

# GREEK-AUSTRALIAN ALLIANCE

1899 - 2016

100th Anniversary Macedonian Front

75th Anniversary Battles of Greece and Crete



COURAGE SACRIFICE MATESHIP

PHILOTIMO





1899 -1902 – Greek Australians Frank Manusu (above), Constantine Alexander, Thomas Haraknoss, Elias Lukas and George Challis served with the colonial forces in the South African Boer War.

1912 - 1913 – Australian volunteers served in the Royal Hellenic Forces in the Balkans Wars. At the outbreak of the Second Balkan War in 1913, John Thomas Woods of the St John Ambulance volunteered for service with the Red Cross, assisting the Greek Medical Corps at Thessaloniki, a service for which he was recognised with a Greek medal by King Constantine of Greece.

1914 - 1918 – Approximately 90 Greek Australians served on Gallipoli and the Western Front. Some were born in Athens, Crete, Castellorizo, Kythera, Ithaca, Peloponnesus, Samos, and Cephalonia, Lefkada and Cyprus and others in Australia. They were joined by Greek Australian nurses, including Cleopatra Johnson (Ioanou), daughter of Antoni Ioanou, gold miner of Moonan Brook, NSW.



One of 13 Greek Australian Gallipoli veterans, George Cretan (Bikouvarakis) was born in Kefalas, Crete in 1888 and migrated to Sydney in 1912. On the left in Crete, 1910 and middle in Sydney 1918 wearing his Gallipoli Campaign medals. Right, Greek Australian Western Front veteran Joseph Morris (Sifis Voyiatzis) of Cretan heritage.

**1905-1923** -Sir Samuel Sydney Cohen was born on 11 March 1869 at Darlinghurst, Sydney, and was the eldest son of Jewish Australian parents George Judah Cohen and his wife Rebecca, daughter of L. W. Levy. He was a prominent and respected businessman in Newcastle and was appointed Vice-Consul General for Greece in Newcastle in March 1905. After ten years of service the Honorary Consul General of Sydney Mr James Love passed away. In 1915 Sir Samuel Sydney was appointed as Acting – Consul General. The majority of the Greek community supported his appointment however a small minority made application for his replacement on several occasions. He was reconfirmed by Royal Decree from Greece on the recommendation from the Venizelos Government. During his term he carried out his duties energetically and financially aided Greek national causes. He advocated Greece's interests and remained Greece's Consul general until his retirement in April 1923. Knighted for his services to commerce and the community he served as a director of many companies and the Great Synagogue. He declined several requests to stand for parliament. Sir Samuel died in St Luke's Hospital on 27 August 1948 and was buried in the Jewish section of Rookwood cemetery.

He was survived by his daughter, Mrs. Keith P. Moss, and his two sons, Major George J. Cullen, M.B.E., and Lieut.-Colonel Paul A. Cullen, D.S.O. who served with distinction in World War II. Of these Lieut.-Colonel Paul A. Cullen ironically served in the Battles of Greece and Crete.



*Major General Paul Cullen AC CBE DSO and BAAR ED (Red) (1909– 2007), on the right Anzac day 2004 (courtesy SMH) wearing the Greek Campaign Medal on the right. Right circa 1954 (AWM P02475.004)*

Paul Cullen was born Paul Alfred Cohen in 1909 in Newcastle and educated in Sydney becoming an accountant. He volunteered for service in 1939 and was attached to the 2/1st Battalion from 25 September to 17 October 1940. He fought in North Africa and was promoted Major on 15 November 1940 and was Second-in-Command by the time he arrived in Greece.



In Greece he converted much of the Battalion's cash to gold which proved valuable in obtaining rations and support from the local populace during the withdrawal to Crete. He managed to survive the Battle of Tempe after machine gun fire pierced his uniform. Having led his men over the freezing mountains, he and five of them managed to escape in a small boat and arrived in Chios just 20 miles off the coast of neutral Turkey. Rather than sailing to Turkey he decided to sail to Crete to rejoin the Anzac formation.

On Crete he led the 16 Composite Brigades and was waiting at Maleme Airfield ready to attack. Early in the morning and at the last moment he was ordered to withdraw. An analysis after the war of German diaries revealed the Germans thought that the withdrawal of the 16 Composite Brigade had helped them takeover of the airfield. Paul Cullen recalled after the war " ...I have always been mystified as why we were not used ....But there is no doubt that our 443 men of the 16 Composite Battalion could have turned the tide at Maleme on which the whole campaign hinged , for if Maleme had been held the Germans may have abandoned the invasion "

Cullen had an impulsive heroism which was perhaps best captured during the evacuation of Crete, when his unit's last boat got stuck on the sand near Hora Sfakion. Cullen jumped off and, with the help of a wave, pushed it away, leaving him at the mercy of advancing Germans. His batman hurled a rope and he was dragged onto the escaping vessel. No one came closer to capture by the Germans than Paul Cullen.

His observation in Greece of the German attitude to people of the Jewish faith led him to officially change his name from Cohen to Cullen on 25 September 1941 as a precaution in the event of being captured by the Germans. His brother and other relatives serving in the UK also changed their name to Cullen.

After Greece and Crete he served with great distinction in the Kokoda campaign where he earned a reputation as fighting commander and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) .He was awarded a Bar to his Distinguished Service Order for gallant and distinguished service in the Aitape – Wewak as CO 2/1st Battalion on 2 November 1946. In the Post war era, Cullen was appointed Commanding Officer of the 45th Battalion (The St George Regiment) on 1 April 1948. He was promoted to Brigadier on 2 July 1956 and served on the Officers Staff Group, Eastern Command, from 2 July 1958 until his appointment as Deputy Commander 1st Division on 1 July 1960. In 1961 he was promoted to Major General commanding Communications Zone. He served as the Citizen Military Force member of the Military Board.

He was appointed a Commander in the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) on 1 January 1965, and also awarded the Efficiency Decoration (ED) for efficient service as an officer in the Citizen Military Forces. In 1966 Major General Cullen transferred to the Retired List but remained an outspoken champion of the part-time soldier. Cullen was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), in 1978 and was raised to a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 1988. He was a lifetime member and long-term President of the Royal Blind Society, a member and President of Australian Jewish Welfare (now Jewish Care), and in overseas aid was deeply involved with AUSTCARE and the Australian Emergency Disaster Response Organisation and served on many boards and charities . He died in Sydney in 2007 and was given a full military funeral. He is considered by many as one of the greatest military leaders of Australia.



**1915, 4th March** – The first Anzacs landed on Lemnos Island, in Moudros Harbour and were part of the largest armada ever assembled at that time. The island served as the main base of operations for the Gallipoli Campaign, including hospitals. In the waters around Lemnos and the island's soil now rest over 220 Anzacs. The most famous Lemnian on Gallipoli was the donkey used by Simpson to rescue wounded Anzacs. Demetri Passa was also born on Lemnos and fought in France.

**1915, 24th April** – The Anzacs left on the 24th April from Mudros Harbour, Lemnos for the Gallipoli peninsula.



*Australian Matron Grace Wilson on Lemnos Island during the Gallipoli Campaign (AWM A05332 and State NSW State Library)*



**1915, August** – 300 guerrillas from the island of Crete under the Command of Pavlos Gyparis (above) attacked the Gulf of Saros on Gallipoli creating a diversion to lure the Ottomans and coincided with the Australian's 1st Brigade assault on Lone Pine. These guerrillas were noted in Charles Bean's diary.

**30th October, 1918** – The Armistice with the Ottoman Empire was signed on the HMAS Agamemnon in Moudros Harbour, Lemnos. Dual ANZAC Constantine Aroney born on the island of Kythera in 1894 served Australia in both World Wars, in Gallipoli, the Western Front and in 1941 the Battle of Crete and The Greek Campaign. Other Greek Australian families such as Manusu, Aroney, Vafiopoulos, Procopis, Gunellas, Crocos, Jannese and Casos provided more than one member to the Australian Armed Forces. The Manusu family of regional NSW (originally from Lesvos island) contributed ten members to the South African Boer War and the two World Wars, of which four were killed.

Sergeant Nicholas Rodakis MM, DSC (US), AIF who fought on the Western Front was born in Athens in 1880 and enlisted in the First AIF in February 1916. In the last year of the war he was attached to a United States army unit, and in September 1918, Rodakis' platoon was cut off behind enemy lines. As they fought to survive, Rodakis rescued an American officer in no-man's-land before capturing a German machine gun. He then defended his position for hours, before returning to the allied lines under cover of darkness, picking up wounded as he went. For his actions, Rodakis was awarded the **United States Distinguished Service Cross - the American equivalent of the Victoria Cross**. Rodakis was fortunate for he survived the war and returned to his wife in Warrnambool, Victoria in 1919.

**19th May, 1915** – Australian records reveal nearly ninety diggers in the First World War had either been born in Greece or were of Greek background. Thirteen of these sailed to Lemnos and served at Gallipoli. One of these diggers would sadly die during the campaign - Private No. 170, Anzac Peter Rados at the age of only 23. He had migrated from Asia Minor and enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces and was killed in action and buried just a few miles away from his birthplace of Artake.

