A composite image for Anzac Day. On the left, three soldiers in World War I uniforms sit on a sandy beach, one holding a newspaper. On the right, a large transport ship, the AE2, is docked at a pier. The background shows a hilly landscape.

ANZAC DAY

110 years since the Gallipoli Campaign

Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

Anzac Portal
anzacportal.dva.gov.au

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE

9:00am

PIETÀ MILITARY CEMETERY

'Malta and Australia are two islands separated by continents and seas but now firmly linked by ties of family and history. It was the First World War which began the close relationship between our two countries. During that terrible conflict Maltese and Australians lived, fought and died together.'

Over 10 per cent of Malta's 222,000 people volunteered for war-related duties, with almost 1,100 members of the Malta Labour Corps working with Australians at Gallipoli, Lemnos and Mudros. The Maltese served gallantly with Australian regiments, six of them receiving decorations for their service in the 7th Brigade.

In addition, many thousands of Australians owed their survival to the tremendous and selfless efforts of the Maltese who tended and nursed the wounded back to health. Malta, which history remembers as the 'nurse of the Mediterranean', became a focus of heartfelt gratitude for the soldiers who convalesced there. To this day the memory of the ANZACs is kept alive in Malta, just as it is in Australia, through annual commemorations.'

R.J.L. Hawke, Former Prime Minister of Australia

Foreword to *'Gallipoli: The Malta Connection'* by John A. Mizzi. December 1990.



Wounded Australian and British soldiers at Tigne Hospital: Building D, Ward 4., Malta. © Imperial War Museum (HU 129298)



Anzac Day: history and significance

The Anzac legend was born on 25 April 1915, when some 16,000 soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed under fire on the shores of Gallipoli, Türkiye.

Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the Allied navies. These landings were the first occasion where soldiers of the two fledgling nations fought together.

After meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders, what had been planned as a bold stroke quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months.

At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated from the peninsula, with both sides having suffered heavy casualties and enduring great hardships. Over 56,000 Allied soldiers were killed in the campaign, including more than 11,000 Australian and New Zealand troops.

Although the Gallipoli campaign failed in its military objectives, the actions of Australian and New Zealand forces during the campaign left a powerful legacy. What became known as the 'Anzac legend' became an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping the ways in which they viewed both their past and their future.

Once used to refer to those who fought in the First World War, as time has passed, the term 'Anzac' has come to express characteristics such as courage, equality, endurance and mateship, and today it also honours those who have served through more recent conflicts and on peacekeeping missions.

Anzac Day: early commemorations in Australia and New Zealand and the United Kingdom

The landing at Gallipoli was already etched into the minds of many people while the Gallipoli Campaign was still being fought. It became a defining moment in the histories of Australia and New Zealand.



In 1916, the Acting Australian Prime Minister, George Pearce, officially named 25 April as 'Anzac Day'. The first anniversary of the landing was observed in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Malta.

By 1927, Anzac Day was a public holiday in every state of Australia.

Today, Anzac Day also honours those who have served through recent conflicts and on peacekeeping missions. The day reflects the diversity of modern military operations as young veterans join with veterans of earlier wars, connected by the experience of service. Now a tradition over 100 years old, Anzac Day has become Australia's most important secular occasion.

Anzac Day in Malta

In both world wars, Malta's position in the Mediterranean made it an important strategic location. During World War One, it was well positioned to receive casualties from the ill-fated invasion of Gallipoli in 1915.

In total, 28 hospitals and convalescent camps were operational in Malta during the war, including Malta's three pre-existing hospitals and Mtarfa Military Barracks, which was given over to medical use. Between them, these sites held more than 26,000 beds, and treated more than 135,000 sick and wounded throughout the duration of the war, earning Malta the nickname 'the nurse of the Mediterranean'.

Malta became the last resting place of 204 Australian and 72 New Zealand soldiers. We remain grateful for Malta's care for so many of our wounded soldiers.

