 367.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p. 379.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, p. 379.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, pp. 369-378.

<sup>49</sup> Captain P Devonport, AWM 41 2/6.4, quoted in Tyquin, *Gallipoli*, p. 31.

<sup>50</sup> As quoted in Tyquin, *ibid*, p. 31.

men.<sup>51</sup> This concern was voiced just two days prior to the majority of the soldiers being captured on 8 August 1915.

In September, the troops that had been on Gallipoli since April were sent to the island of Lemnos for a break and their poor physical condition was noted by an Australian nurse stationed there: 'We had been on Lemnos about two months when the men began arriving off the peninsula for a rest. I shall never forget seeing the first lot march or rather stagger past. Most of them looked haggard and ill'.<sup>52</sup> The Gallipoli 67 destined to become POWs were no exception. Just over one third (34 percent) of the 67 soldiers received medical treatment whilst on Gallipoli prior to capture. This compares to Tyquin's figure of 32.72 percent of the total of soldiers sick and wounded at Gallipoli on 1 September 1915.<sup>53</sup> Approximately half of the POW cohort's ill-health was due to illness and the rest to wounds received in battle. The time spent in hospital ranged from three to 90 days. Gastro-enteritis directly affected three of the men and the time they spent in hospital ranged from three to 26 days. Bailey was forced to rest for three days with the Field Ambulance Hospital at Anzac Cove suffering from 'gastric enteritis' just days before his capture on 8 August.<sup>54</sup> Carpenter was sent to Mudros Hospital for 20 days with influenza and returned to Anzac just days before he too was captured on 8 August.<sup>55</sup> Shelton was hospitalised with 'gastritis' for 26 days.<sup>56</sup>

Nine soldiers were wounded in battles in the period prior to being captured and would have been in a weakened state. A bullet wound to the foot caused Mathers to spend 15 days in Mustapha Hospital, Alexandria.<sup>57</sup> A hand grenade wound to the back resulted in 21 days in Alexandria Hospital for Thomas.<sup>58</sup> Randall spent 90 days in hospital with wounds and

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<sup>51</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 502.

<sup>52</sup> Letter of Sister H. Selwyn-Smith, AWM 41, Box 5, quoted in Tyquin, *Gallipoli*, p. 122.

<sup>53</sup> Tyquin, *ibid*, Appendix IX, p. 228

<sup>54</sup> Service records of Bailey, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>55</sup> Service records of Carpenter, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>56</sup> Service records of Shelton, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>57</sup> Service records of Mathers, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>58</sup> Service records of Thomas, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

returned to Anzac on 1 August. He was captured only a week later on 8 August.<sup>59</sup> Thus many of the men would have been in a poor physical state just prior to capture. Another factor contributing to the ill health of some members of the AIF was the incidence of venereal diseases. Two cases needed medical treatment of 38 to 70 days – longer than some of the more critical wounds resulting from battle.<sup>60</sup> As Ashton was captured on the first day, ill health was not an issue. Luscombe had not slept for three days leading up to the battle for Hill 971 when he was captured.

**Table 5: Reasons for medical treatment prior to capture at Gallipoli**

Reasons for Treatment	Numbers	Time Recuperating
Wounds	9	15 to 90 days
Gastro-enteritis	3	3 to 26 days
Ear infection/abscess	2	7 to 53 days
Influenza	1	20 days
Pneumonia	1	Several days
Syphillis	1	38 days
Gonorrhoea	1	70 days

- Source: Service records, National Archives of Australia B2455.

Thus, in conclusion, the Australian prisoners of war captured at Gallipoli were amongst the first cohort of volunteers to fight overseas. Their enlistment patterns mirrored the first wave of recruitment from August 1914. As a group, they were slightly younger in age, were less likely to be married, included more overseas born and had less previous military experience than the overall AIF cohort. Originating almost equally from the city and country, Bean's claim of a predominantly 'bush' contingent is challenged. Approximately a third suffered debilitating wounds and illness on Gallipoli prior to capture and their weakened state may have played a role in their capture, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

<sup>59</sup> Service records of Randall, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>60</sup> Service records of the 67 POWs, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

### Chapter 3: An 'inglorious end': experiences of capture.

The circumstances surrounding the actual capture of prisoners of war are a little studied aspect of the total POW experience. Most accounts gloss over the experiences of capture to concentrate on actual internment. Furthermore, as mentioned in the Introduction, many Australian POW studies are drawn from World War II experiences where many prisoners were captured in a non-combative situation en masse such as at the fall of Singapore in February 1942.<sup>1</sup> Thus there was not a need to focus on the instances of capture. This chapter will examine the POW experience from the initial capture of the 'Gallipoli 67' to their arrival in Istanbul, including the treatment of the wounded whilst on the peninsula.

Historians have paid scant attention to the capture of the Gallipoli prisoners or if they have, their claims are unsubstantiated. As would be expected in a history which concentrates on the broader spectrum of the war, Bean's *Official History* provides only a sketchy account of the actual capture of Australian POWs. However, in writing the history, Bean had access to POW Repatriation Statements collected at the end of the war and other sources such as diaries, so he obviously made a choice not to focus on POWs. He specifically mentions the experiences of capture of only eleven of the 67 captives.<sup>2</sup> Bean commented on how few Australians were captured during the Gallipoli campaign, 'in spite of rewards offered for their capture, the enemy made hardly any prisoners at Anzac'.<sup>3</sup> He noted that at the end of April, of the 5,000

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Joan Beaumont does not dwell on the nature of capture of the Gull Force in WWII. *Gull Force. Survival and Leadership in Captivity, 1941-1945*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> Ashton, Elston, Lushington, McDonald, Troy, Cliffe, Creedon, Delpratt, King, Calcutt and Luscombe.

<sup>3</sup> C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, vol. 2, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1938, p. 470. There is conflicting evidence about the existence of a reward system. It does not make sense to offer rewards that would increase the number of prisoners captured, as they were more of an incumbrance and expense to the captors. Brackenbury includes reference to a temporary five pound bounty offered by Essad Pasha prior to the Suvla Bay landing for the capture of prisoners. He quotes E.W. Hammond, *History of the 11th Light Horse Regiment*, Brisbane, 1942, p.165. If it had been in place, it was not successful as few men were captured prior to the Suvla Bay landing. N. Brackenbury, *Becoming guests of the unspeakable*, unpublished hon. thesis, AWM MSS, 975, AWM, Canberra. Appendix 11, p. 76. Hoffman Philip, the American Embassy Secretary in Istanbul wrote on 21 August 1915 that there seemed to have been many more prisoners captured in the previous fortnight and adds, 'It is even rumoured that a reward of 30 piastres is given for every live one brought in'. PRO

men missing in the First Australian Division, only *one* was a prisoner.<sup>4</sup> However, previously Bean had recorded that four were captured on 25 April.<sup>5</sup> He further develops this theme: 'It is true that the men at this time hated their enemy for his supposed ill-treatment of the wounded – and the fact that, of the hundreds who lay out, only one wounded man survived in Turkish hands has justified this suspicion'.<sup>6</sup> Bean does not identify this 'one man.' At this point of the narrative, it was May 1915 and nine Australians were prisoners.

Other historians have made broad assertions about Gallipoli soldiers captured by the Turks, including Adam-Smith. With no reference to any specific statistics, she repeats the view that 'few of the wounded Anzacs left with the Turks survived'.<sup>7</sup> Adam-Smith made neither reference to the numbers captured nor any experiences at capture and to emphasise her point that few survived at the hands of the Turks, referred to a letter written by Lieutenant Luscombe to the Red Cross on 31 December 1916, who estimated that the Australian men *with him* totalled about 75.<sup>8</sup> Adam-Smith assumed that this was the total number of Australians captured by the Turks, including those from the AE2 submarine and soldiers, airmen and air crew captured in Mesopotamia. The conclusion then was drawn that 'it is an exceedingly small roll-call when one considers the columns of 'missing' printed in the newspapers back home'.<sup>9</sup> She does not acknowledge, or perhaps did not know that there were other camps housing many more Australian POWs not included in Luscombe's list. Adam-Smith also assumed that those 'missing' referred only to those captured by the Turks. Lists of those missing in action also included soldiers who had been killed but for whom there were no records or eye-witness accounts that recorded their fate.

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FO 383/92, File 251, PRO, London. However, he is pointing out that at this stage it was only a rumour. No Turkish evidence on this point has been found.

<sup>4</sup> Bean, *ibid*, vol.1, 1942, p. 536.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p. 316.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, p. 606.

<sup>7</sup> P. Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War. From Gallipoli to Korea*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1992, p. 31

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, p. 33.

Barker examined the varying experiences of POWs at capture and discussed the transition from a combatant to that of a POW. He includes experiences from World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War, and does not focus on Gallipoli specifically.<sup>10</sup> Barker categorised the most common circumstances of events leading to capture. They include situations where a soldier could no longer fight, could not retreat safely or escape, was overpowered, ran out of ammunition or made a decision to surrender.<sup>11</sup> Barker does not include the possibility of POWs mistaking the enemy for allies and walking into capture such as the experience of McDonald, Elston and Lushington on the first day of landing at Gallipoli.

This period of 'transition' between combatant and POW is one fraught with difficulty for the soldier. In the heat of battle, sympathy for the enemy may be severely eroded, surrounded as the soldiers were by dead and wounded comrades. Considering that the capture of enemy soldiers may well have been a great inconvenience and become an expensive liability, it is surprising that there were so many captives on both sides. Barker argues that most soldiers gave little thought to actually being captured before going into battle. They may have thought of being killed outright or wounded but not being captured by the enemy.<sup>12</sup> A psychological study of POWs by Dr. A. L. Cochrane, himself a captive of the Germans in Crete during World War II, noted too that none of the many prisoners he later examined, including himself, ever considered the possibility of being a captive. They may visualise death and being wounded, but not being taken prisoner.<sup>13</sup> In a study of British POWs captured on the Western Front during WWI in Germany, van Emden supports this view: 'None of the men that I have met in the past or during the research for this book ever expected to be taken prisoner. Their capture

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<sup>10</sup> A. J. Barker, *Behind Barbed Wire*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1974.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> A. L. Cochrane, 'Notes on the Psychology of Prisoners of War', *British Medical Journal*, 23 February, 1946, pp. 282-282.

was a surprise'.<sup>14</sup> Creedon noted in his diary: 'I thought my last had come for I never thought for a minute that they would take me prisoner'.<sup>15</sup>

Barker explained that on capture, soldiers felt apprehensive of what may lie ahead, particularly in a situation where ignorance of the enemy exacerbated fears of the unknown. Having previously discussed the fears held by many Australians of Turkish treatment on capture, this apprehension was understandable, considering that most Australians would have had little knowledge of Turkish language or culture. Barker pointed out that the emotions immediately on capture may range from relief at still finding themselves alive, to frustration at the orders given by commanders and tactics, inadequate weaponry and reinforcements that did not arrive.<sup>16</sup> Bean queried the leadership decisions made on several of the Australian 'feints' that resulted in capture of Australian soldiers, including the attack on Hill 971 where the majority of Australian POWs were captured.<sup>17</sup>

Ashton recalled his thoughts at capture:

I simply could not believe that this was happening to me. I hoped I would wake up and find myself safe in some familiar surroundings. The thought also flashed through my mind that this was the end – the inglorious end of so much enthusiasm and hard work, of ambition and dreams of glory. These curiously mixed thoughts did at least give me a feeling of utter indifference to my fate and allowed me to show a calm front to the enemy...<sup>18</sup>

Sergeant Maurice Delpratt, a 27 year old station overseer from Beaudesert, Queensland, was somewhat philosophical about his capture, though was concerned that it may be construed as cowardice. In a letter to his family, he wrote:

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<sup>14</sup> R. van Emden, *Prisoners of the Kaiser. The Last POWs of the Great War*, Pen & Sword, South Yorkshire, 2000, p. 8

<sup>15</sup> Diary of Daniel Creedon. AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>16</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, pp. 28-35.

<sup>17</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, pp. 462-463.

<sup>18</sup> Frederick Ashton Papers, 973A, p. 20, Battye Library, Perth.

It is a great relief to me to find that I am allowed to write to you and able to say I am in good health and receiving excellent treatment as a prisoner-of-war ... I was excused the ignominy of laying down my arms – they were promptly laid down for me. And here I am, a prisoner of war, having failed in my mission and no longer able to serve my country, but in good health and looking forward to the day when the war ends and I can go home. With the Australians it is considered a disgrace to be captured. It was bad soldiering on my part to get within the enemy's advanced lines, but I know you will understand it is not lack of courage makes a man do that.<sup>19</sup>

A recurring theme in several sources concerning the capture of Australian soldiers was the belief that German officers often saved the Australians from ill treatment by Turkish soldiers. Bean noted: 'The testimony of the few captured Australians clearly shows that, while the rules of war were respected by most educated Turks, it was the German officers who frequently stood between the prisoners and the savagery of another class of Turkish soldier.'<sup>20</sup> Four soldiers referred to this, though it is not clear if they had mistaken Turkish officers for Germans.<sup>21</sup> In 1919 when Bean returned to Gallipoli, he revised his thoughts on the number of German officers:

The presence of only three German graves among those of 3000 Turks was evidence that the average Australian soldier during the campaign had overestimated the number of Germans in the forces facing us. Turkish officers, because of their neat uniforms and often fair complexions, were, when seen, almost always assumed to be German.<sup>22</sup>

The account of each capture varies enormously, depending on the available evidence. Recently published Turkish documents from the Military Archives in Ankara include interviews with forty Australian POWs by the Turkish military. They do not include those who were too badly wounded to be interviewed or those captured on the first day of landing.<sup>23</sup> When soldiers were repatriated at the end of the war, they were required to provide a Repatriation Statement providing details of their capture and subsequent treatment. These often mention the names of soldiers captured at the same time, thus providing the opportunity

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<sup>19</sup> Sgt. M. Delpratt, *Letters written while a POW in Turkey*, 12 July 1915. AWM 3DRL/2153 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>20</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 162. Footnote 42.

<sup>21</sup> Based on the experiences of Boyle, O'Connor, Davern and Dunne.

<sup>22</sup> C.E.W. Bean, *Gallipoli Mission*, ABC Books, Sydney, 1990, p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> A. Tetik (ed), *Çanakkale Muharebeleri'nin Esirleri. İfadeler ve Mektuplar, (Prisoners of War at the Çanakkale Battles. Testimonies and Letters)*, vol. 2. Military & Strategic Studies Department Publications, Ankara, 2009. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2009.

to compare or corroborate accounts. However, some Repatriation Statements of men who returned are missing and those who died in Turkey were obviously not able to supply such a report. A few, such as Creedon who died as a POW, left detailed diaries and others, such as Luscombe and Lushington, published their experiences on return to Australia.<sup>24</sup> There are ten men for whom we have no specific details of capture, 15 percent of the total.

Of the 67 men, there are only ten separate incidents of capture for which we have evidence, some involving soldiers captured in groups. The discussion will now focus on each incident and the nature of capture drawn from the extant sources (see Appendix 9). Contrary to early beliefs held by the Australian troops that Turks took no prisoners, six Australians were captured on the first day of landing: Ashton, Elston, Lushington, McDonald, Rawlings and Brooke.

**Table 6: Date and Place of Capture.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Names</b>
25 April	Shrapnel Gully Pope's Hill	6	Ashton, Elston, Lushington, McDonald, Rawlings, Brooke.
2 May	Gaba Tepe	1	Sherlock
4 May	Pope's Hill	1	Troy
8 May	Johnstone's Jolly	1	Cliffe
28 June	Chatham's Post Pine Ridge	7	Allen, Creedon, Delpratt, Jordan, King, Matthews, O'Callaghan.
7 August	Cape Helles	2	Griffiths, Nelson
8 August	Hill 971	34	Bailey, Beattie, Boyle, Brown, Cahir, Calcutt, Chalcroft, Davern, Dowell, Dunne, Foster, Foxcroft, Green, Jones, Kerr, Kerrigan, Kilmartin, Lightfoot, Luscombe, Masterton, McLean, New, Neyland, O'Connor, Pasmore, Randall, Samson, Stormonth, Stringer, Thomas, Warnes, Wiffen, Williams, Wilson.
9 August	Hill 971	1	Drake
10 August	Hill 971	3	Carpenter, Carter, McKay
20 December	Aegean Sea	1	Goodwin
Little or no evidence	Evidence not clear on either place or date.	10	Francis, Hennessy, Hodges, Hodsdon, Jenkins, Kelly, Leyden, Mathers, Shelton, Wood.

**Sources: Repatriation Statements AWM Series 30, AWM Canberra; Personnel Files B2455, NAA, Canberra; Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles, vol. II.**

<sup>24</sup> Refer to discussion of sources in the Introduction.

## 25 April

On the first day of landing on 25 April, it would have been surprising if the Turks had any procedures in place to deal with large numbers of POWs. They were aware that a landing was to take place but not how extensive nor the precise location. However, some pre-planning was obvious in the publishing of the official Turkish *Manual Regarding Prisoners of War* in 1914.<sup>25</sup>

Ashton was probably the first Australian captured on Gallipoli for whom we have evidence. Near Shrapnel Gully, he was attempting to rejoin Australian troops when he was diverted by two wounded soldiers. On searching for a stretcher-bearer, he became disoriented and was captured by approximately ten Turkish soldiers. He was surrounded so 'threw up my hands' and surrendered. They 'knocked me on the head with their rifle-butts, dazing me'. His personal effects were searched and then returned to him except for his bayonet, ammunition and papers. He was initially marched to the coast and then back inland and questioned by Turkish officers in Turkish. A two course meal was provided and he fell asleep in a Turkish tent.<sup>26</sup> He was joined later in the evening by Lieutenant William Elston, Captain Ronald McDonald and Lushington. McDonald commented that Ashton 'was well and had been well treated'.<sup>27</sup> Next morning they were all provided with a breakfast of eggs and bread and transported to Gelibolu on a small ferry-boat where they were placed in an empty house. Ashton noted: 'At this place we received exactly the same treatment as the officers. Our battalion colour patches having apparently misled the Turks as to our rank'.<sup>28</sup>

Bean implies that other Australians were captured in the same battle but did not survive the ordeal. 'Except for two officers and a private, [Elston, Lushington, McDonald] who later mistook the Turks for Indians and were captured, Ashton was the only Australian who

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<sup>25</sup> *Usura Hakkında Talimatname Mat-baa-i, Askeriyye (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War)*, Military Printer, Istanbul, 1914. Ottoman Archives, Istanbul. 1332/1914. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>27</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>28</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

survived this battle after being in the hands of the Turks'.<sup>29</sup> Ashton does not mention in his Repatriation Statement or in his later writings any incident involving other Australian soldiers being captured at the same time and Bean does not provide the evidence for this assertion. On landing at 6 pm on 25 April, the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion was instructed to move off with some men of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion up through Shrapnel Gully. Lieutenant-Colonel Pope and his Adjutant, McDonald led the men up through Monash Valley. At some stage in the advance, there had been an Indian regiment off to their left but they were cut off and they lost contact in the dark. Pope instructed Elston to make contact with the Indians and Lushington accompanied him as he could speak some Tamil and Pashtun, having grown up in Ceylon. They found themselves surrounded, not by Indians as expected, but Turks.<sup>30</sup> McDonald soon followed them, as he believed that someone had called for a senior officer. 'Immediately I was seized by both arms by two men,' and surrounded by armed soldiers. However, he was not harmed.<sup>31</sup> Pope just managed to escape.

The men were not ill-treated but Lushington speculated years later in the published account of his experiences as a POW that:

There seemed to be a great deal of hesitation and uncertainty as to what they were going to do with us, as to all appearances, for a few minutes, our fate hung in the balance as their actions showed that the easiest way to be out of trouble was to shoot us. However, it was decided otherwise and we and our guard were hustled away.<sup>32</sup>

How accurate this speculation was cannot be ascertained as none of the others captured at the same time wrote of the same fears. It may have been the case, but not understanding Turkish may have made it difficult to comprehend the situation or faulty memory and hindsight may have played a part years later in drawing this conclusion. It is interesting to note that an

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<sup>29</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol.1, p.316.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, pp. 468-470. Again Bean asserts that 'they were the only Australians who remained prisoners in Turkish hands at the landing, except for Ashton.'

<sup>31</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. He added: 'I was thrown down and my revolver was taken from me'.

<sup>32</sup> R. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks, 1915-1918*. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, London, 1923, p. 4.

official Turkish military memo noted the capture, obviously an unusual occurrence on the first day: 'Two Australian soldiers, a Captain and a First-Lieutenant were captured in Kabatepe'.<sup>33</sup>

As previously mentioned, these men later joined up with Ashton, captured earlier in the day. Elston noted that they were 'well treated by captors' and that the next morning met with Essad Pasha. 'He spoke to us and promised to send word of our capture and see that we were well treated'.<sup>34</sup>

Later on their way to the coast, they were protected from hostile Turkish irregular soldiers by the Turkish officers and guards. Lushington noted later that 'we were kindly treated'.<sup>35</sup> Elston added that he was not robbed of any possessions, except for his overcoat, haversack and puttees.<sup>36</sup> Thus from the first day of landing, fate decreed that Lushington and Ashton, both from Western Australia, would spend most of the following three and a half years together in POW camps.

There is little evidence for the capture of Private Alfred Rawlings, a 29 year old blacksmith from Ballarat, Victoria. His Casualty Form noted him as being 'wounded and missing' on 2 May 1915, which was later altered to 25 April 1915. His Repatriation Statement is missing.<sup>37</sup> However, a statement made in London by Rawlings reported that he had been captured with Lance-Corporal Vivian Brooke of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and both were placed in Maidos hospital for treatment. Brooke was further injured by an Allied bombing raid on the hospital and both

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<sup>33</sup> *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi (Magazine of Military History Documents)*, Ağustos 1989, Yıl. 38, Sayı 88, Document # 2136, dated 26 April 1915, 38<sup>th</sup> Year, Edition 88, August 1989, General Staff Printing House, 1989, Ankara. Translated S. Bulgu, 16/12/2005.

<sup>34</sup> Repatriation Statement of Elston, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. Essad Pasha was the Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Turkish Corps responsible for the northern area of the campaign, which included the Anzac sections. A photo of his HQ shows it well camouflaged with bushes.

<sup>35</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Repatriation Statement of Elston, Service records B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>37</sup> Service records of Rawlings, B2455, NAA, Canberra. His Repatriation Statement is not included in his Personnel File nor with other reports collated in AWM 30 B1.31. One did exist as an extract from it was found in the Service records of Len New, reporting on his death.

were transferred across the straits to a military hospital on the southern shore. As Brooke later died in the Turkish military hospital, he left no further details.<sup>38</sup>

### **May captures**

Private Thomas Sherlock of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion was reported missing on 2 May at Gaba Tepe but there are no details of his capture and transportation to Istanbul where he later died from wounds in hospital.<sup>39</sup> Two days later, Private Martin Troy was captured. Troy was stationed with the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which had dug in on the slopes of Pope's Hill and had been involved in bitter fighting with the opposing Turkish troops. He was 'knocked senseless' by a bomb and later regained consciousness surrounded by dead and wounded. Waiting until dark, he attempted to crawl away 'but it was no good, the Turks were everywhere, and soon made me prisoner.' He added in the Turkish interrogation report: 'A Turkish soldier gave me water to drink when I was totally exhausted. I surrendered to him'.<sup>40</sup> He was not ill-treated but interrogated by both Turkish and German officers. 'They kept me there for three days while deciding what my fate should be'.<sup>41</sup> Troy does not mention any other Australian captured with him, nor any indiscriminate killing of prisoners, yet Bean once again hinted at others being killed by the Turks on this day: 'Of those Australians who fought this action, he was the only one who survived it in the hands of the Turks'.<sup>42</sup> Again it is not clear what evidence Bean was drawing on here.

The last known prisoner captured in the first few weeks of landing was Corporal William Cliffe of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, captured on 8 May. Cliffe, a 28 year old coachman from Sydney, had previously been mentioned in despatches 'for acts of conspicuous gallantry or valuable service' between 25 April and 5 May 1915.<sup>43</sup> Cliffe's Repatriation Statement has not been

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<sup>38</sup> ARC W & M File of Brooke, 1DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>39</sup> Service records of Sherlock, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>40</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 941.

<sup>41</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>42</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol.1, p. 596.

<sup>43</sup> Service records of Cliffe, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

found so no specific details of his capture are available. Bean, drawing from eye-witness accounts stated that the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion was sent into no-man's land to observe Turkish digging operations at 10 pm on 8 May. Private Allan Campbell of Bathurst NSW was shot in the head. His mate Cliffe picked him up and carried him into a trench, but unfortunately for Cliffe, it was a Turkish trench. He was subsequently captured.<sup>44</sup> Several eye-witness accounts filed in Cliffe's Service records supports this story. Much later, a letter received by Cliffe's wife, dated 5 November 1915, states he was 'unwounded ... and apparently being fairly well treated'.<sup>45</sup>

Thus in the first few weeks of landing at Gallipoli up to 8 May, nine Australians were captured for whom there is evidence, with four wounded in battle: Troy, Brooke, Sherlock and Rawlings. However, it is impossible to ascertain if others were killed on capture. Most were captured during combat. Despite rumours of the cruelty of the Turks towards prisoners, those captured were treated well and not injured, apart from Ashton's initial knock on the head. It is unfortunate that there is no evidence for the experiences of Brooke, Sherlock and Rawlings. However, all three were badly injured when captured by the Turks and transported to hospital, Sherlock to Istanbul and Brooke and Rawlings to Midos. The captives were questioned without force or coercion, provided with food and protected by Turkish officers and guards. If Bean's assertion is correct, that 'others' captured did not survive at the hands of the Turks, one may speculate why experiences differed. Perhaps some men were killed immediately on capture, but there is no firm evidence for this. Those captured were courteously received by Essad Pasha and he alerted Allied authorities to their capture. This was confirmed in Service records. The British Foreign Office noted in a Memo that at the time, prisoners 'were being well treated by their captors'.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p.55, Footnote 11. Allan must have died immediately as he is listed as dying of wounds and not as a POW. Honour Roll, AWM 145, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>45</sup> Service records of Cliffe, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>46</sup> PRO FO 383/96 *Prisoners*, Turkish File 66683/15, PRO, London.

There is no evidence for the capture of any Australians between early May and late June. During this period, after the first two weeks of 'bloody fights', both sides initially ordered a refrain from general attack.<sup>47</sup> Trench systems were strengthened and expanded and the disastrous Turkish attack of 19 May took place. Continuous sniping, bombing, isolated battles such as at Quinn's Post and a truce to bury the dead were features of this period. Major battles that resulted in the largest numbers of Australians being captured were yet to occur.

## **28 June**

The next batch of prisoners was captured six weeks later on 28 June, once again in active combat. Seven men were captured: Private William Allen, Creedon, Delpratt, Jordan, Private George King, Private Charles Matthews and Private John O'Callaghan. Allen, Delpratt and Creedon were captured separately and Jordan, King, Matthews and O'Callaghan were captured together. Turkish military sources record for 28 June, 'also one officer and nine soldiers were taken prisoner'.<sup>48</sup> It is not clear about the identity of the other two soldiers and Turkish sources often do not differentiate between British or Australian troops. A photograph (Fig.3:1) taken by the Turkish military, shows Allied soldiers of varying nationalities, including Allen and Delpratt.

Allen of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion died from malaria in December 1916 at a POW camp at Belemedik, so there is no Repatriation Statement providing an account of his capture. However, Creedon's diary records that he met up with Allen on 28 June at the Turkish dressing station: 'He did not know me at first and seemed dazed. He explained afterwards that he had been knocked out with a shell'.<sup>49</sup> This was confirmed in his Turkish interrogation report.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 50.

<sup>48</sup> *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, Ağustos 1989, Yıl 38, Sayı 88, Document 2155. (Magazine of Military History, 38<sup>th</sup> Year). Translated by S. Bulgu, 16 December 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Diary of Daniel Creedon, 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>50</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 923.



**Fig 3:1: Allen (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) and Delpratt (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) after capture.  
(Turkish Documents, 2009)**

Allen was not badly injured as later he joined Creedon and Jordan for a meal that night.

Delpratt was captured near Chatham's Post and Bean provided a footnote on his capture.<sup>51</sup> He was captured by two Turkish soldiers and an officer believed by Delpratt to be German. His equipment, watch and water-bottle were taken from him. 'I objected to giving up my watch', he recalled, 'and received a small bayonet wound inside the left elbow joint. Was taken to a Dressing Station and had same dressed. Then to a Bimbashi Dug-out where I was given food and a drink of wine'. Delpratt was later questioned.<sup>52</sup> Both Delpratt and Allan were subsequently photographed by the Turkish authorities (Fig. 3:1).

The other four soldiers captured on 28 June were involved in a 'feint' to divert attention during a British advance at Achi Baba.<sup>53</sup> Lone Pine and Hill 971 are two well known examples of these 'feints' in which many Australians were killed, wounded or captured. No Repatriation Statement exists for O'Callaghan, Creedon and King as they later died as POWs and the Statement for Matthews is missing. The Turkish interrogation report for King only

<sup>51</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p.299, Footnote 20. He noted that Delpratt had been sent as a messenger to the Balkan Pits but was cut off by Australian machine-gun fire, mistaking him for a Turk.

<sup>52</sup> Repatriation Statement of Delpratt, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. *Bimbashi* is *Major* in Turkish. S. Bulgu.

<sup>53</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol.2, pp. 291-292.

states 'we were wounded and surrounded, then fell prisoner'.<sup>54</sup> Only 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Jordan provided his account in a Repatriation Statement. However, Creedon left a detailed diary which does not corroborate the later account given by Jordan. This example is an excellent one for showing the discrepancies that often arise in sources and may be read in full in Appendix 10.

Of the men captured on 28 June, none was poorly treated apart from Delpratt receiving a minor wound. All were well fed, treated for wounds in field hospitals and questioned in a professional manner. The unusual generosity of an old civilian tea-maker was later noted by Delpratt in a letter home:

I shall always remember with gratitude the old proprietor of a little tea shop on Gallipoli Peninsula. We had travelled for three days in a wagon and I had been a week without tea. He gave us such a large enamel mug full (tea in Turkey is nearly always served in very small glasses and always without milk). We turned out our pockets to show we would not be able to pay him, but the old fellow told us or we thought he did that Allah was shouting.<sup>55</sup>

### **Capture on 7- 9 August**

There is no evidence from extant Australian or Turkish sources that any Australians were captured until a major 'push' on 7-8 August, when 47 men were captured, the majority of the POWs. One man was captured in rather unusual circumstances. At first reading there is nothing untoward about the account of capture provided by Driver Robert Griffiths. His Repatriation Statement reported that he was wounded and captured during an advance along the whole British line. He was wounded in the head and became unconscious.<sup>56</sup> However, Griffiths' account is interesting more for what he fails to tell rather than what he includes. He stressed that he was mistreated:

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<sup>54</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p.899. O'Callaghan was only able to write his name. He added no further details.

<sup>55</sup> Letter to Nell, 6 July 1917. M. Delpratt, *Letters written while a POW in Turkey*. 3DRL/2153, No. 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>56</sup> Repatriation Statement of Griffiths, 30 B1.16, AWM, Canberra.

When I came to ... I was entirely in their power as a Turkish soldier was on guard over me who introduced me to his bayonet several times. He stripped me of all my clothes except for my trousers and shirt. While passing along the trenches to the rear I was punched and kicked and butted with a rifle several times.<sup>57</sup>

This was unusual treatment when considering the others' experiences, though not unusual overall in the heat of battle. Griffiths explained that his interrogation by German General Liman von Sanders was brutal: 'This officer threatened to shoot me if I did not reveal all I knew, and also to flog me'.<sup>58</sup> One would question why the German commander himself would bother to question so brutally a man of Griffith's rank when others previously had been treated with courtesy, offered cigarettes, meals and wine. This may be a typical example of 'big-noting' outlined by Robin Gerster.<sup>59</sup> However, other sources suggest another interpretation. Griffiths, a butcher from Sydney, was only nineteen when he enlisted. As a driver, he may not have had the opportunity to engage in actual combat to the extent that he may have wished. The proceedings of a court enquiry about his fate and that of his mate Gunner E. Scott reveal a possible explanation. It is easy enough to imagine two young men desperate to prove themselves and disobeying orders to secretly join nearby British troops in a charge against the enemy.

A witness called to the enquiry, Dr. Spencer, explained that the two young men informed him that they planned to disobey orders and join the British charge. Dr. Spencer went up to the trenches the next day to look for the pair, only to be told that from all accounts, the two had joined the British charge and one had been killed and the other badly wounded. He believed that it had been Griffiths who had been killed.<sup>60</sup> The second witness, Dr. Smithson, learned from a British Sergeant that the two young men had spent the night in the trenches with the British troops and next morning took part in the charge. One of the men was killed before reaching the trench, while the other man was seriously wounded in the head and legs while

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> R. Gerster, *Big-noting. The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1987.

<sup>60</sup> Proceedings of Court Hearing, 16 August, 1915. Service records of Griffiths, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

consolidating the captured trench and was left behind when the trench was recaptured by the Turks.<sup>61</sup>

Griffiths was found to have been killed in action by the Court, but his records were later altered on 17 June 1916 to note that he was a POW. Thus a brave but foolhardy attempt to engage in battle cost the two young men dearly. Griffiths does not mention that he and his friend had disobeyed orders and should not have been with the British troops. His account of his capture conflicts with that provided at the Enquiry. He does not specifically say that he had been a part of the British charge nor that his friend had been killed. Griffiths' account may have been an attempt to draw attention from his disobeying orders which resulted in the death of his friend and his own capture. The account of his capture provided to the Turks was again totally different: 'I was wounded in the eye while we were laying telephone lines on August 7'.<sup>62</sup>

### **Hill 971**

There are 34 extant accounts for the soldiers captured on 8 August, the largest number of POWs captured in one battle.<sup>63</sup> The campaigns of 7- 8 August were disastrous for the Australian and New Zealand troops involved. This major 'push' was an attempt by the Allies to break the stalemate of the past few months. The British New Army division was to land north at Suvla Bay and a 'demonstration' at Lone Pine was planned to divert Turkish attention from this northern landing. An attack was also planned on the heights at Chunuk Bair and Hill 971 in two waves: firstly, a night attack to clear the Turks from the foot-hills where they were strongly entrenched and secondly, to commence the assault on Chunuk Bair and Hill 971.

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<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 930.

<sup>63</sup> Bailey, Beattie, Boyle, Brown, Calcutt, Carpenter, Carter, Cliffe, Davern, Dowell, Drake, Dunne, Foster, Foxcroft, Green, Jones, Kerr, Kerrigan, Lighfoot, Luscombe, Masterton, McLean, Nelson, New, Neyland, O'Connor, Pasmore, Randall, Samson, Stormonth, Thomas, Wiffen, Williams, Wilson.

Bean does little to disguise his contempt for this plan.<sup>64</sup> The troops had been given an almost impossible task.

The advance on Hill 971 mostly involved the 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Battalions, all of whom were already exhausted, with many of the men in poor health. The soldiers were woken at 2 a.m. on 8 August to begin the climb with Bean noting again that the distance to Hill 971 was underestimated, the locality mistaken and the start made too late, with the men facing massive Turkish machine-gun fire.<sup>65</sup> There were huge casualties and Bean believed the men had no chance of success. In all, 743 soldiers and 22 officers were killed.<sup>66</sup>

Once more, Bean asserted that very few of the wounded left in Turkish hands survived. It is not clear how he arrived at the following conclusion:

As on other occasions, very few of the wounded left in Turkish hands survived. Some were shot or bayoneted. A German officer, seeing the Turkish soldiers kicking a number of wounded men and preparing to roll them over a cliff on the hillside, stepped in and saved their lives.<sup>67</sup>

Although Bean did not provide a source for this statement, it appears to be based loosely on O'Connor's Repatriation Statement.<sup>68</sup> Bean included a brief account of the group captured with Luscombe and only then mentions one other name, that of Private Brendan Calcutt.<sup>69</sup> Luscombe, leading a small group of men, stated that the majority of his party were killed or wounded in the battle. He himself was hit and fell unconscious.<sup>70</sup> Thirteen were still alive and

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<sup>64</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, pp. 462-463.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, p. 655.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, p. 664.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*, pp. 662-663.

<sup>68</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B 2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>69</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 663, Footnote 26. He adds that several of the men died later working on the Berlin-Baghdad railway. 'The grave of Private B. Calcutt (of Williamstown, Victoria), of the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, was wounded in this battle, together with several other Australians... lies at Hedschkiri on the summit of the Taurus'.

<sup>70</sup> Luscombe's autobiography published in 1970 provides much more detail. On regaining consciousness, he discovered an officer directing a soldier to replace his boots, 'probably a soldier who had souvenired the boots from my apparently dead body'. L. H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl – Australian*, W. R. Smith & Paterson Pty, Brisbane, 1970, p. 40.

all but two or three were wounded. He lists the men captured with him.<sup>71</sup> Luscombe noted that Private J. Warner, 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion (most probably Warnes) and Private John Hennessy died of their wounds.<sup>72</sup> Luscombe reflected the prevailing Australian view in commenting that his experience was unusual in that he and his men were spared:

On Gallipoli it was not customary for the Turks to take any prisoners. It was simpler and cheaper to dispose of the wounded where they lay. Occasionally there were exceptions to this general rule. Our case was such an exception.<sup>73</sup>

Together the wounded were carried by Turkish soldiers on improvised stretchers back to the Turkish camp. Luscombe does not mention any incident involving ill-treatment of O'Connor. Having experienced three days and nights without sleep, Luscombe fell asleep on a camp bed. Later he was taken to General Liman von Sanders and questioned.<sup>74</sup> The small party was sent to the town of Maidos where they were joined for a meal by Lieutenant Stewart Stormonth, three British officers and two Turkish officers. One of the Turkish officers tried to cheer up Luscombe by jokingly offering to return him to Australian lines.<sup>75</sup>

Private Harry Foxcroft supports Luscombe's account by saying that most of the men were wounded or disabled and surrounded by Turks. They surrendered by putting up a white handkerchief. The men were searched and then they were sent off to a dressing station for medical attention. A German doctor who spoke very good English attended to the wounded. 'During this time we were treated fairly well'.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Neyland, Kerr, Masterton, Brown, Williams, Stringer, Pasmore, Foxcroft, Dowell, Warnes, Hennessy, O'Connor and Matthews.

<sup>72</sup> Repatriation Statement of Luscombe, Service records, NAA B2455.

<sup>73</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*, p.42.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>76</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra. His Turkish interrogation report supports this statement. Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 903.

Private Harry Brown added that there were only 'three left standing' before capture. 'The treatment immediately after capture was not too bad'.<sup>77</sup> Private Walter Williams was wounded in the side and personal items were taken. He makes no mention of ill treatment.<sup>78</sup> Sergeant Niven Neyland was knocked unconscious during the battle but noted: 'The treatment after capture seemed to me reasonable'.<sup>79</sup>

Thus five of the men captured who left a record were not subjected to ill treatment and both Luscombe and Foxcroft indicate that all surrendered together. There was no indication of any aggression applied to anyone else captured with them. It is interesting therefore to note the conflicting evidence of Private Thomas Dowell, O'Connor and Kerr and speculate why their experiences were any different. Dowell was wounded in the left thigh and his experience does not reflect medical treatment received by others. He claimed that he was left lying wounded, without food or water, for 28 hours. He was relieved of his boots, puttees, money and papers.<sup>80</sup> However, Dowell was listed as one of Luscombe's group captured together and provided with medical treatment.

O'Connor also reported a totally different story. Providing a dramatic sub-heading in his Repatriation Statement of *Barbarous Brutality*, he tells a detailed story of having witnessed a Turk bayoneting a wounded Australian. Lying wounded, he yelled out and the Turkish soldier 'picked up a 4lb. lump of rock that lay nearby and holding it in his hand, began to pound my head with it. When I raised my hands to fend the blows off my head he transferred his attentions to my body, about the ribs. Eventually he battered me till I lost consciousness'. On awakening, he concluded that a group of Turks were going to drop him over the gully. However, an officer ('I think the officer was a German, he certainly was not a Turk') ordered that he be carried to hospital. He was taken to a dressing station where the other wounded

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<sup>77</sup> Repatriation Statement of Brown, AWM B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>78</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1. 32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>79</sup> Repatriation Statement of Neyland, AWM 30 B1.26, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>80</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dowell. *Statements of Prisoners of War*, AWM 30, AWM, Canberra.

Australians were being treated. He was eventually treated by an Armenian 'in the uniform of the Red Crescent'.<sup>81</sup>

Again it is puzzling that O'Connor's report is so different from the other men in his group. Why did not any of the group witness this scene or receive poor treatment themselves? Luscombe's account includes O'Connor in the group captured together and there is no reference to ill treatment. O'Connor's emotive language and suppositions suggest bias and exaggeration. He does not explain why he believed the officer involved was 'certainly' not Turkish. Was it because he did not behave in the stereotyped way that O'Connor expected? There may also be a subtle message being relayed here. It appears that O'Connor is juxtaposing the 'gentle' treatment offered by the Christian Armenian Red Crescent attendant to that of the barbarous Muslim Turk. O'Connor eventually had his injured leg amputated, so his obvious hatred for his captors may well be played out in his Repatriation Statement made when he was eventually released. The incident may have occurred as he outlined, though it is difficult to understand why his experience varied so much from the rest of the group and why it was not witnessed by others.

This incident is exaggerated by journalist Greg Kerr in an account of his grandfather's experience as a Turkish prisoner.<sup>82</sup> Corporal George Kerr was with Luscombe's group. Greg Kerr develops the theme of Turkish brutality beyond that provided by the extant sources themselves. He embellished the account provided by O'Connor:

It was a commonly held belief among the Allies that the Turks were not inclined to take prisoners and the events immediately after the defeat of Cpl. Kerr's outfit suggested nothing to the contrary ... they showed little compassion for their foes.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>82</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs. The Story of Two Brothers*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*, p. 99.

In fact, events showed the opposite with 38 Australians being taken prisoner during this battle and provided with medical treatment and overall humane treatment. Greg Kerr expands on O'Connor's account, naming Calcutt as the man bayoneted to death, supposedly witnessed by O'Connor:

One wounded man, Priv. Calcutt, of Williamstown, was bayoneted to death, and when the wounded Priv. O'Connor yelled in protest, the same Turk walked over and proceeded to bash him over the head with a large rock until he became unconscious.<sup>84</sup>

However, O'Connor in his Repatriation Statement does not name the soldier. It is interesting to speculate on the sources used by Kerr here. Calcutt had not been with Luscombe's group but had been wounded elsewhere in the battle, was hospitalised and died one year and four months later of septicaemia at Belemedik. He was not bayoneted to death here.<sup>85</sup> Calcutt was well enough to be interrogated by the Turks and reported that he was 'wounded and captured near Lake Tuzla on August 8'.<sup>86</sup> Without providing the sources to justify his argument, Kerr goes on to describe the continuing 'brutality'. No extant sources of the captured men mention this. 'The brutality continued as the battered men of C and D Company were indiscriminately bashed and struck with rifle butts'.<sup>87</sup> Only Stormonth mentions being hit as he was escorted behind the trenches. Kerr adds that Turkish officers ordered the removal of boots and other possessions. O'Connor, Dowell, Williams, Brown and Foxcroft had some possessions taken, mostly boots, but none refer to Turkish officers ordering this. Luscombe noted that a Turkish officer ensured his boots were returned to him.<sup>88</sup> A Turkish soldier then cut a crutch for Kerr to aid his walking and he was taken to a Turkish medical station with the others.<sup>89</sup> Kerr's interrogation report simply states: 'I was taken prisoner after being wounded ... in my right arm and left leg ... half an hour later Turks picked me up'.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *ibid*, p. 99.

<sup>85</sup> Service records of Calcutt, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>86</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 889.

<sup>87</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 99.

<sup>88</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, p. 40.

<sup>89</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.100.

<sup>90</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 959.

Greg Kerr also adds that the Australian guns were 'tossed away'.<sup>91</sup> Again it is not clear why he states this, as none of the sources mention such a practice and it would have been a senseless and wasteful act. In fact, the Military Museum in Istanbul has several photographs of a large bundle of captured rifles at Gallipoli. It would have been an advantage for the Turkish soldiers to have captured Allied armaments.

Therefore it is clear from the sources that the group surrendered after most had been wounded in battle. Some personal belongings, especially boots, were taken from them and most report that they suffered no poor treatment, apart from Dowell stating that he was neglected and O'Connor's account of being bashed about the head. All received medical treatment at Turkish dressing stations.

Private John Thomas was badly wounded at the base of Hill 971. He hid with Private Arthur Wiffen and Turks took their boots, thinking that they were dead. They were eventually found by a 'Turkish Red Crescent man who ... took us to a dug-out' and then moved on to a Turkish dressing station with Private Lancelot Lightfoot.<sup>92</sup> Lightfoot had been wounded and 'walked straight into the hands of a Turkish Red Crescent man ... Immediately after capture my wound was very roughly bandaged and I was taken behind the Turkish lines together with three other prisoners'. Eventually at midnight, he was fed bread and cheese.<sup>93</sup> Wiffen's Repatriation Statement has not been located but Turkish documents record that he, Thomas and Lightfoot were admitted to hospital on 9 August.<sup>94</sup>

Randall was captured with Sergeant Hugh Kilmartin and Private Charles McLean. 'We were surrounded by Turks and could do nothing. McLean was wounded and Kilmartin thought it

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<sup>91</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 99.

<sup>92</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>93</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>94</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 1042.

advisable to surrender. He did so. After a desperate struggle, I was taken'.<sup>95</sup> McLean merely states that they were 'wounded and cut off. Picked up by Turks and taken to dressing station. Wounds dressed ...'.<sup>96</sup> Kilmartin's Repatriation Statement has not been located. Turkish documents record that both Randall and Kilmartin were admitted to hospital on 9 August.<sup>97</sup>

Other men appear to have been captured individually. Corporal David Boyle was wounded in the right arm and left leg and was captured. 'Treatment better than what I expected, mainly due to German officers', he later noted in his Repatriation Statement.<sup>98</sup> Stormonth was separated from his troops and surrounded by three Turks:

One was for sticking me with his bayonet but the other took me prisoner. When behind the Turkish lines I was struck by soldiers with butts of rifles. Others made lunges at me with bayonets but the guard did his best to keep them off. I was stripped of my equipment and other personal things. They also had a nasty habit of spitting on one.<sup>99</sup>

He was put into a tent with Luscombe and at times was without food 'due to inefficiency not malice'.<sup>100</sup> He does not mention that he shared a meal with Luscombe, three British and two Turkish officers soon after capture.<sup>101</sup> Private Edwin Foster was wounded, surrounded and captured: 'Marched to dressing station, wounds dressed. Then to Turkish Headquarters at Ak Bash'.<sup>102</sup>

There were several examples of quite extraordinary individual treatment. Private Bernard Dunne, a 28 year old farmer from Western Australia, was wounded in the leg and lay out in the battlefield for three days and attributed his survival to the Turk who found him:

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<sup>95</sup> Repatriation Statement of Randall, AWM 30 B1.29, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>96</sup> Repatriation Statement of McLean, AWM 30 B1.35, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>97</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 1042.

<sup>98</sup> Repatriation Statement of Boyle, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>99</sup> Repatriation Statement of Stormonth, AWM 30 B1 30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>102</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foster, AWM 30 B1.14, AWM, Canberra.

... that man was the means of saving my life twice, for two other Turks tried to kill me and he stopped them each time, also took one man's water bottle from him and gave me a little water. He also wanted me to smoke one of his cigarettes but I felt too bad. After some time this same man carried me on his back a very long way under fire and put me under a tree.<sup>103</sup>

He was then taken by mule to a small hut with a few other prisoners. He states that Germans at the hut treated them well and made the Turks give back clothes and boots stolen.<sup>104</sup>

Sergeant William Bailey was badly wounded in both hips, shoulder and ear. He pretended to be dead and his boots, puttees, papers and money belt were taken. He was then picked up by a Red Crescent attendant and 'carried down the hillside. He forced stretcher bearers to carry me to Field Hospital ... was well treated whilst being passed to rear. Doctor in F. H. spoke English (I believe him to be a German) and he made every effort to expedite our transport to Gallipoli jetties'.<sup>105</sup>

Beattie was wounded and captured. It is surprising that he was not shot by his captors, as in the exchange leading up to his capture, Beattie had shot several Turkish soldiers. The soldiers went through his rations, ate his biscuits and took his tea, sugar and bully beef. A Sergeant searched through his possessions and gave back his paybook and letters but kept his pocket knife. Each took a cigarette and gave him back the rest. He was escorted off by 'an easy going middle-aged man' and his wounds were dressed at a dressing station. There he met up with McLean and another wounded Australian. Turkish soldiers inspected the men, offering cigarettes, tobacco and ration biscuits. Remarkably, they were warned to remove their Australian hats as Turkish snipers might shoot them. He saw twelve or so other Australian POWs from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Battalions. He was inspected by several doctors who assured the men that their government would be informed of their capture.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dunne, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>106</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra. The Service records of both Beattie and McLean indicate that the Allies had been notified of their capture by October 1915.

Private John Davern was wounded in the leg and thigh and was captured by about sixty Turks and an officer who Davern believed was German, as he physically reprimanded the soldiers, provided a drink of rum and set a guard on Davern until a stretcher arrived. Thus an act of kindness was interpreted as emanating from a German, not a Turk. His possessions were taken and then he was carried to a dressing station. His wounds were bandaged but they did not 'bother to clean or dress it'. At the dressing station he met up with a Victorian in the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion called 'Hudson' who was wounded.<sup>107</sup>

Several more soldiers were captured in the following few days. On 9 August Sergeant Sydney Drake, who had not slept for three days, was dragged into a Turkish trench by about forty Turks. With him was Boyle who had been wounded and was weak from loss of blood. Drake's rifle was taken away and he was given a drink and cigarettes. 'I was then marched back under a sentry. We were allowed to rest whenever we wanted to'. They were taken before two German officers who spoke English well, provided with bread and told to lie down for a while. Later, personal items were taken from him by Turkish reinforcement soldiers.<sup>108</sup>

Private Alfred Carpenter was part of the 8 August offensive but sprained his ankle and fell behind the enemy lines until the early morning of 10 August. He was captured by four soldiers and an officer. His ankle was dressed and he was questioned about the Allies' numbers. 'But I was not threatened, for in fact treatment was not too bad'. He was taken by horse to General von Sander's camp where he met up with other POWs, and was relieved to discover that he was not the only captured prisoner. General von Sanders spoke a few words of sympathy to the wounded.<sup>109</sup> Private William McKay was also captured on 10 August but

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<sup>107</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. This soldier would have been either Charles Hodsdon No: 750 or Louis Hodges No: 2144, both from the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

<sup>108</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>109</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carpenter, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

provided no details about his actual capture. He had been wounded in the back and right shoulder in battle.<sup>110</sup>

### **The last prisoner**

The last POW for whom we have extant evidence is Lieutenant Shirley Goodwin who was captured in unusual circumstances on the last day of occupation of the peninsula on 20 December. He was acting as an aerial observer from the island of Imbros and initially little was known of his fate. It was noted that both Goodwin and the pilot, British Flight Lieutenant Besson had been missing from Gallipoli since 20 December and that nothing more was known of their fate.<sup>111</sup> However, Goodwin's statement to the Turkish military has survived and provided more detail: 'I was flying on the day the soldiers withdrew. Due to engine trouble, I landed in the sea and in order to save my life I started to swim towards the coast. Exhausted, I was saved by the Turks'.<sup>112</sup> He elaborates further in a despatch sent from AIF Headquarters, London. He explained that he became unconscious in the water and a Bavarian officer 'organised a rescue party which swam out and brought me in'. The pilot was not recovered. Goodwin was treated with great kindness, but Essad Pasha refused to see him on the grounds that 'I belonged to the Air Service which had just dropped a bomb on a hospital and killed the wife of the Surgeon General'. He was met by an 'affable' Liman von Sanders who supplied the interesting fact that he only knew about the Allied evacuation 'from a staff officer who woke him up at 4 am on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> December, and said that the English had gone'. After four days, Goodwin was sent to Istanbul.<sup>113</sup>

It is possible to trace the location of capture of 57 of the Gallipoli POWs, 85 percent of the total. Small groups or individuals were captured on or around the ridges and gullies located

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<sup>110</sup> Repatriation Statement of McKay, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>111</sup> Salvation Army letter dated 4 April 1916. Service records of Goodwin, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>112</sup> *Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, (The Legend and the Monument), Güzel Sanatlar, Genel Müdürlüğü*, p. 185. (BHD Folder: 542 File 2115, Index 41-3). Translated by S. Bulgu, 8 June 2006.

<sup>113</sup> 'Despatch from AIF HQ, London', *Cannonball*, Journal of the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company, No. 60, December 2005, pp. 10-11. Thanks to Alan Smith, Editor of *Cannonball*, for drawing my attention to this article.

above Anzac Cove, including Shrapnel Gully, Pope's Hill, Johnstone's Jolly, Pine Ridge and Chatham's Post. These involved earlier attempts to gain higher ground above and close to the landing site of Anzac Cove. The majority were captured further afield on Hill 971 during the major campaign of 8–9 August 1915, to gain the highest ground dominating the peninsula. Griffiths was captured elsewhere with the British near Cape Helles when he disobeyed orders and Goodwin's plane crashed into the sea. The site of capture for the remaining ten soldiers is not clear.

Barker's categorisation of the modes of capture can be applied to the Gallipoli POWs, including whether or not the soldier was wounded, outnumbered or separated from others. The only category discussed by Barker that does not apply to our POWs is that of soldiers running out of ammunition.<sup>114</sup> Appendix 9 summarises the modes of capture. Nineteen soldiers surrendered and most were wounded. The universally accepted ways to indicate a willingness to surrender was recognised by the Turks, including waving a white flag or its equivalent, throwing away one's weapons or raising open hands above the head.<sup>115</sup> The group of 13 men captured with Luscombe surrendered when most had been badly wounded. Foxcroft stated that they had officially surrendered by raising a white handkerchief.<sup>116</sup> Delpratt, in a separate incident, raised his hands, as did Ashton.<sup>117</sup> It does not appear to have made any difference to their subsequent treatment whether or not soldiers had surrendered, had been overpowered or simply could fight no longer.

The majority of soldiers had been wounded in battle prior to capture, making them more vulnerable. Four men, McDonald, Cliffe, Delpratt, and Drake were physically overpowered but were not wounded at the time of capture. Thus 28 percent surrendered, 33 percent could no longer fight due to their wounds, 6 percent were overpowered and 4.5 percent had been

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<sup>114</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, p. 27.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>116</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>117</sup> Repatriation Statements of Delpratt & Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

unable to retreat or escape. A small number were rescued by Turks (7.5 percent) and there is no direct evidence for 21 percent.

Many of the Australians mentioned that some of their personal possessions were taken from them on capture. Boots were prized items, with several men commenting on the poor standard of Turkish equipment. Boots were taken from Foxcroft, Dowell, O'Connor, Brown, Wiffen, Thomas and Bailey. Personal items were taken from Williams, Dowell, Stormonth, Carter, Bailey and Davern.<sup>118</sup> At times, personal papers, photos and letters were returned to them, but at other times, not. This was in contravention of the Hague Convention that states that personal belongings, except for arms, horses and military papers were to remain soldiers' property.<sup>119</sup> In the Military Museum, Istanbul, within the library archives, is a small collection of old photographs of Australian soldiers, Allied nurses and personal photographs that had been taken from prisoners. Several Turkish sources refer to personal papers being collected and information gathered from interviewing captured soldiers:

After a battle at Anzac, we confiscated diaries, addressed letters, family photos, nude female photos of assumed lovers, signed Bank of New South Wales bank cheques and specially printed English banknotes for use in Turkey, which shows their fantasies about capturing Istanbul; 1:40,000 sealed and detailed maps of the Gallipoli Peninsula, postcards showing the fortifications at the entrance to the Canakkale Straits and documents about their war plans.<sup>120</sup>

Australians also gathered Turkish possessions. The Australian War Memorial's archival collection holds a Turkish Certificate of Service, a prayer book taken from a Turkish soldier and a beautifully illustrated Turkish officer's diary.<sup>121</sup> The Fryer Library of the University of

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<sup>118</sup> Many Allied soldiers on the Western Front complained of German soldiers taking their boots, clothing and personal possessions, so it was not a Turkish practice alone. PRO: POW Committee HO 45/10764/270829, Interview with Pvt. J. Mohan # 12450, 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Royal Scots, captured 25 September 1915, Loos.

<sup>119</sup> Hague Convention 1907, Article 4.

<sup>120</sup> General Esat, *Canakkale Memoirs*, Baha Printing House, Istanbul, 1975, pp. 73-74. Translated by S. Bulgu, February 2004.

<sup>121</sup> AWM Private Records Collection 3 DR/4050, AWM, Canberra.

Queensland also holds a captured Turkish diary.<sup>122</sup> All remain untranslated at the time of writing.

Nine of the men actually commented that they had been treated quite well, with some being supplied with cigarettes, tea, meals and wine before being transported to Istanbul.<sup>123</sup> The following description of the capture of an Australian from the Turkish perspective is an interesting addition to the evidence. One is struck by the calm resignation of the soldier to his fate and it reflects the description later recorded by Ashton:

The prisoner was a tall young Australian fellow of around 22 years of age. He looked like a Western European. His uniform and equipment were in an immaculate condition. He didn't speak any other language but English. Since we had no-one who spoke English, we couldn't interrogate him. He looked calm but tired. We made him sit and have a rest. One of my subordinates showed him a packet of cigarettes and asked by gesture if he wanted a smoke. The young prisoner took a cigarette with pleasure. Then he crossed his legs and quietly smoked his cigarette and rested. The Sergeant who brought him showed me a handful of money and said that it belonged to the prisoner. I told him to hand back the money which he did. The prisoner took the money, smiled and put it in his pocket. We sent this prisoner to the Division Headquarters with his documents.<sup>124</sup>

Several men related stories of being treated with unusual care by their captors. Luscombe's boots were returned to him when he regained consciousness and Kerr had a wooden crutch cut for him by a Turkish soldier to enable him to walk.

Dunn attributed his survival to a Turk who found him and carried him to safety. Beattie and McLean were warned by Turkish soldiers to remove their Australian hats so that they would not be shot by Turkish snipers. Delpratt was given tea by a civilian shop owner.

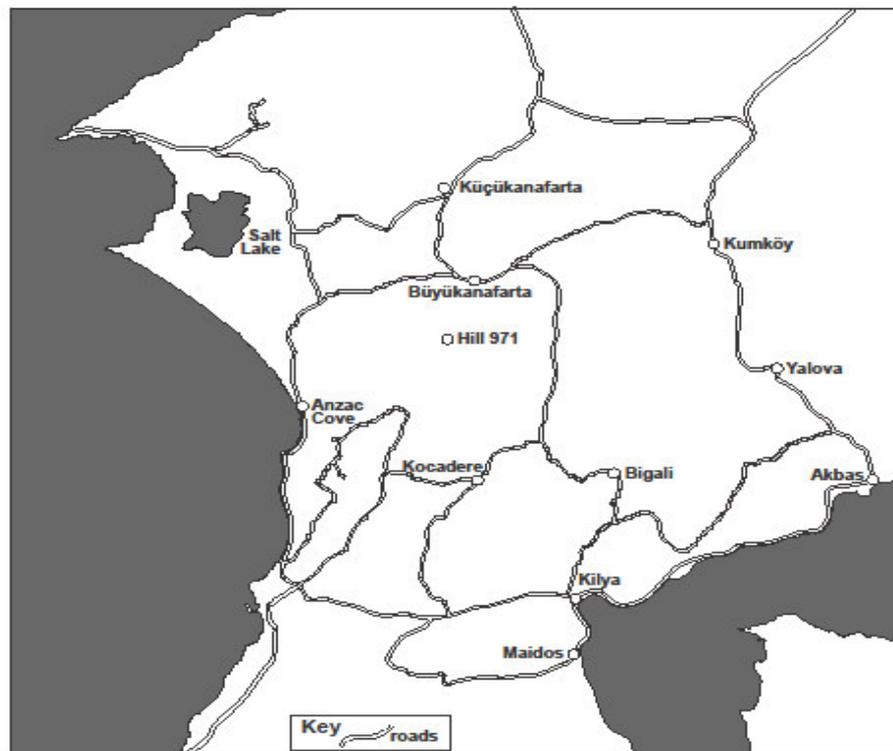
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<sup>122</sup> At present it is untranslated. A quick examination of the diary revealed that it was written by a young Turkish soldier in 1916. S. Bulgu, January 2006.

<sup>123</sup> The men who commented on reasonable treatment included Elston, Lushington, Troy, Creedon, Foxcroft, Brown, Neyland, Boyle and Carpenter.

<sup>124</sup> M. Şefik, Çanakkale Arıburnu Savaşları ve 27 ('Canakkale, Arıburnu Battles & the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment'), *Askeri Mecmua Tarih Kısmı*, Edition 40, 1935, Istanbul. Translated by S. Bulgu May 2004.

**Fig. 3:2: Roads and harbours on the peninsula during the Gallipoli campaign.**



### **Treatment of unwounded prisoners**

Once captured, unwounded prisoners were marched to rest camps, most probably located in the valleys leading to the embarkation points of Mardos, Kilye or Akbaş before being transported to Istanbul. (See Fig 3:2). Generally they spent only a few days on the peninsula before being transported, accommodated in hastily erected enclosures or tents. After walking for several hours and visiting various camps, Beattie and McLean arrived at a rest camp, ‘which consisted of two marquees inhabited by Turks, a wooden building used by the officers as a dining room and two bell tents and a bough shed for the prisoners’. The men were examined by a doctor and then placed in the prisoner enclosure, ‘about twenty yards square, surrounded by a barbed wire and brushwood fence’.<sup>125</sup> Carpenter was placed in a camp at the coastal embarkation point at Akbaş for three days.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>126</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carpenter, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

One of the dangers facing the prisoners came not so much from Turkish treatment but from Allied bombing. Beattie noted that he passed through a deserted village as most of the peninsula had been evacuated because of Allied shelling. The following night, approximately sixty Allied POWs, including Beattie, Thomas and Lightfoot, were sent to a small seaside town and placed in the saloon of a small boat overnight as a makeshift 'holding' area. The subsequent bombing of the jetty suggests that the town was Maidos, as it was under constant Allied bombardment. Beattie provided a colourful description of the bombing of the jetty by an Allied aircraft and 'the splashes of the Turks as they dived from the boat and jetty into the water in their hurry to get away'. The bomb fell so close to the boat that it was considerably shaken and the jetty was partially destroyed.<sup>127</sup> Thomas commented that the plane 'nearly put an end to our existence'.<sup>128</sup>

The closeness of the bombing raid resulted in an alteration of evacuation plans as the men were then loaded onto carts for road and rail transportation to Istanbul, generally travelling by night to avoid bombardment. They arrived in Istanbul on 15 August. Lightfoot recalled travelling in small springless, two-wheeled carts. 'During this journey our wounds were very seldom dressed ...'.<sup>129</sup> Drake was marched to several camps and outlined the dangers some faced from Allied fire:

After passing through hills and gullies we came into the open and were under our own rifle fire. The sentry made us run and we soon came to a small village which was in ruins. Shells were falling close to this village, as our ships were bombarding the place.<sup>130</sup>

Drake noted that the danger had not yet passed as 'one of our aeroplanes was overhead bombing the position'.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps due to the danger of Allied bombardment, the prisoners

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<sup>127</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>128</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>129</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>130</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>131</sup> *ibid.*

were moved several more times before embarking on a Turkish destroyer which left about 8 pm, travelling all night to Istanbul.<sup>132</sup>

Comments by the captured men suggest that they did not have any geographical knowledge of the peninsula beyond the area held by the Allies. Drake mistakenly stated: 'Chanak was the port for disembarkation of the troops and was the general port for Gallipoli'.<sup>133</sup> The site was probably Akbaş as Chanak [Çanakkale] is on the southern side of the Straits and prisoners were never transported across to the southern side, except for Brooke and Rawlinson after the bombing of the Maidos hospital. Foster was marched to Turkish headquarters and correctly names the site of embarkation as Akbaş, where he remained for two days and was then sent to Istanbul.<sup>134</sup>

### **Treatment of wounded prisoners**

The dressing stations were the first port of call for the wounded who were then moved on to the larger dressing stations or Corps hospitals if further treatment was required. Evidence suggests that the men were well treated by both Turkish and German medical staff. According to Şahin Aldoğan of the Eceabat Local History Group, dressing stations were generally located near communication trenches, preferably in valleys, near a water supply, protected by shrubbery and trees.<sup>135</sup>

It is not clear which Turkish dressing stations or hospitals accommodated the wounded prisoners. Hospitals were assigned to the various Turkish Army Corps across the peninsula. Turkish documents list nine prisoners hospitalised on 9 August but do not specify the

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<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foster, AWM 30 B1.14, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>135</sup> Identified in visits to the peninsula battlefields in late March 2006 with Şahin Aldoğan and other members of the Eceabat Historical Group. See also G. Göncü & Ş. Aldoğan, *Gallipoli Battlefield Guide*, M.B. Yayınevi, Istanbul, 2004.

hospital.<sup>136</sup> The larger Turkish Military Company Hospitals were located at Koçadere, Havuzlar, Şarlayan Dere, Soganlidere, Bigali Deresi, Yalova Deresi and Büyük Anafartalar. Most of the hospital sites now have no physical evidence to mark their locations but some are identified by a small Turkish cemetery such as at Akbaş and Koçadere. At the village of Bigali, the locals still refer to a site nearby in a valley as the ‘German’ hospital site.<sup>137</sup> Many of the POWs mention being treated by a German doctor at a field hospital. Oral tradition in the area claims that wounded Allied prisoners who died at this hospital are buried along the nearby ridge in the woods. Their burial sites have not been officially located.

The wounded remained in these field hospitals for varying periods. Creedon’s diary provides details about conditions and treatment in a Turkish field hospital, where he was kept for ten days. Initially he shared accommodation with O’Callaghan, Matthews and King:

This hospital was comprised of about fifty marquees covered with bushes. There were three doctors and several students. The doctors did all the attending to wounds while the students bandaged up after they were finished. There was one doctor, [Dr Jemyl Bey] who attended to us and our wounds were progressing very well under his treatment. Everyone at this place treated us well.<sup>138</sup>

Creedon noted that the food was very good and that every second day they received a packet of cigarettes between two, ‘but when we ran out, the orderlies used to make us as many as we wanted’. The group was visited regularly by a Turkish clerk and several Turkish officers.<sup>139</sup>

After being treated at the various medical establishments, the men were then transported to the small sea-ports to await transportation to Istanbul. Several embarkation points were used.

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<sup>136</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*, p. 1042. Those listed for hospitalisation: Cahir, Calcutt, Chalcraft, Kerrigan, Kilmartin, Lightfoot, Randall, Thomas, Wiffen.

<sup>137</sup> Discussion with Şahin Aldoğan and locals of the town of Bigali, March 2006. Several sites of hospitals still produce broken medicine bottles, bricks and the occasional bullet.

<sup>138</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM IDRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*



**Fig. 3.3: Turkish Medical staff of a field hospital. (Red Crescent Archives, Istanbul).**

There was a Turkish hospital on a hill south of Maidos with two piers and though vulnerable to Allied bombing, was still utilised. ‘Gallipoli’ was mentioned by several of the prisoners, though it may have been the only name with which they were familiar and probably meant the small cove of Gelibolu. Piers existed at the end of valley roads leading from the interior of the peninsula at Kilye and Akbaş. Old piers still exist at both locations and both sites had sufficient space to accommodate the holding camps for prisoners and Turkish wounded.

Sections of the original dirt roads still exist, winding through the valleys and the bone-shaking rides often described by the prisoners in horse or oxen-drawn wagons and carts can easily be imagined. Due to a shortage of hospital wagons, local transport carts were often used.<sup>140</sup> Creedon’s group was transported by wagon to Maidos, a journey that took about two hours. ‘The journey down was rather rough though the wagons were rather steady’. They finally were unloaded further east to Maidos where they rested in a shed and a dugout camouflaged by tree branches. They remained there for four days. Creedon and his comrades were then shipped to Istanbul with several hundred wounded Turks.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> S. Öymen, *Çanakkale, ‘Acı ilaç’*, (*Canakkale –the Bitter Pill*), Omsan Ofset, Istanbul, 2005. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2009.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.* ‘Cherubah’ is probably ‘chorba’ which is ‘soup’. Translated by S. Bulgu.

