

The wounded soldiers

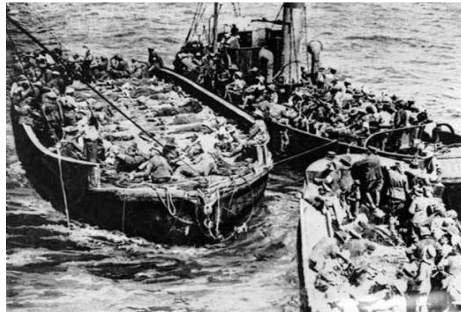
Introduction Statement

Sickness and disease was one of the greatest problems at Gallipoli for the troops of all nations. The fighting at Gallipoli went on for 8 months. In that time 10,000 ANZACS were killed. ANZAC day occurs on the 25th of April. It commemorates all the New Zealanders killed in war and also honours returned service men and women. The date itself marks the anniversary of the landing of New Zealand and Australian soldiers on the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915. With the soldiers living in trenches filled with dirty water and horrible sanitation, being covered in flies, rats, mosquitos and taking into account the rotting, empty food tins and countless dead bodies piled across the area between the trenches called no man's land – it's not surprising diseases were well spread. It was very hot during the summer months at Gallipoli. Even though it was dangerous the soldiers would look forward to swimming in the sea because it was their only chance to have a wash. Jack Simpson was an Australian who helped to save many wounded soldiers by carrying them to safety on the back of a donkey.

Where were the wounded soldiers from?

The countries the wounded were from-

- ~ Great Britain and Ireland – 21,225 died and 52,230 wounded.
- ~ Australia – 8,709 died and 19,441 wounded.
- ~ France – 10,000 died and 17,000 wounded.
- ~ New Zealand – 2,779 died and 5,212 wounded.
- ~ India – 1,358 died and 3,421 wounded.
- ~ Newfoundland – 49 died and 93 wounded.
- ~ **Altogether 130,842 died and 262,014 wounded.**



Wounded soldiers boarding a hospital ship off Gallipoli bound for Malta.



An Australian soldier carries his wounded mate in Gallipoli, 1915.



An ANZAC soldier saw giving water to a wounded Turkish soldier during the battle of Gallipoli.



British, Australian and New Zealand wounded being treated at Bighi Naval hospital, Malta.

How were the soldiers injured during the war at Gallipoli?

Like most wars a huge amount of injuries were caused by gunfire, shelling, and bayonets through hand to hand fighting but the location and conditions was also responsible for a significant number of casualties. The area occupied by the New Zealand and Australians at Gallipoli was tiny – less than six square kilometres. At its furthest point, the distant between the front line and the beach was just over 900m. The conditions were harsh. The area had no natural water source. Water, food and other supplies arrived at Gallipoli on ships and landed on the beach with great difficulty. Packed inside the tiny Anzac perimeter, they contended with extreme weather and horrible living conditions during their eight months on the peninsula. After a few months in crowded conditions on the peninsula, soldiers began to come down with typhoid which is an infectious bacterial fever because of the bad sanitation, unburied bodies and swarms of flies.

Treatment of the wounded in Gallipoli

Very little went well for the ANZAC troops. Heavy shelling came from both the heights overlooking the landing place and from the ships with shells falling amongst the transports. Strong currents meant the boats all along the shore and the men had to regroup on shore under raging fire. Those on shore faced bitter cold and intense sniper fire. Treatment for the wounded was basic. Morphine was given by mouth and splints were made with rifles and bayonets. Stretcher bearers struggle up and down narrow tracks, most having removed their white markers to avoid being shot. For those wounded on Gallipoli the wait for treatment and evacuation was often long and painful. After the first night of landing on Gallipoli the ships were full and could only take half of the wounded.

What were the hospitals like?

From the spring of 1915 hospitals and convalescent camps were constructed on the island of Malta to deal with the many thousands of sick and wounded being evacuated from Gallipoli. Even though the courageous efforts of the doctors and medical staff, some of the wounded could not be saved and were buried at Malta. 903 nurses attended to over 2000 wounded soldiers at any one time. The field hospitals were based in tents and only offered very basic medical treatment compared to the modern day medical facilities available to soldiers now.

Bibliography:

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