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Coping With Captivity:
Australian POWs of the Turks and the Impact of Imprisonment During the First World War

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Abstract

One hundred and ninety-six Australians became prisoners of the Turks during the First World War. These POWs represent the first Australians to endure extended wartime imprisonment at the hands of a radically different enemy, yet little is known about their experiences or the wider ramifications of this aspect of Australian military and social history.

The impact of the capture and imprisonment of the Australians in Turkey, and the ways in which Australians responded to this unprecedented wartime reality, is the focus of this thesis. Utilising a wide range of sources – including previously unexplored private and official records – the experience is explored from a number of different perspectives. The thesis analyses the prisoners' emotional reactions to capture and the ways in which they mitigated the physical and psychological strain of life as a POW. It assesses the organisation and implementation of welfare efforts, along with homefront awareness of, and engagement with, the prisoners and their plight. The ways in which POW families worked to alleviate the emotional impact of captivity is examined, and how the effects of captivity were experienced in the aftermath of the war is also explored.

Such analysis demonstrates that captivity in Turkey was a unique issue that posed many challenges; that, as a direct consequence of this, the capture and imprisonment of Australians in Turkey had a widespread and, for some, long-lasting impact; and, finally, that captivity did not necessarily equate to a situation of passivity. Australians who were involved with or affected by captivity were anything but passive and powerless recipients of the experience – these different parties operated within their respective frameworks to actively adjust to, manage, and, ultimately, cope with its impact.

The thesis highlights the diversity of Australia's POW history, presents an intimate perspective on the Australian homefront, provides unique insight into the story of repatriation in Australia, and, as we approach the centenary of Anzac in 2015, offers an important reminder of the complex and varied experiences of Australians during the First World War.

Declaration by Author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGS	Australian Graves Service
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
ARC	Australian Red Cross
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
CPWC	Central Prisoners of War Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IWGC	Imperial War Graves Commission
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
PITC	Prisoners in Turkey Committee
POW	Prisoner of War
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RCPF	Red Cross Prisoner of War Fund
RSL	Returned and Services League of Australia
YMCA	Young Men’s Christian Association

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The nation known today as Turkey did not exist during the First World War. Technically, it was the Ottoman Empire against whom the British, Australians and other Allies fought. The Ottoman Empire encompassed diverse territories and peoples, including Arabs, Kurds, Jews, and Christian Greeks and Armenians. However, it was the ethnic Turks who dominated the political landcape and, as historians including Edward Erickson have pointed out, comprised the majority of Ottoman forces during the war. Contemporary accounts reflect this and generally refer to the Ottoman enemy as ‘the Turks’. Indeed, the Australian POWs believed they were in the hands of the Turks, and that they were in captivity ‘in Turkey’. In keeping with this contemporary useage, I have maintained this terminology throughout the thesis. Place names are also presented as they appear in the prisoners’ accounts, for example Constantinople rather than Istanbul, Angora rather than Ankara.

When a POW is first mentioned in the thesis, his rank is provided. Thereafter, he is identified only by name.

INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of the morning of 25 April 1915, British, French, and ANZAC troops landed on the beaches of the Gallipoli peninsula. Their arrival signified the second wave of the Allied attempt to break through the Dardanelles and seize the Ottoman capital of Constantinople. The bungling of the landings meant that within hours of the dawn assault, the war was already over for hundreds of men, mown down by a hail of Turkish machine gun and rifle fire as they attempted to get off the beaches and ascend the cliffs with which they were confronted. By the end of the day the war was also over for four other Australians: Bugler Frederick Ashton, Private Reginald Lushington, Sergeant William Elston and Captain Ron McDonald. However, unlike their comrades, these four men had not been killed, nor were they wounded and removed from the battlefield by their fellow soldiers. Instead they had been taken prisoner by their Turkish enemy, earning them the dubious distinction of the first Australians to be captured in the Great War.

During the course of the war 192 more Australians – twenty-one officers and 173 enlisted men – joined Ashton, Lushington, Elston and McDonald as prisoners of the Turks. These men from the infantry, the Light Horse and Camel Corps, the Navy and the Flying Corps were captured in the Dardanelles, across the Sinai-Palestine front, and in Mesopotamia. Of various ages and backgrounds and hailing from hometowns across Australia, this disparate group was interned alongside thousands of their Allied comrades in prison camps throughout Turkey. At the time of the Armistice in November 1918, fifty-four lay in graves scattered across the country, having perished as prisoners.

The capture and imprisonment of these soldiers, sailors, and airmen at the hands of such a radically different enemy was an unprecedented experience for Australians already facing a conflict of extraordinary scale, magnitude and impact. The South African Boers had taken a limited number of colonial troops prisoner during the Boer War of 1899-1902, but few were held in internment camps for extended periods of time.[1] The Germans took nearly 4,000 Australian prisoners on the Western Front between 1916 and 1918 but, as with capture by the Boers, the difference between captive and captor was not as great. The prisoners of the Turks were the first Australians to experience sustained captivity at the hands of a culturally, religiously, linguistically and materially different enemy. This thesis examines how Australians were affected by captivity in Turkey, and how they coped with the manifold challenges it posed to adjust to the experience and ultimately manage its impact. In doing so, the thesis argues that the capture and internment of the Australians in Turkey had a widespread and, for some, long-lasting impact, and that it did not necessarily equate to a situation of passivity and powerlessness.

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[1] Peter Stanley, "Introduction" in *Stolen Years: Australian Prisoners of War* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial/Department of Veteran's Affairs, 2002), 4. The Boer War had descended into a guerrilla-like conflict in its latter stages and maintaining prisoners was difficult for the mobile Boer commandoes.

The novelty of extended wartime captivity for Australians during the First World War generated diverse challenges. For men who had enlisted for active service prepared for injury, or even death, captivity had not been contemplated as a potential outcome. This made the transition from combatant to captive particularly galling, and many felt angry, ashamed and frustrated with their new status and their immediate treatment behind Turkish lines. Adjusting to their new identity as prisoners of war (POWs) thus proved their first challenge of captivity, and the first step in managing their experiences of imprisonment.

Life as a POW in Turkey was also challenging. The Ottoman Empire entered the First World War in a parlous state. Known as 'the Sick Man of Europe', the Empire was stretched to the point of bankruptcy after years of conflict. Internal division and external threats from the Christian Balkan states and other imperial competitors meant that trade networks, communication and transport infrastructure were underdeveloped, while the state of medical facilities was poor. Moreover, the Army was still suffering the effects of defeat in the Balkans and was, according to historian Edward Erickson, "tired out and worn down."[2] Such lack of general

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Most men they captured were stripped of their uniforms, weapons and horses and left to find their own way back to their lines. The nature of the conflict and the lack of extant records have made identifying those who became prisoners difficult. Officially, the number is set at about 100, though one historian has put the figure as high as 224. See Neil C. Smith, *Australian Prisoners of War – Boer War 1899-1902: An examination and listing of all known Australian Prisoners of War in the Boer War 1899-1902* (Melbourne: Mostly Unsung Military History, 2005).

[2] Edward Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 10 & 25. Despite undergoing a radical restructure led by Enver Pasha, the Young Turk Minister of War, and the efforts of a German Military Mission led by General Otto Liman von Sanders, by the eve of war work on the Ottoman armed forces was focussed on rebuilding rather than training and preparing for mobilisation. Enver culled 1,300 of what he saw as old and less active officers, and established 'Ottoman Strength Clubs' to promote martial spirit among the youth. He also introduced universal conscription. Previously Muslim men were the only inhabitants of the Empire liable for active service, excluding those living in the holy cities, those involved in religious

infrastructure, health care, financial support, and supplies for the military inevitably had effects on the prisoners. Moreover, captivity in Turkey caused psychological stress. Aside from emotional strain generated by the restrictions of prolonged imprisonment, the prisoners also felt the impact of culture clash. The Australians had lived under a White Australia that reflected generally accepted beliefs about social Darwinism and racial hierarchies. Being held prisoner by a supposedly 'inferior' race represented a humiliating inversion of this perceived natural order, and the loss of power and superiority their race was supposed to confer was traumatic. The prisoners employed multiple strategies to normalise their conditions and actively manage their situation.

The capture and imprisonment of Australians in Turkey affected not only the captives. It also created challenges for multiple other parties that necessitated active responses in order to successfully adjust to and manage this new wartime reality. Government officials in Britain and Australia established delicate diplomatic relationships to negotiate with their foreign counterparts, while the newly formed Australian Red Cross found ways to provide aid and welfare to those in enemy hands. Australians at home also felt the impact of captivity as they became aware of, and subsequently engaged with, the plight of the prisoners through exposure to narratives of suffering employed by the government and patriotic associations, while the prisoners' families developed ways to manage the unique anxiety caused by having little appreciation or understanding of the location and condition of their loved ones.

When the war ended and the prisoners returned home, the effects of their internment continued to pose specific challenges. Many suffered physical and psychological health issues related to their time in Turkey. Families who had lost husbands, sons and brothers endured the removal and reburial of loved ones, and awareness, remembrance and commemoration of the prisoners' distinctive experiences of the war proved challenging in the context of the developing Anzac

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instruction or training, and those who worked as civil or palace servants. Non-Muslims, viewed with some suspicion by their Muslim comrades, were instead made to pay a special exemption tax. Under the CUP reforms all male Ottoman subjects of a certain age were expected to serve, however the reality was that non-Muslims were used mainly for supply services and support roles rather than being armed for fighting. The 'Ottoman Strength Clubs' were largely based on the scouting movement popular in Europe and involved training and teaching young people the ways of military discipline, the importance of physical health and mental strength and the distinctive traits of 'the national character'. Unashamedly militaristic, these clubs were also largely focussed on Turkish nationalism – leaders were given traditional Turkish titles and the historic fighting qualities of the Turks were taught. See Handan Nezir Akmese, *The Birth of Modern Turkey: The Ottoman Military and the March to World War I* (London: I.B Tauris, 2005), 112-114 & 169-170.

legend. During the interwar period the ex-POWs and their families, as well as Australian military and government authorities, attempted to manage the aftermath of captivity – though not always successfully.

Prisoners of the Turks in Australian Historiography

POWs have long been marginalised in First World War literature. Traditional histories of the conflict focussed on the logistics, tactics and outcomes of specific battles, or the 'big men' involved – commanders, generals, and others in positions of military authority. More recent literature is concerned with the social impact of the war; studies of frontline soldiers' experiences, the mobilisation of homefronts, changing ways of grieving and mourning, and the development of commemorative practices are common areas of enquiry. POWs do not fit neatly into either of these two approaches. As Annette Becker writes, wartime captives were "ensconsced in a place that was elsewhere, outside the nation-in-arms and the collective struggle for its defence" – an exclusive space that subsequently led to their exclusion from the history of the war.[3] British historian Heather Jones also argues that POWs are "a missing paradigm" of Great War historiography:

> The First World War is often understood in terms of familiar paradigms: western front trench stalemate; the brutalisation of millions of conscript soldiers; the totalisation of industrial warfare or the mass mobilisation of societies … It remains remarkable that one of the most significant paradigms of the First World War has long been overlooked – mass military captivity.[4]

A brief scan of international literature relating to POWs in the First World War proves Becker and Jones' point. Aside from Jones herself, who writes about violence towards French, British, and German prisoners on their journeys between battlefront and enemy homefront, there are few sustained analyses of captivity, POW camps, and prisoners of war during the First World War. Moreover, with the notable exceptions of Alon Rachamimov's study of Austro-Hungarian prisoners in Russia or Yucel Yanikdag's analysis of Ottoman POWs also held captive in Russia, scholars who have studied First World War POWs tend to focus on those captured and held in the

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[3] Annette Becker, "Art, Material Life, and Disaster: Civilian and Military Prisoners of War," in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory, and the First World War*, ed. Nicholas J. Saunders (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), 26.

[4] Heather Jones, "A Missing Paradigm? Military Captivity and the Prisoner of War, 1914-18," *Immigrants and Minorities* 26 no. 1-2 (2008): 19.

European theatre.[5] Those who experienced captivity on different fronts, including the prisoners of the Turks, remain an under-researched group.

In keeping with the international situation, the prisoners of the Turks have received only limited attention in Australia. Indeed, the daughter of one ex-prisoner interviewed for this thesis remarked that she has always struggled to convince others that her father was taken captive on Gallipoli.[6] Such lack of awareness of the prisoners and their experiences in Australia is not entirely surprising. Over time, the Anzac legend has simplified Australian participation in the First World War to create a hegemonic ideal of 'the Australian' war experience. Alistair Thomson explores this phenomenon in his study of the influence of collective memory over the individual memories of veterans:

> [T]he sharp edges of the Anzac experience have often been rubbed smooth, as legend-makers have fashioned a compelling narrative and a homogenous Anzac identity … the legend has always worked to construct 'a typical Anzac' or a 'genuine digger' and, in turn, to render aberrant experiences and identities as alien, atypical and un-Australian.[7]

Capture and imprisonment in Turkey qualifies as such an 'atypical' experience. Only 196 Australians were taken prisoner by the Turks during the war – a number that contrasts starkly with the 60,000 Australians who perished and the approximately 150,000 who returned wounded. And, while many of those who became POWs saw action during the Gallipoli campaign or in the Middle East, none spent any time in the trenches of the Western Front, the most significant site of battle for the majority of Australian servicemen. The prisoners of the Turks have been, to borrow Peter Monteath's phrase, "neatly erased from the collective memory of the war."[8]

Moreover, for Australians the definitive experience of wartime captivity is that of the World War II prisoners of the Japanese. The unprecedented number of captives, the tragically high death rates of the Pacific prison camps, the images of emaciated, brutalised men and women, and the stories of suffering and cruelty so vividly portrayed in the many memoirs and scholarly studies of the prisoners have ensured that they have attained an almost legendary status in Australian memory of that conflict.[9] However, the attention afforded this POW experience has also meant that those, like the prisoners of the Turks, who endured captivity at the hands of different enemies in different wars, have long been overlooked.[10]

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[5] Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Yucel Yanikdag, "Ottoman Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-22," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34 no.1 (1999): 69-85. For examples of studies focussed on Europe, see the work of Annette Becker on French POWs in Germany, Brian Feltman on German POWs in Britain, Desmond Morton on Canadian POWs in Germany and S.P. McKenzie on British POWs in Germany.

[6] Interview with Jan Delpratt, 29 November 2011.

[7] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living With the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 215-6.

[8] Peter Monteath, *P.O.W.: Australian Prisoners of War in Hitler's Reich* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2011), 21. Monteath was also referring to the prisoners of the Germans during the First World War.

The prisoners of the Turks are rarely mentioned in any general analysis of World War I, except in statistics provided in footnotes or appendices to denote battle ‘casualties’. The father of Australian military history, Charles Bean, mentions them sparingly in his frontline-focussed official histories of the war and even the 2002 Department of Veteran’s Affairs/Australian War Memorial book, *Stolen Years: Australian Prisoners of War*, devotes only one page to their stories.[11] Generic POW histories that are essentially compilations of various captivity experiences from different wars throughout the years, such as Patsy-Adam Smith’s 1992 publication *Prisoners of War: From Gallipoli to Korea* and, more recently, Denny Neave and Craig Smith’s *Aussie Soldier: Prisoners of War*, are equally as limited in their discussions.[12]

The most attention afforded the prisoners of the Turks has come from non-academic writers, with authors including Greg Kerr and journalist couple Fred and Elizabeth Brenchley (*Stoker’s Submarine,* 2001, and *White’s Flight, 2004*) using the memoirs and diaries of specific ex-prisoners to produce accounts of their lives in captivity and, to some extent, after.[13] While informative and entertaining, these texts tend to rely on the accounts of a small number of ex-prisoners, with little acknowledgment of the potential perils of working with sources based purely on memory. Furthermore, their representation of the POW experience is essentially a reproduction of sensationalised ideas with little analysis of how these ideas were generated. For example, in *White's Flight*, the authors state "Masloum Bey [Commandant at Afyon] was always capable of some new act of cruelty" and go on to discuss his propensity to use the *bastinado* on his prisoners.[14] Masloum Bey had a notorious reputation among the prisoners who were interned at Afyonkarahissar, but the Brenchley's fail to explore the rationale behind the prisoners' memories of contempt for the Commandant, which were driven by cultural clashes over the use of corporal punishment and indignation regarding their position of vulnerability at the hands of someone from a supposedly inferior race.

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[9] Joan Beaumont, “Prisoners of War: Asia Pacific, 1941-45,” in *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics,* ed. Joan Beaumont (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001), 340. Scholarly studies into the prisoners of the Japanese began in the 1980s with the groundbreaking work of historians Hank Nelson and Joan Beaumont. Since then there has been a plethora of work devoted to their experiences, ranging from studies of specific groups of captives, such as Rosalind Hearder, *Keep the Men Alive: Australian POW doctors in Japanese captivity (*Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009) and Catherine Kenny, *Captives: Australian Army Nurses in Japanese Prison Camps* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1986), to analyses of specific camps such as Bruce Gamble, *Darkest Hour: The true story of Lark Force at Rabaul* (St Paul: Zenith Press, 2006), studies of the Burma-Thai Railroad including Hank Nelson and Gavan McCormack, *The Burma-Thailand Railway: Memory and History* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993) and investigations into the trials of those accused of war crimes against prisoners such as Robin Rowland, *A River Kwai Story: The Sonkrai Tribunal* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2008).

[10] It is only recently that other Australian POW experiences have become the focus of academic investigation. For an in-depth analysis of the experiences of Australian POWs in Germany during the Second World War see Peter Monteath, *POW: Australian Prisoners of War in Hitler’s Reich* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2011). For a discussion of Australian prisoners taken on the Western Front in the First World War see David Coombes, *Crossing the Wire: The Untold Stories of Australian POWs in Battle and Captivity During WWI* (Sydney: Big Sky Publishing, 2011). ANU postgraduate student Aaron Pegram is completing a PhD thesis about this latter group of prisoners.

[11] *Stolen Years: Australian Prisoners of War* (Canberra: Department of Veteran’s Affairs/Australian War Memorial, 2002).

[12] Patsy Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War: From Gallipoli to Korea* (Melbourne: Viking, 1992); Denny Neave and Craig Smith, *Aussie Soldier: Prisoners of War* (Brisbane: Big Sky Publishing, 2009).

Academic work on the prisoners and their experiences is minimal – thus far limited to a few chapters in broader themed books, a 1983 Honours thesis and a recently completed PhD thesis. While more engaged with the methodological issues of working with memory and the importance of corroborating personal evidence against other records, these more scholarly accounts are narrow in scope. The majority reinforce the historiographical dominance of Gallipoli by concentrating solely on the experiences of those captured on the peninsula, even though they account for only one third of all Australians imprisoned in Turkey. John Robertson's detailed chapter, "Prisoners of the Turks," in his 1990 publication *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli*, is such an example.[15] By analysing official records Robertson presents a more balanced view of the conditions of captivity in Turkey, but he is concerned mainly with the Gallipoli POWs.

Jennifer Lawless' 2011 PhD thesis "Kizmet: The Fate of the Gallipoli POWs" is another example of the Australian preoccupation with Gallipoli.[16] Lawless challenges alleged misconceptions about the experiences of the Australian prisoners in Turkey, especially the myth that the prisoners endured a brutal captivity equivalent to that of the prisoners of the Japanese. However, her reliance on the evidence of only one-third of the total number of captive Australians skews her study. For example, the men taken prisoner on Gallipoli were captured much closer to their eventual sites of internment, and so did not have to endure the often arduous experiences of travel to prison camps that befell those taken in Mesopotamia and Palestine. Moreover, Lawless neglects to explore the underlying basis of these myths, particularly why the prisoners felt so badly treated. Her focus – understandably as her thesis is the first study of Australians in Turkish captivity – is what happened to the prisoners. How they felt about their capture and imprisonment and how they responded to its many challenges is given less emphasis.

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[13] Greg Kerr, *Lost Anzacs: The Story of Two Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Fred and Elizabeth Brenchley, *Stoker's Submarine* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2001) and *White's Flight*: *An Australian Pilot's Epic Escape from Turkish Prison Camp to Russia's Revolution* (Brisbane: John Wiley & Sons, 2004).

[14] Fred and Elizabeth Brenchley, *White's Flight,* 107. A *bastinado* is a multi-tailed whip, usually used on the feet of the victim.

[15] John Robertson, "Prisoners of the Turks," in *Anzac and Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli* (Melbourne: Hamlyn Australia, 1990), 213-223.

[16] Jennifer Lawless, "Kizmet: The Fate of the Gallipoli POWs" (PhD Thesis: University of New England, 2011).

The only other scholarly enquiry is Noel Brackenbury's 1983 Macquarie University BA Honours thesis.[17] Brackenbury's thesis is different in that he draws on the accounts of Australians captured on all fronts, but is also (necessarily) limited in that he analyses only their experiences of capture and movement behind Turkish lines. While the circumstance of capture and experiences behind enemy lines are a significant aspect of the POW experience, they do not tell the whole story. How the men felt about and responded to being taken prisoner, and how they dealt with the challenges that captivity posed, allows for a more rounded appreciation of the POW experience.

Aside from Brackenbury's thesis, available literature about the Australian experience of captivity in Turkey is also limited in that it is largely focussed on the prisoners' time in internment. For example, Lawless devotes the majority of her thesis to the specifics of the men's capture and imprisonment. While her study provides the first comprehensive analysis of the location and conditions of the different prison camps, she does not go into any particular detail about how or why other individuals and groups experienced the impact of captivity. This is a significant gap in the story for, as historians Janette Bomford and Michael McKernan have demonstrated in their work on the prisoners of the Japanese, the POW experience is not solely about time spent in a prison camp, or even solely about the prisoners.[18] The role of external aid and welfare agencies, the homefront reaction to the men's imprisonment, the effects on family and friends at home, and the process of repatriation and resettlement into civilian life are also important.

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[17] Noel Brackenbury, "Becoming Guests of the Unspeakable: A Study of the Pre-Internment Experiences of Australian servicemen captured by the Turks during World War I" (BA Hons Thesis, Macquarie University, 1983.)

The theme of 'coping', 'managing', or 'adjusting' is not new within Australian histories of the First World War, yet for those affected by captivity in Turkey this aspect has long been unexplored. While there has been excellent work by historians such as Stephen Garton and Marina Larsson on how veterans and their families coped with the legacy of war service in the aftermath of the war, there has been no sustained exploration into the repatriation of POWs and the unique ways captivity continued to affect the men and their families into the postwar period.[19] Similarly, despite a growing literature relating to the impact of the war on those who remained at home, particularly the families of servicemen, no study exists examining the specific challenges faced by families of prisoners or how they managed the peculiar absences of their loved ones.[20] And, while Suzanne Brugger, Richard White and more recently Peter Stanley have explored the interactions of Australian troops with racial 'others', both military and civilian, there has been no inquiry into how the prisoners in Turkey, who spent extended periods of time with their very different enemy, coped with the culture clash this engendered.[21] Other aspects of the captivity experience, such as the official response to the imprisonment of the men in Turkey, including the work of aid and welfare agencies, the fate of those who died in the camps, or the position of the POWs in Australian history and memory of the war, have been similarly overlooked.[22]

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[18] Janette Bomford, "Fractured Lives: Australian Prisoners of the Japanese and Their Families" (PhD Thesis: Deakin University, 2002); Michael McKernan, *This War Never Ends: The Pain of Separation and Return* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2001).

