

6. Hospitals and Convalescent Homes

From the earliest days of the Gallipoli campaign, the arrival of many thousands of wounded troops in Egypt created an enormous need for hospital beds and convalescent facilities. The expectation was that the Dardanelles campaign would be over in a few weeks with minimal casualties. The Allied Generals severely underestimated the Turkish military capability and their resolve to defend their country. After the initial landing at Gallipoli, medical resources were strained to breaking point and many new facilities were quickly established in Egypt, Lemnos Island and Malta.

The principal Australian Hospitals were:

Australian General Hospital No: 1 at the Palace Hotel, Heliopolis.

Australian General Hospital No: 2 at Mena House and the Ghezireh Palace Hotel.

Australian General Hospital No: 3 at Lemnos Island.

Australian Stationary Hospital No: 1 at Maadi Camp, Cairo.

Australian Stationary Hospital No: 2 at Mena Camp and Lemnos Island.

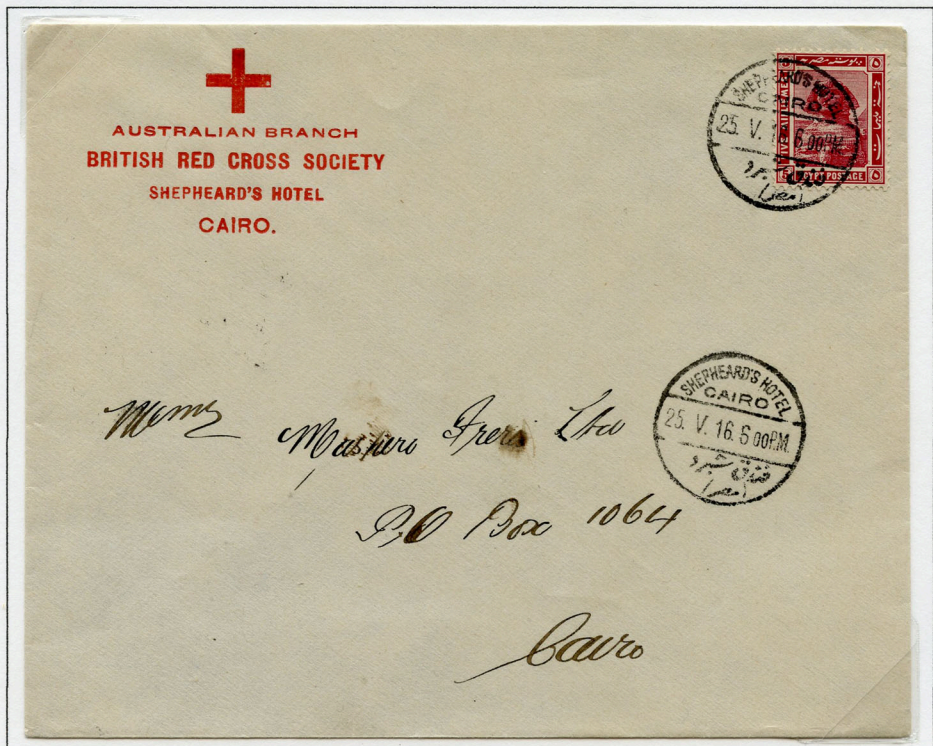
Australian Auxiliary Hospital No: 1 at Luna Park.

Australian Auxiliary Hospital No: 2 at Atelier and Suez.

Australian Auxiliary Hospital No: 3 at the Sporting Club, Cairo.

Australian Auxiliary Hospital No: 4 at the Egyptian Army Barracks, Abbassia.

The Australian Red Cross



A privately printed envelope for the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society with an Egyptian 5 mils stamp cancelled by the "SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL/ CAIRO" datestamp of the 25th of May 1916 and addressed within Cairo.

Hospitals and Convalescent Homes

Egypt

The Australian General Hospital No. 1

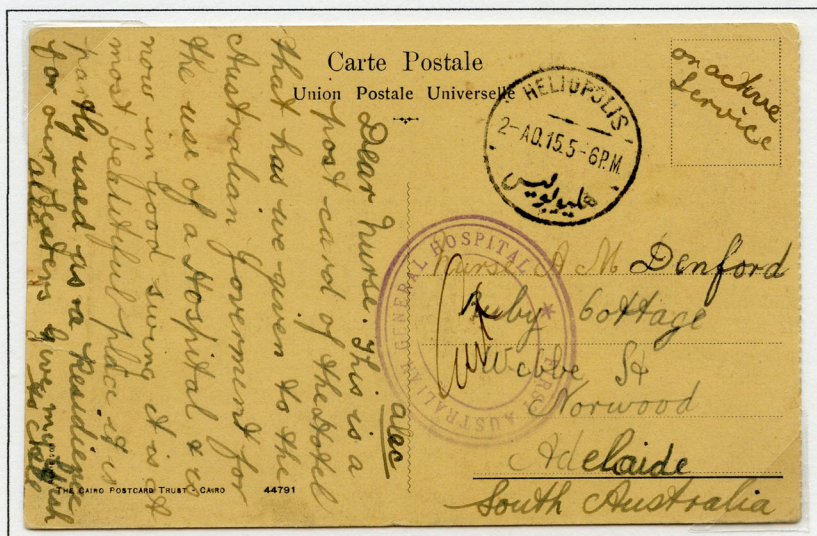
The staff of the No.1 Australian General Hospital sailed for Egypt on the A55 "Kyarra" on the Second Convoy. The hospital was established at the Palace Hotel, Heliopolis on the 25th of January 1915 and by May it had over 1,000 beds. A number of additional hospitals and convalescent units were incorporated within this hospital division, including Luna Park.