Anzac Day has been commemorated in Malta since 1916. Originally, two services were held due to the practice of burying servicemen according to religion: one service was held in Pietà and another at the Addolorata cemetery for Catholics.

After the unveiling of the War Memorial in Floriana by HM The Queen in 1954, services were combined up until 1979 when the service returned to Pietà Military Cemetery, as it contains the highest number of ANZAC war graves (231) in Malta.

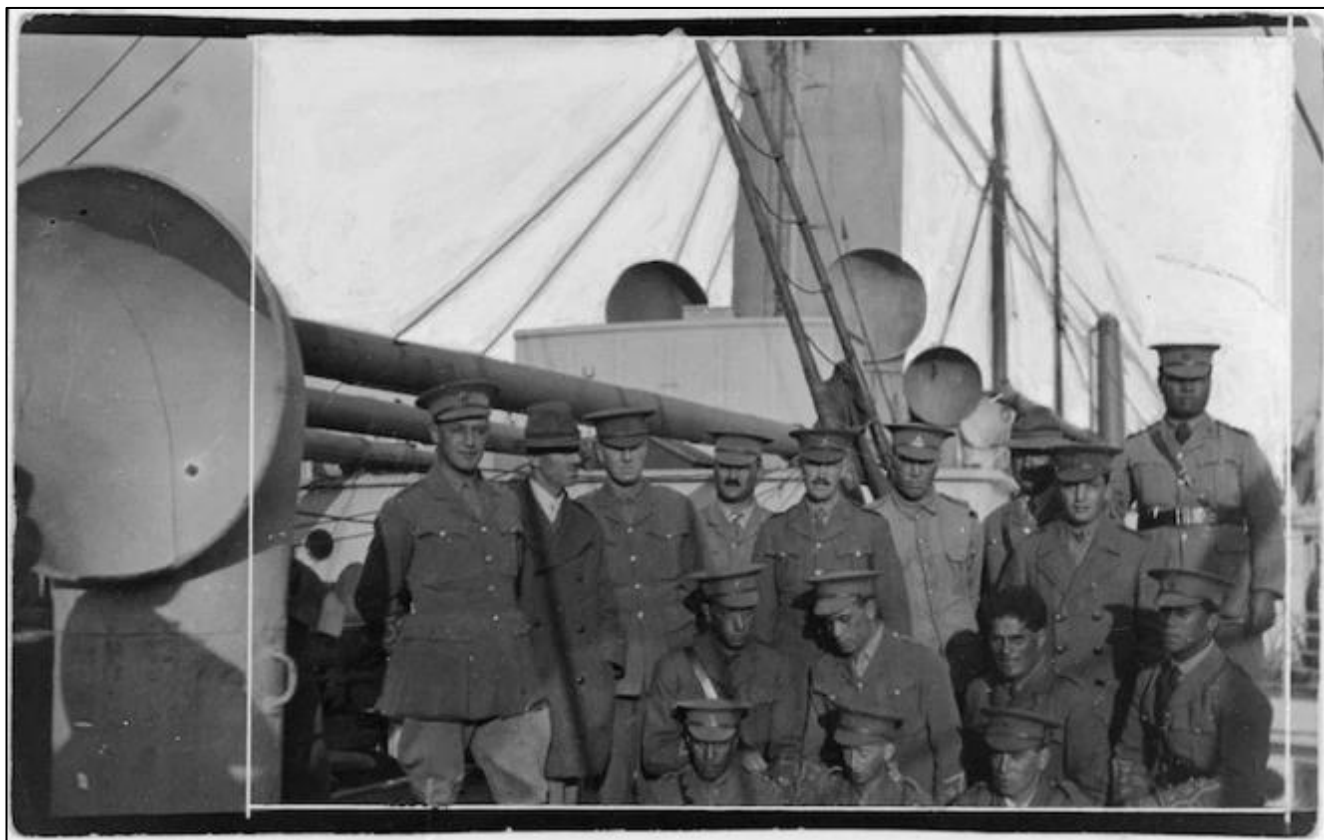


The Second World War

Malta's pivotal role in the Second World War requires little introduction. A valuable, strategic outpost hosting several airfields and as the only safe allied harbour between Gibraltar and Alexandria, Malta was critical to air and maritime operations in the Mediterranean theatre.