[19] Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996); Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs: Living with the Scars of War* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009).

[20] Consider, for example, the work of Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004).

[21] Suzanne Brugger, *Australians and Egypt 1914-1919* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980); Richard White, "The Soldier as Tourist: The Australian Experience of the Great War," *War & Society* 5 no. 1 (1987): 63-77; Peter Stanley, "He was black, he was a White man, and a dinkum Aussie': race and Empire in revisiting the Anzac Legend," in *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, ed. Santanu Das (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 213-230.

[22] Various scholars have studied these aspects of Australian war history without reference to prisoners of war. Melanie Oppenheimer has written extensively on the work of voluntary or aid organisations during the war, including the Australian Red Cross, while Bart Ziino has studied the effects of wartime

The thesis evokes these historiographical trends – the marrying of battlefront and homefront, the exploration of the enduring legacy of war, and the impact of race – to fill the significant gap in our understanding of this POW experience. In doing so it offers a deeper, more rounded appreciation of captivity, of the Australian homefront and interwar period, and of the prisoners themselves, while also highlighting the diversity of Australian experiences during the war.

Sources and Structure

Despite the paucity of secondary literature about the prisoners and this episode in Australian military history, a wealth of primary source material exists in various libraries, archives and personal collections across Australia and internationally. Central to the exploration of how the prisoners managed their captivity are the writings of the men themselves, including diaries, letters, and memoirs and biographical accounts. Diaries were prohibited in the prison camps but a few men managed to maintain illicit records of their daily life as captives.[23] While diaries are useful to the historian as they convey the immediate feelings of the prisoner, they can also contain elements of self-censorship and reflection that skew the representation of events and experiences. Recent historical studies on the nature of diaries have challenged the notion that they are private documents intended only for personal use. Although they are addressed to the self, diaries are often written with an audience in mind.[24] In the case of the POWs, this audience could range from fellow prisoners, immediate family, or wider networks of friends at home.

Some of the most interesting insights into prison camp life can be gleaned from the letters sent by prisoners to family and friends at home. Several collections of letters exist – the recently donated Delpratt collection at the State Library of

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bereavement and the development of war graves cemeteries. See Melanie Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Civilian Volunteers in War* (Walcha: Ohio Productions, 2002) and Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

[23] See George Kerr's diary at AWMPR00953 and Daniel Creedon's diary at John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Kerr's diaries form the basis of Greg Kerr's *Lost Anzacs*. Daniel Creedon died in Turkey and a fellow prisoner brought his diary back to Australia.

[24] For a discussion of the 'self addressing self' aspect of diaries see Samuel Hynes, "Personal Narratives and Commemoration," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 209. For an examination of the effects a potential audience can have in shaping the nature of a diary, see Marina Larsson, "The Burdens of Sacrifice: War Disability in Australian Families 1914-1939" (PhD thesis, La Trobe University, 2006), 16-17.

Queensland's John Oxley Library is a particularly rich source containing nearly four years of correspondence – while others can be found in the men's Service Records or Red Cross files.[25] Like diaries, letters also contain elements of self-censorship and are also written for a potentially diverse audience.[26] With this in mind, the writer often distorts certain events or experiences to ensure the comfort of the reader. Correspondence during the war was ritualised and codified, and was often constructed around formulaic descriptions of life at the front. As Martyn Lyons suggests, the purpose of letters written during wartime was often to disguise the truth rather than reveal it.[27] This was certainly the case for many of the prisoners in Turkey. A common theme of their letters, for example, is to play down any illness contracted or punishment received so as to not worry those at home. Nevertheless, for the historian, silences and gaps in diaries and letters – the things that could not be said – still prove useful. Michael Roper argues in relation to British soldiers on the Western Front writing to their mothers at home that often it is the silences that convey the most information about their experiences:

> We can learn to read the emotions of sons between the lines of letters home … They dropped clues in their omissions, abrupt changes of topic, things alluded to but ultimately left unsaid, and contradictory comments about their spirits … The result was a characteristically oblique style of communication which can nevertheless reveal much about the emotional experience of Army life.[28]

In similar fashion, reading between the lines of POW letters allows insights into how the men felt about their capture and imprisonment, and how they worked to actively shape their conditions and situations to make their captivity more tolerable.

Memoirs also offer valuable insights into the experience of captivity. Eight Australian ex-prisoners published memoirs after the war, including officers Captain Thomas White and Lieutenant Ronald Austin, and enlisted men Reginald Lushington, George Handsley, and John Halpin.[29] Several British ex-prisoners also released memoir-type accounts of their captivity. Lieutneant Leonard Woolley, later renowned for his archaeology work in Egypt, published *From Kastamuni to Kedos: Being a Record of Experiences of Prisoners of War in Turkey 1916-1918* in 1921, Captain Henry Stoker, the Irish-born Commander of the Australian *AE2* submarine, wrote *Straws in the Wind* in 1925, and Lieutenant Elias Henry Jones recounted his captivity and 'escape' in the spiritualist text *The Road to En-dor: An Account of how Two Prisoners of War at Yozgad in Turkey Won their Freedom* in 1930.[30] Several other prisoners wrote narratives of their experiences in Turkey that were never published. *AE2* submariner John Wheat completed a comprehensive account of his capture and internment, including multiple escape attempts, while Air Mechanic Keith Hudson wrote a descriptive report on the surrender of the Kut garrison in April 1916 and the subsequent march through the Mesopotamian desert.[31]

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[25] Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

[26] Alistair Thomson, "Anzac Stories: Using Personal Testimony in War History," *War & Society* 25 no. 2 (2006): 13.

[27] Martyn Lyons, "French Soldiers and their Correspondence: Towards a History of Writing Practices in the First World War," *French History* 17 no.1 (2003): 82.

[28] Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 64.

[29] Thomas White, *Guests of the Unspeakable: The Odyssey of an Australian Airman* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1932); Ronald Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner* (Melbourne: J. Haase and Sons, undated); R.F. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks 1915-1918* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co, 1923); J.R. Foster, *Two and a half years a Prisoner of War in Turkey – related*

While such accounts offer a unique and evocative indication of life as a captive in Turkey and after, the use of primary source material based on memory can prove problematic. Memory has long been viewed as a notoriously unreliable source.[32] Individuals can falsely remember certain events or experiences, the initial memory can become clouded with time, and associated trauma can affect recall.[33] Furthermore, individual memory can be manipulated by the phenomenon of collective memory. Certain memories that do not fit into a societal 'norm' can be suppressed, while others that do meet social expectations can be over-emphasised.[34] Memoirs, by definition, are constructed from memories and are thus subject to these potential distortions. They are typically written well after the events they describe and are given a specific, shaped narrative structure for the benefit of the audience.[35] Moreover, the motivations of the author must be considered. Several ex-POW

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by G.W. Handsley (Brisbane: Jones and Hambly, 1920); John Halpin, *Blood in the Mists* (Sydney: The Macquarie Head Press, 1934).

[30] C.L. Woolley, *From Kastamuni to Kedos: Being a Record of Experiences of Prisoners of War in Turkey 1916-1918* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1921); H.G. Stoker, *Straws in the Wind* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd, 1925); E.H. Jones, *The Road to En-dor: An account of how two prisoners of war at Yozgad in Turkey won their freedom* (London: Bodley Head, 1930).

[31] John Harrison Wheat Papers, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland; Records of Air Mech. K.L. Hudson AFC 1914-1918, AWM3DRL/3325.

[32] Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (2000): 130.

[33] For a discussion of the manifold issues about using memory as a historical source see Paula Hamilton, "The Knife-Edge: Debates About Memory and History," in *Memory and History in Twentieth Century Australia,* eds. Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 9-27.

[34] Thomson, "Anzac Stories," 4-5.

[35] Ibid, 7.

memoirists tend to overemphasise heroic escape attempts in an effort to, as Robin Gerster suggests, “big-note” their experiences.[36] Others have used their memoirs to exact what Gerster terms “belated revenge” on their captors.[37] Thomas White’s *Guests of the Unspeakable* is a good example of this attempt to embellish experiences of escape while simultaneously denigrating the captors. The result is a ‘boys-own’ adventure story that reads, according to Gerster, as “a cranky compendium of nineteenth-century imperialist prejudices and parochialism.”[38]

One way to overcome the problematic nature of theses sources is to corroborate them alongside contemporary official records. This thesis uses records from the Australian Governor-General’s office and the Department of Defence, including reports on the conditions of POW camps in Turkey produced by neutral protecting powers. The correspondence between Australian, British, American and Dutch government departments found in these various government files allows for the assessment of the official response to the imprisonment of the Australians in Turkey. Again, however, the authors’ agenda must be considered. For example, a British War Office White Paper often cited in secondary literature was written to explore the idea of Turkish mistreatment of POWs, with a view to postwar prosecution of alleged breaches of international law, and is propagandist in nature.[39]

The use of Turkish sources has been limited to available published records regarding the prisoners, specifically transcribed interviews of POWs conducted immediately after capture, certain personal accounts translated into English, and material found in correspondence between the Turkish government and the protecting powers.[40] The restricted use of Turkish material in this thesis was largely due to time, financial, and other constraints, but also because Turkish sources were not seen as especially significant in assessing how Australians felt about and coped with the manifold challenges of captivity. Turkish records would have little bearing on the homefront response to the men’s imprisonment, how the relatives and friends of the prisoners coped with having a loved one in captivity, or how the prisoners experienced the legacy of captivity and negotiated its impact. Moreover, aspects of the prisoners' story that could benefit from the inclusion of Turkish source material – such as the official Turkish policies and procedures governing internment or the specifics of individual prison camps – were covered by Jennifer Lawless in her PhD thesis.

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[36] Robin Gerster, *Big-noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1987), 144.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid, 145.

[39] “Report on the Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Turkey,” cd. 9208, (London: HMSO, 1918).

[40] The Sublime Porte was the equivalent of the Turkish Parliament. Much of the correspondence between the Turks and the protecting powers was written in the contemporary international language of diplomacy – French. My thanks to Romain Fathi for his efforts in translating these documents.

Records of the Australian Red Cross have also informed much of the thesis. Each POW had two case files with the Red Cross: a Wounded and Missing Bureau Enquiry file, opened when a man was first posted as missing, and a POW Department case file, created when he was officially listed as a prisoner.[41] Each file contains letters from the Red Cross to the man's family and, in the case of the POW Department files, from the Red Cross to the man himself. When coupled with the relevant prisoner's Service Record (NAA Series B2455) a detailed chronology of a man's imprisonment and his family's response is revealed. Such correspondence needs to be used with the same care as letters from the prisoners, but the often emotive material contained in these files – what Pat Jalland calls the "frank information" – offers intimate insight into the feelings of the prisoners' families and friends.[42] As Michael McKernan points out in his study of the absence and return of the World War II POWs of the Japanese, there are few extant sources detailing the impact of captivity on the families of the captives.[43] In most cases, the letters found in official Service Records and Red Cross files represent the only surviving sources that allow for a detailed assessment of how families coped with the capture and imprisonment of their husbands, sons and brothers.

Letters and reports from Red Cross representatives at the POW Department and the Wounded and Missing Bureau also detail the different ways by which the newly-formed aid agency helped maintain the prisoners' welfare with the issue of food and comforts parcels, and demonstrate how they acted as an intermediary to permit communication between the prisoners and their loved ones in the camps. Branch Records and reports from various Red Cross Departments on the homefront have also been used to determine the extent to which POW affairs were an issue for the Red Cross and other patriotic organisations.

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[41] Both sets of records are located at the Australian War Memorial at AWM1DRL/0428.

[42] Pat Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War, Medicine and the Funeral Business* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 64.

[43] McKernan, *This War Never Ends*, 39.

However, the writings of the men, official government reports and records of the Red Cross only cover the period of internment. The latter sections of the thesis, which deal with previously unexplored aspects of the POWs' experiences of return and resettlement, required the use of other sources that incorporated the immediate postwar period and the aftermath of the war, including Repatriation case files, battalion histories, and records from the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves office.

Like all returned servicemen, the prisoners of the Turks were eligible to apply for financial and medical assistance through the Department of Repatriation. Those who did apply have an individual case file that typically includes applications for pensions, records of medical conditions and hospital treatments, and correspondence between the ex-prisoner and the Department.[44] Unfortunately, many such files have been destroyed over the years but, of those men who were repatriated from Turkey, 65 have full case files. As it was not uncommon for returned servicemen to overemphasise their various ailments or financial predicament to ensure a favourable response from the Department, this material, as Stephen Garton suggests, must be used with caution.[45] Nevertheless, the files provide insight into the legacy of captivity for the ex-prisoner. The medical records and application forms they contain allow for an analysis of mortality rates and illness or trauma associated with the man's time as a POW, while the interdepartmental correspondence often found within the files also offers a glimpse into how 'the Repat' perceived and treated the men.

An aspect of the legacy of captivity that has long been overlooked concerns what happened to the bodies of those prisoners who died in Turkey. Records from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission offices in London were consulted to ascertain how deceased prisoners were identified, relocated, or officially commemorated.[46] This material indicates the policies and procedures of the Commission and how its employees negotiated the difficult task of liaising with exenemy governments, family members, and military departments. It also offers an impression of how the deceased prisoners were perceived, particularly in terms of memorialisation. Unofficial postwar records, particularly battalion histories, were also used to gain an understanding of how the prisoners were remembered by their peers. Some battalion histories devoted significant space to those of their number who had been taken prisoner during the war, such as the 11th Light Horse Regiment's history, which included several appendices written by ex-prisoners, while others largely gloss over the loss of their compatriots to the enemy.[47]

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[44] Individual First World War Repatriation case files are held by the National Archives of Australia in the state branch in which the returned serviceman died. The process of identifying and locating these files was time-consuming and often frustrating – my sincere thanks go to the staff of the Queensland, New South Wales and Victorian NAA offices and the staff of the Department of Veteran's Affairs for their assistance with this aspect of the project.

[45] Garton, *The Cost of War,* 86. Garton writes of the potentially problematic nature of Repatriation-related source material: "by its very nature, the repatriation archive is more likely to be a repository of complaint rather than compliment."

[46] Specifically, series WG219, WG436 and WG920. Thanks are extended to Andrew Fetherston of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for locating and copying these files.

A range of other sources covering both the men's period of captivity and the aftermath also inform the thesis. Newspapers from the major cities and regional centres of wartime Australia were used to obtain insights into the wider social framework of the time. Though newspapers have been criticised as an unreliable source due to their potential for sensationalism and their reliance on hearsay and circumstantial evidence they are, according to Jerry Knudson, "the most valuable index we have of measuring popular attitudes."[48] Australians of this time relied primarily on newspapers for information about the war – wireless was not introduced in Australia for news and leisure purposes until the 1920s – and it was in newspapers that casualty lists, letters from soldiers, advertisements for fundraisers, and letters to editors were published. Analysis of newspapers covering the time of the war and the Armistice thus offer a platform from which to explore how the POWs were represented and perceived on the homefront, while postwar newspapers offer an indication of the reception the men received upon their return.

Interviews with the descendants of the POWs regarding their memories of their father, grandfather or uncle were also undertaken to understand the long-term effects of the captivity experience. Oral histories can prove just as problematic as written memoirs, as they are also based on memory – in this case often childhood memories – and are therefore subject to the same distortions. Usually obtained through an interview in which certain leading questions designed to trigger memories of specific events or experiences are asked, oral histories can have the added problematic dimension of interviewer collaboration. One of the major criticisms of oral history is that the person being interviewed can often sense the type of response the interviewer is searching for, which can ultimately affect the quality of the information obtained.[49] However, the interviews conducted for this thesis proved useful in determining the character of the man and how family members perceived him to be affected (or not) by his experiences of imprisonment, and allowed for a greater appreciation of the intergenerational impacts of captivity.

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[47] Ernest W. Hammond, *History of the 11th Light Horse Regiment, Fourth Light Horse Brigade, Australian Imperial Forces, War 1914-1919* (Brisbane: William Brooks & Co., 1942); for an example of a battalion history glossing over their POWs, see T.P. Chatway, *History of the 15th Battalion Australian Imperial Forces War 1914-1918,* ed. Paul Goldenstedt (Brisbane: William Brooks, 1948).

[48] Jerry W. Knudson, "Late to the Feast: Newspapers as Historical Resources," *Perspectives: American Historical Association* (October 1993): np.

The thesis is structured to allow for a longitudinal assessment of how Australians coped with the experience and impact of captivity in Turkey. The first two chapters focus on the prisoners themselves. Chapter One examines the transition the men made from combatant soldiers, sailors and airmen to captives. Officially, POW status is granted immediately after capture, but this chapter demonstrates that becoming a POW was the end result of a process that began with capture and, after time spent journeying to sites of internment, ended with the prisoner's eventual acceptance of and adjustment to his fate. It explores the preconceptions and perceptions the prisoners entertained about their captors, how they responded to their initial treatment behind Turkish lines and en route to a prison camp, and their emotional reaction to their new status.

Once a camp was reached the prisoners faced prolonged internment in a radically different environment. Cultural clashes over food, accommodation, travel, work, and medical care were of immediate concern, while emotional strain was caused by the restrictions of imprisonment and the traumatic inversion of the 'natural order' of things. These physical and psychological challenges demanded the prisoners respond to minimise their impact. Chapter Two explores these various challenges, and examines how the prisoners negotiated restrictions, reasserted power and status, and implemented measures to normalise their conditions. Captives were not passive recipients of imprisonment, they became active participants in the experience and worked to normalise, and thus manage, their abnormal situation.

As Michael McKernan and others have argued, wartime captivity affects not only the captive. Chapters Three, Four, and Five examine the impact of captivity on those outside of the prison camps, and further emphasise that captivity required various parties to respond to the challenges it posed in order to manage the experience. Chapter Three focuses on the actions of the Australian, British and

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[49] David Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London: Longman Group, 1982), 22; Thomson, "Anzac Stories," 14.

Turkish governments, the role of neutral protecting powers, and the efforts of the Red Cross and other aid organisations. Such analysis allows insight into the policies and procedures governing the distribution of help and support for the prisoners, the negotiation of diplomatic relations between belligerents, and the crucial role that aid agencies played in maintaining the welfare of captives. The chapter assesses how these different parties worked together to manage the provision, implementation, and administration of relief, how they coped with the challenges this work posed, and how successful their efforts actually were. It further highlights the active responses of those involved with the captivity experience.

The impact of captivity on the Australian homefront is the focus of Chapter Four. Unlike perceptions of the Turks, which changed from negative to positive as the war dragged on, representations of captivity in Turkey shifted from tolerable to terrible. The government and charitable associations exploited heightened public awareness of Australians in enemy hands after the capture of large numbers of Australian troops by the Germans during major battles on the Western Front. The POWs' experiences were framed as narratives of suffering by these different parties to encourage enlistment and elicit increased donations from Australians at home. How the Australian public engaged with the prisoners' plight – how they attempted to actively respond to and manage the challenges these popular representations of captivity suggested – is assessed through interactions with the government and patriotic work.

Chapter Five maintains the focus on the Australian homefront. The First World War was, as Jay Winter writes, "an event in family history" and analysis of the emotional impact of captivity on the families of the POWs is the focus of Chapter Five.[50] The families of the prisoners in Turkey faced similar forms of physical, communicative, and emotional separation from their loved ones as the families of all servicemen, but these separations were exacerbated by the particular ambiguity of captivity and the restrictions it posed. This chapter analyses the challenges faced by the families of the prisoners and argues that they did not passively accept their situation. Rather, to negotiate and manage captivity-related stress and strain, they developed and drew on an unofficial, private network of ‘adoptive’ or ‘fictive’ kin for support, information, and, in some instances, commiseration and condolence.

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[50] Jay Winter, "Kinship and Remembrance in the aftermath of the Great War," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century,* eds. Jay Winter and Emmanual Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 42

The Armistice of November 1918 signalled the end of the war and thus the end of captivity. The final chapter addresses the legacy of imprisonment. It explores how the prisoners coped with the reverse transition from captives to free men, and discusses the fate of those who did not come home. Once the prisoners returned to Australia they resumed civilian life yet, for many, their time in Turkey continued to resonate. The postwar health of the prisoners is a key focus of this chapter and, using Repatriation Department records, the physical and psychological impact of captivity is assessed. The ways by which the men and their families interacted with ‘the Repat’, particularly in the context of the construction of claims for pensions and medical care, is also examined. This chapter also discusses remembrance and commemoration with particular reference to the developing Anzac legend, and explores how – and why – the POWs and their experiences were slowly written out of Australian history and collective memory of the Great War.

For nearly a century the prisoners of the Turks have remained on the margins of Australian history and memory of the First World War. This thesis moves beyond a simple narrative of prison camp experiences to build on the limited exisiting work about these men and their experiences and explain how the prisoners, their families, the government, aid agencies and others responded to the unique challenges brought about by wartime imprisonment in the hands of a radically different enemy. In doing so it redresses the imbalance in Australian POW historiography and reminds us that Australians have endured captivity at the hands of diverse enemies, in different wars. It builds on the argument that captivity affects not just the captive but also those at home, and that it can continue to have an impact long after the war is over. It emphasises that captivity in Turkey was not a situation of total passivity and powerlessness, but rather that the responses and work of various parties affected by, or involved with, the capture and imprisonment of the Australians enabled the experience to be actively managed. Significantly, the thesis also presents an alternative to the dominant perception of a homogenous ‘Australian’ experience of the First World War, and, as we approach the centenary of the outbreak of the conflict in 2014, offers a timely reminder of the complex and diverse history of Australians at war.

CHAPTER ONE

From Combatants to Captives: Becoming Prisoners of War

In November 1918 Lieutenant Leslie Luscombe completed an official postwar statement outlining the events leading to his capture on the Gallipoli Peninsula in August 1915. Luscombe successfully led a group of men in an advance on a Turkish position, only to become isolated with no promise of reinforcements and surrounded by attacking Turkish troops. With the majority of his party killed or wounded, Luscombe surrendered and, under the internationally recognised laws of war in operation at the time, became a prisoner of war (POW).[1] Though officially POW standing was granted immediately after surrender or capture, this chapter contends that the drastic change from combatant to captive was not as simple or as straightforward for the men involved.[2] Rather, it was a transitional process beginning with capture and, after moving behind the lines and further away from the battlefield, finished with a period of reflection and acceptance as the men responded to their new status. This chapter focuses on this transition and examines the different ways in which the Australians were captured, their initiation into Turkish culture and life as a POW, their journeys towards internment, and their emotional and psychological reactions to becoming POWs.

Causes and Circumstances of Capture

The Australians who became prisoners of the Turks were taken across various fronts throughout the war. Sixty-seven infantrymen and twelve submariners were captured in the Dardanelles campaign, ninety-four Light Horsemen/Cameleers were taken across the Palestinian front, and twenty-three members of the Australian Flying Corps were captured in Mesopotamia and Palestine.[3] Several Australians were also taken prisoner as members of the British armed services.[4] With the exception of nine air mechanics caught up in the capitulation of the British garrison at Kut-el-Amara in April 1916, the Australians taken prisoner by the Turks were captured either individually or in small groups. The Turkish government offered rewards for the capture of Allied prisoners based on rank and nationality and, as the bulk of Turkish forces were conscripts who were minimally equipped for battle, the financial incentive provided some motivation for the capture of Allied servicemen.[5]

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[1] Repatriation Statement of Leslie Luscombe, AWM30 B1.20.