A picture postcard of the Palace Hotel, which was the location of the 1st Australian General Hospital.



Hospital cachet Type CA 41

Recorded usage: 22nd July - 5th August 1915



A picture postcard with a Heliopolis datestamp of the 2nd of August 1915, with the oval "FIRST AUSTRALIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL" cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CA 41), and initialled for censorship.

Hospitals and Convalescent Homes

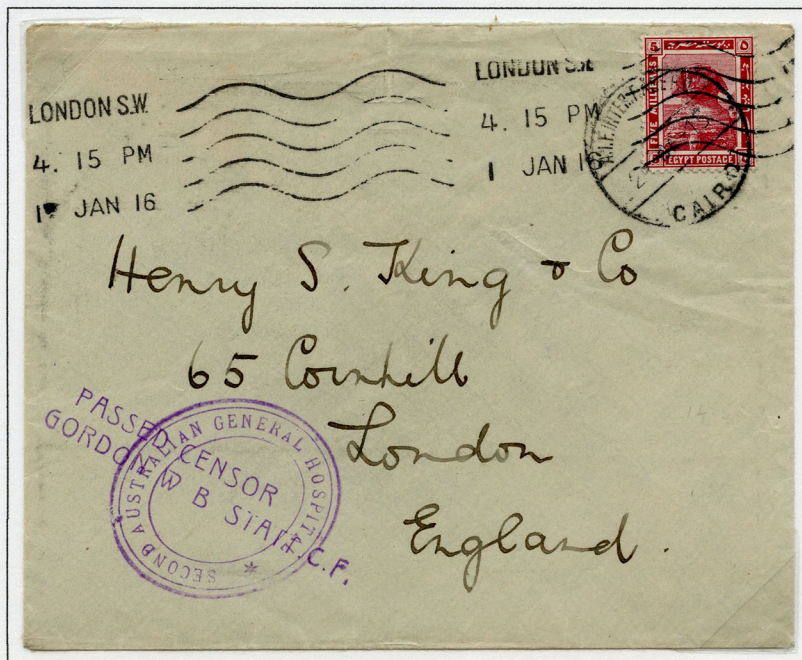
Egypt

The Australian General Hospital No. 2

The staff of the No. 2 Australian General Hospital sailed for Egypt on the A55 "Kyarra" on the Second Convoy. It was established at Mena House in January 1915, and took over the Ghezireh Palace Hotel on the 15th of May, with 600 beds to accommodate the amount of wounded soldiers from Gallipoli. It was closed in March 1916 and the No. 2 Australian General Hospital sailed for France later that month.

Hospital cachet Type CA 43

Recorded usage: 2nd December 1915 - 8th February 1916



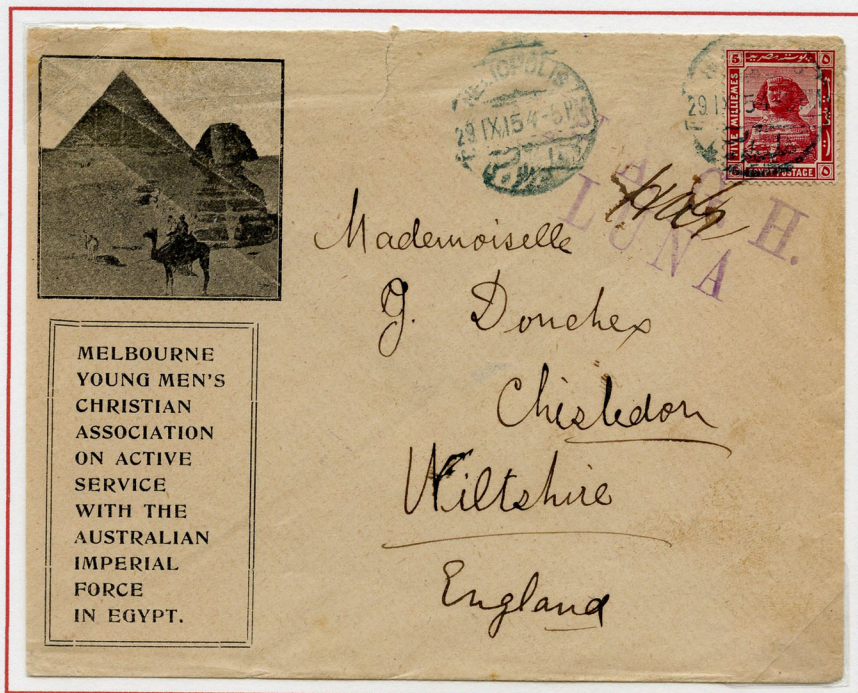
An envelope from Egypt cancelled by the AIF Interbase datestamp of the 2nd of December 1915 and addressed to England, with the oval "SECOND AUSTRALIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL" cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CA 43).