Ships of the Royal Australian Navy took part in the protection of merchant shipping and the supply of aircraft and stores (Operations *EXCESS*, *SUBSTANCE*, *HALBERD*, *HARPOON* and *PEDESTAL*). Aircraft and crew from both the Royal Australian and Royal New Zealand Air Forces operated in the defence of Malta under the Air Headquarters, an overseas command of the Royal Air Force that was established in December 1941.

The Malta Memorial in Floriana commemorates 205 Australian and 85 New Zealand service personnel who were killed in action during the Second World War with no known grave; the majority of these were air crew. A further thirty-one Australian and New Zealand air crew are buried in Kalkara Naval Cemetery and one Australian in Pembroke military cemetery.



Peter Buck, and other New Zealander World War 1 soldiers, aboard a ship travelling to Malta. Ref: 1/2-C-009519-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22311186



Pietà Military Cemetery

More than 1,300 Commonwealth casualties buried at Pietà Military Cemetery date from World War One. 882 of the burials here, nearly 60 per cent of the total number of casualties, died in 1915 having been wounded or contracted sickness at Gallipoli and evacuated to Malta. As well as a large number of British war dead, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for a large ANZAC contingent at Pietà, with more than 230 burials of New Zealand and Australian casualties. There are also 28 Indian casualties commemorated here, and two Canadians.

Across Malta's military cemeteries, 308 Australian and New Zealanders are buried from both world wars.

Period of Silence

On the first anniversary of the First World War armistice, two minutes' silence was instituted to honour the sacrifice of those who had died during the war as part of the main commemorative ceremony in London. Australian journalist and First World War veteran Edward George Honey appealed for a five-minute silence in 1919 by writing a letter to the London Evening News. In recent times, one minute of silence has been observed at Australian commemorative events, such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies.

The Last Post

The Last Post is one of a number of bugle calls in military tradition that mark the phases of the day.

In military tradition, the Last Post is the bugle call that signifies the end of the day's activities. It is also sounded at military funerals to indicate that the soldier has gone to their final rest, and at commemorative services such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

Wreaths

'Anzac wreaths' are often laid at war memorials as a way to remember those who have lost their lives in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

In ancient times, the Romans used a wreath of laurel leaves to symbolise bravery, strength and triumph. Its meaning can be traced back to Greek mythology.



Wearing rosemary has become a traditional symbol of remembrance and commemoration in Australia.

Rosemary grows wild on the Gallipoli peninsula in Türkiye, where many Australians served in the First World War. In the 1980s, cuttings of plants from Gallipoli were planted in nurseries throughout Australia to support 'Avenues of Honour'.¹

On special days of commemoration, such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, Australians often wear a small sprig of rosemary. Usually, it's pinned onto a coat lapel, near to the heart, or held in place by medals.



Photo Credit: Australian Army Museum of Western Australia

¹ Avenues of Honour project is a national initiative to document, preserve, promote and reinstate the original Avenues of Honour and to establish new commemorative trees, commemorating Australia's war service encompassing plantings from Boer War, WW1, WW2 and all subsequent conflicts.



Under the shady trees of Pieta there are many new-made graves, and the chaplain stops on his return from another funeral beside a little plot and thinks of a boyish face that had looked up at his so wistfully and frankly from the pillow.

"He was a brave lad," he murmurs to himself; "and it did me good to know him."

That face is looking into some other heart far away, and its smile brings a sweet ache, and the longing to see the lonely grave at which the unknown chaplain is the only mourner.