**9th June, 1918** – Hector Vasyli, an eleven year old newspaper boy of Greek Cypriot descent was killed in a traffic accident during a welcome home parade in Brisbane. Vasyli did patriotic work for returned soldiers during the war, and gave gifts of cigarettes to them. He participated in many of the welcome home parades in the city. A memorial plaque was erected on the Victoria Bridge by the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League (today known as RSL), Hellenic (Greek) Association and citizens of Brisbane. It was removed when the Victoria Bridge was demolished in 1966 but restored to its original spot on the southern arch of the Victoria Bridge in 1970 and still remains to this day.



*Left, Hector Vasyli memorial plaque, Brisbane. Middle, Sergeant Nicholas Rodakis MM,DSC(US) AIF, Right Gallipoli Anzac Peter Rados commemorated on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial*



## Macedonian Front 1916-1918

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The main Australian involvement with the Macedonian Front (1916-1918) revolved around the doctors, nurses and support staff of the various hospitals around central Macedonia. Between August 1917 and February 1919, three Australian Army Nursing Service units were posted to Macedonia, each of 90 nurses and one matron. The Principal Matron was Jessie McHardie White, based in Thessaloniki. The matrons were Beryl A. Campbell, Christense Sorensen and Grace Wilson. There were also at least 87 servicemen with British and Irish units, as well as a number of individual volunteers. **In all, almost 400 men and women born in Australia and New Zealand served along the Salonika Front.**



*Left, Sergeant Olive May King . Right (AWM H16005) Australian Nurses A group of Australian Army nurses about to depart from Adelaide for Salonika, 14 June 1917. From the left: Miss Molly Wilson, Mrs J. Tyers, Miss Edith Horton, Miss Marion Geddes, Miss Laura Begley, Mrs Jessie McHardie White (Principal Matron), Mrs Forsyth (wife of General Forsyth), Miss Violet Mills (Matron of No 5 Australian General Hospital who was on a visit to Adelaide), Miss Alice Prichard and Miss Florence G. Gregson.*

**1915, 5 October** - First British troops disembark at Thessaloniki. Amongst them are some transport drivers from the **Australian 22nd Battalion**.

**1915, 23 October** - At 9.15 a.m., German torpedo slammed into the **transport ship Marquette** as she entered the Gulf of Salonika. The ship sank within ten minutes, leaving hundreds of survivors in the water. By the time rescue craft arrived several hours later, 167 people had drowned, including 32 New Zealanders (ten women and 22 men).

**1915, 3 November** - **Sergeant Olive May King** arrives in Thessaloniki, part of the Scottish Women's Hospital. She served as an ambulance driver until 1 July 1916. The 7th Medical Unit of the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service, attached to the Serbian Army, was known as 'the American Unit'. It consisted of an ambulance unit and a field hospital, the main centre being located near Lake Ostrovo, (modern Lake Vergoritits), Pella Prefecture, Macedonia. Between July 1916 and late-1918, she served the Serbian Army at the medical headquarters, as well as a humanitarian relief worker.

**1915, November - Salonika (Lembet Road) Military Cemetery** (formerly known as the Anglo-French Military Cemetery) opened. Today, it has 20,637 war graves in five sections: French (8,089 burials), Serbian (7,500 burials), Italian (3,000 burials), British Commonwealth (1,648 Commonwealth, 45 Bulgarian and one Serbian war graves) and Russian (400 burials). It is the oldest of Hellas' 36 Commonwealth War Cemeteries, the final resting place of at least one Australian and one New Zealander (Sergeant Frederick Christopher Benfield NZEF who died of disease on 3 March 1916).

**1915, 6 December - Second Lieutenant Ralph Neville Cohen** (enlisted as Cullen), 6th Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers, born in Maitland, NSW, falls in a bayonet charge by the invading Bulgarian forces during the Battle of Kosturino Ridge (then Kingdom of Serbia, today FYROM). **Cohen was the first Australian-born serviceman to fall in battle in defence of Greece.**

**1916 - The Monastir Road Indian Cemetery and Memorial** opened, comprised of two plots - the southern plot contains burials, and the northern plot, in which the remains of over 200 Indian servicemen were cremated in accordance with their faith. There are now 357 Indian servicemen of World War I buried or commemorated in the cemetery. The northern plot contains a memorial with panels bearing the names of those Indians who were cremated, and the names of over 160 Indian servicemen who died in Macedonia during World War One, whose graves could not be marked or moved.

**1916, March - The Kirechkoi-Hortakoi Military Cemetery** opened. It remained a very small one until September 1917, when the 60th, 65th and 66th General Hospitals came to the neighbourhood. In June, July and September 1918, other hospitals were brought to the high and healthy country beside the Salonika-Hortakoi road and in September 1918, the influenza epidemic began which raged for three months and filled three-quarters of the cemetery. The last burial took place in January 1919, but in 1937, twelve graves were brought into the cemetery from Salonika Protestant Cemetery where their permanent maintenance could not be assured. The cemetery now contains 588 Commonwealth burials of World War One and 58 Bulgarian war graves.

**1916, 2 May - Bacteriologist Dr Elsie Dalyell** joined the Scottish Women's Hospital, Lake Ostrovo, remaining until 2-October. Born Newtown NSW, she enlisted with the Royal Army Medical Corps, serving in Thessaloniki. Early in 1919, she went to Constantinople to deal with cholera, and in June was appointed O.B.E.; she had been twice mentioned in dispatches.

**1916 July- The Lahana Military Cemetery** lies about 56 kilometres north-east of Thessaloniki. It was begun for burials from the 27th Casualty Clearing Station, to which sick and wounded men were brought from the Struma front. The cemetery was also used from June to August 1917 by the 18th Stationary Hospital. After the Armistice, 41 of the graves in Plots II and III were brought in from the two front line cemeteries at Paprat (about twelve kilometres north-west of Lahana) and from other small burial grounds. The cemetery now contains 279 Commonwealth burials of World War One. There are also sixteen Bulgarian and four Hellenic war graves.

**1916, 1 August - Dr Lilian Violet Cooper** joins the Scottish Womens' Hospital, Lake Ostrovo. **Sister Alice Mary Stirling** arrives the same day, serving as an Orderly until 1 January 1917. With them came **Josephine Bedford** (Mary Josephine Bedford), who volunteered as a Transport Officer. Dr Cooper and Bedford both departed the hospital on 1 September 1917.

**1916, 4 August - Dr Agnes Bennett** became the Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish Womens' Hospital, Lake Ostrovo, remaining until 1 September 1917. Born in Neutral Bay NSW, she was the first female commissioned officer in the British Army.





*Left, Dr Elsie Dalyell, middle Dr Agnes Bennett and right Nurse Gertrude Munro grave stone, Mikra Cemetery, Thessaloniki.*

**1916, September - Karasouli Military Cemetery** is on the edge of the town of Polykastro (formerly Karasouli), some 73 kms from Thessaloniki and was a casualty clearing station on the Doiran front.

**1916, September** - Originally called Kilo 71 Military Cemetery, the **Struma Military Cemetery** was opened for the 40th Casualty Clearing Station was established not far from the Thessaloniki-Serres road near the 71 Kilometre stone. It now contains 947 Commonwealth burials of World War One, 51 of them unidentified. There are also fifteen war graves of other nationalities.

**1916, December** - Originally known as Colonial Hill Cemetery No.2, **the Doiran Military Cemetery** opened as a cemetery for the Doiran front, the western end of the Macedonian Front. The cemetery now contains 1,338 Commonwealth burials of World War One, 449 of them unidentified. There are also 45 Hellenic and one French war graves. The nearby landmark memorial was designed by Sir Robert Lorimer with sculpture by Walter Gilbert. It was unveiled by Sir George Macdonogh on 25 September 1926. The memorial serves the dual purpose of Battle Memorial of the British Salonika Force (for which a large sum of money was subscribed by the officers and men of that force), and place of commemoration for more than 2,000 Commonwealth servicemen who died in Macedonia and whose graves are not known.

**1917, 27 February - Dr Mary Clementina De Garis** becomes Chief Medical Officer of the Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish Womens' Hospital, Lake Ostrovo, remaining until 30 September 1918. Born in Charlton, Victoria, she became only the second female doctor in the state's history in 1907.

**1917, April - The Commonwealth War Cemetery at Mikra (Kalamaria)** in Thessaloniki's south-eastern suburbs receives its first burials. Within the cemetery is the **Mikra Memorial**, commemorating almost 500 nurses, officers and men of the Commonwealth forces who died when troop transports and hospital ships were lost in the Mediterranean, and who have no grave but the sea. They are commemorated here because others who went down in the same vessels were washed ashore and identified, and are now buried at Mikra. It now contains 1,810 Commonwealth burials of World War One, as well as 147 war graves of other nationalities.

**1917, April - The Sarigol Military Cemetery** opened. Between April and June 1917, the 35th Casualty Clearing Station was at Sarigol. It was replaced by the 21st Stationary Hospital, which remained until December 1918. From these two hospitals, 150 burials were made. In February 1921, 560 graves were brought into Sarigol from Janes Military Cemetery, a few miles to the north, and serving the same front. The cemetery at Janes was on low ground, and, under the normal conditions of this region, it was found difficult to approach and almost impossible to maintain in good order. Sarigol Military Cemetery now contains 682 Commonwealth burials of World War One and 29 war graves of other nationalities.