There is an additional unframed "PASSED, CENSOR/ GORDON W B STAFF . C.F." cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CA 95).

Ex Emery

This envelope represents the earliest recorded date of use for both of these handstamps

A rare privately printed YMCA envelope



A privately printed YMCA envelope with a Heliopolis cds dated the 29th of September 1915 and addressed to England with the unframed "1st A.G.H./LUNA" cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CA 42).

On the reverse is the circular "FIRST. AUSTRALIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL/ LUNA PARK/ AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE" cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CA 42A) which is illustrated at right.

This envelope represents the latest recorded use of both these cachets.



Hospitals and Convalescent Homes - ANZAC

Egypt

Australian and New Zealand soldiers often shared their hospital facilities, and five cachets are known to record this alliance.

Hospital cachet Type CA 56A

Recorded usage: 21st June - 9th August 1915



An envelope with the Hilwan cds dated the 2nd of July 1915 and addressed to England. It is handstamped with the oval "AUSTRALIAN & NEW ZEALAND/E.B. Norton/Capt./CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL" cachet in purple (Firebrace Type 56A) allocated to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Hilwan.



Hospital cachet Type CA 56

Recorded usage: 8th August - 25th December 1915

A Red Cross envelope cancelled by the Hilwan cds dated the 22nd of October 1915 and addressed to Western Australia, with the oval "AUSTRALIAN & NEW ZEALAND/E.B. Norton/Major/CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL" cachet in purple (Firebrace Type 56), allocated to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Hilwan.

Australian Soldiers Recuperating in British Hospitals and Convalescent Homes Egypt

During the Gallipoli campaign, the Australian hospitals in Egypt were at breaking point, with many wounded Australian soldiers sent to British and Indian hospitals for recovery.

British No. 17 General Hospital - Alexandria

An envelope written by an Australian soldier in a British hospital in Alexandria, Egypt dated the 31st of May 1915 and addressed to Victoria. The enclosed letter is headed "No. 17 Gen Hospital/ Alexandria", a hospital administered by the British.



The wounded soldier writes in a very understating manner:

"Haven't had a chance to write during last two months but am now on a short holiday. We have had a pleasant (but rough) time. Our lads have done well and we are now giving the Turks limerick. War is no picnic, especially when you are in a shower of lead. But the escapes are remarkable. Bullets in the centre of a pocket book or Testament are very common. Many bullets have gone through clothes only and have even lodged in a pocket. One fellow was having a drink when a bullet lodged in his pannikin* and loosened a tooth. P.S. Am only slightly bit".

* A pannikin is a small metal cup.

Hospitals and Convalescent Homes

Malta

The number of casualties from the Dardanelles forced the Allied commanders to look for other hospital locations in the Mediterranean. Lemnos Island was too small and had no facilities, and many of the large hotels in Cairo and Alexandria had already been requisitioned for hospital beds by May 1915.

The island of Malta was considered the ideal location for hospitals for the wounded. No Australian hospital cachets exist on mail sent from Malta. However, the items are easily identifiable by the "On Active Service" endorsements and the contents written on the cards and envelopes.

A postcard endorsed "On Active Service" from Valletta, Malta and addressed to New South Wales.

The wounded soldier writes that he will send the next postcards from England.

When soldiers were severely wounded, they were sent to England which had better hospitals to facilitate recovery.



This card was written by Private James Laing of the 7th Infantry Battalion who served throughout the war and returned to Australia on the 18th of December 1918.

A rare colour chromolithographic patriotic postcard of the St John Ambulance Association headed "All Saints Convalescent Camp/ Malta 30.7.15". It was posted from Valletta on the 31st of July 1915, and addressed to Victoria.

Hospitals and Convalescent Homes

Captain Ronald Smith correspondence

On this and the following page are registered envelopes written by Captain Ronald Smith of the 26th Infantry Battalion to his wife in Forth, Tasmania. He arrived at ANZAC Cove in mid September 1915 and after setting explosions in three Turkish tunnels, he was evacuated on the 2nd of December on the Hospital Ship "Karapara" to the Military Hospital at Valetta, Malta. In early January 1916, he was transferred to the British Convalescent Hospital in Palermo, Sicily. Captain Smith was invalidated and could not return to duty. He returned to Australia on the 3rd of July 1917.

Registered mail - Malta

A registered envelope dated the 19th of December 1915 at lower left and endorsed at top "On Active/ Service/ with A.I.F. from R. E. Smith/ Capt" cancelled by a circular cross cancel at Malta.



Registered mail - Italy

A registered envelope endorsed "On Active Service with A.I.F. From Capt. R. E. Smith" with Italian stamps cancelled by the Palermo cds dated the 14th of February 1916 and addressed to Tasmania.