Albert G. Mackinnon, 'Malta – The Nurse of the Mediterranean', 1916, Chapter Three: 'A Sad March Past'

We have a company poet named Jones. He is the sanitary man and consequently says he is one of the Staff. He is a most humorous man and keeps his neighbours well amused. His latest ode, "TO "A" COMPANY", is sung to the tune of the "Boys of the Dardanelles".

TO "A" COMPANY.

The shells they have scattered our homestead,
The guns they are blazing away,
We'd mortgage our chances of heaven
To be in Australia today.
We knew our old homestead was settled
So away to our trenches we fled;
"A" Company is awfully frightened",
Were the words a General said.

If that chap would only wait
Till those chaps were under fire,
H'd see that he was mistaken
And he'd know that he's a liar;
For the boys are not afraid,
And we are surprised that he
Should throw that insult at Australia,
And the boys of Gallipoli.



The people here are wonderfully kind to us soldiers.
30/12/15. Today, the 30th December, I had the day I liked. At 10.30, a motor car came and together with others I was taken for a drive; up the Strada Merchanti, and through lots of solid stone arches into fairly open country beyond, passing the inner harbour on our way where the many-coloured small craft made a pleasing picture. The country people ride in carts of a peculiar type, something like an Irish jaunting car. There is a mattress in the bottom of the cart, the sides of which are only a few inches high, and on this mattress the people crouch, with their feet over the back of the cart. No-one sits up to drive. Mostly small donkeys are used for these carts; the country roads are very narrow. We nearly had a collision, but a friendly policeman lifted the cart and donkey to one side so that we could pass. Most of the sea-ward fields are tiered, the stone walls being very pleasing. There seems to be no depth of soil about here, and the walls are to stop it being washed bare. Even the farm houses are made of stone; this would be a hard place to attack, for every house would be a stronghold.

Major Mifsud asked me if I would like to visit his home for afternoon tea - naturally I said yes, and on the 5th January, off I went with a couple of other chaps. The cakes were nice, and after a good meal, we adjourned to his flat roof where we played games and talked to some children who were there. I had never been to the gardens beyond





Order of Service

08:45 Guests to be seated

09:00 Service commences

Welcome

Mrs. Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes, Master of Ceremonies



Hymn

(All Stand)

O Valiant Hearts

O valiant hearts who to your glory came
Through dust of conflict and through battle flame;
Tranquil you lie, your knightly virtue proved,
Your memory hallowed in the land you loved.

Proudly you gathered, rank on rank, to war
As who had heard God's message from afar;
All you had hoped for, all you had, you gave,
To save mankind - yourselves you scorned to save.

Splendid you passed, the great surrender made;
Into the light that nevermore shall fade;
Deep your contentment in that blest abode,
Who wait the last clear trumpet call of God.



Prayer

Father Meli, Chaplain, Armed Forces of Malta

O Lord, lover of souls, who through the mouth of your prophet of old declared that all souls are yours, we thank you for the brave and faithful dead, who willingly laid down their lives on the battlefields of war and succumbed to the perils of the deep or of the air. We bless you for the dauntless courage of these defenders of our country who have fallen in the cause of truth and righteousness. In your hand, O Father, we leave their departed spirits. Grant us to follow their good example in faithfulness and endurance, even unto death, that we may with them be found worthy of the crown of everlasting life.

(Audience Responds)

Amen

(Please Sit)

Commemorative Addresses

HE Mr Matt Skelly, High Commissioner of Australia

and

Mr Blake van Velden, Deputy Head of Mission,
New Zealand Embassy to Spain with accreditation to Malta



Reading

HE Mr Erdeniz Ően, Ambassador for the Republic of Trkiye

Reading of the Tribute to Anzacs Who Died at Gallipoli
attributed to Turkish President Mustafa Kemal Atatrk,
First President of the Republic of Trkiye

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

*'Uzak memleketin toprakları stnde kanlarını dken
kahramanlar:*

burada dost bir vatanın toprađındasınız.