Allied shelling often resulted in rushed evacuations for the wounded. Foxcroft provided precise timing of his ordeal. He was captured at 10.30 Sunday morning on Hill 971 and remained at a Turkish dressing station till 4 pm on Tuesday afternoon. The prisoners were treated fairly well but the dressing station was under bombardment from Allied ships. The prisoners were evacuated, taken by mules three miles behind lines and then by carriages to a larger rest camp where they were provided with tea and biscuits and their wounds dressed. They were then sent by bullock wagon to the coast.<sup>142</sup> Williams was in the same group and noted that 'many Turks were killed by the ships' fire'.<sup>143</sup> However, the Turks were determined to remove the prisoners from the area under attack and the evacuation was chaotic: 'The road was rough and the driver careless ... Once the car was upset and we were thrown out. The other man had a compound fracture of the right leg. We both suffered great agony'. They travelled all night and arrived at the coast by morning.<sup>144</sup> Neyland also complained of a 'very rough journey for sick men, being jolted over rough roads in two wheeled carts, sometimes at a gallop, wounds only dressed once in eight days'.<sup>145</sup>

The group was put on a hospital ship and left on Thursday morning for Istanbul. The men were kept below deck on ship and Foxcroft noted in particular that Leyden was very badly wounded. A German doctor ordered tea, milk and biscuits for the men.<sup>146</sup> Davern and Dowell travelled by mule cart to the waterside and were transported to Istanbul by a Red Crescent steamer. The wounded were placed on a dirty deck, supplied with blankets and transported to Istanbul.<sup>147</sup> Most agreed that they were treated reasonably on the journey.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>143</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>144</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

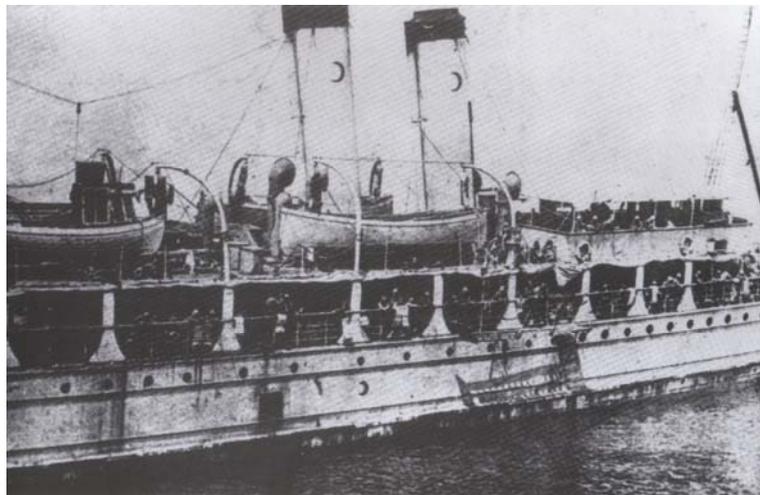
<sup>145</sup> Repatriation Statement of Neyland, AWM 30 B1.26, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>146</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>147</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service Records, B2455, NAA, Canberra and Repatriation Statement of Dowell, AWM Series 30, POW Statements, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>148</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dunne, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

It often took several days to reach Istanbul by ship as they sailed only at night to avoid Allied shelling. Some of the ships were especially designated Red Crescent Hospital ships, whilst Drake stated that he was shipped off in a Turkish destroyer.<sup>149</sup> The dangers of friendly fire once on board was also apparent both from Allied naval fire on the peninsula and aerial bombing closer to the 'narrows'. When one of the transport ships came close to being bombed by Allied aircraft, the men were loaded onto wagons and transported to the capital by road, again travelling only at night. When this route was too dangerous, some of the men were transported by train, leaving from a station a considerable distance from the battlefields.<sup>150</sup>



**Fig. 3:4: A Red Crescent hospital ship. (Red Crescent Archives, Istanbul).**

### **Dressing station death**

The only soldier for whom there is evidence of dying at a Turkish dressing station was Private William Warnes. No doubt other Australian prisoners died in the dressing stations but there is no extant evidence. Allied authorities may not have been alerted about deaths at dressing stations, as they were if soldiers later died in Turkish hospitals or in camps. In Warnes' official documents, there are no details from the American Embassy. Williams stated that

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<sup>149</sup> Şahin Aldoğan states that there were three main hospital ships – *Akdeniz*, *Gülnehal* and *Reşitpaşa*. Other hospital ships were designated numbers - 60, 61, 63, 67, 70.

<sup>150</sup> Stories of W. Randall recalled by George Randall. Randall Family Papers, MSB 401 MS 11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

Warnes was wounded in the abdomen and 'died alongside of me at the first dressing station'.<sup>151</sup> A similar statement by McLean added that Warnes had been wounded and died at the dressing station opposite Walker's Ridge about 4 pm on 8<sup>th</sup> August. 'I was there when he died ... He was conscious before he died and was talking to me, he said he did not think he would get over it, left no message'.<sup>152</sup> In an undated message, Private James Pasmore kindly sent a card to Warnes' mother:

I was his friend and can sympathise with you in his lose [sic], he received every attention from the Turks but they were unable to save him. I was wounded with him and kept with him till the last, he passed away at the field hospital in an unconscious condition so was in no pain.<sup>153</sup>

A Court of Inquiry noted in Warnes' Service records that he was killed in action on 28 June 1915.<sup>154</sup> His name is listed on the Lone Pine Memorial as his final burial place remains unknown.<sup>155</sup>

The men captured with Creedon reported that they had seen Private George Lee of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion at a Turkish dressing station. 'They [O'Callaghan, King and Matthews] told me that they had seen Lee. They said he was very badly wounded and the Doctor had very little hope for his life. We had not seen him since, so I think he must have died'.<sup>156</sup> This is the only reference to Lee, so cannot be taken as absolute proof that he died there as a prisoner of war. As evidence from Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files clearly show, conflicting eye-witness accounts are common.

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<sup>151</sup> Statement by Williams, in the Service records of New, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>152</sup> Statement by McLean, in the ARC W & M File for Warnes, AWM 1DRL/428, Box 286, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>153</sup> Service records of Warnes, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Commonwealth War Graves Commission Website data-base, retrieved 30/3/2006. Kerr added: 'He would be buried alongside this Dressing Station. This was behind Hill 971'. ARC W & M File of Warnes, AWM 1DRL/428.

<sup>156</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra. Lee too is listed on the Lone Pine Memorial and his fate remains unknown.

### **The officer experience**

The experiences of officers differed from that of the lower ranks. Luscombe provided a very detailed account of his journey to Istanbul in his autobiography. He wryly noted that on arrival at Maidos, ‘by a strange trick of fate we arrived at our objective, but, alas, as prisoners not as conquerors’.<sup>157</sup> He shared a meal with Turkish officers and was marched to the pier for embarkation but, as a British aerial bombardment was underway, they were returned to camp. They were loaded onto carts: ‘For the officers a four-wheeled springless buggy called an *Araba* was provided ... For the men a number of dray-like vehicles ...’. Whilst travelling through rough and hilly terrain, the horses bolted. Unfortunately for all, the cart overturned, badly hurting the Turkish driver and bruising Luscombe. They were then transferred into the drays.

Luscombe noted the humanity of the young officer in charge of this group, Mehmet Hussein. ‘This young officer proved to be wonderfully considerate and likeable in every way. He soon noticed that I could lie on one side only’. As the night was cold, the officer put his own coat over Luscombe. He also rode ahead and organised a doctor to tend them on arrival. They stayed overnight in a Greek priest’s house which unfortunately was alive with fleas. They travelled for five successive nights, ‘to minimise the risk of being bombed by British aircraft’, resting during the day. Each time the Turkish officer rode ahead, and as a result ‘medical attention, meals and accommodation were all arranged when we arrived’. They eventually arrived at the railway town of Uzunköprü, where they received an ‘unexpected surprise’.<sup>158</sup> Five officers were accommodated in a hotel where they received a hair cut and shave by the local barber. They were provided with dressing gowns and slippers and had a steam bath in the hotel ‘hamam’ or Turkish bath. Luscombe noted that this was the first hot bath they had enjoyed for months. An excellent three course meal was followed by ‘an extraordinary

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<sup>157</sup> L. H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl - Australian*, W. R. Smith & Paterson Pty. Ltd. Brisbane, 1970, p. 42.

<sup>158</sup> The town of Uzunköprü lies on the most direct road north of Gallipoli and was the closest railway station, approximately 140 kilometres away.

surprise ... A waiter walked in to our dining room carrying a bucket. The bucket contained half a dozen bottles of a light Pilsener beer, packed in ice'. They then fell asleep in comfortable beds but reluctantly were roused and marched to the railway station. There they waited for seven hours for the train, lamenting the loss of their clean and comfortable beds.<sup>159</sup>

The Turkish officer arrived to farewell them. 'In some strange way, although we had no common language, we had established a strong bond of genuine friendship with this considerate and thoughtful young Turkish officer'. They exchanged gifts, with Luscombe receiving a silver watch-chain in exchange for a pair of folding scissors. He also received a letter which he included in his autobiography.<sup>160</sup> Luscombe noted that he met the young man again in Afyon as he was awaiting a train to Smyrna at the end of the war and commented:

Ancora Mehmet Hussein provided an outstanding and altogether fine example of a true patriot fighting devotedly to repel the foreign armies that had invaded his beloved Fatherland ... I felt then, and I still feel now, that if all the countries in this deeply troubled world were peopled by men of the type of this young Turkish officer then future wars would be impossible.<sup>161</sup>

This uncommon ability to empathise so thoroughly with an enemy officer says as much about Luscombe's character as that of the eulogised young Turkish officer. However, Stormonth, who accompanied Luscombe, provides varying recollections. He did not relate these details of kindly treatment but merely noted: 'Food was supplied to us on the journey at various hours and on one occasion we were 27 hours without food. This was due to inefficiency not malice'.<sup>162</sup> The group then travelled to Istanbul by train, arriving on the night of 15 August.

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<sup>159</sup> Luscombe, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>160</sup> Luscombe, *ibid*, pp. 46-47. 'Dear Friends. It is a great happiness to have your company for a few days ... You do not need to be sorry it is possible for us to be prisoner in your country also, we all being soldiers. I will never forget all of you. I shake hands with all of you and offer my best respects. Yours faithfully, Ancora Mehmet Hussein'.

<sup>161</sup> Luscombe, *ibid*, p. 48.

<sup>162</sup> Repatriation Statement of Stormonth, AWM 30 B1.30, AWM, Canberra.

It is evident from the range of hastily arranged accommodation that adequate preparations had not been made for housing large numbers of POWs. On the peninsula the men were placed in dressing stations, field hospitals and resting camps with the Turkish troops. Several of the men were housed temporarily in a small boat by a jetty, awaiting transport to Istanbul. Even from the first day of landing, the first captured Australians were moved fairly quickly off the peninsula, away from the field of combat, as the majority of these first captives had not been badly wounded and did not require immediate medical attention. On the journey to Istanbul if travelling by road, they shared a range of accommodation, either hastily built or commandeered, including barracks, an elementary school, a large shed, a coffee house and a rail carriage.

### **Food – an alien experience**

Once captured, one of the POWs' first encounters with an alien Turkish culture concerned food. Prisoners received the same type of food available to Turkish soldiers, as stipulated in the Turkish *POW Manual*. The typical Ottoman army diet at the time consisted of small amounts of meat, usually served in a stew of vegetables, lentils, beans, legumes and cracked wheat or burgul. The Turkish officer, Sokrat Incesu, noted of the POWs at Gallipoli: 'After their wounds were dressed, the slightly wounded were given the same bowl of lentil soup that we had'.<sup>163</sup> However, Australians accustomed to a diet of high protein, at first believed that they were being fed animal fodder. O'Connor noted that the boiled wheat meal was 'as you would feed fowls on'.<sup>164</sup> Thus very early on in the period of captivity, there existed considerable cultural misunderstandings.

The meal was often served communally. Lushington and his group experienced this manner of eating, consisting of large tin dishes, six inches in depth and eighteen inches wide,

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<sup>163</sup> S. İncesu, *Birinci Dünya Savaşında Çanakkale-Arıburnu Hatıralarım*, (*My Memoirs of Canakkale-Anzac, During World War One*), Esen Printing, Canakkale, 1964, p.29. Translated by S. Bulgu, April 2003.

<sup>164</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. Later in Haydar Pasha Hospital, O'Connor admitted that prisoners were 'having better food than were the Turkish patients themselves'. *ibid.*

containing boiled wheat and olive oil, eaten with wooden spoons. The men could not eat it.<sup>165</sup> Lushington refers to the dish as 'karawana'. In Turkish, this refers to both the communal manner of eating and the vessel itself. This manner of eating was common in Ottoman institutions such as the army and could also refer to a typical soldier's meal of pot-luck – or whatever was available at the time.<sup>166</sup>

Accounts vary when the men recall the food that was provided on the boat journey to Istanbul. Foster recalled that rations consisted only of 'one loaf of bread and handful of olives daily'.<sup>167</sup> Dowell travelled for five days on a boat and recalled receiving only 'one small loaf of bread per day'.<sup>168</sup> Griffiths travelled by hospital ship for three days and commented that they were given 'no food on the journey and had very little water ... and had to help ourselves to this'.<sup>169</sup> Others recalled boiled raisins and rice or black bread and dishes of boiled wheat with olive oil. On arrival in Istanbul, Williams received 'a cup of hot milk and a couple of Huntley and Palmer biscuits, from the Red Crescent people. This was the first food I had received since being captured'. Williams stated that he had travelled for six days without food yet the other men travelling with him indicated that food had been supplied throughout.<sup>170</sup>

### **Reaction of Turkish soldiers and civilians**

There are conflicting accounts of the reactions of Turkish soldiers and civilians to the captured Australians. Hostile reactions to prisoners are commonplace and understandable and many similar examples were also reported in Germany. Various examples of humane and kind treatment have already been discussed, including Luscombe's experience during his

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<sup>165</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 9.

<sup>166</sup> Translation and explanation of the term 'karawana', S. Bulgu, October 2004.

<sup>167</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foster, AWM B1.14, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>168</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dowell, AWM Series 30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>169</sup> Repatriation Statement of Griffiths, AWM 30 B1.16, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>170</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM B1.32, AWM, Canberra. Huntley & Palmer was a British firm, the largest biscuit manufacturer in the world by 1900. They continued biscuit production throughout the war. Huntley & Palmer Collection website, retrieved from Google 29/3/2006.

journey to Istanbul. Lightfoot noted that ‘no hostility was shown by civilians’.<sup>171</sup> Often Turkish soldiers expressed curiosity to see a captured enemy soldier. Jordan added: ‘My treatment whilst being [taken] to internment was quite fair. No hostility was shown, only curiosity, because my guards could not tell them enough that I was ‘Australia’[sic].<sup>172</sup> Beattie noted that Turkish soldiers passing by ‘came and looked at us, some offered us cigarettes; we sat in the shade and smoked’.<sup>173</sup> Creedon commented favourably on his Turkish escort: ‘The sentry who came with me was a very jolly chap and was very kind to me, he seeing that I had plenty of water and cigarettes’. He also added that when they passed any Turks, ‘the cart was stopped for them to have a look at me. British prisoners were a novelty to the Turks then’.<sup>174</sup>

Others reported adverse reactions from soldiers, though most point out that they were well guarded by their escorts and officers. Both Lushington and McDonald mentioned that they met with hostile reactions from irregular soldiers, with McDonald adding ‘Our guard and some Turkish officers beat them off and we were put in a tent under very strong guard’.<sup>175</sup> Both Carpenter and Brown state that they were jeered at by civilians and stones were thrown at them and they had to be protected by their escort.<sup>176</sup>

Several of the men point out that they felt vulnerable whilst awaiting transport on the coast. ‘Common soldiers were extremely hostile’ at the jetties, though ‘was well treated whilst being passed to rear’, added Bailey.<sup>177</sup> Davern commented: ‘Turkish convalescent soldiers who were on the beach spat at us and kicked us’. Turkish officers tried to keep order ‘and used a whip on the more unruly Turks’.<sup>178</sup> O’Connor stated that convalescent Turkish soldiers tried to kick the wounded but the Australians formed a circle around them for protection.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>172</sup> Repatriation Statement of Jordan, AWM 30 B1.17, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>173</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>174</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM IDRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>175</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>176</sup> Repatriation Statements of Brown, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra & Carpenter, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>177</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>178</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

Williams stated that on arrival at the coast, Turkish troops gathered around them, 'shouting at us and spitting on us. I saw a Turkish officer kill one of his soldiers for spitting at the prisoners'.<sup>180</sup> This statement is difficult to be taken at face value and there is no corroborating evidence. Turkish officers struck soldiers for insubordination but killing them for spitting would seem extreme.

### **Interrogation**

Generally POWs were interrogated by their captors. The purpose of such interrogation was to identify the POW and to gain strategic information.<sup>181</sup> The Hague Convention only required captive soldiers to provide their true name and rank to their captors.<sup>182</sup> Recently published Turkish documents have revealed that the Turkish military had a detailed administrative process in place to identify prisoners and to record interrogations. Captives were required to provide their names, rank and battalion in their own writing, in accordance with the Hague Convention, and were asked general questions concerning age, marital status, transport from Australia, date of landing on the peninsula, number of Allied troops and circumstances of capture.<sup>183</sup> Both lower ranks and officers were questioned. Most accounts are very brief with some not answering at all. Most deny any knowledge of troop movements, numbers and casualties. The documents contain forty testimonies from the prisoners, corroborating other sources on dates and circumstances of capture. There are no accounts from the men who had been badly wounded, who died soon after capture from battle wounds or those captured on the first day.<sup>184</sup>

The documents also include lists of soldiers captured on specific dates and those who were hospitalised. Valuable as they may be to verify other sources, there are many errors in the

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<sup>179</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>180</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>181</sup> R. C. Hingorani, *Prisoners of War*, Oceana Publications, New York, 1982, pp. 82-83.

<sup>182</sup> Hague Convention 1907, Article 9.

<sup>183</sup> Tetik, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles*.

<sup>184</sup> Those not included in the documents: Cahir, Davern, Dowell, Francis, Hennessy, Hodges, Hodsdon, Jenkins, Kelly, Leyden, McKay, O'Connor, Rawlings, Shelton, Sherlock, Warnes, Wood.

English translation and historians would need to treat these documents with caution. For the purpose of this thesis, the relevant documents were re-translated and thus more names were identified.<sup>185</sup> Overall the book highlights the problem of poor English translations in many published Turkish historical documents.

Individual experiences of interrogation support the overall argument that the Turks generally adhered to international convention. Ashton's capture on 25 April was the first example for which there is evidence. It is understandable that the Turks would want to interview him at the beginning of the campaign to gain strategic information. At first, this was attempted by two Turkish officers without an interpreter, so the exercise was given up as 'hopeless'. Another officer who 'spoke about four words of English' was then introduced and a large map of Egypt, the Suez Canal and the Dardanelles was produced. They asked how long it had taken to sail from Egypt and whether he had been to Cairo, Lemnos and other sites.<sup>186</sup> McDonald had been questioned by a Turkish Staff officer in French about his name, rank and unit, the numbers landed and the likelihood of reinforcements. He stated that as he was a regimental officer, he was not entrusted with operational plans.<sup>187</sup> Elston and McDonald met with Essad Pasha who did not question them but provided them with breakfast. Luscombe was taken before General Limon von Sanders and treated courteously: 'As required by the terms of the Geneva Convention, I answered questions concerning my name, rank and regiment without hesitation. I then quite politely refused to answer any further questions'. Von Sanders did not press him any further.<sup>188</sup> Jordan stated that he 'conversed' with Essad Pasha over a cigar and he noted that the Turks had in their possession Allied maps marking gun placements.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> The document included several major errors in translation of names. Troy was translated as 'Tervi'; W. Stringer as 'W. Esteringir'; H. Brown as 'H. Yiravin'. I am grateful to translator S. Bulgu for deciphering these documents.

<sup>186</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>187</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>188</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, p. 42.

<sup>189</sup> Repatriation Statement of Jordan, AWM 30 B1.17, AWM, Canberra.



**Fig 3:5: Camouflaged Turkish headquarters, Gallipoli peninsula. (Turkish Military Museum, Istanbul).**

Troy, Delpratt, Beattie and Thomas were interrogated by both Turkish and German officers in English. An interpreter was used to question Matthews, Jordan, Creedon, King and O'Callaghan. Drake was questioned by two Turkish officers: 'I was seated at a table and given tea and cigarettes and was treated in a very hospitable manner'.<sup>190</sup> Carpenter was questioned about the Allies' numbers but 'was not threatened.' Only Griffiths stated that he was subjected to threats of shooting and a beating by Liman von Sanders though this seems doubtful. In all other cases, both Liman von Sanders and Enver Pasha treated the men courteously. If no interpreter was available, French was spoken on several occasions to facilitate the interview. The evidence refutes the claim by Handsley that prisoners were tortured and beaten during interrogation.<sup>191</sup>

Some soldiers were interviewed at a later date in Istanbul and it appears that the Turkish Command had gained considerable knowledge of the Allied forces by that stage. McDonald was further questioned as to whether any more troops were to land, details of naval operations, whether Australian troops were coloured and why Australian troops were in

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<sup>190</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>191</sup> G. Handsley, *Two and a Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey*, Jones & Hambley, Brisbane, undated.

Turkey.<sup>192</sup> Bailey was interrogated by a Naval officer who supplied ‘the required information when I gave false or no answers to his questions.’ He was questioned about the strength of the forces on the peninsula, the names of the regimental and brigade officers, his impression of their overall chances, the date of arrival in Egypt and the peninsula. ‘His information, wherever gained, was very full’.<sup>193</sup> Drake recalled in considerable detail several of the questions asked and included them in his Repatriation Statement. They are by far the most comprehensive extant recording of the questions directed at the prisoners and were framed to gather further practical information about the Allied forces.<sup>194</sup>

During one Turkish account of an interrogation of Allied POWs, the Turks received a fairly typical laconic Australian response: ‘Today two corporals and 23 privates, all of them Australians, were taken prisoner. I asked one of the prisoners: ‘Why did you come here, all the way from Australia?’ He replied, ‘Sport’!<sup>195</sup>

Other Turkish documents indicate a range of information provided, including actual military details: ‘According to prisoner statements, the enemy forces that are landed are three divisions strong. They include members of Kitchener’s Army and number 40,000’.<sup>196</sup> Other Turkish documents indicate that they learnt little from prisoners, commenting on ‘the lack of detail provided by the few prisoner accounts’.<sup>197</sup> Several prisoners intentionally provided outlandish details to their captors: ‘according to these prisoners’ statements, the enemy was both morally

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<sup>192</sup> McDonald, AWM 30 B1-22, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>193</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>194</sup> How many troops are on the peninsula? Who is in command of the Australians? Who is your Brigade officer, Battalion officer, Company officer and Sergeant? How many troops are in Egypt? The name of the troopship on which he came from Australia? Did he expect to get to Constantinople? How did he land on the peninsula? How many ships are at Lemnos? How many battleships are off the peninsula? How was he fed? Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>195</sup> Cemil Conk, *Memoires*, Canlı Tarihler, 1947, p.168. Translated by S. Bulgu, March 2004.

<sup>196</sup> *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, (Magazine of Military History Documents), 38<sup>th</sup> Year, August 1989, General Staff Printing House, Ankara. Document # 2170. Translated by S. Bulgu, 16/12/2005.

<sup>197</sup> *ibid*, Document # 2151

and physically demoralised and in addition to the scarcity of food, due to lack of water, they were also forced to drink their own blood by biting their wrists'.<sup>198</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has collated for the first time the experiences of capture of the Gallipoli POWs. It is not possible to determine the total number of Australians captured by Turkish troops at Gallipoli. The extant evidence does not indicate the numbers of men who may have been captured and were subsequently killed by the enemy in the heat of battle or immediately on capture. No statistics exist except for those collated here concerning the 67 men for whom there is evidence. The recently published Turkish documents referred to earlier corroborate findings about the specific numbers and identification of prisoners. They also highlight for the first time that the Turkish military documented the names of prisoners, dates of capture and whether they were hospitalised. Thus despite the assertions of Bean and others that very few of the wounded left in Turkish hands survived, there were few instances of poor treatment of those captured and all wounded received medical care. It is not clear if the 67 men documented here were the exception to the norm. The experiences of capture varied and may have been affected by factors such as the identity of the captor, timing, closeness to actual combat and location. The subsequent treatment of the prisoners in Istanbul once removed from the Gallipoli peninsula will be the focus of the next chapter.

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<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*, Document # 2171.

#### Chapter 4: The 'first ordeal' – between capture and camp

The period between capture and incarceration in a prisoner of war camp, referred to as 'the first ordeal' by Barker, was one of adjustment. It involved both becoming a prisoner and submitting to the alien culture of the captors.<sup>1</sup> The experience varied depending on the nature of the captor and whether or not the prisoner was wounded. In the case of the Australian Gallipoli POWs, it involved a short period on the peninsula, transportation from Gallipoli to Istanbul by various means and initial incarceration in either a military prison or hospital. This period in Istanbul varied in time from several weeks for those in reasonable health to months for the badly wounded.

The following discussion will focus on the time spent in Istanbul either in prison or hospital, subsequent deaths and burials and the role played by the American and Dutch Embassies. A Turkish reprisal against the POWs for alleged poor treatment of Turkish prisoners by the Allies in Egypt resulted in changed conditions for prisoners within the first few weeks of incarceration. During this initial period prisoners had time to reflect on their circumstances, and possibly to fear what lay ahead, particularly if they had suffered some ill-treatment on capture. They were unsure if their captors were aware of, or were likely to follow, the Hague Convention. Barker noted that escape bids were quite common during this phase.<sup>2</sup> There is no extant evidence to suggest such attempts by any of the Gallipoli soldiers in this early period. Those fighting on the Western Front were never too far from Allied or neutral territory, unlike the prisoners in Turkey. In subsequent years, several escape attempts were made from POW camps in the Turkish interior.

Once captured, the basic necessities of living became major concerns. The standard of accommodation, food and medical care often did not meet the standards that the prisoner was

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<sup>1</sup> A. J. Barker, *Behind Barbed Wire*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, London, 1974, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 54.

accustomed to, particularly if the standard of living of the captor was lower than that of the captured. However, the standard of accommodation, food and medical care provided by the Allies themselves for their men at Gallipoli was also very poor. It was not as if the captured Australians were transferred from a life of luxury on the battlefield to one of unaccustomed hardship.

In most wartime situations, generic problems faced the captor and prisoner, including the provision of suitable accommodation, the transportation of prisoners and the reactions of captor to captive. None of the nations at war had given much consideration to the logistical problems involved in handling and sustaining large numbers of prisoners.<sup>3</sup> The Turks were not prepared for, nor were they in the position to cater for, POWs in great numbers.

Transporting POWs away from the combat zone and between camps involved the wasteful use of soldiers to guard prisoners.<sup>4</sup> Reactions of civilian and military personnel to prisoners varied throughout Turkey.<sup>5</sup> In addition, different standards of military discipline were experienced, with Turkish soldiers often physically punished by Turkish officers for misdemeanors and the same standards applied to POWs.<sup>6</sup> Overall, in World War I POW camps on all sides suffered from mismanagement, neglect and poor accommodation, food and sanitation.<sup>7</sup>

The Gallipoli prisoners were in a state of limbo, living neither as an Australian nor having much outside connections to Turkish society. Certainly the difficulties of language exacerbated the situation. There is no evidence that initially at least, any of the Australians

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<sup>3</sup> R. Jackson, *The Prisoners, 1914-1918*, Routledge, London, 1989. Jackson points out that a similar issue was apparent in Germany, noting 'the almost total inadequacy and unpreparedness of the German POW system', p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Many examples are provided of POWs in Germany complaining of being transported in 'cattle trucks' for days with little or no food, water or toilet facilities. Jackson, *The Prisoners*, p.10; interviews recorded in *Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British POWs*, PRO HO 45/10764/270829, PRO London. Interviews, 400-482; R. van Emden, *Prisoners of the Kaiser*, Pen & Sword, Yorkshire, 2000, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Again, similar experiences were recorded in Germany with examples of soldier abuse and civilian aggression.

<sup>6</sup> R. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks, 1915-1918*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. London, 1923, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> R.C. Hingorani, *Prisoners of War*, Oceana Publications, New York, 1982, p. 116.

understood or spoke Turkish, although they had picked up a few Arabic words whilst training in Egypt. This period was fraught with many opportunities for cultural misunderstanding.

Reprisals were common on both sides during World War I and were manifest in a variety of ways.<sup>8</sup> In 1915, a Turkish reprisal took place in response to complaints of British mistreatment of Turkish prisoners in Egypt which affected some of the Gallipoli prisoners whilst in Istanbul. The reprisal will be discussed later in this chapter. A neutral country was often called upon to act as a 'go-between', to facilitate communication and negotiations between belligerent nations. The American Embassy in Istanbul initially filled this role, with the First Secretary, Hoffman Philip playing a major part. In 1917, after America joined the war, the Dutch Embassy filled the void. The role of the embassies will be further discussed in relation to this first phase of incarceration.

The evidence varies enormously in detail for this phase of capture, as it does for all aspects of the prisoners' experiences. Most evidence is found in Repatriation Statements, diaries and memoirs. Details for those who died were sometimes supplied by others who witnessed their deaths in Turkish hospitals. Turkish sources contribute a perspective that up to now has been lacking.

### **Arrival in Istanbul**

On arrival in Istanbul, the men who were not wounded were sent to a number of different prisons and the wounded to hospital. As Ashton, McDonald, Elston and Lushington were amongst the first group of Australians to be captured, they were probably the first group of prisoners to arrive in Istanbul on 29 April.

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<sup>8</sup> M. Moynihan, (ed) *Black Bread and Barbed Wire*, Leo Cooper, London, 1978, p.11. Germany ceased all privileges due to the 'alleged brutal treatment by the British Government of German civilians in England in 1915'.



**Fig 4.1: Galata Bridge, Istanbul, c. World War I. The POWs were marched across this bridge (Postcard purchased in Istanbul by author).**

Ashton recalled being transported by large steamer and disembarking on the European side of the city. The few prisoners were marshalled together, photographed and placed ‘in an underground room’ at the War Ministry. They were then taken across the Golden Horn via the Galata Bridge (above) to the military barracks of Tash Kishla.<sup>9</sup> Lushington noted they were ‘kindly treated’ and were told in Istanbul that ‘You are guests of the Sultan. Everyone will be kind to you’.<sup>10</sup> McDonald’s complaints indicate that the Turkish War Ministry was not adequately prepared for such an early influx of prisoners:

Here we were housed in a filthy place, where Turks of all ranks inspected us. We complained of the insulting treatment to which we were subjected and of the housing with the result that they said they had no better housing for us at the time, but that we would not be troubled by the crowd any more.<sup>11</sup>

Lushington remained at the military barracks of Tash Kishla for five days, where he was able to exercise and mingle with the 32 recently captured AE2 submarine crew. The men were visited by German General Liman von Sanders who explained to the prisoners that Britain was to blame for the war. On the night of the 1 May, they were sent to the War Ministry and

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<sup>9</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

as McDonald and Elston had complained of having no money, the Turkish Commander Djevid Bey paid them an amount in gold.<sup>12</sup> On the morning of 5 May, the group set off for the camp in the Turkish interior at Afyon. Before leaving Istanbul, the group was told: 'You will leave, my friends, for Afyon Kara Hissar. You will be happy there, you will have a beautiful building to live in, and a nice garden to walk about in. You will be able to play football and to write to your friends'. Lushington observed rather gleefully that they amazed the crowds by leaving the railway station cheerful and singing.<sup>13</sup> Troy, captured on 4 May, was kept on the peninsula for four days and then sent to Istanbul to Stamboul Prison. He too was sent off to Afyon soon after.<sup>14</sup> Thus the first group of captives, most of whom were not seriously wounded, were moved within a week from the peninsula to Istanbul and after a few days, sent off to a more established camp at Afyon.

#### **Civilian reactions in Istanbul**

There are conflicting reports on the reaction of civilians in Istanbul. On 29 April the first group was paraded through the streets with seventeen French prisoners, watched by a large crowd who called out to them 'Engliss!' An American chauffeur called out: 'Keep your hearts up, lads!', and they were jeered at by the German staff of the Deutsche Bank.<sup>15</sup> They were an object of curiosity being perhaps the first group of Allied POWs to enter Istanbul.

Drake, captured much later in August, was marched with a larger group through the city:

A strong guard protected us, as thousands of people lined the route. We were a sorry spectacle as most of us had little to wear. The people did not try to interfere but they appeared to enjoy the sight of so many prisoners. I could see occasionally a kindly smile from one here and there in the crowd. I think these people were Americans.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>15</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

Several weeks later, some of the men were marched through the city to barracks to be photographed together. Williams added:

Most of the party were without boots, and our clothing was in a terrible state. We looked like a mob of rag and bone merchants. The crowds were hostile. We had a guard of Turkish soldiers and police who did their best to keep the people from actually assaulting us.<sup>17</sup>

A totally different impression was gained by the US Secretary, Hoffmann Philip. Despite not actually witnessing the event himself, he reported on a city march of August 21:

Yesterday about one hundred were marched through the Pera main street to a barracks beyond. I don't know if they are the same men or a new lot. The men seen yesterday looked cheerful I am told and most of them had their clothing and boots intact. Things seem to be improving in this respect.<sup>18</sup>

Kerr was transported across Istanbul in November in a closed carriage and later on the return trip, caught a tram for part of the journey. He noted that the crowd reacted 'without any of that jeering that would have characterised an English crowd under the same circumstances. Some certainly smile and think we are scarcely human but they refrain and they keep their gratification within decent bounds'.<sup>19</sup> Thus there was a range of reactions to the POWs from escorts, guards and civilians, from being objects of curiosity to verbal abuse.

### **USA and Dutch Embassies**

The role of the American Embassy in Istanbul was a crucial one for the POWs once interned in the capital and their efforts were later recognised in prisoners' Repatriation Statements. The Secretary of the US Embassy, Hoffman Philip was responsible for visiting the men, corresponding with London to supply details of their capture and negotiating better conditions

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<sup>17</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from H. Philip to US Embassy, London, PRO FO 383/92 #141 385, File # 251. The prisoners had been provided with clothing on 20 August.

<sup>19</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p. 116.

for the prisoners.<sup>20</sup> Occasionally the Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau, and his wife visited the men in hospital. In early July 1915, after being hospitalised for only two days, Creedon received a visit from the Secretary. The visit had two purposes; to distribute ‘comforts’ such as sweets and cigarettes to the men and to gather personal information to send to Allied authorities. The following day Philip delivered more cigarettes and three Turkish piastres to each man. He subsequently visited every fortnight, providing toothbrushes, soap, towel, shoes, handkerchiefs, books and 30 piastres.<sup>21</sup>

Creedon’s Service record verifies that the Secretary kept his word and notified the Allied authorities. The British Red Cross was notified by the American Embassy on 21 July 1915 that Creedon had been wounded, captured and was in hospital in Istanbul. The Embassy often updated the information about each prisoner, noting that the High Commission was notified on 12 August 1915 that Creedon was doing well.<sup>22</sup> Several of the men’s files also included copies of telegrams sent to their next-of-kin alerting them to the men’s capture.

The bulk of the men captured on 8 August and transported to the capital also benefitted from visits. ‘We were well clothed and looked after by the American Ambassador, or rather, Mr Phillips [sic] the Secretary’.<sup>23</sup> It was also noted that one prison, ‘Stamboul Barracks’, was improved after visits by Philip.<sup>24</sup> Overall the Embassy had reasonable access to the men but at one stage Philip had to gain a ‘special order’ to visit Tash Kishla hospital after reprisal action was in place. Again, conditions improved slightly after his visit.<sup>25</sup> Lightfoot stated that the

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<sup>20</sup> Bailey acknowledged the role played by Hoffman Philip: ‘Mention must be made here of the great efforts made by Mr Herman [sic] Phillip of the American Embassy...’. Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>21</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>22</sup> Service records of Creedon, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>23</sup> Repatriation Statement of Boyle, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>24</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>25</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra. Creedon also stated that on 18 August ‘the American Ambassador had been refused admittance to the hospital that day’. However, he visited on another occasion with his wife. Diary of Creedon, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

Ambassador's wife sometimes visited alone and supplied money.<sup>26</sup> Two female American visitors supplied writing paper and pencils but Creedon does not explain if they were representatives of the Embassy. He noted that 'they only stayed a very short time and were too frightened even to speak to us'. More satisfactory visitors in the view of the men were 'two American Red Cross women' who stayed longer to talk to the men and provided chocolates, toffee and English tobacco. Two American journalists also visited 'but they didn't have much to say'.<sup>27</sup>

The men were quite taken by the visits of two 'fine young ladies, daughters of the Dutch Ambassador – Bertha and Freda Willebois'.<sup>28</sup> Bailey attributed significant improvements in their treatment to these two women: 'These ladies were successful in greatly improving things. They had dressings changed, new clean instruments and bandages supplied etc. All medicines, medical comforts, bedding, clothing etc. were also supplied. They visited the hospital daily'. He also noted that visits were made by 'an Austrian sister of Mercy - Sister Marie Colombe from the Convent of St. Elizabeth at Pera, was also exceedingly kind to us. These three ladies did everything in their power to alleviate our lot and deserve our gratitude'.<sup>29</sup>

### **Conditions prior to reprisal**

Individual accounts agree that initial experience of Turkish prisons was an ordeal. Despite accommodation being no worse, and sometimes better, than for Turkish prisoners, conditions were still very poor, being cramped, unsanitary and often lice-ridden. Several prisons, both military and civil, were mentioned by the prisoners, including Stamboul, Tash Kishla and

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<sup>26</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>27</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM IDRL/223, AWM, Canberra. It is surprising that American journalists were able to visit considering that this was wartime and censorship of the Turkish media was in place.

<sup>28</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>29</sup> Bailey, Statement made in London, AWM B1.2, AWM, Canberra.

Topkapi military prisons. The unwounded prisoners spent only a few weeks in prison in Istanbul before being transported elsewhere to a camp in the interior of Turkey.

A typical example was that of Beattie. He arrived at Istanbul by train at 7 pm on 15 August. His group was marched to a prison and provided with a loaf of bread and greens, including boiled marrow, cucumber and cabbage. The prison was infested with lice and bed bugs. The bottom section of the prison housed common civilian criminals. The POWs were provided with a garden for exercise and received some meat at night with their meal. On 20 August, the men were lined up in the garden and received a cotton shirt, underwear and socks. Those without boots were given 'a pair of light Turkish shoes' and those without hats given a khaki fez. The prisoners were provided with a free shave and photographed. On 22 August, they were marched through town, crossed the Galata Bridge spanning the Golden Horn and remained in barracks until 25 August. From there they transferred by ferry boat to Haydar Pasha station and were sent by train to inland Angora.<sup>30</sup>

Delpratt spent ten days in a military prison under difficult conditions: 'Received good bread but the other food was quite uneatable. The place was filthy and full of bugs. I was given no bedding. The WCs were horrible'.<sup>31</sup> Griffiths was sent to gaol where common criminals were also kept. He reported that there was approximately one hundred and twenty British prisoners altogether, including twenty Australians: 'Sanitary arrangements were better but we were compelled to wash at taps in the latrine. The food was boiled wheat, gritty bread and sometimes as a treat, haricot beans or potatoes.' Soon after, his group also was transported by train to Angora.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra. Angora is now the capital city Ankara. Drake also was in this group. He was able to purchase a copy of the photograph after Armistice in 1918. Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM B1.11, AWM, Canberra. An example of such a group photograph was purchased by the author in Istanbul in 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Repatriation Statement of Delpratt, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>32</sup> Repatriation Statement of Griffiths, AWM 30 B1.16. Brown had a similar experience. Repatriation Statement, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

The overall standard of hospitalisation in World War I was often poor, lacking medical supplies, trained personnel and nursing care. Complaints were made by many prisoners hospitalised in both Turkey and Germany.<sup>33</sup> In 1915-1916, with the steady stream of Turkish wounded flowing into the capital, hospital beds were very scarce. Public hospitals were commandeered by the military and specialist military hospitals such as Gümüş Suyu and Haydar Pasha were used for both Turkish and Allied patients. Later, Haydar Pasha and Psamatia (Samatya) were used as convalescent camps for those hopeful of repatriation.

The Turkish War Office sought out additional buildings for use as military hospitals and went to extraordinary lengths to alleviate the issue of overcrowding. An intriguing request was sent to the American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau in mid-1915 by the Inspector-General of the Sanitary Department of the Turkish War Office and Dr Schleib, head of the German Hospital in Istanbul:

though some of the Turkish schools and barracks had already been converted into hospitals, the need for further accommodations for wounded existed and they desired to know whether the British Government would, for humanity's sake, consent to this use of His Majesty's Embassy which would be put in charge of the German Red Cross.<sup>34</sup>

Ambassador Morgenthau refused this request.<sup>35</sup> It was a practical suggestion, as the British, by cutting diplomatic ties and declaring war, presumably had abandoned the building. The request indicates that providing accommodation for the wounded was an issue for Turkish authorities.

On arrival in Istanbul, Creedon was placed in Maltepe Military Hospital, on the Asian side of the city, near the coast. There were 'bugs' and he could not sleep. The food mostly

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<sup>33</sup> Prisoners in Germany complained of the poor standard and amount of food, inadequate medical care and rough orderlies. British POW Committee Report. PRO HO 45/10764/270829, PRO, London.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from the American Ambassador to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 17/6/1915. PRO FO 383, POWs, Turkey File # 7410, PRO, London.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

consisted of boiled wheat with meat or stewed raisins. He was placed in a ward for the first four weeks, apparently sharing accommodation with wounded Turkish soldiers. On leaving, he commented 'I was sorry to leave this ward as I had made friends with the Turks in that ward and the Doctor who was attending me there was more competent than the one who attended me after'. At this hospital it was first thought that Creedon's wounded finger would need to be amputated. An operation was performed under chloroform but the finger was not removed.<sup>36</sup>

Griffiths, Neyland, Dowell, Lightfoot and Bailey all commented favourably on their initial few weeks of hospitalisation in Istanbul. Most were visited by Hoffman Philip with gifts of money and books. Neyland was sent to Gumuş Suyu Hospital near Taxim Square in the centre of Istanbul, where the treatment was good. He was visited by Hoffman Philip and received 30 piastres.<sup>37</sup> Gumuş Suyu still operates as a military hospital. Dowell was taken straight to a naval hospital 'where we received the best of medical treatment and very good food'. He stayed several weeks.<sup>38</sup> Lightfoot was sent to an unnamed hospital 'where I was very fairly treated for three weeks'.<sup>39</sup> Çapa Hospital is an old hospital building still standing by the tram station of that name in a suburb of Istanbul. Bailey spent a month there and declared that it compared 'favourably with British hospitals. We were well fed and medical and surgical treatment was of the best. Civilians whom I met (very few) were well inclined'. He had a plentiful supply of food and cigarettes and recorded a typical daily menu: 'Breakfast, 7am, a glass of tea and one slice of good bread. Dinner, midday, soup (vegetable changed daily). Meat and beans or peas, rice and milk and on application fruit was supplied once'.<sup>40</sup> Davern agreed to the high standard of this hospital:

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<sup>36</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>37</sup> Repatriation Statement of Neyland, AWM B1.26, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>38</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dowell, AWM Series 30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>39</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, NAA B2455.

<sup>40</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

It was a real good hospital, quite as good as some English hospitals I have seen. Our wounds were cleaned and dressed; we were put into clean, comfortable beds; we were given good food. There was one French nurse there but the majority of them were Greek or Turkish women. The orderlies were Turks and, as far as I saw, they were not at all bad.<sup>41</sup>

He underwent an operation on August 10, and a bullet was extracted from his thigh. He remained in this hospital for one month.<sup>42</sup> After the first few weeks, all were then sent on to Tash Kishla hospital under reprisal conditions.

Williams was the only complainant. He stated that the stretcher cases were sent to Çapa and that he complained of the rough handling of several Turkish doctors. The head doctor 'who had been educated in England, watched my dressing next morning. When he saw the subordinate's rough treatment of my wound he knocked him aside with a blow and himself dressed me'.<sup>43</sup> Williams stayed until early October when he also was moved to Tash Kishla.<sup>44</sup>

Harbie Military Hospital was located near the present Military Museum of Istanbul. Some prisoners were sent straight to this hospital, and others were sent there after their 'reprisal' stay at Tash Kishla. Foxcroft arrived by motor bus. He remained there for about two weeks before being sent to Tash Kishla. He received calico underwear and a shirt and was treated very well. He was attended by two German Red Cross nurses who spoke English: 'They were very good to us, even buying eggs and milk for us out of their own money'.<sup>45</sup> O'Connor was carried to Harbie on a stretcher, which was 'by no means a bad place. We were put into nice warm beds and given a change of clothes of the Turkish hospital pattern'. In the same room were fifteen wounded Australians. He spoke highly of the German nurse attending them, 'a really splendid woman ... She gave us cakes and lollies, tobacco and cigarettes and pipes. She did not appear to be able to do too much for us'. O'Connor had a badly wounded leg and the

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<sup>41</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>42</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>43</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

doctors at Harbie disagreed as to whether or not it should be amputated. He told the Turkish Head Doctor, 'a really good man', that if it had to be amputated, 'I was content to let it be but I did not want to be practised on or experimented with ... This *Pascha Doctor* was a Turk – but a rare one'. O'Connor stayed at Harbie for eleven days before being sent to Tash Kishla.<sup>46</sup>

Davern stayed at Harbie hospital for eight months, from 27 January to 27 September 1916 and was then sent to prison in Istanbul.<sup>47</sup> Dowell also observed that the food was much better than at Tash Kishla and that they received good medical attention. He stayed there four months and was then sent to the camp at Afyon.<sup>48</sup>

### **Turkish reprisals**

After several weeks, prisoners were moved to inferior hospital and prison accommodation as a reprisal for alleged poor treatment of Turkish POWs by the British in Cairo. The official complaint was that Turkish prisoners had been marched 'naked' through the streets of Cairo.<sup>49</sup> Bailey explained the consequences: 'After one month or a little less, by reason of reports of bad treatment of Turks in Egypt, all wounded prisoners were collected from the different hospitals (there were 12 to 20 men in each) and taken to Tache Kishla hospital, where treatment was very bad'.<sup>50</sup> Foxcroft was also sent to Tash Kishla and was informed by Enver Pasha 'that Turkish POWs were being treated badly and that we would get the same'. He remained there one month.<sup>51</sup> Creedon wrote that he was not allowed access to books because of the reprisal.<sup>52</sup> Hoffman Philip of the US Embassy noted on 1 September 1915 that it was becoming more difficult to visit the prisoners at Tash Kishla under reprisal conditions.<sup>53</sup> The

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<sup>46</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>47</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>48</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dowell, AWM Series 30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>49</sup> Repatriation Statement of Stormonth, AWM 30 B1.30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>50</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>51</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra. Griffiths, Foster, Lightfoot and Williams reported the same story.

<sup>52</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Mr Philip to US Embassy, London, 1 September 1915, PRO FO 383/92 #136986 #251, PRO, London. Philip noted the reprisal was due to 'the supposed maltreatment of Turkish prisoners'.

accusation of ill treatment of Turkish prisoners was rejected by the British, who stated that it was a Turkish fabrication. A handwritten response by Lord Cecil from the British War Office, suggested that to overcome the complaints of the Turks, American officials should be free to visit Turkish prisoners in Egypt:

The Turks, no doubt inspired by their German masters, are simply inventing stories of the inhumanity with which Turkish prisoners of war are being treated by us. Even if they received a reassuring report on the subject from the US Consul General at Cairo, they would make allegations about bad treatment of Turks in the UK, or in India. There is no satisfying them!<sup>54</sup>

An independent International Red Cross inspection was not made of the British POW camps in Egypt until 1917.<sup>55</sup> The Ottoman Government again complained about British treatment to the American Embassy in London in October 1915 and the complaint was passed on to the British War Office. The complaint involved Turkish POWs in Cairo being without 'adequate clothing and ... their quarters are extremely bad'.<sup>56</sup> Was there a basis for the Turkish complaints? Reports from some British POW camps indicated that conditions were not good. In Egypt, the camps holding Turkish prisoners were purpose-built, surrounded by guards and barbed wire. Camps were also created for Turkish civilian women and children.<sup>57</sup>

Evidence suggesting contravention of the Hague Convention by the British included an extract from an Army Despatch from India dated 13 September 1918, indicating that the imbalance in pay had not been rectified between 1915 and 1918: 'whereby Ottoman prisoners

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<sup>54</sup> Lord Cecil, British War Office Memo of 30 September 1915, PRO FO 383/92 #141385 File # 251,PRO, London.

<sup>55</sup> C. Taşkıran, *Ana Ben Ölmedim, I. Dünya Savaşında Esir Türkler, (Mum. I Didn't Die. Turkish Prisoners in World War I)*, Turkish Is Bank Press, Istanbul, 2001. Translated by S. Bulgu, April 2005.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> In India, many camps also housed Turkish civilians. The American Consul-General in Calcutta reported on a British camp at Ahmednagar, India in September to October 1915, the same time as the Turkish reprisals occurred in Istanbul. He unfavourably reported on five deaths in the camp due to diseases such as enteric fever, malaria and amoebic dysentery; the poor quality of the food, attributing tape worm infestation to the bad meat, punishment diets and severe disciplinary action. Turkish officers were paid only half the rate of British officers, contravening the Hague Convention. He suggested an improvement in accommodation, the extermination of lice, more variety in food and allowances for letter writing. Miscellaneous Files. Report on Camps at Ahmednagar, India by James A. Smith, American Consul-General at Calcutta, Sept-Oct. 1915, PRO FO 383/276/1916, PRO, London.

of war are to receive only half the rates of working pay laid down for British troops'. Ottoman prisoners working as barbers, cooks, ration and water carriers received no pay.<sup>58</sup>

**Fig 4:2: Turkish prisoners forced to strip naked in public for bathing. (AWM J06413)**



A letter to the American Embassy, London, dated 30 January 1917, from the American Embassy in Turkey, stated that further complaints were lodged about treatment of Turkish POWs in Russia. The British responded that they could not intervene in such matters in that country.<sup>59</sup>

A more personal complaint of poor treatment can be found in the memoirs of a Turkish officer, Sokrat Incesu, captured in the Middle East. When first captured, the Turkish officers travelled on a crowded train for two days, to a location on the Suez Canal. They were unloaded beside the railway line and were forced to undress in public, particularly shameful behaviour in the Muslim world. Forced to bathe in disinfectant in the open, the men felt humiliated. They were then forced back into the train, with all clothing thrown in after them. They dressed as well as they could, resulting in some prisoners wearing garments either too

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<sup>58</sup> Extract Paragraph 3, Army Despatch from India, PRO FO 383/453/1918, PRO, London.

<sup>59</sup> Letter to the US Embassy, London, from US Embassy, Istanbul, PRO FO 383/333/1917, POW Dept, PRO, London.

small or too large. They then continued their journey to Alexandria.<sup>60</sup> Fig 4.2 may record this incident.

After the war, a revealing confidential report was sent from Washington to London as part of a British investigation of alleged human rights abuses in Turkey during the war. It was based on advice from Hoffman Philip, dated 20 March, 1919. It described reprisal conditions at Tash Kishla, explaining that no officials could visit the men for two months from 'spring' 1915, despite 'repeated requests' from the American Embassy. It noted that the Ambassador was allowed one visit only and Philip only a few.<sup>61</sup>

The report describes some of the poor conditions experienced at Tash Kishla, but it is misleading in a number of ways. There is no explanation of the reasons given for the Turkish reprisals nor of the complaints of British ill-treatment made at the time by the Ottoman Government. Taken at face value and out of context, the blame is placed solely on the apparent capricious head of the Chief of the Turkish Army Medical Corps. The timing of spring is questionable. The Australians captured before August, that is, spring and early summer, were sent quickly on to the camps and not subjected to reprisals. The first mention of such action is made by Australian POWs in August, well into summer. There is no evidence of refusal of visits lasting two months. Creedon mentions that on 18 August, Mr Morgenthau was refused admittance *on that day* but visited soon after. The report under-represents the numbers of visits described elsewhere by Hoffman Philip himself. Either Philip was not adequately consulted, his memory was perhaps faulty or he was deliberately distorting evidence. The following favourable description of the hospitals dated 11 September 1915 was written by Philip after the reprisals had begun:

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<sup>60</sup> S. İncesu, *My Memoirs of Canakkale-Anzac During WWI (Birinci Dünya Savaşında Çanakkale-Arıburnu Hatıralarım)* Esen Printing, Canakkale, 1964, pp. 29-32. Translated by S. Bulgu, March 2002. The ordeal is reproduced in Appendix 11.

<sup>61</sup> PRO FO 383 97/1915, File 2232-2849, PRO, London. See Appendix 12 for the full transcript.

Generally speaking the treatment accorded to these wounded men appears to be good. Conditions differ in the various hospitals but in all cases the treatment appears to be as good as that given to Turkish wounded. All the men have been visited by representatives of this Embassy and their immediate needs are supplied as occasion offers.<sup>62</sup>

Some of the men who were not badly wounded were sent to prison after being treated in hospital and were subject to reprisal conditions. After Tash Kishla hospital, Bailey was sent to 'Top Kapon' [Topkapi] Military Prison where treatment 'was not too good. We were always at this time very closely guarded'.<sup>63</sup> Foxcroft was also moved from Tash Kishla to naval barracks in Istanbul. He was confined to a small basement room which was filthy and verminous. Food was boiled wheat with very little meat. They were permitted a half hour exercise per day and received a bath by paying two piastres each. After two weeks, Hoffman Philip visited and provided 60 piastres to each man. After his visit, conditions improved slightly. Creedon was moved to prison after being hospitalised in September. There were eight prisoners in each room, and the men were initially supplied with olives (which he declared he could not eat) and a large dish of stew. He was able to exercise for several hours a day in the yard. As with the previous group, Hoffman Philip visited and distributed 60 piastres to each POW. Creedon, together with other prisoners, was marched through Istanbul, placed in lice-ridden barracks for two days, photographed and marched back. A few days later, after being supplied with tooth-brush, towel, soap, handkerchief and either a singlet or underwear and a blanket shared between two men, they left for camp by train.<sup>64</sup>

During the time of reprisal, Tash-Kishla hospital accommodated wounded prisoners. Now part of the Istanbul Technical University, the hospital is located in the central district of Istanbul, near Taxim Square. It is a large imposing building and twelve men described

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>64</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

conditions at this hospital.<sup>65</sup> On 19 August, Creedon and others were transferred there by buggy and tram. He referred to it as ‘the Dungeon’. Mattresses were placed on a filthy floor and the prisoners shared blankets. They were issued with cotton pants and shirts. The food included  $\frac{3}{4}$  loaf a day, a bowl of soup in the morning, a plate of meat and baked wheat at midday and the same again in the evening. Complaints were made of an infestation of fleas and carelessly cleaned dressings. They were guarded by a sentry with rifle and bayonet and escorted to the toilet.<sup>66</sup>



**Fig 4:3: The former Tash Kishla hospital, Istanbul. (Author’s photograph).**

Davern remained at Tash Kishla from 15 September 1915 to 27 January 1916 and he too reported on the scarcity of beds and sleeping on straw mattresses. They were tended by male orderlies who were a bit ‘saucy’.<sup>67</sup> Bailey and Lightfoot agreed on the poor conditions, noting that there were two mattresses for three or four men and one blanket or covering for two men being the allowance. Iodine and a weak disinfectant was the only dressing.<sup>68</sup> Dowell

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<sup>65</sup> The men had difficulty with the spelling of this hospital. I will use *Tash Kishla* as the simplest spelling. The men included Bailey, Boyle, Creedon, Davern, Dowell, Foster, Foxcroft, Griffiths, Lightfoot, Neyland, Williams and O’Connor.

<sup>66</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>67</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. Davern does not explain what he means by ‘saucy’.

<sup>68</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra and Lightfoot, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

complained that he was there for five days before receiving any medical treatment of any kind and shared a straw mattress and one cover between five men.<sup>69</sup> Williams maintained that there was no bedding or blankets with one hundred men in each room. He remained there for two weeks.<sup>70</sup> Both Foster and Foxcroft attribute the poor treatment at Tash Kishla to reprisal treatment.<sup>71</sup>

O'Connor remained at Tash Kishla until January 27 1916 and had a 'rotten experience' there. He underwent an operation on his leg and when he was recovering from the chloroform 'a bloke named Callaghan or O'Callaghan was near by. At my request he lifted up the bed clothes and we found that my leg was gone ... When I left Harbie Hospital my leg was real well'. This is hardly correct as he had acknowledged earlier that several doctors at Harbie had disagreed whether or not it should be removed. O'Connor implied that the leg was removed unnecessarily. It is understandable that he would be resentful and bitter at losing his leg, but there is no evidence that the operation was unnecessary. O'Connor had two further operations to remove small pieces of splintered bone. However, he added that Christmas lunch was an excellent meal supplied by the women from the Dutch Embassy and the Roman Catholic Bishop of 'roasted turkey and roasted chestnuts'. The window boards and blinds were also removed to allow for more light.<sup>72</sup>

When O'Connor returned to Harbie, he recorded that the German doctor there was surprised that his leg had been removed. O'Connor obviously underwent a further procedure as he noted: 'The operation revealed that in the occasion of the operation at Tash Kishla, the bone of my leg had only been partially sawn through and then snapped off! I was unconscious, of course, but my friend Davern, who was there ... can tell you all about it'.<sup>73</sup> Greg Kerr

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<sup>69</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dowell, AWM Series 30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>70</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>71</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15 and Foster, AWM 30 B1.14, AWM, Canberra

<sup>72</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

elaborates the story of O'Connor for dramatic purposes in his narrative and his choice of language is dramatic and not based on O'Connor's own words.<sup>74</sup> It is not clear what evidence is used for this story as it is not recounted in either Davern's Repatriation Statement or his Red Cross files. O'Callaghan left no account as he died of enteritis as a POW. None of the other men relate this story.

Overall, once the prisoners had been transferred to Istanbul it was obvious that there were problems in finding suitable accommodation for their brief stopover before being shipped to camps in the countryside. Unwounded prisoners were placed in Turkish military barracks or prisons or in hospitals if wounded. Initially the wounded received very good care. However, after a decision was made to introduce reprisal treatment, the prisoners were moved to poorer accommodation at Tash Kishla, mostly for a few weeks before being transferred to a camp. The deplorable conditions there may have contributed to, or hastened the deaths of the badly wounded Private John Hennessy, Corporal Charles Hodsdon, Private Albert Jenkins and Private Joseph Kelly.

### **The officer experience**

Luscombe, together with other captured officers, was initially housed in the Ministry of War building for two nights. He recounted the extraordinary story of cabling his mother to let her know he was still alive. To the disbelief of his comrades, Luscombe borrowed pen and paper from the interpreter and wrote a cable: 'Prisoner, well, writing'. He then gave it to the interpreter for transmission. 'My fellow prisoners looked at me in amazement, then they burst out laughing at my simplicity, in expecting that the people of this backward, uncivilised country in the midst of a war would make any attempt to send my cable'. It was indeed sent

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<sup>74</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.108. Kerr adds: 'a chloroform bag was thrust over his face to knock him out and when the saw blade couldn't get through the bone, a Turkish orderly was seen to climb on the table and stomp on the leg until the bone snapped'.

and received by his mother in Geelong eleven days later. She had been told previously that her son had been killed but had refused to believe it.<sup>75</sup>

On 22 August, Luscombe, Stormonth and seven other officers were moved from the War Ministry building to Tash Kishla barracks due to the reprisal.<sup>76</sup> Luscombe described their accommodation as 'a very old wooden building', used both as a prison and a prison hospital. Luscombe's humour did not desert him as he tried to make light of the conditions:

Tash Kishla Barracks was an ancient-looking building that appeared to have been built around the time that Noah built the Ark. Closer acquaintance over the next two weeks tended to strengthen this impression. We were lodged in a very large, very bare and very grubby looking room. A number of rusty iron bedsteads, fitted with rough wooden planks as a mattress on which to lie down, constituted the only furniture of any description in the room... We decided that the ancient building must be the original home and breeding place of all the bugs and fleas that now inhabit the earth.<sup>77</sup>

The officers did not remain there long before being sent to camps in the interior.

### **Death and burial**

Nine men died whilst in hospital in Istanbul and one at Biga and there are varying details of their deaths.<sup>78</sup> There are no details for Private David Francis. The date of his death is recorded on his headstone at Hayda Pasha cemetery as 8 August 1915. It would have been impossible for him to have been captured on 8 August as stated in his Service Record, transported wounded to Istanbul and dying all on the same day. Either the date of his capture or his death is incorrect.

Sherlock remains a shadowy figure, with little evidence to draw from and that being

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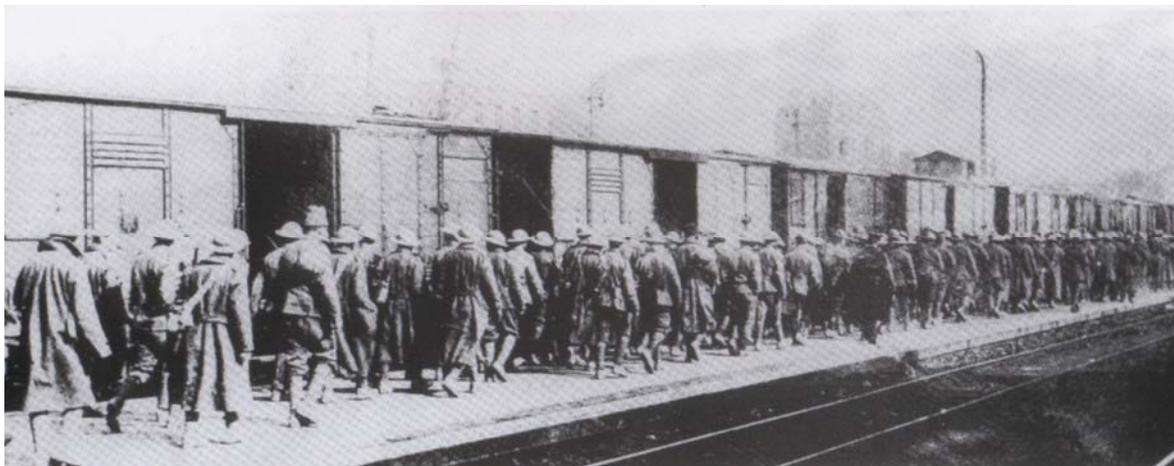
<sup>75</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>76</sup> Repatriation Statement of Stormonth, AWM 30 B1.30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>77</sup> Luscombe, *op.cit.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>78</sup> Those who died in hospitals in Istanbul include Hodges, Hodsdon, Sherlock, Leyden, Wood, Kelly, Shelton, Hennessy and Jenkins. Brooke died in the hospital at Biga on the southern shore of the Dardanelles.

contradictory. It is noted in his Service Record that he went missing on 2 May at Gaba Tepe. A note states that he was admitted to Gulhane Hospital and there are conflicting details of where he died.<sup>79</sup>



**Fig. 4:4: Allied POWs embarking on trains at Haydar Pasha station.  
(Red Crescent Archives, Istanbul)**

A Turkish document states that Sherlock died at Beylerbeyi Hospital (on the Asiatic side of Istanbul) and that his belongings were sent to the American Embassy.<sup>80</sup> The Australian Red Cross noted that he died of septic poisoning on 14 July at Haydar Pasha Hospital and another document in the same file notes that he died at 'Berleby' Hospital of gangrene to the foot:

[Sherlock] died at Berleby on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, not at Gul Khana as stated. I am glad to be able to tell you that he seems to have had decent attention. I happened to meet a Jewish woman who helped to nurse him and she told me that he was the only British prisoner in that particular Hospital and everybody was good to him.<sup>81</sup>

Sherlock is buried at Haydar Pasha cemetery. No details are supplied for his burial. The next Australian POW to die and be buried in Istanbul for whom there is evidence was Private

<sup>79</sup> Service records of Sherlock, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>80</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Çanakkale Muharebeleri (Canakkale War in Ottoman Documents) I & II*, Ankara, 2005, Document 95. Translated by S. Bulgu 28/3/2006.

<sup>81</sup> ARC W & M File for Sherlock, 1DRL/428.

James Leyden. He was captured on 8 August and was badly wounded. Foxcroft noted that he had been in a bad way on the boat journey to the capital.<sup>82</sup>

**Fig 4:5: Haydar Pasha Cemetery. (Author's photograph)**

Leyden died at Gulhane Hospital on 11 August 1915. The American Embassy notified the Allied authorities of his death. Philip posted off the pathetic few



remaining personal effects of the young man: 'Enclosed 1 identification disc; one small note book'.<sup>83</sup>

There are often conflicting accounts of the deaths of the prisoners with some blaming reprisal conditions. Kelly died at Tash Kishla Hospital on 26 August. Three accounts of his death survive. McKay reported that Kelly had been shot through the lungs and died.<sup>84</sup> O'Connor stated: 'he became delirious and died on a mattress alongside me'.<sup>85</sup> Kerr provided further details:

[Kelly] had been with me in Harbie Hospital, Constantinople. To all appearances, he seemed in good health, but complained of some internal trouble, probably result of bullet lodged inside. He died within 48 hours of admission to Tash Kishla Hospital, Pera, Constantinople, where we were under reprisal treatment. The treatment here was very bad. Know nothing of burial. London 22/1/19.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from Philip to the US Embassy, London, dated 13 August 1915, Service records of Leyden, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>84</sup> Supplementary Repatriation Statement of McKay, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>85</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>86</sup> ARC W & M File of Kelly, 1DRL/428, AWM, Canberra. Sadly, his only personal effects were postcards.

Wood died in Çapa Hospital on 19 August. He had been wounded during fighting at Gallipoli and again by Allied fire whilst in the Turkish dressing station. O'Connor reported that he had multiple wounds in the arms and legs.<sup>87</sup> Notification of his death from the American Embassy was included in his file on 24 August. No details of his burial were included but his mother eventually received his personal effects of 'belt, hairbrush, photo, diary' on 3 June 1916.<sup>88</sup> Private Louis Hodges died at Harbie Hospital on 24 August 1915 of wounds and was buried on the same day at Feriköy.<sup>89</sup> Kerr reported later from London in 1919:

I am certain his name was Hodges, but the man alongside me called him George. This man who I think was Hodges died from the result of bullet wound in neck at Harbie Hospital, Constantinople ... He would be buried from hospital. An American lady was in charge of our ward of about 20 Australians ... Information could be got by writing to hospital officials, as it was a fairly well run place.<sup>90</sup>

Hennessy died at Tash Kishla Hospital in early December. His Statement of Service noted that the US Embassy notified London of his death on 21 December 1915.<sup>91</sup> There are conflicting statements made by the POWs. McLean reported that Hennessy died between 8-30 August in hospital in Istanbul of wounds. O'Connor added that Hennessy died at Tash Kishla in December 1915: 'He was wounded under the knee. They cut him about a few times and then left him unattended. He was suffering from diarrhoea and had no bedpan. The wound got badly infected in consequence. He was in a bed close to me when he was dying.' A New Zealander, Corporal Shoebridge stated that Hennessy died of dysentery.<sup>92</sup> Jenkins died at Tash Kishla hospital on 16 January 1916 with his Service Record stating initially 'cause unknown'.<sup>93</sup> Again, accounts vary, with the official cause being 'pleurisy and suppurative haematomis'. New Zealander Corporal Shoebridge stated that Jenkins died of pneumonia but

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<sup>87</sup> Statement by O'Connor in the Service records of Wood, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Service records of Hodges, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>90</sup> Statement by Kerr in ARC W & M File of Hodges, AWM 1DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>91</sup> Service records of Hennessy, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>92</sup> Statements in ARC W & M File of Hennessy, AWM 1DRL/66128, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>93</sup> Service records of Jenkins, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

McKay believed that he had a bad wound in the back. 'The Turks said he died of pleurisy but in my opinion, his death resulted from his wound and improper treatment'.<sup>94</sup>

Corporal Charles Hodsdon is often confused with Hodges or is called Hudson. There are conflicting accounts of his death. Kerr recalled the following:

I distinctly remember a man name of Hodgson dying in hospital at Tash Kishla Hospital, Pera, Constantinople towards the end of August 1915. 24 hours after admission. He had been wounded (two wounds in groin), his wounds had been neglected and had become dirty. We were under what they called reciprocal treatment. Our impression was that it was too much trouble for them to clean the wounds and that they killed him. We had previously been in hospital at Harbie, Const. And I remember seeing his identification disc. He was too ill to speak to.<sup>95</sup>

Despite claiming that he 'distinctly remembered' the soldier, Kerr is either referring to the wrong date or wrong man. Hodsdon's Service record officially lists his date of death as 21 January 1916. His death certificate, signed by a senior doctor, stated that he died at Tash Kishla of 'intestinal tuberculosis' on 20 January 1916. The conflicting accounts are understandable when the recollections were made four years later by men who were often wounded themselves at the time.

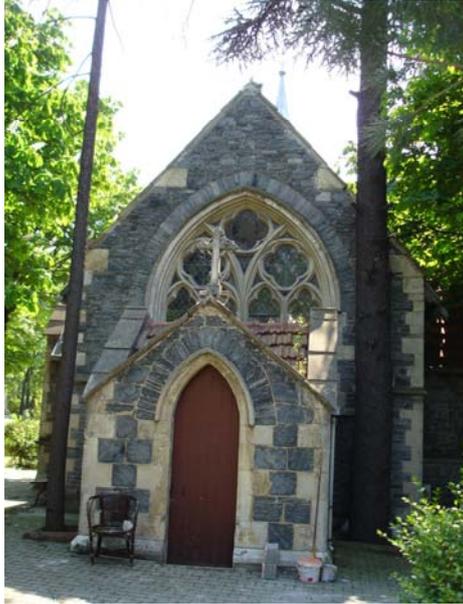
Some of the badly wounded men lasted several weeks in hospital. It appears that Francis died within several days of capture. Leyden lasted three days and then died of head wounds at Gulhane Hospital whilst Wood, Hodges, Kelly and Shelton lasted 11, 16, 18 and 26 days respectively. If the documentation for Sherlock is accurate, he was a patient in various hospitals for 42 days before his death.

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<sup>94</sup> Statements in ARC W & M File of Jenkins, AWM 1DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>95</sup> ARC W & M File of Hodsdon, AWM 1DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

**Fig 4:6: The chapel at Feriköy Christian cemetery, Istanbul. (Author's photograph).**



The nine who died in Istanbul were initially buried in the cemetery at Feriköy, an old Christian cemetery separated into Catholic and Protestant sections by a road and high stone walls. It remains a green and tranquil setting amidst the hubbub of the traffic beyond its walls and there are charming chapels for both the Catholic and Protestant sections.<sup>96</sup> Philip reported that an official from the American Embassy

attended the funerals of Hodsdon, Hennessy, Jenkins and Leyden at Feriköy cemetery. He named Rev. Robert Frew specifically as the officiating clergyman at the burials of Hennessy and Leyden and a 'clergyman of the Church of England' for Hodsdon and Jenkins. Leyden's funeral was escorted by a Turkish military attachment. The actual religious denomination of each man did not seem to determine which officiating cleric attended the funeral as Hennessy, Leyden and Kelly were Catholics, Hodsdon was Methodist and Jenkins and Wood were Anglicans.