**1917, 2 July** - Stella Maria (Marian) Sarah **MILES FRANKLIN** arrived at the Scottish Womens' Hospital, Lake Ostrovo. She remained there until 4 February 1918 when illness forced her relocation to London. In her own words:

*"These comments of a camp cook upon experiences gained as a voluntary member of the army of the British Red Cross are submitted unpretentiously for what they are worth as a document of the war. With no straining after tragedy nor attempt to picture hardships or adventures, which, comparatively, did not exist for Red Cross workers on the Salonique front from July 1917 till February 1918, perhaps they may serve to show that black though the clouds, desolate the future, there is still sunshine and laughter."*



Miles Franklin



Dr Mary Clementina De Garis

**1917, 2 July** - Miss **Jean Lindsay** arrived at the Scottish Women's Hospital, Lake Ostrovo, as an Orderly, remaining until 11 May 1919.

**1917, 11 July** - **The First Contingent of Australian Army Nursing Service** personnel, led by Principal Matron Jessie McHardy White, disembarked at Thessaloniki. By year's end, Australians comprised 20 per cent of the British nursing staff along the Front.

**1917, 18-19 August** - **Matron Jessie McHardie White** documents the Great Fire of Thessaloniki in a series of photographs, letters and diary entries. The disaster left 25,000 people homeless and hungry.

**1918, 4 April** - **The Second Contingent of Australian Army Nursing Service** personnel, led by **Matron Jessie Rose Gemmel**, disembarked at Thessaloniki.



**1918, 10 October** - Pneumonia and malaria claimed the life of **Sister Gertrude Evelyn Munro** of the 43rd General Hospital, Thessaloniki, aged 36 years. She now lies in the Mikra Cemetery.

**1922, October** - **Major George Devine Treloar** (Retired from the Coldstream Guards) commenced in Thessaloniki work as League of Nations Commissioner for Refugees. He was accompanied by his Constantinople-born British wife. Four of their five children are born in Thessaloniki by the family's departure in 1926. During his tenure, an estimated 108,000 survivors of the Genocides of the indigenous Hellenic, Armenian and Assyrian peoples of Anatolia were rescued through his efforts. This included founding at least twelve new villages around the cities of Komotene, Xanthe, Alexandroupolis and Drama, one of which now bears his name, **Thrylorio** (outside Komotene). The Greek government recognised his efforts, presenting him with Order of the Phoenix (Greece 1926).

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**1927** - **The locality of Lemnos**, near Shepparton Victoria was established in 1927 as a soldier settlement zone after the First World War. It was named by Anzac Ernest Hill after the Greek island of Lemnos on which he landed and was the main base of operations for the Gallipoli Campaign. There are many other streets named after Lemnos throughout Australia and many Gallipoli Anzacs gave the name Lemnos to their children. Lemnos Kelly of Tibooburra is believed to be named in honour of his uncles that are buried there.

**1922 - 1982** - Australia's most decorated heroine **Joice NanKivell-Loch and her husband, Gallipoli veteran Sydney Loch and Ethel Cooper**, answered the call for aid from the survivors of Greek, Armenian and Assyrian Genocides. At first at the American Farm School, on the outskirts of Thessaloniki and then at Ouranoupolis, near Mount Athos. Sydney passed away in 1955, while Joice remained at Ouranoupolis until her passing in 1982. Both were awarded medals by the Greek and Australian governments, including the Order Of The Phoenix (Greece 1926); Order Of The Redeemer (Two Awards Of This Order) (Greece); Gold Medal - National Academy Of The Arts (Greece); Medal Of The Order Of The British Empire (M.B.E.) (United Kingdom 1933); Order Of Beneficence (Two Awards Of This Order) (Greece).



*Left, Joice NanKivell-Loch and her husband, Gallipoli veteran Sydney Loch Right, Major George Devine Treloar*

1932 - The Australian poet Christopher Brennan brought to the attention of his friend, solicitor Robert Innes Kay a Greek inscription from the mid 5th century BC. . The translation of the inscription reads

*'Doing battle beside the Hellespont these men lost their shining youth. They brought honour to their homeland, so that the enemy groaned as it carried off the harvest of war, and for themselves they set up a deathless memorial of their courage'.*

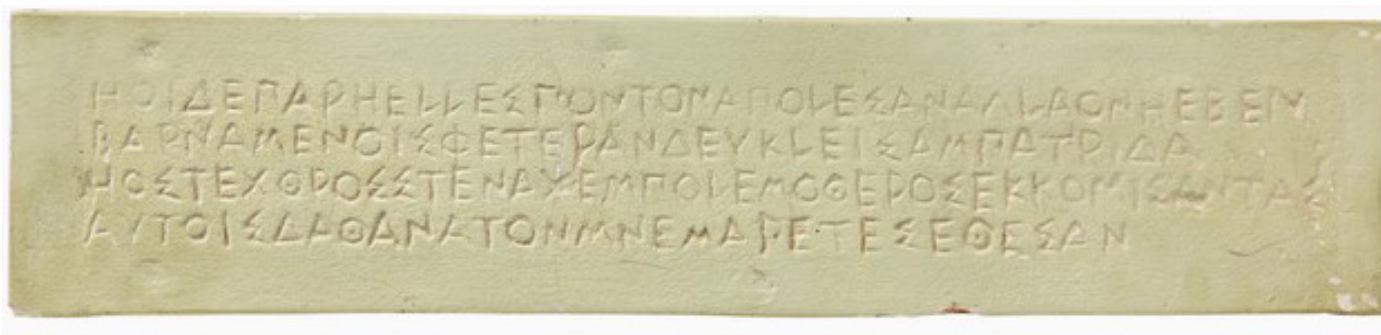
*This ancient Greek inscription is part of a longer inscription commemorating the sacrifice of Greek warriors who died fighting at the Hellespont (the Dardanelles) in the mid 5th century BC.*

Kay then brought it to the attention of the Australian Official Historian Charles Bean who had been at Gallipoli where he was a tireless, thorough and brave war correspondent. He was wounded in August but remained on Gallipoli for most of the campaign, leaving just a few days before the last troops. Bean filled hundreds of diaries and notebooks, all with a view to writing a history of the AIF when the war ended. In early 1919 he led a historical mission to Gallipoli before returning to Australia and beginning work on the official history series that would consume the next two decades of his life.

Bean, Kay and Brennan were struck by how aptly the inscription related to the Australian experience at Gallipoli in 1915 - over 2000 years after the battle for which it was written.

John Treloar, Director of the Australian War Memorial that was being built in Canberra, arranged to have a replica of the inscription made through the offices of Lieutenant Colonel Cyril Hughes, who worked with the Imperial War Graves Commission in the Eastern Mediterranean and often visited Athens, where the original was located.

Initially Hughes acquired a 'squeeze' for the Memorial - an impression made of thick paper. However, as this would not make a satisfactory display item, Treloar asked him to acquire a plaster cast for the Memorial.



*This plaster cast is of an ancient Greek inscription from the 5th century BC. It is part of a longer inscription commemorating the sacrifice of Greek warriors who died fighting at the Hellespont (the Dardanelles) in the mid 5th century BC. (RELAWM12276)*

In November and December 1935, a plaster cast was made and was sent to Australia on board the ship Orford. This was received by the Australian War Memorial in February 1936. It was initially housed in Melbourne and later in Sydney. It was not displayed in the Memorial's permanent building in Canberra until 1954.



**1932, 14 March - The Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park** was completed by Sculpture Francois Sicard. The figures sculpted in bronze are from Ancient Greece and use mythical theme to express and honour the association forged in war of France and Australia. The work also looks forward to peace. Central to his design was Apollo giving life to all nature. Apollo was surrounded by three groups of figures, the first Diana bringing harmony to the world; the second, Pan watching over the fields and pastures; and the third, Theseus conquering the Minotaur of Crete, symbolic of sacrifice for the common good. In some ways it also foretold the fighting of the Second Anzac Core in Greece and Crete in 1940-1941.



*The Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park, Sydney. Theseus conquering the Minotaur of Ancient Crete, symbolic of sacrifice for the common good.*

**1934, 24 November - The Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park Sydney** was unveiled and was built as a memorial to the Australian Imperial Force of World War I. Located at its heart is a bronze sculpture of the fallen warrior. The sculpture "Sacrifice" is based on the story of the Spartans from ancient Greece who were raised as warriors and were told to come home with their shield, or on it - a warning to be victorious or die. Rayner Hoff created an image that depicts the weight of the dead young warrior carried on his shield by his mother, sister and wife nursing infant child. The sculpture uses the Spartan Warrior analogy being returned to his loved ones dead on his shield to evoke the emotion experienced by the families of the young men who died in the Great War 1914-18.



*The Sacrifice, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park Sydney*

# The Battle of Greece and Crete 1940 - 1941

## Naval Battle of Cape Spada 19th July 1940

On 18 July 1940, HMAS Sydney captained by John Collins sailed from Alexandria in company with the destroyer HMS Havock bound for the Gulf of Athens. Together they had orders to support an allied flotilla consisting of HMS Hyperion, Hero, Hasty and Ilex in the Aegean Sea. They were to intercept any Italian shipping sailing east to west along the north coast off the island of Crete.