[2] Article 23 of the annex to the 1907 Hague Convention states that it is "especially forbidden to kill or wound an enemy who, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defence, has surrendered at discretion." "Annex to the Convention: Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV); October 18, 1907," http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hague04.asp

[3] See Appendix One for a list of all prisoners.

The circumstances of each man's capture depended on his location and his role in the services. Australians involved in the ground campaigns – members of the infantry, the Light Horse and the Camel Corps – were captured due to three main factors. The first, and perhaps most obvious, was incapacitating wounds. Despite romantic notions that Australians always collected their wounded, the realities of battle meant that this was simply not possible and, in the rush of withdrawal and retreat, wounded men were often left on the battlefield and brought in by their enemy counterparts. The men captured in this manner were typically combatant troops injured during full-scale attacks, such as the August offensive on Gallipoli, or in the numerous raids and advances across the Palestinian front.[6] Just under half of those who became prisoners in these campaigns were in some way wounded at the time of capture, usually having sustained gunshot or shrapnel wounds to the limbs. Such wounds were not immediately fatal but were severe enough to immobilise the victim. Those with more severe wounds, such as to the chest or abdomen, typically perished on the battlefield, while men with less severe injuries often made their way back to Australian lines.[7]

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[4] There were three Australian men taken POW on British submarines and at least three as members of the British Flying Corps. Several were also captured as members of British infantry or yeomanry units, but more research is required to ascertain the exact number.

[5] "Scale of Turkish Rewards from a Captured Document" in E.W. Hammond, *History of the 11th Light Horse Regiment, Fourth Light Horse Brigade, Australian Imperial Forces, War 1914-1919* (Brisbane: William Brooks and Co, 1942), 165. This document, an order issued under the seal of the 158th Turkish Regiment, was dated 15 December 1917 and was reportedly captured by the Australians in September 1918. According to the order, the reward for the capture of a British or Colonial Private was one Turkish pound, a Colonial Officer was two Turkish pounds, and a British officer was five Turkish pounds.

[6] As many military historians and strategists have noted, trench warfare does not typically lend itself to the capture of prisoners. The Gallipoli campaign quickly deteriorated into a stalemate based on a system of trench warfare, and it is for this reason that those men captured on Gallipoli were taken only during and after active attacks and raids. In Palestine, the battlefield remained fluid and troops were often mobile, which accounts for the greater number of men taken prisoner on that front.

[7] Noel Brackenbury, "Becoming Guests of the Unspeakable: A Study of the Pre-Internment Experiences of Australian Servicemen Captured by the Turks during World War I" (BA Hons Thesis, Macquarie University, 1983), 20.

In several cases Australian wounded were left because they were believed to be dead, or close to death. Checks for signs of life were often perfunctory and wounded men were sometimes assumed to be beyond help. Sergeant John Halpin's comrades from the 12th Light Horse believed that he was killed at Es Salt in May 1918 and left him as they withdrew. In reality, he had only been knocked unconscious after falling from his horse.[8] Wounded men were also left because their position was not conducive to successful rescue. Harold Vidler, a Cameleer shot in the knee during his attempt to withdraw from the second attack on Gaza in April 1917, managed to crawl to a gully with several other wounded Australians and take cover until the battle concluded. The party of wounded returned to Australian lines but left Vidler, who was picked up later by a party of Turkish soldiers. After the war, in a statement that hints at the possibility of abandonment, Vidler reported that his comrades left him because "for some reason they did not think it advisable to help me back."[9] One year later, Corporal Edward Picton of the 7th Light Horse, hit by shrapnel in both legs while taking a message from the front to his commanding officers during the Amman raid, was similarly left "with no assistance" during the retirement of his unit.[10] According to his regiment's 1923 history, Picton's comrades saw him fall, but reasoned that he "was in such an advanced position that he could not be rescued."[11] Other wounded were captured simply because there was no one available to render assistance. Private Martin Troy of the 16th Battalion – "knocked senseless" after a particularly heavy bombardment during a Turkish advance on Pope's Hill on the Gallipoli Peninsula in May 1915 – regained consciousness to find himself isolated between the lines and surrounded by the dead and other wounded, while Cameleer Charles Flatt, shot in the legs three times, was similarly marooned amongst the dead after his unit's attack at Gaza.[12] In many cases, men captured under these circumstances were not found by Turkish patrols for hours, or sometimes days, after the battle ceased. The dangers of patrolling no-man's land meant that areas between the lines were not regularly inspected by either side, and no doubt the Turks also assumed many of those remaining on the battlefield were dead, or close to death.

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[8] John Halpin, *Blood in the Mists* (Sydney: The Macquarie Head Press, 1934), 86-8. When Halpin regained consciousness, his identification tags had been removed and he was alone, in direct sight of a Turkish patrol.

[9] Repatriation Statement of Harold Vidler, AWM30 B2.14.

[10] Repatriation Statement of Edward Picton, AWM30 B2.7.

[11] J.D. Richardson, *History of the 7th Light Horse Regiment A.I.F* (Sydney: E.N. Birks, 1924), 86.

[12] Repatriation Statement of Martin Troy, AWM30 B1.3; Repatriation Statement of Charles Flatt, AWM30 B2.14.

Failure of communication, particularly regarding orders to withdraw or retire, also resulted in the capture of several Australians involved in ground campaigns. In the heat of battle, effective communication between headquarters and frontline troops, the different units involved, officers and men, and the men themselves, often broke down. This was particularly prevalent across the Palestinian front where the fluidity of the fighting and the constant movement of troops often meant orders to retire were not passed on, were received too late, or were unable to be followed. Many of the men captured because they did not receive orders to retire were those in outpost or support positions who were effectively forgotten, leaving them isolated and vulnerable. Corporal Francis Easton and Troopers Edgar Hobson and John Ward, despatched to a defensive post at Romani in 1916, fell into Turkish hands while attempting to reach Australian lines after realising that the noise of rifle fire had died down and their comrades had left. Trooper Charles Carr of the 1st Light Horse, on outpost duty during the Es Salt raid, was captured after a similar breakdown in communication. Carr did not receive any indication that his comrades had withdrawn, and rode back to what was his commanding officer's position to report on Turkish troop movements, only to find it – somewhat ironically – occupied by a party of Turkish and German soldiers.[13] One of the biggest groups captured by the Turks, eleven members of the 4th Light Horse Brigade's Field Ambulance, were also taken prisoner after lack of direction left them stranded and surrounded – Drivers D'Arcy Armstrong, Benjamin Briant, Henry Brockhurst, George Clarke, Herbert Hebbard, Francis Matthews, George Miller, Ernest Mitchell, Robert Seaton, Arthur Thompson and brothers Matthew and John Sloan were with their horses in a *wadi* fifty yards from the main Ambulance during the May 1918 raid on Es Salt when, "without issuing any orders," the Ambulance retreated.[14]

In some instances the order *was* passed on but was received too late for the men to act. Men captured in this fashion were predominantly from Light Horse units, which often delayed withdrawals and retreats until the last minute.[15] 9th Light Horsemen Sergeant Harold Sullivan, Lance Corporal Percy Scroop, and Troopers

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[13] Repatriation Statement of Charles Carr, AWM30 B2.4.

[14] Repatriation Statement of D'Arcy Armstrong, AWM30 B2.12.

[15] Brackenbury, "Becoming Guests of the Unspeakable," 23.

Charles Patten and Edwin Rose were captured together at Romani; the men received an order to retire but were too far away from their horses to reach Australian lines in sufficient time.[16] In other cases the situation did not allow for feasible withdrawal. During the second attack on Gaza in 1917, fifteen Australian Cameleers and approximately eighty British infantry – taking cover in a Turkish trench they won after an arduous battle accounting for the loss of over three quarters of their company – found they had to choose between a suicidal withdrawal or tactical surrender. Under constant bombardment, and with minimal ammunition remaining, the group was believed to have "no chance whatsoever" and the highest-ranking soldier, a British lieutenant, raised a white flag.[17]

Confusion on the battlefield also accounted for the capture of several Australians on Gallipoli and in Palestine. As was the case with the wounded, men taken prisoner under these circumstances were usually captured during or immediately after large-scale attacks when ground quickly changed hands. Bugler Frederick Ashton of the 11th Battalion was captured on the first day of the Allied landings at Gallipoli after he lost his bearings among the scrubby hillsides and walked into Turkish territory.[18] Cameleer John Romano, captured near Jaffa, ended up behind enemy lines in December 1917. Despatched at night to bring in two wounded men, Romano walked through no-man's land and into enemy territory before he realised his error: "First thing I was aware of was being accused by an Officer who spoke English. I knew it was not one of our chaps so made a bolt for it. A pistol bullet passed through the fleshy part of my right elbow which brought me to a halt."[19]

Confusion also accounted for the capture of larger groups. During their withdrawal from the fighting at Hill 971 on Gallipoli in August 1915, Lieutenant Stewart Stormonth and his party of three non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and twelve men became lost in the dark and confusing maze of gullies, and ended up veering off the edge of a spur and falling some twenty feet. Attempting to find a new route and meet another party of Australians, Stormonth instead walked straight into a group of Turkish soldiers. Realising he and his group had inadvertently fallen into Turkish territory and were stranded, Stormonth immediately surrendered and the entire party were taken prisoner.[20]

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[16] "Report from Trooper McKay, 9th ALH, 9 August 1916," ARC Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau Case File of Percy George Scroop, AWM1DRL/0428. Sullivan, Scroop, Patten and Rose had dismounted to assist a party of British machine gunners.

[17] Repatriation Statement of Ernest Ingram, AWM30 B2.14. The fifteen Australians captured as a result of this surrender were Sergeants George Paltridge and Frederick Savill, Corporal Clyde Currie, Lance Corporals Allan Kimber and Arthur Tierney, and Troopers John Angus, Reuben Blechynden, Joseph Dodd, Patrick Duffy, Phillip Fooks, Thomas Halliday, Ernest Ingram, Frederick Jeffery, Daniel Jones, Phillip O'Hare, Noel Sherrie and William Simmons. For a detailed, if slightly romanticised account of the battle – one of the first in Palestine to use a tank – see Henry Gullett, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 – Volume VII. The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine.* 10th edition (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941), 312-15. However, Gullett incorrectly states that 'only five or six' Australians became prisoners after the British officers' surrender.

[18] Repatriation Statement of Frederick Ashton, AWM30 B1.1.

[19] Repatriation Statement of John Charles Romano, AWM30 B2.14.

Pilots of the Flying Corps and naval submariners spent extended periods of time in enemy territory and those captured were taken after the failure of their respective air or seacraft, or when successful attacks from their enemy opposition forced them to either land or surface. The first Australian pilot to fall into Turkish hands was captured in Mesopotamia in September 1915. As part of the Australian Flying Corps unit attached to the Indian Expeditionary Force, Lieutenant William Treloar was engaged in a reconnaissance mission when his engine cut out and, amidst "a perfect hail of rifle fire," he was forced to bring down the plane near a network of Turkish trenches.[21] Captain Muhammed Ali, a Turkish NCO who later became a POW of the British, saw Treloar's plane land and provided a statement of the circumstances of his capture. According to Ali, the plane came to a slow stop and Treloar and his observer, Captain Basil Atkins of the Indian Army, attempted to run from the aircraft but, realising that they were surrounded, returned to the plane.[22] The two men raised their arms to indicate their surrender but the firing continued – Treloar later wrote, "the bullets were whizzing past our heads, tearing though the woodwork and twanging off the bracing wires." [23] To add to the tense situation, the British gunboat in support of Treloar's mission fired on the group, killing three and wounding twenty of the enemy. The British only stopped their bombardment after realising Treloar and Atkins had surrendered.

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[20] T.P. Chatway, *History of the 15th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces, War 1914-1918*, revised and edited by P. Goldenstedt (Brisbane: William Brooks, 1948), 85-88. The other men in Stormonth's party were Corporals Edgar Green and Charles Hodsdon, Sergeant William Bailey and Privates John Beattie, Alfred Carpenter, Edwin Foster, Louis Hodges, Albert Jenkins, William Jones, Joseph Kelly, Robert Kerrigan, Len New, Harold Shelton and John Thomas.

[21] "Hand-Written Account by Lieut. Treloar," 9, Letters, Serial, Leaflets of Lieutenant W.H. Treloar, 1st Half Flight, AFC World War 1914-18, AWMPR84/24. See also F.M. Cutlack, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 – Volume VIII. The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theatres of War* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1935), 12.

[22] "Extract from Statement of Prisoner of War Captain Muhammed Ali, 105th Turkish Infantry, Basrah, 13/10/1915," NAA B2455 TRELOAR WH.

[23] "Hand-Written Account by Lieut. Treloar," 9, AWMPR84/24. Contrary to normal operative procedure Treloar was ordered not to destroy his aircraft in the occurrence of a forced landing, as the British believed that any downed aircraft would be easily recaptured when they broke through into Baghdad. Despite their early confidence, the British would not claim success in Baghdad until March 1917.

With the exception of one other pilot captured in Mesopotamia, the Australian flying officers who became prisoners of the Turks were captured in Palestine.[24] One, Lieutenant Leonard Heathcote, was also forced down by engine trouble.[25] The others, however, were captured after successful attacks from their predominantly German counterparts, either in the air or from anti-aircraft equipment, forced them to land.[26] Lieutenant Claude Vautin was captured in July 1917 when a German airman shot out his controls and forced him down near Gaza. Lieutenants Fred Hancock and Arthur Poole were similarly captured after their plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire on a reconnaissance mission over the Nablus region in January 1918.[27]

The majority of the navy submariners captured by the Turks were also captured after direct attacks in enemy territory. The largest number of Australian POW submariners came from the *AE2*, the first submarine to successfully pass through the Dardanelles into the Sea of Marmara. Dodging submerged mines and nets, the submarine spent five days in Turkish waters before it was attacked by the gunship *Sultanhisar* and scuttled on 30 April 1915.[28] In his 1925 memoir Captain Henry Stoker wrote of his ship's demise:

> BANG! ... A cloud of smoke in the engine-room. We were hit and holed! And again in quick succession two more holes. Finished! We were caught! We could no longer dive and our defence was gone. It but remained to avoid useless sacrifice of life. All hands were ordered on deck and overboard.[29]

The thirty-five *AE2* submariners safely abandoned their ship and were plucked out of the water by the crew of the *Sultanhisar*.

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[24] The only other pilot captured in Mesopotamia was Captain Thomas W. White. White became a POW after his plane was irreparably damaged during a mission to cut Turkish telegraph wires near Baghdad in November 1915. See *Guests of the Unspeakable: The Odyssey of an Australian Airman – Being a Record of Captivity and Escape in Turkey* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1932) for a detailed account of the circumstances of his capture.

[25] Repatriation Statement of Leonard Heathcote, AWM30 B3.3.

[26] Though the Ottoman Empire did have an airborne branch, flying missions over Palestine were conducted by the German pilots and observers attached to the Ottoman forces. One Australian POW was told by a German officer that "the Turkish Flying Corps was only on paper as they were useless as airmen." Repatriation Statement of Douglas Rutherford, AWM30 B3.3.

[27] Repatriation Statements of Claude Vautin, Frederick Hancock and Arthur Poole, AWM30 B3.3.

[28] For an account of the actions and subsequent demise of the *AE2,* see J.H. Wheat, "Unpublished Manuscript," John Harrison Wheat Papers, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. For an account of the sinking of the submarine from the Turkish perspective, see *Sultanhisar* commander Captain Ali Rizar's excerpt in Vecihi and Hatice Hurmuz Basarin's, *Beneath the Dardanelles: The Australian Submarine at Gallipoli* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2008), 81-162.

[29] H.G. Stoker, *Straws in the Wind* (London: Herbert Jenkins Ltd, 1925), 138.

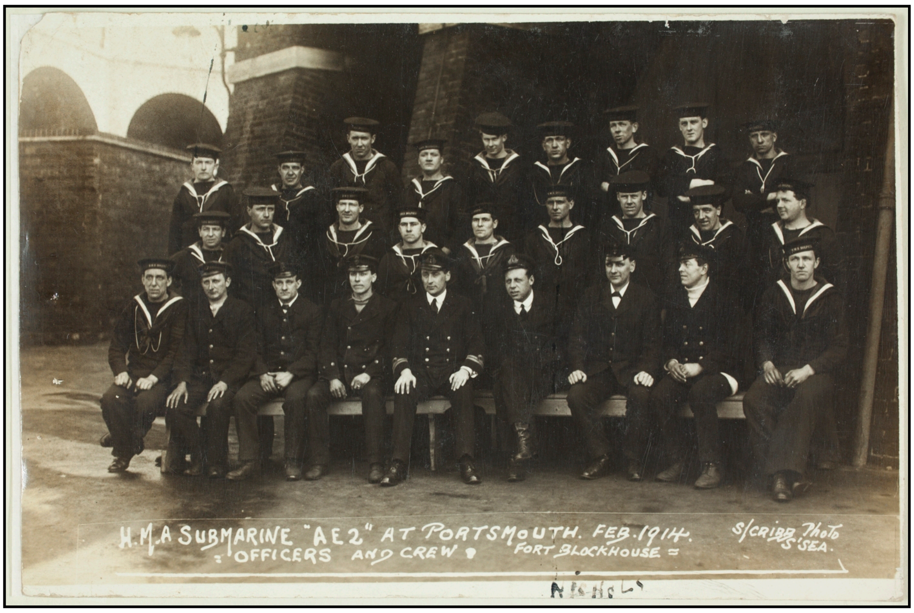

Figure 1.1: Crew of the *AE2* submarine, February 1914.
Source: John H. Wheat Photographs, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Capture due to wounds, miscommunication, confusion, engine failure, and successful attacks from the enemy were particular to specific zones and modes of battle, but other reasons for capture cut across different divisions and locations. In several cases men fell into enemy hands after going to the aid of stricken comrades. Trooper Martin Brennan of the 11th Light Horse was taken prisoner after he stopped during his retreat across an exposed *wadi* at Es Salt to administer first aid to Sergeant James Merson, who was shot through both legs. According to Merson, Brennan "worked very hard to save me…under very heavy fire…until we were completely surrounded by the enemy with fixed bayonets and their belts full of hand grenades."[30] Men of the Flying Corps were also captured after attempting to assist their fellows. In May 1918, four Australians fell into Turkish hands after a dramatic rescue attempt failed. Lieutenants Joseph McElligot, Douglas Rutherford, Ronald Challinor and Frederick Haig were on a tandem reconnaissance flight prior to the Es Salt attack when they engaged a German aircraft. McElligott and Rutherford's escort plane was hit in the petrol tank and the two men were forced to land. Haig and Challinor witnessed their landing and after again engaging the German – causing him to "splitarse" away from them – landed to pick up the two men.[31] However, the German airman returned, firing upon the rescue plane and disabling it. The four men saw Turkish troops advancing on their position and, "under no obligation to commit suicide," surrendered.[32]

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[30] Repatriation Statements of John Merson and Martin Brennan, AWM30 B2.10. It is interesting to note that Merson previously received ministrations from an officer of his regiment who had left him, ostensibly to take charge of the retreat. In another written account of his capture, Merson states that Brennan attempted to scare the Turks away by shouting and swearing at them, but their superior numbers eventually convinced him to surrender. See John Merson, "Behind the Turkish Lines," in Hammond, *History of the 11th Light Horse Regiment,* 160-4.

Sheer bad luck also extended to men across the different fronts and, while arguably every man could attribute his capture to misfortune, several men were taken prisoner under particularly unfortunate circumstances. Private John Clarke of the 11th Light Horse was captured after his horse kicked him in the groin and bolted during his unit's withdrawal from Mageibra in August 1916.[33] Three Australians were taken prisoner on the first day of the Allied landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula after mistaking a group of Turkish soldiers for members of the Allied Indian Division.[34] Also at Gallipoli, Sergeant Maurice Delpratt was picked up by a party of German and Turkish infantry after his route back to Australian lines during a mission to pass on a message was cut off by Australian machine gunners who mistook him for an enemy soldier.[35] In one particularly disastrous incident in Palestine in January 1918, Australian airman Lieutenant Vincent Parkinson was captured after a British aircraft, attempting to outmanoeuvre an attacking German plane, collided with Parkinson's machine and brought it crashing down with it. The two British airmen and Parkinson's Australian pilot were killed and Parkinson was left with a fractured skull.[36]

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[31] Challinor to Traill, 7 July 1918, NAA B2455 CHALLINOR RONALD T. For another colourful account of the failed rescue see Joseph McElligott, "The Flight that Failed," in Hammond, *History of the 11th Light Horse Regiment,* 155-9.

[32] Challinor to Traill, 7 July 1918, NAA B2455 CHALLINOR RONALD T. Two other Australians from the Flying Corps also fell into Turkish hands in Palestine earlier that year after trying to assist a fellow pilot. Lieutenants Ron Austin and Oliver Lee were flying in formation with a British pilot named Evans, when he suddenly landed due to apparent engine trouble. Evans only recently escaped from a German POW camp on the Western Front and Austin and Lee, knowing Evans' fear of recapture, landed to pick him up. During their take off, however, one of their wheels became trapped under a rock and snapped off, leaving all three airmen stranded. See Repatriation Statements of Ronald Austin and Oliver Lee, AWM30 B3.3, and R.A. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner* (Melbourne: J Haase and Sons, 19-), 3-5.

[33] Repatriation Statement of John Clarke, AWM30 B2.10.

[34] See Repatriation Statement of William Elston, AWM30 B1.13 and Repatriation Statement of Ronald McDonald, AWM30 B1.22, along with R.F. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks 1915-1918* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., 1923).

[35] Repatriation Statement of Maurice Delpratt, NAA B2455 DELPRATT, MG.

[36] Repatriation Statement of Vincent Parkinson, AWM30 B3.3. See also Cutlack, *Official History*, 96.

Behind Turkish Lines

While the causes and circumstances of capture varied, the ultimate outcome for each man was the same – he had been taken prisoner and was now at the mercy of his enemy. Preconceptions of the Turks and varied treatment behind Turkish lines immediately after capture meant the Australians' responses to being taken prisoner were diverse. The majority of the captured men initially exhibited shock at the events that had befallen them. Like the thousands of Australians who experienced captivity in subsequent conflicts, those who enlisted for 'the war to end all wars' and became POWs had not expected their fate. While they were prepared to fight, be injured and even, fatalistically, to die, few were prepared for the possibility of being held captive by the enemy for the remainder of their war. In his 1940 memoir *Turkish Days and Ways*, Lieutenant James Brown, an Australian doctor captured at Katia in early 1916 while serving in a British yeomanry unit, reflected that he had not expected his capture and subsequent internment: "We used to talk about the uncertainties of war … although imprisonment may have been mentioned, it was never really contemplated as a probable personal experience. Either we would remain unscathed or be wounded and killed."[37]

John Halpin echoed these sentiments in a postwar piece for *Reveille*, the journal of the New South Wales branch of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia: "Captivity did not enter my mind. Strange that of all possible eventualities, capture was never discussed in Palestine. It was as a thing that simply could not come to pass."[38] The 1st AIF received minimal training regarding capture and captivity, except how to take prisoners themselves. The accepted rules and regulations regarding the humane treatment of POWs established in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 and the Geneva Convention of 1906 were set out in the officers' manuals of military law and disseminated among the men. Pamphlets addressing and outlining guidelines concerning treatment of captured enemy soldiers – including how to officially accept a surrender, how to transport prisoners away from the front line, and what could and could not be taken from prisoners – were circulated in early 1915.[39] Any memory of captivity experiences from previous conflicts, specifically the Boer War, was seemingly forgotten.