Burials were conducted very soon after death in accordance with Muslim tradition. Jenkins and Hodsdon were buried on the same day as their death and Leyden one day later. The Turkish authorities forwarded the personal effects of prisoners, some containing valuables that obviously were not stolen. Hodsdon's effects included 1 ½ pounds of Turkish gold<sup>97</sup> and Jenkin's effects included a purse with Turkish currency and a ring.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Site visit in April 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Letter from Philip, 24 January, 1916 in Service records of Hodsdon, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>98</sup> Letter from Philip, 18 January, 1916 in Service records of Jenkins, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

## **Conclusion**

The experience of the interim period between capture and incarceration in a POW camp varied, depending on whether a POW was wounded or not. Being immersed in a different culture was one of the major issues for the POWs. Alien food, unhygienic and crowded accommodation and the lack of a common language with their captors all challenged the newly incarcerated soldiers. Good medical treatment initially provided declined after reprisal conditions were introduced. Prior to this thesis, no distinction had been made in the literature between conditions before or after reprisal. It had not been noted previously that prisoners who died in Istanbul were accorded Christian burials in the international cemetery of Feriköy, nor that they were attended by British clergymen and members of the American Embassy. British propaganda had emphasised that neutral visits to the POWs were either not allowed or were very restricted yet American Embassy staff, particularly Secretary Hoffman Philip, made regular visits to the men and played a considerable role in assisting the POWs to gain better conditions and to provide additional comforts in this early period of incarceration.

On leaving Istanbul, the POWs journeyed to various POW camps, generally located in the interior of Turkey. The majority then remained in camps where they lived and worked out their remaining time till the Armistice was declared in late 1918. The following chapter will introduce the major camps that housed the Gallipoli prisoners, differentiating between those of the lower ranks and officers, work and convalescent camps.

## Chapter 5: 'As picturesque as it is dirty': prisoner of war camps

Captor nations faced a universal problem in establishing POW camps and determining the subsequent treatment of prisoners. Considerable resources were spent on housing, clothing and feeding prisoners at a time of scarce resources with a nation at war.<sup>1</sup> Depending on the level of development of the captor nation, overcrowding, scarcity of food and fuel, problems with sanitation and epidemics were common in all POW camps.<sup>2</sup> Generally exploitation of prisoner labour was a feature, but this also had a positive side as work occupied prisoners' time that otherwise often seemed endless. Camps were generally established in places most convenient to the captor, based on the availability and cost of transport, the need for a supply of labour and a location from which it would be difficult to escape.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter identifies the Allied POW camps throughout Turkey that housed the Gallipoli POWs and other Australian and Allied soldiers. A discussion of the location, general organisation and work performed at each camp will follow. This is the first time that all camps have been identified, described in detail and categorized. The author felt that it was important to provide the previously uncollated details of each camp to clarify each as a distinct entity with varying purposes. Thus this chapter varies somewhat from the others as it is more descriptive than analytical. The range of contacts made with the prisoners, including visits made by institutions such as the International Red Cross, will also be discussed. The overall conditions of everyday life experienced by the men during their period of internment, including the provision of food, clothing, entertainment and punishment will be considered in detail in Chapter 6. Site visits to the main camps were undertaken in 2006 in an attempt to locate any remaining physical evidence of the camps and to ascertain if there was any extant oral history concerning POW internment. After 90 years, very little remains in most locations.

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<sup>1</sup> R. C. Hingorani, *Prisoners of War*, Oceana Publications, New York, 1982, p. 80

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, p. 90.

Prisoners of war interned in Turkey were amongst the most inaccessible and isolated of any Allied prisoners of World War I. The majority were located in camps in central Anatolia and the outermost eastern regions of the Ottoman Empire. Any contact with the outside world – or with English-speakers or Europeans within Turkey – became important as a link to their own lost world. Contacts consisted of more than correspondence and news from home, though these were important as a reminder that they were not forgotten by family and friends. More important were parcels of clothing, food and money payments that could improve their lives in the camps or at least lift their spirits. Visits by neutral agencies such as the International Red Cross, the Red Crescent, embassies and concerned citizens were allowed depending on circumstances. The Turkish War Office directed camp inspector Colonel Zia Bey to make regular visits to camps and commissioned him with the power to dismiss camp Commandants who were deemed corrupt or inefficient.

### **Role of the Turkish Red Crescent**

Initially, the Turkish War Office took full responsibility for POWs. However, as the war progressed and the number of inquiries increased about both foreign and Turkish POWs, the task of administering prisoners was passed to the Red Crescent. During the first phase of the Gallipoli campaign, the Red Crescent began to send POW lists to the International Red Cross Society in Geneva. The secretary of the Red Crescent, Izzet Bey was sent to Vienna to study the operations of the International Red Cross POW Bureau. On his return, he was able to implement a more orderly system of preparation of POW lists, and the delivery of money, letters and parcels, based on the Red Cross operational system. The Red Crescent also assisted the Red Cross to gain access to POW camps and at times inspected them on their behalf.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> L. Özcan, 'Türk Kızılay Müessesesinin Milletlerarası Kızıllaç İle Olan Münasebetleri', ('The Turkish Red Crescent Society's Relations with the International Red Cross'), *Istanbul University Law Faculty Magazine*, vol. 30 no. 3-4, Sermet Printing, Istanbul, 1965, p. 18. Translated by S. Bulgu, Feb. 2004.

It was common practice for a neutral power to be appointed as an intermediary to facilitate communication and to inspect POW camps. It was also a common wartime practice to ban visits to camps for a variety of reasons.<sup>5</sup> Such bans may have been imposed due to the military sensitivity of particular sites, closeness to a theatre of war or as reprisals for perceived political slights. The role of the intermediary was also to supply lists of POWs for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. In the early years of the war, the American embassy was the assigned intermediary for the Allied POWs, followed by the Dutch Legation after the United States entered the war in 1917. Official notices of capture were the earliest of contacts between prisoners and official departments and were sent early by the Red Crescent and US Embassy to the British War Office. Considerable efforts were made to alert Allied authorities to the capture of soldiers. Often several cables were sent to either the International Red Cross or the British War Office attempting to identify a prisoner who may have died of wounds in hospital.

### **POW Camps**

The Hague Convention allowed considerable leeway in accommodation requirements for World War I POWs, prescribing that internment could be in a town, fortress, camp or other place and that prisoners were 'bound not to go beyond certain fixed limits'.<sup>6</sup> The Turkish War Ministry's *Manual Regarding Prisoners of War* states:

The settlement and accommodation of prisoners of war of officer rank will be provided by renting hotels or private homes which are appropriate to their rank ... depending on what can be afforded at the time. Prisoners of war of non-officer rank are to be accommodated in garrison barracks or available institutions.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the war, a range of work was performed by inmates in POW camps. The Hague Convention clearly addressed this issue, noting that officers were not to work and that other

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<sup>5</sup> Hingorani, *Prisoners of War*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>6</sup> Hague Convention, Article 5. October 18, 1907. [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague04.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague04.htm) Retrieved 16/10/2000.

<sup>7</sup> *Usera Hakkında Talimatname Mat-baa-i, Askeriyye, (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War)*, Turkish War Ministry Military Printer, Istanbul, 1914. Ottoman Archives, 1332/1914. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2001.

ranks could work according to their ability and experience. The work was not to be excessive nor relate to the war effort. Paid work for the state was to be at the same rate as soldiers of the captor's army and should contribute to the upkeep of the prisoner.<sup>8</sup> The shortage of manpower that often occurs in wartime, sometimes resulted in prisoners performing work in labour-intensive industries.<sup>9</sup> When questioned about their prior occupations to determine work suitability, some prisoners fabricated jobs, such as milestone inspector, poacher and hangman to confuse their captors.<sup>10</sup>

Records concerning the Turkish camps are incomplete, making it difficult to ascertain the exact movements of each soldier. Official details were often out of date or erroneous, and the men often misspelt names of camps, adding to the confusion. The men's own recollections of the timing of movements and camp conditions were often faulty and at times do not corroborate each other. Appendix 13 maps the accommodation patterns for each camp, based on extant sources.

The numbers of POWs in Turkey, particularly with the capture of over 13,000 men after the fall of Kut-el-Amara in Mesopotamia, one of Britain's biggest military defeats, posed a problem for the Turks.<sup>11</sup> Prepared as they may have been for an imminent invasion of the Gallipoli peninsula, it appears that the military were not prepared for such a large influx of prisoners as initial camps were makeshift and ill-prepared. Most camps were located on a railway line for ease of transport and also acted as a source of labour for the construction of

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<sup>8</sup> Hague Convention, Article 6.

<sup>9</sup> A. J. Barker, *Behind Barbed Wire*, B.T. Batsford, London, 1974, p. 99. In Germany, prisoners worked in a range of labour-intensive industries such as coal mining and often in wartime work such as transportation of iron ore. See M. Moynihan, *Black Bread & Barbed Wire*, Leo Cooper, London, 1978, pp.38, 48, 61; Hingorani, *Prisoners of War*, p. 144.

<sup>10</sup> Moynihan, *ibid*, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> British division was besieged in the town of Kut-el-Amara from December 1915 to April 1916. 13,672 eventually surrendered, with 1,425 immediately repatriated. 2,611 POWs died and eventually 7,414 became prisoners. *Report of the British Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British POWs in Turkey*, November 1918, London, pp. 10-11. AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

the Berlin to Baghdad railway. POWs were never held near the front line as was the case for some Allied prisoners held in Germany.<sup>12</sup>



**Fig: 5:1: Map locating the major Turkish POW camps.**

The Turkish Government had considerable choice in determining the type of accommodation suitable for its prisoners whilst still meeting the broad requirements of international convention. Throughout their three-and-a-half year term of imprisonment, the Gallipoli prisoners were held in over twenty camps scattered across Turkey and accommodation ranged from barracks, schools, churches, barns and private houses. An official list of camps supplied by the Turkish military to the British War Ministry in 1917 lists 23 camps, including hospitals, but several of these were not used for Gallipoli prisoners. From 1917, additional camps were created such as San Stefano, Ada Bazar and Ras-el-Ain, which were not included in the original Turkish list. Several itinerant camps servicing the construction of the Berlin to

<sup>12</sup> In the winter of 1917, 600 British POWs worked in German trenches on the Russian front well within artillery range. Moynihan, *Black Bread*, pp. 2, 17.

Baghdad railway such as Belemelik and Bozanti are included jointly under the category 'Taurus' in this list.<sup>13</sup>

Several of the Australians found themselves interned in camps within two weeks of capture. The main camps that housed the Gallipoli prisoners were Afyon, Belemelik, Angora, Çankiri, Ada Bazar and San Stefano. There were several different categories of camps. The majority were work camps for the lower ranks, whilst others were transit, convalescent or officer-only camps. They ranged from isolated interior sites to those clustered around Istanbul. Some camps were administered by the Turkish military and others by private companies such as the Philip Holzman Construction Company of Germany. This group of civil engineers was under contract to the Ottoman Government to construct the railway from Haydar Pasha (on the Asian shore of Istanbul) to Baghdad.<sup>14</sup> Some prisoners were moved frequently between camps while others, especially officers, remained mainly at one camp.<sup>15</sup>

### **Work camps**

The majority of camps were designated work camps, though some also housed officers and at a later period, operated as convalescent camps. The Turkish *Manual* mirrored the Hague Convention on matters of labour within these camps.<sup>16</sup> Work performed by prisoners in Turkey varied, but did not involve war-related industries, unless railway construction could be so categorized. Work varied from road-making, tree-felling, railway and tunnel construction, farming, factory work and clerical duties. The main work camps included Afyon, camps associated with the building of the Berlin-Baghdad railway such as Belemelik and smaller work camps attached to private industry, such as Ismidt.

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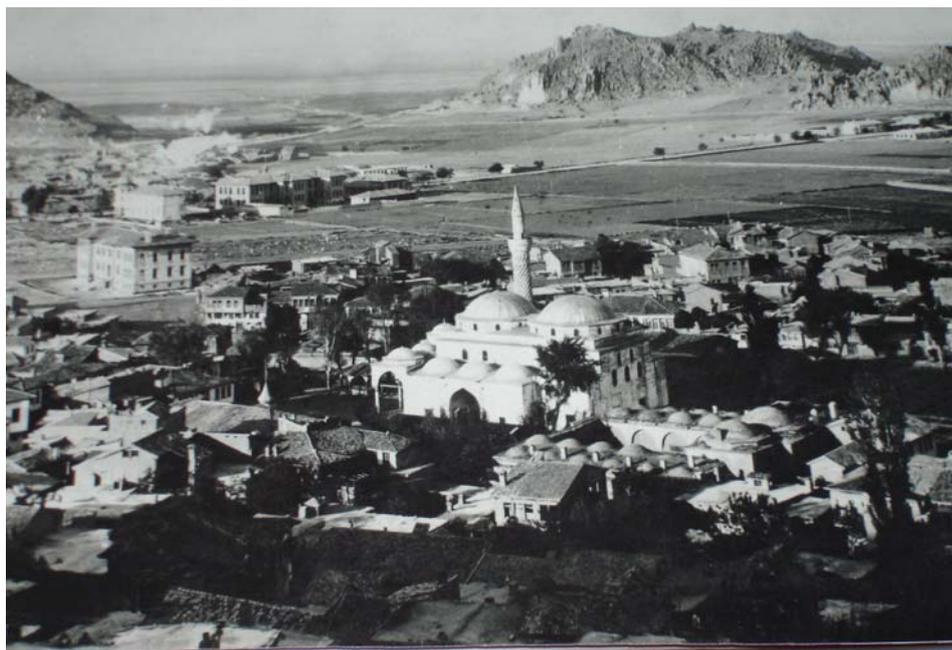
<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 16.

<sup>14</sup> PRO FO 383/334 (1917) File 249, PRO, London.

<sup>15</sup> Carpenter is a good example of the mobility of some prisoners: 'to Angora, Rianghai, back to Angora to Bilemedik, Hadj-Kiri, back to Angora, thence to Asi Yazgad, then to Smyrna and home'. 'Rianghai' is 'Çankiri' and 'Asi Yazgad' is 'Yozgad.' Repatriation Statement of Carpenter, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>16</sup> *Manual Regarding Prisoners of War*, Paragraphs 14 & 15.

**Afyon Kara Hissar** housed the largest proportion of Gallipoli prisoners for the duration of the war initially as a work camp and later as a convalescent camp. Many officers spent most of their time there, though housed separately from the lower ranks. It was one of the earliest camps established and those who were either not wounded or captured early in the campaign, such as Ashton, Troy, Cliffe, Elston, Jordan and McDonald were sent there from Istanbul in early May or June 1915. The camp was in use until the end of 1918 when the men were repatriated. Afyon Kara Hissar, which in English translates as ‘Opium Black Castle’, is a major railway junction, approximately 450 kilometres south-east of Istanbul. The town is dominated by a huge rock, over 200 metres high, crowned by the ruins of an old citadel, possibly dating from Hittite times. The sinister connotation suggested by Greg Kerr’s description of the prisoners experiencing ‘bad vibrations in the presence of the rock’s grim aura’, is overdone.<sup>17</sup>



**Fig. 5:2: Afyon at the time of WWI showing the ‘madresseh’ to the right of the mosque. (Photograph purchased in Afyon by the author )**

The rock itself is spectacular and provides a picturesque backdrop to the town and from its summit provides a panoramic view of the town and nearby hinterland. The old quarter still

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<sup>17</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p. 123.

retains the timber-clad Ottoman houses used by officers during their time of internment. The region produced the majority of legally manufactured opium in Turkey, critical for wartime production of morphine. In season, the town was surrounded by colourful poppy fields. The *Report of the British POW Committee* mistakenly noted that the camp was created early in 1916, with the majority of prisoners being Indian.<sup>18</sup>

The camp at Afyon was not a stereotyped prisoner camp of specifically constructed barracks, surrounded by barbed wire or restrictive fencing. Accommodation varied and officers were housed within the town. Initially, lower ranks were housed in a dilapidated school building and later moved into an old Armenian church. The local Council had no records of the POW internment but elderly residents assisted in the location of the sites of the Armenian church and the old school. The school or 'madresseh' (see Fig 5:2) was once an Ottoman caravanserai and is now an elegant café. Luscombe described it as 'a rambling old building known as the Madrisseh, located near the centre of the town'.<sup>19</sup> It was an ideal place to house prisoners with its small secured rooms, courtyard with a well providing its own water supply and high, enclosing walls with only one entrance gateway. The Armenian church has since been demolished but was located near the citadel in the Armenian quarter.<sup>20</sup> Nearby was a smaller Armenian church that later housed the officers during a period of reprisal following the escape of several officers. This church is now in ruins but can be clearly identified from the descriptions provided by the officers and local memory.

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<sup>18</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AWM, 940-472/784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>19</sup> L. H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl - Australian*, W. R. Smith & Paterson Pty. Ltd. Brisbane, 1970, p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> The baths are still known as the 'Infidels' hamam as they were built by local Christian Armenian stone masons. Site visit 2006.

**Fig 5:3: The smaller Armenian church, Afyon which housed the officers during the period of ‘reprisal’. (Author’s photograph).**



Ashton arrived at the end of May 1915 and noted that ‘we were not actually ill-treated at this place’.<sup>21</sup> Troy recorded a more negative impression:

During the first three months at Afion Kara Hissar, I, with 28 others, was confined to a room measuring 25 ft by 15 ft, being allowed one hour per day for exercise (if we were lucky) on two or three days per week. The sanitary arrangements were very bad and we lived in a constant odour from urine and faeces.<sup>22</sup>

Lushington also arrived in May 1915 and his description of the town corroborates that of Troy. He noted that the town had no system of drainage and refuse was thrown into the street. Thirty-five of the men had to eat and sleep in one room of the madresseh for several months until they were moved to the larger camp. No bedding or additional clothes were provided until a representative of the American embassy visited some months later.<sup>23</sup> Kerr arrived in December 1915 by which time most of the men had been moved to the larger Armenian church site. Kerr’s detailed account of his stay at Afyon contrasts sharply to other accounts as the larger camp site provided better facilities:

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<sup>21</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>22</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>23</sup> R. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks, 1915-1918*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd. London, 1923, pp. 13-14.

The three of us find a great difference between Stamboul. There is ever so much liberty here. It was not so at one time but as Turks here got to know the prisoners they became lenient towards them with the result that one can almost do as one pleases...<sup>24</sup>.

Dowell reported that he was sent straight from hospital to Afyon and that 'any time that our troops had a reverse the Turks would bully us more than usual. Being disabled I was not made to work'.<sup>25</sup> Dunne was also sent from hospital to Afyon and noted the opposite to Dowell: 'We always knew when the British forces were doing well, as the Turks treatment to us got worse'.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the reality, it appears that some of the men believed that events at the war-front affected their treatment.

Conditions deteriorated from the period initially described by Kerr. In January 1916, Kerr and others had considerable freedom, drank raki and welcomed opportunities to party. However, conditions at camps were determined by the nature of the Commandant and as 1916 progressed, stories abound of the corruption and physical punishment meted out by the Afyon Commandant, Naval Lieutenant Mouslem Bey. He had been initially installed because several officers had escaped during the time of his predecessor. Lushington described him as 'the old type of Turk, fat, lazy, cruel and cunning'.<sup>27</sup>

The *British POW Committee Report* emphasised the poor conditions at the camp:

The British were lodged in an old Armenian church with its outbuildings – cold and dirty quarters, which they did their best to make habitable. The chief event of the day was the despatch of two of them under escort, to the town bazaar to buy provisions.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>25</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dowell, *POW Statements*, AWM 30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>26</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dunne, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>27</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 14.

<sup>28</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940 – 472/784, AWM, Canberra.

Mouslem Bey was replaced as Commandant, both at the request of the men and the Turkish War Office Camp Inspector Colonel Zia Bey, early in 1917. Conditions improved on the arrival of the new administrator. Fewer prisoners were housed there at this stage and Afyon was used as a convalescent camp. Randall moved to Afyon early in 1917 and noted 'that matters in Turkey had improved greatly. The POWs were being treated better and the food also showed a vast improvement'.<sup>29</sup> Two British soldiers, Louis and Leach reported on 10 February 1917 that the Commandant, presumably the replacement, provided a piano for the prisoners.<sup>30</sup> Beattie arrived in June 1918 from Gelebek. Shopping parties were allowed out three or four times a week to purchase food from the bazaar, a short walk away from the camp. The Dutch Embassy sent money each month and clothing and parcels arrived from the Australian Red Cross.<sup>31</sup>

Officers' experiences were quite different from those of the lower ranks, being accommodated in two different sets of houses within the town. The 'Upper Camp' was a row of houses across from the main church. These houses were identified in 2006. The 'Lower Camp' was a set of four houses sharing a walled garden near the railway station. Several houses fitting this description still exist, though in a dilapidated state. All sites are within easy walking distance of each other, the bazaar and the railway station. Officers were not required to work and had orderlies of their own nationality to minister to their needs, in accordance with the Hague Convention.

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<sup>29</sup> Letter to cousin, reported in the *Avoca Free Press*, 28 March, 1917. Randall Family Papers, MSB 401 MS 11287, Victorian State Library, Melbourne.

<sup>30</sup> PRO FO 383/453: 1918 Turkey File 683, PRO, London.

<sup>31</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18-8, AWM, Canberra.

**Fig. 5:4: The officer's houses in Afyon where Luscombe, Jordan and White lived.**

**(Author's photograph).**

Overall, their conditions were good, though complaints were often made about the impact of inflation on the cost of food and fuel. Elston, Luscombe, Jordan and McDonald were housed at Afyon, and Elston recorded:



On the whole fairly treated according to Turkish ideas. Not employed in any manner ... The officers had to pay for their food, wood and in cases, drinking water, and were under expense of providing sleeping material, bedding etc. Being allowed our men for cooks and orderlies.<sup>32</sup>

Jordan wrote to the Australian Red Cross Information Bureau that 'I am in the Turkish internment camp 'Somewhere in Asia Minor'. I am quite well and my wound is almost better'. He noted that he was with other officers, including those from the AE2. He was learning French and Russian. He added, 'I am living real well, but it is a damned lazy life ... Never mind the Turkish officials – they are exceedingly kind and courteous'.<sup>33</sup> However, his Repatriation Statement, written after four years being a prisoner, reflects a change of heart:

At Afion Kara Hissar where I stayed during the whole of my captivity, the treatment at first was bad. We were not allowed to town nor were our orderlies. Everything had to be bought through the brother of the Commandant of Prisoners and he charged us prices above the bazaar rate. An example. We occupied a house with 12 Russians, two French

<sup>32</sup> Repatriation Statement of Elston, AWM 30 B1-32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>33</sup> Letter dated 15/7/1915. ARC W & M File of Jordan, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

and nine of us. For this house we were charged 26 Turkish liras a month. Afterwards we got a complaint through to Stamboul and we obtained redress. The Commandant was dismissed and his brother had to leave the place.<sup>34</sup>

McDonald also complained of the inflated prices charged but noted that after a visit in October 1916 by Hoffman Philip, conditions improved and following the intervention of the Turkish Camp Inspector Zia Bey, the Commandant was removed. House rents charged previously were abolished and the POWs were allowed to purchase food once more in the Bazaar.<sup>35</sup>

Luscombe noted that his health was good since being in Afyon and that he had suffered only minor ailments such as 'sandfly fever' and 'Spanish Grippe'. A photograph (Fig. 5:5) sent by Luscombe to Miss Chomley, Secretary of the Australian Red Cross Prisoner of War Department in London, shows the four Australian officers at Afyon in December 1917, standing outside their houses, well rugged up against the cold and looking healthy.<sup>36</sup>

Several of the Gallipoli prisoners were used as orderlies for the officers and thus experienced better conditions than others who worked on physical tasks such as road-making. Orderlies generally were allocated tasks such as cooking, washing, shopping and house cleaning. Foster was sent as an orderly early in 1916 for two years and commented on the good treatment received.<sup>37</sup> Williams and Lightfoot were also orderlies there for a time.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Repatriation Statement of Jordan, AWM 30 B1-17, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>35</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, AWM 30 B1-22, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>36</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley, September 1918. ARC POW File for Luscombe, 1 DRL/428 Box 122, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>37</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foster, AWM 30 B1-14, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>38</sup> Luscombe ARC POW File 1 DRL/428 Box 122, AWM Canberra; Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1-32, AWM, Canberra.



**Fig 5:5: L to R: Lt. Vautin, Lt. Jordan, Cpt. White, Lt. Luscombe outside their house in Afyon, 1917. (Luscombe, *Harold Earl*.)**

**Angora**, now modern Ankara, capital of Turkey, was located on the railway line approximately 450 kilometres south-east of Istanbul. It was often used as a temporary stopping place for prisoners travelling to other camps, served as a convalescent camp at other times and as a work camp. Several of the Gallipoli men were sent to Angora camp straight from Istanbul from September 1915, some for only a few days on their way to Çankiri. Thus Angora was the first Turkish POW camp experienced by some of the Australians. Ashton, Lushington and Delpratt were moved from Afyon to Angora and then on to Çankiri. Others such as Bailey and Neyland arrived there in 1917 and stayed for varying periods of time.

The men initially arrived at the site by train and were housed in a Greek or Armenian monastery overlooking the town. Thirty French and two British prisoners were already there when the first contingent arrived. The location of the monastery could not be identified in 2006, as sweeping changes have been made to the centre of Ankara since the 1920s, with many of the old buildings being replaced by nondescript concrete apartment blocks. Only one

section of the original railway station now remains, as a railway museum. The railway workshops where many of the men worked were demolished in the 1930s.<sup>39</sup>

Individual descriptions of the conditions at Angora vary and emphasise the dangers of relying on only one or two narratives. Beattie recorded that:

The Turks gave us a surprise here; they issued us with a straw mattress and a quilt; the first bedding I had ever had in Turkey ... We were distributed in four small rooms holding about 12 men each and a large room holding the remainder. Our beds were placed round the walls, head to the wall, touching each other. In the big room there were rows of beds down the centre as well.<sup>40</sup>



**Fig. 5:6: The citadel at Ankara where the POWs were initially housed in 1915. (Author's photograph).**

Drake, Foxcroft and Williams corroborated Beattie's account about receiving decent accommodation with beds, mattresses and quilts.<sup>41</sup> However, Thomas noted the men were 'fairly well treated, except that we had little food and no blankets' and Carter described the

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<sup>39</sup> Director, Ankara Railway Museum, interviewed 17 April 2006. Interpreted by S. Bulgu.

<sup>40</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>41</sup> Repatriation Statements of Drake AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra; Foxcroft AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra and Williams AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

conditions as 'very poor'.<sup>42</sup> The men were not required to work at Angora in this early period of internment.

At a later stage, when Creedon spent several days in transit at Angora in June 1916, the men were housed in several town houses and had a fair amount of money to spend, having received regular payments from the Red Cross, and thus could buy their own supplies. He was very pleased to receive rations of tea and particularly sugar.<sup>43</sup> A different picture is presented by Handsley who arrived in Angora in November 1916 and was accommodated in barracks 'foodless, cold and miserable'. The next day he states that the men were stripped whilst their clothes were fumigated, their heads shaved and they waited 'naked, in the cold, for two hours'. He ascertained that he had not eaten for four days, yet met with the American Ambassador who gave them 'a few piastres each'. They were then able to buy food. They were 'herded' into an open courtyard where he found to his misfortune to be close to Russian prisoners 'who smelt like pigs' and who he decided were 'of low moral type'.<sup>44</sup>

Several of the men moved back to Angora or temporary camps nearby later in the war in 1917. The winter of 1916-1917 was particularly severe and epidemics swept through rural Turkey, decimating the local population and prisoners alike. Bailey arrived there from Kirshehir in the winter of 1917 'in tents during the worst of the winter of 1917 ... The treatment had been exceptionally bad here, but during the last year of our imprisonment, changed radically'.<sup>45</sup> Brown and Neyland returned to Angora in 1917, initially with a group of 44 men. Brown claims that after three months, only 17 remained alive. 'The rest died of bad treatment in hospital, not enough nourishing food, bad attention ... '. Neyland agreed with

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<sup>42</sup> Repatriation Statements of Thomas AWM 30 B1.33 and Carter AWM 30 B1.7, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>43</sup> Creedon's diary, AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>44</sup> G.W. Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years a POW in Turkey*, Jones & Hambly, Brisbane, undated, pp. 32-33.

<sup>45</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

that figure, though attributed it to the typhus epidemic. Four of the Gallipoli men died in this period in Angora.<sup>46</sup>

Overall, conditions appear to have gradually improved with the weather. The *British POW Committee Report* noted that by May 1917, ‘the chief settlement was under canvas in a healthy position about twenty miles from the town ... a little later we hear of kind treatment on the part of the Turkish officers ... the general treatment was considerate’.<sup>47</sup> Matthews reported late in 1917 that parcels were arriving regularly but that they were still in need of clothes and boots, though ‘the Australians in camp are in fairly good health’.<sup>48</sup> By 1918 conditions must have improved further, as Carpenter wrote in a letter to Miss Chomley in July 1918: ‘Pleased to say all our lads are looking well at present ... hoping we shall all soon see the land of the Kangaroo again’, and again in September, ‘all were soon in good spirits when they received the dispatch of clothing ... All our boys here are in good health...’.<sup>49</sup>

The Rifki Bey Report, published after an official Red Crescent tour of the camps, also noted that by April 1918 the prisoners were better off. Medicine and clothing were distributed and Rifki Bey himself argued for a further betterment of conditions at Angora when he returned to Istanbul.<sup>50</sup> A confidential letter from the Netherlands Embassy dated 15 June 1918 to the British Foreign Office also reported on conditions at this camp. Most of the prisoners were in good health and worked at the Angora Railway Workshop on the construction of the Sivas to Angora railway. They complained of earlier poor treatment, non-delivery of parcels and were depressed about the percentage of those who had died. On the second visit by the Delegation, major changes had been put in place:

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<sup>46</sup> Repatriation Statements of Brown AWM 30 B18.8 and Neyland AWM 30 B1.26, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>47</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>48</sup> Letter dated 24/9/1917. ARC POW File of Matthews, 1 DRL/428 Box 129, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>49</sup> ARC POW File of Carpenter, 1 DRL/428 Box 33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>50</sup> *Report of Conditions at POW Camps by Rifki Bey*, April 1918. A11803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

I again interviewed many British military prisoners working on the railway line ... they all appeared well and had few or no complaints to make. Their Commandant had been changed and the new one was a great improvement on the previous one. The establishment of help committees had also largely increased their general welfare...<sup>51</sup>

Again, the experiences of Australian officers differed from those of lower ranks. Luscombe and Stormonth joined twelve British and French officers at the Angora monastery in September 1915 and remained there for approximately three months. Luscombe provides considerable detail of this camp. The Commandant at the time was Major Achmet Bey, ‘a tough-looking but kindly old Turk, who appeared to be at least 60 years of age’.

**Fig. 5:7: The Roman ruins of the Augustan temple, Ankara, visited by Luscombe. (Author’s photograph).**

On their arrival, Luscombe described the group as a ‘motley and bedraggled looking group’ in need of a haircut and shave. The Commandant, ‘in his gruff but kindly way’, ordered a local barber to perform his duty. A very lively and



colourful description of the rather perilous operation then followed. Luscombe was also able to visit the ruins situated on the Angora citadel and the Roman ruins at its base, where he copied parts of an official inscription of the Emperor Augustus, the famous *Res Gestae*.<sup>52</sup> ( Fig.5:7). These ruins may still be visited in the centre of Ankara. The officers were soon allocated orderlies who went to the bazaar daily to purchase their supplies. Officers received sustenance payments each month.

<sup>51</sup> PRO FO 383/453/1918/Turkey File 683, PRO, London.

<sup>52</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 54-57.

### **The railway work camps**

Some of the largest work camps were connected to the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railway line, administered by the German Phillip Holtzmann Company. Belemelik was the major camp on this line in the south-east of Turkey in the rugged Taurus Mountains, providing labour for tunnelling and rail line construction. Temporary camps such as Gelebek were also established to accommodate the men working further along the line. No officers were housed at this camp. In 1918 the Rifki Bey Report recorded that:

Belemelik ... is a splendid place and like a Swiss village. The prisoners are very well housed and want nothing until next winter with the exception of writing materials, ink, pens, paper, post-cards etc. The Commandant is an exceedingly nice man and the men can go to the cinema every night. The English and French prisoners work in the offices, the Indians and Russians on the line.<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, only the ruins of four buildings remain of the township. The camp lies in an isolated and rugged valley, dissected by a swiftly flowing stream and surrounded by towering mountains and pine forests. The railway line itself and the tunnels constructed at the time are still in use. The German Honorary Consul at Adana is currently working on the conservation of the site and has constructed a memorial to the German workers who died during the construction of the railway.<sup>54</sup>

The first contingent of approximately twenty Gallipoli prisoners arrived by train in later January 1916. Some remained for only a few months, whilst others such as Private William Stringer remained longer. Lightfoot noted that the men were 'very fairly treated' by the German, Swiss and Austrian engineers in charge of the work camp.<sup>55</sup> Miss Chomley wrote reassuringly to Stringer's mother:

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<sup>53</sup> Rifki Bey Report, NAA A11 803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Teyfik Kısacık, Honorary German Consul Adana, 13/4/2006 and site visit to Belemelik.

<sup>55</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

You will be pleased to hear that I had an interview with an escaped British officer from Asia Minor who had passed through Belemelik Pozanti, and saw a number of Australians there. He said the camp seemed quite a good one, and the men seemed well and fairly contented.<sup>56</sup>



**Fig. 5:8: The POW camp at Belemelik during WWI. (Courtesy of T. Kısacık, Honorary German Consul, Adana).**

Kerr arrived in January 1916 from Afyon and was at first housed in temporary accommodation, adding, 'I was far from feeling miserable but looked on the whole thing as being much of a joke'.<sup>57</sup> By February 1916, 400 prisoners were at Belemelik. Work ranged from tunnelling, clearing timber, mechanical repairs and clerical duties. The officials of the railway company explained that the prisoners would be paid £3 in advance to buy food and £1 per month. The men had to keep themselves on this wage. Kerr commented: 'I am afraid many of us will be hungry the end of the month as there seems to be plenty of opportunity of buying raki'. This certainly became the case as time passed.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Letter dated 4 December 1917. ARC POW File of Stringer, 1 DRL/428, Box 200, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>57</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.150.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, p. 152.

**Fig. 5:9: A railway tunnel built by the POWs near Belemedik.**

**(Author's photograph)**

**Gelebek** was a working camp in the South Taurus Mountains and formed part of the Belemedik railway line development, supervised by German engineers. As it was a temporary camp,



conditions were not as good as at Belemedik. The Rifki Bey Report noted that the Gelebek section was ‘the least good of the whole line. The men live in big barracks and food is not always sufficient’. Medical supplies were adequate.<sup>59</sup> Beattie’s accommodation was a hut with an earthen floor and a plethora of fleas. Approximately sixty Turkish labourers were also employed. Just after Christmas 1917, Beattie and one other had an argument with a German Sergeant and Beattie was struck. The men were reported and spent several days in confinement. Despite Beattie noting that floggings were common, Beattie himself was not physically punished for his altercation with the German soldier.<sup>60</sup>

Halpin was sent to Gelebek at some time in 1918. His description paints a lurid picture of cruelty and neglect and appears to be one of exaggerated severity. He claims that he and several others killed the German in charge, Herr Schmidt. There is no other collaborating evidence from other prisoners for this claim. He also states that when the men left the camp

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<sup>59</sup> Rifki Bey Report, NAA A11803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>60</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

they were ‘skeletons’.<sup>61</sup> Certainly none of the extant photographs of the men at this time support this description.



**Fig 5:10: POWs at Belemedik (Rawlings third from left, front row) and pets Ekmek ('bread') and Pedro. (AWM H19411).**

**Hadji-Kiri** was another construction camp on the Berlin-Baghdad railway, a little further east of Belemedik. Several of the Australian prisoners spent time there from 1916, including Carpenter, Delpratt, O'Callaghan, Neyland and Troy, tunnelling through the Taurus Mountains. Housing was poor in the early stages and Troy recounts arriving at the camp soaking wet and being placed in a hut recently vacated by Russians 'left in a filthy condition'.<sup>62</sup> There is no physical evidence left of this camp. Neyland was sent from Belemedik where he found the camp 'a little better here where for six months did not fare too

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<sup>61</sup> J. Halpin, *Blood in the Mists*, The Macquarie Head Press, Sydney, 1934. pp. 176, 185, 209. The name A. Schmidt is listed on the German memorial at Pozanti but there are no clues as to the cause of death. If prisoners were responsible as Halpin claims, there would surely have been retribution by authorities.

<sup>62</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

badly'.<sup>63</sup> From mid 1917, Delpratt indicated that conditions improved with parcels arriving regularly.<sup>64</sup>

**Ras-el-Ain** was a smaller camp on the Berlin-Baghdad Railway line in the far eastern section of Turkey. Randall was located there for parts of 1917 and 1918, together with Private Alfred Carter. Conditions improved in the latter part of 1917 with a 'fine new hospital' being built.<sup>65</sup>

**Fig. 5:11: San Stefano Church (Author's Photograph).**

By 1918, the Rifki Bey Report was able to state that the prisoners were well with some living in barracks and others in tents which he described as 'really very nice'.<sup>66</sup>

**Nissibin** (Nusaybin) was a camp on the eastern stretches of the Berlin-Baghdad railway line and by June 1917 was the rail-head.<sup>67</sup> Prisoners often took meals at a soldiers' home set up by unnamed German sisters.<sup>68</sup> By October 1918, Randall noted that he was



the only Australian in the camp and that he was in need of the continued delivery of parcels and money, as well as a 'serviceable suit of clothes and a hat suitable for the hot weather'. He had received ten parcels up to this time. He concluded by stating that he was in good health.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Repatriation Statement of Neyland, AWM 30 B1.26, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>64</sup> Letter to Nell 24/5/1918. Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra. Delpratt added: 'I am cheerful in having food and good clothing; excellent health and money ... I am keeping wonderfully fit and have about forgotten what a quinine injection is like'.

<sup>65</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, p. 32. AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>66</sup> Rifki Bey Report, NAA A11803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>67</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, p.32. AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Letter dated 28/10/1918. ARC POW Files of Randall, 1 DRL/428 Box 171, AWM, Canberra.

## Smaller work camps

Several of the work camps set up in the latter stages of the war were located closer to Istanbul. These camps often provided labour for private industries including maritime construction, cement factories and a tannery. **San Stefano** (Yesilköy) was located by a seaport on the Sea of Marmara, approximately 25 kilometres from the centre of Istanbul (Fig. 5:11). Its location is close to the present Istanbul international airport. The camp comprised of a French Catholic Monastery overlooking the sea.<sup>70</sup> The building still exists and functions as San Stefanos Catholic church. The little seaside town was originally inhabited by Greeks and Armenians and near the monastery is also Yesilköy Rum Greek Orthodox Church and Surp Stefanos Armenian Church, both existing at the time of internment of the prisoners. All three churches are still operating and administrative staff knew nothing of the POW experience there. The churches were within easy walking distance of the monastery and one would be the church mentioned by Cliffe in a letter home.<sup>71</sup> The monastery is within thirty metres of the sea, allowing easy access for bathing and open space, and the parkland beside the water provided room for the football games mentioned by prisoners.<sup>72</sup>

Cliffe arrived there in August 1917 and a group of five moved from Ada Bazar in approximately April 1918, with Troy moving from Kargali at the same time.<sup>73</sup> In 1917, Cliffe was 'quite satisfied' with conditions. In a letter to his brother, his only request is a football 'as the only ones we have are all busted beyond repair'.<sup>74</sup> His brother also reported from another of Cliffe's letters that:

he writes quite cheerfully and says that he is being treated fairly well at present. He is allowed 1½ days off each week and can go to church, and also allowed to go swimming in the sea, the men are quite satisfied in their present quarters as far as prisoners can be

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<sup>70</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, p. 90.

<sup>71</sup> ARC POW file of Cliffe, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 39, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>72</sup> Visit to the site of San Stefano church, 3/5/2006.

<sup>73</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>74</sup> Letter dated 27/8/1917, ARC POW File of Cliffe, AWM 1 DRL/428, Box 39, AWM, Canberra.

and hope they will not be moved to the Asiatic side of Turkey where they were badly treated.<sup>75</sup>

**Fig 5:12: Prisoners outside their huts at Belemelik (AWM H19414)**



At some time in early 1918, a new Commandant arrived, a German Major Bennerman and Lushington notes that San Stefano thence became ‘the last hell in Turkey’ for several months.<sup>76</sup> All of the men commented on the harsh regime set in place by this Commandant. Foxcroft described him as an ‘extremely harsh and tyrannical’ and Troy recorded that he ‘showed his hatred for us in every possible way’.<sup>77</sup> Lushington wrote of the lack of washing facilities and insufficient food.<sup>78</sup> He complained that he was forced to work on Sundays and received no pay. He concluded in a statement to the British Prisoners in Turkey Committee ‘if this is German culture, give me the Turks every time’.<sup>79</sup> Other prisoners made complaints about the Commandant. British soldier, T. Wright, wrote to the British authorities noting ‘if we can get this to the ears of the Turkish authorities in Stamboul it would be stopped’. The Foreign Office complained officially through the Dutch Legation on 30 July 1918 and

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<sup>75</sup> Letter dated 13/8/1917, *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, p. 90.

<sup>77</sup> Repatriation Statements of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15 and Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra. This assessment was supported by a comment by a British prisoner, T. Wright: ‘Everything we do is wrong, he makes trouble over nothing and seems to delight in making our lives as miserable as he can...’ Letter dated 3/6/1918. PRO FO 383/453/1918, Turkey File 683, PRO, London.

<sup>78</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, p. 92.

<sup>79</sup> Statement dated 2/6/1918. PRO FO 383/453/1918, Turkey File 683, PRO London.

demanded the removal of the Commandant.<sup>80</sup> The Turkish authorities complied with this request, with Foxcroft noting ‘before leaving he (the Commandant) apologised for having been so harsh to us’.<sup>81</sup>

Gradually conditions improved when a Turkish officer, Kemal Effendi, took control.<sup>82</sup> The Dutch Embassy’s report noted that the men now worked five and a half days a week and had Thursday afternoon and Friday off each week.<sup>83</sup> Troy later assured Miss Chomley that the men were in good spirits. ‘Do not think our spirits are low. Far from it, as we know that the great day will come and we keep up our spirits by looking forward to the time when we shall again be free men’.<sup>84</sup>

**Haydar Pasha** was a working camp located on the Asiatic side of Istanbul, now the seaside suburb Kadiköy, located in the near vicinity of the Haydar Pasha hospital and Commonwealth Cemetery. In 1918 both Matthews and McKay were in this camp. The Commandant, Hairoullah Bey, was also the engineer in charge of a project to construct a quay and jetty and the work was estimated to be ‘not the least connected with the war’. The whole establishment was judged to be well organised and the men well treated. In July 1918, thirty-one Allied prisoners at this camp were housed in an old mosque on the first floor and Russians on the ground floor. The mosque, Sultan Mustafa III Camii, dating from 1760, still stands.

The Dutch Delegation Report noted that although rather crowded, accommodation was quite sufficient during the summer as there was plenty of ventilation and several of the men slept outdoors. Water quality was good and food consisted of the same ingredients as supplied to Turkish soldiers.

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<sup>80</sup> Letter dated 3/6/1918. PRO FO 383/453/1918, Turkey File 383, PRO London.

<sup>81</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>82</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, p. 95.

<sup>83</sup> PRO FO 383/453 / 1918 Turkish File 683, PRO, London.

<sup>84</sup> Letter dated 25/9/1918. ARC POW File of Troy, 1 DRL/428 Box 211, AWM, Canberra.



**Fig.5:13: The jetty built by the POWs at Kadiköy. (Postcard purchased in Istanbul by author).**

However, the prisoners preferred to use provisions from the Dutch Embassy and cook their own. Sufficient wood was supplied for this purpose. Washing was done once a week in a wash-house on the premises. Complaints were made about the canteen due to high prices, so arrangements were made to purchase goods outside of the camp. Several of the men suffered from Spanish influenza and were given medical treatment at the nearby Haydar Pasha Hospital.<sup>85</sup>

**Ismidt** (Izmit) is located on the Sea of Marmara approximately 110 kilometres south-east of Istanbul. It was not possible to locate the specific site of this camp as the town has grown enormously in the past 90 years and there is not sufficient evidence to locate the warehouse that housed prisoners. Several Australians, including Ashton and Lushington, were moved there from Afyon in October 1916.<sup>86</sup> Initially conditions were very poor, including inadequate sanitary facilities.

<sup>85</sup> Dutch Delegation Report, A11803/1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra. One particular danger faced by the camp involved two bombs dropped from a British aeroplane, damaging a house nearby. Bomb sheds were consequently constructed.

<sup>86</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

**Fig. 5:14: Mosque at Haydar Pasha (Author's photograph)**

The men were employed by a private company, owned by a 'German Jew' who had lived in Turkey for many years and who constructed earthworks by the sea.<sup>87</sup> Ashton described his methods as 'typically Teutonic'.<sup>88</sup>



Lushington's account of the

conditions at this camp supports that of Ashton. The Turkish guards were navy personnel and not highly thought of by the men except for 'Little Mehmed ... I don't think any prisoner at Ismidt ever received cruel or unjust treatment' from him. Lushington claimed that of the one hundred men present at the camp, 70 were seriously ill and that the German owner confiscated money sent to the men from the US Embassy.<sup>89</sup>

Sometime before Christmas 1916, conditions changed for the better with the arrival of a new Turkish Commandant. Ashton does not mention this improvement in his Repatriation Statement, but it is outlined by Lushington and is described in detail by Ashton in a letter to an aunt.<sup>90</sup> Lushington wrote that the new Commandant immediately sent 70 men to hospital and that overall he was very kind. They moved to new quarters with a scenic outlook and they were able to visit the village to buy cheese, bread and eggs. Work consisted of making a road up to the hospital at Ismidt and the men gradually regained their strength. 'Our treatment under Old Grey Beard was the best we had had so far'. The prisoners were able to attend a Turkish bath weekly for 25 piastres and concluded that the Commandant 'certainly saved a great many in the nick of time' from the German owner.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, p. 67.

<sup>88</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service records B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>89</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, pp. 65-68.

<sup>90</sup> Letter dated 10/12/1916. ARC POW File of Ashton, 1 DRL/428 Box 7, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>91</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, pp. 70-73.

**Ada Bazar** (modern Adapazari) was located approximately 80 kilometres east of Ismidt and was located in the town amidst a very fertile agricultural region. It was not possible to find the specific location of this camp as very little of the older town remains after the devastation of earthquakes in 1943, 1967 and 1999. The railway station that features in the men's accounts was demolished in the 1970s and only one small building remains.<sup>92</sup> A letter from Miss Chomley dated 18 January 1918 provided some further background:

One of our workers is a lady who has spent a great deal of her time in the East and knows the district in Asia Minor in which Ada Pazar is situated. She tells us it is a large town on the Bagdad Railway in a fertile agricultural district, and she is sure that any of our men who are interned there will be much better off than anywhere else in Turkey or Asia Minor. There is an abundance of food in that district and meat is also plentiful, so she thinks your friend will be fairly comfortable there.<sup>93</sup>

At varying times, at least six of the Gallipoli POWs were incarcerated there from late 1917 to mid-1918. Lushington notes that on arriving in 1917, the men were accommodated in a barn, without glassed windows or furniture. The Arabic Commandant was accused of stealing rations and after a complaint by the men, was replaced.<sup>94</sup> Evidence differs at this time. In a letter dated November 1917 to Miss Chomley, Troy requested further consignments of money 'as we are finding it very hard to get along'. He also requested a football.<sup>95</sup> The men worked on road-making but Lushington adds that in reality they did very little. An example of punishment was provided when a prisoner hit one of the guards. 'In Germany, a man would have been probably shot, flogged or spent many months in solitary confinement, but in this case the punishment was not worse than a week or so of bread and water and some smacks in the face'.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Interview with Mursit Yazici, Director of the Sakaya Museum, 5 June 2006. Interpreter S. Bulgu.

<sup>93</sup> Letter dated 18/1/1918. ARC W & M File of Foxcroft, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>94</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>95</sup> ARC POW File of Troy, 1DRL/428 Box 211, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>96</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, pp. 83-84.

The men all agreed on the fair treatment they received from the new Turkish Commandant, Tarsan Bey, a Major who had served at Gallipoli.<sup>97</sup> When Lushington was later transferred to San Stefano, he commented: 'I am very sorry to have left Ada Bazar where we had fair and just treatment from a Turkish officer ... he knew one's wants and necessities and what was becoming to civilised people. All the boys regret leaving this man who played the game with us'.<sup>98</sup> Troy added that 'we received at his hands the best treatment of the whole of our long sojourn in Turkey'.<sup>99</sup> Foxcroft noted that under Tarsan Bey, consignments of clothes and Red Cross parcels arrived regularly and that at Christmas 1917 'he did his best to make us happy'.<sup>100</sup> The British Government Committee's Report of 1918 also noted that the Commandant 'tried to win the men's goodwill, and succeeded'. The camp broke up when the prisoners moved on to other camps in mid 1918.<sup>101</sup> When the men were transferred, they were regretful and gave the Commandant three cheers at the railway station as they departed.

**Daridje** (modern Daria) was located on the Gulf of Ismidt, about one hour's travel south-east from Istanbul, and provided the work force for a cement factory. The area is now an industrial region and locating the original cement factory proved impossible.<sup>102</sup> Drake is the only prisoner to describe conditions there, though Kilmartin was also at this camp in 1918.<sup>103</sup> The Dutch delegation of Menten and van Spengler visited the camp on 5 August 1918, after receiving letters of complaints from prisoners. The Dutch reported that the men were 'fairly well housed', though accommodation was not very clean. Menten arranged for further facilities to enable the men to prepare their own food and there was sufficient fuel for cooking. Water was of good quality and bathing in the sea was allowed whenever the men wished. There were general complaints of the supply of letters and parcels. At the time of

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<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, p. 82.

<sup>98</sup> ARC POW Files of Lushington, 1 DRL/428 Box 122, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>99</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1-31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>100</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>101</sup> *British POW Committees Report*, p.26. AWM 940-472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>102</sup> Site visit to the area 19/4/2006.

<sup>103</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra. He noted that there were approximately 50 British and 30 Indian POWs there in September 1918.

inspection the men were not paid but the Turkish Commandant Lieutenant-Colonel Sjoukri Bey stated that they were to be paid 5-10 piastres daily from that time on. Generally the men regularly visited the local village but this treat had been curtailed as some prisoners had come back drunk. This privilege was later reinstated.<sup>104</sup>

### **Working conditions**

Work varied across camps, from railway construction at major sites such as Belemedik, Hadji-Kiri and Nissibin, to road-making at Angora and Afyon. Smaller camps such as San Stefano, Diridje and Haydar Pasha offered more varied work such as in cement factories, loading railway trucks or building jetties. At Belemedik, prisoners worked alongside Turkish labourers and German, Austrian and Swiss engineers and administrators. All employees were treated the same, whether prisoner or civilian.<sup>105</sup>

Lushington stated that volunteers at Belemedik were called for to work on the tunnels and only a few offered. He noted that the men who had previously listed their occupations as goalkeepers and divers were sent to labour on the lines. Itinerant camps such as Hadji-Kiri and Tasch Durmas, were set up to service drilling of an extensive tunnel.<sup>106</sup> In February 1916, Beattie recorded that about fifty men were sent to work in a tunnel about 1½ miles from the camp. They worked with picks and shovels, loading wagons with stone blasted out by the miners.

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<sup>104</sup> The prisoners had complained of unsatisfactory medical attention but as they were being visited by the same doctor as those in Eski Hissar, who had proven satisfactory, the delegation did not take the complaints seriously. Medical supplies, monthly allowances and food was sent regularly by the Dutch embassy. Complaints had not mentioned these supplies. The delegation concluded 'to a large extent the depressing spirit in the camp is due to the men themselves ... and the spirit of complaining prevails'. Nearby, the small camp of Eski Hissar housed some British and Indian POWs. Conditions were similar to those at Daridje. The Dutch report noted: 'We expressed our appreciation of the way in which the Authorities treat the prisoners in this place'. Included in the report was a letter from British prisoner James Cross, dated 25 June 1918, which read: 'I am glad to say we are very comfortable here in fact it is quite the best place I have been in Turkey'. Dutch delegation, A11803/1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>105</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra. He noted that the civilian workers were well disposed towards the prisoners and were working for the German company to escape conscription.

<sup>106</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, p. 36.

**Fig. 5:15 German, Swiss and Turkish railway construction staff, Belemedik.  
(AWM H19407)**



The pay was twelve piastres per day, working from 6 am to 6 pm with two hours rest for dinner. Prisoners paid cash for all of their food which was taken out of their pay. They were paid each month and shifts were divided into day and night with two Sundays off monthly. There were opportunities for advancement and higher pay that reflected the work performed. In October 1916 Beattie transferred from work in the tunnels to a power station and was employed as a fireman on the boilers. Here he was paid 16 piastres a day and worked eight hour days.<sup>107</sup> Brown, Carter and Drake noted that working conditions were very good and that the pay ranged from 8-12 piastres per day and parcels and money arrived regularly.<sup>108</sup> Delpratt worked firstly at ‘tipping wagons’ for 15 piastres a day and then by Christmas 1916 he began working as a striker in a blacksmith’s shop and his pay advanced to twenty piastres, working 10 hours per day.

Several prisoners such as Kerr gained positions of responsibility. As he was able to converse and write in French, Kerr gained employment within the Company’s office initially as a clerk

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<sup>107</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>108</sup> Repatriation Statements of Brown AWM 30 B18.8, Carter AWM 30 B1.7 and Drake AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

at Belemedik. He had excellent working conditions adding: 'Everyone seems to work just as he pleases and when he pleases. Everything seems right so long as the work is done. One can please himself if it is done in the office hours or out of them'.<sup>109</sup> He was critical of others who took advantage of the lax conditions, particularly the men employed to construct a tennis court who were 'reclining in more or less carefree attitude on the ground or on their barrows quite regardless of the fact that they could be seen from the windows of the office of Mr Imhoff'. He concluded, 'it strikes me that this is not a railway company running on commercial lines but a philanthropic society'.<sup>110</sup>

**Fig.5:16: Railway line constructed by the POWs near Belemedik. (Author's photograph).**



Kerr's position provided him with many privileges and he eventually rose to the position of head clerk by February 1917, in charge of a staff of thirteen 'with my private quarters, a personal man-servant provided by the Company. My pay at its highest was £18 a month ... the average Turkish workman received £4-5 a month'.<sup>111</sup>

Belemedik was unusual in that

POWs worked with local and German workers and had more freedom than in most other camps. This was the main railway camp previously described by several historians as being equivalent to World War II Japanese POW camps.

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<sup>109</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 159.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*, pp. 162-163.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*, pp. 214-215.

Beattie worked at the smaller railway camp of Gelebek for almost a year from 23 September 1917. He was employed doing small repairs to narrow gauge railway engines. He earned 14 piastres per day, with 5 piastres being taken out for rations. Working hours were from 6 am to 5.30 pm with two hours off for meals. The prisoners worked 6 ½ days a week, with half a day off on Sundays.<sup>112</sup> Hadji-Kiri was another camp administered by the German railway company with regard to pay and work conditions and ‘for discipline, we were under the Turkish military authorities’. Carpenter stated that the men went out on strike for more pay as ‘we got an average pay of 9 piastres a day to clothe and feed ourselves. Our work was in tunnels through the Taurus Mountains. The Turks issued little clothing and enough money for a packet of tobacco now and again’.<sup>113</sup>

Two personal accounts of Nissibin, another railway camp, do not agree on conditions. In 1918, Carter reported that he worked there for some time and complained of the food and work being ‘very hard, food was 100 grams of flour, 200 grams of wheat ...’.<sup>114</sup> Carter also describes being physically punished, so this experience may have darkened his views of the camp. By May 1918, Randall was also at the camp and his position appears to have been quite a comfortable one. In a letter to his sister, he wrote: ‘I am working in a store, and my comrade that I live with is in charge of the bakery, so you see I am not badly off. In fact, I am better off than any of the sixty prisoners here’.<sup>115</sup> The British POW Committee Report noted that ‘the men’s life was more that of ordinary labourers than such as one associates with the name of prisoners’.<sup>116</sup>

The main employment at Afyon was road-making, ‘from 6 am to 6 pm daily’ in June 1915.<sup>117</sup> Lushington provides a picture of a relaxed mode of operation. They were supervised by fairly

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<sup>112</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>113</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carpenter, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>114</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carter, AWM 30 B1.7, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>115</sup> Letter dated 25/5/1918 to Mrs Wangemann. Reported in *The Avoca Free Press*, 23/10/1918. Randall Family Papers, MS B401 BS1 1287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

<sup>116</sup> *British POW Committee Report*. AWM 940.472.T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>117</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

lax soldiers, who rarely abused them, because Lushington surmised, it caused too much trouble. The men did little work and created many ploys to do nothing.<sup>118</sup> This account contrasts with the British POW Committee Report that emphasised the brutal treatment meted out to prisoners. 'Those who were capable of it were sent out to work on the roads, and here they fared very badly at the hands of the Turkish sailors ... who had charge of them'.<sup>119</sup>

There are differing accounts of treatment of sick workers at Afyon, with some men indicating that they still had to work, whilst others did not. Thomas became ill at Belemedik so was sent to Afyon at the end of December 1916 and noted: 'Although I was not fit for it, I was made to work at this place, carrying stones down a mountain side to build a house and for road-making'. He was sent to another camp at Afyon where he was not required to work.<sup>120</sup> Yet only a month later, Troy was sent from Belemedik in January 1917 and remained there until 5 June, and noted: 'I was too ill to work and was for the greater part of this period, off duty'.<sup>121</sup> At Angora, prisoners were sent to the suburb of Kiash, where they were allocated work according to their skills. Some became engine drivers, firemen or labourers.<sup>122</sup> In 1917, Brown and Neyland stated that they worked from sunrise to sunset labouring and averaged 5 piastres a month in pay.<sup>123</sup>

The smaller camps often offered a greater range of employment. At San Stefano, Lushington and Foxcroft worked in the goods yard of the railway, unloading and loading railway trucks and barges, 'under German supervision'.<sup>124</sup> At Daridje, a new Commandant reformed working conditions by stopping work on Sundays. Working hours in winter were from 6 - 8 am, 8.30 - 12 and 2 - 6 pm. In summer the hours ranged from 6 - 8 am, 8.30 - 11.30 am and 2 -

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<sup>118</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 16.

<sup>119</sup> *British POW Committee Report*.

<sup>120</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1-33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>121</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>122</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years*, p. 34.

<sup>123</sup> Repatriation Statements of Brown, AWM 30 B18.8 & Neyland, AWM 30 B1.26, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>124</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15 and ARC POW File of Lushington, 1DRL/428 Box 122, AWM, Canberra.

7 pm.<sup>125</sup> Drake states that his particular job was to fill trucks with stone and to bag cement. 'We had a certain number of trucks to fill daily and when the number was completed we were finished for the day. The work was not too hard but the cement dust was very injurious to the health'.<sup>126</sup> At Ismidt, the men worked six days a week building sea walls, carting stones and road making.<sup>127</sup>

### **Seasonal camps**

As well as the major camps where prisoners spent months and even years, there were also several sites where prisoners remained for short periods of time, often due to the need for seasonal labour. Lance-Corporal Keith Cahir recorded that he was at 'Buyuk Tschekmedje' in September 1918 and was the only Australian there.<sup>128</sup> Thomas was sent to 'Ackshehir' on 22 August 1917 'where I worked on a farm, threshing corn for 18 days'.<sup>129</sup> Bailey remained at Kirchehir, near Ankara, for one year from 1916 to 1917. As he had learnt some Turkish, he acted as an interpreter.<sup>130</sup> Drake was moved to Kavak Selemie in June 1916. Along with thirty others, he was put to work in a factory manufacturing nails. The prisoners lived in a small Turkish mosque and the Dutch consul regularly delivered money and parcels and obtained extra rations for the men. Drake commented that 'we are very well off indeed here'.<sup>131</sup> However, Drake noted a particular danger at this camp: 'British aeroplanes bombed the place on nine different occasions. On one occasion a bomb fell about 20 yards from our billet and all the windows were blown in'. The men were soon after moved to Daria.<sup>132</sup> At Oulache, Bailey was put to work on road-making for three weeks. Enver Pasha passed through the area and when the men complained about their conditions, gave orders for them to be returned to

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<sup>125</sup> Dutch Delegation, A11803/1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>126</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>127</sup> Repatriation Report of Ashton, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>128</sup> ARC POW File of Cahir, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>129</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra. The town was most probably that of Eski Şehir.

<sup>130</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>131</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley dated 20/9/1918. ARC POW File of Drake, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 55, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>132</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

Sivas.<sup>133</sup> Thomas was moved in September 1917 to Saray Ici, near Edirne, where he drove motor and steam ploughs on a large farm belonging to the Turkish Red Crescent Society. He remained there until the Armistice was signed in the latter part of 1918.<sup>134</sup> Williams recorded that he worked 'on the Bosphorus' in September 1918 in a German tannery. He received good food but no pay.<sup>135</sup>

### **Transit camps**

In the transit camps, the duration of stay varied from a few days to several months. Kiangri (modern Çankiri) was such a camp.<sup>136</sup> Located about 120 kilometres from Angora, approximately sixteen of the Gallipoli POWs were marched to Kiangri from Afyon via Angora in October/November 1915 where they stayed for three months until January 1916, when they were moved south-west to Belemelik or Pozanti to work on the railway.

Many described the gruelling four day journey, and were all pleased to reach their destination. Creedon recorded in his diary: 'The town was about a mile from the Barracks we were in and was built on the side of a hill. On arrival, we were surprised to find woollen mattresses and quilts which were very much appreciated and I don't think anyone got out of bed before 11 o'clock the next morning'.<sup>137</sup> Ashton summed up his experiences as follows: 'On the whole, we had a good time at Changri; we had a football of which we made good use. The food here was a little better, and we had our own cook'.<sup>138</sup> Lightfoot agreed that they were 'not treated too badly'.<sup>139</sup> Beattie also reported favourably on this camp: 'Khageri [sic] was a better camp than Angora. We had a large square to walk about in, we were allowed outside occasionally to play football and shopping parties were allowed out two or three times a week to purchase

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<sup>133</sup> Repatriation Report of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>134</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>135</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>136</sup> Various spellings were used by the prisoners for this town, ranging from Kiangri, Changri, Chiangri or Khangeri. The Ottoman translation into English for the name was Kengiri, hence the confusion.

<sup>137</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>138</sup> Repatriation Statement of Ashton, Service record, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>139</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service record, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

food from the bazaar. The guard, being old and middle aged men, made themselves rather friendly ...'.<sup>140</sup> No work was performed at this camp.



**Fig. 5:17: Allied POWs at Çankiri POW camp. (Original postcard purchased by author).**

A year later in early 1917, some officers arrived at Çankiri and complained of the poor accommodation. They were housed in a large empty barracks previously used as 'promiscuous stabling for farmyard animals of all kinds. The floors were crusted with dirt, vermin swarmed, most of the windows were without glass, the sanitation was Turkish ...'. Officers set to immediately cleaning and procuring furniture.<sup>141</sup> A letter of protest was sent to the Dutch Embassy, and the Turkish Camp Inspector, Zia Bey who was sent to make enquiries was horrified at the conditions. They were improved somewhat and Enver Pasha agreed to move those who accepted parole to Kedos.<sup>142</sup>

The difference between the two accounts of the accommodation may be explained by the records held by Çankiri Council. At the time of the war, there were two sets of barracks

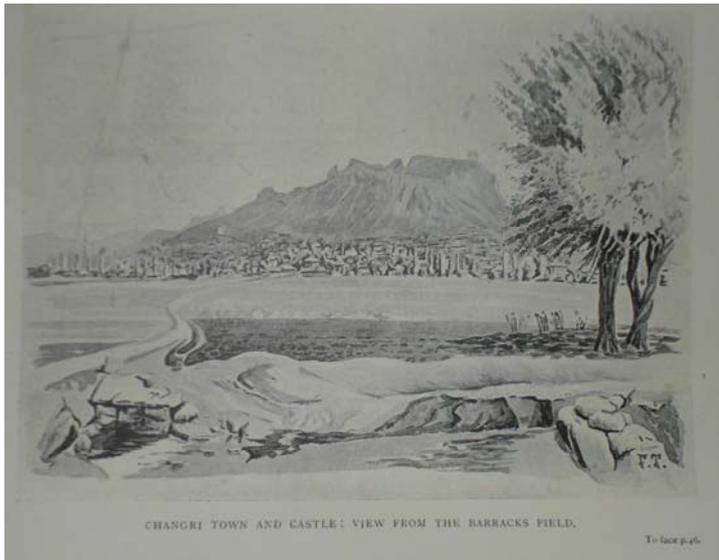
<sup>140</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>141</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, p. 40. AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>142</sup> C. L. Woolley, *From Kastamuni to Kedos*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1921, pp. 44-53.

located a little out of town, so the earlier group of prisoners may have been accommodated in one set of buildings and the officers in the other. Unfortunately, both barracks buildings have been demolished and only the original bath-house remains.<sup>143</sup>

**Fig. 5:18: Drawing of Çankiri by a British POW. (Woolley, *From Kastamuni*).**



**Sivas**, located in Eastern Anatolia, is a small town which lies approximately 440 kilometres east of Ankara on a major road and railroad junction. It is not listed in the official 1917 Turkish camp list and few Australian Gallipoli prisoners spent much

time there. Bailey appears to have been imprisoned there the longest time for approximately 10 months from late 1915. Private Elvas Wilson and Pasmore joined him there in 1916. Bailey commented favourably on his treatment there, commenting that ‘we were well treated. We were in a monastery ... with about 200 Russians. We were granted a separate room and never worked’. He mentioned that he and three others were very thankful of the support given by two women from the American Protestant Mission who ‘supplied us with gold when the Turkish paper lira was very difficult to change amongst the ignorant trades-people. These ladies also made us free of their library and entertained us occasionally at their home’.<sup>144</sup> Regulations at the camp were obviously lax enough to allow the men to be entertained by civilians outside of the confines of the camp.

<sup>143</sup> Interview with historian Erhan Metin and Yüksel Arslan (Manager of Education & Culture), Çankırı, 18/4/2006. Interpreter S. Bulgu.

<sup>144</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

## Officer camps

**Kedos** (modern Eski Gediz) is a small town situated several kilometres from the more recently developed town of Gediz, north of Uşak and approximately 90 kilometres north-west of Afyon. From the end of May 1917 it was a POW camp for officers. The British POW Committee Report described the town as ‘a pretty little breezy place among precipitous hills, facing a fine country of streams and oaks and fruit trees, not unlike many parts of Southern England ... The small town is as picturesque as it is dirty’.<sup>145</sup> The main written evidence for this camp comes from keenly observed and humorous accounts collated by British officer Leonard Woolley who later gained fame as the archaeologist and excavator of the ancient city of Ur.<sup>146</sup> There is more evidence for this camp than for most others, thanks to Woolley. The physical evidence, despite a fire in 1918 and a devastating earthquake of 1972, remains the most comprehensive of all the POW sites. The newly renovated barracks still remain and most of the town’s general layout is little changed since the map drawn by prisoners reproduced in Woolley’s book (Fig. 5:19).

Accommodation included the barracks on the outskirts of the town and several town houses. It is still possible to locate the sites of some of the officers’ houses and the ruins of the old bath-house.<sup>147</sup> Elston and other officers left Afyon by carts to travel to Kedos on 31 December 1916. The camp was not adequately prepared for their arrival and the first Commandant, Nouri Bey, ‘a little French Albanian by birth’, was inconsistent and applied petty restrictions such as not allowing hammocks or clothes-lines.<sup>148</sup> The Commandant was described as ‘armed with a book of rules, which he consulted assiduously, though without enlightenment’. At first, the officers were without orderlies with ‘all Armenian shops out of bounds’.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> *The British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

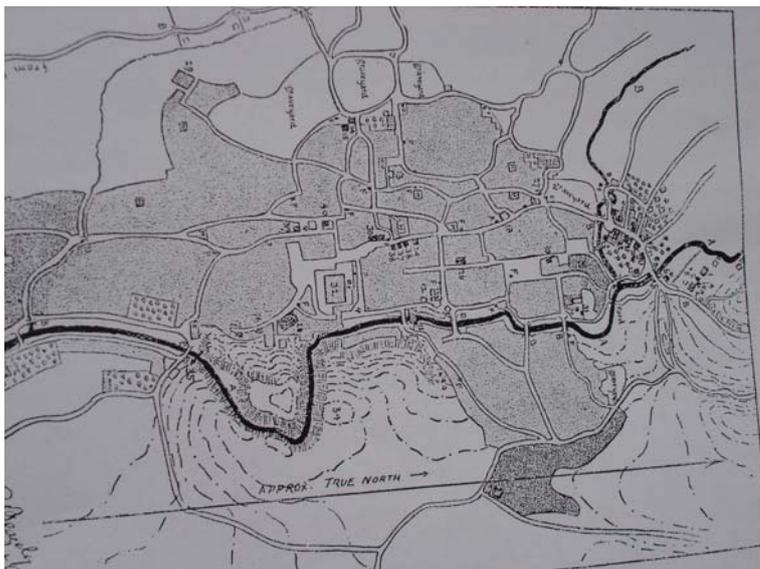
<sup>146</sup> Woolley, *Kastamuni to Kedos*.

<sup>147</sup> The Mayor of Gediz provided considerable assistance on my visit in March 2006. Local historian Mehmet Pinar was an invaluable and indefatigable guide. He has collated local oral history that recalled the period of internment.

<sup>148</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 60-64.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid*, p. 66.

**Fig. 5:19: Map of Gediz. (Woolley, *From Kastamuni*).**



Kedos was small enough for all prisoners to be within easy walking distance of each other. Elston was in this camp and his house was marked on the map of the town provided by Woolley.