Prior to the discovery of the Captain Smith correspondence to Tasmania, no examples of convalescent mail from the Australian soldiers in Italy was known. Less than ten envelopes from Sicily are recorded from this holding.



Hospital Ships

His Majesty's Hospital Ship "Gascon"

Wounded Australian soldiers transported from Gallipoli on British hospital ships

Evacuation of wounded Australia soldiers from Gallipoli was primarily performed by British hospital ships transporting the soldiers to Egypt or Malta. Given that these were the most seriously injured troops and would be unable to write, Australian mail sent from these hospital ships is very scarce.



The "Gascon" was a vessel from the Union Castle Line and was converted to a hospital ship as soon as she was launched. Her duty during the campaign was to transport the wounded soldiers from Gallipoli to Alexandria in Egypt.



A postcard headed "Hospital Ship Gascon" dated the 28th of August 1915 and addressed to New South Wales. The soldier writes "I got shot through three fingers left hand so am going to have a little holiday in Egypt I expect".

Australian mail written by soldiers evacuated on British hospital ships is very scarce

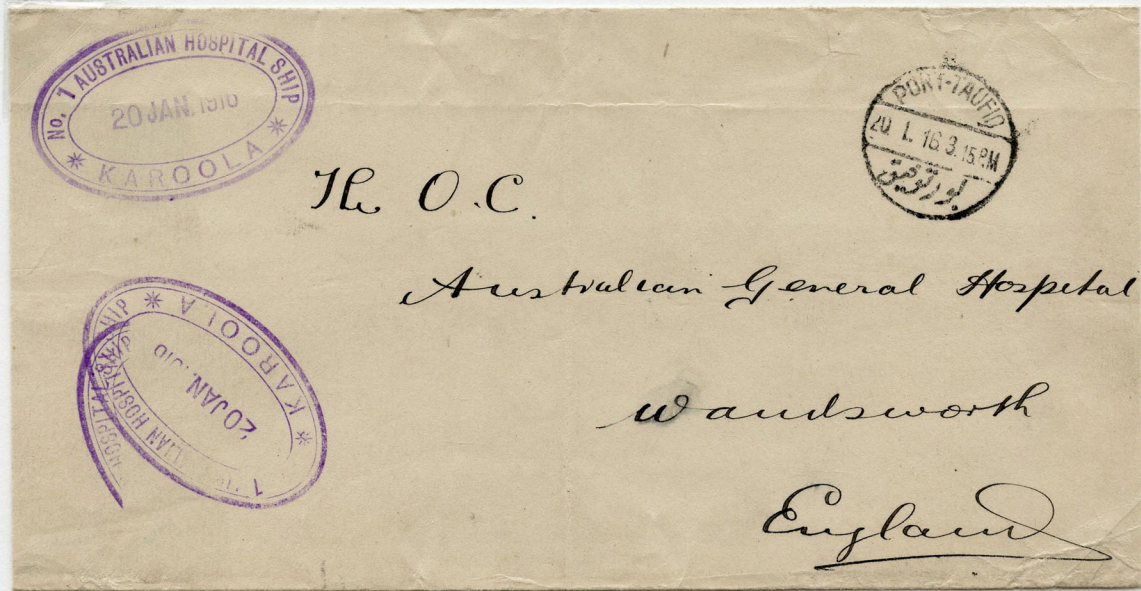
Hospital Ships

No. 1 Australian Hospital Ship "Karooola"

On the 9th of May 1915, the TSS "Karooola" was requisitioned as troop transport ship A63 and sailed for Egypt on the 25th of June. It was refitted in Southampton as a hospital ship on the 11th of August and sailed in September for Alexandria with a full nursing staff and crew. From October 1915, it carried patients between Australia, Egypt and England for the next three years before being returned to it's owners in June 1919.

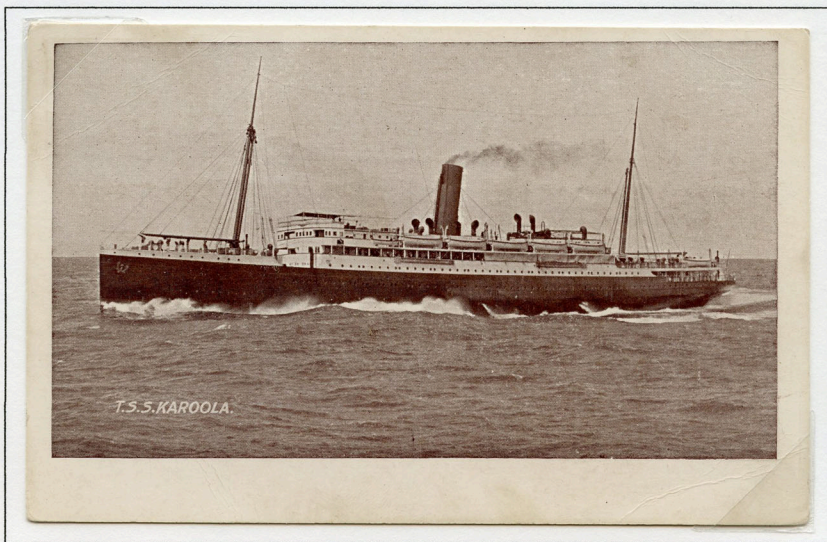
Hospital Ship cachet Type CA 63

Recorded usage: 15th November 1915 - 20th January 1916



An envelope addressed to England with the double ringed oval "No. 1 AUSTRALIAN HOSPITAL SHIP/ KAROOLA" datestamp of the 20th of January 1916 (Firebrace Type CA 63. This rubber datestamp is very scarce with less than ten examples recorded.