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[37] James Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways* (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1934), 36-7.

[38] John Halpin, "A Captive of the Turks – Episode One," *Reveille* 7 no. 7 (March 1934): 25-6.

Some men, particularly those taken early in the war, also expressed surprise that they had survived the act of surrender and capture at the hands of the Turks. The Australians who served on Gallipoli, in particular, were indoctrinated in the supposed bloodthirstiness and brutality of their enemy. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, popular British and Australian troops' ideas about the Turks shifted during the war. Upon the outbreak of the conflict these attitudes were based on Orientalist ideas of the Turks as an inferior, uneducated race that remained backwardly tied to the land rather than embracing industrialisation. The ease with which the February 1915 Turkish attempt to cross the Suez Canal was repulsed, and the poor condition of the Ottoman troops taken prisoner by the British forces during the attack, reinforced this. However, when it became apparent the Australians would face the Turks in battle, this indifference and condescension was replaced by ideas of the Turks that brought into sharp relief their supposed potential for brutality. References to the Balkan Wars, the alleged atrocities committed by Turkish troops against the Armenians and Bulgarians during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the warlike nature of the early Turkic tribes, were common. Official historian Charles Bean reported rumours based on the stories of Army officers who had experience with Kurdish soldiers and "less disciplined Turkish troops" about the treatment the Turks meted out to stranded soldiers.[40] These stories whipped up in the Australian soldiers an initial frenzy of hatred and distrust toward their enemy, which was compounded by reports of the alleged crucifixion of British marines who had landed on the Turkish shore after the first naval bombardments of the Peninsula, and other tales of the suspected hamstringing and mutilation of wounded soldiers.[41]

The Turks – equally ignorant of their Antipodean enemy and wary of the treatment they would receive upon potential capture, and keen to encourage surrender rather than prolonged combat – addressed the concerns of the Australians.[42] In May 1915, a letter assuring proper treatment upon surrender was thrown into a Gallipoli trench:

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[39] Dale Blair, *No Quarter: Unlawful Killing and Surrender in the Australian War Experience, 1915-18* (Canberra: Ginninderra Press, 2005), 14-16. Jonathan Vance writes that a similar situation prevailed in the Canadian Army. See Jonathan F. Vance, *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 26-7.

[40] Charles Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 – Volume I. The Story of ANZAC from the outbreak of war to the end of the first phase of the Gallipoli campaign, May 4 1915,* 11th edition (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1941), 258.

[41] Chatway, *History of the 15th Battalion,* 3.

> Englisch [sic] soldiers taken prisoner by us state they have been told that each soldier who has fallen into our hands will be killed. Don't believe that lie only told to persuade you to prefer being killed than to surrender. Be convinced that everybody of you who has been taken prisoner will be treated just as well as the international law commands.[43]

Despite such assurances, those men captured early in the Gallipoli campaign were surprised they were taken prisoner rather then being killed outright. Writing after the war, Leslie Luscombe summed up the Australian soldiers' early cynicism to the Turkish approach towards stranded men, stating that it was "not customary for the Turks to take any prisoners."[44]

The prolonged campaign on Gallipoli brought the Australians and the Turks into close proximity, and consequently the troops became "more conscious of their similarities and less aware of their differences."[45] The close contact between the enemies that trench life generated, coupled with Turkish demonstrations of courage and gallantry in battle, and interactions while fraternising during the May armistice, marked another shift in the general opinion of the Australian troops towards their enemy. Bill Gammage writes how "the Turk had proved a normal man and a brave soldier … Animosity gave way to admiration and the Turk became part of the game."[46] The developing respect felt by the Australians for their enemy meant that many Australians felt an element of relief at their capture. For the wounded, capture meant the prospect of medical attention and assistance while, for the able-bodied, it signified the end of battle and promised the possibility of food, drink and rest. Several prisoners reported the kindness and generosity of their captors during and immediately after their surrender. John Wheat claimed that the mixed Turkish-German crew of the *Sultanhisar* treated the submariners from the *AE2* with great respect and, though they confined the prisoners to the hold of the ship, went to great lengths to ensure the men were safe and provided with dry clothes and tobacco.[47] Similarly, many of the airmen captured in Palestine commented on the decent treatment they received after their respective captures.

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[42] Blair, *No Quarter,* 22. Several of those POWs taken by the Turks stated that their captors knew little about Australia or why Australians were involved in the war. Ron McDonald was asked if all Australians were black, John Halpin was asked why he had come so far to fight the Turks, while James Brown related a story whereby an Australian presented a Commonwealth Bank cheque to his Commandant, who asked "is there a bank in Australia?" Repatriation Statement of Ronald MacDonald, AWM30 B1.22; John Halpin, "Captives of the Turk – Episode One," 26; Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 225.

[43] "[Prisoners of War] Turkish message at Anzac," AWM25 779/12.

[44] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 40-1. Luscombe believed his party were a lucky "exception to this general rule" and attributed their survival to the fact that he and his attacking party had shown a degree of kindness to the three Turks they took prisoner during their charge to the base of Hill 971. Historian Dale Blair has commented on this notion of the Turks as barbaric, and suggests that such an attitude was not entirely one-sided. The killing of prisoners occurred on all fronts, including by the Australians. See Blair, *No Quarter,* and Peter Stanley, *Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny, Murder and the Australian Imperial Force* (Sydney: Pier 9, 2010), 130-33.

[45] Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (London: The Macmillan Press), 27.

[46] Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2010), 102.

To an extent, the good treatment of the submariners and the airmen can be attributed to an unwritten code of gallantry and sportsmanship between the naval and air forces during the Great War. After the *AE2* was scuttled the crew of the *Sultanhisar* observed a long-standing naval tradition and saluted the sinking vessel while, according to F.M. Cutlack, historian of the Australian Flying Corps, the opposing airmen on all fronts "regarded each other with a curious mix of personal esteem and deadly hostility" and would often drink toasts to each other in their messes.[48] However, many of the ground troops captured on Gallipoli and in Palestine also commented on the compassionate way in which they were treated during and after their capture. For Private Harry Brown "the treatment immediately after capture [on Gallipoli] was not too bad," while one Light Horseman claimed that his party was "fairly well treated" and another reported that "the Turks into whose hands I fell treated me very kindly."[49]

The Australians also felt relief because, for many, capture meant protection and safety. Several of the Australians captured in Palestine and Mesopotamia were first confronted by Arabs and Bedouins and, while some proved friendly to the Allies, others were superficially aligned with the Turks. Fear of these "swarthy, cut-throat sons of Ishmael" was very real, especially among the airmen and mounted troops who spent much time in Bedouin territory.[50] One Australian who served as a pilot in a British flying squadron wrote that rumours of Arab women castrating Allied airmen with blunt knives were common in the mess tents.[51] In one instance, concerns regarding Arab atrocities proved founded. In July 1915, two Flying Corps officers on a reconnaissance flight in Mesopotamia – Australian G.P. Merz and a New Zealand pilot – encountered engine trouble and were forced down near a nomadic Arab camp. Two witnesses claim Merz and Burn fought off an initial attack from the Arabs but, after one fell wounded, both men were killed. Their bodies were never recovered but their plane was later found "hacked to matchwood."[52] In some areas the Arabs were promised rewards for capturing Allied servicemen and, as a result, were keen to detain any marooned men – often violently. Consequently, for some stranded Australians, the arrival of Turkish troops was seen as a blessing. Pilot Thomas White was one of several Australians who were effectively 'rescued' by the Turks. White and his observer, Indian Army officer Francis Yeats-Brown, experienced an unhospitable welcome after they were stranded near Baghdad. Local Arab men attacked the two airmen with clubs and rifles but, just as White was sure they were to be killed, a party of Turks arrived and escorted the two officers to their headquarters.[53]

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[47] Wheat, "Unpublished Manuscript," 13, John Harrison Wheat Papers. The submariners were held below decks as they actually outnumbered the Turco-German crew, who were alive to the possibility of being overrun by their new captives. See Captain Ali Riza's excerpt in *Beneath the Dardanelles*, 136.

[48] Cutlack, *The Australian Flying Corps,* xviii.

[49] Repatriation Statement of Harry Norman Brown, AWM30 B1.5; Repatriation Statement of Diedrich Weidenhofer, AWM30 B2.12; Repatriation Statement of Edward Picton, AWM30 B2.7.

[50] Hammond, *History of the 11th Light Horse Regiment,* 50.

Not all those taken prisoner by the Turks reported humane treatment and feelings of relief after capture. The testimony of many prisoners indicates they witnessed or experienced abuses of the laws regarding prisoners of war during and immediately after the capture process. The overwhelming response from these men was anger. While the Australians may not have received much training in how to act if captured, they were, as Dale Blair notes, aware of and appreciated the rights of the POW.[54] The extent to which Australian soldiers fully comprehended and followed these laws and guidelines has been the focus of recent scholarship, but their awareness of international regulation meant their expectations – or, at best, hopes – of treatment after surrender were based on these principles.

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[51] C.W. Hill, *The Spook and the Commandant* (London: William Kimber, 1975), 31.

[52] See White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, 14-15 and Cutlack, *The Australian Flying Corps,* 10-11. White led the mission to find the bodies of the two airmen or any of their effects. According to Cutlack, after finding nothing and realizing the culprits had fled, the airmen exacted revenge by burning down the houses of the local Sheikh.

[53] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 39-45. The commander of the Turkish troops impressed the need for White and Yeats-Brown to be sent to Baghdad immediately in order to avoid being overrun by the Arabs and gave them a mounted, armed escort for the journey. On the way, however, their party was attacked by the same group of Arabs and White and Yeats-Brown were asked if they would fight with the Turks if needed. Such a battle never eventuated, and after heated discussions between the Arabs and the Turkish escort, the two airmen's journey continued.

[54] Blair, *No Quarter*, 16.

The evidence of several Australian prisoners suggests that in many instances the Turks did not treat those deemed *hors de combat* in accordance with international law, and that many, including the wounded, were physically assaulted and robbed. Private Frederick Gannon, captured at Amman in early 1918, reported that the Turks "treated our wounded with great brutality on the field, shooting and bayoneting some."[55] Private Patrick O'Connor, wounded during the August offensive on Gallipoli, allegedly witnessed the killing of Australian wounded and, upon crying out in anger, was turned on by the culprit:

> On his way to me he [a Turkish soldier] had to pass a number of other Australian wounded. I saw the brute draw a bayonet from the scabbard of a wounded Australian and then thrust it into the wounded man's stomach. I yelled out at him … I could stand it no longer … He picked up a 4-pound lump of rock that lay nearby and holding it in his hands, began to pound my head with it. When I raised my hands to fend the blows off my head, he transferred his attention to my body, about the ribs. Eventually he battered me till I lost consciousness.[56]

O'Connor was left by his attacker, and was later taken prisoner by three other Turkish soldiers. Private Alexander Crockett made similar allegations in a report to the Australian Red Cross upon his repatriation. Crockett was part of the 6th Light Horse Regiment's charge on a Turkish machine gun post at Amman in April 1918 and fell alongside two of his comrades, Troopers Noel Sherwin and Sydney Crozier.[57] As the Turks advanced upon the wounded men, they bayoneted Crockett, stabbed Crozier between the shoulders, and shot Sherwin. All three men were brought behind Turkish lines, where Crozier and Sherwin died soon after.[58]

The unwounded were also harassed in the immediate aftermath of their surrender. Some were the subjects of physical violence. Frederick Ashton was hit on the head with the butts of rifles and dazed and Private Robert Griffiths was allegedly "punched and kicked and butted with a rifle several times."[59] Such attacks were mainly perpetrated by the lower ranks, and could be attributed to the heat of battle and as a necessary response to restrain the new captives.

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[55] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 40-1; Repatriation Statement of Frederick Gannon, AWM30 B2.6.

[56] Repatriation Statement of Patrick O'Connor, AWM30 B1.27.

[57] Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine,* 571.

[58] "Report from Trooper Alexander Crockett 6th ALH, 24 February 1919," ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of Sydney James Crozier, AWM1DRL/0428. Another Australian captured after the same advance, Frederick Gannon, stated the Turks gave Crozier a shot of morphine to relieve his pain and treated him with great kindness. Whether or not Gannon knew of Crozier's bayonet wound is unclear. Both Crozier and Sherwin were reportedly buried alongside the Amman railway station, though the other Australian prisoners were not permitted to see their graves.

[59] Repatriation Statement of Frederick Ashton, AWM30 B1.1; Repatriation Statement of Robert Griffiths, AWM30 B1.16.

Those who were robbed immediately after capture also exhibited anger. While the confiscation of weapons was inevitable, personal possessions were also taken. Brian Feltman argues that the stealing of valuable personal objects from prisoners was a form of identity theft, designed to strip the captive of links to civilian life. Taking personal possessions from a captive also provided tangible evidence of the captor's prowess on the battlefield.[60] The plundering of prisoners was common among servicemen from all armies on the various fronts, including the Australians themselves, who developed a notorious reputation among the Allies for 'souveniring'.[61] However, this did not diminish the outrage of those Australians who lost personal items. Patrick O'Connor's testimony again conveys his anger at the way he was treated during his capture:

> The Turk touched me with his foot. Then he unbuttoned my tunic and saw a money belt I was wearing. Apparently he was unable to see how it unbuckled, for he seized hold of it and bumped me up and down by it until it snapped … Another marauding Turk came along shortly and went through my pockets. He got a few cards and a letter, but missed my watch … A third Turk came along. He was luckier than his predecessors for he found my watch and also robbed me of a ring I was wearing.[62]

The personal papers and photographs of some were returned, presumably because they held little monetary value for their captors, but in many cases the Turks relieved the prisoners of everything, including their rations and, in one instance, a set of false teeth.[63] Their main concern, however, appears to have been the Australians' clothes and boots, and many prisoners were completely stripped. Lance Corporal Timothy Cahill was left with only his hat after his capture, while Matthew Sloan of the 4th Light Horse Field Ambulance was robbed of his entire uniform "barring a steel helmet and a pair of sox [sic]."[64] In return, the captives were given Turkish garments. John Merson wrote of the Turks' desire for the Australians' clothes:

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[60] Brian K. Feltman, "Tolerance as Crime? The British Treatment of German Prisoners of War on the Western Front, 1914-1918," *War in History* 17 no.4 (2010): 438-9.

[61] There is much evidence to demonstrate that the robbing of prisoners of war was a common occurrence throughout the war. Dale Blair and Peter Stanley have written about the reputation of Australian soldiers regarding the taking of 'souvenirs' from prisoners. See Blair, *No Quarter,* 50 and Stanley, *Bad Characters,* 112-16.

[62] Repatriation Statement of Patrick O'Connor, AWM30 B1.27.

[63] Repatriation Statement of John Charles Romano, AWM30 B2.14.

[64] Repatriation Statement of Timothy Joseph Cahill, AWM30 B2.8; Repatriation Statement of Matthew Black Sloan, AWM30 B2.12.

> As soon as I was surrounded despite the fact my boots were full of blood, and my riding breeches saturated also, they roughly pulled my boots off and leggings which they put on straight away and seeing that my legs had swelled considerably, they ripped up the outside seam of my breeches with knives and then pulled them off, after which a Turk took off his ragged trousers, threw them at me, and put on mine.[65]

The Australians recognised the shabby state of their captors' uniforms and footwear, and correctly surmised that this was what drove them to take the prisoners' clothes. Turkish troops were issued with only one uniform for the duration of their service, and boots were a scarce commodity.[66] Recognition of the poor condition of their captors did not lessen the prisoners' humiliation at being relieved of their uniforms and forced to wear threadbare cast-offs. Furthermore, they were left with little protection against the terrain or the weather. Any complaints, however, were usually ignored. John Halpin, who was allegedly robbed of everything, including underwear, voiced his anger to the German commander of the Turks who took him prisoner, to no avail: "[H]e wagged his head in survey of our multi-coloured Turkish garb and moved off, doubtless too well versed on the 'taking' ways of his Turkish allies."[67]

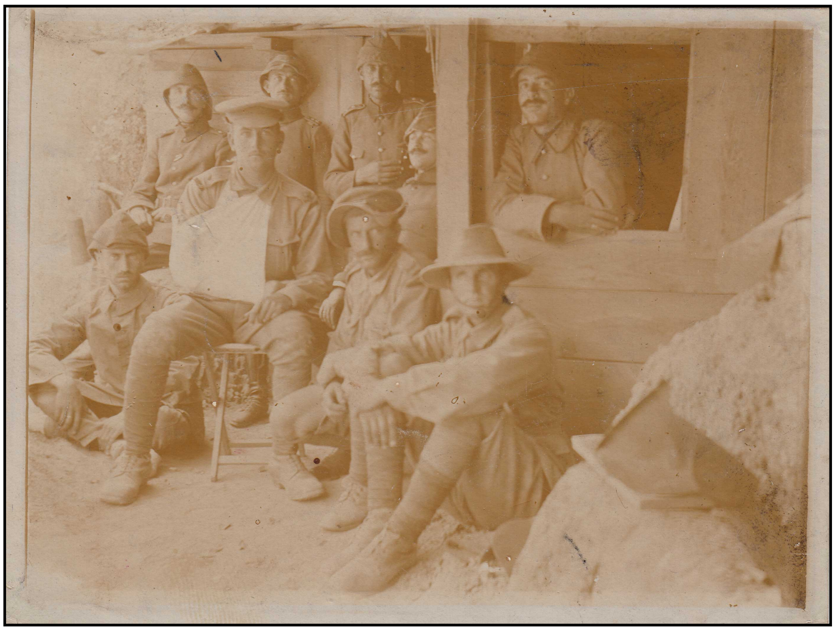

Figure 1.2: Australian POWs in a Turkish General's dugout behind Quinn's Post, June 1915.[68]
Source: Basar Eryoner Collection.

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[65] Repatriation Statement of John Merson, AWM30 B2.10.

[66] Hikmet Ozdemir, *Ottoman Army 1914-1918: Disease and Death on the Battlefield,* trans. Saban Kardas (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 64.

[67] Halpin, "A Captive of the Turks – Episode One," 25-6.

[68] The three Australians in the photo are believed to be Lieutenant Stanley Jordan, and Privates Daniel Creedon and William Allen. Many thanks to Professor Peter Stanley and Tan Kurtcebe for the image.

Immediately after capture, the priority for any captor is to ensure prisoners are taken off the battlefield to an established headquarters. As they moved deeper behind Turkish lines, the treatment of the Australians varied. Several prisoners reported their movement through enemy territory was relaxed and uncomplicated. Gallipoli prisoners Privates John Beattie and Charles McLean were fortunate in their journey off the battlefield. Escorted by "an easy going middle aged man," Beattie was taken to a dressing station where his injured foot was bandaged before he met McLean.[69] The two men were marched in front of an English-speaking Turkish officer, who permitted them to rest while he searched their belongings. All their possessions were returned and, before the two men continued on their journey, a group of Turkish soldiers approached offering cigarettes and food.[70] Several wounded prisoners also commented on their humane treatment while moving towards the rear of Turkish lines. Most were carried on stretchers or provided with makeshift crutches. One Light Horseman was even carried by a Turkish soldier for half a mile before he was placed on a stretcher for the remainder of his journey.[71]

However, not all were as fortunate. Many of the wounded and the able-bodied prisoners confronted different hazards as they moved deeper into Turkish territory. Several experienced an extension of the rough treatment they were subjected to during the moment of capture, as escorts continued to rob and harass the men. The prisoners also remained the targets of Turkish troops unaware of their capture – soldiers taken on Gallipoli were told to remove their slouch hats as snipers would otherwise shoot at them – and were also the objects of Turkish soldiers' anger and frustration.[72] Several men reported they were assaulted, spat at and verbally abused once behind Turkish lines. Pilot Fred Haig bore the brunt of enemy animosity while being transported from his crash site in Palestine in May 1918. Earlier, Haig successfully attacked a German aircraft and, once on the ground, was vilified by the mixed Turco-German opposition.[73] The wounded made particularly easy targets. While waiting for their transfer to Constantinople, a party of injured Gallipoli POWs were placed alongside wounded Turkish soldiers who kicked and spat at the prisoners and generally gave them “a very rough time of it.”[74]

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[69] Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Repatriation Statement of Edward Picton, AWM30 B2.7.

[72] Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3. Again, this behaviour was not restricted to the Turks. Charles Bean noted a particularly distressing incident on Gallipoli involving Australian soldiers taunting and teasing Turkish prisoners. For a summary of these incidents see Blair, *No Quarter*, 22 and Kevin Fewster, *Gallipoli Correspondent: The Frontline Diary of C.E.W. Bean* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983), 149.

[73] Repatriation Statement of Frederick Haig, AWM30 B3.3.

In addition to dealing with the aggression of their enemy captors, the prisoners also dodged the bombs and bullets of their own comrades who continued attacking the enemy. On Gallipoli, Leslie Luscombe’s party was caught by a barrage of shellfire from British ships anchored in Suvla Bay during their journey to Turkish headquarters, as were Ron McDonald and the three other Australians captured on the first day of the Allied landings.[75] Private Barney Woods was hit by a piece of shrapnel from an Allied bomb after his capture in August 1915.[76] In Palestine, John Halpin and a group of prisoners were bombed by the Allied airforce, resulting in the deaths of two men, while Lieutenant Joseph McElligott and his three Flying Corps comrades spent an uneasy night confined in an Amman railway station they knew was scheduled to be bombed by their own squadron the next morning.[77]

Once the men reached Turkish lines, those requiring medical assistance were directed to aid posts and dressing stations or, if required, larger field hospitals. This was their first encounter with Turkish medical care and the quality of treatment the men received varied. Several captives reported being well looked after by Turkish, German and Armenian medical officers and orderlies. Cameleer Patrick Duffy stated that the wounded in his party received good treatment after their capture at Gaza in April 1917, with “the bad cases” sent immediately to field hospitals while the less seriously wounded were treated at aid posts.[78] Private Daniel Creedon, captured on Gallipoli in June, was escorted to a dressing station where he and other Australian prisoners had their wounds dressed and were given coffee and cigarettes.[79]

Others were scathing of the enemy’s medical treatment. Many reported that they were ignored behind the lines; Harold Vidler claimed that he was left untreated at an aid post for eight hours.[80] Lance Corporal Francis Easton, captured severely wounded at Romani, reported he was escorted to a Turkish casualty clearing station but left unattended while Turkish troops received priority treatment. Other prisoners bound his wounds and provided first aid.[81] The Australians were unhappy with what they saw as rudimentary and unhygienic medical attention. After a bumpy journey to an aid post on a stretcher that was dropped every time his escorts heard a bomb approaching, Private John Davern's gunshot wound was neither assessed nor cleaned before being bandaged, which eventually led to a serious infection.[82] However, the prisoners accepted their treatment was on par with that meted out to wounded Turkish troops. That their own Army's battlefield medical facilities were often equally as basic and rudimentary was forgotten by most.[83]

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[74] Repatriation Statement of Patrick O’Connor, AWM30 B1.27. O’Connor and the other wounded reportedly formed a ring around the most badly injured men for protection.