Foster was an orderly there for five months.<sup>150</sup>

The allocated houses were clean but without furniture, so the officers took matters into their own hands and made do with whatever could be scavenged. In June 1917, the Turkish inspector, Colonel Zia Bey, was sent from Istanbul to inspect the camp. He was horrified by conditions and removed the Commandant. Woolley noted that life thereafter became much more pleasant and entertaining for the officers. Zia Bey sent for a football, gave permission to play cards, organise parties and visit the bazaar three times a week. The new Commandant, Adhem Bey, was welcomed as ‘a really civilised type and possessing a sense of humour unfortunately rare in a Turk’.<sup>151</sup>

By April 1918, the Rifki Bey Report stated that ‘Kedos is a lovely place with a fine climate. The officers there are all right, well housed and free to go where they like. The Commandant is a nice man’.<sup>152</sup> The British POW Committee Report assiduously searched for negative elements. Although noting the new-found freedoms, it stated: ‘Discomfort and inconvenience

<sup>150</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foster, AWM 30 B1.14, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 74-81.

<sup>152</sup> Rifki Bey Report, NAA A11803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

– growing with the increased strain on the wretched resources of an Asiatic village unprepared for such company – were still considerable’. However, it does acknowledge that ‘it was a diversion to find themselves sharing in the native life of the place...’.<sup>153</sup> In July 1918, Colonel Zia Bey returned to the camp and abolished the rents that had been paid by the officers on their houses. The Berne Conference had determined that rents were not to be charged to officers and the Turkish Government complied with this.<sup>154</sup>

**Fig. 5:20: POW drawing of the barracks at Gediz. (Woolley, *From Kastamuni*).**



Some locals still resented the presence of the POWs, with women and children on occasion throwing stones at the

prisoners. If caught, they were punished by the Commandant and gradually the situation improved.<sup>155</sup> Some time after August 1918, a huge fire engulfed the town, with 2,000 of the 2,300 homes being badly damaged. Elston reported that approximately ten people died and that prisoners helped to fight the fire.<sup>156</sup> Some of the town houses inhabited by the officers were destroyed, leaving the barracks and remaining houses overcrowded. A decision was made to move the men. An auction was held to dispose of their goods and possessions and if the price was not met, the men burnt them.<sup>157</sup> They were rehoused in nearby Üşak.

<sup>153</sup> British POW Committee Report, AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>154</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 94.

<sup>155</sup> *ibid*, p. 88.

<sup>156</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley, 9/10/1918. ARC POW File of Elston, AWM 1 DRL/428, Box 60, AWM Canberra.

<sup>157</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 102 – 104.

**Fig 5:21: The old barracks at Gediz today. (Author's photograph).**



Handsley continues his extreme account of life as a POW, by reporting that orderlies were not allowed out of the houses, and that he risked death befriending a Turkish woman who promised to assist him to escape. He makes no mention of the high regard in

which the Commandant was held and the fairness of his treatment of prisoners.<sup>158</sup> His account is a sound example of the danger of relying on a single source.

**Ouchak** (modern Üşak) housed the officers and their orderlies after the fire at Gediz. They spent only a few months there until the Armistice at the end of 1918. Many sadly farewelled the Commandant who had been with them for several years: ‘we were indeed grateful to a man who was a gentleman himself and treated us as such’.<sup>159</sup> A member of the Dutch Delegation, Mr Menten, who had been at Üşak with the men ‘photographed the small group, and the train steamed out of the station amid the cheers and yells of our party and of the mob of Turks, Greeks and Armenians who had come down to see us off’.<sup>160</sup> This boisterous scene challenges the stereotyped view of the POW experience. Only the railway station now remains. (Fig.5:22).

**Yozgad** lies on the Sivas to Ankara Highway in Anatolia, ‘a town of some 20,000 inhabitants, perched at the head of a rocky valley in the mountainous heart of the country’. It was camp for officers and their orderlies.

<sup>158</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years*, pp. 51-58.

<sup>159</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

**Fig. 5: 22: Úşak railway station. (Author’s photograph).**

The British POW Committee Report

mistakenly states that the camp was created ‘in the summer of 1918 for about one hundred officers with a complement of orderlies’.<sup>161</sup> However, the camp was operating before this time.<sup>162</sup> A report of Colonel Chitty’s in early 1917 suggests the prisoners



experienced reasonable conditions. ‘I am glad to be able to report that the health of the officers and men, prisoners of war at Yozgad, is good. We require more houses, exercising ground and orderlies, but all these points were brought to the notice of the Red Cross delegates ...’.<sup>163</sup> This assessment is supported by the British Committee’s Report on the camp which however also stressed the scarcity of consumer goods and the problem of soaring inflation:

They are lodged in a group of detached houses, picturesquely placed on the steep side of a hill ... Life here might perhaps be as good as a prisoner’s life may be, if it were not that on any terms it is almost impossible, so acute is the scarcity of all kinds of supply. The Commandant is a Turk of the old school – polite, honest and silent; his merit has been warmly recognised by the officers in his charge. They live under a reasonable rule which gives opportunities for constant exercise and a considerable amount of local liberty.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>161</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AMW 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra, p. 37.

<sup>162</sup> Report was dated 1/2/1917. The official Turkish list of 1917 records that 99 officers and 30 orderlies were already interned there. A report from Colonel Chitty, senior British officer at Yozgad, to the American Ambassador refers to a Red Cross delegation sent to Yozgad on 11 December 1916, so the camp was obviously operating at the time. PRO FO 383/333 Prisoners /Turkish File, PRO, London.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> British Committee Report

However, the report emphasized the difficulties of purchasing sufficient heating fuel, lack of supplies and rising inflation ‘about ten times the normal figure’.<sup>165</sup> It is impossible to locate these houses as an active building program has taken place in the past 50 years. The local Council knew nothing of the history of the POW internment within their town during World War I.<sup>166</sup>

Private Edgar Green was an orderly at Yozgad in charge of the cookhouse. According to letters received by his sister and Miss Chomley, he was comfortable and in good health.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, a letter from Pasmore to Miss Chomley indicated that all was well there.<sup>168</sup> E. H. Jones’ racy narrative, *The Road to Endor*, exaggerates the conditions at Yozgad. After describing a pantomime and other entertaining diversions, Jones claimed that ‘Yozgad was the punishment camp of Turkey’.<sup>169</sup> Several other officer camps existed but did not house any Gallipoli POWs.<sup>170</sup>

**Fig. 5:23: Yozgad c. World War I. (Civelek Photography, Yozgad)**



<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Council employees, Yozgad, 15/4/2006. Interpreter S. Bulgu.

<sup>167</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley dated 19/6/1918. ARC POW File of Green, 1 DRL/428 Box 79, AWM, Canberra. Green died at Yozgad in 1918 of Spanish influenza. Several other men also died of influenza and the Turkish Grand Vizier ordered that the men be transferred to Smyrna in October 1918. Confidential correspondence from Dutch Ambassador, Istanbul. Service records of Green B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>168</sup> Letter dated 17/12/1917. ARC POW File of Pasmore, 1 DRL/428 Box 16, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>169</sup> E.H. Jones, *The Road to Endor*, The Bodley Head, London, 1930, p. 67. He continued: ‘misery, neglect, starvation and imprisonment had combined to foster in us a very close regard for our own interests’.

<sup>170</sup> Kastamuni was located in the north closer to the Black Sea. Woolley and the British POW Committee Report provide details. Bursa to the west accommodated British and Indian prisoners.

### Convalescent camps

Various camps became convalescent camps for ill prisoners, particularly during and after the epidemics that raged through the winter of 1916-1917. Bor was located on the north side of the Taurus Mountains, thirteen kilometres from the town of Nigde, and was a convalescent camp from approximately February 1917.<sup>171</sup> Several of the Gallipoli prisoners arrived at Bor in March 1917, including Beattie, Wiffen, Drake, Private Harold Samson, Kilmartin and King. They were sent from Belemelik and Beattie states that they travelled for several days by train and foot, with about 15 British and 50 Russians and arrived 'rather weak and rundown with fever'. They were accommodated in a school building and Beattie noted that the camp itself had only recently opened as 'we were the second party of prisoners'.

Conditions there appear to have been good. Beattie describes being taken for walks each Sunday, every second day having a shopping expedition and once a week a bath party. The Dutch Embassy sent money and a parcel of coats and trousers. Water was collected from the water fountain within the town, in use today (Fig. 5:24). Clothes were washed in a small stream. As time went on, prices rose. Escaped Russian prisoners were flogged on recapture as was a British prisoner who had hit a soldier during a shopping expedition. As punishment, for a fortnight shopping expeditions, Sunday exercise and bath parties ceased.

**Fig 5:24: The water fountain, Bor. (Author's photograph).**

A Turkish doctor visited every two months and sent back heathy men to the working camps. Others reported that they were quite well and Wiffen noted that it was 'a very good place here'.<sup>172</sup> Contradicting other extant sources, the British POW Committee



<sup>171</sup> British POW Committee Report, AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra, pp. 29-30.

<sup>172</sup> ARC Wounded & Missing File of Wiffen, 1 DRL/428 Box 294, AWM, Canberra.

Report noted that supplies were very scarce and deaths were frequent although it acknowledged that the hospital at Nigde was clean and comfortable.<sup>173</sup> The old school used for accommodation has since been demolished, though the bath-house and water fountain nearby are still used by the citizens of Bor. The local council knew nothing of this aspect of their town's history.<sup>174</sup>

**Psamatia** (modern Samatya) was a small camp in suburban Istanbul, on the Sea of Marmara, where men were either sent to await repatriation or to receive specialised medical treatment. From the description provided by the men, it was possible to locate the Armenian school and church in which they were housed. Both are still used by the Armenian community. The school building of stone blocks and large windows, which would have been ideal as convalescent accommodation, no longer looks directly to the sea as described by the prisoners, as a building was later erected immediately in front of it.<sup>175</sup> Davern and O'Connor were probably the only Australian Gallipoli prisoners sent there to await repatriation. They were transferred there on 18 June 1917 and were interned with Italian, British, French, Indian, Rumanian and Russian prisoners. Davern complained at first of the standard of food and treatment, though acknowledged that the Australians were 'never molested'.<sup>176</sup>

The Dutch delegation inspected the camp on 22 July and the commandant Colonel Ihsan was described by a British prisoner as 'most kind and considerate to all the British prisoners who were under his charge at Psamatia'.<sup>177</sup> Officers occupied small rooms, each with two beds. The furniture was simple and supplied by the men themselves. The number of lower ranked prisoners fluctuated. They were housed in one large room, well ventilated, with six of the fourteen windows overlooking the Sea of Marmara.

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<sup>173</sup> British POW Committee Report, AWM 940 472 T784, AWM, Canberra, pp. 29-30.

<sup>174</sup> Site visit and interview with the Mayor of Bor, 14/6/2006.

<sup>175</sup> Site visit on 12 June 2006. The site is now called the Surp Kevork Ermeni Kilisesi, Samatya. The author was not granted permission to photograph the interior of the buildings.

<sup>176</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>177</sup> PRO FO 383/453/1918 Turkey File 683, PRO, London.



**Fig. 5:25: Psamatia camp, today an Armenian church. (Author's photograph).**

However, complaints were made about the standard and number of latrines. No work was performed by the prisoners and being located in a crowded suburb, there were few avenues for recreation. Thus the Delegation concluded that Psamatia was 'a place we could not approve of'.<sup>178</sup>

### **Travel between camps**

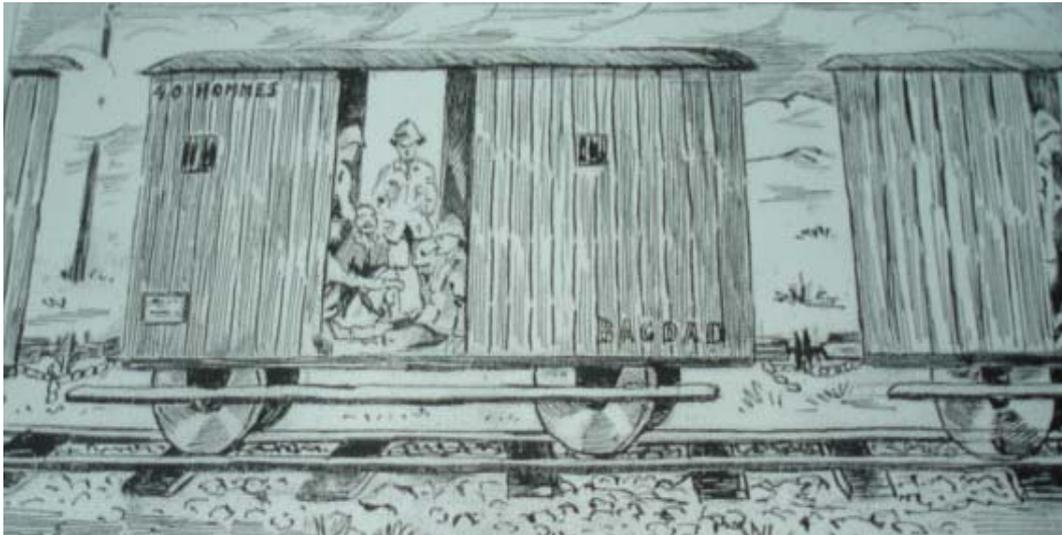
Various modes of transport were used to transport prisoners throughout Turkey. Initially, POWs were transported to Istanbul by ship from the Gallipoli peninsula or by wagon and train in the case of officers. From Istanbul to the interior camps, prisoners were ferried across the Bosphorus to Üsküdar on the Asian shore and then by buggy to Haydar Pasha station.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Dutch Delegation Report, A11803/1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>179</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.118.

Fig 5:26: A '40 hommer' carriage drawn by Lushington. (Cahir, AWM PRO 185)



This was the major terminus for trains travelling to central Turkey and beyond. Lushington described a group of POWs leaving Istanbul in May 1915 singing cheerfully, dressed in an odd assortment of Turkish clothing, carrying their rations of two loaves of bread and a tin of olives. The level of comfort on the railway carriages varied from normal passenger carriages to covered goods wagons.<sup>180</sup> Initially, the men travelled in a passenger coach but later were transferred to enclosed goods wagons, with '40 Hommes' written on the side. These were quickly labelled by the men as a '40 Hommer' carriage.<sup>181</sup> Creedon described the journey as 'terribly monotonous', travelling at a snail's pace. Their ration for the first two days consisted of bread and cheese and on the third day they were able to purchase grapes, melons and tomatoes.<sup>182</sup>

The most difficult journeys for the men were to those camps not serviced by the railway network. In September 1915 a four day journey by foot began from Angora to Çankiri, a distance of approximately 120 kilometres. Accounts vary as to the conditions experienced during the march. Creedon noted that there were approximately 200 prisoners, carrying

<sup>180</sup> Photos of British transporting Turkish POWs in the Middle East generally show crowded open goods wagons.

<sup>181</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 13.

<sup>182</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM IDRL 223, AWM, Canberra.

whatever supplies they could. Every two hours, they were allowed five minutes' rest. Plenty of water was available on the way and the prisoners who tired were transported in carts. Each night they stayed in private houses, coffee houses, churches or stables. Creedon claimed that some men were hit with rifle butts and he complained that the weather was cold and bitter.<sup>183</sup> Foxcroft added that the guards 'were harsh and cruel. Stragglers were frequently struck and beaten'.<sup>184</sup> However, Drake stated that 'we were not badly treated and seven of the lads who dropped out had to be carried to the resting place'.<sup>185</sup> Lightfoot added that they existed on a loaf of bread a day and it was hard on the men who had to carry their kits and rations.<sup>186</sup> Lushington provided a lighter side to the march by adding that they were given four loaves of bread, blankets and 'our other worldly possessions, billy cans, old kerosene tins, all priceless things in the eyes of a POW'. They sang 'It's a Long Way from Tipperary', and on the way several men discovered a wagon carrying a load of butter. They managed to ransack and consume the lot. At times, the men refused to walk any further and were not harmed by the guards for their refusal. However, they were exhausted by the time they arrived at Çankiri.<sup>187</sup> In January 1916, the return journey was made to Angora and then on to other camps where labour was required. This time it was mid-winter and the trek was made through heavy snow. Accommodation on the way ranged from stables, filthy rooms to 'very clean' houses and 'the guards were an easy-going lot and had been with us at Khangeri'.<sup>188</sup> They rested for a day on the way. Lightfoot was also on this march, adding 'we were marching through the snow all the time and had to break ice for water'.<sup>189</sup> Handsley described travelling from Afyon to Angora in 'cattle trucks', thirty to a truck. He claimed that the journey took two days and prisoners were only allowed out twice, and their rations were only two loaves of bread. They arrived in Angora 'in a very weak condition'.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1 DRL 223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>184</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>185</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>186</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>187</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, pp. 25-29.

<sup>188</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>189</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>190</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-half Years*, p. 32.

Despite the difficulties of being a prisoner, some could appreciate the scenery they passed through. Delpratt described the train journey to Afyon in early August 1915 taking ‘two days and a great part of it was through wonderful and beautiful scenery’. However, he conceded that the circumstances of being a prisoner made ‘appreciation difficult’.<sup>191</sup> Kerr travelled from Afyon to Pozanti in January 1916 in a standard railway carriage. Passing through the valleys and mountain passes of the Taurus Mountains, he described the trip as ‘absolutely the prettiest train journey I have had in my life’.<sup>192</sup> On another journey from Angora to Afyon, Handsley and others travelled in ‘fourth-class carriages, cheerless compartments devoid of cushions and the windows were innocent of panes of glass’. His description of their antics, if a true reflection of their journey, suggests that the men were not very closely guarded. They borrowed a small heating stove and ‘it was amusing to see us hop out of the train at each stopping place, when we would run along to the tender of the engine and steal coal for our fire, We were chased by the fireman and guard, who armed themselves with shovels, but we were always successful in getting away with sufficient to keep our fire burning’.<sup>193</sup>

### **Visits to camps**

One of the most contested areas concerning the experiences of the POWs in Turkey, was the allegation that the Turkish Government refused to allow outside neutral agencies the right to inspect camps. This position was put forward officially by the *British POW Committee Report* and has remained unchallenged by historians ever since.<sup>194</sup> This report was written towards the end of 1918, after British authorities had received numerous reports sent by official visitors to the camps. These reports can be accessed today in the British National Archives and clearly show that the War Office was aware of the official visits made to the camps, often

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<sup>191</sup> Cable ‘Early August 1915’. Delpratt, *Letters written whilst a POW in Turkey*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636.AWM, Canberra.

<sup>192</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 149.

<sup>193</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years*, p. 48.

<sup>194</sup> *British POW Committee Report*. Despite the criticisms made by the British Government about Turkish reluctance to allow official visit to camps, it was not until January 1917 that an official Red Cross visit was allowed to British camps for Turkish prisoners in Egypt. *Turkish Prisoners in Egypt*, AWM 940/47241, 3364, AWM, Canberra.

at Britain's request. The official British Report stated that not only were no outside agencies permitted to visit, but that:

The only neutral visitors who have ever had sight of our men, up to the summer of 1918, have been a messenger from the American Embassy who managed to penetrate to Afion Kara Hissar on a single occasion in 1915, two Roman Catholic Priests sent at another time by the Papal Nuncio, and two delegates from the International Red Cross in Switzerland, who were allowed to make a useful but circumscribed tour at the end of 1916.<sup>195</sup>

This emotive report only mentions four independent visits. The visit by the 'messenger' of the American Embassy was, in fact, the Embassy Secretary, Hoffman Philip, who visited in an official capacity on numerous occasions at the request of the British War Office. By referring to him merely as a *messenger*, Philip's official role is downplayed. The Catholic delegation visit and the International Red Cross and Dutch Legation were certainly neutral agency visits. As has been pointed out in earlier chapters, many official and unofficial visitors attended the POWs in hospitals in Istanbul, including Hoffman Philip, the American ambassador Henry Morgenthau and his wife, British Presbyterian Minister Reverend Frew, daughters of the Dutch Ambassador, an Austrian nun, several American women and a journalist in 1915.<sup>196</sup>

Several published accounts supported the misrepresentation of the British Report. T.W. White in *Guests of the Unspeakable*, totally ignored the various official visits made to his camp at Afyon when he commented: 'Turkey was a closed book to all but the secret service for the greater part of the war ... and no first hand evidence of ... treatment was obtained until a few months before the armistice'.<sup>197</sup> Visits were made to the Afyon camp by the US Embassy, the Papal Legation, the International Red Cross, the Red Crescent and the Dutch Legation and all reported back to Britain. Escaped British officers were also interviewed by the Red Cross and British authorities and innumerable letters and postcards were received in Britain mentioning

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<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> See Appendix 15.

<sup>197</sup> T.W. White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1935, p. 83.

the various official visits. F. & E. Brenchley repeated this allegation in their narrative of White's experiences as a POW:

Turkey alone of the war's main antagonists refused to allow international bodies such as the Red Cross or representatives of neutral countries to inspect its POW camps, despite the Red Crescent having reciprocal rights. While British camps were open to inspection, Turkish treatment of prisoners was hidden behind a veil of secrecy. The American embassy in Constantinople under Henry Morgenthau and his Counsellor Hoffman Philip, made constant representations about prisoner rights, but gained only one visit to a camp.<sup>198</sup>

The above assertions are incorrect. As previously discussed, many official visits were made to the camps and hospitals. As early as May or June 1915, within one or two months of the landing, a representative of the American Embassy visited the camp at Afyon. A letter from the American Embassy to the British Foreign Office noted that a representative had visited prisoners at Afyon and that 'he found them in good health and well treated'.<sup>199</sup> A further visit by Hoffman Philip from the American Embassy was undertaken around 5 August 1915, after Sir Edward Grey requested that the Embassy inspect the camp due to reports of ill treatment. Subsequently, a letter from the American Embassy to British authorities noted that Philip had inspected the camp and noted that 'the general conditions seem to have improved'.<sup>200</sup> In December 1915, Luscombe noted that an official from the Red Crescent visited the camp at Angora.<sup>201</sup>

During 1916, camp visits were made by representatives of the American Embassy. Several of the men mention that it was the Ambassador who visited but it was more likely to have been Hoffman Philip as there are only a few documented visits made by Morgenthau himself.

Drake mentions that whilst at Çankiri in 1916 'a representative of the Turkish Red Crescent

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<sup>198</sup> F & E Brenchley, *White's Flight. An Australian Pilot's Epic Escape from Turkish Prison Camp to Russia's Revolution*, Wiley, Milton Qld, 2004, p. 93.

<sup>199</sup> Letter to British Foreign Office, dated 25/6/1915. *Prisoners*, Turkey File, PRO FO 383/96, PRO, London.

<sup>200</sup> The letter dated 15/8/1915, implies that a former visit had been made. Turkey File, PRO FO 383/92, 72088 File 251, PRO, London.

<sup>201</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 59-60.

visited us and we received a few extra clothes and 75 piastres each from the American Consul, Mr Phillips [sic].<sup>202</sup> Lushington noted a visit from the American Ambassador to Afyon in 1916, providing bedding and clothing. Later in his narrative Lushington again refers to a visit but it is not clear if he is referring to the visit previously mentioned.<sup>203</sup> McDonald mentions only one visit by Philip in October 1916 when he visited the camp and procured better conditions.<sup>204</sup> Early in November 1916, Handsley stated that the American Ambassador interviewed prisoners at Angora when they first arrived and provided money.<sup>205</sup> Thus by November 1916, an American Embassy representative had made at least five or six visits to camps holding Australian POWs.

A Catholic Delegation visited Afyon for Christmas 1916 to provide gifts for Catholic prisoners and to conduct Christmas services. Their report noted that the Commandant 'showed great politeness ... and declared as holidays the two days of Christmas for everyone without distinction, in the camp'. The chaplain reported on the kindness shown to the prisoners by the Turkish Commandant.<sup>206</sup> American Consul Nathan based in Adana, sent an American missionary, Mr. V. Nute to visit the camp at Belemelik in October 1916. He was able to report that the camp was 'well supplied with clothing ... had what food was obtainable in the region, enjoyed much freedom of movement and for the most part were in good health'. Consul Nathan visited several of the railway camps himself in January 1917.<sup>207</sup>

An International Red Cross delegation led by two Swiss officials, Mr Boissier and Dr Vischer, visited the camps from late 1916 to January 1917. They visited Afyon, Kirshehir, Konya, Boussa, Ismidt and Yozgad. At Yozgad on 11 December 1916 specific issues were raised by the prisoners, which were later addressed. This tour of camps by a major neutral

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<sup>202</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>203</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p.15, 20.

<sup>204</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, AWM 30 B1.22, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>205</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years*, p. 33.

<sup>206</sup> The report was dated 9/3/1917. Prisoners, Turkey File, PRO FO 383/333, PRO, London.

<sup>207</sup> Memorandum from US Consul Nathan, Adana. PRO FO 383/2149 (1917), PRO, London.

agency was obviously made before the Berne Convention came into force in 1917 and positive changes were made after their visits. They did not visit Kastamounu or Sivas and were not granted permission to visit Belemelik as the railway was regarded as having political and military significance. A British official had hand-written on the report, '... not very valuable ... not a perfunctory visit like this'.<sup>208</sup> This comment was made despite the group travelling several thousand kilometers between camps for two months.

Visits by Hussein Rifki Bey, a representative of the Ottoman Red Crescent Society, were conducted for over three months from late December 1917 to 8 April 1918. He visited Eskişehir, Afyon, Konya, Belemelik, the Amanus and Nissibin sections of the railway, Ras-el-Ain, Angora and Gediz and his colleagues visited Bor. Obviously his visit was cleared for the sensitive Baghdad railway camps. He did not visit Çankiri or Yozgad as they do not appear to have been in use as camps at the time. This was the most extensive tour of inspection, covering over 8,000 kilometres, but it is doubtful if the British Government regarded the Red Crescent as a neutral agency.<sup>209</sup> There is also reference to the Danish Legation distributing parcels at Kütahya and Kirchehir in 1917.<sup>210</sup>

Mrs Elkus, wife of the American Ambassador who replaced Morgenthau, visited prisoners at Psamatia in early 1917 'and she was very favourably impressed by their conditions'.<sup>211</sup> She was received courteously and was able to speak to the men in their quarters. 'Mrs Elkus gave suits of clothes, underclothing, socks, shirts, soap, tooth-brushes, tooth-powder, tobacco, pipes, cocoa, chocolate, aspirins and quinine'. She also left money to purchase milk.<sup>212</sup> Two American embassy officials planned to visit Boussa and Afyon in March 1917. One

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<sup>208</sup> This report includes Colonel Chitty's report at Yozgad. Prisoners, Turkey file, PRO FO 383/187, PRO, London.

<sup>209</sup> Report by Rifki Bey, A11 803/1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>210</sup> Letter from Red Crescent 24/11/1917. *Comforts for British POWs*, AWM 13 7017/1/34, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>211</sup> Letter dated 24/3/1917. *POWs in Turkey*, NAA 1917/89/377, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>212</sup> PRO FO 383/333/1917, PRO, London. There appears to have been no difficulties in being granted permission to visit this camp.

commented that 'it is taking a few days to get the necessary papers for the visits to the two camps', but indicated that they should leave the following week.<sup>213</sup> A letter from the American Embassy to diplomatic colleagues in London, dated 28 March 1917, also refers to this visit.<sup>214</sup> These letters do not suggest refusal or bureaucratic wrangling to prevent visitations as suggested by the British Report.

The Dutch Ambassador visited the camp at San Stefano in April 1918 and the embassy was 'in constant touch'.<sup>215</sup> Later in the year the Dutch Delegation led by Dr Menten and Mr van Bommel conducted visits after negotiations were concluded through the Berne Agreement. Camp inspections were made at Psamatia, Haydar Pasha, Daridje and Eski Hissar. Up to 19 August, Van Spengler also visited the above camps but had to withdraw due to ill health. On 19 August Dr Menten and two Turkish officers began their visits in Asia Minor to Afyon, Gediz, Magnesia, Konya, Bor, Ankara and Yozgad.<sup>216</sup> Woolley noted that on 28 August, Menten visited Gediz, bearing parcels and 'really enjoyed his visit'. The officers performed a play and conducted dinner parties and lunches for his entertainment.<sup>217</sup>

As noted earlier, the Turkish War Ministry sent an Inspector of their own to the camps, Colonel Zia Bey. He made radical changes to ensure better conditions. This Turkish officer was very well regarded by the prisoners. Despite not being a 'neutral', his visits benefitted the prisoners more than international agencies could achieve as he represented the Turkish War Office and could make immediate changes. He visited camps including Afyon, Angora, Kastamonu, Cankiri, San Stefano, Ada Bazar, Ismidt and Gediz. He dismissed the commandants at Afyon, San Stefano, Ada Bazar and Kastamonu after finding them wanting. He often drew up detailed lists of amendments to regulations that made life easier for the

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<sup>213</sup> It is not clear if this visit went ahead. America may have entered the war before this visit occurred. *POWs in Turkey*, NAA, 1917/89/377, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>214</sup> *Prisoners*, Turkey File. PRO FO 383/333, PRO, London.

<sup>215</sup> Foxcroft, Repatriation Statement, AWM 30 B1-15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>216</sup> Visits were made from July to August 1918. Dutch Delegation Visit, PRO FO 383/1919, PRO, London.

<sup>217</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 98.

prisoners.<sup>218</sup> A further allegation made in the British Report was that prisoners were not allowed to communicate complaints to the authorities, but this was clearly not the case.<sup>219</sup> In between formal visits, the American and Dutch embassies monitored conditions at the camps and received correspondence from the men. A letter from the American Embassy of 24 March 1917, reported that conditions in Turkish camps were improving: 'I am enclosing copies of letters received from prisoners which will give you an idea of the improved conditions prevailing. All reports agree on this point'.<sup>220</sup> Colonel Chitty had sent a report to the War Office in 1917 and letters were sent regularly to the Australian Red Cross POW office in London. Many examples of complaints from the men have survived and the Turkish War Ministry acted on many to remove errant Commandants.

There are many examples of uncensored complaints reaching Britain. The racist nature of some of the prisoner's accounts is exemplified by the comments made by a New Zealand soldier, Arthur Pearce, imprisoned at San Stefano and sent to the British POW Committee:

You mustn't forget I am in an uncivilised country at present ... we are on half rations and bread is 6/- a loaf and unobtainable; meat and all stuffs, you can't look at. The Red Crescent is full up with parcels, they are too lazy to sort them ... if we get food or not these dogs make us work, just the same ... If you see any Turks knocking about England after this, shoot them for me.<sup>221</sup>

The above description was refuted by the Dutch Embassy's Report on San Stefano camp:

The food supplied by the Turkish authorities is certainly totally insufficient, but the additional food is supplied by the legation every two weeks ... With this extra food and a monthly allowance in money of LT6 [6 Turkish Lira] per man, they declared to be content ... With the exception of two men who had recently been ill, they looked

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<sup>218</sup> R.A. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner*, McCarron, Bird & Co; Melbourne, undated, p. 24; Woolley, *Kastamuni*, pp. 20, 21, 48-49; 72-74; 94. In a huge miscarriage of justice at the end of the war, Zia Bey was arrested by the British forces 'in connection with the treatment of POWs' and was imprisoned in Malta. PRO FO 383/530 (1919).

<sup>219</sup> '... the prisoners have constantly been prevented from communicating by letter with the Dutch legation and have suffered for it when they succeeded in doing so'. *British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940 / 472 T78, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>220</sup> PRO FO 383/187.

<sup>221</sup> PRO FO 383/453 1918 Turkish File 683, dated 27/4/1918.

extremely well and healthy and there is no question of starvation, as stated in Arthur's [Pearce) letter.<sup>222</sup>

Thus despite later denials by the British Government, a range of independent visits were made to the various camps throughout the war, resulting in improved conditions for the prisoners.

## **Conclusion**

From the extant sources, it is possible for the first time to identify more than twenty POW camp sites throughout Turkey. Conditions at the Turkish camps were generally no worse than POW camps elsewhere during World War I. Initially, camps were makeshift, though with time they were better established and organised, thanks to the work of the Turkish Camp Inspector Colonel Zia Bey, inspections by the International Red Cross, Red Crescent and the American and Dutch Embassies. They were not the stereotyped POW camps surrounded by guards and barbed wire entanglements as were the British camps in Egypt for Turkish POWs. Nor were any located near the front lines to provide war related labour, as was the case at times in Germany.

The Turkish government attempted to mirror the Hague Convention's guidelines for treatment of POWs through the publication of the *Manual Regarding POWs*, produced in this thesis for the first time in English. However, conditions still varied considerably, depending on location, timing, decisions made by individual commandants and the purpose of the camps. Some camps changed function as the war progressed and needs changed. One of the most crucial challenges facing the POWs in Turkey however was their isolation in a far flung foreign country. Contact with home – or indeed with any English-speaking organisation or individual – assumed great importance. Personal contacts with the American and Dutch embassies and various individuals helped to alleviate trying conditions. The number of visits made by the American Embassy and other organizations was downplayed by official British reports at the

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<sup>222</sup> PRO FO 383/453 1918 Turkish File 683, dated 30/9/1918.

end of the war, presumably to manipulate public opinion against the defeated Ottoman government. The political legitimacy of carving up the Ottoman Empire and its economic wealth by the British and European powers was based on fostering negative views of the defeated Ottomans. British propaganda will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

Most physical evidence of the camps has since vanished over the past ninety-five years. Some buildings such as the barracks of Gediz and the Madresseh at Afyon have been restored and used for different purposes. Religious buildings such as the Catholic church at San Stefano, the Armenian complex at Psamatia and the Kadiköy Sultan Mustafa III Mosque have resumed their normal function. Public buildings used by the men such as railway stations and bath-houses have often survived. The varying life experiences in the ensuing three years in the camps will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6: 'A wearisome wastage of time': camp life

Having discussed the location and types of POW camps in the previous chapter, aspects of everyday life within the camps will be examined here, including issues of adjustment, authority, punishment, food, entertainment, clothing, correspondence and external aid to prisoners. It will be argued that prisoners' experiences in Turkey were more typical than atypical of overall World War I POW experiences and challenges the assumption that Gallipoli POW experiences were akin to those under the Japanese in World War II.

The Hague Convention attempted to regulate conditions affecting the lives of POWs in World War I, including the provision of food rations, accommodation and punishment. However, there was considerable leeway for captor nations to determine the standards of living for prisoners as they were subjected to the laws, regulations and conditions of the captor nation.<sup>1</sup> Generally Turkish administration attempted to adhere to these regulations in accordance with the Turkish War Ministry's *Manual Regarding Prisoners of War*.<sup>2</sup> Punishment, food rations and accommodation were in line with Turkish military practice of the time. This differed from Australian or British standards and practices and resulted in hardship for many POWs. Conditions in Turkey were also adversely affected by wartime shortages of food, fuel and manpower, which generally worsened as the war progressed. However, going beyond the dictates of the Hague Convention, Turkish regulations allowed prisoners to purchase and prepare their own food which later helped to alleviate the issue of inadequate Turkish army rations. One issue of concern for the prisoners was that physical punishment could be administered to prisoners as it was in the regular Turkish army.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Article 8 of the Hague Convention. Complaints of violations of the Hague Convention were common in WWI. Over 15 pages of complaints against conditions in Germany were made by British officers in 1915 alone. *Violations of the Hague & Geneva Conventions*, PRO HO 45/10763/270829, PRO, London.

<sup>2</sup> *Uşera Hakkında Talimatname Mat-baa-i, Askeriyye, (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War)*, Turkish War Ministry, Military Printer, Istanbul, 1914. Ottoman Archives 1332/1914. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Crendon commented in his diary: 'The way in Turkey to punish the soldiers is to strike them. Then the soldier has to turn round and salute the one who has struck him. A corporal can strike a private and so on'. Crendon's Diary, AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

There are some generic experiences of POW camp life that are repeated, no matter which war or country of internment is under examination. Large numbers of men interned in camps with little to occupy their time create problems, both for the prisoners and for camp administrators. POWs typically suffered from boredom, overcrowding, poor sanitation and outbreaks of epidemics and were at the mercy of their captors for the provision of general living conditions.<sup>4</sup> Many prisoners found adaptation to internment difficult 'living in close confinement with a herd of fellow men, with less food, less space, less privacy and considerably less freedom than they have enjoyed previously, the adaptation process is a long and unpleasant business'.<sup>5</sup> Cochrane's psychological study of POWs in World War II concluded that 'in general one could say that the first year was spent in adaptation, the second was the best year, the third began to be a strain, and the fourth and following years left no-one unscathed'.<sup>6</sup> The Gallipoli prisoners were imprisoned for approximately three and a half years, so would be regarded as having lived through the most difficult years of adaptation to life as a POW.

On arrival at the camps, few commented on their ability to adapt to their new life. As this was a very personal issue, these sentiments may not have been voiced in letters home or mentioned in memoirs. Kerr noted that elements of their life surprised them such as the access to alcohol and a brothel in Belemedik, but he also detailed the squabbles and petty annoyances of camp life.<sup>7</sup> Woolley perhaps best summed up the reactions of many of the officers by describing the frustrations of being subjected to poor organisation and petty annoyances, rather than outright brutal treatment:

We chafed beneath the whims of individual commandants, we suffered from the inefficiency and lack of organisation which characterises everything in Turkey, and at times we had, some of us at least, more serious charges to bring against our captors; but

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<sup>4</sup> R. C. Hingorani, *Prisoners of War*, Oceana Publications, New York, 1982, p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> A. J. Barker, *Behind Barbed Wire*, B.T. Batsford Ltd, London, 1974, p.76.

<sup>6</sup> A. L. Cochrane, 'Notes on the Psychology of Prisoners of War', *British Medical Journal*, 23 February, 1946, pp. 282-284.

<sup>7</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998.

the Turks were not out to inflict on us systematic bad treatment, and from the time we reached camp and could more or less run our own show we, as officers, were not so badly off. At the time, indeed, our complaints were loud and not unjustified, but much that grievously irked us then seems in retrospect more laughable than tragic.<sup>8</sup>

The British POW Committee Report corroborated Woolley's summation by referring to the situation of the officers at Afyon, though in more extreme, emotive language:

The constant trial was not bad treatment, but the stupid and irritating notions of the commandant and his subordinates on the score of discipline. The natural indolence, the want of organisation, dirty habits and customs of the Turks, their inveterate and irrational lying, all meant a wearisome wastage of time and temper.<sup>9</sup>

Turkish camps shared the same level of enforced intimacy of a closed community as discussed by Beaumont in reference to World War II life at Ambon.<sup>10</sup> The limited access to human contact beyond fellow prisoners was made more difficult by an alien culture and a language incomprehensible to English speakers. The isolating and baffling barrier of the Turkish language made access to outside news very difficult. Officers at Afyon occasionally received copies of a newspaper printed in French, *The Hilal*, which at times contained news of the war.<sup>11</sup> Beattie observed that news was 'usually of a pro-German nature', sometimes provided by a passing German soldier or a Turk. 'Occasionally we got two newspapers from the Germans, printed in English, called the *Continental Times* and *The Illustrated War Journal* ... We received no news from England or Australia, our letters and parcels undergoing a strict censorship'.<sup>12</sup> Newly captured prisoners from the eastern front sometimes provided an update of war news and the occasional letter from home provided hints of victories, but generally the men were left in ignorance of the progress of the war. This aspect of life must have been very frustrating as news of the war was crucial for determining their length of stay as prisoners.

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<sup>8</sup> L. Woolley, (ed) *From Kastamuni to Kodos*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1921, p. v.

<sup>9</sup> *Treatment of British POWs in Turkey*, Report of the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British POWs, p. 36. AWM 940.472. T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>10</sup> J. Beaumont, *Gull Force. Survival & Leadership in Captivity*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> L. H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl*, W. R. Smith & Paterson Pty. Ltd. Brisbane, 1970, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

Attempts were made to create as normal a life as possible under the circumstances of incarceration, particularly in respect to personal standards of hygiene and habits. Delpratt hints at the effort to keep up the routines of everyday life:

None of the party ever lose this chance of getting into a clean shift of having a shave and of airing bedding and having a good sweep out. They're but small things but count for much in a life where there is considerable inclination to let such matters slide.<sup>13</sup>

Rifki Bey, a representative of the Red Crescent, explained in 1918 that even though conditions for the officers and lower ranks were good, the men needed a change, even a minor change such as a move to a different camp. He referred to many becoming 'nervous'.<sup>14</sup> This nervous energy appears to mirror the phenomenon of 'barbed-wire disease' discussed by Barker who referred to the general, intense irritability of confined men that often resulted in petty concerns blowing up into arguments. This behaviour was exacerbated by lack of privacy or solitude and often resulted in suspicion of other groups of prisoners. As time went on, men were likely to suffer lethargy, resentment and feelings of oppression. Barker notes that with time, morale usually deteriorated, and with it, went discipline.<sup>15</sup> In a number of ways, these characteristics emerged in the Turkish camps and were exacerbated by the influence of alcohol.

Kerr observed on first arriving at Afyon, that 'one hears complaints of the monotony of the daily life but we have not as yet begun to feel it'. However, a year later in 1916, he noted that he had 'the blues' and 'took the gloomiest views of my future'.<sup>16</sup> White commented that after a time at Afyon, 'the spectre of hopelessness stalked in our camp. Long captivity is the greatest test of patience and unselfishness'.<sup>17</sup> However, few prisoners expressed such gloomy

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<sup>13</sup> Letter dated 3/3/1918. Delpratt, *Letters whilst a POW in Turkey*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>14</sup> Rifki Bey Report 1918: A11803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>15</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>16</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 124, 144.

<sup>17</sup> T. W. White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1935, p. 161.

views in letters home, attempting to sound cheerful to alleviate the concerns of families in Australia.

**Fig. 6:1: POWs at Belemedik. Wiffen (front left) and Kerr (front 2<sup>nd</sup> left).  
(AWM H19402)**



Beaumont's examination of traditional Anzac characteristics and how they bore up in trying conditions such as a POW camp is useful here. The development of the

Anzac legend during World War I ascribed superior traits to Australian soldiers under fire. Beaumont discusses such traits as mateship, egalitarianism, independence, resourcefulness and humour and examines how these qualities survived in prisoner camps in World War II.<sup>18</sup> These characteristics generally appear to have survived in the Turkish camps. Several men comment on the willingness of Australians to provide money, food or other assistance to fellow Australians. Austin noted that 'I was always very proud of being an Australian while I was in that camp, because the Australians looked after one another so well. It was a thing that the Englishmen could not understand'.<sup>19</sup> Kerr noted that on arrival at Afyon in December 1915, several Australians offered him money and food, yet commented: 'Such offerings almost surprised me for the selfishness and callousness of the majority of us for our fellow

<sup>18</sup> Beaumont, *Gull Force*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> R. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner*, McCarron, Bird & Co., Melbourne, undated, p. 28.

prisoners'.<sup>20</sup> Kerr does not elaborate on this remark and few examples of selfishness are recalled by the Gallipoli prisoners.

A sense of humour was often evident in various dramatic productions and comedies played out on stage and pranks engaged in whilst at work or in camp. Ashton recalls an element of larrikinism displayed in hijacking coal trucks for races through towns and ingenious methods of shirking their workload.<sup>21</sup> Resourcefulness can be seen in the many creative recipes that were planned to compensate for the lack of essential ingredients in such dishes as plum puddings, the making of alcoholic drinks and the ingenious methods of manufacturing furniture, musical instruments, 'bush' showers and other items deemed necessities at the time.

Mateship was a precious commodity. Drake commented that he was grateful that his friend Arthur Wiffen had been with him since capture, as 'it is well to have someone with you, whom you know so well'.<sup>22</sup> Both were from Victoria and had enlisted within a week of each other. The few personal possessions retained by prisoners also took on greater importance, with their tenuous link to home. In a letter to his mother in December 1916, Drake lamented that his personal possessions were now limited. He had 'only Phill's Bible left. All the rest were taken from me, even your little wristlet watch, which I prized so much, has gone. I still have the Bible, but it is very much knocked about'.<sup>23</sup>

Kerr's detailed descriptions of the petty squabbles at both Afyon and Belemelik often focussed on trivial matters such as those who objected to the drunken antics of others or those who took offence at a slight remark. Austin also noted:

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<sup>20</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.123.

<sup>21</sup> Frederick Ashton Papers, 973A. Battye Library, Perth, pp. 101, 106.

<sup>22</sup> Letter dated 17/12/1916. ARC POW File of Drake, 1DRL/428, Box 55, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.* Letter to mother 17/12/1916.

The part I did not like about camp life was the cliques and little squabbles. The men from Kut were one clique against everybody else in the camp, another was Englishmen against Colonials, another Flying Corps against all other arms of the service, another Regulars against new Army Officers, and finally the people who did not want to escape against the people who did.<sup>24</sup>

Cochrane discusses the psychology of captivity and notes that bitter fights and antagonisms between various national groups were common.<sup>25</sup> On the issue of consignments of clothing, particularly when the British prisoners were in charge of distribution, Creedon commented that the British received the lion's share. 'There was a terrible lot of ill-feeling on the part of the Englishmen apparently because we were paid more than they. There were several pretty heated discussions about this'. Creedon wrote that the Australians and New Zealanders received very little and when their consignment arrived were told that 'if we did not pool the clothing we would not receive any more clothing that came in future for the British prisoners. We were in the minority so consequently had to acquiesce'.<sup>26</sup>

On New Years Day 1916, Kerr drank brandy with the French and commented on the contempt that the British had for the French or any other nationality.<sup>27</sup> Woolley noted that British officers refused to share a room with an Indian officer.<sup>28</sup> Various derogatory comments were made about the hygiene and habits of Russian prisoners.<sup>29</sup> Nationalities were sometimes segregated, with the camp at Konya mainly housing Indian prisoners. It is worth noting that amendments to the Hague Convention after World War I specified that prisoners should be segregated according to race or nationality.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Austin, *My Experiences*, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Cochrane, *Notes*, pp. 282-284.

<sup>26</sup> Creedon's Diary, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>27</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 141.

<sup>28</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 71.

<sup>29</sup> G.W. Handsley, *Two and a Half Years a Prisoner of War*, Jones & Hambly, Brisbane, undated, p. 33.

<sup>30</sup> Article 9. *Convention Between the USA and Other Powers, Relating to Prisoners of War*, 27 July, 1929. [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/geneva02.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/geneva02.htm). Retrieved 20/6/2008.

### Leadership in camps

The issue of leadership and authority is one that is commonly raised in POW camps. Traditional military leadership was often inappropriate for the new situation in which soldiers found themselves. Once the established hierarchy of army authority was removed, with officers distanced from the men in separate accommodation, alternative sources of authority emerged from within the ranks. Beaumont discusses two forms of authority; *formal* by virtue of rank and *informal* based on personal characteristics, stemming from personality or expertise in a particular situation. The AIF generally preferred the *informal* mode and some officers displayed characteristics of both.<sup>31</sup> Without the presence of officers within the camps, individuals with *informal* modes of authority tended to replace formal modes of leadership. For example, Sgt. Rawlings received the Meritorious Service Medal in 1919 for 'valuable services rendered whilst a POW'.<sup>32</sup> Rawlings wrote many letters to the Australian Red Cross POW Bureau advising them of the arrival of camp packages and the health and well-being of the inmates. He supplied names of prisoners within individual camps, death notices, payment details and made requests on behalf of other prisoners.<sup>33</sup> Delpratt was given the task of supervising the welfare of 85 Indian prisoners at Hadji-Kiri, at times a task fraught with squabbles and minor dramas.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout their captivity, officers experienced better conditions than the lower ranks. The assumption that officers by right were entitled to privileges was not questioned, nor their right to be served by orderlies. At Kodos, Woolley noted gratefully that conditions improved for the officers with the arrival of eleven British and two Indian orderlies from Afyon.<sup>35</sup> There is conflicting evidence as to whether or not the officers had any contact with the men, particularly at Afyon where they were housed nearby. Handsley states that the men were

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<sup>31</sup> Beaumont, *Gull Force*. pp. 93-95.

<sup>32</sup> Service records of Rawlings, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>33</sup> Rawlings, ARC W & M File, AWM 1 DRL/428; ARC POW File 1DRL/428 Box 171, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>34</sup> Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>35</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 71.

never able to contact the officers.<sup>36</sup> However, in January 1916, Kerr notes that a group of prisoners went off to entertain the officers and returned drunk on raki.<sup>37</sup> The British POW Committee Report noted that the men were free to mix with officers at Afyon from 1917 onwards.<sup>38</sup>

**Fig. 6:2: Gallipoli POW officers, Afyon. Back L to R: Luscombe, Jordan, Elston.  
(AWM AO2265)**



Despite being separated physically from the men, some officers such as Luscombe and McDonald exerted some formal authority and positive influence. Randall commented that Luscombe ‘was very good to us ... and done all in his power for our comforts [sic]’.<sup>39</sup> Several letters refer to Luscombe sending money to the Red Cross to purchase supplies for Gallipoli prisoners. He wished his gift to remain anonymous.<sup>40</sup> Luscombe also took it upon himself to photograph the graves of men buried at Afyon and sent these on to the respective families. Stormonth intervened in the issue of the punishment meted out to MacKay in August 1916,

<sup>36</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years*, p. 28.

<sup>37</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 143.

<sup>38</sup> British POW Committee Report, AWM 940.472. T784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>39</sup> Repatriation Statement of Randall, AWM 30 B1.29, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>40</sup> ARC POW File of Luscombe, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 122, AWM, Canberra.

obtaining a lighter punishment.<sup>41</sup> McDonald also compiled a list of known Australian POWS imprisoned in Turkey.<sup>42</sup>

### **Food and sustenance**

Providing sufficient resources for the prisoners, including food and clothing, was an issue in World War I, particularly if the economy of the captor nation was poorer than that of the captives. Britain and Germany initially did not meet Hague Convention guidelines in this matter. POWs were supplied with inferior rations to those of British and German regular troops.<sup>43</sup> Complaints about the quality and quantity of food were major issues concerning all POWs in captivity. As discussed previously in relation to food provisions prior to movement to camps, initially prisoners were provided with Turkish army rations, in line with Hague Convention guidelines.<sup>44</sup> The division, sharing and rationing of food was often a source of conflict in camps.<sup>45</sup> In Turkish camps, unusual food was treated with suspicion by the prisoners, particularly cracked wheat and olive oil. Delpratt refers to yoghurt as being 'something like junket'.<sup>46</sup> In the camps, once prisoners were able to purchase their own supplies and prepare food themselves, they had much greater choice in both ingredients and preparation and their diet improved. Bailey commented negatively on the initial army rations but pointed out that once settled the prisoners could supply their own food including meat, vegetables and groceries.<sup>47</sup>

Initially at Afyon, Russian prisoners cooked for the whole camp, but very quickly, prisoners organised themselves into messes and pooled their resources and labour, making themselves

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<sup>41</sup> Repatriation Statement of Mackay, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>42</sup> McDonald, POW list, AWM 30 B18.1, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>43</sup> It was maintained that feeding POWs on the same scale as their own troops might have put the prisoners far above civilian living standards. (Barker, *Barbed Wire*, pp. 80-84). By 1917, POWs in Germany had to rely on supplementary supplies of food. Drawing on seven diaries & journals, Moynihan also points out that Germany and Britain did not initially attempt to follow the Hague Convention on this matter, p. xiii. (*Black Bread & Barbed Wire*, Leo Cooper, London, 1978.) Many prisoners complained of the inadequate quality & quantity of food provided in German camps. PRO HO 45/1076/270829 439, 458, 451, PRO, London.

<sup>44</sup> At Angora, Williams identified the food as typically Turkish soldiers' rations. Repatriation Statement, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>45</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>46</sup> Letter dated 6/7/1917. Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL /2153 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>47</sup> Bailey, Confidential Report, London, 17/12/1918 AWM B1.2, AWM, Canberra.

‘for the most part ... independent of the prison diet’.<sup>48</sup> Beattie described the organisation of messes at Belemedik in 1916: ‘A cook and a caterer were allowed to each mess. The caterer’s duties were to walk to Belemedik and buy the food, collect the mess money from the men and keep the books’.<sup>49</sup> Delpratt refers to his mess at Hadji-Kiri as the ‘Always Merry and Bright’ mess and commented in July 1917 that the time had long passed when they had to sell belts and handkerchiefs to afford to purchase tea, which had become a luxury. In May 1918 he commented that his group had ‘messed better than ever’ and that the bill ran to nine piastres per day. He recounted a welcome change in their diet, when ‘an Italian woman who lives close by made us some potato macaroni with a little cheese grated over it’.<sup>50</sup>

There were both regional variations in the variety and availability of food and also variations of quantity at different periods of the war. Beattie commented that at Gelebek, food was ‘a bit rough’, with issued rations of haricot beans, olive oil, rice, beans, lentils or peas and sometimes meat. When a consignment of lentils was delivered, prisoners were served lentils five days a week until they were finished. The camp at Bor, situated in a rich agricultural region, provided wheat, haricot beans, potatoes and onions, seasonal supplies of marrows in August/September, mangel tops in May/June and small rations of meat, usually in stews.<sup>51</sup>

One of the main difficulties faced by the Australians was that the diet was essentially vegetarian. The staple diet consisted of stews with small portions of meat, together with lentils, haricot beans, wheat or white peas. The communal manner of eating and the division of meat in particular sometimes resulted in arguments.<sup>52</sup>

The men’s recollections at times are at variance, particularly in relation to the quality and quantity of food. At Afyon in August 1916, Handsley described the food as consisting of a

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<sup>48</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp.124, 126.

<sup>49</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>50</sup> Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/ 2153 # 636. Letter dated 19/2/1918.

<sup>51</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

small loaf of bread a day and boiled wheat twice daily. One day he claims that they ‘smuggled’ apples into the camp and made apple pudding, ‘the best attempt at cookery possible under the circumstances’.<sup>53</sup>

**Fig. 6:3: The bazaar at Afyon frequented by the POWs. (Author’s photograph).**

Handsley’s account contradicts the culinary details provided by Kerr and others whilst they were at Afyon, where Kerr indicated that the men were free to purchase a variety of foodstuffs and cook their own food.<sup>54</sup> At Çankiri, initially Lushington complained of hunger yet later



the men were able to buy cheese, fruit and chicken at the bazaar. At Ada Bazar, he again commented that initially they were always hungry and lists the available food as black bread fried with olive oil, tea, boiled wheat, pumpkin stew, chicken and potatoes.<sup>55</sup> This diet was obviously inadequate in comparison to Australian standards but was typical of the Turkish diet at the time.

Çankiri was an example of improved conditions. Initially, food there consisted of the traditional stews as described previously. However, on receiving 86 piastres each from the American Embassy ‘things began to look up’. They could buy eggs, flour, meat, potatoes, raisins, bread, butter and onions and anything else required. They also purchased their own plates, cups, basins, knives and forks, frying pans, cooking pots, wood and charcoal. Cooking

<sup>53</sup> Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years*, p. 30.

<sup>54</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp.124, 126, 133.

<sup>55</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, pp. 30-32, 84.

was performed around small fires outside or within the cookhouse.<sup>56</sup> However, McLean played down the food available at Çankiri the same time by stating ‘very little food receiving about 2 ozs of meat and 6 ozs of wheat a day’.<sup>57</sup>

Writing from Haji-Kiri in November 1917, Delpratt indicated that he was certainly receiving sufficient food and reported that a Christmas pudding was made in preparation for Christmas and that he had put on weight. An official photographer came to the camp and he hoped to have his photograph taken:

my present likeness would give you a pleasant surprise being decently free from angles and undoubtedly prosperous about the belt line, which now buckles full length without undergarments ... I’ve gorged like a carpet snake all day and like the carpet snake I’ll coil up for a good long sleep.<sup>58</sup>

He added later that ‘I am cheerful in having food and good clothing; excellent health and money’.<sup>59</sup> Some of the discrepancies in the prisoners’ recollections of food may have resulted from later faulty memories or the need to denigrate their captors. Similarly, more positive comments may have been made in contemporary letters to allay fears of their families.

Extra rations were also supplied by embassies and aid agencies such as the Australian Red Cross. However, these ‘comforts’ generally were not staples but additional luxuries to relieve the monotony of the prison diet. At times, particularly during the hard winter of 1917, famine was common in areas of Turkey. This affected the Turkish population in general and had an impact on camps’ supplies. Ashton explained that this was due to ‘the tremendous quantities the Germans have commandeered and railed to Germany’, leaving the local population in dire

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<sup>56</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>57</sup> Repatriation Statement of McLean, AWM 30 B1.35, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>58</sup> Letter dated 11/11/1917. Delpratt, Letters, AWM 3 DRL/2153 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* Letter dated 25/11/1917.

straits. Towards the end of the war, the Dutch Embassy was sending sacks of staples such as dried beans and wheat to prisoner camps.<sup>60</sup>

Officers had money to purchase a range of produce at local bazaars and markets and meals were prepared by orderlies. McDonald observed that at Afyon 'there was no scarcity of food provided one had money to buy it'.<sup>61</sup> At Kastamonu, breakfast commonly consisted of two eggs, bread, butter, honey and a cup of milk; lunch of soup, meat, vegetables and fruit and dinner, of soup, meat, rice pilaf or pasta and fruit. Woolley commented that the food was 'not bad' but monotonous. At Kedos, the officers' breakfast consisted of bread, cracked wheat (burghul) and coffee and sometimes eggs and butter-milk. Dinner consisted of stew, eggs or cold salad and stewed fruit.<sup>62</sup>

Hingorani argues that there was a universal problem of camp canteens, including overpricing and inferior goods with administrators profiteering from transactions.<sup>63</sup> Throughout 1916, accusations were made against the Afyon Commandant, Masloum Bey and his deputy for profiteering from the camp's canteen and for pilfering mail and money sent to prisoners.<sup>64</sup> Lushington accused the Commandant of ransacking parcels and selling the contents to merchants in town and Griffiths also accused him of taking money and parcels.<sup>65</sup> However, O'Connor arrived around September 1916, whilst Mouslem Bey was still in charge, and noted that they 'managed to live fairly well. We received money through the American Ambassador – from 40 to 100 piastres per month ... still stuff was cheap enough'.<sup>66</sup>

Colonel Zia Bey, the Turkish camp inspector, removed Commandant Mouslem Bey because of his corrupt practices. House rents were reduced and prisoners were allowed to purchase

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<sup>60</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A Battye Library, Perth, p. 104.

<sup>61</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, AWM 30 B1.22, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>62</sup> Woolley, From *Kastamuni*, p. 5, 76.

<sup>63</sup> Hingorani, *POWs*, p. 125.

<sup>64</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>65</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 63; Repatriation Statement of Griffiths, AWM 30 B1-16, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>66</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

from the open bazaar, instead of the camp-controlled canteen. However, kerosene ran out in the winter of 1917. Bailey complained that during the winter of 1917-1918 fuel was never supplied.<sup>67</sup> In an interview with the British POW Committee in 1917, Mr Vischer of the International Red Cross confirmed the dire situation in Turkey in regards to fuel. He noted Turkey was in its fourth war within six years and ‘there is a great lack of wood for the construction of huts and there is no wood for heating. They have no coal – the only Turkish mine being on the Black Sea’.<sup>68</sup>

### **Correspondence**

Receiving correspondence from home had an enormous impact on prisoners. Mail to and from Turkey was initially haphazard and poorly administered. The delays were exacerbated by the long distances between Australia and Europe and interruptions to sea transport. It took up to nine months for letters to travel from Australia to Turkey and often as long to travel between Britain and Turkey. Prisoners were at first restricted to official postcards of four lines. As time went on, restrictions were relaxed until by 1918 prisoners could write as many letters as they liked. Postage was free and transport was provided by the Turkish military.<sup>69</sup> Despite the early restrictions, many prisoners wrote longer letters home. Randall’s letters varied from four to eight lines in 1915 and up to fifteen lines in 1916.<sup>70</sup> Communication was made easier in the latter part of the war. Casual and more lenient postal arrangements were suggested by Delpratt when he commented that ‘by sending this early in the morning by a Frenchman who is going to Belemelik it ought to catch the mail’. At Hadji-Kiri in November 1917, Delpratt explained ‘by a new arrangement our letters go on Monday instead of Sunday morning. This enables us to write them on Sunday’.<sup>71</sup> At Kirchehir, Bailey noted that the Commandant ‘gave special

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<sup>67</sup> Confidential Statement by Bailey, London, 17 December 1918, AWM B1.2, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>68</sup> Interview between Mr Vischer and the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British POWs, March 13, 1917. PRO FO 383/333/1917.

<sup>69</sup> Repatriation Statements of Beattie AWM 30 B18.8, AWM Canberra; Brown AWM 30 B18.8, AWM Canberra; Carpenter, Service records B2455, NAA Canberra; Dowell, AWM 30, AWM Canberra; Dunne, Service records B2455, NAA Canberra; Mc Donald AWM 30 B1.22, AWM Canberra.

<sup>70</sup> Randall Family Papers, MSB 401 MS 11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

<sup>71</sup> Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra.

facilities for writing to embassies, signing letters himself so as to ensure delivery'.<sup>72</sup> Letter writing was often a challenge, with scarcity of writing material and facilities and Cahir explained: 'I wrote a letter to you yesterday but cannot send it for want of an envelope. You will guess from this that note-paper is a luxury and we swoop down on every scrap of cardboard we set eyes on'.<sup>73</sup>

Official censoring occurred for both incoming and outgoing mail. Jordan noted that letters were often opened by a Turkish officer in front of the recipient but Mc Donald added that 'censoring was not very strict'.<sup>74</sup> Many letters and cards making various complaints were sent to the Australian Red Cross uncensored. The Red Crescent Society complained to the International Red Cross that some letters sent to Turkey were written in invisible ink and if the practice continued it would result in more scrupulous censorship and further delays.<sup>75</sup>

**Fig. 6:4: A Red Cross Acknowledgement Card for receipt of parcels. (AWM 1DRL/428)**

Australian Red Cross Acknowledgment Card.

Date 25<sup>th</sup> August 1916

I have received Parcel (s) Two

Marked one 24 and clothes sent Feb 1916

Contents as per list enclosed in parcel.

Name Ronald Lally McDonald Capt Regtl. No.

Battalion 16<sup>th</sup> Bn A.I.F.

Full Address: Afion Kara Hisar  
Turkey

The arrival of parcels from home containing much missed treats was gratefully received.

However, complaints were often made that letters and parcels went astray or took so long to

<sup>72</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM Canberra.

<sup>73</sup> Postcard to Miss O'Brien, 6/6/1916. Cahir, Assorted Papers, AWM PRO 0185, AWM Canberra.

<sup>74</sup> Repatriation Statements of Jordan, AWM 30 B1.17 and McDonald AWM 30 B1.22, AWM Canberra.

<sup>75</sup> Miss Chomley's Papers, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 2, AWM Canberra.

arrive in Turkey. Generally the Turkish postal system was blamed but there were other factors involved. Initially, with little time to organise POW matters, and under the pressure of a wartime society, mail was unreliable. The volume of mail and parcels sent from Britain to Turkey was enormous and obviously more than the over-burdened Turkish postal system could handle. By 23 December 1916, the Red Crescent had transmitted 30,303 parcels to POWs throughout Turkey.<sup>76</sup> It took parcels from two to nine months to arrive in Istanbul from Britain. When criticisms were made of the delays in postage, US Ambassador Elkus explained that the Turks were trying to deliver mail under difficult conditions:

These parcels upon their arrival in Constantinople are sent to a Post Office storehouse on the quay near the bridge. The Red Crescent Society has them inspected there and sorted and addressed properly in all cases where necessary. Those arriving in a dilapidated condition and requiring repacking, and those having illegible addresses, or addressed to deceased prisoners or to prisoners whose whereabouts are not known are taken to the Red Crescent Society Headquarters in Stamboul where they are sorted out and repacked.<sup>77</sup>

Elkus confirmed that the main reason for the delays was that parcels were held up in Vienna and other parts of Europe, 'but I believe that once having reached Constantinople they are sent out to the prisoners in the internment camps in Asia Minor without very great delay. I have no information to indicate that parcels are lost or stolen between Constantinople and the prison camps in the interior'.<sup>78</sup> He claimed that a member of the US Embassy toured the Red Crescent facilities recently 'and the work seemed to be progressing satisfactorily. He was informed that there were no parcels there which had been received more than twenty days previously'.<sup>79</sup> The Turkish Government was also co-operative in allowing neutral vessels to unload supplies for POWs at the port of Mersin. All that was required was 'to be informed in

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<sup>76</sup> Correspondence between the US Ambassador and the British Foreign Office, 2/2/1917, A11 803/1 1917/89/488, NAA Canberra.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.* The bridge referred to was most probably the Galata Bridge in the centre of Istanbul.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.* In the post-war period, the British Government ignored this evidence and embraced the version given by Rev. Frew who stated that 'the allegations that the Turks misappropriated parcels are fully confirmed', citing one example. [naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/ShowImages.asp?B=3532190S=16&T=R](http://naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/ShowImages.asp?B=3532190S=16&T=R). Retrieved 4/7/2003.

advance of name, nationality and date of arrival of vessels'.<sup>80</sup> Many prisoners also moved camp several times during their internment, so that letters often pursued them back and forth across Turkey. Beattie provided a description of the rather cumbersome system of postage that could prolong delivery.<sup>81</sup> Miss Chomley acknowledged that the Turkish system was often chaotic, as 'the Turks seem to be fearful muddlers, but not as a rule, ill-natured'.<sup>82</sup> By the end of the war, there were still stockpiles of parcels in Istanbul.

As noted by Ambassador Elkus, the main delays of the mail occurred in Austria. At various intervals, the Austrian Government blocked mail routes bound for Turkey for months at a time. A British Foreign Office confidential memo alerted the Australian Red Cross to the fact that 'transport through Austria or parcels for prisoners in Turkey had been suspended until further notice' in March 1917. The Foreign Office requested that the US Ambassador in Vienna relay to the Austro-Hungarian Government their annoyance at this restriction and that 'the British government will consider reprisals against Austrian and Hungarian POWs in British hands'.<sup>83</sup>

Vischer of the International Red Cross reported that parcels sent through the American Embassy arrived 'eventually – for instance at Ismidt they got their Christmas parcels but they arrived two weeks too late'. Yet he also pointed out that one prisoner at Ismidt received a letter from Britain in 18 days.<sup>84</sup> In the British POW Report, no reference was made to the official delays made both at their own behest or that of the Austrian Government. They placed the blame squarely on the Turkish government, ignoring the previous evidence provided by the US Ambassador and others:

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<sup>80</sup> Note from the US Embassy via US Embassy, London, 22/8/1916, Miss Chomley's Uncatalogued Material, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 2, AWM Canberra.

<sup>81</sup> After being censored, the mail 'would be sorted out into the different districts; the letters for a district would be tied into a bundle and be sent to the Commander of that district, who would give them to the British Sergeant in charge to distribute. If a prisoner was not in the district his letters would be given back to the Commander who would forward them to another district'. Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM Canberra.

<sup>82</sup> Letter dated 11/5/1917. ARC POW File of Lightfoot, 1 DRL/428, Box 118, AWM Canberra.

<sup>83</sup> Confidential Memo of 24/3/1917, British Foreign Office, NAA A11 803/1 1917/89/488.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Mr Vischer, PRO FO 383/333 (1917).

All communication with the world outside is endlessly uncertain and broken. Between these prisoners and their friends at home, who only ask to be allowed to send them the help they need, there lies a mass of corrupt and torpid inefficiency, a barrier almost impossible to overcome ...<sup>85</sup>

The POWs often complained of the delays in the mail and generally blamed the Turkish system, oblivious to the delays in Austria and official government embargoes. In a response to Bailey who had apparently complained of the lack of parcels in September 1918, Miss Chomley replied:

I do not know whether you fully understand over there how often the parcel post is closed by Austria, and nothing can get through. I am glad to say that on 1 August, it opened again and we have been sending a much more ample supply of parcels ... but we are hampered in every direction by rules ... and apparently very little of what we send ever reaches its destination.<sup>86</sup>

### **Role of the British government**

The British War Office also played a role in the delay or cessation of parcels being sent to Turkey that had a negative impact on the lives of the prisoners. The Australian Red Cross was refused permission to send clothing parcels to Turkey a year after such parcels were sent to POWs in Germany. No reason was given. A confidential memo from the British War Office to Miss Chomley in September 1916 announced that 'the dispatch of clothing for POWs in Germany dated 25/10/1915 can now apply to Turkey'. They could now send one greatcoat, jacket, trousers, boots, flannel shirt, woollen drawers, two pairs of socks, a felt hat and kit bag. A month later, another flannel shirt, woollen drawers, cardigan waistcoat and pair of canvas shoes could be sent. A warning was added that the contents of the letter were not to be released to either the public or the press.<sup>87</sup> It is not clear why this decision was confidential other than an attempt to sway public opinion against the Ottoman government. In a burst of

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<sup>85</sup> British POW Committee Report, AWM 940/472 T784

<sup>86</sup> Letter dated 7/9/1918. ARC POW File of Bailey, 1 DRL/428, Box 19, AWM Canberra.

<sup>87</sup> Confidential Memo from British War Office, London, 27/9/1916. Miss Chomley's Uncatalogued Material, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 2, AWM Canberra.

extravagance, the War Office then announced that ‘two towels and three handkerchiefs’ could be sent every six months.<sup>88</sup>

In addition, the War Office also banned the dispatch of army uniforms to prisoners in Turkey. In November 1916, Miss Chomley received a memo from the British War Office announcing that ‘it has been found desirable to prohibit the sending of service dress uniforms to British POWs in Turkey’.<sup>89</sup> The Australian Government appears to have been unaware of this official ruling. The Australian High Commission forwarded a letter from Lightfoot’s father who ‘raises the question of the supply of uniforms to the Australian prisoners’. He received a letter from his son saying that the Australians were the only prisoners to be without a uniform and that they would be useful going into a cold winter. The High Commission apparently thought that the POW Department would have sufficient political influence to solve this problem and addressed them directly.<sup>90</sup>

The Australian Government had little influence overall with the British administration of the POWs. Carpenter complained in 1918 that both British and New Zealand prisoners had received uniforms. Miss Chomley was baffled and explained: ‘We have been forbidden to send uniforms, and I cannot understand how it is the New Zealanders have received theirs’.<sup>91</sup>

After the United States entered the war, the British Government created a Relief Committee at Aleppo, controlled by the Spanish Consul, to provide relief for those camps in the far eastern section of the Ottoman Empire. The Aleppo connection was a disaster. From late 1917, the

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<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, Memo dated 5/11/1916.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.* Confidential Letter from British War Office, London, 4/11/1916, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 2, AWM Canberra.

<sup>90</sup> Memo from the Australian High Commission, Australia House, London, 20/8/1917 to Miss Chomley. Miss Chomley’s Uncatalogued Material, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 2.