Ex Emery, Firebrace



A picture postcard of the "T.S.S. "Karooola" before being converted to a hospital ship.

Hospital Ships

No. 2 Australian Hospital Ship "Kanowna"

The "Kanowna" was requisitioned as troopship number A61 on the 1st of June 1915 to carry troops to England. On the 26th of August it was refitted in London as a hospital ship with 88 nursing staff and 114 crew. In September 1915 the HMAHS "Kanowna" sailed for Alexandria with 70 wounded, and collected additional patients in Malta. For the next three years it sailed regularly between Australia, Egypt and England before being returned to its owners in July 1920.

Hospital Ship cachet Type CA 65

Recorded usage: 27th January - 8th May 1916



An envelope addressed to Ireland with an Inter Base datestamp of the 27th of January 1916 and the unframed "H.M.A.H.S. Kanowna" cachet in violet (Firebrace Type CA 65).

Ex Emery, Firebrace

Less than five examples of this cachet are recorded

A picture postcard of the H.M.A.H.S. "Kanowna"

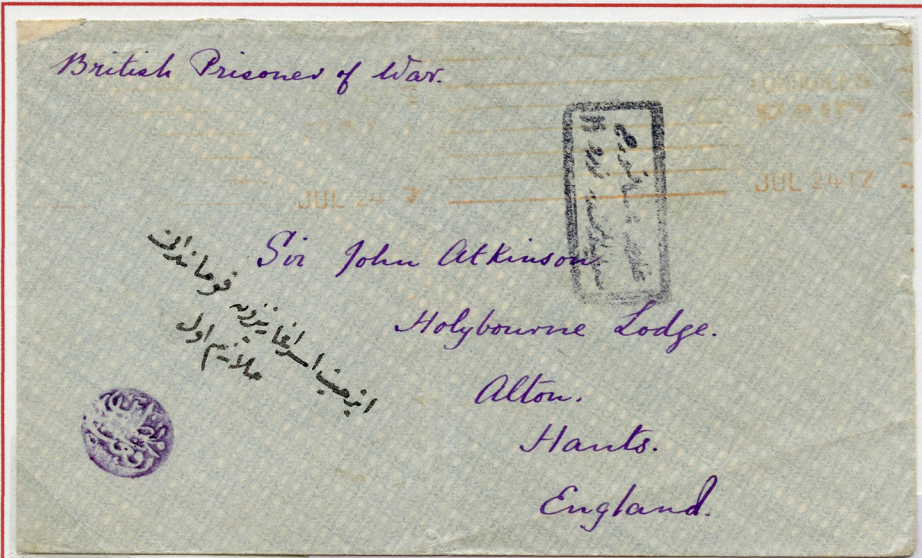


7. Prisoners of War

Mail from Australian prisoners of war in Turkey

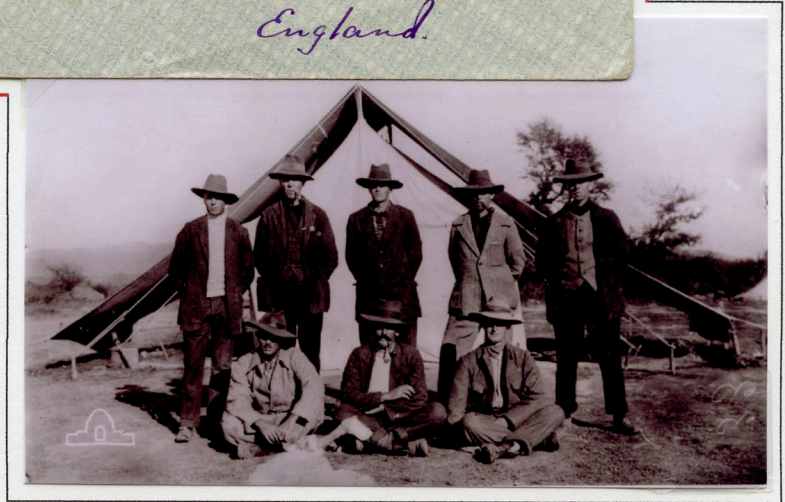
Private Reginald Lushington

Mail from the 69 Australian soldiers taken as prisoners of war in Turkey is quite rare. Besides the six envelopes from the Private Drake correspondence, envelopes from only two other soldiers are known.



A group of eight Australian soldiers captured by the Turks on the Gallipoli peninsula at the San Stefano prisoner of war camp.

Standing in the middle is Private Lushington of the 16th Infantry Battalion.