Collins, adjusted his course and speed so that he was better placed to provide support. In pre-radar days, dawn was often the most dangerous time of day and on 19 July this was to prove to be the case when at the western end of the sweep, they sighted two enemy Italian cruisers which soon opened fire. Collins, hundreds of miles closer than anyone realised, prepared his ship for action but maintained strict communications silence so as not to alert the enemy to his presence. At 08:20 the two Italian cruisers were sighted and with tension mounting, Sydney hoisted her battle ensigns and opened fire at a range of approximately ten miles. Both the enemy and the fleeing allied destroyers were taken by surprise at the sudden appearance of Sydney and before long hits were registered on one of the enemy cruisers, the Giovanni Delle Bande Nere.

By then all of the flotilla were in wireless contact with Sydney and the two groups joined forces north of Cape Spada, Crete. Sydney had scored hits on both enemy cruisers and it became apparent to Collins that they were attempting to retreat towards the Anti-Kythera Channel under cover of smoke. The enemy gunfire became sporadic at that point of the action and one of the cruisers, later identified as the Bartolomeo Colleoni, was seen to be on fire and losing headway, before coming to a complete stop.

Two of the allied destroyers, Hyperion and Ilex, were subsequently ordered to finish her off and pick up survivors. In all some 550 Italians, including her Captain, were rescued by the destroyers. During the action Sydney sustained just one hit to her forward funnel which caused only minor damage and no serious casualties.



Left, the crew of HMAS Sydney commemorate their victory off Cape Spada, Crete demonstrating the size of the minor damage to the Sydney's forward funnels. (AWM 002435) and right Commemorative plaque presented to the crew of HMAS Sydney (AWM P08917.013)



## Naval Battle of Matapan 29th March 1941

The Battle of Matapan took place off the Western coast of Crete on 29th March 1941 and involved the Australian ships HMAS Perth and HMAS Stuart. Under the command of Vice Admiral Pridham-Wippell, the cruisers HMAS Perth, HMS Orion, HMS Ajax, and HMS Gloucester, then patrolling in the Aegean Sea, was ordered to a point off Gavdos Island south of Crete to protect troop convoys bound for Greece, from attacks by the Italian Navy.

The Italian Fleet, comprising one battleship, eight cruisers, plus destroyers, was conducting sweeps west off Crete trying to find the convoys also off Gavdos. Unknowingly, the Allied ships were sailing into a potential disaster.

At 6am HMAS Perth and company were sighted by the Italians but at the same time the carrier HMS Formidable sighted the Italians. At 7.45am HMAS Perth sighted the Italian cruisers, Bolzano, Trieste, and Trento. At 8.12am the Italians opened fire. The Italian fire was very accurate and they were closing rapidly. HMS Gloucester, who had received most of the shelling, opened fire and at 8.53 HMS Orion started to make smoke to try and attract our battle fleet. At 9am the Italians broke off the engagement so the allied cruisers turned to shadow them.



*The battle ensign worn by Perth during the battle of Matapan (AWM REL29311).*

Unfortunately, at 10.58am they ran into the new Italian battleship, Vittoria Veneto. They were now caught between the battleship and three Italian cruisers. Vittorio Veneto commenced very accurate fire, firing ninety four shells. However because the spread of shots was too wide, only slight damage was done to HMAS Perth and HMS Orion. Hopelessly outgunned, the Allied our cruisers set up a huge smokescreen and turned south at full speed to try to escape. They were now in a very dangerous position as the Italian battleship was driving them towards the Italian cruisers. At 11.27, just as disaster seemed about to strike, aircraft from HMS Formidable attacked Vittorio Veneto and she broke off the pursuit.

HMAS Perth and the others now turned to follow Vittorio Veneto and, until the close of the battle later that night, acted in a shadowing capacity for the main battle fleet. An attack by Formidable's aircraft stopped the Italian cruiser Pola. The Italian admiral, not realizing the Allied Fleet was so close, ordered her sisters ships, Zara and Fiume to go to her assistance.

At 22.10 the radar on HMS Valiant detected the three cruisers at a range of only six miles. Illuminated by searchlights, the ships were pounded by 15” salvos from HMS Warspite and Valiant at point blank range. The Italians lost the three cruisers and the destroyers, Alfieri and Carducci plus 2400 men. HMAS Perth then returned to Piraeus and resumed patrols of the Aegean Sea.

The Battle of Matapan, was a resounding and essential Allied naval victory. Had the Italian cruisers managed to break into the sea routes between Egypt and Greece the result could have been disastrous for the Lustre Force convoys. Matapan was, in the words of Gavin Long, a ‘notable success’ and the Italian fleet, the only force in the Mediterranean capable of engaging the Royal Navy, did not again show itself during the ensuing months of the campaign in Greece and Crete thereby enabling the evacuation of tens of thousands of Allied troops in those future Battles.



*Battle of Matapan, Captain H.M.L Waller, in HMAS Stuart in the thick of the battle. By Frank Norton (AWM ART27623)*

## **The Battle of Greece**

The Greek campaign, codenamed ‘**Operation Marita**’ by the Germans, commenced on 6 April 1941, when the Germans simultaneously attacked Greece through Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in a pincer movement designed to encircle the Greek troops fighting the Italians on the Albanian front, as a result of Italy’s declaration of war on Greece on 28 October 1940.

The allies sent a token force of British, Australian, New Zealand, Cypriot and Palestinian troops to aid Greece, in what is, often referred to as ‘The Second Gallipoli’. **They began arriving in March 1941 under the code name - Lustre or ‘W’ Force**, named after its Commander, British Major General Maitland Wilson. Of the 65,532 allied soldiers sent to Greece, the largest number of fighting troops came from Australia and New Zealand, the others were support troops, apart from one British Armoured Brigade. In this campaign, the allied forces were greatly outnumbered and outgunned by the Germans who had allocated ten divisions for the invasion of Greece and had over 1,000 planes at their disposal. What resulted was a fierce month long campaign where the allied troops fought valiantly but were underequipped and had to evacuate Greece .

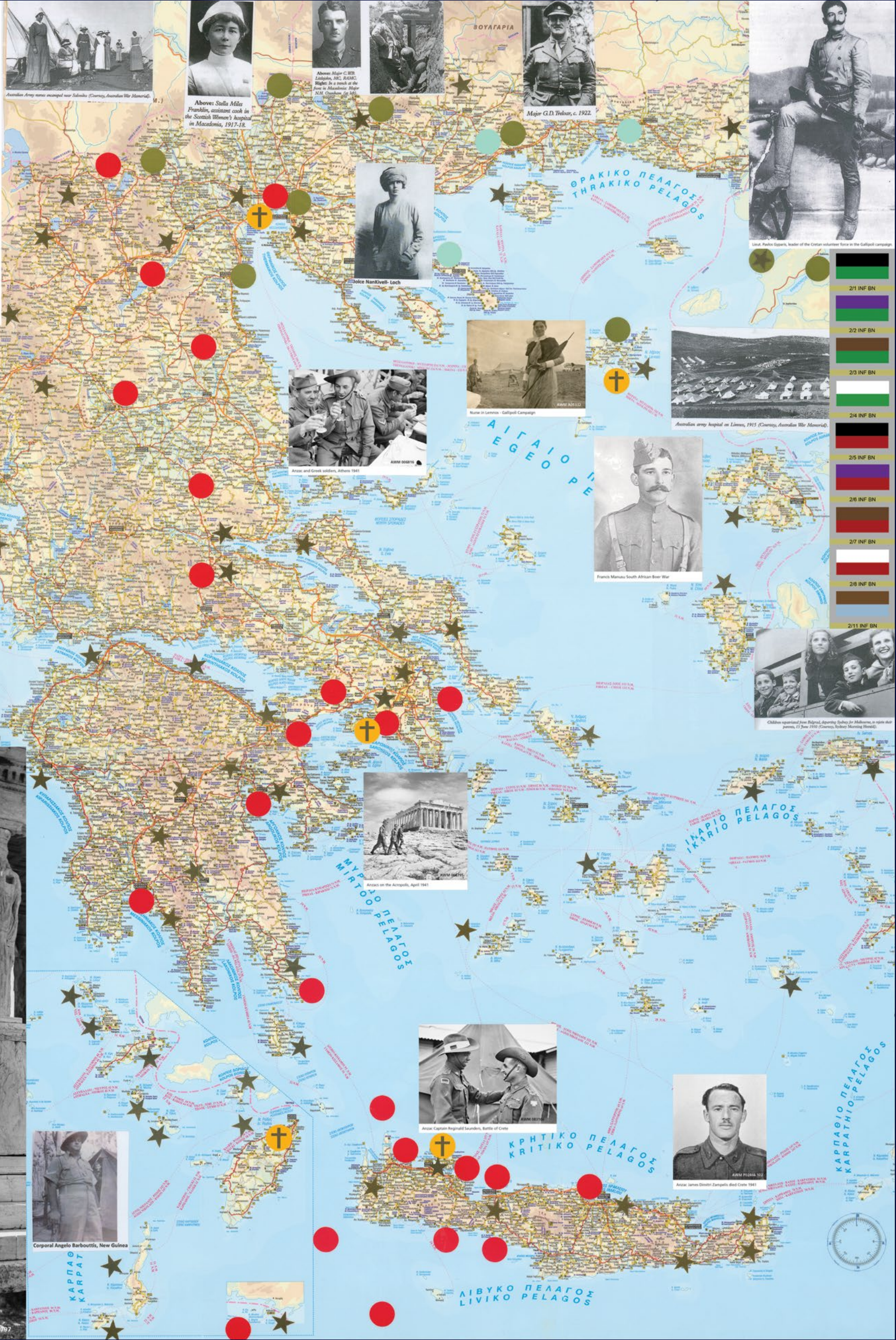




DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

### GREEK-AUSTRALIAN ALLIANCE

- AUSTRALIANS & ANZACS - WORLD WAR I
- ANZACS IN GREECE - WORLD WAR II
- AUSTRALIAN INTERWAR REFUGEE CENTRES
- GREEK VOLUNTEERS GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN
- ★ ORIGINS OF GREEK-AUSTRALIAN SERVICEMEN & WOMEN
- ✚ ANZAC CEMETERIES