Huzur ve skun iinde uyuyunuz.

Sizler Mehmetiklerle yan yana, koyun koyunasınız.

Uzak diyarlardan evlatlarını harbe gnderen analar;

gzyařlarınıızı dindiriniz, evlatlarınız bizim bađrımızdadır.

Huzur iindedirler ve huzur iinde rahat rahat uyuyacaklardır.

*Bu toprakta canlarını verdikten sonra artık bizim evlatlarımız
olmuřlardır.'*



Reading of *'In Flanders Fields'*

Ms Diana Sillato, PhD Student (History)

'From Gallipoli to Malta: A Medical, Social and Cultural History of the Anzacs'

University of Newcastle, NSW

'In Flanders Fields' by Lt. Col. John McCrae, 1915

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



Wreath Laying

Mrs. Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes, Master of Ceremonies

Wreaths layers will be invited to lay their wreaths in accordance with the separate order of wreath laying sheet and will be announced by the Master of Ceremonies.



(All Stand)

The Ode of Remembrance

Sergeant Mamo, Armed Forces Malta

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

(Audience Responds)

We will remember them.



The Last Post

(All Stand)

One Minute's Silence

Lest We Forget

(Audience Responds)

Lest We Forget

The Rouse

Flags Raised



National Anthems of Australia, New Zealand and Malta

Mrs. Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes, Master of Ceremonies

Please remain standing for the national anthems of Australia, New Zealand and Malta.

Advance Australia Fair

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are one and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts;
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia fair
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia fair

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross,
We'll toil with hearts and hands,
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands,
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share,
With courage let us all combine
To advance Australia fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia fair.



God Defend New Zealand

E Ihowā Atua,
O ngā iwi mātou rā,
Āta whakarangona;
Me aroha noa
Kia hua ko te pai;
Kia tau tō atawhai;
Manaakitia mai
Aotearoa

God of Nations at Thy feet,
In the bonds of love we meet,
Hear our voices, we entreat,
God defend our free land.
Guard Pacific's triple star
From the shafts of strife and war,
Make her praises heard afar,
God defend New Zealand

L-Innu Malti

Lil din l-art ħelwa, l-Omm li tatna isimha,
Ħares Mulej, kif dejjem Int ħarist:
Ftakar li lilha bil-oħla dawl libbist.

Agħti, kbir Alla, id-dehen lil min jaħkimha,
Rodd il-ħniena lis-sid, saħħa 'l-ħaddiem:
Seddaq il-għaqda fil-Maltin u s-sliem.



(Please Sit)

Presentation to the Armed Forces of Malta

HE Mr Matt Skelly, High Commissioner of Australia

Dr Philip Hadcroft

Lieutenant Colonel David Aquilina, Armed Forces of Malta

HE Mr Matt Skelly, High Commissioner of Australia, and Dr. Philip Hadcroft present to the Armed Forces of Malta a bugle on behalf of Dr Hadcroft and the Australian Army Band Corps in recognition of the continued support of Anzac Day and the historical military connections between Australia and Malta.



Ceremony Concludes

HE Mr Matt Skelly, High Commissioner of Australia

Thank you for attending today's service to commemorate Anzac Day.





Elevated view of the 1954 Anzac Day service in Malta, showing members of 78 Fighter Wing, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and 14 Squadron Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) on parade at the Malta War Memorial. The Wing was in Malta for garrison duty.