An envelope endorsed "British Prisoner of War", and handstamped with Turkish censor cachets on the front and addressed to England. On the reverse is written "Pte. R. Lushington/16th Batt. A.I.F./Ismidt/Constantinople".

The first prisoners of war taken at Gallipoli

Private Reginald Lushington was part of the 16th Infantry Battalion who landed at ANZAC at 6:00 pm on the evening of the 25th of April. The 16th Battalion moved up Monash Valley to support the 3rd Infantry Brigade who had suffered heavy losses on the first day. They met with the remnants of the soldiers from the 11th Battalion whose officers had been killed, however, they stated that the Indian troops were still fighting on their left flank. Captain William Elston, Captain Ronald McDonald, and Private Reginald Lushington, who spoke Tamil and Pathan, were ordered to link up with the Indian soldiers. In the confusion of the darkness, contact was not made with any Indian troops, but with Ottoman soldiers who immediately took the small group prisoner.

Gallipoli

Prisoners of War

Mail from Australian prisoners of war in Turkey

Chief Petty Officer Cecil Bray

Two submarines, the AE1 and AE2 were built for the Australian Navy in England before being commissioned and arriving in Australia in mid 1914. The AE2 was despatched with the Second Convoy for the Gallipoli campaign.

At 2:30 am on the 25th of April 1915, the AE2 entered the Dardanelles on the surface. Avoiding the spotlights, it was forced to dive through the heavily mined strait, evading destruction by a matter of chance. It torpedoed the Ottoman gunboat "Peyk-i-Sevket" and for the next four days attacked enemy ships without success.

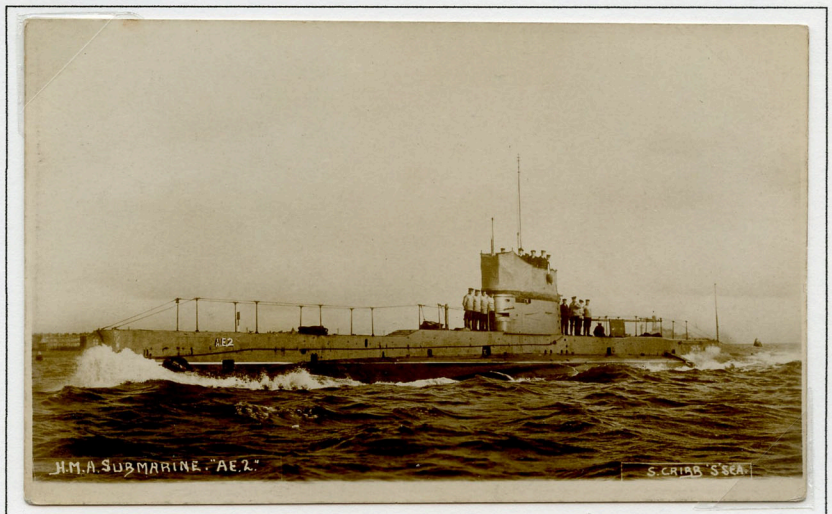
Finally, confronted by the Turkish torpedo boat "Sultanhisar", the AE2 was abandoned due to mechanical problems and fatally damaged in the ensuing gunfire, but not before she was scuttled and the crew of 37 (23 from Great Britain and 14 Australians) were taken prisoner.

The only prisoner of war envelope recorded from an Australian submariner on the AE 2



An undated envelope addressed to Mrs. C. Bray, the wife of Petty Officer Cecil Arthur Bray with both Turkish (one on the reverse) and Swiss censor cachets.

A real life postcard of the Australian Navy submarine AE2.



Gallipoli

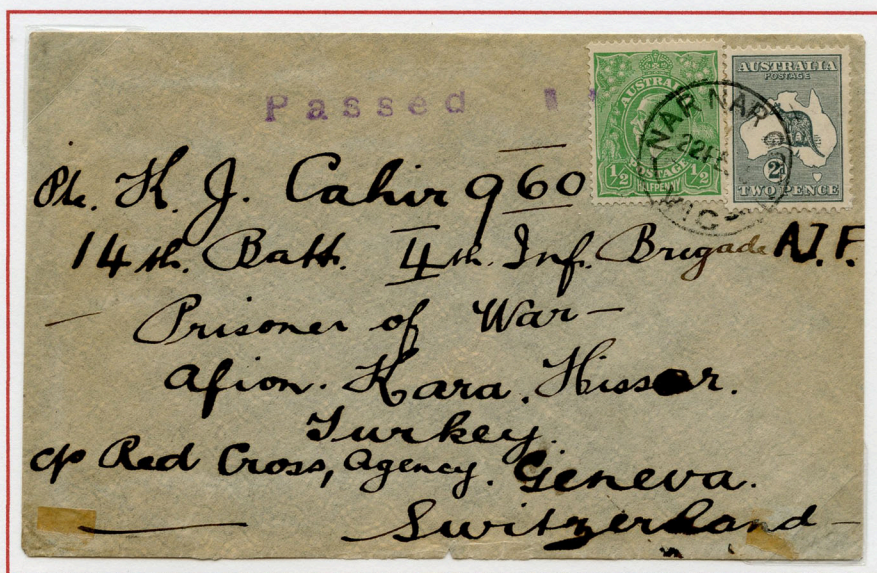
Mail addressed to Australian prisoners of war in Turkey

Prisoners of War

Private Keith Cahir

An envelope from Nar Nar Goon, Victoria dated the 22nd of February 1916 and addressed to Private Keith Cahir of the 14th Infantry Battalion. On the 7th of August 1915, the 14th Battalion attacked Hill 971 as part of the renewed Allied offensive.