John Callinan, 1942, age 20



PHOT 060797



Children operated from hospital, Salonika, 1915



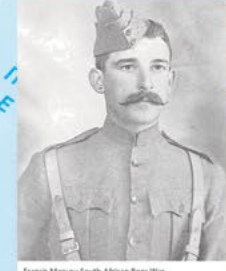
Australian army hospital in Leros, 1915



Joyce Nankivell-Loch



Nurses in Leros - Gallipoli Campaign



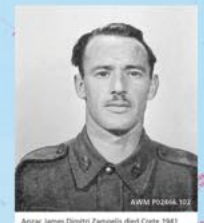
Francis Munnick South African War



Anzacs on the Acropolis, April 1941



Anzac Captain Reginald Saunders, Battle of Crete



Anzac James Dimitri Zampelis died Crete 1941



Corporal Angelo Barboutis, New Guinea



On 10 April the Germans sent a XL Panzer Corps through Monastir Gap seizing the town of Florina. The first contact with the Germans occurred on 11-12 April when the SS Adolf Hitler unit and 9th Panzer division engaged the allies at Vevi, known as the 'Battle of Vevi' or the 'Battle for Kleidi Pass'. Due to a confusing command structure, the 1 Rangers, part of the British Armoured Brigade, withdrew, leaving the 2/4th and 2/8th battalions exposed to heavy enemy fire. This resulted in the destruction of the 2/8th battalion as a fighting force for the rest of the Greek campaign.

**To address this issue on 12 April General Blamey formed the second Anzac Corps which comprised of the 6th Australian Division and the 2nd New Zealand Division, under his command.** Many troops were captured at Vevi, some escaped while others were buried in the very cold winter of 1941.

By 13 April the Greek forces in Epirus had begun to disintegrate. On the 14 April Katerini was captured by the Germans forcing Blamey to order the withdrawal of his forces on 15 April south to Thermopylae. The allies soon became engaged in a series of rearguard actions aimed at delaying the German advance long enough to safely evacuate their troops out of Greece, sometimes described as a 'fighting withdrawal'.

The 2/2nd battalion took part in first rearguard action at Pinios (Tempe) Gorge on 16 April where they had been sent to support the 2/1st New Zealand battalion, overwhelmed by the German forces. In the course of the battle, the 2/2nd battalion disintegrated with many soldiers trapped behind enemy lines, while others escaped with the help of the Greek people. At Lamia, Brigadier Stan Savige was tasked with keeping the main road out of Greece clear of returning Greek soldiers to facilitate the withdrawal of the allied troops. From the 19 April onwards the allied forces fought further delaying actions **at Brallos and the Thermopylae Passes**. On 21 April the 2/11th battalion held off the German 6th Mountain Division for three days at Brallos Pass to ensure the withdraw of the Allied troops, suffering the heaviest losses in killed and wounded of any Australian battalion in Greece.



*Brallos Pass, Greece. Painting by William Dargie, c 1946. (AWM ART26298)*

It was a race against time as 800 German paratroopers landed on 26 April at Corinth Canal in an effort to cut off the evacuation of the allied forces from the beaches further south in the Peloponnese. The 17th Brigade sent a detachment to assist the 4th Hussars at the canal, enabling the 16th and 17th Australian Infantry Brigades to embark that evening from Kalamata. While the evacuation of Greece was a success, 10,000 soldiers were captured and a further 1,000 troops remained, trapped behind enemy lines assisted by the Greek people.



The allied troops who were evacuated from the Greek mainland found themselves fighting another campaign on the island of Crete. As early as November 1940 the British had established their main refuelling base in the Mediterranean on Crete. Long before the campaign on the Greek mainland, plans were in place for the defence of the island because of its strategic importance, with Churchill demanding Crete be turned into a 'fortress'.

## **The Battle of Crete**

The Crete campaign, code named 'Operation Mercury' or 'Merkur' by the Germans, was ferocious and lasted ten days, from 20th to 30th May 1941. Unlike the campaign on the Greek mainland, the Allies outnumbered the Germans on Crete, having deployed 31,200 troops to the island, in addition to the 25,000 soldiers sent by the Greeks and the original garrison of 5,300 troops stationed on the island, bringing the total to 61,800. The Germans however had only sent 23,000 troops, mainly paratroopers to Crete, having underestimated the strength of their opponents. They had also misread the response of the local people and were surprised by the fierce resistance of the Cretans, who used any means at their disposal to defend their island from the invaders.

The allies, under the command of New Zealand General Bernard Freyberg, had deployed their forces to prevent the three airfields on the island falling into enemy hands. The New Zealanders were to defend the airfield at Maleme - near Chania on the eastern side of the island, facing the Greek mainland. On the first day of the attack, German paratroopers proved to be easy targets with the allies having the upper hand. Due to a breakdown in communication however New Zealand Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Andrews withdrew the 22nd New Zealand battalion on the evening of the first day, leaving the airfield unprotected. This opened the way for the Germans to land their aircrafts, bringing in reinforcements to support their airborne troops. By the 27 May the New Zealanders, including Maori battalion with remnants of the Australian 2/7th and 2/8th battalions, were fighting a rearguard action along the Chania to Tsikalarion road, near Suda Bay, nicknamed '42nd Street' by the troops. Coming under heavy fire, with fierce shouts and 'Maori War Cry' Haka they engaged the Germans in a fierce bayonet charge inflicting heavy casualties.

At the same time, the Australian 2/1st and 2/11th battalions were sent to defend the airstrip at Rethymnon, situated half way between Maleme in the east and Heraklion to the west of the island. They were placed under the command of Lieutenant Ian Campbell - the C.O. of the 2/1st battalion. Campbell did a brilliant job of defending Rethymnon along with Major Ray Sandover whose 2/11th battalion fought a fierce final battle on 28 May at Perivolia. Campbell's troops were forced to surrender. Having never received the order to retreat they found themselves encircled by the enemy. The 2/4th Australian battalion who had been deployed to Heraklion under the command of British Brigadier Chappell, ably defended the perimeter of the aerodrome along with 2/7th Australian Light Ack-Ack, Royal Marines and Engineers and the Black Watch.



*German paratroops, part of the German airborne invasion of Crete, parachuting onto the village of Suda. Sunken British shipping can be seen in Suda Bay and a burning Junkers JU52 is flying across Suda Bay toward the Akrotiri Peninsula. (AWM P00433.009)*

Following a hazardous journey through the White Mountain- south to Sfakia 10,000 allied soldiers were successfully evacuated by the Royal Navy from 29 May to 1 June. Six hundred Australian and four hundred New Zealander troops however remained trapped behind enemy lines, some for up to three years, surviving because of the bravery of Cretan people who fed and hid them at great personal risk to themselves. The Crete campaign resulted in the capture of 3,102 Australian troops, the deaths of more than 6,000 civilians and Allied casualties totalling 15,335. Both campaigns proved costly with 83% of the Australians taken prisoner by the Germans and Italians, coming from the Greek and Crete campaigns. Through the horror of war the Australians and Greeks formed a closed bond of friendship that did not cease with the death of the veterans but continues to this day.

**1939 -1945 – About 2,500 Greek Australians** served in the Australian Defence Forces during World War Two, including 35 women who served in various roles at home and abroad. They served in Greece/ Crete, Tobruk, El Alemein, Egypt, Palestine, New Guinea, Singapore, Thailand and other parts of the Asia Pacific region.

**1941, 12th April – The Second Anzac Corps** was formed out of the Australian and New Zealand units strung out across western Macedonia to resist the Nazi invasion .They fought courageously at **Vevi, Florina, Tempe, Volos, Brallos Pass, Thermopylae, Megara and Corinth**. Evacuated across the Aegean Sea to the island of Crete, they fought again in the Battle of Crete in May 1941. In the course of the world, over 17,000 Australian soldiers, airmen and sailors served, with 1,001 being wounded, 5,174 taken prisoners and 646 now resting in the **Commonwealth War Graves at Phaleron (Athens), Rhodes and Suda Bay, Crete**.

Anzac Captain Reginald Saunders, Australia's highest decorated Aboriginal serviceman, was supported by the Tzangarakis family and evaded capture on Crete for almost one year until he finally escaped to Egypt. Captain Saunders later served Australia again in New Guinea and the Korean War.





Left: Anzacs on the Acropolis of Athens, April 1941 (AWM 006795). Right: The 1941 Greek Campaign

**1942 – The Greek RSL Sub Branch** was formed in Castlereagh Street Sydney. It was officially chartered in 1950 and commemorates Greek and Australian servicemen and women and the battle in which they fought. The current president is Mr Bill Kotsovolos.