[75] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl*, 41; Repatriation Statement of Ronald McDonald, AWM30 B1.22; Repatriation Statement of Patrick O’Connor, AWM30 B1.27.

[76] Barney Woods died a fortnight later from his many wounds.

[77] Halpin, *Blood in the Mists*, 104-7; McElligott, “The Flight that Failed,” 157. Fortunately for the airmen the bombing raid never eventuated.

[78] Repatriation Statement of Patrick Duffy, AWM30 B2.2.

[79] “Copy of Diary Written by D.B. Creedon,” 2, D.B. Creedon Diary 1915, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

[80] Repatriation Statement of Harold Vidler, AWM30 B2.14.

Food and rest were a priority for the fit. At enemy mess huts or tents many experienced Turkish cuisine for the first time. The unfamiliar fare caused consternation. Cameleer Ernest Ingram was contemptuous of his first experience of "what they called food," which comprised "a slice of black bread with enough chaff in it to thatch a roof and a substance of crushed boiled wheat, [enough] grit in that to gravel a good size path."[84] John Halpin's party of prisoners were similarly disconcerted by their first meal after capture – bowls of boiled wheat – and "paused momentarily of nausea at the contents."[85] The different dining practices also shocked the men. Writing for his regimental history in the 1940s, John Merson reflected on his initial horror at the Turkish custom of eating from a shared receptacle:

> Apparently spoons were unknown, and it seemed I had much to learn from the custom of dining from a community bowl, for I noticed that the Turks plunged their hands into the vessel in search of morsels of meat and fat, before it was passed on to the next in line. The spectacle sickened me.[86]

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[81] Foster, *Two and Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey,* 10-11. Lance Corporal Archibald Hewitson reported similar treatment. Repatriation Statement of Archibald Hewitson, AWM30 B2.6.

[82] Repatriation Statement, NAA B2455 DAVERN J. It must be noted, however, that maintaining standards of hygiene and treatment was a difficult task for the medical officers and nurses of all belligerents. Davern was fortunate to be carried on a stretcher; the lack of transportation available to Turkish medical companies on Gallipoli meant that most wounded or ill troops were transported on equipment normally used to carry ammunition.

[83] For the state of Australian medical affairs on Gallipoli see Eric Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations During World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 53, Michael Tyquin, *Gallipoli: The Medical War – The Australian Army Medical Services in the Dardanelles Campaign of 1915* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1993) and A.G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-1918 – Volume 1. Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea,* 2nd ed (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1938).

[84] Repatriation Statement of Ernest Ingram, AWM30 B2.14.

[85] John Halpin, "A Captive of the Turks – Episode Two," *Reveille* 7 No. 8 (April 1934): 48.

[86] Merson, "Behind the Turkish Lines," 162.

Many of the Australians assumed that such communal eating practices were deliberately designed by their captors to humiliate the prisoners. After experiences with Turkish medical care, encounters with Turkish food were a key aspect of the culture clash that would mark the prisoners' time in internment.

Once food was provided, Turkish and German officers conducted interrogations.[87] The majority of the Australians who were interrogated were happy with their treatment.[88] Most were only asked to provide their personal details, though several were questioned on other matters, such as troop numbers and dispositions, weaponry, or the condition of the Allied homefronts. Those who declined to answer met with a range of responses from their captors. Paradoxically, some earned their admiration for refusing to talk.[89] Others, however, were encouraged to answer through a variety of coercive means. Many of the airmen captured in Palestine reported they were treated to lavish meals and alcohol in an effort to persuade them to open up.[90] Other prisoners claimed they were detained in tents or huts with 'plants' – enemy soldiers masquerading as either fellow POWs or as locals who could not understand English.[91] In several instances more forceful means were also attempted. Some prisoners were physically and verbally abused. Trooper Duncan Richardson claimed he was "thrashed" for refusing to answer questions while Harold Vidler was repeatedly called a 'pigdog' and a 'pighead' by his interrogator. Several men reported they were threatened with the denial of food and water.[92] One group, captured at Romani, were lined up as if to face a firing squad for their perceived lack of cooperation.[93]

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[87] Examples of the Turkish transcripts of such interrogations can be found in the recently released collection of documents relating to the capture of Allied troops at Gallipoli. See Ahmet Tetik, Sema Demirtas, and Y. Serdar Demirtas, *Prisoners of War at the Canakkale Battles: Testimonies and Letters* (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basim Evi, 2009).

[88] See, for example, Repatriation Statement of Ronald McDonald, AWM30 B1.22. The relatively easy-going nature of McDonald's interrogations may have had something to do with the fact that he had been captured in the possession of detailed maps, a field message book and his standing orders from General Ian Hamilton.

[89] Repatriation Statement of Charles Carr, AWM30 B2.4. Carr was questioned at Nablus by a German intelligence officer who reportedly responded to his refusal to answer by stating, "I know a Britisher won't inform on his comrades."

[90] See, for example, Repatriation Statement of Laurence Smith, AWM30 B3.3.

[91] Commander Stoker of the *AE2* was placed in a room with several Turks who he believed were military prisoners that had been offered rewards for getting information out of him. H.G. Stoker, *Straws in the Wind,* 152-3.

[92] Repatriation Statement of Duncan Richardson, AWM30 B2.4; Repatriation Statement of Harold Vidler, AWM30 B2.14. For an example of a POW being threatened, see Repatriation Statement of D'Arcy Armstrong, AWM30 B2.12.

[93] Foster, *Two and a Half Years a Prisoner of War,* 12.

The first distinctions in treatment between officers and men become evident in the immediate post-capture period. While not always a definite, clear-cut division, POW officers were, as Joan Beaumont notes, usually treated better and commanded more respect from their captors than enlisted men.[94] Charles Carr reported that his initial treatment during capture and movement deeper into Turkish territory was exemplary, but later realised that it was because he had been mistaken for an officer. When his real rank was discovered, Carr's preferential treatment ended.[95] This distinction became even more apparent during the prisoners' journeys into internment.

En route to Internment

As soon as the process of capture was completed and the new captives were organised behind Turkish lines, their journeys into internment began. Military historian A.J. Barker argues that, for the new captive, this period of travel and temporary confinement is "an ordeal which may well be the worst he has to suffer during the whole course of his captivity."[96] The majority of Turkish internment camps were situated in Anatolia, meaning these journeys could last months depending on the point of capture and the condition of each man. These journeys marked significant moments in the transition from combatant to captive. The Australians experienced a diverse range of conditions and treatment and were brought into extended close contact with the enemy. This was an initiation period where the POWs gained an appreciation of what awaited them in the prison camps. As John Halpin later wrote, these journeys were "the kindergarten of our captivity."[97]

Prisoners captured in the Dardanelles were first transported to the Ottoman capital of Constantinople, a journey undertaken either by boat across the Sea of Marmara or on a longer overland route through several small villages and towns. Those who crossed the sea reported their journeys were uncomfortable. The submariners of the *AE2* were transported together "cramped up in a space not fit to accommodate 15 men let alone 32" for their crossing, while soldiers captured early in the Gallipoli campaign and transported across the Marmara on various boats suffered similarly close quarters “confined below in a stuffy atmosphere.”[98] Those transported on the overland route endured conditions equally uncomfortable as those of their comrades on the boats, for a longer period of time. The enlisted men were conveyed to a Constantinople-bound train in stages by bullock wagons and were accommodated in barracks and abandoned buildings along the way with only basic rations for sustenance.[99] In an extension of their superior treatment, however, the officers experienced a much more relaxed journey. Together with Stewart Stormonth, Leslie Luscombe travelled across the Peninsula in a horse-drawn *araba* assisted by a Turkish officer who was “wonderfully considerate and likeable in every way.”[100] Before they boarded the train bound for the Ottoman capital, Luscombe and his fellow captive officers were accommodated in a luxurious hotel and given a three-course meal and beer, haircuts and shaves, and the opportunity to partake in a traditional Turkish bath.[101]

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[94] Joan Beaumont, "Rank, Privilege and Prisoners of War," *War and Society* 1 no. 1 (1983): 67-94.
[95] Repatriation Statement of Charles Carr, AWM30 B2.4.
[96] A.J. Barker, *Behind Barbed Wire* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1974), 44.
[97] Halpin, "A Captive of the Turks – Episode Two," 48.

The officers and enlisted men captured in Palestine and Mesopotamia often endured much longer journeys. Lack of transport infrastructure meant that those captured in these more isolated areas often travelled in stages through the bigger cities of Jerusalem, Nazareth, Damascus and Aleppo. Like their counterparts captured on Gallipoli, the Australian officers captured in Palestine journeyed fairly comfortably into Turkey. Challinor, Haig, Rutherford and McElligott were transported from Amman to Nazareth, where they were entertained for a week at a German mess, and travelled to Damascus, where they lived with Turkish officers. The four Australians then left for a prison camp in central Turkey via Aleppo and Constantinople.[102] The enlisted men, however, were transported via a combination of train trips and foot marches, often under particularly trying conditions. Corporal Clyde Currie, captured at Gaza in 1917, was transported from Turkish Headquarters at Tel-el-Sharia to Jerusalem in “railway trucks that were closed in, 60 men to a truck, the one small window the guard kept closed.”[103] D’Arcy Armstrong and the other members of the 4th Light Horse Field Ambulance captured at Es Salt were marched for eighteen miles on “a goat track through the hills” to the city of

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[98] Wheat, “Unpublished Manuscript,” 13, John Harrison Wheat Papers; Lushington, *A Prisoner With the Turks*, 6.

[99] Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

[100] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 44.

[101] Ibid, 45.

[102] Challinor to J.H. Traill, 7 July 1918, NAA B2455 CHALLINOR RONALD T.

[103] Repatriation Statement of Clyde Currie, AWM30 B2.14.

Nablus.[104] The majority of their party were stripped of their boots and uniforms and so undertook the march barefoot. Consequently, the prisoners arrived "all in a bad state … our feet were all torn and blistered."[105] Other Australians reported similar experiences of travel into Turkey. After marching from Turkish Headquarters at Katia, roped together in groups of four, Trooper George Handsley and his fellow Romani POWs were put on a train bound for Jerusalem:

> The filth was indescribable, and we were packed so close together that it was impossible to sit down for rest. We just managed to crouch with our heads between our knees. We were given a bag of hard biscuits for the journey, and a few dates, which were promptly confiscated by our escort … Most of us were suffering from dysentery, and as there was no sanitary arrangements in the cattle truck, we were soon in a filthy condition.[106]

Handsley and the other prisoners travelled under these conditions for two days before reaching their destination.

Perhaps the most distressing experience of travelling to internment was endured by those captured after the fall of the Kut garrison in April 1916. Following an aborted attempt to take the city of Ctesiphon in late 1915, British Major-General Charles Townshend's Sixth Indian Division were forced to retreat to the garrison at Kut, where thousands of Ottoman troops laid siege to the combined British-Indian forces. After nearly four months and several failed attempts to reinforce the garrison, Townshend was left with little option but to capitulate and 13,000 sick and starving troops, including nine Australians, became POWs. The Australian contingent at Kut comprised seven air mechanics and two NCOs of the Australian Flying Corps: Francis Adams, David Curran, Keith Hudson, William Lord, James Munro, William Rayment, Leo Thomas, James Sloss and Thomas Soley. The troops from the garrison, already weak from the siege, were separated from the officers, formed into columns and force-marched over a thousand kilometres north into Turkey. Tied together and harassed by hostile Bedouins along the way, the prisoners were robbed of their clothing, boots and personal possessions, or were forced to exchange them for food. Offered only limited rations, water, shelter or medical assistance, in their feeble state many suffered from dysentery, malaria, ulcerated feet and exposure.[107] Those who dropped from exhaustion or illness were allegedly abandoned to the desert; one Australian reported that he tied his wrists to the back of a supply cart so that he could not fall out and be left behind.[108] Major C.J. Mellis, General Townshend's second-in-command, followed the same route as the first column of enlisted men three weeks later:

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[104] Repatriation Statement of D'Arcy Armstrong, AWM30 B2.12.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Foster, *Two and a Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey*, 17.

[107] K.L. Hudson, "Report on the Treatment of Prisoners from Kut-ell-Amarah," 4-5, Records of Air Mech. K.L. Hudson AFC 1914-1918, AWM3DRL/3325.

> I came across some heartrending scenes … I found numbers of our men … lying exhausted and nearly all desperately ill, and many in the extreme stages of dysenteric enteritis, mere living skeletons – uncared for – unassisted – without medicines … selling their clothing and boots to the Arab villagers to purchase milk to keep life within them.[109]

Upon reaching the Anatolian border, the Kut prisoners travelled by train and on foot further into the countryside to the internment camps. Only two of the original group of nine Australians survived this last stage of their journey. Acting Flight Sergeant James Sloss later reflected that, in doing so, he "suffered almost beyond human endurance."[110]

Upon arriving in the bigger cities of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Nazareth or Damascus, prisoners were accommodated according to their rank and their condition while awaiting transportation straight to a prison camp or the continuation of their journey into Turkey. To get to sites of temporary confinement, they often marched through the streets in parades designed to both humiliate the captives and boost the morale of local forces and civilians. On arrival in Constantinople the submariners of the *AE2* were given Turkish soldiers' uniforms, including a fez, and were marched off the boat and through the city, as were the soldiers captured on the Peninsula during the August offensive.[111] In the Middle East, the prisoners marched in similar parades. A few experienced hostility from civilians – some reported that they were spat at and claimed that threatening throat-cutting gestures from the crowds were common. While marching through the streets of Damascus, George Handsley's group "excited the interests of the natives," and stones and excrement were thrown at the passing ranks of prisoners.[112] Heather Jones attributes physical and verbal abuse of prisoners of war en route to internment to the strength of 'war culture' within the captor nation.[113] The prisoners' testimony indicates that an aggressive war culture had not permeated all areas of the Ottoman Empire. Despite Handsley and other's experiences, the majority of prisoners state that the locals appeared war-weary and disillusioned, particularly the Christian and Jewish populations. Submariner John Wheat claimed "very little notice was taken of us" on their march through Constantinople, while one Light Horseman reported that civilians in Jerusalem repeatedly asked the prisoners when the British would be coming to relieve them.[114]

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[108] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, 149. See also "Report from American Ambassador to British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 2 February 1917," Prisoners of War in Turkey, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[109] Major-General Sir C. Melliss to Rt. Hon. Lloyd George, 1 February 1918, Prisoners of War in Turkey – Mortality Among, NAA A11803 1918/89/724. This letter was smuggled out of Turkey by a Russian prisoner put up for exchange.

[110] Repatriation Statement of James McKenzie Sloss, AWM30 B3.1. According to Red Cross files, two of the Australians from Kut died at Nisibin staging camp in August 1916, three at Adana between August and November, and one somewhere between Adana and the Taurus Mountains between August and November.

[111] Wheat, "Unpublished Manuscript," 14, John Harrison Wheat Papers; Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

In these cities the fit were typically detained in military barracks and civilian gaols for varying periods of time while further transportation was arranged. In an extension of the contrasting treatment meted out to commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, most POW officers were accommodated in relatively comfortable conditions, issued with money, and permitted certain freedoms.[115] James Brown enjoyed a seemingly relaxed stay in Damascus on his way into Turkey. Quartered in a house with French officer prisoners, Brown regularly wandered the town, purchased books from the local bookstore, and visited the steam baths, where he spent many afternoons drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes and relaxing on divans.[116]

For most of the Australians, however, including some officers, their memories of temporary confinement were of squalid, vermin-ridden cells and rooms, meagre rations, and neglect. Reginald Lushington was imprisoned in the basement cells of a military barracks in Constantinople before being transferred to an internment camp deeper in the countryside, and described his time in the barracks as "hell – and a hell which got worse each day we stayed there."[117] The cells were dirty and infested with bugs and lice, the prisoners received no food, and exercise was denied. Similar stories were common among the Australians captured along the Palestinian front. Upon arrival in Damascus, prisoners were confined to a "verminous and filthy" barracks in a state of "semi-starvation." One group that passed through in 1916 was locked into a small room rife with bugs and lice with only one barred window, which was used in place of a latrine.[118] In Mesopotamia, Thomas White spent nearly two months at a military barracks in Mosul in conditions he likened to those provided to prisoners during the Spanish Inquisition.[119] Locked up with four other officers in a one-windowed cell and under constant armed guard, White and his fellow POWs slept on bug-infested grass mats, were allowed to bathe only sporadically and, as their pay was often delayed, they were unable to regularly purchase food. Sanitation at the barracks was far below the standard to which the officers were accustomed and many contracted debilitating diseases. Upon his arrival White was surprised to find fellow pilot William Treloar, but did not recognise his comrade at first due to the emaciating effects of malaria and dysentery Treloar had suffered since his capture some three months earlier.[120] Fred Hancock and Alfred Poole had similar experiences of temporary confinement after their capture in January 1918, when they were held for four months in filthy cells at the Ministry of War in Constantinople before being transferred to their prison camp.[121]

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[112] Foster, *Two and a Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey,* 19.

[113] Heather Jones, "Encountering the Enemy: Prisoner of War Transport and the Development of War Cultures in 1914," in *Warfare and Belligerence: Perspectives in First World War Studies,* ed Pierre Purseigle (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 133-62.

[114] Wheat, "Unpublished Manuscript," 14, John Harrison Wheat Papers; Repatriation Statement of Ernest Ingram, AWM30 B2.14.

[115] Australian POW officers received pay from their captors in accordance with Article 17 of the Hague Convention, which states: "officers taken prisoner shall receive the same rate of pay as officers of corresponding rank in the country where they are detained, the amount to be ultimately refunded by their own Government." NCOs and enlisted men were not paid by the Turkish government. This point is developed further in Chapter Three.

[116] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 133-4.

The seriously wounded were placed in hospitals, where they also experienced a range of conditions and treatment. The Australians captured wounded on Gallipoli were first hospitalised in a private institution which one man wrote was "quite as good as some English hospitals I have seen."[122] However, as an act of reprisal, they were later transferred to Tashkishla Barracks Hospital in Constantinople, the site made famous during the Crimean War as the workplace of Florence Nightingale.[123] Patrick O'Connor was appalled by the primitive conditions at Tashkishla – upon arrival he "thought we had pulled up at a livery stable."[124] The wounded prisoners were herded into rooms with boarded up windows and no lights, and slept on straw mattresses on the floor. Nurses were not permitted to visit. Wounds were neglected, no clothes or bedding were supplied, and the prisoners received little in the way of food.[125] Twenty-five-year-old Private John Hennessy, hit by shrapnel in the groin and leg, was left untended for a full fortnight and, as the young prisoner was also suffering from a severe case of dysentery, he developed a fatal infection.[126] O'Connor himself had, in a significant understatement, a "very rough time of it" at Tashkishla; his wounded leg was amputated and he was left with an infected stump that never fully healed during his time as a prisoner.[127]

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[117] Lushington, *A Prisoner With the Turks,* 11-12.

[118] Foster, *Two-and-a-half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey,* 20; Repatriation Statement of Leslie Lambert, AWM30 B2.6.

[119] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 65.

[120] Ibid, 64.

[121] See Repatriation Statements of Alfred Poole and Fred Hancock, AWM30 B3.2.

[122] Repatriation Statement of John Davern, NAA B2455 DAVERN J.

[123] Ibid. The transfer of the POWs to Tashkishla was brought about as a reprisal against alleged mistreatment of Turkish prisoners in British hands.

However, not all hospitals or medical facilities in the Empire were as primitive or poorly administered as Tashkishla and other Australians suffered far less traumatic experiences of medical care and hospitalisation. Wounded Australians who passed through Damascus hospital were, in stark contrast to their 'fit' comrades detained in the city's barracks, full of praise for the medical staff at the "well appointed" hospital where "treatment was good all round" and the prisoners "seemed to fare better than the Turks themselves."[128] Similarly, Private Ellis Gilman experienced expert treatment and good conditions in hospital at Jerusalem, and Vincent Parkinson was treated "with nothing but kindness" at a hospital in Nazareth while receiving treatment for his broken skull.[129] At Aleppo, Armenian doctors attended Corporal William Simms who, despite reporting that rations and anaesthetic were insufficient, believed he received good treatment.[130] Harbie Military Hospital in Constantinople, where many of the Tashkishla patients were eventually transferred, developed a reputation for being "by no means a bad place" and several Australians remembered the care with which they were looked after by Harbie's staff, especially a German nurse who “was a toff to us … in every way.”[131] Even O’Connor, after his ‘rotten’ experiences, was later impressed by the facilities and conditions at another hospital in Constantinople, where he was “treated quite handsomely” by a Turkish doctor who he believed was “a thorough gentleman.”[132]

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[124] Repatriation Statement of Patrick O'Connor, AWM30 B1.27.
[125] Repatriation Statement of Walter Williams, AWM30 B1.32; Repatriation Statement of John Davern, NAA B2455 DAVERN J.
[126] Repatriation Statement of Walter Williams, AWM30 B1.32.
[127] Repatriation Statement of Patrick O'Connor, AWM30 B1.27.
[128] Repatriation Statement of Ellis Gilman, AWM30 B2.10; Repatriation Statement of Edward Picton, AWM30 B2.7. It must be pointed out, however, that the POWs reserved the most praise for a Sister Johncock, a British nurse working in Damascus prior to the outbreak of war and was interned by the Ottoman government. See also Repatriation Statement of Archibald Hewitson, AWM30 B2.6.
[129] Repatriation Statement of Ellis Gilman, AWM30 B2.10; Repatriation Statement of Vincent Parkinson, AWM30 B3.3.
[130] Repatriation Statement of William Simms, AWM30 B2.5.

After their hospitalisation, the wounded followed one of two paths depending on the severity of their injuries and the time at which they were captured. Those taken prisoner earlier in the war remained in hospital until they were deemed to have sufficiently recovered, at which point they continued on their journey to the various internment camps in Turkey. Those who needed extended treatment usually spent the remainder of their war in various hospitals, military barracks or ‘rest’ camps, from where they could be assessed for repatriation or exchange on medical grounds.[133] Two men captured wounded in the latter stages of the war, William Simms and John Merson, never reached an internment camp – they were liberated from their Turkish hospitals during the October 1918 Allied advance in the Middle East.[134]

Reflection and Acceptance

For many Australians, their journeys off the battlefields and into temporary confinement were arduous. However, once the POWs stopped at their sites of temporary confinement their initial reactions to capture and subsequent treatment settled as they processed what had happened. This period of reflection was the last phase in the transition of the men from soldier, sailor, or airman to POW.