Private Cahir was listed as missing, believed killed on the 8th of August. However, he had been captured by the Turks and spent the duration of the war in various prisoner of war camps. He was repatriated to Cairo on the 25th of December 1918 and returned to Australia a couple of months later. This envelope was probably written by his sister Stella, who lived at Nar Nar Goon.



The envelope is addressed to Afion Kara Hisar which was the principal prisoner of war camp of the Australian soldiers in Turkey. It was situated at the junction of Constantinople, Baghdad and the Smyrna (Izmir) railway, at an altitude of 3000 feet, and 200 miles from the sea.

It was a secure and comparatively healthy spot, the summer being pleasantly cool, however, the winters were very severe. One of the prisoners, Able Seaman Albert Knaggs of the Australian Submarine AE2 which was sunk in the Dardanelles wrote of the camp in his diary *"It's impossible to sleep at night with the cold and the wind.packed 32 in a room which would accommodate 16 healthily."*

Ex Emery

Only two envelopes have been recorded addressed to Australian Prisoners of War from Gallipoli

Gallipoli

Australian soldiers killed in action but initially listed as prisoners of war

Prisoners of War

Private Frederic Cuttriss

The action at Lone Pine on the 22nd of August 1915

Private Frederic Cuttriss of the 18th Infantry Battalion was involved in the defence of the Line 2 trench at Lone Pine on the 22nd of August. Fellow soldiers from the battalion recall him being wounded and left overnight. He was listed as missing, presumed taken prisoner by the Turks.

Further enquiries by the Red Cross after the evacuation of Gallipoli

After the evacuation to Egypt, the Red Cross began making further enquiries. They interviewed Corporal Rose who stated that they brought Private Cuttriss in after lying out all night, and that he never regained consciousness, before dying of wounds. This was supported by Corporal Satchel and Private Ross of the 18th Battalion, when they had embarked for France in May 1916.



An envelope addressed to Private Frederick Cuttriss as a prisoner of war at Constantinople, processed through London with the large circular POW cachet. This letter was written on the 26th of November 1915 at Port Macquarie, the birth place of Private Cuttriss, when he had been listed as missing. Although it was known that he had died of wounds in May 1916, he wasn't officially listed as killed in action until after the war in 1919.

Only three envelopes have been recorded addressed to Australian soldiers who were killed in action at Gallipoli but initially listed as prisoners of war.

Turkish Prisoners of War

Defence of the Suez Canal

To protect their interests in Egypt along the Suez Canal, by early January 1915 the British had assembled some 35,000 troops to man the defences along the canal. The First Suez Offensive began on the 3rd of February when two Ottoman Divisions attacked, and were routed in two days. Thereafter, sporadic attacks were made intending to keep the British Army focused on the defence of the canal and away from other theatres of war, including Gallipoli.

Turkish prisoners of war taken in the defence of the Suez Canal

February 1915

This real photo postcard is dated the 4th of April 1915 and sent under cover to Victoria.

The message reads
"Turkish prisoners taken on the Suez Canal after disembarking at Cairo being marched through the streets to Kasr-el-Nil Barracks."

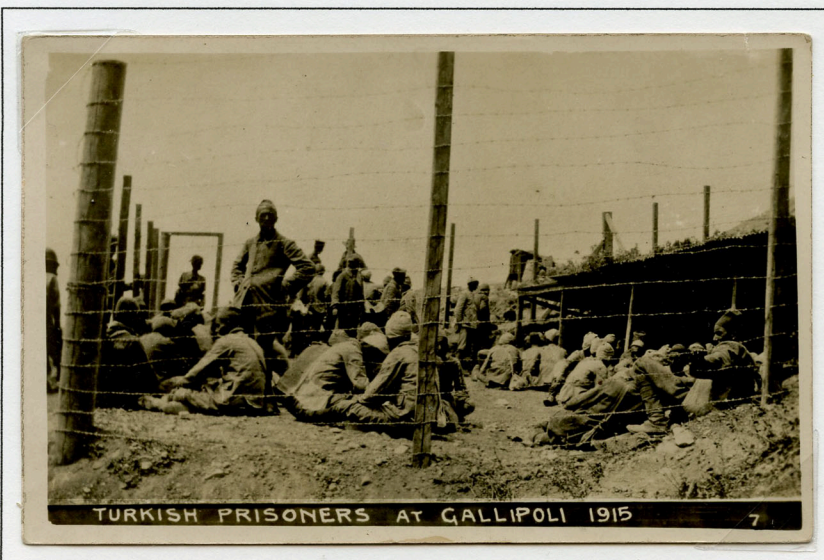
These prisoners were taken during the First Suez Offensive on the 2nd of February 1915.