**1942 –** At least 625 Australians were killed along the **Kokoda Trail** in the second half of 1942 and over 1,600 were wounded. There were at least 193 Greek Australians who served in New Guinea in WWII, and a number of those served in the Kokoda campaign in October 1942. Near Eora Creek on the Track, two brothers of the **Manusu family** from NSW - Guy and Perry, who served in the 2/1st Battalion - were killed in action within days of each other (see graves below). Victorian **Jack Manol (Manolitsas)** faced the full force of the first Japanese attack. Manol became part of Kokoda folklore, having been immortalised in a 1942 photograph (See Below) of Diggers, ankle deep in mud, climbing one of the track's steep jungle paths.



Grave Guy Manusu, Kakoda Trail



Grave Perry Manusu, Kakoda Trail





Left, members of D Company, 39th Battalion, on the Kokoda Trail. Right to left: Warrant Officer 2 R. Marsh, Private (Pte) G. Palmer, Pte J. Manol, Pte J. Tonkins, Pte A. Forrester and Gallipoli veteran Sergeant J. Long. Their shoes sink deep in the mud on the jungle track. (AWM 013288). Right memorial at Xinon Nero, Macedonia

**1943 – Corporal Angelo Barbouttis**, whose parents were from Megisti (Castellorizo) island, stands out for his bravery during the Kokoda Campaign. He destroyed almost a whole boat load of invading Japanese, eventually being killed by a sniper who had swum to shore. He was buried at sea with little fanfare. A Street and some public buildings in Townsville have been named in his honour. An application to award a posthumous Victoria Cross to Angelo Barbouttis has been made and is currently before the Australian Government.



Left: Captain Reginald Saunders (AWM 083166).



Right: Corporal Angelo Barbouttis

**1945 – The memorial at Xinon Neron** near Florina, Macedonia was the first memorial erected in Greece to commemorate a World War Two battle. It was erected in 1945 by the Greek residents of the area, commemorating this important Anzac battle. The monument is lined with Australian, New Zealand and Greek flags which rise to honour the Anzacs who fought here to defend Greece. Another war memorial is located in the town of Vevi commemorating the 2/4th Australian Battalion.

**1947 - 1948 –** Under the auspices of the **United Nations’ Refugee Relief Agency**, a 20-person Australian mission was organised and became active in relief work across western Macedonia, particularly the Kozane, Florina and Grevena districts. Their main role was to transport and return home thousands of predominantly young women whom the Nazis had abducted as slave labourers.



**1946, 29 July** - A 2,500 years old Greek Corinthian urn was donated to the Australian Government. It was presented by the Vice-President of Australian-Greek League (Athens) Mr Anargyros Stratigos to Prime Minister Chifley. The urn contained soil from the graves of Australians buried in the cemetery at Phaleron outside Athens. Mr. A. Stratigos, who came from Greece specifically to make the presentation, told Mr. Chifley that this was the first time in history that Greece had presented Greek soil to a foreign country.

“Such an act from ancient times has been considered an act of capitulation,” he explained. When he made the presentation, Mr Stratigos said: “This is a piece from the holy body of Greece, which the Greeks have ever denied to other races. But they now offer it to a brother people, Australia, as an official token of the most sacred and unbroken ties of unity.” The contents are historically significant as they are a symbol of friendship and recognition of the valiant efforts of Australian soldiers who fought and died in Greece.



*A 2,500 years old Greek Corinthian urn containing soil from the Graves of Anzacs  
(AWM ART 30402)*

In a letter to the Prime Minister of Australia (dated 23 August, 1947, Athens), the Prime Minister of Greece stated: “The Greek people will always remember with deep emotion the unparalleled heroism of the Australian soldiers, who, in the dark hours of our recent history, fought against the common enemy in Greece and Crete in comradeship with our soldiers. The Australian soldiers who are buried in Greece are the everlasting symbol of the friendship between our two countries and of the heroic contribution of Australia in the struggle for liberty and justice.”

**1946 - 1971** – Australia received hundreds of thousands of Greek migrants, another outcome of World War Two. It is estimated that Greece lost eleven percent of its population including eighty seven percent of its Jewish population during the Nazi occupation due to military activity, crimes against humanity and war-related famine and disease. Migration was necessary to avoid increasing poverty and unemployment.

**1950 - 1952** – The Australian Council of Social Service under the leadership of **Aileen Fitzpatrick** orchestrated the reunion of children separated from their parents as a result of the Nazi invasion and occupation of Greece, and the Civil War that followed.

**1950 - 1955 – Korean War.** In response to the invasion of South Korea and the United Nations Resolution, 17,000 Australians served in the Korean War and they suffered 339 dead, and 1,200 wounded. Greece sent some 10,823 men to Korea and suffered 186 dead and 610 wounded. **Anzac Captain Reginald Saunders** having fought in Greece and Crete also fought in Korea.

**1952, Anzac Day** - A monument to British, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers who fell in Greece was indeed dedicated at The Field of Mars (Pedion Areos) in Athens by King Paul of the Hellenes. It was an initiative of the Greek-Australia League, formed in Athens on 10th July 1945, and funded by public subscription. On Anzac Day 1950, Consul-General Vrysakis presented the Prime Minister (Sir) Robert Menzies with a small-scale model of the projected monument, made of Pentelic marble – one of the materials used in the construction of the Acropolis . Menzies himself visited the monument in March 1955.



*Left , Prime Minister Menzies at the memorial to British, Australian and New Zealand troops at Pedion Areos, Athens, March 1955 . (Special Collections, Baillieu Library, The University of Melbourne) and right the monument today.*

**1962 – St George Greek Orthodox Church Rose Bay NSW** dedicated as a war memorial to Australian soldiers of Greek origin who laid down their lives for the Commonwealth of Australia in two world wars and Australian servicemen who died in Greece during the second world war . The foundation stone was laid on 24th November 1962 by His Excellency Lieut. General Sir Eric Woodward K.C.M.G, C.B, C.B.E, and D.S.O Governor of New South Wales. The church is an officially registered NSW war memorial.



**1965 - St Ioannis Greek Orthodox War Memorial Church Parramatta NSW** was erected to the eternal memory of Australian soldiers who died in Greece. The foundation stone was laid on the 25th December 1965 by His Eminence Archbishop Ezekiel Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand. The church is an officially registered NSW war memorial.



*Left , St Ioannis Greek Orthodox War Memorial Church Parramatta NSW and right , St George Greek Orthodox Church War Memorial Church Rose Bay NSW .*

**1962 - 1972 – Viet Nam War. 128 Australians of Greek heritage** served with the Australian Defence Forces. One of those was Mr Steve Kyritsis who has written two books highlighting the contribution of Greek Australians that fought in WW1, WW2 and the Vietnam War.

**1970 – The Joint Committee for the Commemoration of The Battle of Crete and The Greek Campaign** was established by the Greek RSL Sub Brach, the 6th Division Association, the Military Police Association and the Cretan Association of NSW to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign, the Second Anzac Campaign. The joint committee continues to commemorate the Anzacs and Greek people.



*Left Annual Cenotaph Commemorations and wreath laying service for the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign, Sydney. Right Greek Australian Vietnam Veteran Steve Kyritsis wearing Vietnam medal 2nd left .*

**1975 – St Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church in Kingsford NSW** was erected as a war memorial and is dedicated to the Anzacs who died in Greece and to Australian and Greek soldiers who lost their lives in the two World Wars. The church is an officially registered war memorial. The old Colours of the University of New South Wales Regiment were laid-up in the church on Saturday, 3rd March, 2003. They were marched to the Church with the band leading from the University. St Spyridon is the only Greek Orthodox Church in Australia to have received the Colours of an Australian Army Regiment.

**1975 -1977 – The Australian Hellenic War Memorial** was erected in 1975 at Stavromenos, near Rethymno, on Crete. It was here where Australian and local Greek forces held back the German paratroopers in May 1941 and the local community erected a memorial to commemorate that event. A plaque on the memorial records, with attendant colour patches every major Australian unit that fought the Germans at Stavromenos, at Perivolia and in the Rethymno area in general. In 1977, the Australian Government presented the Stavromenos memorial with two anti-aircraft Bofors guns, the type used by Australian anti-aircraft gunners in May 1941.

**1978 , May– General Vasilios Kourkafas** was the first high ranking officer of the Greek military to visit Australia. Since then a delegation of the highest ranking officers of the Hellenic Military have visited various cities around Australia annually to commemorate the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign. They visit Australian Military establishments such as Lamia Barracks and exchange dialogue with Australian Military personnel as well as visiting schools and many other Australian communities including Anzac families.

**1979 – Anzac Geoff Edwards OAM** of the 2/11th Battalion's Carrier Platoon remembered the bravery and sacrifice of the Cretan people who helped him avoid capture. In 1979 he built a Greek Orthodox Church on the hill above his seaside community and named his home in Western Australia, Prevelly Park, after the monastery at Preveli, Crete. The Monastery was instrumental in harbouring and assisting Anzacs to evade capture and eventually escape. Today Prevelly Park is known as the town of Prevelly and is an important town of the Margaret River region. There are also many streets throughout Australia and a park named after the island of Crete during the post war period.