Acknowledgements

The High Commission of Australia gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided for Anzac Day by:

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Mr Mark Fitzgerald - Malta's CWGC Supervisor and staff
Pietà Local Council

Father Joe Meli - Chaplain, Armed Forces of Malta
Lieutenant Colonel David Aquilina, Armed Forces of Malta
Sergeant Mamo - Armed Forces of Malta

Captain Jonathan Borg and all members of the Armed Forces of Malta Band
Malta Police Force

TS St Paul Sea & Royal Marine Cadets Corps (SCC Malta)
St Aloysius College Scout Association
Mrs Jeanette Camilleri-Dawes

Ms Diana Sillato - University of Newcastle, NSW
Coro Bel Canto Choir

St. John's Ambulance & Rescue Malta
Dr Philip Hadcroft

Standard Bearers

Mr Liam Barlow

Mr John Falzon

Mr Arist Cordina

Mr Terry Hughes

Mr Stephen McCarthy

Mr Louis Bonnici

George Cross Island Association (Malta G.C. Branch)

Royal British Legion (Malta G.C. Branch)

Royal Naval Association (Malta G.C. Branch)

Royal Marines Association (Malta G.C. Branch)

Royal Air Forces Association (Malta G.C. Branch)

Merchant Navy



Sources

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Imperial War Museum: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/>

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An Anzac Day Ceremony at Valletta. Lord Methuen, the Governor of Malta 1915 - 1919, is marked by a cross in the left foreground and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Malta is in the background marked with a cross.



The Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS)

The Australian Army formed the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) in July 1903, as part of the Australian Army Medical Corps.

Records show that 2,861 women in the AANS served overseas during World War I. Of those women, 25 died during their service. The nurses worked in many countries, including Malta, Belgium, Egypt, England, France, Greece and India. Australian nurses also trained to work in veterans' hospitals back home in Australia. Many returned soldiers needed health care after the war.

In late 1914, 25 AANS nurses sailed with the first convoy of the AIF in seven ships:

- HMAT *Argyllshire* from Sydney
- HMAT *Ascanius* from Adelaide and Fremantle
- HMAT *Benalla* from Melbourne
- HMAT *Euripides* from Sydney
- HMAT *Geelong* from Hobart
- HMAT *Omrah* from Brisbane
- HMAT *Shropshire* from Melbourne

The sea voyage formed part of the training for the ambulance, medical and nursing

personnel. Some ships in the convoy had well-equipped hospitals. The nurses in charge lectured and trained ambulance staff and regimental medical detachments.

The first landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 conjures up images of Australian soldiers charging bravely up the steep and barren slopes from Anzac Cove. Another image from that day is an Australian nurse attending to hundreds of wounded men on a hospital ship.

Barges and boats ferried the wounded soldiers to the HMHS *Gascon*, anchored off Anzac Cove. By the night of 25 April, 557 wounded soldiers were on board.

Sister Ella Tucker was among the nurses, doctors and orderlies who attended to the soldiers on board:

'The wounded from the landing commenced to come on board at 9 am and poured into the ship's wards from barges and boats. The majority still had on their field dressing and a number of these were soaked through. Two orderlies cut off the patient's clothes and I started immediately with dressings. There were 76 patients in my ward and I did not finish until 2 am.'

Ella Tucker stayed with HMHS *Gascon* for the next 9 months. *Gascon* transported over 8000 sick and wounded soldiers between Gallipoli and military hospitals at Alexandria, Imbros, Lemnos, Malta, Salonika and England.

Ella Tucker, in Bassett, *'Guns and Brooches'*, p.44

On the hospital ships off Gallipoli, Australian nurses came face to face with the reality of the wounded. They confronted the limitations of their nursing skills and the notion of 'the glory of war'.

To discover more about the important role of the AANS, go to:

<https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/wars-and-missions/ww1/military-organisation/australian-imperial-force/australian-army-nursing-service>



Doris Ethel Sexton Dora
Died: 2 May 1970, Macleod, Victoria
Occupation: Nurse
World War I 1914-1918
Military event: Gallipoli Campaign 1915, Serbian Campaign
1914-1915

Dora Ethel Sexton, from Toowoomba in south-east Queensland, was born on 7 November 1885. She trained as a nurse and was working at Toowoomba General Hospital when World War I began.