A common reaction was melancholy torpor. Doctors and psychologists who conducted studies into prisoners captured during the Second World War coined an evocative term for the sense of inertia that overcame men once they reached their first point of confinement – “collection centre stupor” – claiming that it is typically brought on by a combination of exhaustion, disappointment and fear.[135] Ex-Army prison officer and sociologist Walter Lunden argued this sense of stupor and fatigue had several consequences. It quashed any thoughts of escape, and also engendered a sense of docility among prisoners, who tend to "lie down alone or in small groups" and "remain silent with no apparent interest in anything."[136] This was certainly the case for John Halpin, who wrote "despondency … gripped many" at his party's first staging camp, and that "lassitude almost completely benumbed our faculties."[137] Such stupor also allowed the men to come to terms with their situation, as during the highly-charged moment of capture and movement behind the lines and off the battlefield, "there is little time for reflection … there is no time to think."[138]

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[131] Repatriation Statement of Patrick O’Connor, AWM30 B1.27.

[132] Ibid.

[133] See Repatriation Statement of John Davern, NAA B2455 DAVERN J. The POW exchange programme is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

[134] Repatriation Statement of William Simms, AWM30 B2.5; Repatriation Statement of John Merson, AWM30 B2.10.

[135] Walter A. Lunden, “Captivity Psychoses Among Prisoners of War,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Crimonology* 39 (1949): 726.

Some prisoners attempted to be philosophical about their situation. After the war, John Merson wrote that he spent much of his time in Nablus hospital reflecting on the "strange whims of fate" that had delivered him into captivity.[139] Merson was instrumental in the capture of the first Turkish prisoners taken by the 11th Light Horse Regiment at Mageibra in 1916, and felt that it was "poetic justice" that he was subsequently taken prisoner.[140] Lieutenant Stanley Jordan was frustrated but resigned: "It was darned hard luck being captured within seven weeks of getting a commission as it did not give me a chance, but I did my bit and now I am tied up till the end of the war."[141] Private Daniel Jones wrote of his capture to a fellow Cameleer a few months after he was taken prisoner in 1917 in a flippant tone, finishing with the somewhat nonchalant observation that "at any rate things could have been worse."[142]

For most new captives, though, such reflection often brought with it uncomfortable feelings and emotions. For some, it engendered feelings of failure. Thomas White's realisation that he "would be of no more use to our army for perhaps the duration of the war" plunged him into a deep despair that initially left him too miserable to eat.[143] Similar feelings are also evident in a letter from Maurice

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[136] Lunden, "Captivity Psychoses Among Prisoners of War," 726. Because of the circumstances of capture, very few prisoners tried to escape immediately after being taken POW or during their journeys away from the battlefields. Those taken wounded were in no position to attempt escape, nor were those fit captured in the Dardanelles, where they were outnumbered by the enemy. Escape was equally impracticable for the men taken prisoner in Mesopotamia and Palestine, where the battlegrounds were usually surrounded by barren and inhospitable desert. Moreover, like the men captured by the Japanese in South East Asia a generation later, the Australians on any of the Ottoman fronts would never have been able to successfully blend in with the locals.

[137] Halpin, "Captives of the Turk – Episode Two," 48; Halpin, *Blood in the Mists*, 103.

[138] Lunden, "Captivity Psychoses Among Prisoners of War," 725.

[139] Merson, "Behind Turkish Lines," 162.

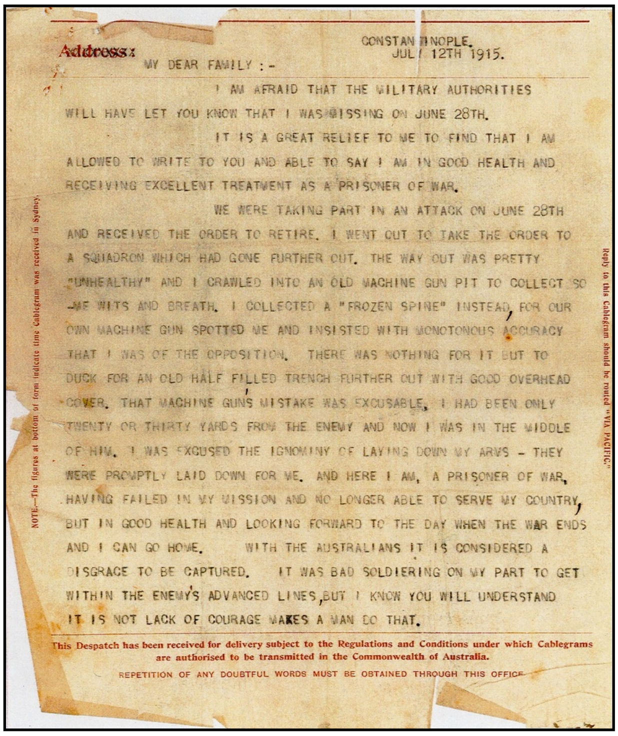
[140] Ibid.

[141] Jordan to Friend, 15 July 1915, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of Stanley Rupert Jordan, AWM1DRL/0428.

[142] Jones to Friend, 10 March 1918, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of Daniel Jones, AWM1DRL/0428.

[143] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 41-2.

Delpratt to his family in Queensland. Writing from a military barracks in Constantinople, Delpratt explained his position as “having failed in my mission and [now] no longer able to serve my country.”[144] Some prisoners apportioned their sense of failure to others, especially members of other Allied forces. Gallipoli POW Harry Brown considered his capture and subsequent internment to be the fault of the British troops at Suvla Bay who failed to reach their objective during the August offensive, leaving the Australians stranded. Several of the Cameleers taken at Gaza somewhat irrationally blamed their capture on the British officer who surrendered without first asking their permission.[145] As Brian Feltman writes, moving from “warriors to spectators with an obstructed view” was an extremely bitter pill for ex-combatants to swallow.[146]



Address:

CONSTANTINOPLE.
JULY 12TH 1915.

MY DEAR FAMILY :-

I AM AFRAID THAT THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES WILL HAVE LET YOU KNOW THAT I WAS MISSING ON JUNE 28TH.

IT IS A GREAT RELIEF TO ME TO FIND THAT I AM ALLOWED TO WRITE TO YOU AND ABLE TO SAY I AM IN GOOD HEALTH AND RECEIVING EXCELLENT TREATMENT AS A PRISONER OF WAR.

WE WERE TAKING PART IN AN ATTACK ON JUNE 28TH AND RECEIVED THE ORDER TO RETIRE. I WENT OUT TO TAKE THE ORDER TO A SQUADRON WHICH HAD GONE FURTHER OUT. THE WAY OUT WAS PRETTY "UNHEALTHY" AND I CRAWLED INTO AN OLD MACHINE GUN PIT TO COLLECT SOME WITS AND BREATH. I COLLECTED A "FROZEN SPINE" INSTEAD, FOR OUR OWN MACHINE GUN SPOTTED ME AND INSISTED WITH MONOTONOUS ACCURACY THAT I WAS OF THE OPPOSITION. THERE WAS NOTHING FOR IT BUT TO DUCK FOR AN OLD HALF FILLED TRENCH FURTHER OUT WITH GOOD OVERHEAD COVER. THAT MACHINE GUN'S MISTAKE WAS EXCUSABLE. I HAD BEEN ONLY TWENTY OR THIRTY YARDS FROM THE ENEMY AND NOW I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF HIM. I WAS EXCUSED THE IGNOMINY OF LAYING DOWN MY ARMS - THEY WERE PROMPTLY LAID DOWN FOR ME. AND HERE I AM, A PRISONER OF WAR, HAVING FAILED IN MY MISSION AND NO LONGER ABLE TO SERVE MY COUNTRY, BUT IN GOOD HEALTH AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN THE WAR ENDS AND I CAN GO HOME. WITH THE AUSTRALIANS IT IS CONSIDERED A DISGRACE TO BE CAPTURED. IT WAS BAD SOLDIERING ON MY PART TO GET WITHIN THE ENEMY'S ADVANCED LINES, BUT I KNOW YOU WILL UNDERSTAND IT IS NOT LACK OF COURAGE MAKES A MAN DO THAT.

This Despatch has been received for delivery subject to the Regulations and Conditions under which Cablegrams are authorised to be transmitted in the Commonwealth of Australia.

REPETITION OF ANY DOUBTFUL WORDS MUST BE OBTAINED THROUGH THIS OFFICE

NOTE.—The figures at bottom of form indicate time Cablegram was received in Sydney.

Reply to this Cablegram should be routed "VIA PACIFIC."

Figure 1.3: Message sent by Maurice Delpratt informing his family of his capture, July 1915.
Source: Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

Feelings of failure were often compounded by a sense of shame. Allowing oneself to fall into enemy hands was considered a dishonourable fate within the 1st AIF, whose ‘never give up’ attitude was deeply entrenched from the beginning of the war. Historian Henry Gullett wrote of the expectations of the Australian Light Horse regarding their conduct on the battlefield: "From the opening of the fight at Romani to the end of the campaign in 1918, the light horsemen observed a voluntary and unwritten law that no sound man should allow himself to be taken prisoner."[147] Maurice Delpratt knew that "with the Australians it is considered a disgrace to be captured."[148] Reginald Lushington also felt the shame of his capture keenly: "Our hearts were heavy as lead, and we just stared at each other, feeling sure the one thought was shared by us all – what an ignoble ending to all our brilliant aspirations, death seemed almost preferable."[149] Cameleer Allan Kimber was similarly distressed. In a letter to his sister written after he was taken prisoner at Gaza in 1917, he stated that he was "sorry" to tell her the upsetting news, explaining "I feel it very much as my heart and soul was in the good work."[150]

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[144] Delpratt to Family, 12 July 1915, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.
[145] Repatriation Statement of Harry Norman Brown, AWM30 B1.5.
[146] Brian K. Feltman, “Letters from Captivity: The First World War Correspondence of the German Prisoners of War in the United Kingdom,” in *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in First World War Studies*, ed. Jennifer D. Keene and Michael S. Neiberg (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 104.

Those who responded to capture with feelings and expressions of disappointment, failure, shame, anger and depression did so ultimately because of the perception of passivity inherent in their new status as prisoners of war. As captives, they moved from the hypermasculine battlefront to occupy what Annette Becker argues is "a liminal space," and what Christina Twomey calls "the more culturally feminine site of containment."[151] Capture by the Turks threatened to tarnish a man's reputation as a brave soldier and a noble citizen – surrender carried with it the underlying stigma of cowardice, treason, or even desertion – and place him at the whim of an enemy he did not understand. With this in mind, it is understandable why so many Australians taken POW by the Turks responded to their dramatically altered status negatively. For many of the prisoners, however, these immediate reactions were tempered by the realisation – and the acceptance – that the active management of their situation would be necessary to successfully meet the various challenges of internment.

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[147] Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine,* 184-5.

[148] Delpratt to Family, 12 July 1915, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[149] Lushington, *A Prisoner With the Turks,* 6. This response was not unique to Australians. Brian Feltman writes how the German *Heldentod* myth – the heroic veneration of those who died in service of the nation – excluded those who surrendered, and left German POWs feeling shame and guilt at their capture. See Feltman, "Letters from Captivity," 90.

[150] A. Kimber to Sister, 21 April 1917, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of Allan Thomas Kimber, AWM1DRL/0428. Kimber finished his letter by stating "I shall have to wait now." Kimber never made it back to his sister. According to the testimony of his fellow POWs, he contracted malaria and died at a camp hospital in the Taurus Mountains in November 1917.

[151] Annette Becker, "Art, Material Life, and Disaster: Civilian and Military Prisoners of War," in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory, and the First World War*, ed. Nicholas J. Saunders (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), 28; Christina Twomey, "Emaciation or Emasculation: Photographic Images, White Masculinity and Captivity by the Japanese in World War Two," *Journal of Men's Studies* 15 no. 3 (2007): 299-300.

Conclusion

The Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen taken prisoner by the Turks underwent a process of transition to become prisoners of war. Captured on different fronts and under varied circumstances, the POWs were subject to a range of treatment and conditions while moving behind Turkish lines, from neglect and abuse to deference and kindness. Their initial responses were equally diverse, including shock, surprise, relief and anger. As the prisoners embarked on journeys away from the battlefield and came into extended close contact with their radically different captors, these responses were, for many, replaced by confusion and indignation. Many experienced accommodation, food, and medical care that were below acceptable Western standards, and the new prisoners looked with some trepidation towards internment. Forced inactivity in temporary confinement before arrival at an internment camp allowed the captives time to reflect on and realise the implications of their position, and adjust to their status as prisoners of war. For many, this period of reflection and acceptance was an uncomfortable one as it brought with it feelings of shame and guilt, engendered by a sense of failure to meet the prescription of the Australian soldier, and thus the Australian male. How the prisoners moved beyond these initial reactions to exert influence over their conditions and treatment – in effect, how they coped with and managed their captivity – is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Enduring Internment: Managing Camp Conditions and Culture

Prisoners of war are typically portrayed as powerless recipients of a passive experience.[1] As noted in the previous chapter, POWs are often perceived to be stripped of agency, the prison camp is seen as a liminal space, and captivity is represented as a 'feminised' situation through which captives must effectively sit and wait for the end of hostilities and, if they survive, for their return home. Such statements, as Craig Barrett argues in relation to the postwar construction of captivity by World War II ex-prisoners of the Japanese, conflate 'captive' with 'victim' and deny the POW any sense of control over, or management of, their situation.[2] This chapter builds on Barrett's idea with relation to captivity itself, and argues that, far from being powerless and passive victims, the Australians in Turkey took an active role in managing their conditions and treatment. The chapter explores the physical and psychological challenges the prisoners faced, ranging from accommodation, food, and work, to restrictions regarding mail, constant contact with the same people and the deaths of fellow captives, and examines how the Australians managed these different stresses and strains by modifying their physical environments, reasserting traditional power structures, and establishing methods to combat 'barbed wire disease'. Such analysis demonstrates how the prisoners adjusted to their abnormal and unexpected situation to better cope with their captivity.

The Physical Challenges of Captivity

At the outbreak of war, the internationally recognised Hague Conventions governed the behaviour of belligerents. The principal law within the Convention relating to POWs directed that all prisoners were to be treated on the same footing as soldiers of equivalent rank from the captor nation.[3] For many Allied prisoners, therefore, their lives as captives in wartime Turkey – described by one historian as "educationally backward, resource poor, industrially underdeveloped and financially bankrupt" – were markedly different from what they were used to.[4] For the Australians, this difference, particularly in terms of their physical environment, proved particularly galling.

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[1] Joan Beaumont, for example, states that the prisoner of war is "a victim, passive, deprived of the function for which he was trained" while Christina Twomey takes a similar view, stating that "captivity is the antithesis of battle for it confines the warrior and renders him powerless." Joan Beaumont, *Gull Force: Survival and Leadership in Captivity* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 4; Christina Twomey, "Emaciation or Emasculation: Photographic Images, White Masculinity and Captivity by the Japanese in World War Two," *Journal of Men's Studies* 15 no. 3 (2007): 299.

[2] Craig Barrett, "Remembering Captivity: Australian Prisoners of War of the Japanese" (PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, 2011), 209-10.

The men of the 1st AIF came from a nation that placed much stock in ideas of race. The relative ease with which white people had colonised the country during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cemented social Darwinist notions of racial hierarchies or ladders, in which white people, or more precisely white men, occupied the top rung.[5] Ensuring the purity of the white race in such an isolated outpost of the British Empire was a key priority for the colonists. Anxiety about the 'other', particularly the Asian other who, it was believed, could potentially invade the sparsely populated colonies, was one of the main driving forces behind Federation in 1901, and one of the first acts undertaken by the newly formed federal government of Australia was the passing of the *Immigration Restriction Act (1901)* to restrict migration on racial grounds. The pursuit of a 'White Australia' ideal was not limited to restricting immigrants; the indigenous inhabitants of the country were also affected. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, Aboriginal Australians were denied basic citizenship rights. They were not permitted to vote and, for many, 'protection boards' controlled their ability to work, marry, and even move.[6] It was generally expected, and even hoped, that they would die out within the near future. Such restrictive policies towards migrants and the indigenous population prove, as Peter Stanley writes, “the Australia that raised and constituted the first Australian Imperial Force was a deeply racist society.”[7]

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[3] Article 7 of "Annex to the Convention: Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV); October 18, 1907," http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hague04.asp

[4] Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Connecticut: Westport Press, 2001), 15.

[5] Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 18–20. The white male Australian came to embody all that was 'manly' in the age of Empire. Initial fears that the heat of the tropics would lead to the degeneration of the white race were swept aside as the performance of men from the colonies were contrasted against those from the perceived increasingly effeminate English metropolis. According to many popular writers of the time, 'manliness' was made on the frontier.

[6] For the development and function of Aboriginal Protection Boards in various Australian states see Richard Broome, "Controlled by Boards and Caste Barriers," in *Aboriginal Australians: A History Since 1788*, 4th ed (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2010), 172-94.

The Australians’ racism was reinforced by their experiences in their different training camps amid what was, for many, their first contact with non-white people. The majority of Australian troops spent some time in Egypt, including those who became prisoners of the Turks. Both Suzanne Brugger and Richard White explain that the Australians were shocked and appalled by the Egyptian ‘native’ way of life, particularly the poverty, squalor, and inequality they witnessed in the cities.[8] Writing to his father from his camp at Maadi, future POW Fred Hancock expressed his surprise at what he had seen in the native quarter of Cairo, stating that “some of the Eastern customs are decidedly off,” and adding “you have no idea of the way they live, to a person coming from Australia it is absolutely astounding.”[9] With their relatively high rates of pay, many Australians were able to hire Egyptian locals to perform menial work around the camps, such as cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes. The Australians also regularly partook of the local goods and services on offer, going to Egyptian hairdressers and tailors, visiting local restaurants and, perhaps most infamously, frequenting bars and brothels. Such “informal assertions of imperial authority” – to quote Richard White – reinforced the Australians’ place in what Brugger calls “the top caste of the colonial hierarchy” and validated their belief that, as white men, they were true “lords of the desert.”[10]

These feelings of innate superiority were compounded by lack of understanding of Turkish customs and culture. As is explored in greater detail in a later chapter, Australians had little experience with Turkish people prior to the First World War. Ignorance of an enemy and their cultural habits can prove particularly problematic for a POW who becomes, as anthropologist William K. Carr writes, “as surely confined by this ignorance as … by barbed wire and armed guards.”[11] The unfamiliar nature of their captors, along with ideas of racial and cultural supremacy, meant that cultural clashes were the cause of many of the physical challenges associated with the Australians' time in captivity – namely food, accommodation, transport, medical care, and work.

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[7] Peter Stanley, “’He was black, he was a White man, and a dinkum Aussie’: race and Empire in revisiting the Anzac Legend,” in *Race, Empire, and First World War Writing*, ed. Santanu Das (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 221.

[8] Suzanne Brugger, *Australians and Egypt 1914–1919* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980), 34; Richard White, “Sun, Sand, and Syphillis: Australian Soldiers and the Orient – Egypt 1914,” *Australian Cultural History* no. 9 (1990): 57-60.

[9] Hancock to Father, 24 December 1914 and 17 January 1915, Papers of Lt F. Hancock 1ALH and No. 1 Sqd AFC, AWM2DRL/530.

[10] White, “Sun, Sand, and Syphillis,” 57; Brugger, *Australians and Egypt,* 29.

[11] William K. Carr, “The Faceless POW,” *Naval War College Review* (Fall 1977): 89.

Turkish food was one of the key concerns for the prisoners, and the cause of much complaint. They first experienced their captors' very different food behind Turkish lines and on their journeys to internment, and reacted with revulsion and contempt. For men used to a largely meat-based diet, Turkish food and its emphasis on vegetables and grains was inferior. The Australians loathed the unfamiliar black bread they were given, a regulation ration in the Ottoman Army, and complained about its poor quality. The prisoners were also scornful of the common Turkish meal of boiled wheat and olive oil. Submariner Henry Kinder explained: "Can you imagine any Australian coming off good rations sitting down to a meal of fusty wheat which had rancid butter poured over it … it would make your stomach heave."[12] For Kinder, "it took ages to get used to the Turkish food."[13] Some initially believed the food with which they had been provided was animal food, served to the prisoners specifically to humiliate. The American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire reinforced impressions of the inferiority of Turkish food in a report to the British government, stating that the rations the prisoners received were "not of the right kind for Englishmen."[14] Communal eating practices also shocked the prisoners. Eating from a shared receptacle was seen as unhygienic and uncivilised. One POW expressed his distaste for his captors' traditional dining practice in a postwar memoir:

> There were three dishes brought into us and placed on the floor and we were given a wooden spoon each, and told to divide ourselves equally round the dishes. Just imagine Englishmen, with a dirty wooden spoon, squatting down on the floor, all eating from the same dish food not fit for a pig.[15]

The prisoner's anger over the expectation that he and his fellow POWs would eat in the same manner as Turkish troops was clearly based on his feelings of cultural superiority.

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[12] H. Kinder, "Unpublished Manuscript," 34, Papers of Kinder, HJE (Stoker, Petty Officer), AWMPR01466.

[13] Ibid, 38.

[14] American Ambassador to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 9 January 1917, Prisoners of War in Turkey, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[15] J.H. Wheat, "Unpublished Manuscript," 14, John Harrison Wheat Papers, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

The accommodation with which the prisoners were provided also proved confronting. As in Egypt, the Australians were struck by the squalor of many of the towns in which they were housed. George Handsley was shocked by his surroundings in Angora (present-day Ankara): "a walk through its streets soon convinces one that it still holds a reputation as the home of goats. The houses are mostly very small hovels built of mud, and there is very little attempt at … cleanliness."[16] Henry Kinder was also less than impressed by the then capital: "I don't know who quoted 'see Constantinople and die.' I'm not surprised at anyone dying after seeing it."[17] Public health and sanitation infrastructure in the Ottoman Empire was rudimentary. John Merson claimed the standards of sanitation in Turkey were "a disgrace to civilisation and too abominable for words," an outlook echoed by doctor James Brown's assessment of the Turkish attitude towards hygiene: "The Turks had no notions about sanitary measures except that they seemed to be utterly futile and unnecessary."[18]

Accommodation varied according to rank and the purpose of the camp. The Turkish War Ministry established a general policy regarding accommodating POWs. Officers were to be settled in hotels or houses, while enlisted men could be kept in garrison barracks or "other available institutions."[19] The majority of Australian officers were interned at Afyonkarahissar, a town approximately 450 kilometres southeast of Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) renowned for its cultivation of opium poppies. Prisoners were interned at Afyon from early 1915 until the end of the war. Officers at Afyon were quartered in two sections of the town in houses they believed belonged to deported Armenians.[20] The houses offered a place to sleep and eat and provided protection from the weather, and the officers' concerns related to cramped conditions – according to James Brown, ten men usually lived in each house

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[16] J.R. Foster, *Two and a Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey – related by Trooper G.W. Handsley* (Brisbane: Jones and Hambly, 19–), 42.

[17] Kinder, "Unpublished Manuscript," 34-5.

[18] Repatriation Statement of John Merson, AWM30 B2.10; James Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways* (Sydney: Halstead Press, 1940), 255.

[19] "Usera Hakkinda Talimatname Mat-baa-I (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War)," (Istanbul: Turkish War Ministry, Military Printer, 1914.) Ottoman Archives 1332/1914. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2001. My thanks to Jennifer Lawless for permission to reproduce this source. Lawless offers a comprehensive overview of the different POW camps in Turkey in her PhD thesis, including location and purpose. See Jennifer Lawless, "Kizmet: The Fate of the Gallipoli POWs" (PhD Thesis: University of New England, 2011).