*Town of Prevelly in Western Australia, St John the Theologian Greek Orthodox Church (centre)*

**1980 – The Hellenic Sub Branch of the RSL** was first formed in Melbourne following meetings with Victoria's longest-serving RSL President Mr Bruce Ruxton MBE OBE AM and Greek Australian ex-servicemen. The sub branch promotes the contribution of Greeks to the Australian War Effort over the 20th century and beyond. The current President is Mr Steve Kyritsis, a Vietnam War veteran who has written two books highlighting the contribution of Greek Australians that fought as part of the Australian Military forces in WW1, WW2 and the Vietnam War.



**1983 – The Royal Australian Corps of Military Police (RACMP)** complex adopted the name of Lamia on the 12th June 1983. Lamia is a small town in central Greece through which the 16th Australian Infantry Brigade, 6th Australian Division conducted a fighting withdrawal in April 1941. During this action, Military Police performed their duties under fire with courage and professionalism. During this action, Captain J. W. Grimshaw, Australian Army Provost Corps, was awarded the Military Cross for leadership and bravery.



*The Royal Australian Corps of Military Police (RACMP) complex Lamia Barracks-Olive Tree planting ceremony by visiting Greek Military Delegation during commemorations for the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign .*

**1984 – The Australian Hellenic Historical Society** was established in 1984 to collect and research Hellenism in Australia and has been instrumental in discovering the Greek migrant families' contribution to the Australian war effort.

**24th May, 1985 – The Australian Ambassador to Greece unveiled a memorial at Preveli, Crete,** recognising the debt the escapers in the Preveli area owed to the local people. On the memorial are these words: “This tablet commemorates the deep gratitude of British, New Zealand and Australian servicemen befriended by the monks of Preveli Monastery and Cretans from surrounding villages, who, at great personal risk, helped them to escape by British submarines, HMS Thresher and Torbay, in July and August 1941.”

**1988 – Mr Marcos Polioudakis OAM** born in Rethymnon, Crete in 1928, acted as a runner between the Anzacs and the Cretan people during the Battle of Rethymnon. He dedicated his entire adult life to research and collecting material that related to the Cretans and Anzacs, producing a three-volume account of the Battle of Crete. Marcos is credited with being instrumental in developing the Greek-Australian relationship and friendship and was president of the committee that oversaw the dedication of the memorial for Greek and Australian soldiers in Rethymno. Marcos's activities brought him to Australia on two occasions, and he was awarded the Order of Australia in 1988 for his efforts. He was Immensely proud of this award, and genuinely loved Australia.

**1988 – 21st May The Hellenic Memorial Canberra** beside the Australian War Memorial commemorates those who died and fought in the Battle of Crete and Greece . The Doric column symbolises the birth of civilisation and is embossed with a Greek orthodox cross representing a soldier's grave. The damaged steel fragments represent the futility and destruction of war and , together with the column reflect buried relics of civilisation and conflict.



1991 - During the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign and since then also, the Greek government issued certificates of appreciation and the Greek Campaign War Medal to Anzacs for their service in Thrace, Macedonia and Crete..



Greek Campaign Certificate and medal issued by Greece during the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete and the Greek campaign( issued to Anzac H.B Moran).

1992 - 2001 – The Australian Hellenic Memorial Melbourne was unveiled on the 2nd September 2001 and was dedicated to the Australians and the Greek people that fought in the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign.



Left, The Australian Hellenic Memorial Melbourne and right The Hellenic Memorial Canberra.



**1994, 17th May – The Kalamata War Memorial** was dedicated by the veterans of the Kalamata campaign with the inscription “In memory of the Allied Forces and the Greeks who fell at the Battle of Kalamata on the 28th of April, 1941, or who were taken prisoner or who escaped to fight again that the world might be free.” Surrounding the memorial are native Australian Trees.

**2001 – The Hellenic-Australian Memorial Park at Rethymno**, commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Battle for Crete was dedicated on 19 May 2001. The design for the memorial symbolically represents the Greek people fighting side by side with Australians during the battle for Crete in 1941.

**2007, June – The Hora Sfakion War Memorial** in southern Crete was expanded with a bronze plaque donated by The Greek Australian International Legal and Medical Conference and commemorates the largest evacuation of allied soldiers from Crete over three nights in May 1941. About 15,000 retreating soldiers were taken out on British and Australian warships. Still another 5,000 did not manage to escape. On the anniversary of the Battle of Crete, the four flags of Greece, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom is raised over the monument and wreaths are laid to commemorate all those that fought and were evacuated from this location.

**2007 –** Following a five year effort of research by Greek Australian historian **Lambis Englezos AO**, the largest unmarked military grave of Australian soldiers was uncovered at Fromelles, France.



*The ceremonial re-burial of Australian and British soldiers recovered from mass graves near the site of 1916 Battle of Fromelles in France*

**2008 – Dr Michael Bendon**, a Sydney archaeologist working in the ancient site of Phalasarna, in North Western Crete begins the research and documenting of the remains of the sunken Landing Craft Tank (LCT) A6 and LCT A20 the type of that saved thousands of ANZAC lives in the evacuation from The Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign.

**2010 – Dr Maria Hill**, a military historian with Honours, Masters and a PhD in History spent eight years researching and writing about the Australian campaigns in Greece and Crete. Her aim in writing *Diggers and Greeks* was to highlight the human relations between Anzacs and Greeks in the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign making her book a unique contribution.

**2011 – The Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee** was formed in Melbourne to ensure the Anzac connection to the Aegean island of Lemnos is commemorated. A memorial was erected on August 2015 in Albert Park, Melbourne as part of the Anzac Centenary and was designed and created by one of Australia's best known commemorative sculptors, Peter Corlett, OAM. It features the figures of a nurse, standing protectively over a sick or wounded soldier. The statues stand and rest on the stone plinth, the colour of the stone of Lemnos' ancient amphitheatre at Hepheastia, with the words Gallipoli and Lemnos as well as the names of many of the villages visited by the Anzacs in 1915. The Memorial is located near Port Melbourne's famous piers from which Australia's diggers and nurses departed during the First World War. It has been gifted to the City of Port Philip for their care and on-going maintenance. The Committee will continue to hold commemorative services at the Memorial in future years.

**2013 –** Australia and Greece contributed 110 and 63 personnel to United Nations Peacekeeping Missions.

**2013, May – Anthropologist Dr Ian Frazer**, along with 50 Australians and New Zealanders (Anzac Descendants) erected a memorial at the Tripiti Gorge in southern Crete, as a tribute to the Greek people and the Anzacs who managed to evade capture some two years after the Nazi occupation until rescue in 1943. It is estimated between 1000 and 1500 Anzacs evaded the Nazis with the help of the Cretan people. Along with Dr Frazer and the Anzac families, private donors from the Greek Australian community have been instrumental in the creation of Tripiti Memorial ..



*Tripiti Gorge Monument*



*Anzac James Zampelis*

**2013, June –** Work by Keith Rossi, Victoria's RSL historian, Melbourne military historian Carl Johnson, amateur historian Maria Cameron and Newcastle schoolteacher Tom Tsamouras has provided enough evidence that there are approximately 20 Anzacs that are buried in unmarked graves near the town of Vevi in northern Greece. The Greek government announced it plans to fund a dig at a site near where the 20 Anzacs are believed to have been buried anonymously in 1941.



**2013, 6th December – Dr Maria Hill and the Joint Committee for the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign** convened an Academic symposium in honour of the 70th anniversary of the Greek and Crete campaigns in WWII. It was sponsored and held at the State Parliament of NSW exploring aspects of Australia’s wartime relationship with Greece and its repercussions. The eminent speakers included Dr Ian Frazer –author of *On the run - Anzac Escape and Evasion in Enemy-occupied Crete*, Archaeologist Dr Michael Bendon who gave a presentation on the two landing craft wrecks at Phalasarna in western Crete, Dr Brian Taaffe talking about *The Gate Keepers of Galatas*, author and art historian Susanna De Vries who talked on the extraordinary life and refugee aid work of Joice Nan Kivell (1887-1982) and Professor Joy Damousi, gave the keynote speech “The Greek Civil War, the United Nations and Australia: an Untold History “.

**2014, 14th May - The Royal Australian Mint** unveiled as part of an Anzac Centenary Coin series vivid designs commemorating the Battles of Greece and Crete in two **50c Uncirculated Coins**. The coins tell the story of the Anzacs involved in costly actions in defence of Greece and Crete in 1941, capturing their courage and commitment to the cause against insurmountable odds. The coins connect the Anzacs and Ancient Spartans who both fought at Thermoply and the Minoan Civilization of Crete at Knossos with the Battle for Heraklion.



*Anzac Centenary 50 cent coins, Left, The Battle of Greece and right The Battle of Crete*

**2014, May – The 42nd Street Memorial plaque** was unveiled in Chania, Crete, to commemorate the Battle of 42nd Street. **Captain Reginald Saunders** fought in this battle along with the **Maori Battalion, who performed a haka** before the onslaught against the Nazis. The Saunders family along with journalist Michael Sweet and private donors from the Greek Australian community have been instrumental in the creation of this memorial.

**2014, September – Anzac James Zampelis** is the only ANZAC of Greek heritage who was killed in The Battle of Crete in 1941. He is buried in an unmarked grave near Chania which has never been found. There are moves to locate his grave.