Sexton tried to enlist in the Australian Army Nursing Service but was rejected. She remained in Australia until March 1915 when she went to Alexandria in Egypt.

Sometime in 1915, Sexton joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve (QAIMNSR). She nursed at the 15th General Hospital in Alexandria and on hospital ships sailing to and from Gallipoli. Sexton was working off-shore during the Suvla Bay landings of August 1915 in the Gallipoli Campaign.

After voyages carrying patients to Malta and England, Sexton's service next took her to Salonika.

Sexton was also full of praise for the aides who worked alongside medical personnel:

'I had the same girls with me on Malta who went to Salonika with me and I cannot speak too highly of them. Imagine a sister with four or five tents under her control, the staff sister with about 200 men to look after. Why, the one ... aide can do a hundred and one things, and help in a thousand ways. I loved my girls and I can't understand how anyone can under-rate their services.'

DVA (Department of Veterans' Affairs) (2022), Doris Ethel Sexton, DVA Anzac Portal, accessed 21 February 2025, <https://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/stories/biographies/doris-ethel-sexton>



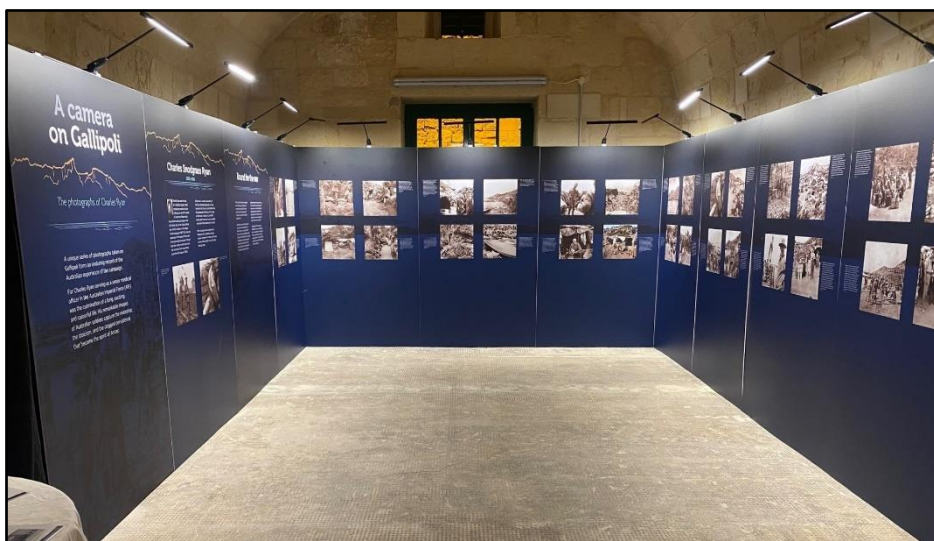
Anzac Cove looking towards Ari Burnu (bee's nose) about June 1915. With stores stacked high and new piers built to unload gear from boats, the beach, which had been the scene of the historic landing in April, was still within range of Turkish artillery.

AWM P02649.008



A camera
on Gallipoli

This photograph is taken from the 'A Camera on Gallipoli' exhibition from the Australian War Memorial which was displayed for a month-long period by the Australian High Commission at Fort St. Elmo during Heritage Malta's 2024 Remembrance Day open day, and as part of the official ministerial launch of Malta Tourism Authority's strategy to promote military tourism in Malta.



To discover more opportunities to view the 'A Camera on Gallipoli' exhibition, please follow the Australian High Commission in Malta's social media pages for updates.





Australian High Commission

Malta

Please note that photographs and footage will be taken throughout Anzac Day Service. These may be used by the Australian High Commission in our publications, on our website and in social media. Please contact a staff member of the Australian High Commission if you have any concerns. Recordings, photographs and videos taken by the Australian High Commission follow the guidelines on Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's guidelines on ethical photography.