[20] Panayiotis Diamadis, "Precious and Honoured Guests of the Ottoman Government," in *Genocide Perspectives II: Essays on the Holocaust and Other Genocides*, eds. Colin Tatz, Peter Arnold, and Sandra Tatz (Blackheath, NSW: Brandl & Schlesinger/Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003), 169. Diamadis argues that POW testimony offers proof of the extremely contentious Armenian genocide.

– spartan furnishings, inflated prices for rent, and lack of space to exercise.[21] In his postwar report, William Elston wrote that officer prisoners at Afyon had been "fairly well treated according to Turkish ideas."[22] Elston's grudging concession indicates the Australians' ideas of the Turks as inferior, and their surprise at the reasonable conditions of their accommodation.

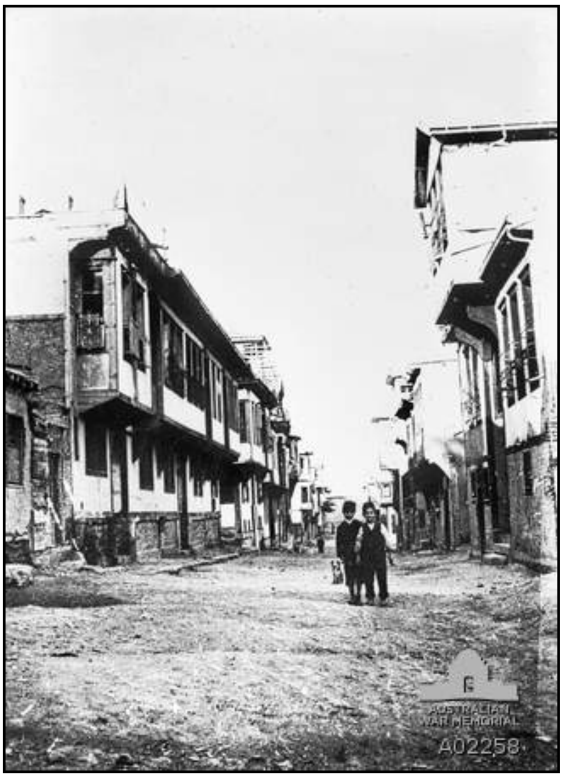
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL A02258

Figure 2.1: Afyonkarahissar streetscape, showing POW officers' houses.
Source: AWMA02258.

Enlisted men bore the brunt of cultural clashes over expectations and concerns regarding accommodation and were confronted by more immediate physical challenges. The majority of soldiers were accommodated in work camps located in areas where building infrastructure, farming, or other work was required. Some camps had favourable reputations. Belemedik, the base camp for those working on the Berlin-Baghdad Railway in the Taurus Mountains, was renowned as a model camp, and in one Turkish report was even likened to a Swiss village.[23] Prisoners at Belemedik lived in wooden huts and were provided with areas for exercise and entertainment. Keith Hudson believed that "a man was lucky who went to Bilemedik

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[21] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways*, 177.

[22] Repatriation Statement of William Elston, AWM30 B1.13.

[23] Rifki Bey Report, 12 April 1918, Prisoners of War in Turkey – Allowances to, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[sic] and who could stay there."[24] Yarbaschi in the Amanus Mountains, where prisoners lived in tents, was similarly remembered as relatively comfortable.[25] Later in the war, work camps were established closer to the Gulf of Ismidt and in Constantinople. At these camps, prisoners were housed in existing buildings such as old warehouses, which were well-ventilated and offered effective protection from the weather.

Other work camps were notorious for their dirty, overcrowded, and insufficient accommodation. Lice, fleas, and other bugs were a chief concern. Sanitation could also be problematic. At Gelebek, in the south Taurus region, POWs either slept in the open or lived in crowded, draughty barracks offering little protection from the elements. D'Arcy Armstrong wrote of Gelebek: "camp conditions very bad – a total lack of accommodation for the working parties, sanitation nil, fleas and lice abounded."[26] In April 1918, Ottoman Red Crescent delegate Rifki Bey admitted that Gelebek was the worst of the Railway camps.[27] At Tasch Durmas, a Railway camp near Belemedik, prisoners were accommodated in a windowless "rotten room" 26 feet long and 18 feet wide that was perched on the edge of a large drop into a canyon. Australian, British and French POWs lived alongside Turkish, Greek, Armenian and Arab workers, resulting in conflict over territory. The Western prisoners did not want to mix with the 'other' labourers, and fought to maintain a division between the groups. One POW recalled an occasion where a Turkish labourer attempted to eat with the British prisoners – the Turk was punched and his bread was thrown over the cliff.[28] The barracks at Tasch Durmas was hardly, as Reginald Lushington sarcastically wrote, "a cheerful place to come back to of an evening."[29] Again, it was the prisoners' belief in their racial and cultural superiority that formed the basis of their anger over the standards and conditions of their accommodation. The conditions in which they found themselves living in Turkey reinforced the perceived uncivilised nature of their captors.

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[24] Keith Hudson, "Report on the Treatment of Prisoners from Kut-el-Amarah, 1916-1918 Turkey," 8, Records of Air Mech. K. L. Hudson, AFC, AWM3DRL/3325.

[25] Repatriation Statement of Arthur Tierney, AWM30 B2.14.

[26] Repatriation Statement of D'Arcy Armstrong, AWM30 B2.12.

[27] Rifki Bey Report, 12 April 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[28] R.F. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks 1915-1918* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, 1923), 38.

[29] Ibid.

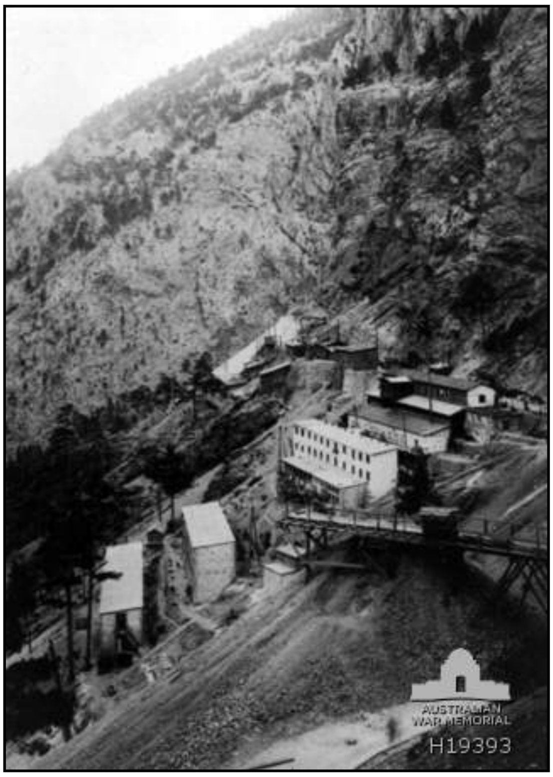

Figure 2.2: Workers' barracks at Tasch Durmas in the Taurus Mountains.
Source: AWMH19393.

Transportation between camps also proved confronting. Transport infrastructure across the Ottoman Empire during the war was basic. Unpaved roads usually followed ancient caravan routes and there were only 280 engines in use across the existing rail network, which comprised 5,759 kilometres of mismatched gauges and lines across an area of nearly 2.5 million square kilometres – extremely limited in comparison to Germany's 64,000 kilometres of railroad for an area of 540,000 square kilometres.[30] Ottoman troops were often transported in cattle trucks, where the cramped and unhygienic conditions took their toll. Charles Bean witnessed the transport of demobbed Turkish soldiers during his trip through the Taurus Mountains in 1919, and noted that many had perished in the dangerously overcrowded conditions before reaching their destinations.[31] Often the doors of the trucks were bolted shut to prevent attempts at desertion. The prisoners found this method of ensuring the arrival of troops particularly uncivilised. One English officer reflected that such measures would never be undertaken in the West: "Imagine British troops being kept under lock and key on their way to the front!"[32] When rail travel was not available, troops were made to march. The lack of complete rail lines between Anatolia and Mesopotamia, for example, meant that Ottoman troops deployed to the Iraqi front marched for approximately two months to reach their destination.[33]

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[30] Erickson, *Ordered to Die,* 16-19.
[31] C.E.W. Bean, *Gallipoli Mission* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1952), 316-7.
[32] E.H. Keeling, *Adventures in Turkey and Russia* (London: John Murray, 1924), 43.

The prisoners, many of who had already experienced travel via cattle trucks and forced marches following capture, were also subject to these transportation difficulties on journeys between camps. In his 1923, memoir Reginald Lushington described the general conditions under which POWs travelled between camps in what became known as the '40 Hommers':

> Our mode of transport when we moved from camp to camp for working parties was a closed goods wagon with two small carved windows … This was generally a most painful and tiring mode of travelling, packed to suffocation with 40 men with their kit so that we sat on top of each other often for couple of days and nights. It was impossible to lie down, so you who read this can imagine what we were like and the language we used.[34]

Like their Turkish counterparts, the prisoners were often locked into the trucks and suffered from the overcrowded conditions.

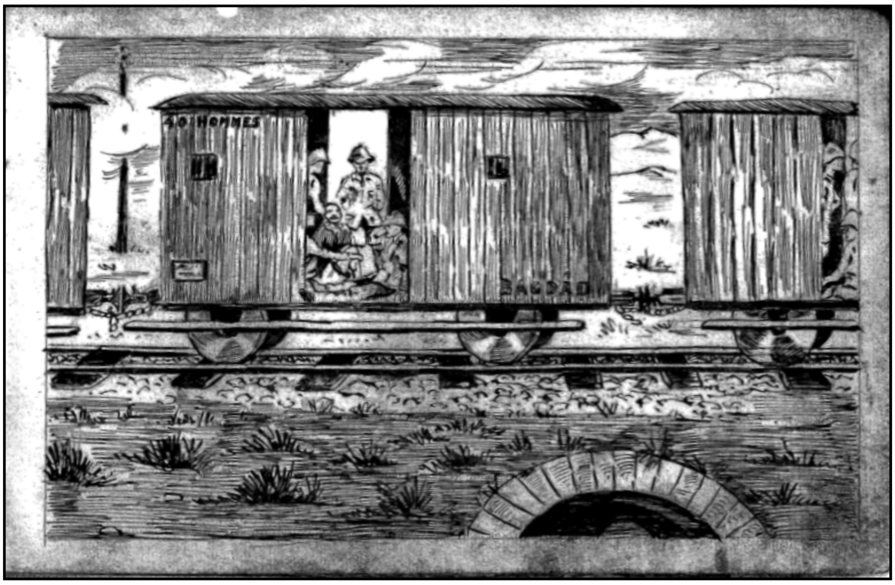

Figure 2.3: Reginald Lushington's sketch of POWs travelling on a '40 Hommer'.
Source: Papers of Cahir, K.J (Private) and Lushington, R (Private), AWMPR00185.

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[33] Hikmet Ozdemir, *The Ottoman Army 1914-1918: Disease and Death on the Battlefront,* trans. Saban Kardas (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2008), 30-33. Many troops became ill and fell out or deserted during these arduous marches, which resulted in depleted regiments upon arrival. One division of 10,000 Ottoman troops lost over half its complement to disease and desertion en route from Istanbul to the Palestinian front.

[34] Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks,* 13.

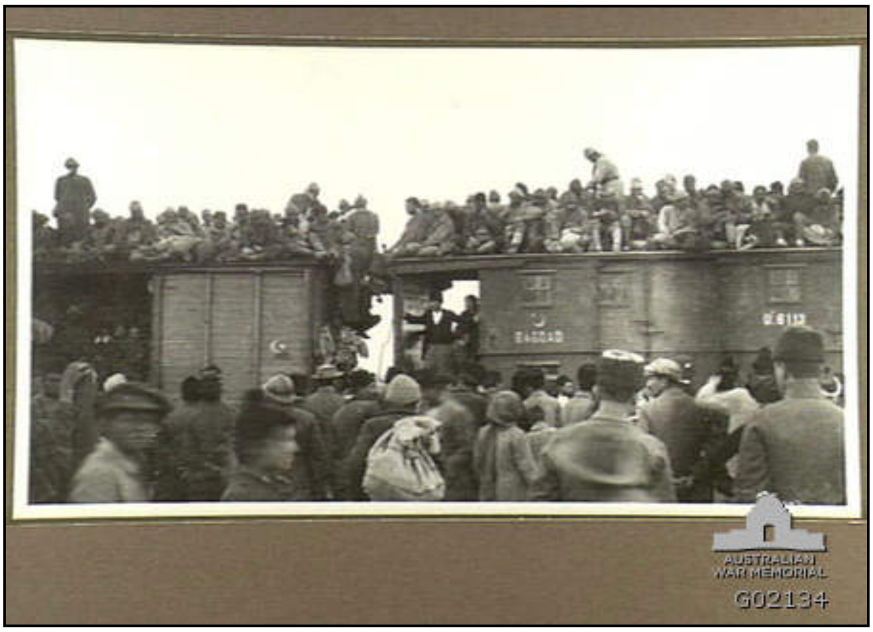

Figure 2.4: Photograph taken by Charles Bean of Turkish troops being transported away from the front after the cessation of hostilities.
Source: AWMG02134.

Perhaps the most infamous POW march occurred after the capitulation of Kut in April 1916, when British and Indian prisoners marched nearly 1000 kilometres into Anatolia. Another notable march involving Australians occurred in October 1915, when men captured in the Dardanelles were forced to trek between Angora and Changri, a distance of approximately 130 kilometres over mountainous terrain. The prisoners, many of whom had been sent straight to hospital after their capture suffering from wounds, covered the distance in four days. Daniel Creedon believed the march "was a most inhuman thing."[35] In rain and snow, the poorly clothed prisoners, many of whom were without boots, undertook the march on meagre rations of bread and olives. They carried their supplies and the guards harassed and herded the men along. Many of the exhausted prisoners had to be helped or carried along the way. For Charles Suckling the march was particularly traumatic: "As long as I live I will not forget that four days of my life – the suffering and misery of that march would fill a book."[36] For the prisoners, such forced marches were indications of the cruelty and uncivilised inferiority of their captors but, for the Turks, they were a common method of troop movement.

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[35] "Copy of Diary Written by D.B. Creedon," 13, D.B. Creedon Diary 1915, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.
[36] C. Suckling, "Unpublished Manuscript," 33, Papers of Charles Suckling, Submariner, 1914-1918, AWM3DRL/6226.

Standards of health and medical care were other points of contention. Epidemics swept through the Empire between 1914 and 1918, infecting thousands of people. Hikmet Ozdemir estimates that during the course of the war three-quarters of the population of the Ottoman Empire had malaria, while typhus and cholera were also endemic in many areas.[37] Indeed, during the First World War, the Turkish Army was the only force in which death from disease exceeded combat fatalities.[38] Along with problems arising from infected wounds, the prisoners also suffered from disease. Several fell victim to an epidemic of malaria that devastated the Belemedik area in the summer of 1916.[39] Others became ill as a result of the conditions of their accommodation or transportation. Dysentery and other gastric illnesses, attributable to poor latrine infrastructure and other sanitation issues, were common. Insect-borne diseases such as typhus spread quickly among the overcrowded POWs. For example, prisoners transported from a Railway work camp to Angora contracted typhus when the crowded truck they were carried in also picked up Russian prisoners suffering from the disease. According to Sergeant Niven Neyland, only 17 out of the party of 45 were spared the disease.[40] Thirty-three Australian prisoners died in Turkey from diseases including malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia, typhus, and dysentery.[41]

The prisoners were also subject to the inadequacies of the Turkish medical system. Many had already experienced the limited medical care available to Turkish troops and civilians on their journeys to internment. By 1914 the Ottoman Empire was suffering from a chronic shortage of trained medical staff and supplies. Quinine, used to treat malarial infections, was particularly hard to obtain and the total number of hospital beds in Turkey was estimated at only 37,000.[42] Members of the German military mission were shocked by the primitive condition of some Turkish hospitals. General Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein wrote of the conditions at hospitals in Aleppo:

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[37] Ozdemir, *Ottoman Army,* 84 & 100.

[38] Ibid, 133.

[39] Maurice Delpratt makes several references to the malaria epidemic that plagued the northern Railway camps. At his camp at Hadjikiri, 13 out of 70 prisoners died from malaria. According to Delpratt, it was “exceedingly difficult to muster enough for a burial party from the men in the camp.” Delpratt to E. White, Xmas letter 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

[40] Repatriation Statement of Niven Neyland, AWM30 B1.26. Typhus was recognised as a dangerous illness by the British Army very early in the war. British troops passing between the lines had to undergo specific delousing rituals in order to minimise the spread of the disease.

[41] See Appendix Two.

[42] Ozdemir, *Ottoman Army,* 100; Erickson, *Ordered to Die,* 8.

> One hospital had no doors and windows which would protect patients against cold; in another one 3 patients were using the same glass to drink water. Another hospital accommodating 500 patients had only three body thermometers.[43]

In a letter sent to the British government and later forwarded to the Australian Governor-General, a Swiss delegate from the Commission for the Inspection of POW Camps in Turkey reported that "Turkish doctors are extremely inefficient, and when assistance is offered it is scarcely worth having."[44] This perception could perhaps be explained by the Turkish practice of assigning dentists and veterinarians to the role of medical officer as army doctors also fell victim to disease.[45]

The Turks implemented various measures to provide health care to their POWs. An outbreak of cholera around Bozanti, situated at the crossroads of routes leading from Palestine and Mesopotamia into Turkey in mid-1917, was contained by the vaccination of Army recruits. Prisoners were also inoculated.[46] A mobile bacteriology unit organised by the Germans was sent to Belemedik at the height of the malaria outbreak, and some prisoners received mosquito nets.[47] Camp hospitals were established at Afyon along with the more isolated work camps along the Berlin-Baghdad Railway line, and prisoners could report to these facilities for treatment. Prisoners interned closer to Constantinople were often sent to existing military or civilian hospitals in the city. As discussed in the previous chapter, the prevailing concern for the Australians was the cleanliness of these hospitals, the lack of medicines and other supplies, and the quality of care provided by doctors and orderlies. Edgar Hobson was shocked by his experiences of medical care in the Afyon camp hospital, where he was placed on a mattress on the floor recently vacated after the death of the previous occupant. Hobson was particularly contemptuous of the attention offered by the orderlies: "Men were dying every day. If a man was incapable of helping himself he invariably died as the Turkish orderlies would never help him."[48] Prisoners were also sent to convalescent camps to recover from wounds or sickness. The convalescent camp through which most Australians passed was located at Bor, north of the Taurus Mountains. This camp encompassed an existing hospital, a school, and several military barracks. Turkish doctors visited the prisoners regularly to select men deemed recovered for labour detachments.[49]

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[43] Freidrich Kress von Kressenstein, qtd in Ozdemir, *Ottoman Army,* 140-1.
[44] E.B. Harran to Sir H. Rumbold, 15 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.
[45] Ozdemir, *Ottoman Army,* 84.
[46] Delpratt to E. White, 24 May 1917 and Delpratt to E. White, 4 August 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.
[47] Ozdemir, *Ottoman Army,* 148.
[48] Repatriation Statement of Edgar Hobson, AWM30 B2.2.

The prisoners recognised that their experiences of healthcare and medical attention were largely on par with that provided to any wounded or sick Turkish troops. Some were sympathetic – Ron McDonald reported "Turkish medical arrangements are disgraceful, even for Turks themselves."[50] However, the inferiority of their captors was emphasised by praising non-Turkish medical care and drawing parallels with the standards of care they expected at home. Repatriated prisoners regularly expressed thanks to Armenian doctors and German medical staff, while simultaneously berating Turkish doctors for their ignorance and supposed lack of skill. One prisoner admitted that, though he had received medical care as a POW, "it was of course not equivalent to English treatment."[51]

Another immediate physical challenge was work and conditions of work. This was a particular concern for prisoners from the ranks as, in keeping with the Hague Conventions, officers could not be made to work. Most POW labour related to the agricultural or industrial sectors of the captor nation – areas that typically suffered from a depleted workforce as mass mobilisation accounted for large numbers of available workers. Heather Jones writes that Central Power states, with no access to colonial resources, quickly mobilised large numbers of their POWs as an additional wartime workforce. By late 1915, for example, between sixty and seventy percent of prisoners in Austria-Hungary were organised into mobile *Kommando* work units. Similarly, in Germany, ninety percent of POWs were involved in some form of work by August 1916.[52] The Allies also made use of POW labour. Prisoners in France and Britian were used as farm labourers, in quarries and mines, and in factories.[53] According to Hague laws, POWs were not to be used for work directly related to the captor's war effort. Nevertheless, captives in France, Germany and other states were used in the manufacture of munitions or on work projects directly behind the lines, such as digging defences or moving artillery shells. Australian POWs of the Germans were used behind German lines to unload ammunition, bury German dead, and build huts and roads for German troops, all while being bombarded by their own army. These so-called 'prisoners of respite' spent many months labouring under these arduous conditions as reprisal for the alleged mistreatment of German POWs by the British.[54]

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[49] Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

[50] Repatriation Statement of Ron McDonald, AWM30 B1.22.

[51] Repatriation Statement of Stanley Jordan, AWM30 B1.17.

[52] Heather Jones, "A Missing Paradigm? Military Captivity and the Prisoner of War, 1914-18," *Immigrants and Minorities* 26 no. 1-2 (2008): 28.

[53] Ibid, 29. Jones writes that the British were slower to mobilise POW labour, largely due to the fears of trade unions that wages of British workers would be undercut.

Australian prisoners in Turkey were not employed directly behind Turkish lines. Rather, they were mobilised for labour on farms, the construction of wharves, and public infrastructure projects, such as roadmaking. The project on which most Australian POWs were deployed was the Berlin-Baghdad Railway, an ambitious scheme that reflected German Wilhelmine imperial designs on the Middle East. The Railway was inauguarated in 1899 and construction started in 1903. However, interruptions due to various factors, including cholera epidemics among the local workers, the disruption of supplies during the Balkan wars, and the mobilisation of the army in 1914 meant that by the outbreak of the First World War, the line had only reached the Taurus Mountains (the approximate halfway point).[55] German engineers estimated the need for three-dozen tunnels through the mountainous section and progress was slow.[56]

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[54] David Coombes, *Crossing the Wire: The Untold Stories of Australian POWs in Battle and Captivity during WWI* (Sydney: Big Sky Publishing, 2011), 185-8.

[55] Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power 1898-1918* (London: Allen Lane, 2010), 241.

[56] Ibid, 44. McMeekin writes that one mountain at Bagtchi was composed of "solid quartz hard enough to cut glass" and reportedly broke over 2,000 drill bits a day.

Figures 2.5 and 2.6: The construction of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway through the Taurus Mountains utilised POW labour. Tunnels at Tasch Durmas (above) and section of line at Hadjikiri (below). Source: AWMH19389 and AWMH19386.