<sup>91</sup> Letter dated 1/6/1918. ARC POW File of Carpenter, 1 DRL/428, Box 33, AWM Canberra.

men at Belemelik received no payment from the Spanish consul for seven months.<sup>92</sup>

Rawlings was appalled and formally complained. He was aided by the Turkish War Office Inspector, Colonel Zia Bey to regain regular payments and Red Cross parcels.<sup>93</sup>

In August 1917 the Red Cross was stopped from sending clothing but the British Government authorised the Dutch Ambassador to spend '£70,000 a month on the purchase of food and clothing and in relief allowances'.<sup>94</sup> Some of the goods distributed by the Dutch Legation included cans of food, overcoats, pants, quinine, aspirin, socks, playing cards, musical instruments and games. However, these arrangements were highly criticised by the prisoners themselves. To counter the complaints made by some of the men about the Dutch supplies, the Embassy argued: 'to my great satisfaction the Royal Legation has sent this year to the English POWs even more articles than the American Embassy during the same period of last year'.<sup>95</sup> However, the British Committee on POWs recognized that there was a problem with the Dutch supplies and commented that the Dutch Ambassador was elderly with a Bavarian wife, so it was 'very necessary to infuse more energy into the proceedings of the Dutch at Constantinople'.<sup>96</sup>

The AIF played a very minor role in caring for the prisoners as it was the official role of the Red Cross POW Department to do this. However, a letter from the AIF Chief Paymaster in London to the Australian Red Cross revealed the ignorance of the military of the actual situation of the prisoners: 'I note with interest that you are sending 10/- fortnightly, Red Cross money, to our POWs in Turkey, so that pending further inquiries by the High Commissioner,

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<sup>92</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley, 28/4/1918. Rawlings noted the odd assortment of food supplies sent from Aleppo, consisting of '1.3 kilos beans, 426 kilos figs, 327 kilos raisins and 59 cigarettes per man'. ARC POW File of Rawlings, 1DRL/428, Box 171, AWM Canberra.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940/472 T784, AWM Canberra.

<sup>95</sup> *Comforts for British POWs*, AWM 13 70 17/1/34, AWM Canberra.

<sup>96</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British POWs, 28/6/1917. PRO FO 383/333/1917, PRO London.

the men will not be quite penniless'.<sup>97</sup> A further letter to the Australian High Commission on the same day highlights the issue:

With the entry of America into the war, I understand that the work of the American Embassy in this connection was taken over by the Netherlands Consul at Constantinople, though I am unable to state whether payments are being continued ... Perhaps you will be good enough to take the matter up and ascertain whether POWs in Turkey are being paid ...<sup>98</sup>

### **Patriotic funds and the role of the Australian Red Cross**

Patriotic funds that sprang up in both Britain and Australia also played a major role in supporting the POWs. At first a multitude of patriotic funds, mostly operating independently, were formed.<sup>99</sup> These groups varied enormously, from small town committees, local branches of the Red Cross, school groups or simply concerned citizens. Diverse examples included the 'Pupils of State School 3442, Cotswolds,' who sent a parcel worth 10/6d 'for any POW' and the Lithgow Branch of the Red Cross that sent pillows and note-paper.<sup>100</sup> The Blackburn POW Help Committee sent Bailey parcels each fortnight from May 1916 as he was 'a native of this town'.<sup>101</sup> In 1916 Lady Victoria Herbert's Scheme for British POWs sent parcels to various prisoners, including 36/- a quarter for parcels to Troy.<sup>102</sup> Initially the various groups did not have any understanding of what each was contributing. Lady Herbert's Scheme provided a genteel reprimand to the Australian Red Cross when it agreed to send a parcel to Calcutt, obviously unaware that the Australians were already sending supplies, by commenting: 'Perhaps the Australian POW Fund would prefer to send parcels to their own men?'<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Letter dated 31/8/1917. ARC POW File of Cahir, 1DRL/428, Box 31, AWM Canberra.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, letter dated 31/8/1917 from the Chief Paymaster, AIF.

<sup>99</sup> See M. Oppenheimer, *All Work, No Pay*, Ohio Productions, Walcha, 2002, for a broad discussion of the role of the patriotic funds in World War I.

<sup>100</sup> Miss Chomley's papers, 1 DRL 0615, Box 62, 14 of 48, AWM Canberra.

<sup>101</sup> Parcel dated 24/7/1916. ARC W & M File of Bailey, Box 18, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>102</sup> ARC POW File of Troy, 1 DRL/428, Box 211, AWM Canberra.

<sup>103</sup> Letter dated 1/12/1916. ARC POW File of Calcutt, 1 DRL/428, Box 31, AWM Canberra.

Members of the general public also played a role early in the war until regulations were tightened. In 1916 O'Callaghan received a welcome parcel from Harrods from a Miss Hichens from Britain containing margarine, 1 tin peaches, 1 tin beef, chicken and tongue paste, Oxo cubes, 1 cake, sardines and packets of syrup and 1 packet of cocoa.<sup>104</sup> Miss Cameron from Winchelsea requested that 16/9 be spent on procuring tea, milk, sugar, margarine, jam, biscuits, quaker oats, soup tablets, rice, tinned vegetables and asked Miss Chomley to 'kindly procure one tin Brompton Ox tongue at Harrods 3/6', to be sent on to Delpratt.<sup>105</sup>

The supplies sent to the POWs by the various agencies cannot be said to have saved lives, though supplies of quinine relieved the symptoms of malaria. However, they provided various practical items such as soap and razors and much needed reminders of home. No doubt the Ottoman Government was willing to accept additional supplies for POWs in their care. The maintenance of POWs was a burden with thousands of prisoners requiring clothing, food and accommodation. Enver Pasha, referring to the Hague Convention, stated that:

POWs are being treated in the same manner with respect to food, clothing etc as Ottoman soldiers and that many of them being accustomed to better standards of living complain of this treatment, their respective governments may furnish them with anything that they may desire in addition to the rations etc supplied to them by the Ottoman Government.<sup>106</sup>

The Australian Red Cross POW Department played a major role in the lives of prisoners. It provided news of the prisoners to families, corresponded directly with prisoners and sent money, clothing and 'comforts'. From May 1916, Miss Vera Deakin, the 24 years old daughter of former Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, ran the Australian Bureau of the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau in London.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> POW File of O'Callaghan, 1 DRL/428, Box 155, AWM Canberra.

<sup>105</sup> Letter dated 26/5/1917. ARC POW File of Delpratt, 1 DRL/428, Box 52, AWM Canberra.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from the US Embassy, 2/6/1916 to British Foreign Office, CP 78/24 1914/89/364, NAA Canberra.

<sup>107</sup> Oppenheimer, *All Work, No Pay*, p. 54ff.

Fig. 6:5: Miss Chomley (AWM HO1366)

The Australian Red Cross POW Department was also located in London and was headed by another formidable Australian woman, Miss Elizabeth Chomley. The Department packed parcels for the POWs, the amount and delivery times varying throughout the war. Miss Chomley explained that they operated on the goodwill of full-time female volunteers:

We had to depend on ladies coming in for only short hours, who did not really understand the work or know the men individually as we regular workers do, and I was always in a state of anxiety as to what little slip they might make, which seems small at this end, but I know is important to you.<sup>108</sup>



The expertise developed by the volunteers was obviously crucial to the smooth operation of the POW Department. Miss Chomley gently turned down an offer from a volunteer offering to help for half a day a week, by explaining: ‘Thank you so much for your kind offer of help. I fear that so short a time would not be of any use. Our work is so complicated that it is impossible to pick up the threads, if any long interval occurs between the working days’.<sup>109</sup> With thousands of parcels being sent to both Germany and Turkey each week, it was an enormous enterprise.

The Australian Red Cross parcel service commenced in October 1916 with fortnightly supplies of tobacco and food sent to each man. Foster received parcels by the end of 1916 at Afyon and Miss Chomley declared that ‘You are the first of all our POWs in Turkey who has

<sup>108</sup> Miss Chomley to Bailey 27/9/1918. ARC POW File of Bailey, 1DRL/428, Box 19 AWM Canberra. Sgt. Bailey had taken exception to being addressed as *Private* Bailey.

<sup>109</sup> ARC POW File of Matthews, 1DRL/428, Box 129, AWM Canberra.

really received anything from us except postcards'.<sup>110</sup> By December 1916, a British Central POW Department was established to co-ordinate aid sent to POWs which often curtailed the work of the Australian POW Department. New regulations were introduced in December 1916 refusing permission for independent societies and individuals to send food parcels to the prisoners.<sup>111</sup> Parcels had to be sent through the Red Cross. Miss Chomley explained the reason for the slowness of parcels:

we are told by the Central POWs not to send more than one a fortnight as they thought a fewer number of parcels would ensure a more prompt delivery. This has not been the case and now other arrangements are being made ... We will send you a 15 lb parcel once a fortnight by the American Express Company, who have undertaken to try to get the things across Austria without delay.<sup>112</sup>

She also explained to Kerr that delays were imposed at the British end: 'We have been very upset lately because of the Post Office was not able to accept any parcels for your part of the world at all'.<sup>113</sup> Prisoners reported varying success in the delivery of parcels, perhaps depending on location of camps or the mobility of prisoners. Some received more than 25 parcels yet others complained that many went astray or were rifled. Dowell complained that he received about 8 percent of parcels sent; McDonald estimated approximately 50 percent of parcels whilst Lightfoot commented that 'I have received my parcels very regularly: I am glad to say that most of the other Australians in this camp are the same'.<sup>114</sup> Bailey complained that during his period in Turkey, he only received thirteen parcels and that 'two of the parcels that I received have been opened and more than half of the contents stolen and the parcels sewn up again'.<sup>115</sup> By April 1918, Miss Chomley commented that mail sent from Turkey was arriving much more regularly: 'It is very nice now to get letters from you all so frequently. It has taken

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<sup>110</sup> ARC POW File of Foster, 1DRL/428, Box 67, AWM Canberra.

<sup>111</sup> ARC POW File of Ashton, 1DRL/428, Box 7, AWM Canberra.

<sup>112</sup> Letter dated 29/5/1918. ARC POW File of Bailey, 1DRL/428, Box 19, AWM Canberra.

<sup>113</sup> Letter dated 10/5/1918. ARC POW File of Kerr, 1 DRL/428 Box 111, AWM Canberra.

<sup>114</sup> Repatriation Statements of Dowell, AWM 30, AWM Canberra and McDonald AWM 30 B1.22, AWM Canberra; ARC POW File of Lightfoot, 1DRL/428, Box 118, AWM Canberra.

<sup>115</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM Canberra.

a long time to get into communication with you'.<sup>116</sup> Parcels were even delivered to isolated spots such as the Red Crescent farm at Serai-Ici near Edirne, close to the present Bulgarian border.<sup>117</sup>

The receipt of parcels meant a great deal to the men. Luscombe commented on the importance placed by the men on such deliveries:

I have now received altogether twenty parcels from the Australian Red Cross. The contents of these parcels are quite invaluable to us, as the articles they contain are unobtainable locally ... During the last fortnight we have received quite a lot of mail. I was quite fortunate – I received altogether 43 letters and cards, varying in date from early in July to October 7, 1917, feel considerably 'bucked up' for the moment in consequence.<sup>118</sup>

Rawlings commented in June 1917 that 'things are pretty fair here with us and your parcels make a great difference in our condition'. Delpratt described the arrival of a 'grand parcel' that was:

unpacked in the centre of admiration. You people will never know just how much brightness the money, parcels and letters you send bring with them. Will you please give Mrs Waddell my warm affection and remembrances and tell her the plum pudding is being carefully treasured for Christmas.<sup>119</sup>

Later writing from Britain, Delpratt expressed his thanks to Miss Chomley: 'we were a quiet enough lot, not much given to excitement, but I am jolly sure no kid got more thrills from a Christmas stocking than we did from the wonders of our parcels. I don't know, I don't suppose a cove will ever get so excited again'.<sup>120</sup> Early in 1918, Rawlings wrote to Miss Chomley, noting appreciation for the arrival of Australian butter, jam and tobacco. 'The parcels we receive from the Australian Red Cross are better than those sent by any other society'.<sup>121</sup> Wiffen also appreciated the parcel of 'Australian goods; they were a great treat,

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<sup>116</sup> ARC W & M File of Rawlings, 1DRL/428, AWM Canberra.

<sup>117</sup> ARC POW File of Thomas, 1 DRL/428 Box 272, AWM, Canberra. He received money, parcels and boots.

<sup>118</sup> *British-Australasian*, Thursday 4 April 1918.

<sup>119</sup> Letter dated 25/11/1916. Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM Canberra.

<sup>120</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley dated 19/2/1919. ARC POW File of Delpratt, 1DRL/428, Box 52, AWM Canberra.

<sup>121</sup> ARC POW File of Rawlings, 1DRL/428, Box 171, AWM Canberra.

especially the good old Victorian butter and IXL jam'.<sup>122</sup> The men sometimes requested additional 'comforts' such as sweets, condiments and beverages unavailable in Turkey, as well as medical supplies. Brown asked his brother to send an odd assortment of items including cigarettes, pipe tobacco, razor blades, chlorodyne, quinine tablets, Epsom salts, three tubes of Colgate Dental cream, peas, soap, two blankets and a pair of boots.<sup>123</sup> In 1918 at San Stefano, Troy requested on behalf of 'the boys', jam, butter, dripping, tea, sugar, milk, honey, tobacco, salt, pepper, curry, soap, oats and bacon, though begged Miss Chomley 'not for one moment think that we are not satisfied with the parcels that you are sending us'.<sup>124</sup> The American Embassy also sent supplies for Christmas 1916, when the men at Belemedik received tea, sugar, cocoa, chocolate, syrup, puddings and bacon.<sup>125</sup> At times, the men provide advice for the packing of the parcels. Ashton suggested that sugar was such a precious commodity that it should never be packed in paper bags as it usually broke and was found scattered amongst the tobacco.<sup>126</sup>

Money was sometimes donated and simply addressed to 'An Australian Prisoner' or 'A Lonely POW'.<sup>127</sup> Miss Chomley's papers include lists of additional monies sent to individual prisoners, either from family members or local societies.<sup>128</sup> Ashton received a special 10/- parcel sent once a month from a Miss Stockman.<sup>129</sup> Foster's benefactors included 5/- from Cpl. Luxton, £1/13/4 from Mrs Wheeler, 18/8d from the Australian Comforts Fund and another donor sending 10/-.<sup>130</sup> Jordan, originally from Lismore NSW, received considerable funds for several years from the Lismore Soldiers Aid Society, Miss L. Watson, Lismore, and the Lismore Christmas Cheer Up Committee.<sup>131</sup> Individuals and families could also send

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<sup>122</sup> Telegram dated 29/5/1918. ARC W & M File of Wiffen, 1DRL/428, Box 294, AWM Canberra.

<sup>123</sup> Letter dated 28/6/ 1917. ARC POW File of Brown, 1DRL/428, Box 26, AWM Canberra.

<sup>124</sup> ARC POW File of Troy, 1DRL/428, Box 211, AWM Canberra.

<sup>125</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM Canberra.

<sup>126</sup> Letter dated 16/6/1918. ARC POW File of Ashton, 1DRL/428, Box 7, AWM Canberra.

<sup>127</sup> Miss Chomley's File, 1 DRL 615 Box 62, 17 of 48, AWM Canberra.

<sup>128</sup> Papers of Miss Chomley, 1 DRL/615 749/1920, Box 62, AWM Canberra.

<sup>129</sup> ARC POW File of Ashton, 1DRL/428, Box 7, AWM Canberra.

<sup>130</sup> ARC POW File of Foster, 1DRL/428, Box 67, AWM Canberra.

<sup>131</sup> ARC POW File of Jordan, 1DRL/428, Box 107, AWM Canberra.

additional money to the Red Cross to pay for extra parcels. Earlier in the war, Brown's father sent money regularly.<sup>132</sup> Calcutt's mother sent a postal order of 12/6 for some 'comforts' such as condensed milk, tea, coffee and saccharine tablets.<sup>133</sup>

Miss Chomley took it upon herself to counsel and comfort both prisoners and their families and it proved to be an exhaustive endeavour. She wrote hundreds of letters and she showed intimate knowledge of some of the men's lives. She was active in furthering the cause of 'her boys'. She encouraged relatives to use any political influence they may have with the British Government to speed up the process in repatriating the Gallipoli POWs. In 1916 she encouraged Lushington's aunt and uncle to write to Lord Robert Cecil, British Member of Parliament and Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. She was concerned that British officers from Kut would ensure that their men were released before the Gallipoli prisoners. She commented that the new POW Committee under the leadership of Colonel Keeling was active in educating public opinion on this matter 'as the more the Government feels that public opinion is at an end, the more likely they are to take steps'.<sup>134</sup>

### **Clothing**

Cold weather with insufficient clothing and modes of heating were common complaints of POWs.<sup>135</sup> This was a particular problem for prisoners from warmer climates such as Australia and India and supplies of clothing and footwear were welcomed from the American and Dutch embassies, the Australian Red Cross Society and initially from the Turkish Government in 1915. Although the Hague Convention stated that clothing should be provided by the captor nation, Turkey had difficulty in clothing its own army, let alone thousands of prisoners. However, the Red Crescent played a major role in distributing parcels and clothing, transported by rail at the expense of the Turkish War Ministry.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> ARC POW File of Brown, 1DRL/428 Box 26, AWM Canberra.

<sup>133</sup> ARC POW File of Calcutt, 1 DRL/428, Box 31, AWM Canberra.

<sup>134</sup> Letters dated July 1918. ARC W & M File of Lushington, 1 DRL/428, AWM Canberra.

<sup>135</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, p. 84.

<sup>136</sup> *Comforts for British POWs*, AWM 13, 7017/1/34, AWM Canberra.

At Angora, Luscombe received a parcel from the American Embassy in December 1915 that contained much needed supplies of civilian clothes, blankets, greatcoats, tinned food, tea and coffee. He received a suit of clothes, two shirts, underwear and a greatcoat. Luscombe had been wearing shorts, and with the approach of winter, was particularly grateful for long trousers. The prisoners also had a visit from a Red Crescent official who berated the Commandant for the meagre supplies provided and organised for the men to receive further supplies from a warehouse. 'We were now supplied with all the mod. cons. necessary for civilised living, including bed linen, sheets, pillows, towels, enamel basins, soap, razors, hair brushes, cutlery and crockery'.<sup>137</sup> Some prisoners were provided with clothing before they left Istanbul. Later camp photos show an array of apparel but generally the men were adequately clothed. At Çankiri, on 20 November 1915, the first consignment of clothes sent by the American Embassy arrived for the lower ranks. Beattie received trousers and a blanket. In December they received a further Turkish lira each, more clothes and a towel. By December, Beattie had a full suit of clothing.<sup>138</sup> A photograph of the men at Çankiri in 1915 shows them quite well clothed (see Fig. 5:17).

One of the difficulties for the Australian Red Cross was to ensure the correct sizing for clothing. Often prisoners had to swap clothes and boots until they found a set to fit. Elston stoically outlined his particular problem when he explained: 'Being six foot high I am sorry to say the civilian clothes were too small but they came in for some others ... However, I thank you for all your trouble and kindness'.<sup>139</sup> By 1918 it appears that various camps had sufficient clothing. Delpratt was able to provide extra sets of clothes to newly arrived prisoners as 'we have all of us had clothing parcels and are fairly well situated'.<sup>140</sup> Kerr obviously had a sufficient wardrobe to request extra linen handkerchiefs and three 'soft, fancy' shirts but then explained to Miss Chomley that he hoped he had not given her the impression that he urgently

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<sup>137</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>138</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>139</sup> ARC POW File of Elston, 1DRL/428, Box 60, AWM Canberra.

<sup>140</sup> Letter dated 5/1/1918. Delpratt, *Letters*, 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM Canberra.

needed clothes. He also requested a uniform, explaining it would be more serviceable than other clothes provided, 'but also for those who have their personal appearance to consider'.<sup>141</sup>

Despite centralised control, it appears that some agencies did not adhere strictly to the official restrictions imposed. McDonald complained to Miss Chomley that New Zealanders and British received more money and parcels than the Australians. It was explained that the Australians 'have been adhering to rules rather too strictly' so will now be sending two extra parcels or 10/- a week'.<sup>142</sup> Following a similar complaint by Dunne that the New Zealanders again received regularly more money and parcels than the Australians, Miss Chomley replied:

We were told not to send more than one (parcel) a fortnight ... We did so, as we understood we had to obey the rules. The New Zealanders were wiser and sent parcels much more often, in the hope that some at any rate would arrive, and this seems to have happened ... I think the New Zealanders were quite right to do as they thought best, and I wish we had not given in about it as we did.<sup>143</sup>

Opinions about the quality of clothing varied. By 1916, Luscombe noted that at Afyon, the officers 'were now fairly well supplied with warm clothing. We had comfortable beds and bedding'.<sup>144</sup> However, in White's published account, he complained at the same time, that the clothes sent by the American Embassy was an 'assortment ... as diverse and tawdry as a pedlar's outfit ... ill-fitting or clumsily altered, worn incongruously with much creased and ragged khaki ... must have looked like a playground of lunatics'.<sup>145</sup> White's description is certainly not born out by the photograph taken of the officers at Afyon a year later in December 1917. They had either received more new clothes or White was exaggerating (see Fig. 5:5).

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<sup>141</sup> Letters dated 28/10/1917 and 9/1/1918. ARC POW File of Kerr, 1DRL/428, Box 111, AWM Canberra.

<sup>142</sup> Letter from Mrs Reid to Luscombe, 2/4/1918. ARC POW File of Luscombe, 1DRL/428 Box 122, AWM Canberra.

<sup>143</sup> ARC POW File of Dunne, 1DRL/428, Box 57, AWM Canberra.

<sup>144</sup> Luscombe, *ibid*, p. 81.

<sup>145</sup> White, *Guests*, p.142. He is describing the same place and time as Luscombe.

At Afyon around Christmas 1916, the Commandant provided a set of clothes for each prisoner sent by the American Embassy, comprising 'one suit of thin underclothing, an overcoat, pair of socks and pair of boots and toilet necessaries'.<sup>146</sup> The men often complained that the clothing provided by the Dutch and Spanish embassies later in the war were of inferior quality. Beattie noted that:

The only clothes we received in Turkey were from the American Ambassador and the Dutch and Spanish Consuls ... about five suits of clothes, six sets of underclothes, five pairs of boots and four overcoats. For about the last 12 months, the clothes supplied to the working camp were of very poor quality. The suits of clothes were of a sort of grey coloured loosely woven canvas, very poor wearing stuff, and the boots averaged about two months wear. Clothing seemed to be very scarce and hard to get in Turkey.<sup>147</sup>

Brown corroborated this observation by describing the clothing sent by the American embassy as 'good', but the Dutch clothing as 'poor stuff', lasting only three months.<sup>148</sup> The importance placed on a sturdy pair of boots by the prisoners is emphasized. Delpratt described taking delivery of 87 pairs of boots at Belemedik:

they are better quality and stouter than those sent along previously and look like going more than a week. It is a fact that some previous issues didn't last that long. I still wear to work the boots I got at the beginning of 1915. They are much admired and the uppers are still without a patch.<sup>149</sup>

## **Payments**

As well as receiving food and clothing supplies from the Australian Red Cross, payments were made to POWs in accordance with the Hague Convention. Prisoners received the same rates of pay as their equivalent rank in the captor's army. For the first six months of the war Britain and Germany could not agree on the rates of pay, so Britain reduced the pay for German, Austrian and Turkish officers to 4/- a day for Lieutenants and 4/6 a day for Captains and all officers of higher rank. In June 1915, the Turkish Government proposed that full pay should be issued in accordance with The Hague Convention, but Britain continued to pay

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<sup>146</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>147</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>148</sup> Repatriation Statement of Brown, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>149</sup> Letter dated 14/4/1918. Delpratt, Letters, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra.

Turkish officers the reduced amount as above ‘and asked them to pay our officers at reciprocal rates’.<sup>150</sup> Thus the reduction in payments made in Turkey was due to an official decision by the British Government and not at the whim of the Turkish authorities as believed by the men. Initially, the officers in Turkey were paid the full Turkish equivalent. However, when the British would not reciprocate, the pay was reduced and levelled out at 700 piastres per month for officer ranks below Major.<sup>151</sup>

Additional payments were also received by the prisoners. The Dutch Embassy was asked to send £6 Turkish per month to each soldier. In addition, the Australian Red Cross sent £1 a month for extra food and one parcel a fortnight.<sup>152</sup> Meanwhile, the men’s army salary was credited to them and gradually accumulated in accounts. If they had dependent families, allowances were paid to them.<sup>153</sup> Prisoners could also allot small portions of their pay to the Australian Red Cross Society to send additional parcels.<sup>154</sup> The men could authorise the Red Cross to withdraw an amount from their pay, 10/- for privates and £2 for officers, per month to purchase additional parcels of ‘comforts’.<sup>155</sup> Overall, when payments were made regularly, it allowed prisoners to purchase additional food and other necessities from the local markets.

Not all members of the British Empire were treated equally. Indian prisoners received half the allowance received by the British.<sup>156</sup> A complication of payments appears to have arisen for Australian officers however, with the British Army Council showing petty concerns about Australian officers’ higher pay:

... officers in Turkey also receive an allowance of 5 Turkish liras per month from funds placed at the disposal of the Netherlands Ambassador by the War Office. The Army

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<sup>150</sup> Payments: Prisoners of War- Turkey – Miscellany, 21/2/1918, AWM 10 4332/7/30, AWM Canberra.

<sup>151</sup> Nominal Roll of POWs in Turkey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM Canberra. See McDonald’s list in Appendix 16.

<sup>152</sup> Letter from Miss Chomley to Brown’s father, 13/3/1918. ARC POW File of Brown, 1DRL/428, Box 26, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>153</sup> Prisoners of War, Turkey – Miscellany. AWM 10 4332/7/30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>154</sup> Prisoners of War, Financial Arrangements, 1/11/1917, AWM 10 4332/7/30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>155</sup> ARC POW File of O’Callaghan, 1DRL/428, Box 155, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>156</sup> POWs in Turkey – allowances, A11803 1918/89/453, NAA Canberra.

Council has ruled that these payments are ex gratia, but that rule will not necessarily follow in the case of Australian officers whose rates of pay are so much higher. It is presumed that the Imperial Authorities will claim on Australia for her proportion of the disbursement ... the Australian Red Cross will doubtless meet the claim.<sup>157</sup>

The Australian Government was concerned about this decision and suggested a more egalitarian approach, as they argued 'that it is very undesirable that through any delay our POWs should be placed in the unfortunate position of not receiving money when others were receiving it, and that we take the responsibility of asking that these payments be made to include all Australian POWs – both Officers and other ranks'.<sup>158</sup>

### **Officers**

Officers paid for their own upkeep and generally there was no real shortage of supplies except for kerosene running out in the winter of 1917. However, one of the greatest problems facing the officers was the rapid rate of inflation during the war years in Turkey. Stormonth noted:

in the early days of captivity, I could live for about 4 liras a month but lately it cost me nearly 40 liras a month. No alteration was made in our daily rate of pay when the Turkish Lira depreciated. The average exchange over the whole period for £1 was less than 140 pts. This I think should be inquired into.<sup>159</sup>

Inflation spread beyond the camp canteens to the local bazaars. It appears that merchants soon discovered that the prisoners had money to spend and increased prices accordingly. Beattie complained that wherever camps were established, inflation soon followed, with prices rising two to three times their original price.<sup>160</sup> At Yozgad, there was also a problem of purchasing sufficient heating fuel, lack of supplies and rising inflation. 'The general cost of living ... was about ten times the normal figure'.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Prisoners of War – Financial Arrangements, Turkey Officers, 1 November 1917. POWs in Turkey-Miscellany. AWM 10 4332/7/30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>158</sup> Response by Australian Government to High Commissioner, London, 26/3/1917. AWM 10 4332/7/30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>159</sup> Repatriation Statement of Stormonth, AWM 30 B1.30, AWM, Canberra. Inflation was a problem for all countries involved in the war. From August 1914 to 1918, Britain suffered 110 percent inflation and Germany 446 percent. See M. Brown, *The Imperial War Museum Book of the First World War*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1991.

<sup>160</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8

<sup>161</sup> British POW Committee Report, p.38. AWM 940.472.T784.

One way of dealing with this issue was to draw cheques on private accounts.<sup>162</sup> Individual private businesses in Turkey often cashed cheques for officers. On their return to Britain, several British officers voiced their concerns that such cheques cashed with Turkish businesses and individuals may not be honoured by British banks.<sup>163</sup>

### **Social life**

The development of a complex social life within camps was clearly needed to cope with the restricted and monotonous life of a POW. Once settled into camp life, prisoners tended to gravitate towards those with common interests. Social groups eventually formed around mutual interests in both sport and intellectual pursuits rather than earlier allegiances such as original battalions.<sup>164</sup> Both officers and soldiers created diversions to while away the time, such as language tuition, debating, theatrical productions, painting and drawing, writing and organised sports. A very broad intellectual life was developed in the Turkish camps, particularly by the officers who had more free time on their hands and thus a greater need to ward off boredom. Some activities were solitary and others required communal participation. Physical activities varied from communal walks, organised games or events that sometimes included the local population. Sport was popular and varied from local games within individual camps to inter-camp competitions. Authorities were reasonably accommodating in allowing rowdy play. During the early months at Afyon in January 1916, snow-ball fights broke out and much damage was caused by playing football. Kerr calculated that one of the footballs used 'has cost an amount of 100 piastres. That has been on account of the number of windows and lamps that have been broken'.<sup>165</sup> An example of inter-camp and inter-forces competition included the army playing the navy at cricket at Belemelik in June 1916.<sup>166</sup> Lushington explained that at Ada Bazar, the new Commandant arranged for students from the

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<sup>162</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, AWM 30 B1.22, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>163</sup> [naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/showimages.Br.353219](http://naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/showimages.Br.353219). Retrieved 4/7/2003.

<sup>164</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, p. 76.

<sup>165</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp.142, 147.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*, p. 200

local agricultural college to play football against the prisoners, who won.<sup>167</sup> Officers organised a University Hockey Match at Kedos between those prisoners who had attended university at Oxford or Cambridge.<sup>168</sup>

Delpratt's letters home provide entertaining details of everyday life in the camps of Belemedik and Hadji-Kiri. A major sports day was organised at Belemedik on the 31 March 1918 with the assistance of the Turkish authorities. Delpratt recounted how he was looking forward to the event and noted that 'I am feeling very fit for an attempt on the 100 metres, though I fear too much inside fat will prove inconvenient, over the last 30 metres'. The day after the big event, he wrote that it had been 'a grand success'. Noting that he had beaten malaria for the time being, he won the 100 metres race against 'a big field of French and English competitors', came second in the long jump, won the egg-and-spoon race and was third in the cricket ball throwing contest. He observed that the Frenchmen tended to scoop the pool and prepared a little speech titled 'The Wallaby Who Upheld British Prestige'. He was obviously proud of his victories as he added, 'You will excuse the skite but of course I was jolly pleased to find muscle and wind still good and you will be glad of this proof of my fitness'. The sports day was followed by an impromptu concert and he noted the importance of such a diversion for the men 'as the spirit of that sort of show is truly wonderful and is just as one man put it to the new arrivals when he said: "It is the refusal to allow anyone to break our hearts"'. Delpratt concluded that 'it has been a grand Easter holiday and a good deal of thanks is due to the Divisional Turkish Commandant who granted all requests...'.<sup>169</sup>

In May 1918 at Nissibin, Randall enjoyed a daily swim in the local river and a football match between the prisoners and the German 'transport fellows'. According to Randall's account in the *Avoca Free Press*, the prisoners won five goals to nil. This victory would indicate that the prisoners were in reasonable health at the time. 'Next week we have another match, also a

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<sup>167</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p. 86.

<sup>168</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 93.

<sup>169</sup> Letters dated 29/3/1918 and 14/4/1918. Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra.

feed and free drinks afterwards, so as you see life here is not so bad as one would think'.<sup>170</sup> In a previous report in the same newspaper, it was noted that 'letters which have reached England described football matches, in which 64 teams had taken part'.<sup>171</sup> The officers at Kastamuni hired a sports field for 15 liras and played cricket, football and soccer. They manufactured, bought or sent away for the required equipment. Boxing gloves were supplied by the Red Cross and officers organised boxing matches and made their own equipment for badminton. In early 1917 they made their own toboggans.<sup>172</sup>

Officers were allowed considerable freedom beyond camp confines, particularly if there had not been any recent attempts at escape or if, later in the war, the officers had accepted parole terms. This was in accordance with the Hague Convention. The men often displayed curiosity about the local environs, particularly if it held historical or natural interest. The officers in particular had the opportunity to act as tourists. At Angora in 1915, Luscombe recorded that officers were allowed a daily walk under guard along a stream and the men were able to explore the ancient ruins on the citadel overlooking the town. He also visited the Roman ruins that displayed the inscription of the Emperor Augustus, the 'Res Gestae', which Luscombe copied.<sup>173</sup> Later at Afyon in 1917, long walks were introduced. Luscombe wrote an account of one day's outing, 'A Day's Outing at Afyon Kara Hissar'. Accompanied by a Turkish officer, he first climbed the rocky citadel and inspected the ruins there, providing a detailed description. He looked down upon a 'magnificent view of the fertile plains and poppy fields'. They then walked cross-country to the opposite hill, looking down on a valley of vineyards and orchards. 'Sitting there on the grass-covered hillside and observing the seemingly prosperous and peaceful scene, it was difficult to realise the circumstances that had brought us here'. On the walk, 'our freedom was almost unrestricted ...We expressed our really sincere

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<sup>170</sup> Reported in the *Avoca Free Press*, 23 October 1918. *The Avoca Free Press* was a local newspaper in Avoca, Victoria, Randall's home town. Randall Family Papers, MS B401 BS 1287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

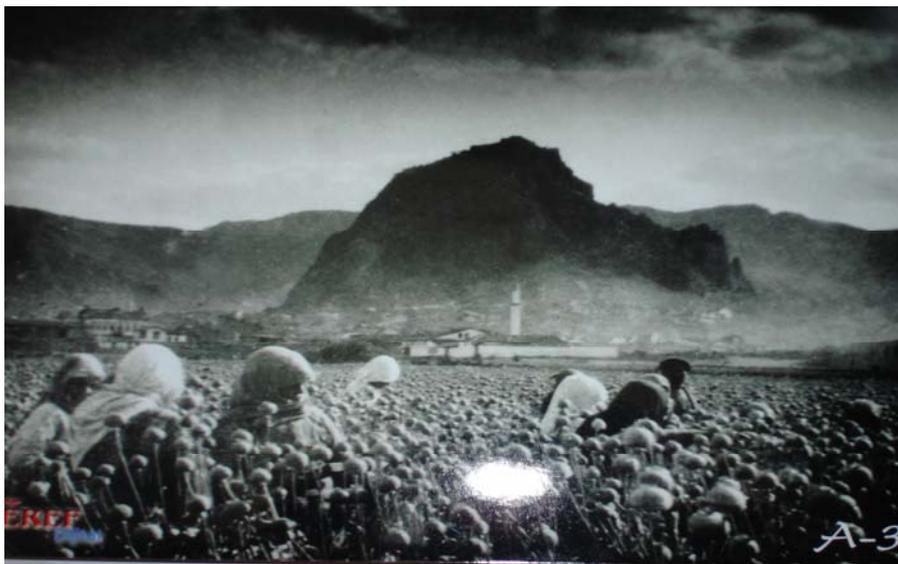
<sup>171</sup> *ibid.* The 64 teams were doubtless an exaggeration. Reported 15 May 1918.

<sup>172</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>173</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 61-62.

appreciation and thanks to the Turkish officer who was in charge of the outing. He was pleased ... Altogether we felt that this was the happiest day we had spent during our long period of captivity'.<sup>174</sup> The contemporary photograph below of poppy harvesting at Afyon would have reflected Luscombe's view from the citadel.

**Fig. 6:6: Poppy gatherers, Afyon around the time of WWI. (Şerif Photography, Afyon).**



Initially at Kedos, the men had little to do for entertainment until the visit in June 1917 of Inspector Colonel Zia

Bey when parole conditions were introduced and the old Commandant was replaced. The use of parole was sanctioned in the Hague Convention and many of the officers took it up.

Woolley states that 'practically no restrictions were put on our freedom, except such very natural ones such as roll-call once a day, and a limit to the lengths of our walks if unaccompanied by the *posta*'.<sup>175</sup> Officers were able to ramble for many kilometres throughout the countryside and often took part in 'field days' to study and record local flora and fauna.<sup>176</sup>

At Kastamouni, country walks, with a sentry or two, were taken weekly. Officers could stroll to the town bazaar to make their purchases on certain days and to the Turkish bath house whenever they liked.<sup>177</sup> The British POW Committee Report noted 'that the Commandant

<sup>174</sup> *ibid*, pp. 92-95.

<sup>175</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p.82. Parole was sanctioned in the Hague Convention, Articles 10,11,12. A 'posta' was a guard.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>177</sup> British POW Committee Report, p.39. AWM 940.472. T784, AWM, Canberra.

preferred the officers to wear uniform, so that they might be recognised and respected on their walks'.<sup>178</sup> Officially it was noted that in relation to prisoners at Kedos: 'the prisoners in question enjoy their liberty and that the complaints of ill-treatment are without foundation'.<sup>179</sup>

Other forms of entertainment for officers included hockey, skiing in winter and hunting with a pack of hounds at Yozgad.<sup>180</sup> Local oral tradition at Kedos records the officers joining the locals in boar hunts and enjoying a gossip and tea at the local tea house.<sup>181</sup> Woolley listed some of the typical activities of a day at Kastamonu. It included morning games of bridge, patience, reading and smoking. In the afternoon, sleeping, bridge, reading, walking or playing games.<sup>182</sup> A typical day at Afyon for an officer included talking, reading, playing cards, walking, drinking and playing cricket and hockey.<sup>183</sup>

Lower ranks generally had less freedom away from camps than officers, though opportunities for physical activities varied. The British POW Committee Report was able to state that since 1917:

Afyon became a good camp, the men there enjoy considerable freedom and have plenty of occupation and amusement. They are busy with cooking, washing, mending and other duties about the camp; they have football and cricket on certain days and occasionally country walks; some time ago they hired a piano for £5 a month and gave concerts and dances.<sup>184</sup>

However, Beattie noted that at Afyon in 1918 'we were taken out once a week for exercise, being marched to a field about half a mile from the barracks; games of football and cricket were usually played'.<sup>185</sup> Drake learnt to swim in the river at Belededik.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Letter to A.J.Balfour, British MP, 17/10/1918, from Cardinal Secretary of State of the Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople. PRO FO 383/453:1918, Turkey File 683, PRO, London.

<sup>180</sup> British POW Committee Report, p.37.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with local historian Ahmet Pinar from Gediz, 8 April 2006.

<sup>182</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 5.

<sup>183</sup> Austin, *My Experiences*, p. 24.

<sup>184</sup> British POW Committee Report, p. 28.

<sup>185</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>186</sup> ARC POW File of Drake, AWM 1DRL/428 Box 55, AWM, Canberra.

Intellectual pursuits were likewise varied and often very creative. Prisoners attempted to cater for their individual interests. For example, Lushington wrote to Miss Chomley requesting a watercolour paint box, brushes and sketch book.<sup>187</sup> Some of his art work has survived and is housed in the Australian War Memorial in Cahir's file.<sup>188</sup> Kerr noted that early on at Afyon, 'everyone was filled with a desire to learn something', including shorthand, languages and boxing'.<sup>189</sup> At Kastamonu and Kedos, sketching expeditions were held and much of the evidence we have today of the physical environment of these two camps comes from British Major Rybott's artistic pursuits. Several of Rybott's drawings were hung in the Commandant's office.<sup>190</sup>

Communal pursuits included debating societies and readings from Shakespeare. It was also common practice in camps for prisoners to provide lectures on a range of topics. Woolley listed some of the lectures delivered at Kastamonu and Kedos, reflecting the catholic interests of the officers: 'Evolution of Religion in the Old Testament', drawing, shorthand, horse management, polo, propellers, trains, motors, metallurgy, telephones, gunnery, aircraft, battles, the Gallipoli campaign, shooting, fishing, classical education, the history of the Hittites, heraldry, pottery, law, gold-mining, rubber planting, tea planting and astronomy.<sup>191</sup> Luscombe and White took part in many political debates at Afyon. A Debating Society and a Minority Literary Club were formed and members were encouraged to deliver papers on a particular aspect of their respective country. Luscombe and White, 'from opposing political parties', practised speeches and debated political issues. 'It is just possible that this debating practice may have proved useful to Tom White in his subsequent long and distinguished political and diplomatic career', Luscombe later observed.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Letter dated 1 March 1918. Lushington, ARC POW File 1DRL/428 Box 122, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>188</sup> Private Records of Keith Cahir, AWM PRO 185, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>189</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.143.

<sup>190</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>191</sup> *ibid*, p. 116.

<sup>192</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, p.77

For some prisoners, writing was a form of diversion or release from the frustration and boredom of everyday life as a prisoner. Luscombe published several poems in his memoirs, some of which were written by British prisoner John Still, later published as *Poems in Captivity*. Luscombe explained the importance of writing for himself: ‘the mere writing down of these fragmentary thoughts served to provide a kind of safety valve to temporarily detach our thoughts from our prison environment’.<sup>193</sup> Diaries were kept by several men, including White, Kerr, Creedon and Troy. Anecdotal evidence from several Turkish researchers has indicated that several Allied diaries are held in the Turkish Military Archives, Ankara, but cannot be accessed.

The creation of newspapers and magazines was often a feature of camp life. At Belemelik the prisoners printed a newspaper called ‘Belemelik Bugger’.<sup>194</sup> At Kastamouni the orderlies published a magazine called ‘Ekmek’ (Bread) which featured stories, poems and drawings.<sup>195</sup> Unfortunately to date no surviving newspapers or magazines have been located.

Taking advantage of the many monotonous hours to fill and the availability of a range of native speakers of several languages, the learning and teaching of languages was also a popular pastime. Conversely, at Angora, Luscombe started teaching English to the Commandant. Later at Afyon, Luscombe noted that many prisoners had acquired ‘a rough working knowledge of the Turkish language’ which enabled them to ‘exchange the customary greetings, ask for the normal kinds of food and drink, and count Turkish coins and notes’.<sup>196</sup> Many prisoners commenced studying French, Russian or Hindustani. At Afyon, Jordan recorded: ‘I am learning the French and Turkish languages ... Having no books I have to be continually writing’.<sup>197</sup> His obvious aptitude for languages paid off in the future when he went on to be recruited into the British Foreign Service. It was not only officers who applied

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<sup>193</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>194</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 177. Kerr managed to have the paper printed on the office printer.

<sup>195</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 23, 116.

<sup>196</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 58, 66.

<sup>197</sup> Letter dated 15/7/1915. Jordan, ARC W & M File, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

themselves to language learning. Kerr took pains to practise his French at Afyon where he spent many social hours with French prisoners.<sup>198</sup>

With so much time on their hands, officers in particular craved reading matter. As early as 1915 in Angora, finding little to do, a search was made to discover some literature. Two 'dog-eared' books were uncovered in the Monastery, a 'racy' novel called *The Duke Decides* and a story of Egypt, *Sands of the Desert*. A librarian was appointed and a reading roster of one hour per day per book was allocated. Reading time no doubt expanded when in early December 1915, Luscombe received a parcel of books and magazines from the American embassy.<sup>199</sup> When the officers later moved to Afyon in 1916, books began to arrive and 'captivity certainly became more bearable'. Luscombe and White took turns to read aloud to each other. Books included Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Lord Curzon's *Monasteries of the Levant*, *The Travels of Marco Polo* and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. The titles indicate a very broad range of interests. Books were generally sent off to the Turkish censor in Istanbul, to be returned many weeks later.<sup>200</sup>

Books were sent by neutral embassies, the Red Cross or private individuals. Luscombe was sent a selection of books in mid 1917 and thanked the sender for such titles as *The Literary and Historical Atlas of Africa and Australia*, *Cook's Voyages of Discovery*, *Australian Aborigines*, J.S. Mill's *Utilitarianism*, Emerson's *Representative Men* and Tolstoy's *Master and Man and Other Parables*. On another occasion, Luscombe noted that a parcel of books arrived:

intact and in good order. Regret Debating Society was stopped some time back, but Cpt. White and I make good use of Public Speaking Books. Had ceased Russian on account of Russian officers leaving this town, but have now started again with Russian Grammars sent by you. They are excellent books.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.142.

<sup>199</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, p. 57.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid*, p. 77, 89.

<sup>201</sup> Letter to Mr Sharp dated 31/12/1916. ARC POW File of Luscombe, 1 DRL/428 Box 122, AWM, Canberra.

At Kastamonu, the officers made shelves for a library which was catalogued and numbered. By September 1917, it housed 800 books.<sup>202</sup> It was not only officers who craved reading material. At San Stefano in 1918, Troy expressed his thanks for a parcel of books sent by Miss Chomley, noting that they were ‘very acceptable and they will help to pass the time of an evening when we are finished our days work.’ A month later, displaying a very Australian interest, he also requested the *Spalding Book of Sporting Records*, explaining that ‘great arguments crop up here on different sporting records’.<sup>203</sup> At Afyon, Rifki Bey reported that there was a need for more books in 1918 as ‘books sent from England are often very much delayed at the censors’.<sup>204</sup> Delpratt, interned in the far east at Hadji-Kiri, also received a consignment of six books. ‘I have just finished and enjoyed *Buried Alive* (Arnold Bennett) and *The Brass Bottle* (Anstey). They are both entertaining – just the bright and breezy sort to blow the dullness of our daily round’.<sup>205</sup>

**Fig. 6:7: Marching boots & drum borrowed by the POWs at Gediz. (Author’s photograph).**



### **Social life: drama and music**

At each camp, there appeared to have been a group of talented musicians and dramatists whose recitals and concerts helped to keep boredom at bay and to raise spirits. These events

<sup>202</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 112.

<sup>203</sup> ARC POW File of Troy, 1 DRL/428 Box 211, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>204</sup> Rifki Bey Report, A11803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>205</sup> Letter dated 3/3/1918. Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra.

were often attended by members of the public and Turkish personnel. At Kastamonu the officers established an orchestra ‘which then gave performances in the open, attended by an admiring public’.<sup>206</sup> Officers purchased a violin, flute and two clarinets from the town. One officer made a banjo and a cello and various musicals were composed. From February 1917, concerts were held fortnightly.<sup>207</sup> On one occasion at Kastamonu, the Commandant invited nine female visitors to a dance organised for the officers.<sup>208</sup>

Officers at Kedos formed a close relationship with the new Commandant, and began to organise dinner parties, concerts and plays, to which he was invited.<sup>209</sup> There began a very creative period in which dramas, comedies and musicals were produced, engaging the skills and accomplishments of many of the officers, creating what seems to have been very elaborate productions. They were helped in this endeavour by the Kedos Town Band lending their magnificent big drum, cymbals and side drum, a cornet and a clarinet to the orchestra for use during theatrical shows.<sup>210</sup> The old drum and cornet are still in storage in the Council Chambers in Gediz (Figs.6:7 and 8). The story of sharing these instruments is one of the oral traditions retained in the town by local historian Ahmet Pinar.<sup>211</sup> At Belemelik, Lushington recalls singing patriotic songs around the fire. The Turkish Commandant there enjoyed the music played by the prisoners and the marching of the band, *The Terrible Eight*, who played mouth organs, combs, kerosene tin and triangle. They would often march past the Commandant’s house playing *The British Grenadiers*.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> British POW Committee Report, p. 39. AWM 940.472.T784.

<sup>207</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 120 -123.

<sup>208</sup> *ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>209</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, p. 81.

<sup>210</sup> *ibid*, p. 127.

<sup>211</sup> Site visit to Eski Gediz, 7 April 2006. With thanks to the Mayor of Gediz and Mr Pinar.

<sup>212</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, pp. 42-44.

**Fig. 6:8: The cornet borrowed by the POWs at Gediz. (Author's photograph)**

Dramatic productions were always popular. At Kedos in 1918, Woolley designed dresses for the plays that 'were a triumph'. In the play, *Kill that Bug*, 'Lacy as Sonia' made 'an admirable



leading lady.' (see Fig. 6:9). The Commandant and Turkish guests greatly appreciated the shows. Other plays included *Twelfth Night*, *The Monkey's Paw* and *The Bride*. The theatrical program seemed to have been a full one in 1918. The orderlies performed a show titled the *Dottyville Pierrot Troup* and the officers performed *Theodore and Co*. For this production, Woolley and his colleagues made 28 frocks, an opera cloak, wigs, a full suit of armour, evening suits and a Hussar's uniform. Materials such as scraps of wool, tape, tin and cardboard were utilised. A female costume was described as 'a dress of palest yellow netting over vieux rose' and another was made of pink antiseptic bandages. Of the chorus girls, it was noted that the 'blue chin' of one was most distracting.<sup>213</sup> Most prisoners had a role to play in the productions, including the Australian orderly Handsley, who provided a 'hilarious' comic presentation of an Australian woman. His memoirs do not include reference to this part of his life in camp.

In a strange twist, Handsley insisted that the Turks were 'experts in theatrical dressmaking and scenery effects'. Did he regard officers' creative accomplishments as unmanly?<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 81-135.

<sup>214</sup> Handsley, *Two and a Half Years*, p. 57.

**Fig.6:9: ‘Sonia’.** (Woolley, *From Kastamuni*).



At Yozgad, the British POW Committee recorded ‘the production of a successful pantomime last Christmas’. E.H. Jones however, reported that the Christmas pantomime, *The Fair Maid of Yozgad* ‘had to be performed secretly at night, after the guards had done their nightly round’.<sup>215</sup> The claim that such a production could be performed in front of an audience of one hundred men ‘secretly’ at night has no credibility as such concerts were enjoyed by both prisoners and Turks alike in all camps. It is another example of a published account that exaggerates the POW experience.

### **Practical pursuits**

The POWs developed other skills, sometimes through necessity. Officers occupied with carpentry often reaching a sophisticated standard. Houses in Turkey at the time generally did not have the range nor quality of furniture normally found in contemporary Australian or British houses. Seating was often built-in and wooden beds were scarce. Various groups formed carpentry shops, providing themselves with imaginative names such as *Ye Olde Firm* or *The Ragtime Carpenters*. One group produced 18 tables, 45 writing desks, 50 chairs, 25 cupboards and 100 boxes. Carpenters also created intricate scenery for the concerts.<sup>216</sup> At Afyon, Luscombe and other officers arrived in early February 1916 and moved into houses ‘relatively modern by Turkish standards but quite bare of furniture’. They set about building furniture such as beds, tables and chairs. They purchased saws, hammers, planes and other

<sup>215</sup> E.H. Jones, *The Road to Endor*, Bodley Head, London, 1930, p. 20

<sup>216</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 139-142.

tools, packing case timber, rope, nails and screws and began to make 'high quality furniture'.<sup>217</sup>

At Kedos, the arrival of another 80 British officers from Çankiri in December 1917 added to their comforts in that they brought with them a library, a band, carpenters, shoemakers, barbers and watch-makers. Hobbies could now be pursued in earnest.<sup>218</sup> Oddly enough, with no apparent censorship involved, Kerr obtained a camera and film and recorded aspects of life at Belemedik. These photographs are now held in the Australian War Memorial.<sup>219</sup>

### **Social visits**

Less exciting than drama productions or sports meetings but no less gratifying, were informal social visits involving shared cups of tea, modest meals and casual visits to new arrivals and others. At Afyon, Kerr noted, 'At one time here, the prisoners were not allowed to mix together but took it in turns to promenade the yard. Now the prisoners are allowed to mix together, as freely as they like'.<sup>220</sup> At both Afyon and Belemedik, Kerr recorded many low-key social visits between the men:

I invited several in to have a cup of tea, among them, Sandy [Masterton]. The greater part of the morning was occupied in fighting battles over again and of asking after mutual acquaintances. Ran up against a couple of chaps I had met in hospital – had them in to dinner with us. Later, had Sandy down for tea.<sup>221</sup>

At Afyon, Luscombe noted that at first, life was 'reasonably good'. Officers enjoyed walks outside and exchanged visits with other officers. After the reprisal lock-up in the Armenian church for seven weeks from March to June 1916, the officers could once again visit each other. To help alleviate boredom, they gathered pets about them; a beautiful silver-coated Persian greyhound called 'Gumush' [Silver] and others, including a mongrel stray. This

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<sup>217</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp.63 – 65.

<sup>218</sup> Woolley, *Kastamuni*, p. 83.

<sup>219</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 199. Photographs archived in the Australian War Memorial photographic section.

<sup>220</sup> *ibid*, p. 125.

<sup>221</sup> *ibid*, p. 158.

unlikely union produced a litter of twenty puppies. An eagle-owl, tortoise, ducklings and a wolf-cub were added to the menagerie.<sup>222</sup>

An unlikely form of entertainment, though obviously a welcome one, was available at Belemedik, where a cinema was built in the railway village by the German authorities. The Rifki Bey report noted that 'the men can go to the cinema every night' and Kerr expressed his gratitude:

Thank goodness the cinema, our sole distraction here, is only one hundred yards or so from my room ... The program changes roughly twice a week. The films are nearly always German with a few old French farces and American cowboy pictures and are very poor clarity.<sup>223</sup>

### **Alcoholic pursuits**

The availability of alcohol in some of the camps was an unexpected aspect of prisoner life and one that challenges assumptions about POW camp life in Turkey. It is certainly not an issue that is discussed in generic POW literature, as it was not a normal feature of prison life. In several camps there was already access to alcohol and there were many instances of the men overindulging and becoming quite inebriated on occasions. This often caused problems within the camp and led to disorderly behaviour and arguments between the men. This was particularly the case for the lower ranks at Afyon and Belemedik. No doubt alcohol was a diversion from monotonous work schedules. Accounts of this behaviour tended to be recorded only in private diaries or journals rather than in official correspondence, though Lushington records several examples in his published memoirs. Certainly the men who complained of poor living conditions did not mention this part of their lives.

Kerr commented on the availability of alcohol at Afyon: 'It would seem that we are not being treated too badly when it is possible for us to get drunk'. Two men actually assaulted a guard

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<sup>222</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>223</sup> The Rifki Bey Report, NAA A11803/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra; Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp. 219-220.

whilst drunk but there was no retaliation or reprisal.<sup>224</sup> Lushington described various occasions when ‘rakky’[raki] was consumed. During one birthday party and drinking bout, several guards were assaulted. As punishment, the culprits were imprisoned for several days.<sup>225</sup> Kerr provides further detail in his diary. He recorded that German overseers at Belemedik complained several times of inebriated prisoners. A complaint was made about a crew member of the submarine AE2, making himself ‘obnoxious to the women working there’ under the influence of alcohol. In January 1916, due to the Russians becoming drunk, access to the town was limited and raki was no longer permitted for a time. This ban did not last long, as a new group arrived from Ankara and two of the men became drunk, were physically punished by the Commandant and locked up. ‘Jim’ was later heard singing in his cell.<sup>226</sup>

As a clerk in the administration office, Kerr was able to order a dozen bottles of vermouth in February 1916 and two days later, he and another prisoner consumed two bottles. A few days later, two prisoners who had walked into town to buy alcohol absented themselves for more than a day. They remained in town drunk. In another incident, two British prisoners were sent before the Commandant for attempting to strike an officer and soldier: ‘the officer that was almost struck allows the soldiers to go to the café and drink beer right up till 8 o’clock’. The men had refused to leave and a fracas resulted. Kerr noted that frequent arguments between nationalities occurred during drinking bouts. In March 1916 he and another prisoner drank approximately twenty glasses of raki in the town and Kerr notes that he spent much of his time drinking and fighting. By 29 March 1916 some groups had been getting drunk every night for three weeks. They then held a small concert and a Turkish official commented that it was a more worthwhile activity than getting drunk every night. Two drunken British prisoners threw rocks at the guards who attempted to arrest them. They received a beating and were

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<sup>224</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.128.

<sup>225</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>226</sup> *ibid*, pp. 156-158.

confined for four days. Kerr noted that he was living at Belemedik in a similar way that he would have at home. 'I get drunk with as much or rather more frequency than I do home, only here it is only raki and petrol-flavoured wine to drink'. He too was locked up on Good Friday 1916 for drunkenness.<sup>227</sup>

Officers also had access to alcohol but evidence suggests that generally it did not create the same poor behaviour. However at Kastamuni, Woolley noted that officials complained about the amount of alcohol consumed and the resulting rowdy behaviour. By 1917, officers were operating their own bars.<sup>228</sup> In 1918, Austin was able to state that he drank raki, Balkan wine, Smyrna beer and local brandy 'all remarkably bad. The chaps who had raki used to put cherries, peaches, apricots and ginger into it and make liqueurs'.<sup>229</sup>

### **Religion and celebrations**

Religion may well have been a comfort if a prisoner had strong religious convictions before capture.<sup>230</sup> All but five of the Gallipoli POWs stated that they were of a particular Christian denomination in their attestation papers. However, there is little reference to religion or personal beliefs in their writings. Initially, Catholic and Protestant prisoners were separated in 1915 at Eskishehir, before the Catholics were transported to Afyon and Protestants to Angora. Perhaps the Turkish authorities believed that religious antagonisms could develop between the different religious groups. Later in the war, this division was not sustained.

Religion offered an opportunity for celebrations that eased the monotony of life. The first Christmas in 1915 was celebrated at several camps. At Afyon, two priests, a Greek and an Armenian, arrived to conduct mass on 19 December and Christmas Eve. Kerr, himself a Catholic, explained that 'I went to the service from a sense of self-respect than from any idea of duty. We are not all Catholics here but it behoves us to show some outward respect for our own creed in the presence of strangers, whether we pay much attention to it in our hearts'. He

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<sup>227</sup> *ibid*, pp. 162-182.

<sup>228</sup> Woolley, *From Kastamuni*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>229</sup> Austin, *My Experiences*, p. 25.

<sup>230</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, p. 113.

goes on to criticize the French attitude to church attendance as ‘apparently they went solely for the fun of the thing or because it lent more colour to the New Year Festival’.<sup>231</sup>

After the service, preparations were then made for a Christmas feast with five geese purchased. On Christmas Day, Kerr shared geese stuffed with chestnuts and cream with the French prisoners. They lamented having no wine at this stage, but sang and held a concert until the morning. ‘At daybreak the party collected all the tins they could find and we all (21 of us) made a hell of a row’. There was no retribution against such behaviour. The prisoners decorated their rooms with coloured paper chains and the priests were invited to another meal of geese and potatoes, and altogether, 23 diners sat down to the meal. In addition, the officers’ cook had sent them five puddings and ‘the officers had also sent up six bottles of raki which was divided up between us in the afternoon’. They later held another concert. Several of the men dressed up; one young Russian was transformed into a convincing woman and the others dressed as clowns. Many became drunk.<sup>232</sup> Randall wrote to his brother: ‘only think of it being Christmas Day; we are still prisoners. For dinner we have turkey and plum pudding. The turkey looks as if though it had been in training and we have no sugar for the pudding ... We are getting a little money here and are quite happy’.<sup>233</sup> At Çankiri in 1915, Christmas Day lunch consisted of boiled turkey and plum pudding, followed by a football match and concert. New Years Day offered the same entertainment.<sup>234</sup>

By Christmas 1916, the prisoners were scattered across a wider range of camps and celebrations were similarly enjoyed.<sup>235</sup> At Afyon, Luscombe organised a concert, White drank lamp oil mistaking it for raki and a British cook made ice-cream. A combined Christmas church service was held, attended by all, involving a Methodist clergyman and a Catholic

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<sup>231</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp.130, 140.

<sup>232</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

<sup>233</sup> Letter dated 25/12/1915. Randall Family Papers, MSB 401 MS11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

<sup>234</sup> Creedon’s Diary AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>235</sup> At Ismidt, Christmas was celebrated with alcohol, songs and a wrestling competition. Lushington, *A Prisoner*, p.73. At Kastamonu, officers and orderlies dined on turkey, pudding and raki and enjoyed a variety show. Woolley, *Kastamuni*, p. 17.

Priest.<sup>236</sup> Christmas 1917 witnessed extremely cold weather and shortages of fuel. However, Lushington recorded that at Ada Bazar, the prisoners again cooked goose for lunch and organised a concert, attended by the Turkish guards.<sup>237</sup> The Red Cross reported that at Belemelik the German chief engineer presented the men with gifts.<sup>238</sup> At Afyon, the British POW Committee Report commented that Christmas Day was freezing, and as ‘there being no firewood and 20 degrees of frost, the officers took their dinner in bed, as the only place where they could keep a little warm’. White commented that they took to their beds to save fuel. He also recorded that the local population was suffering equally.<sup>239</sup> Cliffe recorded visiting a Greek church at San Stefano and Halpin’s memoirs are awash with Christian allusions, drawing comparisons between the pure nature of Christianity and the degradation of Muslim Turks. The only instance when Muslim sensibilities are mentioned is when Ashton mimicked the call of the muezzin at Afyon and upset a guard.<sup>240</sup>

Other celebrations occurred for Western holidays such as New Years Day and the French National Day. The first anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli was also commemorated with wine.<sup>241</sup> The receiving of parcels was also an excuse to celebrate. At Haji-Kiri, Delpratt wrote in 1918 that on receiving a new batch of parcels the French prisoners there celebrated ‘with harsh native wine, stored and carried in and tasting strongly of goat skin’.<sup>242</sup>

Celebrations often continued into the New Year. Any cause for celebration was welcomed. Kerr found Boxing Day 1915 at Afyon ‘very dull. Being Sunday, the boys went for a walk and a game of football. The match played was Army versus Navy’.<sup>243</sup> On New Years Day,

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<sup>236</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 82-84.

<sup>237</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, pp. 85- 86.

<sup>238</sup> As reported in *The Avoca Free Press*, 15/5/1918. Randall Family Papers, MSB 401 MS11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

<sup>239</sup> White, *Guests*, pp. 172-173.

<sup>240</sup> Ashton Papers, p.47, 973A, Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>241</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 184.

<sup>242</sup> Letter dated 2/6/1918. Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153, 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>243</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.137.

1916, Kerr drank brandy with the French and on 7 January 1916 the Russian Christmas Day was celebrated with a dinner, snow fights and a concert.<sup>244</sup>

On various occasions, different nationalities combined expertise and supplies. New Years Eve at Hadji-Kiri 1918 was cheerful though chilly and Delpratt celebrated it with Frenchmen in 'the good old tin-can way', which also appeared to involve the consumption of coffee with copious amounts of cognac. On New Years Day itself, a Captain Jones visited from Belemedik and the meal was a combined effort:

The Frenchmen supplied wine, sardines and fish paste, the Mess provided pork (wild), roast potatoes and the pudding, the English gave two fowls. I made the pudding and everyone politely, especially the Frenchmen with their native good manners, said it was good. I've tasted plenty better.<sup>245</sup>

Delpratt provided his recipe which involved flour, raisins, figs, suet, almonds, walnuts, eggs, treacle, milk and cognac. He noted that some ingredients were supplied by the Turkish Government whilst the walnuts were supplied by the local nursing sister. Jones supplied cigars.<sup>246</sup>

Birthdays were also an excuse to relieve the monotony of everyday life. Surprisingly, Creedon noted in his diary that he celebrated his birthday at Belemedik in March 1916 at a local restaurant.<sup>247</sup> Kerr also recorded visiting 'a new restaurant' at Belemedik.<sup>248</sup> To celebrate a birthday, Delpratt described one afternoon's entertainment at Haji-Kiri, where the men borrowed a gramophone from the company's cashier. Delpratt enjoyed the diverse range of music available: 'I listened to *The Dollar Princess* in Greek, songs from *The Geisha Girl* in Italian, *Asleep in the Deep* in Turkish, but mostly the records were in Greek. It was a splendid gramophone and the records all of high class performers, and brought back vividly a happier

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<sup>244</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 141-143.

<sup>245</sup> Letter dated 5/1/1918, Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>246</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> Creedon, *Diary*, AWM 1 DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>248</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 209.

and more civilised day'. A number of men had been able to travel from other camps to attend the celebration.<sup>249</sup>

At Ismidt, Ashton's letter to his aunt provides an eloquent description of changed circumstances for the better with the arrival of the new Commandant, who allowed a birthday party celebration to be enjoyed. He described 'a glorious day', with their rooms commanding:

a fine view of the Gulf of Ismidt, and can see the steamers going to and from Constantinople ... It is the birthday of two of the occupants of our room today and we are having a 'duff' to celebrate the occasion; ingredients as follows: flour ... one loaf of bread crumbed, figs ... fat. Boiled in a kerosene tin in a small charcoal fire. Fine, I tell you, you should really try one!<sup>250</sup>

Obviously such celebrations played a major role in keeping up spirits, relieving monotony and strengthening social ties.

### **Sexual issues**

The issue of sexual behaviour is one that is rarely mentioned in POW literature. Barker states the obvious by noting that in general, POWs had little chance of sexual adventures with women.<sup>251</sup> However, at Belemedik, the railway company had provided a brothel for the workers on the railway.<sup>252</sup> From Kerr's account, it appears that prisoners were also able to visit this establishment. It is not clear from his account whether he is referring to the actual company's brothel or to individual prostitutes in town, but refers to 'Madame Sophia ... who does it ... I must say that we never expected to get so much liquor in the town, nor did we ever dream that any of us would be able to sleep with a woman'.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Letter dated 15/5/1918. Delpratt, *Letters*, AWM 3 DRL/2153 636, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>250</sup> Letter dated 10/12/1916. ARC POW File of Ashton, 1 DRL/428 Box 7, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>251</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, p. 133.

<sup>252</sup> *The Real Story of a Century-old Railway*, [www.stargazete.com/index.asp](http://www.stargazete.com/index.asp)? Accessed 8/1/2006. Translated by S. Bulgu, March 2006.

<sup>253</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.171.

Cochrane concluded that the extent of homosexual behaviour was difficult to ascertain as it was a 'hidden' part of prison life, with no statistical data recorded.<sup>254</sup> There was some hint of such behaviour, though it is not often or openly referred to in the Turkish camps. Kerr notes that at times sexual activities were a major focus of conversation and at Belemelik, one man was 'accused of being unnatural by some'.<sup>255</sup> Barker warned that dressing up as a woman in camps could be 'a perilous pastime'.<sup>256</sup> At Afyon when a young Russian dressed up in female attire, it was noted that he had an obvious physical effect on a Senegalese prisoner.<sup>257</sup>

Halpin hinted at homosexual rape by the Turkish Commandant at Afyon. He states that three young merchant sailors were subjected to 'the searing scourge of the perverted bestiality of Muslim Bey'.<sup>258</sup> A charge of sodomy was made by several British soldiers in 1918 against an unnamed Turkish commandant. However, the two British doctors who examined the men in July 1918, swore on oath that there was no medical evidence of sodomy having occurred: 'It is quite certain that none of these cases are in the habit of having the act of sodomy performed on them'.<sup>259</sup>

### **Punishment**

In a POW camp, there are likely to be times when military administration needs to discipline prisoners. The severity of punishment in World War I varied enormously over time and place.<sup>260</sup> The Hague Convention allowed considerable leeway in this matter.<sup>261</sup> The Turkish War Ministry Manual responded accordingly: 'According to the degree of criminal offence, a POW will be court-martialled and punished as would a soldier of the host nation'.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Cochrane, *Notes*, pp. 282-284.

<sup>255</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>256</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, p. 132.

<sup>257</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 137, 143.

<sup>258</sup> J. Halpin, *Blood in the Mists*, The Macquarie Head Press, Sydney, 1934, p. 223.

<sup>259</sup> Report by Major Haughton and Captain Stattin. PRO FO 383/453:1918 Turkey File, 683, PRO, London.

<sup>260</sup> Barker, *Barbed Wire*, pp. 124 -125. There are many accounts of brutal punishments of POWs in Germany in World War I in *How the Germans Treated Australian POWs*, Defence Dept. Melbourne, 1919 and Moynihan, *Black Bread*, pp. 8, 39.

<sup>261</sup> The Hague Convention Article 8. 'Any act of insubordination justifies the adoption towards them of such measures of severity as may be considered necessary'.

<sup>262</sup> *Manual Regarding POWs*, Article 26.

Punishments meted out in camps were obviously a source of resentment and ill-feeling and one regarded as justified by the captor nation. This aspect of captivity attracted the greatest diversity in men's responses.

The main complaints about physical punishments came from Afyon in 1916. After the escape of three officers, the liberal minded commandant, Bimbashi Kollassi, was replaced by Mouslem Bey and a naval officer, both loathed by the men. There are no accounts of any Australian officers ever suffering physical punishment, but three Gallipoli soldiers were subjected to a beating over the period of their internment. Several men provided exaggerated accounts of the rate of physical punishments at the camps. Again the published account of Handsley reported that a 'whole gang' of one hundred prisoners had been flogged for refusing to work.<sup>263</sup> This incident has not been recorded elsewhere but perhaps exaggerates an incident that occurred at Belemedik.<sup>264</sup>

Handsley also claimed that men were beaten by guards and that to retaliate meant certain death. Several men retaliated against physical punishment and were either beaten or put into solitary confinement. There is no evidence that any prisoner was put to death. At one stage Handsley stated that he was punished for trying to send a letter of complaint for having had to share accommodation and meals with the Turkish workers.<sup>265</sup> As previously discussed, other prisoners had successfully complained of conditions and not been so punished. The American Embassy refers to many letters of complaint received from prisoners. The Turkish War Office also replaced several Commandants after prisoner complaints.

Foxcroft stated that some men were flogged for trivial offences, 'such as not working fast enough to please the guards or for reporting sick'. However, other evidence outlines the many

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<sup>263</sup> Handsley, *Two and a Half Years*, p. 37.