Turkish prisoners of war at Gallipoli

April - December 1915

It is difficult to quantify the number of Turks captured at Gallipoli. Tim Travers, in his book "Gallipoli" states that between April and July 1915 the ANZAC's captured 117 prisoners, the British at Cape Helles 985, and the French 238.



A real photo postcard titled "Turkish Prisoners at Gallipoli 1915". This is a rare photograph of Ottoman troops corralled near the beach before being transported to Egypt for incarceration.

8. The Legacy of the Gallipoli Campaign

The 25th of April 1915 is enshrined in Australian history as ANZAC Day, and the birth of a nation. However, the first official ANZAC public holiday did not take place until the 1920's when one Australian state after another gazetted it as a day of remembrance.

Yet, its history begins on the first anniversary of the landing, when services were held on the 25th of April 1916 by Australian and New Zealand troops in France, Egypt and England. Over 2000 ANZAC veterans marched along Whitehall to Westminster Abbey in London for a commemorative service. They were joined by King George V and Queen Mary, Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes, Lord Kitchener, and Generals Birdwood and Hamilton.

When the war ended on the 11th of November 1918, there were mass celebrations throughout the Allied countries. Most of the troops were sent home as soon as was practicable, however, many were required to continue their service in England, to assist with the repatriation of troops and convalescence of the wounded soldiers.



A real life postcard of an ANZAC Day march in Brisbane, Queensland in 1916. The soldiers are wearing the slouch hat and emu plume of a Light Horse Regiment. This is a very early photograph of the first ANZAC Day, four months after the evacuation of Gallipoli, with current archives not recording this event in Australia until 1917.

1920 to the Second World War

With the return of the Australian Imperial Force from all theatres of war in 1918 and 1919, there were many celebrations around the country from the large cities to the small country towns welcoming back the returned soldiers.

In the 1920's ANZAC Day had become enshrined as the predominant national holiday. The public consciousness stated that Australia had come of age when their sons had been blooded at ANZAC Cove. The Gallipoli story provided a distinctive image and character for the Australian identity.

During the 1920's hundreds of towns and cities throughout the country built memorials for those soldiers who had lost their lives in the first war. These memorials were the heart of ANZAC Day marches and celebrations up to the Second World War where returned soldiers, friends and relatives would mourn the soldiers who did not return.

In addition, during this period, the Australian government sponsored the acquisition and building of Returned Service Leagues (RSL) Clubs around the country providing a place for formal and informal gatherings for soldiers who had returned from the First World War.

The Legacy of the Gallipoli Campaign



A World War One memorial built at the New South Wales town of Narrandera, characteristic of the hundreds erected in the towns and cities across Australia in the 1920's.

Post 1990

Since 1990, regular attendances for the ANZAC Day service at Gallipoli frequently top ten thousand, and have been as high as fifteen thousand people. There has been a dramatic increase of organised tour groups of older Australians, backpackers, and senior politicians, all embracing the ANZAC tradition.

Unexpectedly, the Turkish people and their government have contributed to the resurgence. Gallipoli was seen as the first struggle in the conflict that led to its own revolution, relating to their emergence as a new republic under their Gallipoli General, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. By the end of the decade, increasing numbers of Turks were attending the 25th of April commemorations and visiting the battlefields cemeteries.

Today, the legacy of ANZAC is at the forefront with all Australians. The 25th of April is commemorated nationally in the remembrance of soldiers who fought across all theatres of war, recognising their contribution to the safety of their country and the memory of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. From the Dawn Service at Gallipoli, to the ANZAC Day marches in the major cities, to the services in the small country towns where the small memorials were erected in memory of the fallen: "Lest we forget".

By the Second World War, the name ANZAC was cemented into the national folk lore and was used as an enlistment slogan to attract Australian men to fight for their country in WW2.

1950 to the 1980's

This was the period of the demise of the ANZAC legacy. The commemoration of ANZAC Day seemed suddenly to have less relevance, except to the ageing veterans themselves. A nation was rebuilding, and the politics of the 1960's were depressing popular interest in military adventures of the past. Australia's controversial participation in the Vietnam War further devalued the place of ANZAC Day, with the peace movement questioning the ethics of military conflict. When Australian troops pulled out of Vietnam in 1972, there was no welcome home parades and no public demonstrations of appreciation. By 1980, ANZAC Day had almost become irrelevant.

75th Anniversary in 1990

The 75th anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign was in 1990, and the Australian nation, led by the government and the media embarked on a memorial for the Gallipoli veterans, who numbered just over one hundred. Fifty-eight original ANZAC's were deemed fit enough to make the journey, and made the pilgrimage for the Dawn Service at ANZAC Cove. The Australian Government spent \$10 million on the project. Media coverage was massive with five hours of live television coverage fed back to Australia. The Prime Minister Bob Hawke, New Zealand's Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer and at least ten thousand people celebrated the event.