**2015, 6th May - The Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra** has named a new 800-seat theatre within a new auditorium after **Captain Reginald Saunders**, a legendary figure within the Australian Defence Force who fought in the Battle of Crete. The theatre was created as part of a \$98.5 million ADFA redevelopment.

**2015 - Anzac Centenary Commemorations on Lemnos and Athens** - The Centenary of Anzac events were held in Greece and were the most extensive ever held. They included many events held on the Island of Lemnos - the forward base of the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, where Australia's nurses served throughout the campaign and where 148 diggers remain buried - as well as on Anzac Day itself in Athens. The Melbourne-based Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee (LGCC), along with the NSW-based Lemnos 1915 group, assisted organizing and actively participated in many of these events. They collaborated with the Australian Embassy in Greece, the Embassy of Canada, the Royal Australian Navy and HMAS Success, Commonwealth War Graves Commissions, the Athens War Museum, Hellenic Navy and the Lemnos Friends of Anzac. These events included:

- The unveiling of the new nurses memorial at Portianos Military Cemetery, the result of much lobbying and effort by his Excellency Robert Peck, ambassador of Canada to Greece, along with the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- A viewing of Australia's Anzac Girls docu-drama at Portianou
- The involvement of the ship's crew of the Royal Australian Navy's HMAS Success, in Mudros Bay - the first visit of an Australian warship into the bay since 1918.
- Major wreath-laying ceremonies at east Mudros and Portianos Military Cemeteries, as well as at the Anzac Memorial at Mudros harbour, with representatives of our Committee laying wreaths at these event
- A major military and community parade at Mudros
- The historic re-enactment of the famous 1915 football match on Lemnos - re-enacted by teams from HMAS Success and the Hellenic Army based on Lemnos
- The presentation by Lemnos 1915 to the Lemnos authorities of a reproduction of the famous painting – The Lemnians by Sir William Russell Flint– held by the Art Gallery of NSW
- A folkloric dance event was held at the Myrina Theatre, representing the dances of Asia Minor refugees who came to Lemnos after WW1
- Assistance to the Canadian Embassy and the descendents of the 3rd AGH's Matron Grace Wilson in touring of the key Anzac sites
- Anzac Day dawn service on HMAS Success at Piraeus, Athens
- Anzac Day Wreath-laying ceremony at Phaleron Military Cemetery, Athens, followed by a reception at the Australian Embassy
- Anzac Day Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee photographic exhibition and presentation at the Athens War Museum.



*Sailors from HMAS Success who took part in the Anzac services on Lemnos and in Athens*





*“Then and Now” image of Portianos Military Cemetery. Original photo by A. W. Savage | The firing after the Burial. Lemnos Island, c. 1915 | Courtesy of the State Library of NSW*

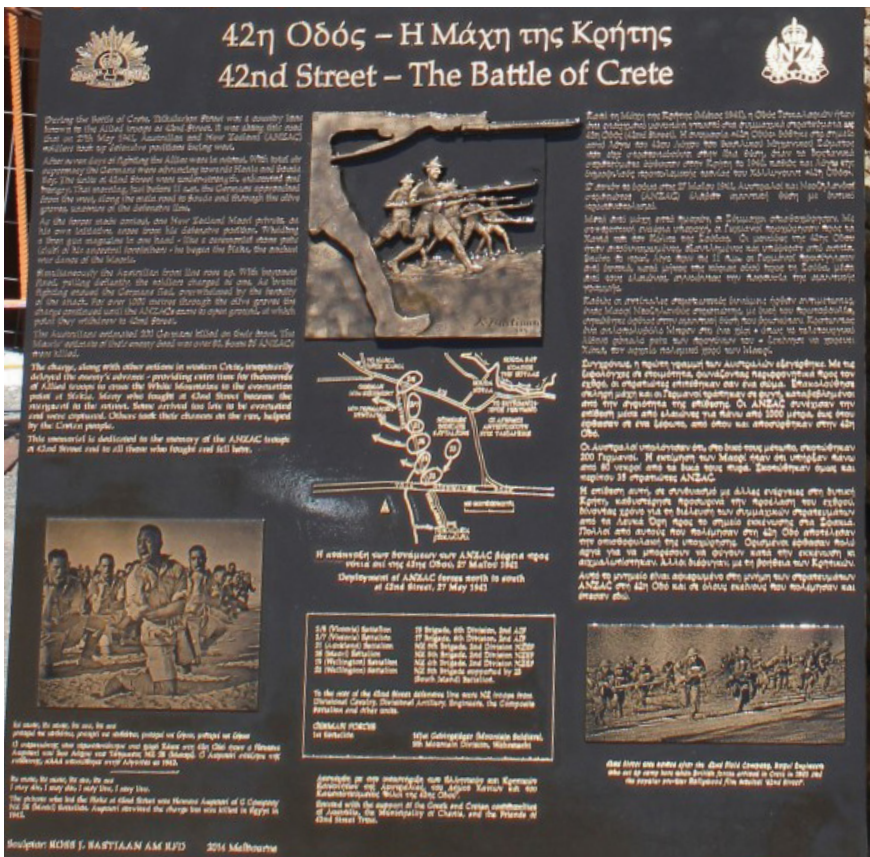
**2015 - The Lemnos1915 WW1 Commemorative Committee** (Lemnian Association of NSW) together with the Greek Consul General Sydney, Dr Stavros Kyrimis created the following commemorative Anzac/Lemnos story events.

- Lemnos1915 Commemorations for the Anzac Centenary began on 4th March with a dawn service at the Cenotaph at Sydney’s Martin Place. It was 100 years to the day that the first Australian Anzacs arrived on Lemnos. The dawn service was supported by the Australian Defence who provided an Army Band and Catafalque Party. Attendees were from various Consular Corps, Canada, New Zealand Great Britain, and state and federal politicians.
- The State Library of NSW featured a photographic exhibition of Cheryl Ward and Bernard DeBroglis’s “Then and Now” images of the A W Savage photos from 1915 (see above ) . The Greek Festival presents Cheryl Ward’s play ‘Towards Lemnos’.
- A Special event was held at The Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney to commemorate the departure of the Allies on 24th April 1915 from Mudros Harbour.
- Photographic exhibitions featuring Life of Lemnos from the State Library of NSW W Savage Collection occurred at Rockdale Town Hall, Homebush and Waverley Libraries.
- Lemnos1915 program was promoted in the Sydney’s Greek Festival;
- The Hellenic Lyceum produced 1915 Commemoration Concert featuring guest dance groups from the Lyceum in Lemnos and Kavala, Greece.
- Ms Claire Ashton and her contingent of Australian and NZ nurses traveled to Lemnos in September 2015 to re-enact the march of the Anzac nurses in 1915.

**2015, 8th August - The Lemnos Gallipoli Memorial** was unveiled in Melbourne’s Albert Park following over three years of fundraising and raising awareness by Melbourne’s Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee. The date was chosen because it was the centenary of the arrival of Australia’s nurses on Lemnos. The Memorial was designed and created by one of Australia’s best known commemorative sculptors, Peter Corlett, OAM. It features the figures of a nurse, standing protectively over a sick or wounded soldier. The statues stand and rest on the stone plinth, the colour of the stone of Lemnos’ ancient amphitheatre at Hepheastia, with the words Gallipoli and Lemnos as well as the names of many of the

villages visited by the Anzacs in 1915. The Memorial is completed by an information board telling some of the story of Lemnos' link to Anzac. The Memorial is located near Port Melbourne's famous piers from which Australia's diggers and nurses departed during the First World War. It has been gifted to the City of Port Philip for their care and on-going maintenance. The Committee will continue to hold commemorative services at the Memorial in future years.

**2015, 11th November - Remembrance Day - Australia's most famous Indigenous officer, Captain Reg Saunders,** was honoured at the Australian War Memorial with a new gallery bearing his name. Captain Saunders served in Greece, Crete, and New Guinea in WWII, before fighting in the Korean War. It was the first time a room at the War Memorial was named after a person. The ceremony was witnessed by his extended family and members of the Cretan and Greek communities.



Left, The 42nd Street Memorial Plaque, Chania Crete and right The Lemnos Gallipoli Memorial Albert Park, Melbourne

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*“We left the beautiful rugged island of Crete richer in feelings and memories of those indomitable Cretan people. We had been defeated in the field of Battle and had nothing to offer them yet they risked their all, their very lives to help us when we badly needed help. They had so little yet gave so willingly. For this the men, women and children were to pay a terrible price in savage reprisals by the enemy. Men like interpreter Vassilakis who, facing the firing squad, refused to be blindfolded and went to his death singing the Greek National Anthem -no wonder the island was never completely subdued.*

*And now with the building of the white chapel on the hill overlooking the ocean and the village of Prevelly in the south west corner of Western Australia, we can pay tribute to these courageous Greek people, making sure their sacrifice was not in vain and their heroic deeds will live forever more.”*

**Anzac Geoff Edwards OAM, 1979**



**For more information, contact Nick Andriotakis , Secretary , The Joint Committee  
for the Commemoration of the Battle of Crete & The Greek Campaign**

**(M: 0411 183 500) or [nick@lateralestate.com](mailto:nick@lateralestate.com)**