<sup>264</sup> Lightfoot complained that together with six other prisoners, he was imprisoned for 27 days for 'refusing to work where excreta had been dumped.' Following incarceration, he was hospitalised in a weakened state. Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>265</sup> Handsley, *Two and a Half Years*, p.35.

ruses taken by prisoners to work slowly or to sabotage the work process and many record not working whilst ill. Foxcroft also accused the Commandant of having ‘an inspection for vermin, and if any man was found to have lice on him, they tried to make him eat them. He would also be flogged and put into solitary confinement’.<sup>266</sup> No other prisoner makes this accusation. However, Lightfoot states that they were flogged ‘for trivial offences, such as having a small tear in our coat’.<sup>267</sup>

Mackay was in Afyon from August 1916 and is one of the three Australian Gallipoli prisoners to have suffered physical punishment. During a working party, Mackay was hit with a stick by a Turkish Lieutenant, and immediately hit back. In the ensuing melee, he struck a Sergeant. He was court-martialled according to Turkish regulations and punished as a Turkish soldier would have been punished in the same circumstances:

[I was] sentenced to be flogged with 20 days cells ... I was flogged three times, at night, in the morning and the following morning. I think I would have been flogged again only Lt. Stormonth of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion made representations on my behalf to the Commandant. I did twelve days in the cells on bread and water. What they flogged me with was more like a hockey stick than anything else I can think of.<sup>268</sup>

A published account exaggerates the incident. Greg Kerr’s narrative, incorrectly states that Mackay was initially sentenced to death and that he was flogged with ‘a dehydrated member’ in the dungeon on top of the rock.<sup>269</sup> Apart from the fact that there is no dungeon on top of the citadel, Mackay himself makes no mention of an order for execution and it would have been the only occasion that such an order was made in these circumstances. Davern dismissed the incident quite simply: ‘MacKay, an Australian was flogged and imprisoned. He had banged a Turkish officer. But he was not imprisoned for long’.<sup>270</sup> Delpratt recorded that he was beaten by a doctor, Memdough Bey and then by the guards, who beat him across the buttocks with ‘a

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<sup>266</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>267</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>268</sup> Repatriation Statement of Mackay, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>269</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p.124.

<sup>270</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

twisted bull-penis'.<sup>271</sup> Carter recorded that whilst working for the Germans at Messebin, he had received 25 lashes across the feet and was then imprisoned for several days.<sup>272</sup>

A confidential interview by the British Committee with International Red Cross representative Mr Vischer, who had visited many of the camps in 1917, played down the rate of floggings at this time at Afyon:

The case I referred to was more or less an isolated one which had been carried out by a Turkish Naval officer, who was removed from the camp by the Commandant as soon as he heard about it. When we complained about it to a representative of the Turkish War Office he said that flogging was not allowed and that the Officer would be most severely dealt with.<sup>273</sup>

However, later the same committee inflated the information:

Afion, indeed, has a hideous record for the flogging of prisoners - punishment which was habitual there, for the most trifling offences, while the place was under the control of a certain Turkish Naval officer. This man ruled with a cow-hide whip; from which the offender received a given number of lashes on his bare back. Many specific instances are known and noted. Fortunately the man's behaviour became notorious and the Turkish Government, under pressure, removed him early in 1917.<sup>274</sup>

Reprisals and counter-reprisals were common, often based on exaggerated stories or *furphies*.

As POWs were the nearest objects for retaliation, they were often used for political leverage.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Repatriation Statement of Delpratt, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. The use of a dehydrated bull penis, or pizzle, is an old Middle Eastern tool for punishment and one that obviously fascinated the prisoners. It is often described as the means of beatings but other evidence, such as that of McKay himself, refer to a wooden paddle.

<sup>272</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carter, AWM 30 B1.7, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>273</sup> Confidential Interview with Mr Vischer with the Government Committee on the Treatment of the Enemy of British POWs, March 13, 1917, PRO FO 383/333/1917, PRO, London.

<sup>274</sup> The British POW Committee Report. AWM 940.472. In fact, both the Commandant and the Naval officer were removed.

<sup>275</sup> Reprisals in Germany involved the banning of sports, cards and musical instruments. Barker, *Behind Barbed Wire*, p.81; Moynihan, *Black Bread*, pp, 8,11. Aaron Pegram discusses reprisals between the British and German governments in 1916 and 1917. 'The Arms of Black Melancholy', *Wartime*, Issue 46, 2009, pp. 38-42.

Officers at Afyon in March 1916 suffered reprisal treatment as a means of punishment for the escape of three officers of the AE2 submarine, Cochrane, Stoker and Price. Officers were removed from their town houses and were sent to the smaller of the two Armenian churches near to the citadel until June. The officers' recollections of the number of men involved and the time frame of incarceration vary.<sup>276</sup>

Obviously the War Ministry viewed the bid for freedom dimly. The men subjected to the reprisal were able to take their bedding, blankets, cooking utensils and other furniture. White described the colourful spectacle of officers walking up the hill to the church 'some carried cooking utensils, others deck-chairs, another sported a banjo, and two led dogs'. He added that 'no-body appeared depressed'. Later, Turkish guards confiscated a range of items including Turkish clothing, diaries, notebooks, a broken air-gun and a cricket ball.<sup>277</sup>

Luscombe noted that within the confines of this building, all of the languages sounded like 'the tower of Babel', with over twenty languages being spoken. During their time there, the Russians, with their musical instruments comprising balalaikas, violins and accordions, presented 'a wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten musical concert and play'. The altar improvised as the stage. The officers watched the show from their beds placed on the floor, whilst partaking of food and raki. After three weeks, they were able to take exercise outside.<sup>278</sup>

One unusual danger experienced by some of the men whilst in Turkey was that of British bombing of civilian areas, particularly towards the end of the war. At San Stephano, aerial combat and bombing of Istanbul became more commonplace in 1918 with Lushington

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<sup>276</sup> Luscombe recalls 7 weeks, Jordan 10 weeks with 120 men, Stormonth 6 weeks with 90 men and McDonald 100 men. Repatriation Statements.

<sup>277</sup> White, *Guests*, pp. 133-135.

<sup>278</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 67-71.

observing British air-raids and the crashing of a Turkish plane.<sup>279</sup> Other such incidents were reported at Kadiköy, a southern suburb of Istanbul.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, prisoners' experiences in Turkey were more typical than atypical of World War I POW experiences and challenges the assumption that Gallipoli POW experiences were akin to that under the Japanese in World War II. The officer experience in particular challenges this comparison, with paroled camps, freedom of movement and the availability of a wide range of physical and intellectual activities. Lower ranks were not confined in stereotyped barbed wire camps and their access to alcohol and at Belemelik, a brothel and cinema, offered opportunities never to be expected as a prisoner. Characteristics that we may deem 'Australian', such as humour, mateship and a reckless sense of larrikinism, often came to the fore in trying situations. Despite instances of punishments and hardships such as at Afyon in 1916, the various official reports sent to the British War Office throughout the war emphasised that overall the Turkish authorities attempted to provide reasonable living conditions for the prisoners at a time of national hardship. However, often poor or neglectful administration led to trying conditions and unhygienic facilities. The role of embassies and the Australian Red Cross were crucial in supplying additional clothing, food and 'comforts' to the prisoners. The intervention of Camp Inspector Zia Bey resulted in improved conditions overall despite resource shortages in many areas throughout Turkey.

It has been argued in this chapter that published accounts provided by some prisoners exaggerated their own sufferings in line with POW literature in general. Despite the belief that prisoner punishment was rife, largely encouraged by post-war British propaganda, a close examination of the evidence shows that only three Gallipoli POWs actually suffered physical punishment. The following chapter examines medical facilities, treatment and the mortality rate of the incarcerated prisoners.

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<sup>279</sup> Lushington, *Prisoner*, pp. 94-95.

## Chapter 7: 'I could do better outside': medicine and mortality.

In relation to the treatment of sick and wounded prisoners of war in World War I, the Hague Convention was somewhat vague, stating that prisoners were to be humanely treated, that information be forwarded if prisoners were admitted into hospital and that death certificates be issued.<sup>1</sup> The Turkish War Ministry's POW Manual reflected these basic requirements.<sup>2</sup> As the early deaths of the badly wounded men have already been discussed in Chapter 4, this chapter focuses on the medical treatment, deaths and burials of the Gallipoli prisoners already interned in POW camps across Turkey from 1915 onwards. Earlier chapters have shown that many of the stereotyped views of the POW experience in Turkey can be successfully challenged, and it is no different when examining medical treatment and mortality.

### Death rates for the POWs

As noted in Chapter 2, the health of many of the Australians by the time of their capture was not robust, with just over one third (34 percent) of the 67 POWs receiving medical treatment prior to capture. Similar health problems were suffered in the years of captivity, with the added burden of epidemics of malaria, typhoid and Spanish influenza that swept through Turkey in the winter months of 1916-1917.

As discussed in the Introduction, exaggerated statements were made about the death rate of POWs in Turkey during the war. Beyond this study, there has been no substantial research into the statistics of Australian prisoners held in Turkey. Previous writers have estimated that up to 85 percent of POWs in Turkey died of cruelty and neglect.<sup>3</sup> Greg Kerr estimated that

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<sup>1</sup> Hague Convention, Laws and Customs of War on Land, 18 October 1907.

[www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague0.4](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague0.4) Articles 4, 14, 19, 21. Retrieved 16 October 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Usera Hakkında Talimatname Mat-baa-i, Askeriyye, (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War)*, Military Printer, Istanbul, 1916. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Randall Family Papers, MSB 401, MS 11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne; *The British Australasian*, 1 August 1918, London; R.A. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner*, Melbourne, McCarron, Bird & Co. unknown

800 Allied POWs died during the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad railway, basing his figures on those provided by Adam-Smith.<sup>4</sup> Adam-Smith based her figures on the estimates of AE2 prisoner Stoker Brown who does not name a source for his figures.

The only official compilation of Allied POW statistics for Turkey are provided by the British POW Committee Report, though figures of the actual number captured are acknowledged to be uncertain. It reported that 16,583 Allied soldiers were captured, 1,506 were repatriated or escaped, 3,290 died, 2,222 were untraced, leaving 9,565 prisoners.<sup>5</sup> Not counting the men untraced, British records show that 21 percent of the prisoners died in camps or hospitals connected to the camps, which discredits the inflated estimates. Eighteen percent of the Gallipoli prisoners who reached camps died in captivity compared with 23.5 percent of Australians captured in other Turkish theatres of war. No Australian officers from Gallipoli died in captivity.

The mortality figures for the POWs needs to be placed in the broader context of war-torn Turkey. It was not POWs alone who suffered. Virulent epidemics took an enormous toll on the Turkish population. The estimated death rate for the Turkish population was much worse than for POWs. An unpublished doctoral thesis estimates that in some Anatolian villages during the war, 75-90 percent of children aged 1-5 years died of malaria. Mr Vischer of the International Red Cross emphasised that the form of malaria in Turkey at the time was especially virulent.<sup>6</sup> In 1916 at Belemelik, 53 percent of German workers suffered also from this disease. At Pozanti nearby, the medical facilities treated 2,798 Turkish cases of malaria

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date, p. 43; T.W. White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1934, p. 84; *Reveille*, 1 August 1934, vol. 7, No. 12.

<sup>4</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1998, p. 212. See P. Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War. From Gallipoli to Korea*, Viking, Sydney, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> British POW Committee Report, AWM 940.472, AWM, Canberra. It is not certain how accurate the 'untraced' numbers were, considering that the initial number captured was uncertain.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Mr Vischer on Recent Visits to Turkish Camps, PRO FO 383/333/1917, PRO, London. He also pointed out that the Gallipoli POWs were better off than those captured at Kut, due to malnutrition and illness caused by the siege and subsequent forced march. He noted that of a Turkish Battalion of 1,000 men, 20 died per day of malaria.

with 6.7 percent dying, 202 dysentery cases, 40 percent of whom died and 156 cases of typhus with a death rate of 11.5 percent.<sup>7</sup>

On several occasions, the British Government accused the Turkish Government of neglecting prisoners resulting in a very high mortality rate. It maintained ‘that it is the duty of every belligerent Government to clothe and feed properly the POWs in their hands, and that, if through circumstances beyond their control they are unable to do so, their proper course would be to release its prisoners’. This was part of a concentrated on-going British campaign to discredit the Turkish Government. It was a hypocritical statement by the British as they had refused to provide German POWs with similar rations to those supplied to British soldiers, and did not subsequently release them.<sup>8</sup> The POWs continually found themselves part of the politics of war, often used for propaganda purposes. Placed in the context of conditions in Turkey at the time, it will be argued in this chapter that most prisoners died as a result of epidemics raging through Turkey during the war, compounded by third-world medical treatment and not simply from brutality or institutionalised neglect, so widely claimed during and after the war.

### **Health standards in Turkey**

The men generally accepted that that they could not expect Turkish medical treatment to be similar to that of the British. Jordan commented that ‘medical treatment was received but it was of course not equivalent to English treatment’.<sup>9</sup> The British POW Committee Report was critical of the overall standards, describing Turkish medical and surgical skills as ‘low’. It noted that there were some competent doctors, especially in Istanbul, but that many provincial

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<sup>7</sup> H. Becker, I. Dünya Savaşında (1914-1918) Osmanlı Cephesinde Askeri Tababet ve Eczacılık (*Military Medical Practice and Pharmacy at the Ottoman Fronts During World War One*), Istanbul University, 1983, unpublished PhD thesis. Translated by S. Bulgu, December 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Prisoners of War – Turkey File, PRO FO 383/528/1919, PRO, London.

<sup>9</sup> Repatriation Statement of Jordan, AWM 30 B1-17, AWM, Canberra. Tyquin noted that the British Final Report of the Dardanelles Commission glossed over the failure of the medical service to cope at Gallipoli. *Gallipoli: the Medical War*, p. 42.

hospitals were places of ‘neglect and squalor’. They were lacking in adequate equipment and if by chance they were provided with modern appliances, most probably local staff would not be capable of using it.<sup>10</sup>

**Fig. 7:1: Red Crescent postcard, sold to raise money for war medical supplies and treatment. (Red Crescent Archives, Istanbul)**



This view is supported by Turkish scholar H. Becker whose doctoral thesis argued that Turkish medical practice was poor during WWI. Mice, vermin, lack of water and lighting were all systemic problems within the hospitals.<sup>11</sup> However, these criticisms should be placed within the context of war-time conditions.

British hospitals set up to cater for Gallipoli wounded were no better off. Patients suffered flies, fleas, dust, lack of personnel and supplies. The only food

available to the patients was the standard army ration of bully beef and biscuits. All patients lay on mattresses on the ground, nurses often tore up their own clothing to be used as bandages and medical equipment was inadequate. Many soldiers in Allied hospitals died before they could be treated.<sup>12</sup>

It is not surprising that many complaints were made about hospital and medical treatment, in particular the treatment meted out by some orderlies. The British POW Committee Report was scathing in regard to the Turkish orderlies whom they described as ‘lazy, dirty and

<sup>10</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940, 472 T784, p. 6, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>11</sup> Becker, *Military Medical Practice*, 1983.

<sup>12</sup> Tyquin, *Gallipoli: the Medical War*, pp. 58-73; J. Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, Oxford, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 36-48.

dishonest', and everywhere 'an object of detestation...'.<sup>13</sup> Greg Kerr, writing of his grandfather's experiences, alleged that at Afyon, orderlies assaulted patients, tied them to their beds and fatally injected some.<sup>14</sup> Kerr presents O'Connor's complaint as standard practice. O'Connor had knocked down an orderly and as punishment had been tied to his bed.<sup>15</sup> Several prisoners provided the story of orderlies fatally injecting patients with caffeine. Carpenter recorded:

treatment in hospital was brutal, short rations, hardly any medicine. A man only survived if another was able to get about a bit to administer foods to the helpless. If a man was bad these hospital sick people would be injected, the hospital orderlies say 'Cayferere'. I have seen many of our lads get this when they were delirious, and I know they never saw light again. That I swear to.<sup>16</sup>

Dowell also claimed that 'prisoners sent to hospital if unable to help themselves they usually died'.<sup>17</sup> In several instances POWs claimed that personally they were quite well treated, but knew of others who had met with death at the hands of the orderlies. Bailey supported these claims but added, 'Have no information in my possession regarding deaths'.<sup>18</sup> There is no official documentation to support these assertions and no evidence that anything of this nature occurred in regard to the Gallipoli prisoners. Very similar complaints were made by Australian POWs about German hospitals and staff.<sup>19</sup>

### **Camp hospitals**

The experiences of the prisoners in Istanbul hospitals have been dealt with in Chapter 4. Initially, conditions there were very good, with the British POW Committee Report describing them as 'good modern institutions'.<sup>20</sup> However, during the reprisal period in 1915, Tash Kishla hospital in Istanbul was particularly criticised for having poor standards for both

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<sup>13</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940 472T 784, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>14</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>16</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carpenter, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. There is no evidence that Carpenter personally spent any time in hospitals.

<sup>17</sup> Repatriation Statement of Dowell, AWM 30, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>18</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>19</sup> *How the Germans Treated Australian Prisoners of War*, No. 1, Defence Department, Melbourne, 1919.

<sup>20</sup> *British POW Committee Report*, AWM 940 472T 784, AWM, Canberra.

its Turkish patients and Allied POWs. Overall, conditions varied enormously throughout Turkey, particularly in isolated rural areas. There were common problems of lack of medical personnel, equipment and medical supplies and Turkish and Allied patients were treated alike. Prior to the Armistice in 1918, British doctors had taken charge of ill prisoners or they had been sent to Istanbul for specialised treatment.<sup>21</sup>

Initially Afyon was the largest camp but as other camps were established in 1916 and labour was required on the Berlin-Baghdad railway, men were moved elsewhere. From the end of 1916, Afyon became a convalescent camp for ill and recovering prisoners. Those Afyon prisoners in need of further medical attention were sent to the nearby Turkish hospital, located near the centre of town and complaints about treatment were common. It was staffed initially by Turkish doctors and British doctors were not permitted to practise there. Beattie noted that a British doctor visited the camp every morning and sick men were sent to the Turkish hospital, although it had 'a bad name among the prisoners; no prisoner wanted to go there if possible'.<sup>22</sup>

Some prisoners hinted darkly of poor treatment at the Afyon hospital. Lightfoot repeated the stories of abuse by adding '300 prisoners died in two months in the hospitals at Afyon Kara Hissar. Want of food caused the greatest number of deaths'.<sup>23</sup> Two of the Gallipoli POWs died there - Jones on 31 January 1917 of dysentery and King on 16 August 1918 of pneumonia. Most of the prisoners at Afyon spent some time in hospital during their imprisonment and recovered. In December 1916, Williams was sent from Belededik to hospital at Afyon. He remained for only four days as 'I thought I could do better outside'. He suffered from malaria until June and was then sent as an orderly to the officers' camp.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>23</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>24</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

During his bouts of malaria, he was sent quinine by Miss Chomley which ‘came in very useful’.<sup>25</sup> Foxcroft too went to hospital with pneumonia for six weeks and then convalesced there for two months. Despite complaining of rough treatment by the orderlies and claiming there was a lack of medicines, he too recovered.<sup>26</sup> Thomas went into hospital on several occasions, suffering from malaria and pneumonia. He recovered sufficiently after a month and was able to return to camp.<sup>27</sup>

The official figures up to the end of 1916 for all POW deaths at Afyon show 1,179 patients being admitted to the hospital, with 168 deaths, a fatality rate of 14 percent, challenging much higher estimates.<sup>28</sup> In March 1917, Mr Vischer of the International Red Cross Delegation again inspected the medical facilities. He noted that of the 101 prisoners there, 40 had been treated in the hospital and had presumably recovered. He noted that the men complained about the orderlies and the standard of the food. However, ‘a British officer who had previously been treated at the hospital told us that he had no complaints against the hospital’. He noted that the lower ranks were inspected at the camp every day by a Turkish doctor and an Indian Assistant Surgeon.<sup>29</sup>

Rifki Bey, representing the Ottoman Red Crescent Society, visited Afyon in April 1918 and found that medicines sent to the prisoners were not distributed by the Turkish doctor and that British doctors were still not able to tend to prisoner patients. He made arrangements for medicines to be sent to the senior British Medical Officer, Major Baines, and that ‘the British medical officers should have charge of their sick men’.<sup>30</sup> In May 1918, Turkish camp inspector Zia Bey visited and implemented regulations to further improve conditions. A

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<sup>25</sup> ARC POW File of Williams, 1 DRL/428, Box 228, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>26</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>27</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>28</sup> Report from Ambassador Elkus on Visits by the Swiss International Red Cross Delegates to POW Camps, POWs in Turkey, 1917/ 89/ 377, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>29</sup> International Red Cross Delegation Report (Vischer Report), March 1917, PRO FO 383/187/1917, PRO, London.

<sup>30</sup> Rifki Bey Report, April 1918, A11803 /1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

private house in town was converted into a POW hospital, with nine beds set aside for officers. He decreed that Allied prisoner doctors should be able to buy drugs from chemists in town. He also added that a clergyman should be made available for dying patients, or if not available, two soldiers who could also act as nurses.<sup>31</sup> On a visit in August 1918, the Dutch Delegation noted that two British doctors were treating the officers in the private house organized by Zia Bey. Despite this, four British POWs who had been sent ill from Gelebek died in their care. Ten others had died in the Turkish hospital, having also recently arrived from Gelebek in need of medical care.<sup>32</sup>

Angora was also used as a convalescent camp for sick prisoners and four Gallipoli prisoners died there in hospital. They died of typhus or enteritis in the period of epidemics in the winter of 1916 -1917. A mobile German medical laboratory with trained staff was set up in Angora at the end of 1916 to deal with the typhus epidemic. In the first six months of 1917, approximately 51 percent of all Turkish typhus cases in the hospital ended in death.<sup>33</sup> Again, accounts of treatment vary. Brown estimated that out of 'a party of 44 and after we had been there 3 months there was only 17 of us alive'. He claimed that the men died of bad treatment in hospital and insufficient food.<sup>34</sup> However, Pasmore was admitted to the hospital and found the treatment was 'fairly good'.<sup>35</sup> The International Red Cross delegation reported in 1917 that 118 prisoners were admitted to the Angora hospital, with a death rate of 12 percent, much lower than for the Turkish population.<sup>36</sup> *The British POW Report* was scathing about the hospital, though noted that Allied prisoners and Turkish patients were subjected to the same poor treatment.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Dutch Delegation, Turkish File – 1919, FO PRO 383/383/529, PRO, London.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Becker, *Military Medical Practice*, 1983.

<sup>34</sup> Repatriation Statement of Brown, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra. Brown himself did not fall ill. He may have been referring to British casualties here; Australians from other theatres of war died at Angora: Sommerville, Sullivan, Ward, Scroop, Patten, Drysdale and Day.

<sup>35</sup> Repatriation Statement of Pasmore, AWM 30 B1.35, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>36</sup> Report of Ambassador Elkus, POWs in Turkey File, 1917/ 89/ 377, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>37</sup> British POW Committee Report, AWM 940-472 T784, p. 6, AWM, Canberra.

At Belemedik, Allen was the only Gallipoli soldier to die of disease (malaria), a quite remarkable outcome considering the seriousness of the various epidemics in the region. However, the Australian Red Cross Information Bureau still claimed that ‘as long as they remained in health, were well treated; but if they broke down with malaria, gastritis or dysentery, they stood but a poor chance of recovery’.<sup>38</sup> Beattie provided considerable detail about hospital treatment, emphasising again that prisoners and Turks alike received the same treatment. He also outlined the system of sick-pay for the POWs set up by the German railway company at Belemedik. Three doctors, a Turk, German and Englishman, inspected sick prisoners, allowing days off if too ill. Sick pay of eight piastres daily was paid, covering rations for the period.<sup>39</sup>

Foxcroft explained that the prisoners’ health was satisfactory at Belemedik until a malaria outbreak occurred in June 1916 and ‘half of the camp was down with it’. The German staff, both doctors and nurses, ‘did their best to cope with the rush of patients’. They were joined by Dr Pearson of the Indian Medical Service, who arrived after the fall of Kut, but all were hampered by lack of medical supplies. Foxcroft explained that the ‘Turks and Russians had by far the heaviest death toll’. The very sick were eventually sent to Afyon in December 1916.<sup>40</sup> Thomas was sent to the hospital with malaria in August 1916, noting that treatment was ‘not good’. He returned in December of that year, where Dr Pearson ‘did his best for me, but he had little material to work with’.<sup>41</sup> After Rifki Bey visited in early 1918, he managed to ensure that Dr Pearson had access to medicines, including injections of quinine.<sup>42</sup> When Williams was hospitalised with malaria, he also found that ‘the German doctors and nurses

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<sup>38</sup> Report from the *Avoca Free Press*, 15/5/1918. Randall Family Papers, MSB 401 MS 11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

<sup>39</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>40</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra. Williams also noted this in his Repatriation Statement, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>41</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>42</sup> Rifki Bey Report, A11803 /1/1918/89/453, NAA, Canberra.

were kind enough but had no medicines to cope with the epidemic'.<sup>43</sup> Cliffe complained of the impact of the epidemic and blamed the location and Turkish administration for placing the prisoners there in the first place:

We have a great amount of illness and deaths, as it is terrible unhealthy here. Everyone has had fever and what there are left of us are a weary thin pasty looking lot of men. There is a lot of talk of moving us to a healthier camp.<sup>44</sup>

In July 1917 a German bacteriological laboratory was set up in nearby Pozanti to deal with the epidemics. Turkish soldiers travelling to the fronts in Palestine and Mesopotamia passed through via the railway and often brought back diseases on their return journey. No actual statistics are available, but the death rate for Turkish soldiers was very high.<sup>45</sup> It was noted by the POWs that there were specific malaria seasons in the region. Rawlings reported that by March 1918 the danger period had passed 'and all the boys in this camp are in good health and in excellent spirits'.<sup>46</sup> The German medical facilities made an impact on health standards over time and during both 1917 and 1918 Carpenter was able to write from Angora that: 'I and the rest of our corps keeping well' and 'pleased to say all our lads are looking well at present'.<sup>47</sup>

At Haji-Kiri, Delpratt described the impact of malaria on this isolated camp in the summer of 1916, with only about six of the men out of 100 escaping illness. Delpratt described the hospital as being filthy and ridden with lice and bed bugs. Drugs were scarce as he accused the staff of selling them. Twelve prisoners died but once a British Medical Officer took charge in November 1916, only three deaths occurred. Unfortunately, one of the three was Calcutt. Delpratt also praised a New Zealander, F. Gaffney, who worked ceaselessly to

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<sup>43</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>44</sup> ARC POW File of Cliffe, 1 DRL/428 Box 39, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>45</sup> Becker, *Military Medical Practice*, 1983.

<sup>46</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley. ARC W & M File of Rawlings, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>47</sup> Letters of 16/11/1917 and 1/7/1918. ARC W & M File of Carpenter, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

improve the conditions for the men. However, he claimed that 'that Dr Lutphian who was in charge of the Hospital was guilty of the most criminal neglect'.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps Troy was fortunate that, after contracting malaria, he could not get into the hospital due to severe overcrowding.<sup>49</sup>

From early 1917, a convalescent camp was established at Bor. Both a Turkish and British medical officer was stationed there and sick prisoners were attended to each morning. Bailey pointed out that there was no actual hospital at Bor and any very sick patients were sent to nearby Nigde.<sup>50</sup> Drake suffered from severe attacks of malaria and on 21 February 1917 was sent to Bor. He was attended there by a Turkish doctor and later by a British Medical Officer, Captain Murphy.<sup>51</sup> The British POW Report emphasised that supplies were very scarce and deaths frequent but acknowledged that the hospital at Nigde was clean and comfortable.<sup>52</sup> No Gallipoli POW died there. At Yozgad, British doctors attended to the ill and complained of the lack of supplies, particularly quinine. Nothing was available locally and goods posted from the Red Crescent had not arrived in 1916.<sup>53</sup> Wilson and Green died of typhus and Spanish influenza at Yozgad.

As the war progressed, new hospitals were built and equipped in the eastern regions of Turkey. Along the railway line being constructed east from Ras-el-Ain to Nissibin, eight hospitals were established and in each an English or Indian Medical officer was placed in charge of ill POWs. The Rifki Bey Report of April 1918 noted that there was a great improvement and that these hospitals were now better than those in Istanbul. The Report noted that few men were now ever sick.<sup>54</sup> No Gallipoli prisoners died in this region.

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<sup>48</sup> Repatriation Statement of Delpratt, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>49</sup> Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>50</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8.

<sup>51</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM B1.11, AWM, Canberra. Drake remained at Bor for three months and then went before a Turkish Medical Board with a view to exchange.

<sup>52</sup> British POW Committee Report AWM 940.472 T784, pp. 29-30.

<sup>53</sup> International Red Cross Report, 1916. PRO FO 383/187/1917.

<sup>54</sup> Rifki Bey Report, NAA A11803/1918/89/453, April 1918.

In 1918, few medical problems were reported in the officers' camp at Kedos. British medical officers treated the prisoners, though it was noted that 'the climate being very good, very few were ever ill.' British Captain Spackman of the Indian Medical Service requested medical instruments be sent from Istanbul and complained that cases of equipment sent previously had not arrived. A voluminous correspondence was recorded between the Commandant and the War Office for a dentist to be sent to assist Dr Coxon who was in Afyon and who would then proceed to Kedos. It was noted that 90 percent of the men required dental attention.<sup>55</sup>

Several prisoners continued to suffer from their injuries sustained at Gallipoli. Foster's arm troubled him throughout his time in Turkey. His medical assessment on repatriation on 28 November 1918 declared him unfit for hard work due to his wounded arm.<sup>56</sup> Kerr managed to secure work as a clerk at Belemedik due to his injuries and several men including Matthews became orderlies in officer camps as they were unable to work in the labour camps. Mackay had several operations on his back whilst at Angora. O'Connor had several successful operations on his leg and eye whilst in Istanbul.<sup>57</sup>

Despite the number of complaints about health standards in Turkey, not all prisoners suffered illnesses whilst in captivity. Nineteen of the 43 survivors (44 percent) indicate that they had not been ill in Turkey during captivity, whilst another 19 (44 percent) suffered various illnesses, were hospitalised and successfully treated. The majority of these men sent to hospital suffered malaria (16), typhus (4), pneumonia (2) and one each Spanish influenza and dysentery. There may have been more cases of typhoid except that the men received

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<sup>55</sup> Dutch Delegation Report, PRO FO 383 / 1919, PRO, London.

<sup>56</sup> Service records of Foster, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>57</sup> Service records of Mackay, B2455; NAA, Canberra. Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

inoculations by the Turkish authorities and the AIF had introduced compulsory inoculations for cholera.<sup>58</sup>

Some prisoners commented on their good health, even throughout the hard winter years of 1916-1917. Officers in particular suffered few bouts of ill health, no doubt due to their more leisurely lifestyle and access to better accommodation and food. Elston noted 'had good health all through and never brought into contact with the Turkish doctors, except when we inoculated against typhus [sic]'.<sup>59</sup> McDonald was admitted to hospital on one occasion at Afyon with 'supposed typhus'. He was well treated, allowed a room to himself but had to purchase medicine and food. He complained that at first a Russian Medical Officer was in charge at the hospital and that the Turks had no medicinal supplies. When British Medical Officer Captain Coxon arrived from Kut, conditions improved. 'Praise too high cannot be given to this officer for self sacrifice and efficient service'. Despite concluding that 'Turkish medical arrangements are disgraceful even for the Turks themselves', McDonald commented later that he was in 'splendid health'.<sup>60</sup> Goodwin explained to Miss Chomley that in 1918 in Afyon, 'with the exception of a few months subsequent to my capture, when I was rather run down, it has been excellent, and during the last two years, I have not had a days illness'.<sup>61</sup>

It was not only some officers who enjoyed reasonable health. More than a dozen prisoners of lower ranks did not suffer any illnesses and had no need to visit a hospital. Pasmore commented at Yozgat in 1917, that 'I am in the best of health and hope to pull through safely'.<sup>62</sup> At Afyon, Stormonth commented that in 1918, 'I was not wounded when captured and have only suffered from a few minor illnesses since ... at the present I am extremely

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<sup>58</sup> Repatriation Statement of Elston, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>59</sup> Repatriation Statement of Elston, AWM 30 B1.13, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>60</sup> Repatriation Statement of McDonald, AWM 30 B1.22, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>61</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley. ARC POW File of Goodwin, 1 DRL/428 Box 77, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>62</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley, 17/12/1917. ARC POW File of Pasmore, 1 DRL/428 Box 16, AWM, Canberra.

fit'.<sup>63</sup> Some prisoners such as Beattie were not hospitalised but were sent to convalescent camps such as Bor and in the latter part of the war, to Afyon to recuperate from minor illnesses. The disparity in the mens' health may have been due to the state of their health at capture, their individual constitutions or luck in being placed in a camp with better facilities. Miss Chomley reasoned that 'I think a tremendous lot depends on whether the camp happens to be healthy or not; if it happens not to be, the Turks have not got the sense to know what to do'.<sup>64</sup> She congratulated Troy on his move to Afyon at the end of 1916 as 'from what I hear it seems a healthier place'.<sup>65</sup>

The evidence suggests that many POWs were treated in hospitals and recovered their health. Lightfoot recorded that he suffered from malaria and was treated with quinine 'on and off' whilst in Turkey. He was sent to Afyon to convalesce for about 20 months.<sup>66</sup> Cahir's medical report of 1919 noted that he suffered from malaria for three years and Spanish influenza and 'feels well but weak'.<sup>67</sup> Carpenter had 'a great deal of sickness, including malaria, typhus and ber-beri'. He was critical of hospital treatment but survived to return home.<sup>68</sup> Many enjoyed good health up to autumn 1916 and then caught malaria in the winter of 1916-1917, including Troy, who by 1918 could report to Miss Chomley that 'at present my health is as good as can be expected under the circumstances'.<sup>69</sup> At Bozanti, Wiffen was hospitalised twice with malaria, suffering attacks once a week. However, he too was able to report to Miss Chomley that he later enjoyed 'splendid health'.<sup>70</sup> A summary of health issues for each POW may be found in Appendix 17.

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<sup>63</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley, 31/8/1918. ARC POW File of Stormonth, 1 DRL/428 Box 200, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>64</sup> Letter to Ashton's father, 19/11/ 1917. ARC POW File of Ashton, 1 DRL/428 Box 7, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>65</sup> Letter dated 31/3/1917. ARC POW File of Troy, 1 DRL/428 Box 211, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>66</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>67</sup> Service records of Cahir, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>68</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carpenter, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>69</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley from San Stefano, 9/9/1918. ARC POW File of Troy, 1 DRL/428 Box 211, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>70</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley from Bozanti, 5/9/1918. ARC POW File of Wiffen, 1 DRL/428 Box 227, AWM, Canberra.

There were several instances where the men commented on a particular Turkish doctor who provided excellent treatment. Bailey noted that ‘Tusbashi Zenides Effendi, a doctor ... near Angora, also deserves recognition for his careful treatment of men of my camp’.<sup>71</sup> O’Connor recounted the story of Dr Ruffki Bey, ‘a Turkish gentleman’, who had him moved to his own hospital, the Zeynet Kiamil, several kilometers away from Haydar Pasha, for an operation on his head and eye. ‘I was treated quite handsomely by Dr Ruffki Bey. He gave me eight hours leave to visit Constantinople whither I was accompanied by a Turkish guard ... Altogether, I had a really good time at Dr Russki (sic) Bey’s Scutari Hospital’.<sup>72</sup> Comments were often made about the sound treatment provided by German nurses at the major Istanbul hospitals such as Haydar Pasha. A number of German doctors and nurses had been sent to Turkey by the German Red Cross Society early in the war.<sup>73</sup>

Overall therefore, there is little evidence to support the hitherto uncontested claims of extraordinary death rates of the Gallipoli prisoners. When the repatriated prisoners first returned to London, Miss Chomley remarked on how well they looked.<sup>74</sup>

### **POW exchange**

The British and Turkish Governments became involved in prolonged and complex negotiations to arrange POW exchanges. In November 1915, the British initially proposed to exchange all incapacitated prisoners. The Turks agreed in principle but negotiations dragged on. In September 1916 the Turkish Government suggested the exchange take place via Sweden. The British rejected this suggestion and towards the end of 1916 they both agreed to allow a hospital ship to be used for the exchange. The Turks suggested that eleven British POWs were ill enough to be repatriated. However, the British again rejected this, declaring

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<sup>71</sup> Repatriation Statement of Bailey, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>72</sup> Repatriation Statement of O’Connor, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>73</sup> International Red Cross Report, PRO FO 383/187/1917, PRO, London.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Miss Chomley dated 18/12/1918. ARC POW File of Green, AWM 1DRL/428, Box 79, AWM, Canberra.

‘This was palpably absurd ... the diversion of a hospital ship from important duties for so small a number of our men appeared to be unjustified’. Thus the men who had been placed in hospitals in Istanbul in readiness for exchange in 1916 were to be disappointed. Negotiations went on for another year until October 1917, when some eighty incapacitated prisoners were eventually exchanged via Austria and Switzerland.<sup>75</sup> Several Australians from Gallipoli were initially selected for exchange, including Kilmartin, Dowell, Bailey, MacKay, Davern and O’Connor (below).

**Fig.7:2: O’Connor on arrival in London, 1917. (AWM P03236-020)**



Dowell, O’Connor and Davern spent time at Haydar Pasha hospital, Istanbul, awaiting exchange and noted ‘we had a fairly good time’.<sup>76</sup> The hospital was located on the Asian side of Istanbul and had been a military hospital since 1846. Barracks were built in the extensive hospital gardens as a recovery unit for up to 200 wounded or ill Turkish and Allied soldiers.<sup>77</sup> The Red Cross Report of 1917 noted that a visit was made to the hospital and that ‘the men are given good room, iron bedsteads and are looked after by German nurses, who do good work. They get a little money and their Christmas parcels all right’.<sup>78</sup> However, only O’Connor and Davern were eventually repatriated in October 1917. A purpose-built hospital train transported the exchanged prisoners to Austria. The prisoners remained there for approximately ten weeks:

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<sup>75</sup> Summary of Steps Taken Regarding British POWs in Turkey, October 1917. PRO FO 383/334/249/1917, PRO, London.

<sup>76</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>77</sup> *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı'nın Ortak Yayınıdır (Encyclopedia of Istanbul, Ministry of Culture & History Foundation)*, vol. 4, Istanbul, 1994, pp. 27-29. Translated by S. Bulgu 26/4/2006. The barracks were demolished in 1933. The hospital also had German medical specialists and nearby are the facilities used by Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War. Today the Haydar Pasha Commonwealth cemetery lies behind the hospital, together with an imposing monument to those who died in the Crimean War, with a tribute to Florence Nightingale.

<sup>78</sup> International Red Cross Delegates' Report of Boissier and Vischer. PRO FO 383/187/1917.

the Austrians treated us fairly enough ... Through Switzerland and France our journey was one triumphal procession ... The Swiss people and the French did all they could to welcome us and to entertain us ... We had a cordial welcome at Southampton Docks and another at Waterloo Station, London.<sup>79</sup>

Negotiations over further repatriation of prisoners continued. A system was put in place to decide which prisoners were the most in need. Not surprisingly, many attempted to convince the medical authorities that they were deserving cases. In the early months of 1918, Luscombe noted at Afyon that there was a call for officers with ill-health who would be sent to Istanbul for a medical examination. He wryly observed that 'about half of this party were genuinely in ill-health. The other half were genuinely good actors'.<sup>80</sup>

Suffering badly from malaria, Kilmartin was one of the men initially chosen for exchange. He was sent to Istanbul in the latter part of 1917, but did not pass the final medical board inspection. By 1918 he was able to assure Miss Chomley that he was 'getting on well thanks to a good constitution'.<sup>81</sup> McKay was physically impaired since being badly wounded on Gallipoli. He was passed as medically unfit on 30 November 1917 but failed to be chosen for early repatriation.<sup>82</sup> Drake awaited exchange at Haydar Pasha Hospital where he was treated very well and allowed to freely roam the hospital gardens. He was later transferred to Psamatia.<sup>83</sup> Dowell also suffered disappointment. He was badly wounded in the thigh at Gallipoli and spent over ten months in hospital before being sent off to Afyon. Being disabled, he was not made to work there. O'Connor noted that 'his left leg is 5 inches shorter than his other leg', so he was clearly incapacitated.<sup>84</sup> Dowell himself had attempted to accelerate the process of exchange by requesting assistance from Miss Chomley:

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<sup>79</sup> Repatriation Statement of Davern, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. They arrived in Britain on 18 January 1918 and were greeted by Australian women and 'handed wattle blossom and blue gum leaves'. Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service Records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>80</sup> L. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl*, W. R. Smith & Paterson Pty. Ltd. Brisbane, 19170, pp. 98-99.

<sup>81</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley dated 3/10/1918. ARC POW File of Kilmartin, 1 DRL/428 Box 112, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>82</sup> ARC POW File of Mackay, 1 DRL/428 Box 145, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>83</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>84</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

Is it possible for you to do anything to help the exchange along. There are some of us here who greatly need good Doctors to attend to us. My own wound has broken out again after six months at the camp. And there are two other Australians here who are just as bad.<sup>85</sup>

However, good naturedly, Dowell later noted in a letter that he was 'pleased to learn that O'Connor and Davern reached London safely and that they were well. I hope to get there shortly or at least to Switzerland'.<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, this was not to be. Dowell was not repatriated until 15 November 1918 together with other POWs.<sup>87</sup> The frustrations experienced by Miss Chomley are clear in a letter to Australia House:

I think that perhaps the High Commissioner may be able to do something to expedite the exchange of some of our wounded. It is only right to tell you that I am not at all satisfied with the way the British Government is dealing with the whole subject of exchange of prisoners.<sup>88</sup>

From the evidence, it appears that the Australian Government had little representation and certainly little influence where the issue of POWs was concerned.<sup>89</sup> It is not clear why Australia had no representation at these discussions and was not able to argue more persuasively for the release of more Australians POWs. Miss Chomley was highly critical of the British Government over the exchange process as so few Australians from Gallipoli were chosen and were amongst the longest serving prisoners. Some of the men also held out hope that their extended time as prisoners would be a factor in the selection. Foxcroft observed in mid 1918 that 'I think there is a good chance of all the men who were captured at Gallipoli being among the first to be repatriated. They certainly deserve to be'.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley 2/3/1917. ARC POW File of Dowell, 1 DRL/428 Box 55, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>86</sup> Letter dated 1/8/1918. ARC W & M File of Dowell, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>87</sup> Service records of Dowell, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>88</sup> Letter to Captain Collins, Australia House, London, 17/3/1917. ARC POW File of Dowell, 1 DRL/428 Box 55, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.* Letter from Capt. Collins, dated 18/3/1917. He explained that he had already brought the issue of the POWs to the High Commissioner's notice and 'I think I got it raised the other day, through the New Zealand Minister, at the Conference, we unfortunately not being in the position to have a member at these discussions and was not able to argue more persuasively for the release of the Australian POWs'.

<sup>90</sup> Letter to father dated 30/5/1918. ARC POW File of Foxcroft, 1 DRL/428 Box 68, AWM, Canberra.

Miss Chomley attempted to influence the selection by creating illnesses for some of the men. Her ruse was to intimate in letters that the men had bogus illnesses. She wrote to Lushington in 1918 suggesting that he was 'consumptive'. 'I feel sure with your weak lungs, that you will be sent home'. Ten days later she assured Lushington's aunt that his suggested illness was only a fabrication of her own making:

I wrote to your nephew the other day telling him how sorry I was that he was still so seedy and I was afraid his lungs were affected. I hope this will not startle him, but I had to put him down on the list and I thought I had better warn him to carry out the part. I did this because I was not sure that all the Gallipoli men would be returned, or whether those whose health was suffering would get precedence. I understand that there is no medical examination, so that perhaps my little ruse will not be discovered ... I have invented diseases for several of our men, but please do not tell anyone I have done this.<sup>91</sup>

She was very busy on the day of 21 May 1918 as she wrote to Ashton and Rawlings with similar guile. She consoled Ashton:

I am sorry to hear that your heart, which I know has been troubling you for a long time, is no better. I have therefore recommended that you should be examined by the Medical Commission with a view to your repatriation. I hope this may have good results, and that you may be sent here to have proper medical treatment. It would be very nice if we could see you all home.<sup>92</sup>

She used the same ploy of heart trouble with Rawlings:

I am very sorry to hear that your health is unsatisfactory and that you have had such trouble with a weak heart. I'm afraid you need special treatment so I have asked that the Medical Commission should examine you with a view to possible repatriation.<sup>93</sup>

Unfortunately her ruse did not result in these three men being exchanged any earlier, but they are examples of the compassion felt for these prisoners by this remarkable woman.

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<sup>91</sup> Letters dated 21/5/1918 and 31/5/1918. ARC POW File of Lushington, 1 DRL/428 Box 164, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>92</sup> ARC POW File of Ashton, 1 DRL/428 Box 7, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>93</sup> ARC POW File of Rawlings, 1 DRL/428 Box 171, AWM, Canberra.

Families also petitioned the government for an early exchange. King's mother wrote in mid 1918 to the Australian High Commissioner, London, explaining that she was a mother of three sons, all serving and all wounded. 'I would deem it a great favour if you will kindly do all in your power to have him released'. She received a reply consoling her by declaring that 'everything possible has been done to secure the release of prisoners of war captured on Gallipoli'.<sup>94</sup> In reality, little pressure was applied by Australian authorities and King died in a camp hospital prior to the Armistice.

### **Deaths at camps**

The twelve Gallipoli prisoners who died in hospitals after being interned in camps did not die directly of poor conditions or lack of sophisticated medical care, though these factors no doubt contributed to their death. Most died of infectious diseases sweeping through Turkey and the camps, particularly in the winter of 1916-1917. (See Appendix 18 for details). Apart from those who died from battle wounds in dressing stations or in hospital, the earliest deaths occurred nine months after capture in an accidental rock fall (New) and typhus (Wilson). Eight deaths occurred in the winter months of 1916 -1917; an enteritis outbreak killed Nelson in November 1916 and O'Callaghan in January 1917. Allan died of malaria at Belemedik in December 1916 and Kerrigan at Afyon in February 1917. Calcutt died of septicaemia at Hadji-Kiri in December 1916 and dysentery caused the death of Jones in January 1917. Typhus killed Mathers and Creedon died of enteritis in February 1917. The last deaths occurred three years and two months after capture. King died of pneumonia and Green of Spanish influenza in 1918.

Len New was the first prisoner to die in camp in May 1916. Kerr, McLean, Bray and Williams provided four detailed eye-witness accounts of his death and an official death certificate was issued. At Belemedik a group of prisoners were working on a hillside, rolling

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<sup>94</sup> Reply dated 17 September 1918. Service records of King, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

logs down the incline. One dislodged a large rock, which crashed through the roof of the hut where New and Williams were sleeping after night shift duties. New was on the top bunk and Williams below him. The bunks were demolished, New suffered a fractured skull and died almost immediately and Williams was injured.<sup>95</sup> Williams later noted that ‘the Germans did all they could for him, and they were also considerate to me, keeping me from work for a few days after my head had healed and giving me full pay whilst away from work’.<sup>96</sup>

Wilson was the next Gallipoli prisoner to die on 30 May 1916 of typhoid at Yozgad. He and several other prisoners including his friend Pasmore, were on the move from Sivas to Angora when he became ill near Yozgad. He was admitted into the hospital there and died several days later. A year later, Pasmore, admitted to the same hospital, found some of Wilson’s letters and photo of his mother. He was unable to locate his friend’s grave and was shocked to discover that some guards were wearing some of Wilson’s clothes.<sup>97</sup>

It was six months before another Gallipoli POW died. On 28 November 1916 Nelson died from enteritis at Angora. Altogether, four Gallipoli prisoners died at Angora from typhus and enteritis epidemics. A typhus outbreak caused the deaths of Mathers in February 1917 and O’Callaghan on 21 January 1917. Creedon died of enteritis at Angora on 27 February 1917 though typhus was recorded on his death certificate of 5 May 1917. He was buried in the Armenian cemetery. His New Zealander friend J. Havard later noted that he had experienced excellent health until September 1916 when he succumbed to malaria. Both were sent to

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<sup>95</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 187ff; McLean and Bray in the ARC Wounded & Missing File of New, 1 DRL/427 Box 199, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>96</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>97</sup> Pasmore’s statement dated 30/5/1919, in the ARC W & M File of Wilson, 1 DRL/428 Box 298, AWM, Canberra.

Angora where they went to hospital several times with malaria and dysentery.<sup>98</sup> All four men were buried in the Armenian cemetery and all four were issued with official death certificates.

Allen died in December 1916 of malaria at Belemelik after a long illness. British Dr Pearson, who had attended Allen, alerted London of his death.<sup>99</sup> Calcutt also died at nearby Hadji Kiri on 18 December 1916 from septicaemia and was buried there. Delpratt was a witness on his death certificate and the Red Crescent notified the Allies of his death.<sup>100</sup> Three Gallipoli soldiers, Jones, Kerrigan and King died at Afyon. Kerrigan died of malaria on 15 February 1917, though the official Nominal Roll gives an incorrect date of death of 13 December 1917. The Ottoman Red Crescent supplied a notification of his death on 5 April 1917 as well as an official death certificate.<sup>101</sup> Captain McDonald was a witness on the death certificate that noted he had died of malaria. Jones died of dysentery at Afyon on 31 January 1917 and the Red Crescent notified London three months later on 5 April 1917. An official death certificate was issued.<sup>102</sup>

The account of King's death is an example of exaggeration over time. According to Luscombe, King died of pneumonia on 16 September 1918. He had been ill for some time and was hospitalised in the latter months of 1917. However, eight months later he reported that he was quite well. A letter written by Private Marriott threw doubt on the circumstances of his death, to be elaborated on in the ensuing months and years:

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<sup>98</sup> ARC POW File of Creedon, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra; Service Records, B2455, NAA, Canberra. His death was confirmed on a list sent by the Red Crescent Society.

<sup>99</sup> It was noted that Allen 'had every possible attention in this Hospital'. ARC W & M File of Allen, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>100</sup> ARC Wounded & Missing File of Calcutt, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra; Service records B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>101</sup> Kerrigan ARC W & M File 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra. Notifications of death included Colonel Hughes' list of 12/9/1919; Red Crescent correspondence; death certificate; War Graves Registration & Inquiry dated 29/9/1919. The Australian War Memorial retains a copy of his official Commemorative scroll. AWM 3 DRL/6112, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>102</sup> ARC W & M File of Jones, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

George Burdett King, died August 16 1918 at AKH, Turkey. I am sorry to inform you that he died in a very mysterious manner. He was made to go in hospital on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1918, against his wish, suffering from a slight attack of Spanish influenza, and two or three days previous he had just been cured of gaunders [sic] (jaundice). His last words to me were – ‘I will be out again in a couple of days’ which I believed he would for he was such a well built man, but that was the last time after being mates together for over two years. He was in hospital just a fortnight, when he was brought out and buried in a Greek cemetery. The burial party only recognised him by the wound in his leg, his head was covered with blood, and his chest was all bruised. Whether or not he was murdered still remains a mystery but to my opinion he was murdered.<sup>103</sup>

Another informant D. L Richardson reported: ‘Trooper R. Clarke, 6<sup>th</sup> LH ... made a statement to Lt. Jordan that he was in the burial party of Pte. King at Afion and he saw at the back of King’s head a hole about the size of half a crown and closed fist marks all over his body’.<sup>104</sup> Beattie added, ‘I was told afterwards ... that the back of his head and shoulders were bruised and covered with blood as if he had been struck several times with a stick. He had gone into hospital with influenza’.<sup>105</sup>

In response to these allegations, two officers interned at Afyon, Luscombe and Jordan, refuted the veracity of these reports. Both responded to inquiries made to them by the Red Cross with Luscombe stating: ‘I have seen the copy of letter from Private T. Marriott ... and the allegation that this soldier was murdered is not correct’. Jordan ‘saw the Greek Doctor who had attended him and he stated that King was delirious and had tried to throw himself out of the window, and that this was the cause of the marks on his head and chest mentioned by Marriott’.<sup>106</sup> Neither Luscombe nor Jordan mentioned King’s death as being suspicious in their Repatriation Statements.

However, these refutations did not stop Halpin from further elaborating the story years later.

There is no other soldier he could be referring to here apart from King: ‘The murder ... at

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<sup>103</sup> Letter dated 29/4/1919. ARC W & M File of King, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, reported on 7/1/1919.

<sup>105</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B1.18, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>106</sup> ARC W & M File of King, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

Afyon Kara Hissar, in October 1918 – an original Anzac captured at the landing, and probably the only survivor of the lower ranks at that date, was the most abominable experience of the Australians in Turkey, in an ocean of abomination!'.<sup>107</sup> Unfortunately, King's true fate will never be known. The last of the Gallipoli soldiers to die in Turkey was Green, of Spanish influenza on 10 October 1918 at Yozgad. A letter from the Dutch Minister on 29 October 1918, stated that five POWs including Green had died of the 'flu resulting in the Turkish Grand Vizier issuing orders to transfer Yozgad camp to Smyrna before the winter of 1918.<sup>108</sup>

### **Burials**

The twelve burials of Gallipoli POWs took place at individual camps from May 1916 to October 1918. Accounts of burials vary considerably with some prisoners claiming no consideration being shown by the Turks and that Christian burial rites were denied. Thus it was another issue prone to cultural misunderstandings and exaggeration. Carpenter wrote in his Repatriation Statement:

Most of the lads that died in Turkey were buried without our presence, in fact men were buried and we never knew till months after and nothing was left to mark the spot. I do know that one of our men was buried in a rubbish heap. This was at Angora, of which place I brought a photo of back with me ... The deaths here were mainly due to overwork, lack of food, insanitation ... .<sup>109</sup>

Some POWs emphasized that at Angora the Turks conducted all burials and they had not been allowed to attend.<sup>110</sup> Prisoners were concerned that bodies went straight from the hospital to the burial ground:

We are not allowed to attend the burial of a fellow prisoner. When they die in Hospital they are taken to a room in the Hospital and washed, and then conveyed on a stretcher to the Hospital Grave yard and buried by Turks (Shrouds are unnecessary luxuries to these

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<sup>107</sup> Halpin, letter to the editor of *Reveille*, August 1, 1934, Vol. 7, No. 12. There were quite a few Anzacs of 'lower rank' still alive; no Gallipoli soldier died at Afyon in October 1918.

<sup>108</sup> Service records of Green, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>109</sup> Repatriation Statement of Carpenter, Service records, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>110</sup> Statement by Pt. Havard, 18/6/1919. ARC POW File of Creedon, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

people). There are no marks to show who is buried in certain places. We know they are English that is all.<sup>111</sup>

However, Creedon noted that about thirty prisoners attended a British prisoner's burial at Angora. 'Two Turkish priests led the way chanting, then followed the pall-bearers and then the rest of us'.<sup>112</sup> Nelson, O'Callaghan, Mathers and Creedon were buried at Angora, their deaths due to the epidemics of enteritis and typhoid. Roberts commented that O'Callaghan 'as far as I know was buried as soon as he died in one of the numerous yards of Angora.'<sup>113</sup> Rather than being buried in a 'yard' or 'rubbish dump' in Angora, all four were buried in the local Christian Armenian cemetery but in 1928 when bodies were reinterred elsewhere, the individual burial sites for each man could not be identified.<sup>114</sup>

At Belemedik, Allen and New were buried in a more formal manner. Considerable details are available for New's burial. The Christian dead were buried together on a hill overlooking the local Turkish cemetery. A large group of prisoners were allowed to attend, travelling in from isolated posts along the railway, including many French prisoners. Kerr was disgusted that few British prisoners bothered to attend the funeral of their Australian colleague. A British private took the service and led the procession. 'The proceedings commenced with a reading of the service for the dead which was followed by a hymn and a prayer and the coffin was put in the ground. Another hymn was sung and the meeting slowly dispersed'. The coffin was made by the prisoners and was a simple wooden box. Colleagues made simple crosses inscribed with the names of the deceased'.<sup>115</sup> Kerr's account is supported by that of Bray: 'We attended his funeral which was carried out according to the Christian service. The grave

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<sup>111</sup> Letter from Trooper G.A. Roberts, 958, Angora, 20/11/1917. ARC W & M File of Mathers, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>112</sup> Creedon's diary, AWM 1DRL/223, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>113</sup> Statement dated 25/1/1918. ARC W & M File of O'Callaghan, 1 DRL/428 Box 203, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>114</sup> Service records of Creedon, Mathers, Nelson and O'Callaghan, B2455, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>115</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 188.

is marked'. A photograph of his grave was sent on to London to be forwarded to his family.<sup>116</sup>

Drake commented: 'All burials were well conducted; the coffins were made by their comrades. Crosses with name and full regimental particulars were also erected over the graves'.<sup>117</sup> Complaints were made that some crosses were later vandalised.<sup>118</sup>

Allen's funeral was also conducted according to Christian rites. Sims reported that 'the funeral was carried out by his comrades according to the rites of the English Church. A large cross was erected for identification and remembrance. Photo of grave enclosed'.<sup>119</sup> Kerr's account corroborated this report: 'Cross erected and grave in good order. I have seen his grave'.<sup>120</sup>

**Fig.7:3: Kerrigan's grave, Afyon. (AWM CO2914)**



At Afyon, Jones, King and Kerrigan were buried in the local Armenian Christian cemetery. Foxcroft noted that he was part of a burial party, preparing the grave, 'but were permitted to hold no burial service, although two British Padres were in the town'.<sup>121</sup> The graves were obviously marked and still intact by the end of 1919 as a note from the British Graves Registry added that Jones' grave 'is alongside those of Pte. G. B. King , 1379... and Pte. R. Kerrigan, 1510. They are all marked with crosses,

<sup>116</sup> Informant G. Bray, AE2, 1/1/1919. ARC W & M File of New, 1 DRL/428 Box 199, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>117</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra; ARC W & M File of Allen, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>118</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 198.

<sup>119</sup> Informant R. Sims, 24/2/1919. ARC W & M File of Allen, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, informant G. Kerr, 22/1/1919. Notification of his death was sent through the Dutch Legation by Dr Pearson on 17 December 1917.

<sup>121</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra.

erected, I believe, by the men's companions'.<sup>122</sup> Wilson and Green were buried at Yozgad. Green was noted to be buried in Grave 10 yet the British Graves Registry in 1919 could not clearly identify Wilson's individual grave.<sup>123</sup>

Calcutt was buried at Haji-Kiri on the Berlin-Baghdad railway line near Belemedik. His grave was still recognisable in 1919 when Charles Bean passed by on the way to Egypt. The train stopped at Hadji-Kiri to refill with water and Bean was told by an English officer that there were some POWs buried nearby. 'He pointed the way to me; beyond was a much more prominent German cemetery ... and there, derelict and overgrown with grass, were a dozen or twenty graves'. Bean photographed the graves.<sup>124</sup>

Due to cultural misunderstandings, there were many criticisms made by the prisoners of the 'hasty' burials in Turkey. According to Muslim tradition, burials are conducted as soon as possible after death, a sensible precaution in hot climates. Bodies were ritually washed and wrapped in a simple shroud, and were buried, never cremated. There was no lengthy service at the graveside. A simple unadorned coffin was used to transport the body to the graveside but was not buried with the body. Attendants at funerals covered their heads with a hat or cap as a mark of respect, directly opposite to Christian practice.<sup>125</sup> The haste of burial so soon after death, the lack of a suitable coffin and hats remaining on Turkish heads during the funeral service were criticised by prisoners. However, it seems that as far as possible, Christian rites and customs were observed except at Angora in the latter part of the war.

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<sup>122</sup> Note from DADGR & E, 27/12/1919. ARC W & M File of Jones, AWM 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>123</sup> Letter from the Director General of Graves Registration & Enquiries, Istanbul, 27/12/1919. ARC W & M File of Wilson, AWM 1 DRL/428 Box 298, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>124</sup> C. Bean, *Gallipoli Mission*, ABC Books, Sydney, 1990, p. 318. Epidemics also cut a swathe through the German workers' ranks. Forty-one German workers died whilst working on the railway and the Honorary German Consul at Adana has recently worked to restore the German cemetery at Belemedik. A memorial to these men was recently erected by the Honorary Consul. (Interview with Teyfik Kisacik, Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany, Adana on 13/4/2006).

<sup>125</sup> A. R. Gatrad, 'Muslim customs surrounding death, bereavement, post-mortem examinations and organ transplants', *British Medical Journal*, London, 20 August 1994, pp. 521-523. [www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/309/6953/521](http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/309/6953/521) Accessed 9/11/2006. Most customs were laid down by Shariah law, derived from the Hadith (the sayings of Mohammed), rather than the Koran.

Prisoners were able to make coffins, attend the funeral and conduct a Christian service at the grave. Crosses with names inscribed generally indicated the location of the graves.

In the 1920s the British War Graves Commission made the decision to rebury those who were interred in locations scattered throughout inland Turkey and to rebury them in British military cemeteries elsewhere. In 1927 the bodies of Allen, Calcutt, Green, Jones, King, New and Kerrigan were reburied at the North Gate Cemetery, Baghdad in Plot 21. The graves of the four Australians buried at Angora were never clearly identified so the bodies were not reinterred. Wilson's body was not reburied and apparently still lies at Yozgad. To add confusion, his name was added to those officially missing on the Lone Pine Memorial on the Gallipoli peninsula. In 1928 a 'special cross' was erected at the Baghdad War Cemetery (North Gate) to commemorate the soldiers remaining buried in Turkey 'when no surface marking could be traced'. Names were also listed on the Kipling Memorial at Baghdad. Letters were sent to relatives explaining the reburials and requesting a brief inscription to place on the new graves.

### **Aftermath**

Deaths of the men at the camps were generally reported by the Turkish authorities through the Ottoman Red Crescent Society, in accordance with the Hague Convention. Several officers attempted to compose lists of those who died and Miss Chomley also kept a close watch on reports of deaths. Official death certificates were generally issued for all deaths, though certificates have not been found for King, Green and Allen.

The anguish of their families was intensified by the tardiness of authorities to send notifications of death. Creedon's death on 27 February 1917 at Angora was reported by the Red Crescent two months later. It was not for another twenty-two months that his mother received the pathetic few belongings of her son on 26 December 1918, consisting of '1

devotional book, wallet containing 1 lock of hair, 1 locket (damaged), 1 pair of scapulas, photos and postcards'. The grief suffered by families was often demonstrated in letters inquiring about the fate of their young men. Miss F. Neal wrote to Miss Chomley on 26 July 1917, on behalf of Creedon's widowed mother, describing herself as Creedon's 'personal friend'. She asked for details of his death and for any personal possessions 'which would forever be treasured by myself and his people'. She also inquired about his paybook containing his will. She revealed that Creedon was visited several times in 1916 by the American Ambassador who wrote to the family. Requests continued to be made for further details throughout 1919 and Miss Chomley wrote to his New Zealander friend Havard for more information. Havard wrote a lengthy response, explaining that he had written to the mother on arrival at Alexandria but had had no reply. He had handed in Creedon's pocket wallet, prayer book and photos to the AIF Cairo Headquarters. He also handed over Creedon's incomplete diary to Halpin, which is now archived in the Australian War Memorial. Havard explained that he had been a close friend of Creedon's and added, 'Creedon was a quiet, fine fellow and seemed liked and respected by all his fellow prisoners. He was ever hopeful and bravely bore his trials and hardships even to the last'.<sup>126</sup>

Sixteen months after his death, Calcutt's mother received his possessions, a terrible reminder of the meagre remains of a young man's last days: a scarf, pipe, socks, mittens, military book and hair brush. Miss Chomley's letters provided comfort and a humane element that official correspondence lacked. She wrote to Calcutt's family: 'as you would already have heard that your son Pt. B. Calcutt 2124, died some time ago while in Turkish hands. Your elder son from South Africa came in to see us the other day, it was most distressing to have to break the news to him. Please accept our deepest sympathy'.<sup>127</sup> Again she offered comfort to Jones' father: 'I think it very likely that your son would have received something from you before the end.

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<sup>126</sup> ARC POW File of Creedon, 1 DRL/428, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>127</sup> Letter from Miss Chomley to his mother, 31/10/1917. ARC POW File of Calcutt, 1 DRL/428 Box 31, AWM, Canberra.

Please accept our deepest sympathy.<sup>128</sup> Miss Chomley also provided considerable comfort to Miss Green about her brother's death, noting that she was 'so glad that you have really heard some definite news about your brother ... It must be a comfort to you to know that he was as well looked after as possible at the last'. Miss Green informed Miss Chomley that several soldiers had written to her after being requested by Miss Chomley to do so. A British officer who had lived in the same house at Yozgad as Green wrote:

He knew him very well and was present at his death, which took place on October 14<sup>th</sup> from pneumonia following influenza. I had a letter from my brother only yesterday. It was written on October 1<sup>st</sup>, and he was in great form then, and full of excitement at his imminent exchange. He was one of the 39 who had been selected the previous day as urgent cases for the first batch of exchanged prisoners. It is some consolation to know he was happy and bright up to the last.<sup>129</sup>

Some terrible blunders occurred in notifying families of the fates of their sons, brothers or husbands. Nelson's mother did not learn of his death through any official channels before learning of it in a brutal way two months after his death: '[his death] has been reported to me through a letter which I had sent to him and has been returned, stamped deceased'.<sup>130</sup>

Wilson's ARC Wounded and Missing file contains examples of official notification from Turkey of a prisoner's death. Responding to an inquiry from London of 14 November 1916 directed to the Turkish Commission for POWs, the Secretary of the Turkish Red Crescent Society noted: 'I have the honour to inform you that the Australian soldier E. R. Williams 1424 died at Yozgad on 30 May 1916 from typhoid fever. The fact of his death was communicated to the L'agence Internationale des Prisonniers de Guerre at Geneva on 11 November 1916'.<sup>131</sup> However, later correspondence would suggest that his family was not notified as they were still trying to gather information of his death two year later. Was the

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<sup>128</sup> Letter from Miss Chomley 9/5/1917. ARC POW File of Jones, 1 DRL/428 Box 107, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>129</sup> Letter dated 6/1/1919. ARC POW File of Green, 1 DRL/428 Box 79, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>130</sup> ARC POW File of Nelson, 1 DRL/428, Box 150, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>131</sup> Letter from Secretary, Turkish Red Crescent, 25/12/1916. ARC W & M File of Wilson, 1 DRL/428 Box 298, AWM, Canberra.

initial information not sent on from London? A letter with unclear date and author sent to the Turkish Red Crescent requests: 'Will you kindly discover for us whether it is true that these two Australians have died whilst POWs in Turkey their names are 1424 Elvas Roy Wilson and 1127 E.R.C. Adams, both of the AIF. Their fathers are feeling very anxious because they do not hear from their sons and we would be glad if possible to relieve this anxiety'.<sup>132</sup> The lack of information was still obvious in December 1918, two and a half years after Wilson's death, when a letter from the Australian Red Cross declared: 'All our efforts to obtain this information so desired by his people have up to the present failed'.<sup>133</sup> The reply from the Central POW Committee in London could not supply any details and simply added that enquiries should be directed to fellow POWs at Yozgad at the time.<sup>134</sup> The information that was supplied by Luscombe and Pasmore previously referred to was then made available.

King's sister wrote to Base Records on 12 December 1918 inquiring as to the whereabouts of her brother and 'if he is in England; we are all anxious about him'. A letter from Base Records dated 17 December 1918 in response wrote 'no advice as yet at hand that your brother ... has been transferred to England'. He had died four months earlier. Two months later, on 21 February 1919, Base Records was told of his death and were directed to let his next-of-kin know.<sup>135</sup> The anguish of the family can only be imagined.

On several occasions men were mistakenly reported dead when in fact they had been taken prisoner. Bailey's Service records contain several conflicting reports of his death. At first he was categorised Died of Wounds. Official notifications concluded that 'This soldier's death is reported by cable dated London 16/11/1916 and the attached postcards are not of sufficient a recent date to warrant cabled investigations being made'. Melbourne AIF headquarters were

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<sup>132</sup> *ibid.* Undated letter to Turkish Red Crescent Society, Istanbul.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, letter to Prisoners in Turkey Care Committee, dated 9/12/1918.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, letter from Central POW Committee, London, dated 20/12/1918.

<sup>135</sup> Service records of King, NAA B2455.

notified on 21 December 1916 of his alleged death. It must be assumed that his family was notified of his death at this time. However, a cousin received a letter from Bailey dated 30 November 1916, indicating that he was in good health. Finally Bailey was declared officially 'not dead' on 21 January 1917, 16 months after capture.<sup>136</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The Turkish authorities attempted to adhere to the Hague Convention in relation to medical treatment of POWs, despite claims to the contrary by British reports and the accounts of some POWs. The wounded and ill were treated by doctors and if serious enough, were admitted to hospitals. In many cases, hospital treatment was often poor, with unhygienic conditions and few supplies and functioning equipment, especially during the period of reprisal in Istanbul in 1915. Stories of rough treatment by medical orderlies were countered by other stories of individual kindness and humane treatment. Descriptions of poor treatment in Turkey were similar to complaints by Australian POWs about German hospitals. In relation to the overall health of prisoners, many prisoners had been hospitalised or had suffered poor health whilst fighting at Gallipoli before capture and similar diseases and ailments affected them during captivity. The main causes of death of the prisoners were the epidemics of malaria, typhoid, enteritis and influenza sweeping Turkey during the winter of 1916-1917. The death rates of prisoners was not as high as later British propaganda suggested and was not as high as that for the local Turkish population, both civilian and military. All prisoners died in hospitals located close to individual camps and burials were generally conducted according to Christian tradition.

Families of the deceased often suffered the 'tyranny of distance' and poor communications in not receiving timely notification of the deaths, many waiting several years before being told officially of the demise of family members. Miss Chomley offered many families comfort and

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<sup>136</sup> Service records of Bailey, NAA B2455.

support during this time and her extraordinary efforts to support the cause of the prisoners were acknowledged by many of the prisoners on their return to Australia. The final release of prisoners from their incarceration and subsequent repatriation will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 8: 'Not up to expectations': repatriation and aftermath.

The war ended for the Gallipoli prisoners on 30 October 1918, when the Treaty of Mudros was signed by Britain and Turkey. It stipulated the immediate gathering in Istanbul of all Allied prisoners. This was not a practical plan. Lieutenant Colonel Keeling, a former British POW in Turkey, wrote scornfully that whoever made this decision 'must have been singularly ignorant either of the location of prisoners or of the state of communication in Turkey in the fifth year of the war'.<sup>1</sup> So vast was the Ottoman territory that travelling to Istanbul for embarkation from many of the camps would have been grossly impractical. Istanbul was a suitable embarkation point for those interned in camps either in Istanbul itself, the surrounding suburbs or along the Sea of Marmara at camps such as Ismidt, Ada Bazar and Daridje. However, for those camps in the interior of Anatolia, it was more convenient to travel by rail directly to the harbour city of Smyrna (Izmir). Keeling was assigned the task of organising the repatriation of prisoners in the far east of the Ottoman Empire and pointed out that those imprisoned east of the Taurus and Amanus Mountains would require transport to the more southern Mediterranean harbour towns such as Adana.<sup>2</sup> On hearing of the armistice several weeks later, many prisoners in Germany simply set off to walk in a westerly direction into France.<sup>3</sup> This was not an alternative for those imprisoned in Turkey as the distances were too great. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 7, a number of POWs were released prior to the armistice due to ill health, including two Gallipoli prisoners, O'Connor and Davern.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter traces the repatriation experiences and post-war lives of the Gallipoli POWs. It also examines the immediate post-war propaganda of the British government that set out to

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<sup>1</sup> Lt. Colonel E. H. Keeling, 'How British Prisoners Left Turkey', *Blackwoods Magazine*, vol. CCV, no. MCC XLIII, January-June, 1919, p. 682.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 682.

<sup>3</sup> R. B. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats and the Great War. A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1990, p. 172.

<sup>4</sup> Repatriation Statement of O'Connor, Service records, B2455, AWM, Canberra.

denigrate the defeated Turkish government. Sources for this period are sketchy and little evidence has come to light about the private lives of the men on their return to Australia. Many prisoners ended memoirs and diaries on release or on hearing of the announcement of the Armistice. Garton accounts for this by explaining that perhaps the men perceived their war experiences as their 'defining moment of existence', the most important part of their lives, which was now over.<sup>5</sup> Post-war life was perhaps viewed as commonplace in comparison.

Realising that the war was nearing its end, the Commandant at Belemelik announced that POWs were to be released in stages from early October to travel west to Afyon. Lightfoot and Beattie were among this early group. Lightfoot noted that 'the news of the great British advance and destruction of the Turkish armies in Palestine was received about 30 September, by the Greeks and Armenians with great joy, and the Turks also seemed pleased that the war was nearing its end'.<sup>6</sup> From 9–13 October, the prisoners left Belemelik in groups, travelling to Afyon by train. Once there, all underwent medical examination and those deemed to be in poor health were the first to leave for the coastal port of Smyrna to await transportation.

At Afyon, Luscombe was instrumental in organising the large group of POWs to travel on to Smyrna. Later in his autobiography, Luscombe expressed his joy at hearing of the capitulation of the Turkish forces. Feeling that he had been inactive long enough, his first thought was to rejoin his battalion on the Western Front. The first hurdle to surmount was availing themselves of appropriate transport. Considerable organisation was required to commandeer a suitable train. Luscombe was experienced with railway administration in Victoria and so took charge. He and Jordan, who had learnt some Turkish, made arrangements with the local station master to procure a special train to Smyrna. After a hasty preparation to leave that included finding homes for the camp's pet menagerie, they arrived at the station at 8 am the

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<sup>5</sup> S. Garton, *The Cost of War. Australians Return*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1996, p.17.

<sup>6</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lightfoot, Service records, B2455, AWM, Canberra.

following day and waited patiently. 'I suppose this was something of a record for early arrival. However, we really did not mind waiting for ten hours. After all, we had waited for three long weary years for this train'.<sup>7</sup>

The men had an uneventful trip to Smyrna, where they were met by the American Red Cross and taken to the American Grammar School about a ten minute train ride from the town centre. They received money from the Red Cross and spent their newly found freedom whilst waiting for the troop ships wandering the streets and visiting bazaars.<sup>8</sup> Beattie observed that the local population was very friendly.<sup>9</sup> Luscombe joined up with a number of other officers, including Australian pilot Captain Austin, who played host to the other officers, who obviously relished the opportunity: 'Each evening our party of seven Australians met at one of Smyrna's leading hotels for the evening meal. The dining-room on the upper floor was tastefully and luxuriously furnished'. They celebrated each night with champagne that became more expensive each evening.<sup>10</sup>

The men from Beledik and Afyon were soon joined by those from Angora and the officers from Üsak. The first ship to leave Turkey was the hospital ship, the *SS Kanowna*, departing on 1 November 1918 and arriving in Alexandria on 6 November. Bailey, Carpenter, Lightfoot, Elston and Beattie were amongst this first group to leave Turkey.<sup>11</sup>

Orderlies remained at Üsak until 1 November. They were able to wander freely through the town and then set off by train to Smyrna where they met up with other POWs.<sup>12</sup> Foster obviously experienced a few misspent days in Smyrna as he became infected with VD,

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<sup>7</sup> L. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl, Australian*, W. R. Smith & Paterson Pty. Ltd., Brisbane, 1970, pp. 100-101.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>9</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>10</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, p. 102.

<sup>11</sup> ARC POW File of Elston, 1 DRL 428 Box 60, AWM, Canberra; Service records of Bailey, Carpenter, Lightfoot & Beattie, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>12</sup> G. W. Handsley, *Two-and-a-Half Years a Prisoner in Turkey*, Jones & Hambly, Brisbane, undated, pp. 59-61.

spending 42 days recovering in a Smyrna hospital.<sup>13</sup> Those further east took longer to depart Turkey. For example, Randall left Ras-el-Ain and finally arrived at Port Said on 30 November 1918.<sup>14</sup>

The mobilisation of the prisoners was handled quite efficiently. As Beattie noted, 'in a week all the British prisoners had left the Taurus and Amanus districts'.<sup>15</sup> The Allies were not as quick to release their prisoners. It was not until August 1919 that Britain began to repatriate prisoners interned there. Speed noted that 'the Allies played favourites with the various nationality groups they captured'.<sup>16</sup> Many Turkish prisoners in Russia took years to return home.

On hearing of the signing of the armistice, many of the POWs from other camps closer to Istanbul simply walked out. It was often left up to the men themselves to organise the trek to the nearest embarkation point. Those at San Stefano camp, located in a waterside suburb of Istanbul, left immediately on the tram for the centre of Istanbul, approximately 40 minutes away, after they were alerted by the Dutch Legation that their war was over. A group made up of Ashton, Foxcroft, Lushington and Troy set off together by tram, accompanied by their guards, some men even paying for their tram tickets. They were welcomed by the Dutch Legation and accommodated at Crocker's Hotel, commandeered by the Dutch for released prisoners. The men found that they were free to roam about Istanbul, ready to experience civilian life once again.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Service records of Foster, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>14</sup> ARC POW File of Randall, 1 DRL/428 Box 171, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>15</sup> Repatriation Statement of Beattie, AWM 30 B18.8.

<sup>16</sup> Speed, *Prisoners*, p. 179.

<sup>17</sup> Repatriation Statement of Foxcroft, AWM 30 B1.15, AWM, Canberra; R.F. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks*, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, 1923, pp. 98-100; Repatriation Statement of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra.

Ashton was one of the few who provided a detailed and colourful account of his release into freedom. He is particularly descriptive of the awkwardness felt by many prisoners who had been so quickly catapulted back into 'civilised' life, in particular in dealing with women once more:

We tried, inadequately I fear, to convey our thanks to these wonderful people, who almost seemed to us like inhabitants from another world! To be handed a cup of freshly-made tea, in a fine china cup, in a well furnished lounge, by a charming well-dressed lady who added a few well-chosen words of welcome, sympathy and encouragement, was something to which we had been strangers for so long that it was no wonder a lump came into our throats; we could only murmur some broken words of thanks.<sup>18</sup>

The Dutch allowed the men to examine and then retrieve some of the parcels that had built up awaiting delivery to POW camps. Despite delivering huge volumes of mail to the camps during the war, there was still a stockpile at the Red Crescent headquarters. The men spent most of their free time sight-seeing. Over the Galata Bridge they discovered 'a vast maze of native bazaars, quite unchanged for more years than anyone could remember'. Santa Sophia 'with its romantic history' was a popular destination, and later the men sailed along the Bosphorus in a steamer. 'We made the most of our unusual freedom to explore Constantinople both by day and night'. Along the waterway of Istanbul, Ashton wrote: 'The scenery was comparable to a succession of picture postcard views; each bend in the narrow stretch of water presented some new but equally enchanting panorama'.<sup>19</sup> They gained a glimpse of the Black Sea, previously viewed as offering a mythical promise of escape, and on return in the evening noted:

Returning to the capital after sunset, with the silhouette of numerous minarets standing out against the last glow of an autumn evening; we received an unforgettable impression of subdued beauty ... My friend and I felt that we had never enjoyed a day more rich in lovely sights.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Frederick Ashton's Papers, 973A, Batty Library, Perth.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

Amongst other entertainments was a visit to the former US Ambassador Morgenthau's boat on the Bosphorus, attending concerts produced by the women from the British Embassy and visiting a theatre presenting a Greek play.<sup>21</sup> The men obviously relished the unfettered freedom that enabled them to be tourists, enjoyed after more than three and a half years of incarceration.

Soon after, the men from San Stefano were joined by others from nearby camps. Thomas was working on a Red Crescent farm at Serai-Ici when he heard of the Armistice. He was given food and a rail fare to Istanbul. His small group waited three days at the station and arrived in Istanbul on 14 November where they joined the others at Crockers Hotel.<sup>22</sup> Williams was working at a German tannery on the Bosphorus and quickly left for Istanbul, joining the others.<sup>23</sup> Drake was working in a cement factory in Daridje, south-east of Istanbul on the Sea of Marmara. As soon as the prisoners there heard the news of the Armistice, they refused to work any more. The Commandant provided no assistance so the men themselves hired a boat to transport the sick prisoners to Istanbul. The more able set off for the nearby Touzla railway station to catch a train to Istanbul. All of the men now in Istanbul were housed and fed by the Dutch legation and provided with money.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, there are no accounts of reconciliation of former mates at this time.

It was not long before Allied ships entered Istanbul. A French and British destroyer soon lay at anchor by the Galata Bridge and troop ships arrived with the occupying forces which then marched through Istanbul.<sup>25</sup> The city was bedecked with flags and British forces were warmly welcomed, particularly by the Greek and Armenian sectors of the population.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Repatriation Statement of Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>23</sup> Repatriation Statement of Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>24</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra..

<sup>25</sup> Lushington, *A Prisoner*, pp. 98-100.

<sup>26</sup> Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11, AWM, Canberra.

## **The British propaganda machine**

The last few months of the war and immediate aftermath saw an increase in official British propaganda directed at the Turkish government. The British government was determined to punish Turkey for the humiliating defeats at Gallipoli and Kut-el-Amara and to justify the subsequent carving up of the Ottoman Empire. The blatant racism towards the Turks was never far from the surface. Dr Vischer of the International Red Cross had to remind the British POW Committee in 1917 ‘that the Turks must be considered on the same level as other Europeans; they don’t like to think they are considered an inferior race’.<sup>27</sup>

British revenge began as soon as they had established control in Istanbul. In London, an official letter outlined propaganda policy: ‘as soon as the prisoners have been extricated from Turkey, Lord Newton is of course desirous of giving the fullest publicity to the brutal character of Turkish authorities and subordinates’.<sup>28</sup> The British POW Committee Report of November 1918 railed against the Turkish character and inflated the severity of the POW experience in Turkey. This publication was supported by an official report from the British High Commission established in Istanbul and written by a Christian Minister, the Rev.

Thomas Frew:

... we must teach them now once and for all that they cannot ill-treat and insult England and Englishmen with impunity ... and the Turkish nation should be taught, by an example that it will not be easy to forget, that it is a dangerous thing to lay anything but the gentlest hands on any son of the British empire.<sup>29</sup>

In early 1919 a list was published of 107 Turks to be imprisoned in Malta, including politicians, governors, military leaders, merchants, police officers, bank managers and German General Liman von Sanders. Unfortunately even Camp Inspector Colonel Zia Bey, who had been responsible for improving conditions for prisoners, was also included.<sup>30</sup> The

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Dr Vischer, 8 March 1917. PRO FO 383/333/1917, PRO, London.

<sup>28</sup> POWs in Turkey – Mortality, NAA 1918/89/724, CP 78/24, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>29</sup> Report of the Rev. Thomas Frew from the British High Commission, PRO FO 383/528/1919, 4 January 1919.

<sup>30</sup> Arrest of Turks re Treatment of POWs, 26 March, 1919. PRO FO 383/530/1919, PRO London.

success of British propaganda was such that future historians did not challenge the reports of gross brutality of the World War I Turkish POW camps.

### **Departing Turkey**

Meanwhile, the San Stefano group and others gathered in Istanbul enjoyed up to two weeks of sightseeing before boarding the SS *Katoomba* on 16 November, two weeks after the first group had sailed from Smyrna. They were marched to their ship ceremoniously accompanied by a band, sailed to Salonika and on to Taranto in Italy, arriving on 25 November.<sup>31</sup> Old memories were revived as they passed through the Dardanelles. Ashton, once again a keen observer, noted that they were ‘intensely interested in viewing those regions from the Turkish angle, as it were. There was nothing much visible of the famous forts of Chanak, whose guns, in those days that will live forever in Australian hearts and memories ... and caused such a lot of trouble to our troops and ships’. Looking towards Anzac Cove, he reflected on ‘the beach on which we Australians had landed on that historic morning, the anniversary of which we commemorate each Anzac Day, and which gave Australia the right to nationhood’.<sup>32</sup>

At Taranto, the men remained in a large British camp for several days. Once settled, the ex-prisoners had to decide whether or not to travel on to London for leave or to sail to Egypt in preparation for an immediate return to Australia. They received new clothes and funds. Those who chose London were then put onto ‘the longest troop train I have ever seen’ on 6 December and travelled up the length of Italy, passing through the Italian Alps. The train was made up of ‘the equivalent of our old Turkish ‘40 *hommers*’, but this time we could have the door open’. Through France, they were only able to see the lights of Paris at a distance as they

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<sup>31</sup> Repatriation Statements of Troy, AWM 30 B1.31, AWM, Canberra; Thomas, AWM 30 B1.33, AWM, Canberra and Williams, AWM 30 B1.32, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>32</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Batty Library, Perth and Repatriation Statement of Drake, AWM 30 B1.11. Ashton’s account was written much later when Anzac Day had acquired this notion of celebratory ‘nationhood’.

travelled to Calais. Ashton was disappointed with this lost opportunity and commented that he became bored in Calais awaiting transport across the Channel.<sup>33</sup>

Those who travelled to Egypt were met at Alexandria by British officials and sent to camp or hospital according to the state of their health. Both Lightfoot and Goodwin spent time in hospital on arrival in Alexandria suffering from malaria and influenza.<sup>34</sup> The Red Cross once again supplied clothes and money. Many took advantage of the free time to rediscover Egypt and surrounding territory. Luscombe visited the orange groves of Jaffa and Serona and the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. He was yearning to rejoin the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion in France or to take part in a planned British engagement in Russia, as 'my knowledge of the Russian language would doubtless prove useful'. He and White spent a pleasurable week awaiting their troop ship to transport them to Britain, sight-seeing around Port Said and 'rowing on the moonlit canal in the evenings'. From Port Said, they sailed to Marseilles, travelled across France for four days on a troop train, skirting Paris, again a regret to all. From Calais, they sailed to Dover.<sup>35</sup>

Thus most POWs left Turkey between the Armistice of 30 October and mid-November. The decision to either return to Australia or to visit England was guided by several factors. Those who were born in Britain or who had close relatives there, decided in favour of Britain. All British-born Gallipoli POWs chose to visit Britain except for Beattie, who may have been estranged from his family. His father later wrote to the AIF Headquarters seeking the whereabouts of his son and whether or not he had returned to Australia, so obviously Beattie had not contacted his family.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ashton, *ibid.* The men had named the old Turkish train carriages '40 hommers', referring to a play on the French word for 'men' ie the carriage could carry 40 men.

<sup>34</sup> Service records of Lightfoot and Goodwin, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>35</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 104-108.

<sup>36</sup> Service records of Beattie, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

Ashton chose to go to Britain. He explained that he had the opportunity to visit Britain with his father who was in Egypt: 'he had shaved off his whiskers and put his age back, to join the army, when he learnt that I was a POW'. His grandparents and extended family still resided in Britain and Ashton remarked that he had 'no cause to regret my decision'.<sup>37</sup> Kerr wrote a postcard to his sister from Port Said, casually announcing: 'Forgot to tell you that I am going to look around for a month or two before returning to Aussie – never to leave it again. Shall have to put off till a little later the pleasure of being once more with you and mother'.<sup>38</sup>

The twelve who returned immediately to Australia from Egypt were all Australian-born. Two were married and were no doubt keen to return to their families, including Elston who was 49 years old at the time. Some were still suffering from malaria or the aftermath of their wounds and understandably were anxious to return to Australia for better medical treatment. Boyle, Beattie, Cahir, Dowell, Griffiths and Wiffen were all declared medically unfit by Allied doctors and some still suffered from war injuries.<sup>39</sup>

There may have been private, personal reasons for returning home apart from those publicly stated. Lushington was open about his personal reasons for returning home when he wrote to Miss Chomley on *SS Katoomba*, thanking her for all she had done. 'I have decided to go back to Australia and from there to India as my mother seems very anxious about me and I think it's my duty to see her as soon as possible'.<sup>40</sup> However, he cited business concerns to his friend Ashton, perhaps considering this a more manly reason for his return.<sup>41</sup> More commonplace reasons were suggested by Cahir who also wrote to Miss Chomley on board the *SS Katoomba* on 21 November 1918 thanking her for all she has done, adding:

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<sup>37</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A Batty Library, Perth.

<sup>38</sup> G. Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997, p. 225. He was actually away for eight months.

<sup>39</sup> Service records of Boyle, Beattie, Cahir, Dowell, Griffiths and Wiffen, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>40</sup> Letter to Miss Chomley, 22/11/1918. ARC POW File of Lushington, 1 DRL/428 Box 122, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>41</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A Batty Library, Perth.

A number of Australian fellow prisoners are journeying to England and will perhaps be enabled to thank you personally. I and a few others have decided to go direct to the Sunny South. To tell you the truth, we are rather afraid of the English winter. The cold weather in Turkey at times proved almost too much for me and that fact has influenced me in deciding for Home, where we will find sunshine.<sup>42</sup>

Pure nostalgia or home-sickness was a main factor for some. The *Avoca Free Press* reported on 1 February 1919 that Randall had written that: 'he was in good health and intended to take the first boat home. He had the offer of a trip to England, but did not take it as he was anxious to return to the land of the Southern Cross'.<sup>43</sup>

The time spent awaiting transport varied from nine days to eight weeks. The quickest turn around involved the arrival in Egypt on 6 November and departure for Australia nine days later on 15 November on *SS Port Darwin*. Boyle, Dowell, Elston, Masterton and Neyland were on this voyage and were the first Gallipoli prisoners to return home.

### **Arrival in London**

Those who travelled to Britain landed at Dover, journeyed by train to London and arrived at Victoria Station. Most were in Britain by mid-December, 1918 and remained there for varying lengths of time, averaging two and a half months. The reactions of the Australians on arriving in Britain emphasise the strong sense of allegiance to 'the mother country'. Luscombe expressed his excitement at first seeing the white cliffs of Dover, and exclaimed 'At Dover, we took our first steps on English soil'.<sup>44</sup> Ashton expressed his almost childlike excitement at visiting Britain: 'With what eagerness we strained our eyes for the first glimpse of the famous white cliffs, our first view of the mother country! Forgotten were our sorrows and our troubles! We were coming home!' Once in London, his patriotic feelings were unleashed: 'The very name made us tingle with excitement and anticipation ... the centre of our Empire,

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<sup>42</sup> ARC POW File of Cahir, 1 DRL/428 Box 31, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>43</sup> Letter to his father. Randall Family Papers, MSS MSB 401, MS 11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

<sup>44</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 107-108.

and the home of all those historic buildings which we had read about since our childhood days'.<sup>45</sup> Arriving at Victoria Station, Ashton's perceptive observations of his father's greeting reveal insights that were perhaps made possible by his recent experiences with other cultures.

He recalled:

And who should be there to meet me but my father! Well, how are you? Alright, thanks, how are you? A handclasp, a query about luggage, and a meeting is over! Why do Anglo-Saxons suffer from that feeling of shyness? So undemonstrative, when we are seething with emotion? We go out of our way to appear casual, as if a display in a public place were something to be ashamed of. It's queer, but there it is. Two Frenchmen, father and son, meeting under the similar circumstances, will be entirely oblivious of their surroundings, and would clasp each other in their arms, kiss each others' cheek and thoroughly enjoy themselves.<sup>46</sup>

Not all of the men experienced joy on their arrival in London. The story of Chalcroft's homecoming is a sad one. Both parents lived in Britain and Chalcroft was looking forward to a reunion with his family when tragedy struck. This is highlighted by a letter from his father to Miss Chomley on 8 December 1918, requesting a favour. The father explained that Chalcroft's mother had just died and he did not want his son to return home ignorant of his mother's demise. He requested that Miss Chomley meet Chalcroft at the station and explain the situation. He does not say why he could not travel up from nearby Kent to convey the bad news himself. Miss Chomley accepted the daunting task to tell Chalcroft of his mother's death, despite being emotionally affected by this charge. She wrote to the father two days later with a hint of a criticism:

I went to the station, found your son and told him as well as I could of the sad message you had given me. After I had spoken to him I learned that he had a friend at the station who had gone to meet him for the purpose of breaking the news, and I felt dreadful at having told him, when it would have been so much less hard to have heard it quietly from someone he knew. I fear the lad was terribly upset, and I felt so unhappy about it all.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> ARC POW File of Chalcroft, 1 DRL/428 Box 35, AWM, Canberra.

Others had family anxiously awaiting their return, with little or no official news of their arrival. Foxcroft's father wrote to Miss Chomley on 2 November 1918 and again on the 10 December inquiring about the arrival date of the POWs. He was trying to organise his other sons to be on leave when Foxcroft arrived home.<sup>48</sup>

### **Initial planning**

The task of returning approximately 167,000 men and women scattered across Britain and Europe was an enormous one and ships were in short supply. Every vessel was under the control of the British Ministry of Shipping and few could be spared for the long voyage back to Australia. A priority for boarding had to be established. Field Marshall Sir William Birdwood, in command of the AIF, instructed his staff to work on the premise that 'the first to come out shall be the first to go home'.<sup>49</sup> Ashton recorded that he was able to board reasonably quickly as he was one of the '1914-ers'.<sup>50</sup> The *Port Hacking* was the first to leave on 3 December 1918 with 673 Australian troops. By the end of December, fifteen other ships had departed, including those from Egypt. The vast majority of the AIF were shipped out of Britain within eight months. The POWs from Turkey were the longest serving Australian POWs and deserved to be amongst the first to return if they so wished.<sup>51</sup>

The difficulties of returning troops and the transition from soldier to civilian were recognised as early as 1917. Opposition Parliamentarian Frank Tudor noted: 'the matter of getting our soldiers back into private life again on their return will prove to be one of the most difficult questions that any Government ... will have to handle'.<sup>52</sup> The whole issue of repatriation was

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<sup>48</sup> ARC POW File of Foxcroft, 1 DRL/428 Box 68, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>49</sup> E. Scott, *Australia During the War*, vol. XI, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1939, pp. 825-827.

<sup>50</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Battye Library, Perth. That is, he had enlisted in 1914.

<sup>51</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*, p. 76.

to become one of the biggest challenges that Australia faced.<sup>53</sup> From an Australian point of view, the term *repatriation* took on a much broader meaning than merely bringing the soldiers and nurses back to Australia. It included rehabilitating the soldiers back into civilian life. The process included training programs, education, home loans, soldier settlements, medical treatment and compensation schemes.<sup>54</sup>

### **Life in London**

Whilst authorities struggled with the challenge of transporting so many men back to Australia, it was an exhilarating time for ex-POWs let loose in Britain on leave, after having been confined for almost four years. They shared experiences never to be repeated. However, those in charge of demobilisation observed an odd 'strange unrest' and 'unsettling of the mind' amongst the men.<sup>55</sup> This was played out by some going Absent Without Leave (AWOL) and others getting into trouble with both military administration and civil authorities. Chalcroft, perhaps affected by his mother's death, went AWOL for 17 days on 4 February 1919 and forfeited pay.<sup>56</sup> Cliffe went AWOL for two days.<sup>57</sup> Dunne failed once to embark for Australia<sup>58</sup> and Foxcroft went AWOL for a month in London. At a later stage, he was put 'under escort' from the police station in Manchester and handed over to the civil police on 14 March 1919. His file again noted that he was charged with a 'civil offence' at Sutton on 25 March 1919.<sup>59</sup> Samson was in Britain for almost seven months and was court-martialled on 4 April 1919.<sup>60</sup> The *Official History* remains silent on overall AWOL figures in London. Several of the men obviously took advantage of the period in Britain to release pent up energy and frustrations after almost four years incarceration.

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<sup>53</sup> *Repatriation* is defined as the process of restoring or returning men and women to their native country. The term was not used by any other nation after World War One, except for Australia. In Britain, *reconstruction* or *rehabilitation* was used. *ibid*, p. 74.

<sup>54</sup> Scott, *Australia During the War*, p. 824.

<sup>55</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 3

<sup>56</sup> ARC POW File of Chalcroft, 1 DRL/428 Box 35, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>57</sup> Service records of Cliffe, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>58</sup> Service records of Dunne, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>59</sup> Service records of Foxcroft, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>60</sup> Service records of Samson, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

Others spent their time in a more productive fashion. Many took part in the AIF Education Scheme which encouraged non-military employment. Some took advantage of the scheme to remain close to family and friends for a few months. Bailey's family home was in Paignton, Devon. A carpenter by trade, he managed to secure three months employment with Mr John Crocker, to gain 'experience in sheep raising' in his former home town. Mr Crocker's report stated: 'Private Bailey made very good use of his time and gained good experience in sheep raising. His conduct was all that could be desired'.<sup>61</sup> McLean attended the Mansions Motor-Training Garage in London. His training was in 'Motor Tractors' for three months, and was 'instructed in the construction, repairs and running of tractors'.<sup>62</sup> As a labourer, it may have been an opportunity to upgrade his skills. Rawlings also added to his skills by attending a course in coal-mining at Fifeshire, with pay and leave granted for six months.<sup>63</sup> Kerr attended South-Western Polytechnic Art School.<sup>64</sup>

Chalcroft, anxious to be successful in his application for training to be with his recently widowed father, wrote to Miss Chomley requesting her to check on his application's progress, concerned that he may be sent home before it could be finalised. Writing later from his father's home in Kent, he was able to announce that he was ready 'to start work and uphold the tradition of the village blacksmith'. He was apprenticed to his father on full pay for three months and issued with a suit of clothes worth £2/5/6, overalls (4/11d) and a cap (3/-). A report from his father dated 21 July, perhaps written tongue-in-cheek, stated: 'Pt. Chalcroft was working for me as a blacksmith's labourer and gave me great satisfaction. He was a good worker and made good progress. His conduct was very good and I was sorry to lose him'.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Service records of Bailey, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>62</sup> Service records of McLean, B2455, NAA, Canberra; Repatriation File NAA B73/71 R92248. It was noted that 'he took great interest in his work and was generally all that could be desired'.

<sup>63</sup> Service records of Rawlings, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>64</sup> Service records of Kerr, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>65</sup> ARC POW File of Chalcroft, 1 DRL/428 Box 35, AWM, Canberra.

Officers had a range of experiences with some taking advantage of the opportunity to add to their military training perhaps as they had seen so little of warfare as a prisoner. Goodwin remained in Britain for seven months and on 3 March 1919 undertook a course in Gunnery. In May he was sent to France for a further month with another division of the army.<sup>66</sup> McDonald was on convalescent leave until April 1919 and then went on duty in France for five days in June. He attended the School of Musketry for a Bayonet Rifle course.<sup>67</sup>

Jordan's experience was unusual. It is not clear why a 24 year old plumber from Lismore was singled out for special attention. Luscombe refers to Jordan's ability in languages, which may explain the situation. A letter dated 4 March 1919 from the British Foreign Office to the AIF Headquarters stated that they had been directed by Earl Curzon of Kedleston to appoint Jordan to be a Vice-Consul in His Majesty's Consular Service in the Levant. Lord Kedleston directed that Jordan be sent to the University of Cambridge to undergo a course of training and requested his immediate release. Jordan resigned from the AIF, was paid £150 and was treated as a 'special case'.<sup>68</sup> White provided further information about his later career, stating that Jordan had learnt 'French, Turkish and Arabic, and since the war in the consular service in Arabia, and later as British Trade Commissioner in South Africa, now Commercial Attaché in Cairo'.<sup>69</sup>

Apart from these more serious pursuits of education and training, the men set out to take full advantage of the entertainments available to young men with money to spend and time to enjoy it. Some visited the families of friends. Bailey's mother reported to Miss Chomley from Devon that 'You will be pleased to know my son is bringing a friend with him to spend his

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<sup>66</sup> Service records of Goodwin, B2455, NAA, Canberra..

<sup>67</sup> Service records of McDonald, B2455, NAA, Canberra..

<sup>68</sup> Service records of Jordan, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>69</sup> T. W. White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1935, p.143. Presumably now is around 1935.

leave with us'.<sup>70</sup> Pasmore was able to spend Christmas leave with his family at Stratford, Essex before leaving for Australia in early February 1919.<sup>71</sup>

Miss Chomley and her assistants at the Australian Red Cross POW Department played a considerable role in entertaining the young men in London, offering afternoon teas, making hospital visits and organising cultural trips for the men. Many notes are archived in the Australian Red Cross POW Files, requesting the men's company for tea. Photographs in Miss Chomley's photograph album show various groups of soldiers enjoying a pleasant afternoon with the ladies.<sup>72</sup> Ashton and his father (who had visited Miss Chomley on several occasions to enquire about his son), were invited to tea.<sup>73</sup> Goodwin was invited to a small tea party for a few officers only as Miss Chomley explained 'I find that at our large tea parties with all the men coming, we have no time to talk at all, and I hear so little of the officers' experiences'.<sup>74</sup> Miss Chomley commented that the returned POWs looked 'wonderfully well'.<sup>75</sup> It must have been a gratifying experience for all parties to finally meet after corresponding for so long during their imprisonment.

During the war many organisations had sprung up to assist Allied soldiers in Britain and some individuals also offered hospitality. Officers' accommodation was provided by the American YMCA at the Palace Hotel, Bloomsbury Street, London.<sup>76</sup> It was open to all Allied officers in London and offered lectures at night on international topics. Officers were also offered the opportunity to visit estates and country homes through the British Empire Hospitality Bureau in London. Organised by the Countess of Harrowby, it allowed British Empire officers the experience of staying for several weeks in British and Scottish country estates to 'strengthen

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<sup>70</sup> ARC POW File of Bailey, 1 DRL/428, Box 19.

<sup>71</sup> Service records of Pasmore, B2455, NAA, Canberra; ARC POW File 1 DRL/428, Box 16.

<sup>72</sup> AWM Research Centre, RC 00864.

<sup>73</sup> Letter dated 17/1/1919. ARC POW File of Ashton, 1 DRL/428, Box 7,

<sup>74</sup> ARC POW File of Goodwin, 1 DRL/428, Box 77

<sup>75</sup> ARC POW File of Ashton, 1 DRL/428, Box 7.

<sup>76</sup> ARC POW File of Luscombe, 1 DRL/428 Box 122.

the bonds of inter-Empire understandings and friendships'. Luscombe visited a Scottish estate and a 'stately home' in the West Counties'.<sup>77</sup> Such experiences were open to officers only as befitted the British class system.

Hospitality was also extended to soldiers from the lower ranks. Mrs Alexander Leith of Grey Court, Riding Mill, wrote to Miss Chomley on 11 December 1918 offering assistance to Matthews and Cahir. She offered to pay for accommodation in Newcastle or to accommodate them over Christmas. She asked Miss Chomley what she should do and whether or not the men would need additional money.<sup>78</sup> Cahir's file contains three letters from her indicating that both he and Matthews were sent money and parcels from Mrs Leith whilst they were in Turkey.<sup>79</sup>

Family members also played a role entertaining the men. A significant number had emigrated to Australia and still had immediate family in Britain. Once again we rely on Ashton to outline his activities in London. He was welcomed by two aunts, 'a welcome which surprised and delighted me and which was almost like coming home'. His four young female cousins set themselves the task of entertaining him 'and I must say they succeeded admirably'. He enjoyed dances, theatre, skating 'on real ice' and a Christmas party consisting 'of the whole Ashton clan'. His father, a Londoner, showed his son the sights including the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Windsor Castle and the Houses of Parliament. Ashton secured a job with his father at the AIF Headquarters at Horseferry Road for four months. His father was in charge of the canteen of the troopship *SS Wyreema*, due to leave from Liverpool. Ashton decided to return home as his assistant, 'because although my relatives had been hospitality itself, and I had enjoyed every moment with them; indeed I would not have missed

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<sup>77</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp.108-116

<sup>78</sup> Miss Chomley explained that the men had sufficient funds that had accumulated whilst they had been prisoners. Matthews had a months leave 'and if he comes to London we will be able to look after him.' ARC POW File of Matthews, Box 129, AWM, Canberra.

<sup>79</sup> ARC POW File of Cahir, 1 DRL/428 Box 31.

an opportunity for anything in the world; still the war was over and everyone's thoughts were turned homeward, mine amongst them'. His final days in London were exhausting, trying to cut through the red tape prior to departure. He explained that AIF Headquarters was now so large that various departments were scattered across London; with records at Horseferry Road, Kit store at Wimbledon, the pay office and transport elsewhere.<sup>80</sup>

Luscombe had been granted leave from 27 January to 10 February 1919 and took advantage of his opportunities until returning to Australia on 2 April 1919. Initially he was kept busy writing Repatriation Reports and compiling a list of known POWs. Many Red Cross Wounded and Missing files contain brief reports on each prisoner signed off by Luscombe. His busy social life included Christmas dinner at the apartment of Vera Deakin. Vera and his friend and fellow POW Captain Tom White later married. Luscombe and White attended a play with US General Pershing, Commander of the American Army and Admiral Sims, Commander of the American Navy. Luscombe's plan to accompany British forces to Russia came to nothing when Birdwood explained that Prime Minister Hughes had decided that no more young Australians were to take part in any military conflict. Luscombe was also interviewed for the British Diplomatic Corps but declined the offer as he then believed he was still to go to Russia. In the meantime, he travelled through Scotland and south through Chester, Manchester and Liverpool, also spending time in the museums of London. However, after months of experiencing a social life that would have been beyond his normal social circles in Australia, he began to be homesick 'for a sight of my family and my native land ... It had always been my intention to return to my Homeland'.<sup>81</sup>

Some men were hospitalised for a time on arrival in Britain. Chalcroft, Williams and Delpratt spent varying times at Weymouth hospital, with Delpratt commenting that it was 'very

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<sup>80</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>81</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, pp. 109-117.

comfortable, no duty, good beds, sheets and plenty of blankets'.<sup>82</sup> McDonald spent time in hospital elsewhere. Some were ill during their voyage home such as Carter who suffered from bouts of malaria.<sup>83</sup>

A recurrent issue raised by several of the soldiers was that the Australians were scattered across Britain and had difficulty contacting their former POW mates. Some had spent the entire time of their imprisonment together, so losing contact would have been difficult. They may have felt disassociated from the rest of the AIF who had undergone more military experience than those imprisoned in Turkey. Luscombe commented that due to this lack of military activity as a POW, he had 'wanted to experience further active service before my return'.<sup>84</sup> Stringer apologised in a letter to Miss Chomley on 24 January 1919 that he missed an opportunity of joining others on a visit to Windsor. He obviously missed his mates as he added, 'I have had no word from an Aussie since I landed in England.' He inquired about the whereabouts of Rawlings, McLean and Kerr.<sup>85</sup> There is little other evidence of the men's reactions to finding themselves parted from the few men who had shared their experiences as a POW.

### **Returning home**

Ashton was one of the few to describe the journey home. Passing through Gibraltar, the troopship sailed through the Mediterranean. At Port Said he reminisced about the changes within themselves from the 'young and eager' soldiers' they had been in 1914. He passed through the Red Sea and visited tea and rubber plantations in Aden and Colombo.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> ARC POW File of Delpratt, 1 DRL/428, Box 52.

<sup>83</sup> ARC POW File of Carter, 1 DRL/428, Box 33.

<sup>84</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*, p. 117.

<sup>85</sup> ARC POW File of Stringer, 1 DRL/428 Box 200.

<sup>86</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Batty Library, Perth.

The return of the AIF from Britain and Egypt was an emotional one. Initially crowds welcomed the returned soldiers, firstly in Fremantle, then Adelaide and Melbourne. Anxious families scanned shipping lists published by newspapers. Local communities organised welcome home ceremonies, such as in Ashton's home town. The Geraldton Returned Soldiers and Sailors Association in Western Australia held several such meetings in their Town Hall. Ladies were requested to provide 'a plate of provisions' and 'all returned soldiers are requested to attend'.<sup>87</sup> However, with time, the novelty wore off.<sup>88</sup>

Ashton provides an excellent account of his first few months. 'How can I hope to convey the feeling of mounting excitement which ran through the ship, as each day brought us so many miles nearer home and our family and friends!' It was his first glimpse of home for four years. He was greeted with 'kindness and cheeriness' and provided with hot drinks, food and cigarettes by local Red Cross women, 'bless their hearts'. He was met at the wharf by his sister and future wife.<sup>89</sup> Cahir may not have been so lucky. His next-of-kin, sister Stella, inquired about a free rail pass to greet her brother. The official response was terse: 'Free railway passes issued only to relatives of members of the AIF who embarked from Australia during 1914 and are returning on furlough'. She had only seen his name listed in the newspaper and had received no official notification of his return. It is not clear whether or not she was able to afford to travel to Melbourne from the country to greet her brother.<sup>90</sup>

After completing all of the demobilisation procedures, Ashton returned to his family in Geraldton. Only on his return did he realise what his mother had experienced during his incarceration. When he was first reported missing and then became a POW:

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<sup>87</sup> The *Geraldton Express*, 14 October, 1918.

<sup>88</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>90</sup> Service Records of Cahir, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

ghastly tales had come to her ears of what the Turks did to their prisoners – cutting their tongues out was one ... It did not take much imagination to guess at my mother's feelings, to have her only son back safe from the war again.<sup>91</sup>

The local newspaper, the *Geraldton Express*, had kept locals up to date with war news.<sup>92</sup> On 30 September 1918 it announced that Turkey was seeking an Armistice, so Ashton's mother knew that his release was imminent. Later, the paper also noted the arrival home of Ashton and his father:

Among the returned soldiers reaching Geraldton during last week were: Bugler Fred Ashton, son of Sgt. J. Ashton who had also returned to Australia after a lengthened service at the front... Bugler Ashton was taken prisoner on the day of the historic landing at Gallipoli, and was held at different centres in Asia Minor until the Turks abandoned the conflict.<sup>93</sup>

Ashton received six weeks furlough, 'a tidy sum in my pay-book' and a suit of 'civvies'. 'I had promised myself a real good time, but strangely enough it did not come up to expectations'.<sup>94</sup> Ashton's experience mirrors that of many others returning home. Australian society had changed and family and friends had not shared their life experiences of the past four years. There was often little in common with family and friends.<sup>95</sup> The difficulties of disabled soldiers in particular in settling back into civil life outlined by M. Larsson would have been shared by the returned POWs who had been wounded at Gallipoli or who had suffered illness as a prisoner.<sup>96</sup>

In the last months of 1918 and throughout 1919, life at home went on as before and must have provided a startling contrast to previous life as a POW. The *Geraldton Express* provides an overview of local interests in its pages, filled with summer sales of clothing and furniture,

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<sup>91</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>92</sup> The *Geraldton Express*, published every Monday, Tuesday and Friday, Price: One Penny.

<sup>93</sup> The *Geraldton Express*, 30 June, 1919.

<sup>94</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>95</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 1

<sup>96</sup> M. Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs. Living with the Scars of War*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009.

advertisements for Beecham's Pills, Lactogen, Rexona Soap, and a variety of nerve tonics. One small advertisement is almost lost: 'Returned soldier wants work, any kind. Good farm hand'.<sup>97</sup> Ashton noted societal changes including 'for one thing, my girl friend was working, and I could only have her company when off duty, and meanwhile time seemed to hang somewhat heavily on my hands'.<sup>98</sup> A similar reaction was expressed in a postcard sent to Kerr in January 1919 from a British friend, presumably a fellow-POW, describing a sense of alienation. 'I am still alive, and back again amidst the grime and smoke. I have been home a month now, and I am absolutely fed up, and if something does not happen pretty soon I think I shall re-enlist'.<sup>99</sup> Civilian life would remain a challenge for some for many years to come.

It is not clear whether many of the Gallipoli POWs kept in contact over the years. Wiffen wrote to Kerr's mother at Kerr's insistence whilst in hospital at Caulfield on 16 May 1919. He explained that he had been:

a great friend of your son's for nearly four years. I last saw George on Christmas Eve at Port Said when he was looking splendid. I would like to say that George was one of the finest mates one could wish to have and over in Turkey was the place to find the true value of a man.<sup>100</sup>

Later Kerr wrote to Miss Chomley, together with McLean, wishing her a Happy New Year, so these two were still in contact with each other.<sup>101</sup> Ashton met up with Troy several times after their return home. He visited Troy at his family's home in Guildford, Perth and both met up with Lushington when they could. Troy's house at Guildford still stands and remains in many ways as it must have been in the immediate post-war period. Interestingly enough oral traditions about the house recall that it was a place of recuperation for World War 1 soldiers.

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<sup>97</sup> *The Geraldton Express*, 18 October 1918.

<sup>98</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>99</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 233.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*, p. 230.

<sup>101</sup> Papers of Miss Chomley, 1 DRL/615 749/1920, Box 61, 7/48, AWM, Canberra.

Perhaps this stemmed from the memories of the reunions there.<sup>102</sup> Ashton commented that 'our reunion was all too brief, as he (Lushington) had by then decided to return to Ceylon, and take up again his original calling of tea planting'. Once Lushington had left for Ceylon it seems that contact with his friends declined as 'each of them had their own particular interests'. Ashton came to the realisation that perhaps the only thing the young men had in common was their shared experiences as a POW. After the excitement of war, POW life and four months being feted in London, the return to Geraldton must have been a let-down. Ashton went back to his previous job as a clerk at Geraldton on £140 per annum and in 1920 was still living in Snowden Street, Geraldton.<sup>103</sup>

Experiences such as the following help to explain why several of the ex-POWs exaggerated the difficulties of their life as a POW once back in Australia. A typical welcome home was organised at Avoca, Victoria on 1 March 1919 by the Returned Soldiers' Committee. The Spanish influenza outbreak caused by infected soldiers returning home was a major health risk, so the function was held in the open air. The local newspaper, the *Avoca Free Press*, welcomed Randall and others as heroes and noted that they were met:

by an admiring throng ... Reverend Roberson gave the welcome address and stated that he'd like to hear of Randall's experiences 'because they had read of the cruelty practiced on prisoners, and were told that hundreds, if not thousands, who were taken, were never heard of again.'<sup>104</sup>

The stereotyped views concerning the treatment of the POWs in Turkey were already widespread. At a function held by the Avoca Girls' Patriotic Guild a week later, the treatment of Randall suggests the reasons for his stories of abuse and poor treatment as a POW escalating with time. The main speaker of the evening explained:

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<sup>102</sup> Stories recalled by the present owner. Visit by author 23/3/2007.

<sup>103</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>104</sup> *Avoca Free Press*, 1/3/1919. Randall Family Papers, MSS MSB 401, MS 11287, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

it might seem strange that he had left Pt. Randall until the last. But everyone who knew Bill Randall knew he would not be offended at that. He mentioned the others first because they had all been in France. Pt. Randall was equally good as the others, and after being wounded had the bad luck to fall into the hands of the Turks at Gallipoli ... he had the same chances of being killed as any other soldier.<sup>105</sup>

This clumsy speech perhaps cast doubt on his bravery compared to the other soldiers who had survived to fight in France. No matter how good the intentions, drawing attention to the fact that he was a POW and thus did not have the opportunity to put his own life in danger on the battlefields of the Western Front perhaps spurred Randall on to exaggerate his experiences to equal the experiences of the other returned soldiers. His experiences at Gallipoli and subsequently as a POW had also been widely publicised in the local paper. His father contributed a strongly patriotic poem about his son's exploits, so Randall had a considerable reputation to live up to on his return.<sup>106</sup> As time went on, Randall's accounts of his POW experiences became more extreme, with headlines including *The Terrible Turk, Many Die from Bad Treatment* and *Avoca Soldier Survives the Ordeal*.<sup>107</sup>

In comparison, Ashton noted how many of the returned men did not speak of their experiences and that 'this attitude puzzled, and sometimes hurt their relatives and friends...'.<sup>108</sup>

It is not clear how active the men were in the various leagues formed for the returned servicemen. There is no evidence of a POW Association. Stringer used the Bairnsdale RSL sub-branch as a postal address in the 1930s and Foster belonged to the Gallipoli Legion of Anzacs in Townsville. Kerr helped to establish the local RSL branch at Red Cliffs.<sup>109</sup> Drake belonged to the Geelong Branch from 1919 and had visited the Melbourne Shrine of

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<sup>105</sup> *ibid*, 8 March 1919.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*, 8 August 1917. The poem was titled *On Gallipoli*. He penned another on 2 April 1919 titled *Brave Billy Boy*.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid*, 1 March 1919.

<sup>108</sup> Ashton Papers, 973A, Battye Library, Perth.

<sup>109</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 237.

Remembrance in March 1959. He discovered that his name was not recorded there and requested that the omission be rectified. He also lamented that there 'cannot be many of us left now'.<sup>110</sup> Most of those who were still alive in 1967 applied for their Anzac medallion.<sup>111</sup> Both Beryl Carpenter and Isabel Matthews applied for the medals in memory of their husbands.<sup>112</sup>

### **Pensions and repatriation**

The long term costs in medical care and welfare benefits were to become a burden on a scale never before experienced in Australia. The Australian economy was not prepared for the enormity of the task of repatriation.<sup>113</sup> The Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Bill 1917 was formulated to 'look after those who have suffered either from wounds or illnesses as a result of war and who stand in need of such care and attention'. A Repatriation Department was established in April 1918 to help ease the returned soldiers into civilian life. By June 1920, the Department was able to report that it had placed 108,949 returned soldiers in employment, 5,198 had completed vocational training, 8,077 had undergone preliminary training in schools or universities and 6,129 had undergone training with employers. War pensions came under the control of the Repatriation Department in July 1920.<sup>114</sup> By 1938, 257,000 Australians were assisted by war pensions.<sup>115</sup> The annual cost of repatriation benefits, including medical services, was nearly £18 million, just under one fifth of all Commonwealth expenditure.

Sixty-four percent of the returned Gallipoli POWs either applied for a pension or corresponded with the Repatriation Department over the years.<sup>116</sup> As the majority of POWs had sustained wounds prior to being captured, this percentage is not surprising. However, this

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<sup>110</sup> Melbourne City Archives, Shrine of Remembrance, 7/1 Box 2, General Correspondence 1958-1960, SOR 3/9. Thank you to Dr. Bruce Scates for drawing my attention to this document.

<sup>111</sup> Carter, Drake, Foster, Lightfoot, Luscombe, Chalcroft, O'Connor.

<sup>112</sup> Service records of Carpenter and Matthews, B2455, NAA Canberra.

<sup>113</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 77.

<sup>114</sup> Scott, *Australia During the War*, pp. 833-838.

<sup>115</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 83.

<sup>116</sup> Bailey, Brown, Cahir, Chalcroft, Carpenter, Cliffe, Drake, Dunne, Foxcroft, Griffiths, Kerr, Kilmartin, Lightfoot, Luscombe, Mackay, Masterton, McDonald, McLean, Neyland, O'Connor, Pasmore, Randall, Rawlings, Samson, Thomas, Wiffen and Williams.

figure does not indicate how many actually were granted a pension and records are not complete. This compares with approximately a third of all returned soldiers being officially recognised as disabled and receiving some pension by 1933.<sup>117</sup>

Though incomplete, repatriation documents are invaluable to ascertain what happened to the returned POWs in the post-war period. 1967 was an important year as a Gallipoli medal was awarded to the veterans and several of the men wrote enquiring about it, providing evidence that they were still alive, as well as providing their addresses. In several instances widows wrote, supplying the date of death of their husbands. The Department of Veterans Affairs Case Files are unfortunately not available for every returned POW. Some have been destroyed (Stringer and Thomas), some have disappeared (Luscombe) or about one third of the returned POWs did not apply for Repatriation assistance or pension support. Those who gained continuous work and did not suffer ill health such as Troy and Ashton appeared not to have contacted the Repatriation Department. Those who migrated elsewhere, such as Beattie, Lushington and Chalcraft also did not apply for assistance.

### **Settling down**

Many returned soldiers had trouble settling down to civilian life. When the soldiers returned, Australia may not have been the ideal that they had yearned for whilst fighting on the other side of the world. Distance and time may have favourably coloured their memories of home. Work was scarce, prices high and society in general was divided between those who had volunteered for service and those who remained home. The Australian government requested that employers give returned men preference for work, which sometimes made them a target of resentment and abuse. The economic recession of 1920-1921 exacerbated these difficulties with 11 percent unemployment.<sup>118</sup> In Garton's sample study, two to three times the number of

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<sup>117</sup> M. Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 211.

<sup>118</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, pp. 7-12.

returned soldiers were more likely to be vagrants or to be denoted as ‘whereabouts unknown to families or police’.<sup>119</sup> Several of the Gallipoli POWs made significant life changes and moved overseas whilst others went interstate. The ones who moved overseas were all British-born so probably did not have family commitments or economic ties to hold them in Australia.

By 1968, after spending time with his father and family in Devon after the war, Bailey was living in British Columbia, Canada. In a letter to Central Army Records, Melbourne, he requested his ANZAC medallion. Whilst visiting his sister-in-law in Melbourne in April 1969, he applied for Repatriation benefits.<sup>120</sup> In 1937, Beattie wrote from Wellington, New Zealand as he’d lost his military discharge papers.<sup>121</sup> Chalcroft worked with his widowed father in Britain and then returned to Australia in 1919. By 1921 he was back in Britain and requested his three service medals. In a letter dated 19 March 1967, Chalcroft requested assistance from the RSL in acquiring his Anzac medallion:

I returned to Melbourne in 1919 but left again after about a year and did not return. I have been living in Auckland, NZ, since 1925. I have had no dealings with the military authorities in Melbourne since I relinquished a small disability pension while in England about 1925.<sup>122</sup>

Despite moving away from Australia, these men still placed importance on acquiring the Anzac medallion commemorating their military service fifty years before.

Military authorities lost contact with several of the men. A photograph of Cliffe as a POW was sent by AIF Base Records on 19 November 1920 to his home address of 101 Dowling

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<sup>119</sup> *ibid*, pp. 26-28.

<sup>120</sup> Service records of Bailey, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>121</sup> Service records of Beattie, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>122</sup> Service records of Chalcroft, B2455, NAA, Canberra; ARC POW File 1 DRL/428, Box 35. His address was Flat 2, 15 Wairiki Rd, Mt Eden, Auckland.

Street, East Sydney. However, it was returned unclaimed.<sup>123</sup> Dunne's family lived in Torquay in Britain. He had returned to Australia in 1920 but in April 1925 his Victory medal was sent to him at his parent's home in Torquay. A request to the Repatriation Commission in 1946 does not indicate an address for Dunne.<sup>124</sup> McKay is a good example of 'whereabouts unknown'. In 1929 the Public Trust Office searched for 'Walter Douglas McKay', who had enlisted in Queensland and sought information from the Warden of Mines, Cloncurry. He was noted as being 'a POW in Germany'.<sup>125</sup> It is not clear from the documentation if Jordan ever returned to Australia after his service with the British Foreign Service.<sup>126</sup>

Some of the returned POWs had difficulties remaining in one occupation. In August 1920 Drake applied for a night course in Fitting and Turning and was accepted. He was employed by a railway foundry in South Geelong but ceased employment there in May 1921 'owing to slackness'. Several months later, he stated that he was not prepared to continue with his training and that he believed working on the land was more suitable to him. The evidence does not provide any clues whether or not he took to the land. Later he married and had four sons. He was still alive in 1959.<sup>127</sup> Others worked steadily throughout the post-war period. Masterton worked for the Metropolitan Gas Company from 20 March 1919 to 30 June 1934 when he retired aged 65 years. It was noted that he had been 'sober and industrious'.<sup>128</sup> Samson was employed as a Water Bailiff with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for 21 years. 'No time was lost by Mr Samson through ill-health during the period of his service'.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Service records of Cliffe, B2455, NAA, Canberra. Bean's biographical card refers to his address as 42 Park Road, St Mary Church, Torquay, Devon, perhaps sometime in the 1920s or 1930s. AWM 168.

<sup>124</sup> Service records of Dunne, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>125</sup> Service records of Mackay, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>126</sup> Service records of Jordan, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>127</sup> DVA Case File of Drake, NAA R56653 B100 47332, Melbourne.

<sup>128</sup> DVA Case File of Masterton, NAA B73 B73/85 R41738, Melbourne.

<sup>129</sup> DVA Case File of Samson, NAA B73 B73/37, Melbourne.

Some moved interstate, often looking for work during the Depression. In 1931 in a letter from Forbes NSW, Kilmartin requested his two medals as 'being away in North Queensland for the past six years, I have neglected to send for them'.<sup>130</sup> Luscombe was affected by the Depression through failure of a business. However, despite being a widower raising a son, he was resourceful enough to overcome the setback, moving from Victoria to Queensland.<sup>131</sup> Stringer's experience is one of misfortune. At the height of the Depression in September 1931, he wrote from Bairnsdale RSL Victoria to the AIF Base Records outlining his difficulties. He had been renting a room in South Carlton 'but owing to shortage of cash I was unable to stay in town, as a matter of fact I rolled up my blanket and went to the Western District looking for work ...'. He requested his discharge papers, 'as I am still looking for work and the discharge papers may be of use to me'. In 1958 he requested Repatriation assistance.<sup>132</sup>

Others indicated a lack of organisation, a run of bad luck or perhaps the effects of the psychological impact of war. Matthews seemed to have suffered a string of incidents where he lost possessions. In 1931 his Gallipoli medal was found on the premises of *Buckingham's*, Oxford Street, Sydney and sent on to Base Records. In 1944 he wrote to Base Records asking for a copy of his Statement of Service, in lieu of his misplaced discharge, which had been 'accidentally burnt along with camp at Stanley Victoria in October 1942'. However, subsequent statutory declarations state that he had lost his discharge papers in 1937 in a fire and then later, that he had lost papers 'by fire at Stanley in 1943'. He also lost his 'Returned Badge' in Victoria Market, Melbourne in June 1945.<sup>133</sup> Was he simply absent-minded or more seriously affected by the war? His Repatriation File indicates that he suffered giddy attacks and often

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<sup>130</sup> Service records of Kilmartin, B2455, NAA, Canberra..

<sup>131</sup> Luscombe, *Harold Earl*.

<sup>132</sup> Service records of Stringer, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>133</sup> Service records of Matthews, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

fell, unconscious.<sup>134</sup> Others suffered loss of badges and official papers. Carter stated in a Statutory Declaration in May 1964 that he had lost his badge in the 1930s. Central Records advised that he would have to pay for a replacement badge at the cost of 14/2d.<sup>135</sup> Rawlings lost his discharge papers in 1931 in a fire.<sup>136</sup>

Like many returned soldiers, some battled ill health, either from battle wounds or illness contracted in Turkey. The extant DVA Case Files provide interesting glimpses into this aspect of post-war lives, though provide no details of the burden placed on families who cared for these men. It is obvious that many returned soldiers had to constantly battle the Repatriation Department for pension assistance and in some instances blamed poor health on their experiences in Turkey. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Carpenter claimed that 'my existence in Turkey was under the most trying conditions, purely starvation and work of the hardest nature ... whilst one endured terrible winters with practically no clothing'.<sup>137</sup> In July 1919 Carpenter had been discharged as medically unfit with malaria and made repeated hospital visits. On discharge he was given a 10 percent pension. In the following decades, Carpenter fought for an increased pension until it was eventually granted at 40 percent in 1947. Over the years he suffered colitis and problems with his eye and leg. In 1964, a doctor concluded 'I regard Mr Carpenter as being totally and personally incapacitated and would support his claim for Repatriation'.<sup>138</sup> Masterton had a pension cancelled in 1919 and did not claim any medical treatment or support for a further 15 years. He finally applied for a pension in 1931 for himself, his wife and children, based on the 'effects of malaria and deafness'. The report noted that on retirement in 1934 he 'looked his age'.<sup>139</sup> In old age, McDonald suffered

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<sup>134</sup> DVA Case File of Matthews, NAA M24657 B100 47328, Melbourne.

<sup>135</sup> Service records of Carter, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>136</sup> Service records of Rawlings, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>137</sup> Letter to Repatriation Commissioner 11 February 1930. DVA Case File of Carpenter, NAA B73 B73/34, Melbourne.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> DVA Case File of Masterton, NAA B73 B73/85 R41738, Melbourne.

recurrent bouts of broncho-pneumonia, pleurisy, bronchitis and emphysema. His ill-health was deemed to stem more from World War II than his POW experience.<sup>140</sup>

Widows also came under the protection of the Repatriation Department and Legacy was established in 1923 to assist families of soldiers who had died as a result of war injuries.<sup>141</sup> Delpratt's widow applied on 14 June 1957 to Central Army Records for his discharge papers so she could obtain a War Service Department home.<sup>142</sup>

Many returned soldiers developed psychological disorders, some many years later and several of the POWs reflected this trend. Butler estimated that about 80 percent of returned disabled soldiers suffered mental health problems.<sup>143</sup> The sources do not reveal whether or not these mental problems resulted from battle experiences or from being a POW. Larsson clearly shows that the care of those impaired and mentally scarred men was an enormous burden on families. Many wives and mothers were left with the task of coping with irritable, irrational and moody men. Alcoholism and domestic violence were often the result of mental illness, which was little understood at the time. Mental problems also carried a social stigma for families.<sup>144</sup> Womens' magazines cautioned wives to be tolerant of husbands' poor behaviour.<sup>145</sup> For several years after his return, Kerr continued drinking to excess and fighting, a pattern established in the POW camps. He abstained from alcohol in 1926.<sup>146</sup> In that year Kerr's claim for repatriation benefits for pleurisy was rejected. His DVA file noted that throughout the 1920s he suffered 'nervousness' and depression, appeared to be 'highly

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<sup>140</sup> DVA Case File of McDonald, B73 B73/0 M115248, Melbourne.

<sup>141</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, p. 203.

<sup>142</sup> Service records of Delpratt, B2455, NAA, Canberra..

<sup>143</sup> A. G. Butler, *The Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, vol. 3, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1943, p. 142.

<sup>144</sup> Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*.

<sup>145</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, pp.167, 179.

<sup>146</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, p. 237.

strung' and 'looked knocked up'.<sup>147</sup> Rawlings file reports him having a 'nervous manner' throughout the 1920s.<sup>148</sup> Wiffen also was described as being 'nervy' in 1929.<sup>149</sup>

O'Connor battled depression and 'nerves' for most of the post-war period up to the time of his death in 1967. He claimed that severe headaches had been caused by injuries in Turkey yet the Repatriation Department argued that they were caused by a car accident in 1937. He was unnerved by machine noise and in 1941 left his position as a surgical boot-maker at the Commonwealth Artificial Limb Factory citing depression as the reason. Employment in such a factory was encouraged for returned soldiers with amputated limbs such as O'Connor. Other recommended 'light work' for the disabled was that of a lift attendant.<sup>150</sup> In 1942 O'Connor worked as a lift operator but 'cracked up' and 'was short tempered with a passenger and jerked the lift'. The report at the time noted that he looked 'fat and well'. By 1951 he was living in a caravan in Swan Bay and was 'difficult to manage'. He overdosed on phenobarb tablets and was taken to hospital. He died of a heart attack in 1967, aged 74.<sup>151</sup>

Neyland had been wounded in battle before capture and his widow explained that 'I noticed a great change in my husband on his return home. He complained of general listlessness, pains in the stomach and back and general debility'. Like thousands of other returned soldiers, Neyland obtained a block of land through the Soldier Settlement Scheme and worked this land as a dairy until 1927. Many wives shouldered the enormous burden of continuing the farms when their debilitated husbands could work no more. His wife claimed that 'I often had the responsibility of running the place on account of him being laid up'. The couple had to give up the land at the end of 1927 and Neyland died in March 1928, aged 50.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> DVA Case File of Kerr, NAA M9 122 B100 47232, Melbourne.

<sup>148</sup> DVA Case File of Rawlings, NAA B73 B73/69 M96246, Melbourne.

<sup>149</sup> DVA Case File of Wiffen, NAA M46 432 B100 47247, Melbourne.

<sup>150</sup> Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, p. 103.

<sup>151</sup> DVA Case File of O'Connor, NAA B73 B73/61 H5257, Melbourne.

<sup>152</sup> DVA Case File of Neyland, NAA B73 B73/29 R41759, Melbourne.

It is not clear how many of the Gallipoli POWs married and whether they mirrored the pattern revealed in the 1933 Commonwealth census which indicated that 15 percent of returned men remained unmarried. There is evidence for 19 of the 43 (44 percent) returned POWs being married in the post-war years.<sup>153</sup> Elston and Cliffe had been married before they enlisted. Garton's random sample of World War I servicemen showed a higher rate of marital instability than the average. Family violence increased in the 1920s with a rising divorce rate.<sup>154</sup> Griffiths was living apart from his wife when he was killed in 1941.<sup>155</sup>

Several of the men re-enlisted to fight in World War II. Rawlings rejoined the army at the height of the Depression in 1931 and again in 1934 and 1937. He was a Captain by 1939 and was mobilised from 1940 to 1946. He gained the Australian Efficiency Medal in 1944 and was discharged on 17 September 1946. He had lied about his age, stating that he was 44 in 1940, not his real age of 50. In Rawlings' discharge papers, his stated age was crossed out and his real age, 64, was inserted.<sup>156</sup> Wiffen also lied about his age to re-enlist in World War II in 1940. He stated his age as 39 when he was really 48. He fought in New Guinea but in 1943 was declared 'not fit for tropical duty'. Perhaps he suffered relapses of the malaria that he had suffered in Turkey. He was discharged in 1944 and made enquiries about the Efficiency Medal on 14 December 1946. Goodwin enlisted again in 1940, aged 46 and was an outstanding officer. He fought at Tobruk and el Alamein, showing 'skilful leadership' and 'splendid action in service ... and outstanding ability and power of handling men'. He was awarded a DSO in 1943. He became a Lieutenant Colonel and was sent to New Guinea. He was tragically killed in an air raid there on 25 October 1943. His daughter wrote on her

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<sup>153</sup> Evidence of marriage is extant for Ashton, Carpenter, Cliffe, Drake, Elston, Goodwin, Griffiths, Kerr, Luscombe, Masterton, Matthews, Neyland, O'Connor, Pasmore, Randall, Rawlings, Samson, Troy and Wiffen.

<sup>154</sup> Garton, *The Cost of War*, pp. 26-28, 197.

<sup>155</sup> DVA Case File of Griffiths, NAA B3110 R38914, Sydney.

<sup>156</sup> Service records of Rawlings, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

mother's behalf in 1952 requesting his medals.<sup>157</sup> His commendation for the DSO by General Moorshead, Commander of the AIF in the Middle East, is a sound indication of the quality of this man.

Several POWs rose to prominence in their post-war lives. McDonald became a Lieutenant/Colonel in the army in 1938 and was later awarded an OBE as Director of Supplies, Transport in 1942.<sup>158</sup> As previously noted, Goodwin was awarded a DSO in World War II. Kerr took up a soldier settlement block at Red Cliffs, Victoria, married and raised five children. He grew citrus fruit and later moved to East Kew, Melbourne. Kerr became the Secretary of the Federal Citrus Council of Australia, which resulted in a trip to America and Europe to investigate the citrus industry. In 1965 this trip included a return to Turkey, travelling along the Beledik-Adana train line where he had worked as a POW. He recalled that the sites had changed. He also visited Gallipoli, most probably the only Gallipoli ex-POW to have done so. He was awarded an OBE in 1965 in recognition of his contribution to the Australian citrus industry.<sup>159</sup> Luscombe went on to write three books: *Rebuilding the Melbourne of Tomorrow* in 1943, *Australia Replanned* and *The Story of Harold Earl – Australian* in 1970. Lushington, living in Ceylon, wrote *A Prisoner with the Turks*, published in 1923.

Many of the returned POWs suffered from illness and poor health because of their war injuries and diseases transmitted either in Gallipoli or as a POW and these factors contributed to the deaths of some. Williams was the first of the returned POWs to die. After surviving the rock fall that had killed Len New, suffering malaria and a chest wound from Gallipoli and treated for laryngitis on the return journey to Australia, Williams died on 26 June 1920, only

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<sup>157</sup> Service records of Goodwin, B2455, NAA, Canberra. Six medals were sent: the 1939/1945 Star, Africa Star & 8<sup>th</sup> Army Clasp, Pacific Star, Defence Medal, War Medal and Australia Service Medal.

<sup>158</sup> Service records of McDonald, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>159</sup> Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, pp. 237-257.

26 years old. He died in Melbourne Hospital 'engaged at the time of death in vocational training at the working men's college'.<sup>160</sup> It is not clear if he had died of wounds that had been described as 'a little pain at site of wound' on his return home. Neyland died of heart disease on 28 March 1928 at the age of 50. He had complained of 'giddiness' and deafness throughout the 1920s. He was described as 'never robust' in 1924 and a 'man of elderly appearance' in 1926. His widow reported that he was never well and suffered enteric and typhoid fever. His wife and children were granted a full pension as his death was accepted as being due to war service.<sup>161</sup>

Several others died relatively young in the ensuing decades; Stormonth on 13 September 1935, aged 47 and Brown in 1939, aged 44. Both Griffiths and Kerr died in motor accidents. Griffiths died aged 47 when hit by a car in Newcastle in 1941. He had had his right eye removed in 1918, due to a war wound. Griffiths' estranged wife argued that the accident was due to his loss of sight. Initially rejected by the Repatriation Department, she contested the decision and finally a year later, the Appeal Tribunal accepted that the death was due to war service. Olive Griffiths thus received a full pension and was still receiving it in 1955 despite having lived apart from her husband before his accident. It is not clear whether the parents who had been fully supported by Griffiths received any payment or consideration.<sup>162</sup> Many of the ex-POWs lived well into old age.<sup>163</sup> Kilmartin, Beattie and Ashton were probably the oldest to die at 88 years of age.

## Conclusion

The names of the prisoners who died in Turkey have generally been lost to public memory. Until now, there had not been an accurate verified list of the Gallipoli prisoners. Individuals

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<sup>160</sup> Service records of Williams, B2455, NAA, Canberra.

<sup>161</sup> DVA Case file of Neyland, NAA B73/29 R41759, Melbourne.

<sup>162</sup> DVA Case file of Griffiths, NAA B3100 R38914, Sydney.

<sup>163</sup> Those who lived to over 70 included Carpenter, Drake, Kerr, Matthews, O'Connor, Pasmore, Randall, Rawlings, Delpratt, Kilmartin, Davern, Troy and Ashton.

have been remembered in local Honour Rolls such as that for the Ballina-Tintenbar Shires that included Mathers. He is also listed on the commemoration roll in the tiny local primary school in Rous, northern NSW, though not identified as a POW. Overall their unique experiences have not attracted historians' attention and this thesis has attempted to reclaim their right to have their experiences acknowledged as part of the Anzac legend.

The return home, so anxiously anticipated, was a disappointment for some. Society had moved on and changed in the time the men had been away and some did not slide seamlessly back into civilian life. Unfortunately, the dearth of sources does not allow a more personal glimpse into their lives at this point. Some took time to settle back into employment and others suffered physically and mentally for years to come. It cannot be stated conclusively that the returned POWs were treated differently from those who had gone on to fight in other theatres of war, though the reaction of Randall would suggest a sensitivity to being a POW. Several of the men rose to prominence in their chosen professions and several fought again in World War II. Overall, the extant evidence suggests that the varied experiences of the returned POWs did not differ noticeably from other returned soldiers.

## Conclusion

When 67 AIF volunteers departed Australian shores at the commencement of World War I, the prospect of being held captive in Turkey for over three years would not have been a consideration. Knowing nothing of their final destination and very little of their future captors, they would have been oblivious to their fate. Like other enlisted soldiers, they believed that they were off to fight Germany.

The story of their lives as captives of the Turks has not been told until now. Unfortunately, as a blatant reminder of military failure, their experiences have not been considered part of the Anzac tradition, despite the focus on Gallipoli in popular historical literature, film and academic scholarship. Selected popular memoirs of a few returned POWs from the 1920s and post-war British propaganda have been taken at face value and have never been challenged by historians. Largely due to language issues, consultation of Turkish sources was also never a consideration.

Charles Bean, as the official historian of the war, set the scene for future neglect of the subject with only a cursory mention of the Gallipoli captives. Early myths developed and remained unchallenged by subsequent writers relating to the number captured and their overall survival and treatment. An examination of writers has shown a continuation of bias, omissions, elaborations, limited source base and uncritical use of a few memoirs, with scant attention paid to the historiography of war and POW writing overall established by Fussell and Gerster. Many memoirs displayed characteristics of Australian war captivity writing in general: exaggerations, personal 'big-noting' and racism bent on revenge on former captors. Similar 'orientalist' stereotypes have been attributed to the Turks as to the Japanese in World War II. Overall, the writings have been the victor's version of history; the absence of the Turkish

voice is obvious. A broader range of sources has always been available to the researcher but not consulted. The more mundane and sustaining elements of POW life have also been ignored. As has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, writers have preferred to favour examples of blatant sensationalism over more considered and balanced narratives such as Woolley, Luscombe, Ashton, Creedon and Austin.

The aim of this thesis was to draw upon a wider range of sources than had previously been used in any discussion of the Gallipoli POWs. Much of the research undertaken in this study has involved an extensive examination and analysis of material in Government archives - Australian, British and Turkish. Most of the Turkish material consulted has never before been translated into English and integrated into the historical narrative of Gallipoli. By contrasting and comparing divergent personal accounts, published memoirs, official documentation and Turkish sources wherever relevant, a broader perspective of the POW experience has been presented. This study has also drawn upon site visits and the limited oral tradition that has survived in Turkey. The study has challenged the stereotypes and blatant propaganda that has developed about the POW experience in Turkey over time.

The main themes of this thesis have been concerned with the underlying myths concerning the Gallipoli prisoners. The first was that few POWs survived to return home and that the majority died in captivity of brutality and neglect. Claims of POW mortality were as high as 85 percent. After verifying a list of the Gallipoli prisoners for the first time, it was found that 36 percent died in Turkey. It had previously been argued that the majority died whilst working on the Berlin-Baghdad railway, with obvious allusions to the Japanese POW railway experience. However, only 4.5 percent actually died in camps attached to the railway and 13.5 percent died in convalescent hospitals from epidemics that swept through Turkey in the winter of 1916-1917. Eighteen percent died almost immediately of battle wounds sustained whilst

fighting at Gallipoli. It is simplistic to argue that a large percentage of prisoners died of neglect and brutality when not taking into consideration the percentage that died of severe battle wounds before reaching a POW camp. To compare this figure with the one third of Japanese prisoners in World War II who died is to ignore the fact that the majority of Australians captured by the Japanese had not suffered battle wounds but died of disease and poor conditions in the camps. Other prisoners may surface who have eluded inclusion in any extant POW lists, official documentation or reference by fellow prisoners. The future discovery of so far unknown prisoners may well lead to an adjustment of these figures. It is impossible to estimate how many captive Australians may have died immediately after capture in field hospitals or killed by their captors. No sources record this number.

The second myth was that the Turkish POW experience was akin to that of soldiers captured by the Japanese in World War II and that prisoners suffered more than those in Germany in World War I. This myth needs to be reassessed. Their experiences were universal ones experienced by most POWs in the twentieth century. Generally, the POW experience included unsanitary accommodation hastily organised to house large numbers of captives, insufficient and unfamiliar food, engagement in manual labour and difficulties with an alien culture and language. The poor conditions on Gallipoli itself, sub-standard medical facilities, poor food and unsanitary conditions such as infestations of lice and fleas no doubt prepared the men for their subsequent life as a prisoner. Unlike conditions in Germany, prisoners were never held in dangerous front-line positions nor engaged in war production. They were not subjected to the same harsh regime as those under Japanese captivity, who suffered a lack of protection from international convention and aid agencies, systematic torture and summary execution. Unlike the Japanese experience, the prisoners in Turkey were generally paid for their hard physical work on roads and railways, had set work hours, access to medical treatment though rudimentary at times and were generally able to supply their own food. Prisoners' conditions

were also improved by the intervention of the American and Dutch embassies. Once established in a camp routine, the men could sustain a basic living standard. Prisoners were not vilified by their captors and in particular, the experiences of the lower ranks at the main railway camp at Belemelik, under the supervision of a German engineering firm, were not those normally associated with the lives of POWs, such as having access to a cinema, brothel and copious amounts of alcohol. Most camps developed considerable diversions such as concerts, sports days and other physical and intellectual pursuits to combat boredom, one of the most insidious characteristics of camp life.

Initial problems faced by the captives included harsh Turkish army discipline and standard Turkish army food rations. Three of the POWs suffered beatings as punishment. It has been shown that experiences varied between camps and improved over time. Despite the *Manual regarding treatment of POWs* published by the Turkish War Office, conditions overall rested on the decisions of individual Camp Commandants. Afyon in 1916 under Mouslem Bey was particularly taxing for the inmates. However, when prisoners made official complaints about individual Commandants, the Turkish War Office had them removed. Significant improvements were made on the recommendations of the War Ministry's Camp Inspector, Zia Bey and following official visits of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. The Australian Red Cross POW Department under the leadership of the remarkable Elizabeth Chomley played a major role in assisting prisoners in the form of clothing, money and correspondence.

Health standards were very poor in some hospitals particularly at Tash Kishla in 1915 during reprisal treatment for alleged British ill treatment of Turkish prisoners. These harsher conditions may have hastened the death of some of the severely wounded. However, several hospitals offered very good treatment and there were examples of kindness and concern for

the welfare of the prisoners. They were provided with the same treatment as Turkish wounded. Funerals were conducted according to Christian rites where possible and those who died were buried in Christian cemeteries. After the war, most bodies were re-interred in Commonwealth Military cemeteries in Haydar Pasha, Istanbul or Baghdad.

Officers experienced better living conditions and were served by orderlies as set out by the Hague Convention. They were not required to work so invented a number of diversions to fill their spare time and ward off boredom. However, they were adversely affected by soaring inflation. No Australian officer captured at Gallipoli died in captivity.

When the Armistice was declared on 30 October 1918, within two weeks the majority of Allied POWs had been moved from Turkey. Their transportation out of Turkey was generally well organised and prompt. The men had the choice of returning to Australia or taking leave in Britain, The majority took the opportunity of visiting Britain, some taking part in employment training schemes. Once back in Australia, sources are sketchy. Returning home was a disappointment for some and a challenge to integrate into civilian life. Some settled down to regular employment whilst others, particularly those who were British-born, moved interstate or settled overseas. Some were adversely affected by the Depression in the 1930s and others had constant communication with the Repatriation Department due to continuing ill health from either their battle wounds or effects of illness whilst in captivity. There is no evidence to suggest that the returned POWs suffered differently from other returned soldiers apart from that raised by Randall's experiences that they may have been viewed differently from soldiers who had gone on to fight in other theatres of war. Sources are sketchy on returned prisoners, so it has been difficult to construct post-war lives.

A third theme of this thesis challenged the bias and exaggeration of many of the published and official sources previously accessed by historians. Source bases were narrow and limited and little effort was made to corroborate or challenge the evidence. The official *British POW Committee Report on the Treatment of POWs in Turkey* is startling in its use of emotive and biased language, yet came to be regarded as the authority on conditions in Turkey. This document was constructed with a clear political purpose; revenge for the humiliating military defeats at Gallipoli and Kut-el-Amara and justification for the subsequent dismantling of the Ottoman empire. Prejudiced Western views of the Turks were firmly entrenched by the outbreak of the war, based on a sense of Western cultural and moral superiority. The Ottomans suffered from challenging the imperialism of the West, for controlling land and resources coveted by British and European powers and of being non-Christian and decidedly 'foreign'. This build up of prejudice shaped the Australians' attitudes to the Turks prior to the landing at Gallipoli. The British also encouraged the belief that the Turks did not follow Hague Conventions on the battlefield. The official British denial that the Turkish Government allowed independent inspections of camps has been shown to be untrue, with many visits by officials from the American and Dutch Embassies and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Popular POW memoirs referred to by historians have exhibited characteristics of POW writings in general established by Gerster and Fussell, displaying bias, exaggeration and big-noting. Various biographical writings of the ex-POWs have reinforced assumptions about captivity. This study has highlighted the hazards of using published memoirs as historical evidence without sound corroboration from other sources. More considered and balanced views such as those of Luscombe and Woolley lacked the sensationalism of more popular accounts and had not been included in any previous discussion of the POW experience.

Finally, and of great significance, Turkish sources have provided additional detail on the experience of capture and life in camps and corroborated the initial list of prisoners established here for the first time. They have illustrated that the Turks had in place official administrative procedures to monitor prisoners and communicate details to the International Red Cross throughout the period of captivity. However, application of the administrative procedures was unevenly implemented by individual Commandants.

Suggested areas for further study would be the experiences of POWs from other theatres of war such as Mesopotamia and Palestine, the treatment of Turkish POWs under British control and the role of the Australian Red Cross POW Department under Elizabeth Chomley. An examination of the experiences of the Gallipoli prisoners has not been of interest to military historians nor fitted the patriotic construct of the Anzac legend. Their story has been tainted by the biased and traditional 'orientalist' perceptions of the Turks and writings have been drawn uncritically from a narrow range of sources. With particular neglect of Turkish sources, historians and other writers repeated exaggerations and half-truths based on guesstimates rather than actual data. By broadening the source base of the research, it has been possible to create a more balanced and considered narrative of this neglected aspect of Gallipoli history.

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Jordan, S	AWM 30 B1.17
McDonald, R	AWM 30 B1.22

Neyland, N	AWM 30 B1.26
Randall, W	AWM 30 B1.29
Stormonth, S	AWM 30 B1.30
Thomas, J	AWM 30 B1.33
Troy, M	AWM 30 B1.31
Williams, W	AWM 30 B1.32.

**Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau Files, AWM 1 DRL/428**

Allen, W	1 DRL/428 Box 7
Ashton, F	1 DRL/428 Box 15
Bailey, W	1 DRL/428 Box 18
Beattie, J	1 DRL/428 Box 30
Boyle, D	1 DRL/428 Box 49
Brown, H	1 DRL/428 Box 57
Cahir, K	1 DRL/428 Box 67
Calcutt, B	1 DRL/428 Box 67
Carpenter, A	1 DRL/428 Box 69
Carter, A	1 DRL/428 Box 70
Chalcroft, T	1 DRL/428 Box 71
Cliffe, W	1 DRL/428 Box 75
Creedon, D	1 DRL/428 Box 83
Davern, J	1 DRL/428 Box 88
Delpratt, M	1 DRL/428 Box 91
Dowell, T	1 DRL/428 Box 95
Drake, S	1 DRL/428 Box 95
Dunne, B	1 DRL/428 Box 97
Elston, E	1 DRL/428 Box 101
Foster, E	1 DRL/428 Box 109
Foxcoft, H	1 DRL/428 Box 110
Francis, D	1 DRL/428 Box 110
Goodwin, S	1 DRL/428
Green, E	1 DRL/428 Box 121
Griffiths, R	1 DRL/428 Box 122
Hennessy, J	1 DRL/428 Box 131
Hodges, L	1 DRL/428 Box 134
Hodsdon, C	1 DRL/428 Box 134
Jenkins, A	1 DRL/428 Box 143
Jones, W	1 DRL/428 Box 147
Jordan, S	1 DRL/428 Box 147
Kelly, J	1 DRL/428 Box 149
Kerr, G	1 DRL/428 Box 150
Kerrigan, K	1 DRL/428 Box 150
Kilmartin, H	1 DRL/428 Box 151
King, G	1 DRL/428 Box 153
Leyden, J	1 DRL/428 Box 160
Lightfoot, L	1 DRL/428 Box 160
Luscombe, L	1 DRL/428 Box 164
Lushington, R	1 DRL/428 Box 164
Masterton, J	1 DRL/428 Box 173
Mathers, C	1 DRL/428 Box 173

Matthews, C	1 DRL/428 Box 174
Mackay, W	1 DRL/428 Box 192
McLean, C	1 DRL/428 Box 194
Nelson, A	1 DRL/428 Box 199
New, L	1 DRL/428 Box 199
Neyland, N	1 DRL/428 Box 200
O'Callaghan, J	1 DRL/428 Box 203
O'Connor, P	1 DRL/428 Box 203
Pasmore, J	1 DRL/428 Box 210
Randall, W	1 DRL/428 Box 224
Rawlings, A	1 DRL/428 Box 224
Samson, H	1 DRL/428 Box 241
Shelton, H	1 DRL/428 Box 248
Stormonth, S	1 DRL/428 Box 264
Stringer, W	1 DRL/428 Box 265
Thomas, J	1 DRL/428 Box 272
Troy, M	1 DRL/428 Box 278
Warnes, A	1 DRL/428 Box 286
Wiffen, A	1 DRL/428 Box 294
Williams, W	1 DRL/428 Box 297
Wilson, E	1 DRL/428 Box 298
Wood, B	1 DRL/428 Box 301.

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Ashton, F	1 DRL/428 Box 7
Bailey, W	1 DRL/428 Box 19
Beattie, J	1 DRL/428 Box 14
Boyle, D	1 DRL/428 Box 23
Brown, H	1 DRL/428 Box 26
Cahir, K	1 DRL/428 Box 31
Calcutt, B	1 DRL/428 Box 31
Carpenter, A	1 DRL/428 Box 33
Carter, A	1 DRL/428 Box 33
Chalcroft, T	1 DRL/428 Box 35
Cliffe, W	1 DRL/428 Box 39
Creedon, D	1 DRL/428
Davern, J	1 DRL/428 Box 49
Delpratt, M	1 DRL/428 Box 52
Dowell, T	1 DRL/428 Box 55
Drake, S	1 DRL/428 Box 55
Dunne, B	1 DRL/428 Box 57
Elston, E	1 DRL/428 Box 60
Foster, E	1 DRL/428 Box 67
Foxcroft, H	1 DRL/428 Box 68
Goodwin, S	1 DRL/428 Box 77
Green, E	1 DRL/428 Box 79
Griffiths, R	1 DRL/428 Box 81
Jones, W	1 DRL/428 Box 107
Jordan, S	1 DRL/428 Box 107
Kelly, J	1 DRL/428 Box 109

Kerrigan, R	1 DRL/428 Box 111
Kerr, G	1 DRL/428 Box 111
Kilmartin, H	1 DRL/428 Box 112
King, G	1 DRL/428 Box 112
Lightfoot, L	1 DRL/428 Box 118
Luscombe, L	1 DRL/428 Box 122
Lushington, R	1 DRL/428 Box 122
Mathers, C	1 DRL/428 Box 129
Masterton, J	1 DRL/428 Box 129
Matthews, C	1 DRL/428 Box 129
McDonald, R	1 DRL/428 Box 143
Mackay, W	1 DRL/428 Box 145
McLean, C	1 DRL/428 Box 146
Nelson, A	1 DRL/428 Box 150
New, L	1 DRL/428 Box 151
Neyland, N	1 DRL/428 Box 151
O'Callaghan, J	1 DRL/428 Box 155
O'Connor, P	1 DRL/428 Box 155
Pasmore, J	1 DRL/428 Box 160
Randall, W	1 DRL/428 Box 171
Rawlings, A	1 DRL/428 Box 171
Samson, H	1 DRL/428 Box 182
Stormonth, S	1 DRL/428 Box 200
Stringer, W	1 DRL/428 Box 200
Thomas, J	1 DRL/428, Box 200
Troy, M	1 DRL/428 Box 211
Warnes, W	1 DRL/428 Box 218
Wiffen, A	1 DRL/428 Box 227
Williams, W	1 DRL/428 Box 228
Wilson, E	1 DRL/428 Box 229
Wood, B	1 DRL/428 Box 231.

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### Appendix 1: Profile of the 67 Gallipoli POWs

Sources: Service records, NAA B2455, NAA, Canberra; DVA Case Files, NAA.

Key: RTA : Returned to Australia

Name	No.	Btt.	Enlistment	Age	Birthplace	Married / Occupation	Captured	Wounded ?	Fate
ALLEN William Pvt.	552	9th	26/8/1914 Maryborough	30	Toowoomba Qld	No Painter	28/6/1915	Dazed by shrapnel	Died at Belemedik of malaria, 20/12/16. Reburied in Baghdad North Gate cemetery. Plot 21, row F, grave 4 in 1927.
ASHTON Frederick Pvt.	743	11th	5/9/1914 Blackboy Hill, WA	21	Sydney	No Clerk	25/4/1915 Pope's Hill	Slightly	RTA. Died aged 88, 13/9/1981, Perth. Buried Karrakatta cemetery.
BAILEY William Sgt.	1901	15th	20/1/1915 Brisbane	20	Lancashire, UK	No Carpenter	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Hips, shoulder, buttocks.	RTA. Was living in Vancouver, Canada in 1968.
BEATTIE, John Irving, Pvt.	1827	15th	11/3/1915 Townsville	25	Liverpool UK	No Miner	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes	RTA. Lived in NZ in 1937. Died aged 88 in 1978. Buried Auckland cemetery.
BOYLE David William Cpl.	296	14th	11/9/1914 Vict.	22	Warrnambool, Vict.	No Carpenter	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes Right arm	RTA. Living in Victoria in 1922.
BROWN, Harry Norman Pvt.	1333	14th	28/9/1914 Bendigo, Vic.	19	Lancashire, UK	No Farmhand	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Slightly in left thigh	RTA. Died at Davenport Downs station, aged 44, 20/10/1939
CAHIR, Keith Joseph L/Cpl.	960	14th	1/10/1914 Melbourne	24	Carlton, Vic.	No Striker	8/8/1915	Yes	RTA. Date and place of death unknown.

Name	No.	Btt.	Enlistment	Age	Birthplace	Married / Occupation	Captured	Wounded ?	Fate
CALCUTT, Brendan Pvt.	2124	14th	7/4/1915 Echuca, Vic	19	Williamstown Vic.	No Time-keeper	8/8/1915	Yes	Died at Hadji-Kirion 18/12/1916 of septicaemia. Reburied in 1927 at Baghdad North Gate Cemetery, plot 21, row W, grave 2.
CARPENTER, Alfred Allan, Pvt.	1926	15th	18/1/1915 Warwick, Qld	20	Denapure, India	No Labourer	10/8/1915 Hill 971	Sprained ankle	RTA. Died 28/5/1967, aged 72, of a heart attack in Victoria.
CARTER, Alfred John, Pvt.	1654	14th	31/12/1914 Melbourne	20	Kaniva, Vic.	No Labourer	10/8/1915 Hill 971	Chest & right leg	Living in South Australia in 1968. Age at death unknown.
CHALCROFT, Thomas, Pvt.	2252	14th	1/9/1914 Melbourne	21	Sundridge, UK	No Plumber	8/8/1915	Yes	RTA. Living in Auckland, NZ in 1967. Date and age of death unknown.
CLIFFE, William L/Cpl.	482	4th	25/8/1914 Kensington NSW	32	Lancashire, UK	Yes Coachman	8/5/1915 Johnstone's Jolly	No	RTA. Later returned to Britain in the 1920s/1930s.
CREEDON, Daniel B Pvt.	589	9th	19/8/1914 Maryborough Qld	21	Maryborough, Qld.	No Clerk	28/6/1915 Pine Ridge	Hands & head	Died at Angora 27/2/1917 of enteritis & typhus. Buried in unmarked plot in Armenian Cemetery, Ankara.
DAVERN, John Pvt	2474	16th	2/6/1915 Blackboy Hill WA	27	County Clare, Ireland	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Left leg	RTA – medical exchange. Died at Perth in 1963, aged 75.
DELPRATT, Maurice George, Sgt.	636	5th AL H	12/11/1914 Longreach QLD	27	Beaudesert Qld	No Station overseer	28/6/1915 Chatham's Post	No	RTA. Died at Warwick, Qld 8/3/1957, aged 70.
DOWELL, Thomas Henry, Pvt.	527	14th	22/9/1914 Melbourne	25	Samarina, Vict.	No Driver	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes	RTA. Died in 1946 at Richmond, Victoria, aged 56.

Name	No.	Btt.	Enlistment	Age	Birthplace	Married / Occupation	Captured	Wounded ?	Fate
DRAKE, Sydney Joseph, Sgt.	1934	14th	11/1/1915 Drysdale, Vict.	18	Drysdale, Vict.	No Stonemason	9/8/1915 Hill 971	No	RTA. Died 18/11/1967, Geelong, aged 71.
DUNNE, Bernard Joseph, Pvt.	2204	16th	19/5/1915 Blackboy Hill, W.A	28	Yorkshire, UK	No Farmer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Shrapnel wound in leg.	RTA. Later returned to Britain & living there in 1925.
ELSTON, William Ernest, Cpt.		16th	8/10/1914 W.A	45		Yes Farmer	25/4/1915 Pope's Hill	No	RTA & lived in W.A. Died age 71 years.
FOSTER, Edwin Charles, Pvt.	892	15th	30/9/1914 Lismore, NSW	18	Lismore, NSW	No Printer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Wounded in arm	RTA. Alive in 1967 living in Tully, Qld.
FOXCROFT, Harry Pvt.	1720	14th	7/12/1914 Melbourne	20	Lancashire, UK	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes	RTA. Died 16/10/1962 in Victoria, aged 68.
FRANCIS, David Thomas, Pvt.	2137	15th	26/3/1915 Brisbane	21	Shropshire, UK	No Labourer	8/8/1915	Yes	Died in 1915. Buried at Haydar Pasha cemetery, Istanbul.
GOODWIN, Shirley Thomas, Cpt.		6th AFA	17/8/1914 Melbourne?	20	Ballarat, Vict.	No Soldier	20/12/15 Plane crash	Slightly	RTA. Killed in WWII in New Guinea, 25/10/1943, aged 49.
GREEN, Edgar Cpl.	1705	15th	15/1/1915 Townsville	23	London, UK	No Stenographer	8/8/1915	Hand and leg.	Died 16/10/1918 at Yozgad of Spanish Influenza. Reburied in 1927 in Baghdad North Gate plot 21, row G, grave 2.
GRIFFITHS, Robert Wright, Dvr.	226	1AF A	26/8/1914 Sydney	19	Sydney NSW	No Butcher	7/8/1915 Cape Helles	Wounded in eye.	RTA. Died from motor accident 22/12/1941 in Newcastle, aged 47.
HENNESSY, John Patrick, Pvt.	1367	14th	24/9/1914 Melbourne	25	Melbourne	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Both legs	Died of wounds in 1915. Buried at Haydar Pasha cemetery, Istanbul.

Name	No.	Btt.	Enlistment	Age	Birthplace	Married / Occupation	Captured	Wounded ?	Fate
HODGES, Louis George, Pvt.	2144	15th	9/3/1915 Bundaberg	20	Bundaberg, Qld	No Labourer	8/8/1915	Yes	Died of wounds in 1915. Buried at Haydar Pasha cemetery.
HODSDON, Charles Harold, Cpl.	750	15th	23/9/1914 Brisbane	21	Woolloowin Qld	No Tailor	8/8/1915	Hip, leg & arm.	Died 20/1/1916 of wounds. Buried at Haydar Pasha cemetery.
JENKINS, Albert Howell, Pvt.	2012	15th	21/12/1914 Townsville	27	Wales, UK	No Draper	8/8/1915	Shoulder	Died 16/1/1916 of wounds. Buried at Haydar Pasha cemetery.
JONES, William Draper, Pvt.	2156	15th	18/3/1915 Brisbane	29	Gympie, Qld	No Stockman	8/8/1915	Left hand	Died 31/1/1917 at AKH of dysentery. Reburied in 1927 in Baghdad Cemetery North Gate, plot 21, row B, grave 3.
JORDAN, Stanley Rupert, 2/Lt		9th	22/8/1914 Lismore.	20	Coffs Harbour	No Accountant	28/6/1915 Pine Ridge	Slightly	Joined the British Foreign Service. Date & age of death unknown.
KELLY, Joseph Patrick, Pvt.	1959	15th	21/1/1915 Brisbane	23	Mt Morgan, Qld	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes	Died 26/8/1915 of wounds. Buried at Haydar Pasha.
KERR, George Ernest Cpl.	888	14th	22/9/1914 Orbst, Vic	22	Ballarat, Vic.	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Wounded in arm & leg	RTA. Died in motor accident 10 /9/1965 in Victoria, aged 73.
KERRIGAN, Robert Pvt.	1510	15th	29/12/1914 Cairns	29	Ballarat, Vic.	Yes Miner	8/8/1915	Yes	Died 15/2/1917 at AKH of malaria. Reburied in 1927 in Baghdad Cemetery North Gate, plot 21, row B, grave 1.
KILMARTIN, Hugh Sgt.	886	14th	16/9/1914 Melbourne	29	Richmond, Vic.	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes	RTA. Died in 1973 at Canowindra, NSW, aged 88.

Name	No.	Btt.	Enlistment	Age	Birthplace	Married / Occupation	Captured	Wounded ?	Fate
KING, George Burdett Pvt.	1379	9th	6/1/1915 Charters Towers	21	Charters Towers, Qld	No Miner	28/6/1915 Pine Ridge	Both legs, hand	Died 16/8/1918 at AKH of pneumonia. Reburied in 1927 in Baghdad Cemetery North Gate, plot 21, row Q, grave 4.
LEYDEN, James Pvt.	1775	14th	5/1/1915	21	Carlton, Vic	No Telephone cabler	8/8/1915	Wounded in head	Died 11/8/1915 of wounds at Gulhane Hospital. Buried at Haydar Pasha
LIGHTFOOT, Lancelot Douglas Pvt	2378	16th	22/4/1915 Kewick SA	19	Melbourne, Vic	No Clerk	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Wounded left arm	RTA in SA. Still alive in 1967.
LUSCOMBE, Leslie Henry Lt.		14th	11/4/1915 Geelong	23	Geelong	No Clerk	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Slightly	RTA. Still alive in 1970, living in Brisbane.
LUSHINGTON, Reginald, Pvt.	507	16th	16/10/1914 Helena Vale	23	Megapatam, India	No Farmer	25/4/1915	No	RTA. Returned to Ceylon as a tea plantation owner. Still in Ceylon in 1938.
MASTERTON, James, Pvt.	896	14th	15/9/1914 Melbourne	44	Melbourne	No Cook	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Bullet in left leg	RTA. Date and cause of death unknown.
MATHERS, Chapman, Pvt.	919	15th	18/9/1914 Lismore	28	Rous, NSW	No Farmer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes	Died 17/2/1917 at Angora of typhus. Buried in unmarked plot in Armenian Cemetery, Ankara.
MATTHEWS, Charles, Pvt.	637	9th	10/9/1914 Brisbane	27	Sydney, NSW	No Butcher	28/6/1915	Yes – right arm	RTA. Died 6/3/1963 in Victoria, aged 75.
McDONALD, Ronald Tracy A Cpt		16th	1/10/1914 WA?	28	?	No Soldier	25/4/1915 Pope's Hill	No	RTA. Died 30/11/1967 in Victoria, aged 82 of broncho- pneumonia.
McKAY, William, Pvt	1978	15th	12/2/1915 Cloncurry	29	Cambridge, UK	No Miner	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes - back	RTA. Date and cause of death unknown.
McLEAN, Charles, Pvt	477	14th	19/9/1914 Melbourne	29	Brunswick, Melbourne	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Wounded left arm	RTA. Died 4/7/1955 in Victoria, aged 69 of a heart attack.

Name	No.	Btt.	Enlistment	Age	Birthplace	Married / Occupation	Captured	Wounded ?	Fate
NELSON, Alfred, Pvt	934	15th	12/10/1914 Brisbane	23	Glasgow, Scotland	No Labourer	8/8/1915	No	Died 28/11/1916 at Angora of enteritis. Buried in unmarked plot in Ankara.
NEW, Leonard George, Pvt.	2181	15th	15/3/1915 Bowen, Qld	21	Kent, UK	No Labourer	8/8/1915	Wounded in face	Died of a rockfall 7/5/1916 at Belemedik. Reburied in 1927 in Baghdad cemetery North Gate in plot 21, row L, grave 3.
NEYLAND, Niven, Sgt.	2192	14th	31/12/1914 Woomland, Vic	36	Natty-Yallock Vic	Yes Farmer	8/8/1915	Yes	RTA. Died 3/3/1928 in Victoria, aged 50 of heart disease.
O'CALLAGHAN, John, Pvt	1600	9th	14/12/1914 Townsville	21	Townsville, Qld	No Drover	28/6/1915	Right thigh, left knee.	Died 21/1/1917 at Angora of enteritis. Buried in unmarked plot in Armenian Cemetery, Ankara.
O'CONNOR, Partick, Pvt	1568	14th	18/12/1914 Melbourne	22	Brunswick, Melbourne	No Farmer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Right leg, shoulder.	RTA. Died 14/8/1967 in Victoria, aged 74 of heart attack.
PASMORE, James, Pvt	486	14th	15/9/1914 Melbourne	22	Essex, UK	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Right side	RTA Perhaps died in 1975, aged 83.
RANDALL, William, Pvt.	532	14th	29/9/1914 Avoca, Vic	32	Avoca, Vic	No Labourer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Yes	RTA. Died 22/6/1966 in Victoria, aged 84.
RAWLINGS, Alfred John, Sgt.	890	2nd	23/8/1914 Randwick	29	Ballarat, Vic	No Blacksmith	25/4/1915	Yes	RTA. Died 31/8/1964 in Victoria, aged 82.
SAMSON, Harold Pvt	1636	14th	5/10/1914 Kerang, Vic	18	Macorna, Vic	No Labourer	8/8/1915	Left shoulder	RTA. Died 10/8/1949 in Victoria, aged 52 of arterial degeneration.
SHELTON, Harold William, Pvt	1088	15th	23/9/1914 Avoca, Tas.	20	Avoca, Tas.	No Labourer	8/8/1915	Yes	Died at Tash Kishla hospital 3/9/1915.

Name	No.	Btt.	Enlistment	Age	Birthplace	Married / Occupation	Captured	Wounded ?	Fate
SHERLOCK, Thomas William, Pvt	546	9th	19/8/1914 Bundaberg, Qld	22	Lancashire, UK	No Labourer	Reported missing 2/5/1915.	Yes – badly wounded	Died of wounds at Haydar Pasha hospital 14/6/1915.
STORMONTH, Stewart Lyle, Lt		15th	3/10/1914	26	Killarney, Qld	No Clerk	8/8/1915 Hill 971	No	RTA. Died 13/9/1935 in Queensland, aged 47.
STRINGER, William Henry, Pvt	1817	14th	27/1/1915 Melbourne	19	Surrey, UK	No Fruit farmer	8/8/1915	Uncertain	RTA. Died 1965 in Victoria, aged 70?
THOMAS, John Edward, Pvt	1442	15th	5/11/1914 Melbourne	34	Cardiff, Wales	No Marine Stoker	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Wounded left shoulder	RTA. Died 10/1/1940, in Victoria, aged 60.
TROY, Martin John, Pvt	688	16th	29/9/1914 WA	23	Geraldton WA	No Miner	7/5/1915 Pope's Hill	No	RTA. Died 3/9/1962 in WA, aged 71. Buried at Karakatta cemetery, Perth.
WARNES, William Edward, Pvt	505	14th	14/9/1914 Melbourne	24	Williamstown Vic	No Farmer	8/8/1915 Hill 971	3 wounds; stomach	Died at dressing station of wounds, 8/8/1915.
WIFFEN, Arthur George, Pvt	2228	14th	18/1/1915 Geelong, Vic	23	Warragul, Vic	Yes Engine driver	8/8/1915	Wounded left hand	RTA. Died 20/10/1959 in Victoria, aged 68 of heart attack.
WILLIAMS, Walter Pvt	1195	14th	12/9/1914 Casterton, Vic	20	London, UK	No Farm-hand	8/8/1915 Hill 971	Left side, thigh	RTA. Died 26/6/1920 in Melbourne Hospital, aged 26.
WILSON, Elvas Roy, Pvt.	1424	14th	29/9/1914 Melbourne	23	Fitzroy, Vic	No Labourer	8/8/1915	Wounded in foot by shrapnel & bullet	Died 30/5/1916 of typhoid at Yozgad. Buried in 'Sour Kapou' cemetery in unmarked plot, Yozgad.
WOOD, Bert, Pvt	1177	14th	1/10/1914 Melbourne	31	Collingwood, Vic	Yes Driver	8/8/1915	Multiple injuries	Died 19/8/1915 of wounds at Tash Kishla hospital.

## **Appendix 2: The Hague Convention, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1907.**

### **Chapter II: Prisoners of War.**

Source: 'Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV), October 18, 1907. (The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School). [www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague0.4.htm](http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague0.4.htm). Retrieved 16/10/2000.

#### **Article 4**

Prisoners of war are in the power of the hostile government, but not of the individuals or corps who captured them. They must be humanely treated.

All their personal belongings, except arms, horses, and military papers, remain their property.

#### **Article 5**

Prisoners of war may be interned in a town, fortress, camp or other place, and bound not to go beyond certain fixed limits, but they cannot be confined except as in indispensable measure of safety and only while the circumstances which necessitate the measure continue to exist.

#### **Article 6**

The state may utilise the labour of prisoners of war according to their rank and aptitude, officers excepted. The tasks shall not be excessive and shall have no connection with the operations of the war. Prisoners may be authorised to work for the public service, for private persons or on their own account. Work done for the State is paid for at the rates in force for work of a similar kind done by soldiers of the national army, or, if there are none in force, at a rate according to the work executed.

When the work is for other branches of the public service or for private persons, the conditions are settled in agreement with the military authorities.

The wages of the prisoners shall go towards improving their position, and the balance shall be paid to them on their release, after deducting the cost of their maintenance.

#### **Article 7**

The Government into whose hands prisoners of war have fallen is charged with their maintenance. In the absence of a special agreement between the belligerents, prisoners of war shall be treated as regards board, lodging and clothing on the same footing as the troops of the Government who captured them.

#### **Article 8**

Prisoners of war shall be subject to the laws, regulations and orders in force in the army of the State in whose power they are. Any act of insubordination justifies the adoption towards them of such measures of severity as may be considered necessary.

Escaped prisoners who are retaken before being able to rejoin their own army or before leaving the territory occupied by the army which captured them are liable to disciplinary punishment.

Prisoners who, after succeeding in escaping, are again taken prisoners, are not liable to any punishment on account of the previous flight.

#### **Article 9**

Every prisoner of war is bound to give, if he is questioned on the subject, his true name and rank and if he infringes this rule, he is liable to have the advantages given to prisoners of his class curtailed.

#### **Article 10**

Prisoners of war may be set at liberty on parole if the laws of their country allow, and in such cases, they are bound, on their personal honour, scrupulously to fulfill, both towards their own Government and the Government by whom they were made prisoners, the engagements they have contracted.

In such cases their own Government is bound neither to require of nor accept from them any service incompatible with the parole given.

#### **Article 11**

A prisoner of war cannot be compelled to accept his liberty on parole; similarly the hostile Government is not obliged to accede to the request of the prisoner to be set at liberty on parole.

**Article 12**

Prisoners of war liberated on parole and recaptured bearing arms against the Government to whom they had pledged their honour, or against the allies of that Government, forfeit their right to be treated as prisoners of war, and can be brought before the courts.

**Article 13**

Individuals who follow an army without directly belonging to it, such as newspaper correspondents and reporters, sutlers and contractors, who fall into the enemy's hands and whom the latter thinks expedient to detain, are entitled to be treated as prisoners of war, provided they are in possession of a certificate from the military authorities of the army which they are accompanying.

**Article 14**

An inquiry office for prisoners of war is instituted on the commencement of hostilities in each of the belligerent States and, when necessary, in neutral countries which have received belligerents in their territory. It is the function of this office to reply to all inquiries about the prisoners. It receives from the other services concerned, full information respecting internments and transfers, releases on parole, exchanges, escapes, admissions into hospital, deaths, as well as other information necessary to enable it to make out and keep to date an individual return for each prisoner of war. The office must state in this return the regimental number, name and surname, age, place of origin, rank, unit, wounds, date and place of capture, internment, wounding and death, as well as any observations of a special character. The individual return shall be sent to the Government of the other belligerent after the conclusion of peace.

It is likewise the function of the inquiry office to receive and collect all objects of personal use, valuables, letters, etc. found on the field of battle or left by prisoners who have been released on parole, or exchanged, or who have escaped, or died in hospitals or ambulances, and to forward them to those concerned.

**Article 15**

Relief societies for prisoners of war, which are properly constituted in accordance with the laws of their country and with the object of serving as the channel for charitable effort shall receive from the belligerents, for themselves and their duly accredited agents every facility for the efficient performance of their humane task within the bounds imposed by military necessities and administrative regulations. Agents of these societies may be admitted to the places of internment for the purpose of distributing relief, as also to the halting places of repatriated prisoners, if furnished with a personal permit by the military authorities and on giving an undertaking in writing to comply with all measures of order and police which the latter may issue.

**Article 16**

Inquiry offices enjoy the privilege of free postage. Letters, money orders and valuables, as well as parcels by post, intended for prisoners of war, or dispatched by them, shall be exempt from all postal duties in the countries of origin and destination, as well as in the countries they pass through. Presents and relief in kind for prisoners of war shall be admitted free of all import or other duties, as well as payments for carriage by the State railways.

**Article 17**

Officers taken prisoners shall receive the same rate of pay as of officers of corresponding rank in the country where they are detained, the amount to be ultimately refunded by their own Government.

**Article 18**

Prisoners of war shall enjoy complete liberty in the exercise of their religion, including attendance at the services of whatever church they may belong to, on the sole condition that they comply with the measures of order and police issued by the military authorities.

**Article 19**

The wills of prisoners of war are received or drawn up in the same way as for soldiers of the national army.

The same rules shall be observed regarding death certificates as well as for the burial of prisoners of war, due regard being paid to their grade and rank.

**Article 20**

After the conclusion of peace, the repatriation of prisoners of war shall be carried out as quickly as possible.

**Article 21**

Obligations of belligerents in regard to sick and wounded are governed by the Geneva Convention.

**Article 23**

It is especially forbidden: to kill or wound treacherously individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army. To kill or wound an enemy who, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defence, has surrendered at discretion.

### **Appendix 3: (Turkish) Manual Concerning Prisoners of War.**

#### **Ottoman War Ministry. 1914.**

**Source:** *'Usera Hakkinda Talimatname Mat-baa-I'* (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War), Military Printer, Turkish War Ministry, Istanbul, 1914. Ottoman Archives 1332/1914. Translated by Sedat Bulgu, September 2001

#### **Transfer and Supervision.**

1- Prisoners of war are to be transferred and assigned to camps (garrisons) under the supervision of the War Ministry. Moreover, a total or partial change of camps can be ordered by the War Ministry and in the case of an emergency, this decision can be made by the Deputy Army Corps.

2- Prisoners of war of officer rank are to be treated the same as officers of equivalent rank in the Sultan's army. Until their salaries are provided by their relevant governments, they are to receive the same salary as their counterparts in the Sultan's Army. Junior officers, other military personnel and civilian prisoners of war are to receive the same rations as the junior Ottoman officers and soldiers. They will not receive a salary.

3- Prisoners of war will be protected from any ill treatment and their humanitarian rights will be honoured. Camp commanders and the Deputy Army Corps are responsible for all considerations concerning prisoners of war welfare.

4- The settlement and accommodation of prisoners of war of officer rank will be provided by renting hotels or private homes which are appropriate to their rank and honour, depending on what can be afforded at the time. If officers reject the rations provided, provision will be made for their relevant governments to pay for supplies.

5- Prisoners of war of non-officer rank are to be accommodated in garrison barracks or available institutions. The Turkish government will supply a sum of money for their rations, clothing or medical treatment.

#### **General Compliance Issues.**

6- Money and valuables of prisoners of war will be consigned to the safe of the Committee of Prisoners of War and will be issued with a receipt. Prisoners of war are restricted from carrying more than 1 Mecidiye (*Turkish currency at the time*). If there is a necessity for more money, it will be given to prisoners of war in small lump payments. Officer prisoners of war are free to keep their money and valuables with them or may place them in the safe.

7- The postage of both incoming and outgoing letters, money orders, money and parcels of prisoners of war are free of charge within Ottoman territories and in neutral countries. Relief parcels and aid sent to prisoners of war are free of any import tax and other charges and the transportation of these goods within Ottoman territory is free of cost. The transportation of prisoners of war within Ottoman territory will be the responsibility of the Ottoman government.

8- All incoming letters, parcels, newspapers and outgoing material will be subject to censorship. Goods cannot be sent or received without being censored and uncensored material cannot be distributed to prisoners of war.

9- Unless otherwise ordered by the Military or local government to comply with security measures, prisoners of war are completely free to worship or participate in their religious practices according to their religion or sect's convictions. Under special circumstances, camp commanders may limit their freedom of worship.

10- The choice of ingredients, preparation and cooking of prisoner of war meals will be left to the prisoners of war. The person in charge of purchasing the food must ensure that expenditure does not

exceed the soldiers' daily ration allocation. Soldiers may spend more than the usual allocation if they so choose by paying the excess themselves.

11- The War Ministry may provide personal and/or special permission to prisoners of war if warranted.

#### **Rations and Food and Welfare.**

12- Officer prisoners of war will receive the same monthly salary at the end of each month as their counterparts in the Ottoman Army. If they are staying at private institutions such as hotels or private homes, rent will be taken out of their salary and if they are getting paid by the relevant government, their food and treatment of their injuries or illnesses which is not caused by the war will also be paid and deducted from their salaries. They also lose their entitlement of "Retirement Fund Payment". The injuries caused by the war will be treated free of charge by the Ottoman Government.

13- Non-officer prisoners of war get the same rations and food as their counterparts in the Ottoman Army. They will be accommodated in State institutions such as military barracks and if required, clothes will be provided. However, they will not be charged for the clothes, food, accommodation and treatment they receive.

14- Officer prisoners of war are not required to do any work. Non-officer prisoners of war, according to their abilities, may be required as workers or employees.

15- Prisoners of war who are employed as workers or employees will be paid an amount which is set by the Government. However, a part of these payments will be temporarily held in the safe of the Committee of the Prisoners of War, to be returned when they are repatriated or as part payment when required.

#### **The Committee of the Prisoners of War.**

16- The Committee of the Prisoners of War will supervise the settlement, accommodation, rations, supervision, welfare needs, treatment of the injured, security, transfer and administration of the prisoners of war.

17- The Committee of the Prisoners of War consists of a chairman (who, according to circumstances may hold the rank of colonel, major or lieutenant-colonel or a lower ranked officer), rations and accountancy officers and sufficient guards. The Deputy Army Corps will choose and appoint the Committee for their local area.

18- The Committee of the Prisoners of War will prepare prisoners of war register lists. On arrival of a new group of prisoners, the Committee will register them on the list according to their personal number. A copy of the register list is to be sent to the War Ministry.

19- The Committee of the Prisoners of War will prepare an incident log book. If a prisoner of war dies, the man's name, his estate and the date of death will be registered in this log book. At the end of every month, a copy of this log book will be copied onto the incident tables and sent to the Secretary of the War Ministry.

20- The Committee of the Prisoners of War will prepare an allocation log book. Whenever officer prisoners of war are paid their salaries, the signature of the issued officer will be registered onto this, along with the payment. The Committee will also prepare allocation tables to be sent to the War Ministry.

21- Documents relating to rations, accommodation, clothing and the treatment of the non-officer prisoner in Ottoman military establishments, will be organised in minutes, tables and summaries and sent to the War Ministry.

22- It is appropriate to also register the prisoners' names in French, to help transcribe the names properly, to prevent any misunderstandings and therefore to prevent unnecessary further communications and transactions. If the Committee cannot find an appropriate French speaker, they may use local officials, public servants, prisoner of war volunteers or local people with familiarity with the French language.

23- Every month the Committee of the Prisoners of War will register the number of prisoners of war in the camp into its private tables (log book, register, list) and send a copy of this along with the incident and the estate log books to the War Ministry.

### **Security Regulations.**

24- The prisoners of war of the warring countries will comply with all the laws, regulations, orders and instructions of the host nation.

25- In accordance to camp safety regulations and security issues, officer prisoners of war will have freedom of movement within their premises and on special or specified dates non-officer prisoners of war will be taken for walks in small groups under supervision of guards.

26- According to the degree of criminal offence, a prisoner of war will be court-marshalled and punished as would a soldier of the host nation.

27- Prisoners of war who try to escape will lose their liberty and will be subjected to hardship and if necessary, firearms will be used for his capture.

28- The camp commander can request from the Deputy Army Corps that prisoners of war who are caught in an inappropriate action be removed to another camp as punishment. The Deputy Army Corps posses the authority to carry out the punishment.

#### Appendix 4: Enlistment by States

Source: National Archives of Australia B2455, Service records of the 67 POWs:attestation papers.

States	Numbers
Victoria	29
Queensland	22
NSW	6
Western Australia	6
South Australia	1
Tasmania	2
Uncertain	1

#### Appendix 5: Age at enlistment

Source: National Archives of Australia B2455; Service records of the 67 POWs; attestation papers.

Age at enlistment	Number
18	3
19	5
20	9
21	9
22	4
23	8
24	2
25	3
26	1
27	4
28	3
29	6
30	1
31	1
32	2
34	1
36	1
44	1
45	1

### Appendix 6: Stated Occupations:

Source: National Archives of Australia B2455: Service records of the 65 POWs: attestation papers.

<b>Stated Occupations</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Labourers	18
Farmer / Farm Hand	9
Miner	5
Clerk	5
Butcher	2
Carpenter	2
Driver	2
Professional Soldier	2
Accountant, blacksmith, coachman, cook, draper, drover, engine-driver, fruit gardener, marine stoker, painter, plumber, printer, station-overseer, stenographer, stockman, stonemason, striker, tailor, telegraph cable joiner, time-keeper (railways).	1 of each occupation.

### Appendix 7: Range of Urban and Rural Occupations.

Source: National Archives of Australia B2455: personnel records of the 67 POWs: attestation papers.

Occupations	City Enlistments	Country Enlistments
Labourer	10	9
Farmer	2	7
Professional soldier	2	-
Driver	2	-
Butcher	2	-
Stockman/Drover	1	1
Clerk	2	4
Carpenter	1	2
Striker	1	-
Cook	1	-
Coachman	1	-
Plumber	1	-
Blacksmith	1	-
Telephone Cabler	1	-
Fruit gardener	1	-
Marine Stoker	1	-
Miner	-	5
Station overseer	-	1
Accountant	-	1
Printer	-	1
Stone-mason	-	1
Engine-driver	-	1
Painter	-	1
Stenographer	-	1
Draper	-	1
Railway timekeeper	-	1

### Appendix 8: Enlistment by City/Town and State.

Source: National Archives of Australia B2455, Service records of the 65 POWs: attestation papers.

State and Town	Numbers
<b>Queensland</b>	
Brisbane	8
Townsville	4
Maryborough and Bundaberg	2 each
Warwick, Cloncurry, Bowen, Longreach, Cairns, Chartres Towers.	1 each
<b>Victoria</b>	
Melbourne	18
Geelong	2
Drysdale, Casterton, Kerang, Warranambool, Bendigo, Echuca, Woomland, Avoca, Orbost.	1 each
<b>New South Wales</b>	
Lismore	3
Kensington, Randwick, Sydney.	1 each
<b>Western Australia</b>	
Blackboy Hill	3
Helena Vale	1
Town not stated	2
<b>Tasmania</b>	
Avoca, Newtown?	1 each
<b>South Australia</b>	
Keswick and uncertain.	1 each

### Appendix 9: Modes of Capture

Source: Repatriation Statements: NAA B2455; AWM Series 30.

Could fight no longer (wounded)	Allen, Beattie, Boyle, Cahir, Calcutt, Carpenter, Carter, Chalcroft, Creedon, Davern, Foster, Green, Griffiths, Jordan, Kerrigan, King, Matthews, McKay, New, O'Callaghan, Samson, Wilson.
Could not retreat or escape	Elston, Goodwin, Lushington.
Overpowered	Cliffe, Drake, McDonald, Stormonth.
Surrendered	Ashton, Brown, Delpratt, Dowell, Foxcroft, Hennessy, Kerr, Kilmartin, Luscombe, Masterton, McLean, Neyland, O'Connor, Pasmore, Randall, Stringer, Troy, Warnes, Williams.
Rescued by Turks/Red Crescent	Bailey, Dunne, Lightfoot, Thomas, Wiffen.
No evidence	Brooke, Francis, Hodges, Hodsdon, Jenkins, Jones, Kelly, Leyden, Mathers, Nelson, Rawlings, Shelton, Sherlock, Wood.

## Appendix 10: The account of Lt. Jordan.

There appears to have been a concerted effort to cover up the role played by this officer. Two copies of Creedon's diary exist in the Australian War Memorial collection. On the first page of one copy of the diary is written: 'Access to this collection is conditional on provision that Lieut. Jordan's name is not to be used in any publication. Researchers are to sign and date this page as acknowledgement that they agree to this access condition'.<sup>1</sup> The other version does not include this warning, and it is to this version that I refer.<sup>2</sup>

Bean's account draws on Creedon's diary for a brief description of the capture: 'Only three of the six men seem to have survived imprisonment in Turkey. Pvt. D.B. Creedon of Maryborough Qld whose diary forms the main basis for the above narrative, died at Angora in 1917'.<sup>3</sup> Creedon explained in his diary that both King and O'Callaghan provided details of their capture to him and they certainly did not corroborate Jordan's own version. Creedon provided an early account of the actions leading up to capture. Led by Jordan, the group was ordered to 'dash over the ridge and work to the left'. Creedon noted drily that luckily few men were with Jordan at the time 'for all who followed these orders are either dead or captured'. Creedon was injured in the head and hands and sought shelter from the shelling in a dug-out and was captured by three Turks. He was taken through a series of Turkish trenches to a dressing station and was provided with cigarettes by Turkish soldiers. King and O'Callaghan were already there with Jordan. Matthews soon joined them. Both King and O'Callaghan were wounded in the legs, Matthews had a nasty wound on his right arm and Jordan 'had a slight flesh wound in the forearm'. All wounds were dressed and they were each provided with cigarettes and a cup of coffee.<sup>4</sup>

Drawing on the descriptions of King and O'Callaghan, Creedon explained further. The two men, with a few others, had dug themselves in on a hillside, when Jordan came running down the hill

'without equipment or rifle'. Thinking he was badly wounded, they dug him in too:

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<sup>1</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM PR 90/130. In this version, Jordan's full name is used. In the alternate version, Creedon only refers to him as 'Lt. J'.

<sup>2</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1 DRL/223.

<sup>3</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol .2, p. 301, Footnote 25.

<sup>4</sup> Diary of Creedon, AWM 1 DRL/223.

After they had dug him in he drank all the water they had. When they had finished digging in, Lt. Jordan sent one of the number for reinforcements. He knew that he was cut off. After this, one of them proposed to open fire on the enemy, but the Lt. gave them orders not to fire as they might draw fire on him. He then gave them orders to go down further to open fire. The place he sent them to was a ploughed field without a vestige of cover; there were four of them against a couple hundred Turks. They had not gone far when one of the number (O'Sullivan) was killed and another (King) wounded. The remaining two helped the wounded one back to where they were before.<sup>5</sup>

Two more men were sent for reinforcements and both were shot. Jordan's account differs markedly from Creedon's. Explaining that he had been cut off from his men, he decided that there was no point in continuing forward, 'recognising the impossibility of rushing a redoubt on my own', thus establishing his own personal bravery. Whilst attempting to return to his men, 'I discovered one of my men shot through the leg. I tied his wounds as well as I could as I had been shot through the right arm on the advance and had lost a fair amount of blood'. Together with the wounded man, he crawled until they came across another man 'who had had the same accident as myself'. They lay together in the darkness until captured. 'We were all wounded', he stated.<sup>6</sup> Jordan does not name the men captured with him.

Why do the accounts vary? Were King, Creedon and O'Callaghan so critical of Jordan's leadership that they lied about his behaviour? Considering that their account was recorded in a private diary, this would seem unlikely. Jordan's description was an official report and provides a more positive account of his own behaviour and circumstances. He does not mention sending men off to an improbable position, nor for reinforcements. He emphasised that his wound was sufficiently severe to have lost considerable amounts of blood, yet Creedon described the wound as 'slight'. Jordan does not name the men with him. Was this in the hope that they may not later be called to provide an alternative account?

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for the warning in Creedon's diary. Bean also appears to have been subjected to censorship, either self-censorship or official. Although he based his account of the men's capture on Creedon's diary, Bean does not name Jordan nor the other men captured with him, even though they are clearly identified in the diary.<sup>7</sup> Bean merely added: 'The prisoners captured were taken that night before Essad Pasha'.<sup>8</sup> In other instances when Bean had access to sources describing capture, he listed the men's names. Jordan's career after Gallipoli may provide a clue to this censorship. When Jordan was repatriated to England after the war, he was chosen as a 'special case' by Earl Curzon of

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Repatriation Statement of Lt. Jordan, AWM 30 B1.17.

<sup>7</sup> Bean, *Official History*, vol. 2, p. 301, Footnote 25.

<sup>8</sup> Bean, *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 308, Footnote 37.

Kedleston and sent by the British Foreign Office to undergo diplomatic training at Cambridge University for one year.<sup>9</sup> Jordan was then appointed to a diplomatic posting in the Middle East. Captain T. White later writing of his experiences as a POW in Turkey, added some more details of Jordan's career:

Stanley Jordan, formerly a private in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, AIF, who received his commission and was captured on Gallipoli, mastering French, Turkish and Arabic, and since the war serving in the consular service in Arabia, and later as British Trade Commissioner in South Africa, now Commercial attache at Cairo.<sup>10</sup>

I would suggest that the warning in the diary was an attempt to remove any evidence of an early stain that may have tainted his later diplomatic career. Sadly, O'Callaghan, Matthews and King did not survive to tell their stories. Adam-Smith uncritically uses Jordan's account of capture and describes it as 'neat and explicit'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Service record of Jordan, NAA B2455. Letter from the British Foreign Office to Australian HQ, London, 4 March 1919.

<sup>10</sup> T.W. White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1935, p. 143.

<sup>11</sup> Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War*, p.38.

### **Appendix 11: Account of Mistreatment in Egypt.**

**Source:** Sokrat Incesu, *Birinci D̄nya Savařında Çanakkale-Ariburnu Hatiralarım (My Memoirs of Canakkale-Anzac during World War I)*, Esen Printing, Canakkale, 1964, pp. 29-32. Translated by S. Bulgu, January 2004.

‘We got undressed under rifle butts and whip blows, until we looked like newborns. With one hand we covered our front, with the other, our back. We awaited our fate. The English soldiers who surrounded us were uncivilised, common and vulgar people... The officers of my dignified and honourable army would have preferred to die, rather than being naked like this. The English forced us to walk towards the sea of sand in a single line. For the sake of gaining our clothes, they were going to kill us naked in this desert! All of us would have preferred to have died a thousand times than be subjected to this state of humiliation.

We kept walking across the sand, covering our private parts with our hands. We saw four English soldiers standing around a barrel (filled with water.) They gestured to the first officer in the line to get into the water. A soldier clubbed his head until he was fully submerged. All of us had to get into the same water. However, as soon as we got out, with the effect of the sulphurous water, our burning and cracked skin started to sting like hell and we rolled in the sand, without even covering our private parts. At this behaviour, the English whom I believe to be a vulgar creation of God, laughed at our pathetic state’.

**Appendix 12: Confidential Report from Dept. of State, Washington, March 20, 1919 to US Ambassador John W. Davis, London.**

**Source:** PRO FO 383/530/1919, PRO, London.

‘Suleiman Nouman Pacha, Chief of the Turkish Army Medical Corps, who frequently demonstrated during the war that he was profoundly imbued with Prussian ideals which he slavishly followed. He was guilty of having given the order in the war in the spring of 1915 for the rounding up of all the British and French wounded prisoners lying at various hospitals in and around Constantinople, and their segregation under the most inhumane and brutal conditions at the barrack hospital of Tash Kishla. Once the men entered Tash Kishla, clothing and other necessities sent to them were not delivered, nor were visits of any kind permitted for some two months after their incarceration, notwithstanding the urgent and repeated requests made by the American Embassy. The prisoners, including several officers, were herded together in two narrow dark rooms; the most desperate cases were provided with cots furnished with filthy mattresses only, the others lay on the floors along the walls. The windows of the damp rooms in which the men were imprisoned were boarded up so as to prevent adequate light and ventilation. These conditions remained unchanged until the middle of September, despite the fact that strong representations were made by the American Embassy as soon as the facts became known. Mr Morgenthau was permitted to visit the prisoners once and Mr Philip several times but it was not until September 15, at the request of the Papal Delegate at Constantinople, that daily visits to these prisoners were allowed to the step daughters of the Dutch Minister, and the extension of nursing and to them by certain Catholic Sisters of Charity.

Coupled with the name of Souleiman Nouman Pacha, should be that of the military Commandant of the Tash Kishla Hospital during the summer of 1915. He is referred to as being a particularly brutal and ignorant example of Turkish officialdom, who, as Commandant of the Hospital, was especially responsible for many of the minor indignities’.

### Appendix 13: Resident Patterns for Individual Camps

Sources: Service Records NAA B2455; ARC POW Files AWM; ARC Wounded & Missing Files, AWM 1DRL/428.

Camps	1915	1916	1917	1918
Afyon Kara Hissar	Ashton, Troy, Cliffe, Kerr, Dowell, Jordan, Lushington, Delpratt, Rawlings, Goodwin?	Troy, Mackay, Cliffe, Thomas, Kerr, Rawlings, Dowell, Boyle, Elston, Jordan, Luscombe, Foster? McDonald? Lightfoot, Williams, Stormonth	Troy, Cliffe, Elston Randall? Dowell, Jordon, Thomas, Luscombe, McKay McDonald	Beattie, Dowell, Elston, Luscombe, Jordon, McDonald
Angora	Luscombe, Beattie, Brown, Carter, Drake, Foxcroft, Thomas, Williams	Wilson, ?? Nelson	Bailey, Neyland, O'Callaghan, Mathers, Creedon	
Kiangri	Ashton, Beattie, Brown, Carpenter, Creedon, Delpratt, Drake, Foxcroft, Griffith, Lightfoot, Lushington, Neyland McLean? Randall, Thomas, Williams	Ashton, Beattie, Brown, Carpenter, Creedon, Delpratt, Drake, Foxcroft, Griffith, Lightfoot, Lushington, McLean, Neyland, Randall, Williams, Thomas		
Belemedik		Ashton, Allen (died) Beattie, Brown, Carpenter, Carter, Cliffe, Creedon, Delpratt, Drake, Foxcroft, Green, Kerr, King, McLean, Lightfoot, Masterton, New (died), Neyland, Randall, Rawlings, Samson, Stringer, Wiffen, Williams	Kerrigan (died) Stringer	
Sivas	Bailey	Bailey, Pasmore, Wilson		
Yozgad		Wilson (died)	Pasmore	Green (died)
San Stefano			Cliffe	Ashton, Chalcroft Cliffe, Foxcroft, Lushington, Troy
Ras-el-Ain			Randall?	Carter? Randall?
Ismidt		Ashton, Lushington	Cahir, Lushington	
Ada Bazar			Ashton, Cahir, Chalcroft, Troy, Lushington	Ashton, Cahir, Chalcroft, Foxcroft? Lushington, Troy

**Appendix 14: Camp List Provided by the Turkish Military, 18/1/1917**  
**Source: PRO FO 383/333 Prisoners: Turkey File.**

<b>Camps</b>	<b>British Officers (including Australians)</b>	<b>British Soldiers (including Australians)</b>
Afion Kara Hisar	64	512
Angora	-	460
Ismidt	-	88
Broussa	13	6
Psamatia	-	29
Castamouni	131	40
Kirshehir	4	2
Magnesia	-	67
Yozgad	99	30
Mossoul	-	1
Taurus	-	283
Amanus	-	62
Damascus	-	8
Aleppo	-	35
Adana	-	35
Tarsus	-	60
Nisibin	-	3
Harbie Hospital	-	3
Prinkipo	2	2
Haidar Pasha Hospital	-	15
Gumush Suyu Hospital	-	1
Matchka Hospital	-	1
Maltepe Hospital	-	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>1744</b>

### Appendix 15: Summary of Camp Visits

Camps	1915	1916	1917	1918
Afyon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-6/6 US Embassy rep. (PRO FO 383/96)</li> <li>5-18/8, H. Philip (PRO FO 383/92)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>later 1916, Lushington: 2 visits by the 'US Ambassador' (p15, 20)</li> <li>McDonald: Philip in Oct. (AWM 30 B1.22)</li> <li>December the Catholic priests (PRO FO 383/333)</li> <li>Int. Red Cross –Boissier &amp; Vischer. (PRO FO 383/187).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>April, US Embassy rep? (PRO FO 383/333)</li> <li>Rifki Bey, Red Crescent Society twice.(check date). (NAA A11803/1918 /89/453)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early 1918, Rifki Bey, Red Crescent Society.</li> <li>Dutch Delegation 21-26 August of Menten.</li> </ul>
Yozgad	DNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11/12, Red Cross of Boissier &amp; Vischer</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closed in October 1918.</li> </ul>
Angora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11/1915 Red Crescent official (Luscombe p. 60)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early November Handsley 'interviewed' by US 'Ambassador'. p33</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early 1918 Rifki Bey, Red Crescent Society.</li> <li>Dutch legation 23/9 of Menten.</li> </ul>
Cankiri		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Crescent official &amp; possibly Philip. (Drake AWM 30 B1.11)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspection by Zia Bey; moved most to Kedos.</li> </ul>	
Boussa*			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4/1917 US Embassy rep.? (PRO FO 383/333)</li> </ul>	
Ras-el-Ain	DNE	DNE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early 1918? Rifki Bey, Red Crescent (NAA A11803/1918 /89/453)</li> </ul>
Gediz	DNE	DNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>June 1917 visited by Zia Bey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early 1918? Rifki Bey, Red Crescent.</li> <li>Dutch Legation 27-31/8/ of Menten</li> <li>7/18 another visit by Zia Bey</li> </ul>
Bor	DNE	DNE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>early 1918, Red Crescent Society.</li> </ul>
Daridje cement factory				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dutch Delegation 5/8 of Van Spengler &amp; Menten.</li> </ul>
Psamatia	DNE	DNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21 March Mrs Elkus visited &amp; provided supplies. (NAA 1917/89/377).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dutch Delegation 22/7; 4/8 &amp; 14/8 of Van Spengler &amp; Menten</li> </ul>
Haydar Pasha	DNE	DNE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dutch Delegation 30/7 of Van Spengler &amp; Menten</li> </ul>
Eski Hissar				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dutch Delegation 4/8 of Van Spengler &amp; Menten.</li> </ul>
Magnesia				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dutch Delegation 2-3/9 of Menten.</li> </ul>
Kirshahir		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14/12 Red Cross of Boissier &amp; Vischer (PRO FO 383/187)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Danish Legation distributed parcels.</li> </ul>	
Ismidt	DNE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4/1 Red Cross visit of Boissier &amp; Vischer</li> </ul>	

<b>Camps</b>	<b>1915</b>	<b>1916</b>	<b>1917</b>	<b>1918</b>
San Stefano	DNE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dutch embassy visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dutch Ambassador visits in April.</li> </ul>
Eski Shehir		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12/1916 Red Cross of Boissier &amp; Vischer(PRO FO 383/187)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• early December, Rifki Bey, Red Crescent Society (NAA A11803/1918 /89/453)</li> </ul>
Konya				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• early 1918 Rifki Bey, Red Crescent Society</li> <li>• Dutch Legation 13-19/9 of Menten.</li> </ul>
Belemedik	DNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• October 1916 US missionary sent by American consul Nathan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Consul Nathan visited the railway camps in January 1917.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• early 1918 Rifki Bey Red Crescent Society.</li> </ul>

DNE – this specific camp did not exist at the time

\* All camps except for Boussa accommodated Gallipoli POWs at various times throughout the war.

**Appendix 16 : Amounts of Pay Received from Turkish Authorities by Captain RTA  
McDonald, 16 Battalion, AIF.**

Source: Nominal Roll of POWs in Turkey, AWM 30 B18.1.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount in Piastres</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount in Piastres</b>
29 April 1915	1020	1 March 1917	350
30 June	472	1 April	700
8 July	1050	1 May	700
6 August	800	1 June	700
28 September	1050	1 July	700
15 October	661 ½	1 August	700
15 November	588	1 September	700
26 December	661 ½	1 October	700
20 January 1916	588	1 November	700
17 February	661 ½	1 December	700
1 April	554	1 January 1918	700
29 April	688 ¼	3 February	767
29 May	617	2 March	693
17 June	688 ¼	30 April	767
16 July	550 ½	30 May	742
13 August	612 ¼	2 June	742
13 September	700	22 July	742
14 October	700 ¼	9 August	767
14 November	700 ¼	30 August	767
14 December	700 ½	19 October	742
14 January 1917	700	2 November	767
14 February	700		

Due to the rate of inflation throughout the war, it is difficult to determine the value of the piastre. However, in 1916 pay rates ranged from 8-20 piastres a day, depending on the skills level of the work. Five piastres were taken out per day for their food rations.

### Appendix 17: Summary of Health of the 43 Gallipoli POWs who survived

Source: Files NAA B2455; Repatriation Statements; ARC POW Files; ARC W & M Files 1DRL/428.

Name	Health Issue	Hospital	Outcome
Ashton	Not wounded; no evidence of ill health.	Adana as a ruse.	
Bailey	Suffered gastro-enteritis on Gallipoli; wounded	Tash-Kishla	Chosen initially to be exchanged October 1917; had scars on thighs, buttocks, right shoulder.
Boyle	Hospitalised with VD at Gallipoli; wounded right arm; suffered malaria	Tash Kishla	Discharged medically unfit 18/3/1919, disability not stated.
Beattie	Fever; not hospitalised but sent to convalescent camp.		Discharged as medically unfit 11/5/1919.
Brown	Slight wound left thigh. No other illness.		Felt 'very well' on discharge.
Cahir	Not wounded; malaria & Spanish influenza		'Feels well but weak'. Deemed permanently unfit' with attacks of malaria, 15/2/1919.
Carpenter	Hospitalised with influenza at Mudros before capture. Not wounded; malaria, typhus, 1917 'keeping well' in Angora.		Discharged as 'medically unfit'; disability not stated.
Carter	Treated for syphilis in Cairo. Treated for wounds in chest & right leg in hospital; malaria.		Treated for malaria on return to Australia in 1919.
Chalcroft	Not wounded; no evidence of illness		
Cliffe	Not wounded; 'a little better now'.		Medical report 1919 notes 'no disability'.
Davern	Wounded in leg	Harbie, Tash Kishla, Haydar Pasha, Psamatia	Disabled; one leg shorter than the other; repatriated end of 1917
Delpratt	Not wounded; malaria.		Hospitalised London with malaria to 20/6/1919.
Dowell	Wounded thigh.	10 months in hospital.	Disabled leg.
Drake	Not wounded; malaria	Haydar Pasha; convalesced at Bor.	
Dunne	Wounded leg; poor dental condition; no other illness.	Istanbul hospital.	'Short' leg.
Elston	Not wounded; no evidence of illness		
Foster	Hospitalised for VD after release from camp; wounded in right side and arm.; hospitalised with severe ear infections.		Medical report 28/11/1918 stated 'unfit for hard work due to wounded arm'.
Foxcroft	Wounded; pneumonia	Afyon	
Goodwin	Not wounded; malaria and dysentery in 1916; 'last 2 years no a day's illness'.		3/12/1918 admitted Alexandria Hospital with influenza & malaria. Poor teeth.
Griffiths	Cairo hospital enteritis; minor wounds; no other illness.		Discharged medically unfit, 25/3/1919.
Jordan	Slightly wounded; no evidence of illness		
Kerr	Treated for VD 10/3/1915; wounded; one illness Sept. 1916,		

Name	Health Issue	Hospital	Outcome
	then good health		
Kilmartin	Not wounded? Malaria, then 'best of health'.	Istanbul	Sent for exchange; not passed.
Lightfoot	Wounded; malaria; treated with quinine in Turkey.	Convalesced in Afyon.	11 days in Alexandria Hospital with malaria 22/11/1918. Discharged medically unfit due to malaria 27/6/1919.
Luscombe	Slight wound; no evidence of illness.		
Lushington	Not wounded; dysentery, typhoid, malaria; dental issues	Ismidt, Adana.	
Masterton	No evidence of illness.		
Matthews	Treated for VD in Mena Hospital 16/1/1915; Wounded right arm; no evidence of illness.		
McDonald	Not wounded; typhus; then 'splendid health'	Afyon	Hospital in London; convalescent leave till 1/4/1919.
McKay	Wounded back & right shoulder; several operations to back in Turkey.	Angora.	Sent for exchange; not passed. Medical report 9/11/1918 'scars'.
McLean	Bayonet wound left leg prior to capture & hospitalized; no evidence of illness		Medical report 1919, 'no disability'.
Neyland	Wounded; no evidence of illness. Typhus?		
O'Connor	Wounded side, shoulder, foot; leg amputated & surgery on head.	Haydar Pasha, Psamatia,	Repatriated 1917
Pasmore	Wounded right side; later 'sound health'		
Randall	Heliopolis Hospital 1/5/1915 for wounded arm; perhaps '1 <sup>st</sup> 2 years in hospital'; 'last year better'.		
Rawlings	Wounded? Malaria.		Discharged 4/3/1920 as 'medically unfit'.
Samson	Wounded left shoulder.		
Stormonth	Not wounded; minor illnesses; 'extremely fit'.		
Stringer	Wounded & in Mudros Hospital 14/6/1915 before capture.		
Thomas	Wounded before capture 26/6/1915 & in Heliopolis Hospital; wounded; malaria, pneumonia.	Afyon	
Troy	Not wounded; fever; later 'health good'.	Could not get into hospital	
Wiffen	Wounded; malaria; later 'splendid health'	Bozanti	Port Said Hospital 14/12/1918 with malaria; Caulfield Hospital 1919; 'invalided with malaria'.
Williams	Wounded in left side & head; fever; by 1918 'in good health'.	Afyon	Weymouth Hospital 14/1/1919. Medical report 1919 'feels well except for a little pain at site of wound'; deemed unfit for general services.

### Appendix 18: Deaths in Camps

Source: Repatriation Statements in Service records, NAA B2455; ARC POW Files, AWM 1DRL/428.

CAMPS	DEATHS	CAUSE OF DEATH
Angora	Nelson 28 Nov 1916 O'Callaghan 21 Jan 1917 Mathers 17 Feb 1917 Creedon 27 Feb 1917	Enteritis Enteritis Typhus Typhus / enteritis
Belemedik	New 7 May 1916 Allen December 1916	Rockfall Malaria
Afion Kara Hissar	Jones 31 Jan 1917 Kerrigan 15 Feb 1917 King 16 Aug 1918	Dysentery Malaria Pneumonia
Hadji-Kiri	Calcutt 18 Dec 1916	Septicaemia
Yozgad	Wilson 30 May 1916 Green 16 Oct 1918	Typhus Spanish Influenza