Australian prisoners were put to use on the Railway in various capacities. Some, like George Kerr, took on administrative positions. Kerr's previous experience as a clerk, his ability to speak French, and his injured leg made him an excellent candidate for work in the company's stores at Belemedik. His cushy position sorting out "odds and ends" in the "ragtime office" was created for him by the German engineers and did not prove particularly taxing. Indeed, Kerr confided to his diary, “it strikes me that this is not a railway company running on commercial lines but a philanthropic society.”[57] Others were used as skilled labourers operating machinery and equipment necessary for the railway project, or as a manual labour force working with pick and shovel to clear ground for rail lines, loading and unloading wagons with ballast, or blasting rock as part of the tunnelling effort. Maurice Delpratt was employed to clean and repair tunnelling machines at Hadjikiri, while Arthur Tierney worked as a driller at Yarbaschi.[58] John Beattie was transferred between several jobs at Belemedik: he first worked in a tunnel a mile out of the main camp loading wagons with stone, before being moved to the power station, where he worked as a fireman on the boilers, and then later to Gelebek, where he helped repair engines.[59]

Prisoners were paid by the German engineering company managing the project and received rations, with part of their pay held over to cover the cost of food. As the 1918 British “Report on the Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Turkey” stated, prisoners in railway work camps lived “the life of a labourer, though on short commons, rather than the restricted and supervised life of a prisoner.”[60] However, the POWs were not impressed with the conditions under which they were expected to work. The hours were long – twelve-hour shifts were common – and conditions were poor. Upon first arriving at Belemedik at night, Reginald Lushington and his fellow POWs saw a group of labourers working on the rail line by the light of flares. Their reaction – “if the blankety Blanks think we are going to work like that they will be jolly well mistaken” – is indicative of the prisoners’ view that conditions were not believed to be of an appropriate standard.[61] The work itself was tough and potentially dangerous. Charles Suckling explained how the drilling machines in the tunnels sometimes struck unexploded charges set down to blast rock, while Richard Stripling died at Gelebek after being crushed by a landslide at the embankment where he was laying line.[62] Moreover, rest days were often overlooked. James Brown wrote of the

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[57] Greg Kerr, *Lost Anzacs: The Story of Two Brothers* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 161 & 163 (diary entries for 10 February 1916 and 12 February 1916).

[58] Delpratt to E. White, undated, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence; Repatriation Statement of Arthur Tierney, AWM30 B2.14.

[59] Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

[60] “Report on the Treatment of British Prisoners of War in Turkey,” cd. 9208, (London: HMSO, 1918), 12.

[61] Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks,* 35.

[62] Suckling, “Unpublished Manuscript,” 34; Lambert to M. Chomley, 21 July 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Leslie Lambert, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 113.

POWs' outrage at the Afyon commandant's insistence that the enlisted men work every day. Though Brown explained that Sundays were "a customary day of rest for Britishers," his protest proved fruitless.[63]

Another common complaint attributable to culture clash was the punishments meted out to POWs by their camp guards and commandants. According to historian of the Turkish Army, Edward Erickson, training for new troops was "particularly severe" and was based on "draconian discipline."[64] Gallipoli POW Daniel Creedon observed that "the way in Turkey to punish the soldiers is to strike them; then the soldier has to turn round and salute the one who had struck him."[65] Such disciplinary action sat awkwardly with the Australians. Physical punishment was not permitted in the 1st AIF but, in Turkey, prisoners from the ranks regularly faced such measures. Thomas White wrote after the war about the Turkish inclination to physically punish POWs for alleged misdemeanours: "Flogging with the ryak … is so common amongst the Turks that prisoners-of-war no doubt seemed delivered into their hands by the will of Allah expressly to be practised upon."[66]

Many Australians reported witnessing the physical punishment of other POWs, usually enlisted men. Edwin Rose stated that he had seen "many of my friends flogged with the hide whips unmercifully by sentries" during his time in various work camps – and several received floggings and beatings themselves.[67] Maurice Delpratt received a flogging from the Hadjikiri camp doctor and guards after intervening on behalf of a British soldier. William Mackay was struck with sticks by a camp guard for allegedly lagging behind in a work party, and John Romano reportedly received three floggings during his time as a captive.[68] The Turks' propensity to flog and hit their prisoners and their own soldiers reinforced the Australians' beliefs about Turkish savagery and, subsequently, inferiority. As is discussed in a later chapter, several

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[63] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 189. Indeed, the commandant replied "the soldiers at the front have to work on Sunday, therefore these men should work also."

[64] Erickson, *Ordered to Die*, 6.

[65] "Copy of Diary Written by D.B. Creedon," 13.

[66] Thomas White, *Guests of the Unspeakable: The Odyssey of an Australian Airman – Being a Record of Captivity and Escape in Turkey* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1932), 161. *Ryak* was what Thomas White stated the Turks called the bastinado. This instrument, usually made of leather or cane, was traditionally used to whip prisoners across the soles of the feet, though most physical punishments given to British and Australian prisoners were reportedly administered across the back.

[67] Statement made at Aleppo, 20 November 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Edwin Rose, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 179.

[68] Repatriation Statement of Maurice Delpratt, NAA B2455 DELPRATT MAURICE; Repatriation Statement of William Mackay, AWM30 B1.21; Repatriation Statement of John Romano, AWM30 B2.14.

Australians, including Delpratt and Mackay, felt the psychological impact of these punishments years after the physical marks had disappeared.

Mental and Emotional Stress

Food, accommodation, transport, medical care, work, and punishment were corporeal challenges that affected the prisoners' physical environment. But being held under the same conditions and receiving the same treatment as those they perceived to be racially and culturally inferior also exacted a psychological toll. The shock and anger the Australians expressed at being made to live like Turks stemmed from a deep sense of humiliation over the inversion of what was perceived to be the 'natural' racial order in which they, as white men, should have been at the top. Agnieszka Sobocinska argues that such humiliation could be mentally and emotionally damaging. Writing in relation to the Australian prisoners of the Japanese during World War II, Sobocinska states that one aspect of the trauma they experienced was that their white bodies, symbols of their superiority in the Pacific, were under the total control of Japanese and Korean guards, people long believed to be at the bottom of the colonial order.[69] Their brutal imprisonment and the corporeal damage it wrought represented to the prisoners, the Australian homefront, and the various populations of the Asia-Pacific region the dramatic overturning of this established order. A generation earlier the Australian prisoners in Turkey reacted to their capture and internment by what they saw as an inferior race in a similar way.

The particular nature of wartime captivity also engendered other specific psychological strains for the prisoners. Swiss doctor and International Red Cross representative, Adolf Vischer, visited thousands of men in POW camps during the First World War and in 1919 produced a book based on his observations. Vischer argued that POWs, like the inmates of civilian gaols, suffered from the general restrictions of internment including lack of privacy, the monotony of routine existence, repetitive contact with the same people, and constraints regarding communication with the outside world. He also believed the indefinite duration of wartime captivity exacted a severe psychological toll: "In contrast with the criminal who knows to the day and hour the length of his imprisonment and can tick off each day, the prisoner of war remains in complete uncertainty of the duration of his imprisonment."[70] Vischer argued these stresses deeply affected those living as captives and caused a recognisable psychological condition he termed 'barbed wire disease'.[71]

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[69] Agnieszka Sobocinska, "The Language of Scars: Australian Prisoners of War and the Colonial Order," *History Australia* 7 no. 3 (2010): 58.6-58.8.

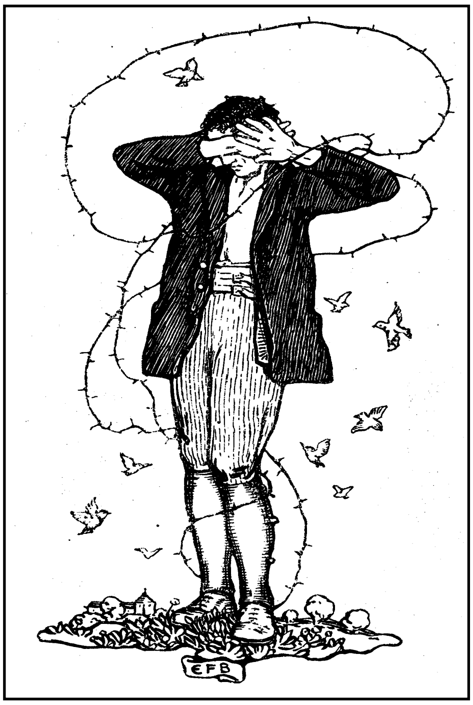

Figure 2.7: Frontispiece from *Barbed Wire Disease*. Vischer wrote of the POW that "the barbed wire runs like a red thread through his mental processes."
Source: Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease,* 31.

According to Vischer, one of the primary contributors to barbed wire disease was the ennui of camp life.[72] The routine existence posed by imprisonment engendered a monotony that sapped the will. By mid-1916 George Kerr was writing in his diary that "the events of our daily life here are not of such importance that they would command any interest if they happened anywhere else."[73] Monotony was of particular concern for officers in Turkey; for Thomas White "time ceased to be" as the days melded into one long, continuous drag.[74] Some officers expressed concern that their time in captivity would aversely affect their careers and postwar employment opportunities.[75] As discussed previously, officer prisoners of war were not required to work. While this led to certain advantages – superior accommodation, less movement between camps, no heavy manual labour and reduced exposure to potential accidents – lack of work while a prisoner also had pitfalls. The sense of stultification caused several prisoners to break down. One Australian witnessed the nervous collapse of a fellow officer at Afyon: "One day I found Lieutenant LF … walking up and down the promenade, cursing imprisonment … and striking such an attitude as to suggest he was about to tear his hair and rend his clothes."[76] Famous British ex-POW Pat Reid believed "inactivity could lead to idiocy" in a prison camp, and it seemed that Lieutenant LF felt the strain.[77]

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[70] A.L Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease: A Psychological Study of the Prisoner of War*, trans. from German (London: John Bale, Sons and Danielsson Ltd, 1919), 30-31.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid, 45.
[73] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs,* 180 (diary entry for 21 April 1916).
[74] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 157.

Constant contact with the same people and general lack of privacy was another psychological challenge. Vischer noted that sharing sleeping, eating and leisure quarters means prisoners of war had no respite from each other. For Thomas White, the closely confined nature of the camp put pressure on relations among the prisoners: "prolonged and compulsory association in a confined space tends to enlarge the supposed weaknesses of one's fellows to iniquities of the first degree."[78] Living in each other's pockets meant that otherwise easily overlooked eccentricities or undesirable personality traits were magnified and became a source of tension.[79] Such tensions sometimes bubbled over and, as George Kerr's diary entry for early January 1916 indicates, disagreements, petty fights and squabbles were commonplace:

> Last night, as is my custom, I went over the other side of the room after the beds were laid down to have a yarn with Cullen and Troy and during one of my tales…Troy began joking about the amount of space I was taking up and told me several times to go to bed. Very soon the whole room was saying goodnight to me and when this had no effect, I was counted out … Now … instead of saying 'good day' to me, I am greeted with 'goodnight George' all the time.[80]

In the crowded and confined atmosphere of the POW camp, bored and irritated prisoners targeted unfortunate fellow captives to temporarily relieve some of their frustrations and modify 'undesirable' behaviours.

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[75] James Brown was frustrated by the forced interruption to his medical training and practice brought on by captivity: "Here I was getting no medical experience at all, and was even without medical books." Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 127.

[76] Ibid, 214.

[77] Pat Reid, *Prisoner of War: The Inside Story of the POW from the Ancient World to Colditz and After* (London: Hamlyn, 1984), 157.

[78] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 132.

[79] Vischer, *Barbed Wire Disease,* 36-7.

[80] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, 145-6 (diary entry for 11 January 1916).

Mental and emotional strain was also caused by lack of contact with the outside world. The prisoners felt particularly isolated from news of the war. Writing to his sister, Edgar Green outlined his frustration at not being able to assess any developments in the conflict, and thus a likely end to their captivity: "Terrible having no news. Cannot form any opinion as to the war finishing. Did we but know that, it would not seem so bad."[81] A pro-German Turkish newspaper printed in French in Constantinople was available, but it was only by reading between the lines that prisoners gained any idea as to what was happening on the different fronts.[82] The arrival of new prisoners sometimes contributed to ideas of the conflict but often these fresh captives had disappointingly little idea of the bigger picture regarding the war effort.[83] Such lack of concrete information meant snippets of news picked up from locals were over-analysed, resulting in rumours and speculation that were often damaging to morale, as Maurice Delpratt explained in an August 1917 letter home: "There is much excitement here over rumoured peace conferences and much speculation as to terms. Having been disappointed so often, we take these things quietly."[84]

Restrictions regarding the arrival and dispatch of mail to family and friends compounded this sense of isolation. Martyn Lyons notes in his work on reading and writing practices during the First World War the importance of regular communication between the battlefront and the homefront to maintain the morale of soldiers.[85] For the servicemen in the trenches of the Western Front or the deserts of the Middle East letters from home were comforting reminders of past lives and lives they could look forward to in the future. The situation was the same for those in Turkish captivity, where letters from home informed the prisoners about family happenings, reassured them that they had not been forgotten and, as one prisoner wrote, offered “something to inspire one to keep fit for.”[86] During the early years of the war prisoners were permitted to write only one four-line postcard per week, and to receive one four-line message. This limited contact with loved ones was received with gratitude; Delpratt told his sister “writers will never now how much joy their four lines brought.”[87]

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[81] Green to M.J. Green, 26 October 1916, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Edgar Green, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 79.

[82] Repatriation Statement of William Elston, AWM30 B1.13. Other prisoners stated decoding permitted newspapers became something of a skill. James Brown wrote: "the specialists had noted that when the Germans announced that their brave troops had attacked the enemy with supreme valour and covered themselves with glory, they had probably been decimated and driven back. A few days afterwards, the new positions would be disclosed in the newspaper … the language of German military journalese became an open book to them." Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways*, 239.

[83] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 239.

[84] Delpratt to E. White, 4 August 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[85] Martyn Lyons, "French Soldiers and Their Correspondence: Towards a History of Writing Practices in the First World War," *French History* 17 (2003): 79-95.

Any interruptions to the arrival of post caused intense anxiety. Lyons writes that breaks in communication between French soldiers and their families led to panic and despair among troops at the front.[88] Prisoners also panicked and felt despondent without mail, as lack of communication implied abandonment. Moreover, as Annette Becker writes, the absence of mail from home in the all-masculine world of the POW camp also reinforced the lack of a feminine presence.[89] Lowes Skyring emphasised the importance of letters to his friend Corporal Audie Grant: “Now Audie don’t forget to write it is a bit lonely, you can quite imagine that … a man wants cheering up here if any where [sic] and letters and parcels are the only things that will have that effect.”[90] The case of Philip O’Hare also illustrates the impact lack of mail could have. O’Hare had not received any letters from his family or friends during the sixteen months he had been a prisoner, and wrote to the Red Cross asking them to find “some benevolent person that would take a little interest in a lonely prisoner of war.”[91]

Regulations regarding length and frequency of mail were eventually relaxed to permit the writing of three or four one-page letters per week, but the Turkish postal system remained a cause of intense frustration for the POWs. The geographical spread of prison camps, lack of infrastructure, and regular movement of prisoners meant the arrival of letters from family and friends was erratic. Letters destined for prisoners were sorted via a convoluted process – they were first organised into districts in Constantinople, then sent to the military commander of each district who, in turn, passed them on to the British POW sergeant in charge for distribution. If a prisoner was no longer interned in that particular district, his mail was given back to the commander, who then sent it back to Constantinople, where the process began again.[92] This meant that, as one prisoner told the AIF upon his repatriation, "no dependence could be placed on the arrival of mails" in Turkey.[93] Such inefficiency also affected outgoing mail; the prisoners recognised that their letters home were, in all probability, not reaching their destinations. This increased their frustration and distress, as they knew their friends and families were anxious.

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[86] Delpratt to E. White, 26 July 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[87] Delpratt to E. White, 16 September 1916, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[88] Lyons, “French Soldiers and their Correspondence,” 90 & 89.

[89] Annette Becker, “Art, Material Life, and Disaster: Civilian and Military Prisoners of War,” in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory, and the First World War*, ed. Nicholas J. Saunders (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), 27.

[90] Skyring to A.L. Grant, 19 May 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Lowes Skyring, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 190.

[91] O’Hare to Chomley, 28 June 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Phillip O’Hare, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 156.

Aside from the particular causes of barbed wire disease, other factors including lingering feelings of shame and failure, the advent of anniversaries and special occasions, or the death of a fellow captive also presented challenges that affected the mental and emotional health of the prisoners. Several prisoners dwelt on the sense of failure engendered by their capture and subsequent internment. As discussed in Chapter One, these ideas were commonly felt in the immediate aftermath of capture and, for some, did not diminish with time. The popular expectations of the Australian soldier were that he was courageous under fire, physically superior, and, importantly, never gave up. For the men who had essentially 'given up' by being captured, their failure to match this prescription for Australian martial masculinity sat awkwardly. Writing to his sister in 1917, Maurice Delpratt expressed particular concern regarding his personal contribution to the war effort and how others would perceive him:

> I've put in more years serving the enemy than I did for my own country. I often think of that much advertised recruiting question: 'what did you do in the Great War?' I must think out some useful, evasive answer before peace terms are signed. There's such a tremendous lot of young relatives too, who will soon be inquisitive. When I visit their homes grown ups will have to warn the young folk not to ask Uncle Maurice anything about the war.[94]

Captivity made the men reconsider their public position and thus their private selves. Being a POW forced John Halpin to reassess his self-image and self-worth: "I was an Australian Sergeant. I try to picture to myself and read the Regimental Orders wherein I was 'Struck off Strength.' Now I have lost all identity."[95]

The death of a fellow captive was also confronting. The industrialised warfare of the First World War resulted in carnage never before experienced on the battlefield. Hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of men died every day. They were buried alive, torn to pieces, atomised in an instant or simply shot dead. Bill Gammage argues that such unprecedented casualties and regular exposure to wounds and suffering brutalised soldiers on the battlefront and left them inured to death.[96] Gammage quotes several soldiers who wrote about the deaths of comrades in a blunt, callous manner: "at first these things fill you with horror, but after awhile you become accustomed to them and take little notice," while another stated "its no surprize [sic] to tell a fellow that so & so was killed last night one get so use to hearing of death's [sic] that the look of unconcern is all that one gets."[97] For the prisoners of the Turks, their distance from the battlefield and all it entailed meant that death was not as regular an occurrence. The prisoners had, according to George Kerr, "practically reverted to their former impressionable state" and the intrusion of death "came home to them with all its force."[98] A death in the camp led to great sadness and also caused men to question their own mortality; William Cliffe told his brother that hearing of the deaths of fellow prisoners and attending funerals "makes you wonder how soon it will come your turn."[99] That the majority of deaths in Turkish captivity were attributed to disease was also difficult. For John Halpin, there was no glory associated with death in captivity: "'Killed in action'. There is a beauty in the utterance, an heroic halo round the memory of a mangled mass or stiffened limbs; but 'died as a prisoner' … that sounds a condemnation of dishonour, an aimless and unnecessary sacrifice."[100] The friend of one prisoner who perished soon after capture expressed similar concern for how the family would feel about their son's death in captivity: "I do not know what Mrs Sherrie will do – what it will be for her thinking he died there – a prisoner."[101] Foreshadowing issues regarding contribution to the war and commemoration, a POW who perished from disease in an internment camp far away from the action of the front was denied the valour of a soldierly death.

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[92] Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

[93] Repatriation Statement of Richard Griffiths, AWM30 B1.16.

[94] Delpratt to E. White, undated, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[95] John Halpin, *Blood in the Mists* (Sydney: The Macquarie Head Press, 1934), 184.

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[96] Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War,* 4th ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2010), 117-120.

[97] B.B. Leane and Bessell, qtd in Gammage, *The Broken Years,* 118.

[98] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs,* 188 (diary entry for 8 May 1916).

[99] Cliffe to Brother, 30 October 1916, ARC POW Dept. Case File of William Cliffe, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 39. In some instances, a death in the camp gavanised POWs into survival. William Randall explained in a letter to his family that "I have made up my mind not to leave my bones in any of these Eastern countries, so I guess I shall pull through." *Avoca Free Press,* 2 December 1916, 2, Randall Family Papers, Heritage Collections Library, State Library of Victoria.

[100] Halpin, *Blood in the Mists,* 234.

[101] B. Butler to V. Deakin, 28 May 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Noel Sherrie, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 187.

Special occasions or anniversaries also had an emotional impact on the prisoners. Birthdays, traditionally days of celebration with family and friends, emphasised their distance from home, while anniversaries of capture reminded prisoners of the passing of time and their impotence regarding the war effort. On his birthday in May 1918 William Randall wrote to his sister and brother-in-law stating he was well, but "would like to be looking into the bottom of a glass today" while the anniversary of Claude Vautin's capture found him "in sackcloth and ashes" feeling "more than ordinarily fed up."[102] Christmas was a particularly hard time. As Chris Gratien writes, Christmas emphasised the cultural differences between the prisoners and their captors. The Turks had minimal understanding of the symbolic importance of the day to their Christian prisoners, though many camp Commandants did permit the prisoners to observe the holiday.[103] Christmas also marked the close of the year – another reminder of the dragging of time – and brought back memories of happier times with family and friends before the war. One Australian stated that Christmas, more than any other day, caused the prisoners' thoughts to turn "to their own vacant chair in the homeland."[104] British prisoner Leonard Woolley recounted a special Christmas poem composed by the prisoners in his camp:

> A Christmas in captivity,
>   Oh what a sorry travesty!
> A song to sing in a minor key,
>   Of things that are and should not be;
> Yet still I have to comfort me,
>   The Christmas of my memory.[105]

Christmas also served as a reminder of the loss of friends and fellow servicemen. For John Wheat, Christmas was a day of remembrance, during which "many a prisoner had an un-accustomed lump in his throat when he drank to the toast of 'absent friends'."[106]

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[102] Randall to Wangemann, 27 May 1918, Papers of Trooper E. Randall 6th ALH and Pte W. Randall 14Bn, AWM3DRL/7847; Vautin to Harold, 8 July 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Claude Vautin, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 213.

[103] Chris Gratien, "Christmas and Diplomacy in the Ottoman Empire During the First World War," *Toszuz Evrak*, 20 December 2012: http://www.docblog.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2012/12/christmas-and-diplomacy-in-ottoman.html

[104] Wheat, "Unpublished Manuscript," 25.

[105] C. L. Woolley, *From Kastamuni to Kedos: Being a Record of Experiences of Prisoners of War in Turkey 1916-1918* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1921), 17.

[106] Wheat, "Unpublished Manuscript," 25.

Modifying and Mitigating the Strain

The particular physical and psychological challenges of captivity in Turkey tested the Australian prisoners. Vast cultural differences regarding food and eating practices, standards of accommodation, modes of transport, health care, work and punishment emphasised for the Australians the inferiority of their captors and engendered concern over their ability to cope with the perceived uncivilised conditions. Moreover, forced to live in the same manner as a race and culture they felt was vastly inferior to their own, the prisoners were deprived of the status their race was supposed to confer, their identity as servicemen, and many elements of their customs and culture. Many suffered from ideas of shame and failure, and experienced bouts of depression, loneliness and hopelessness brought on by 'barbed wire disease'. However, the prisoners did not passively accept their situation. To bring a semblance of normality to their lives as POWs in Turkey, the Australians developed and implemented certain measures to modify, mitigate, and manage their conditions and camp culture, and thus shape their experiences of internment.

Modifying their immediate physical environment was one way in which the Australian prisoners were able to mitigate some of the strain of captivity. The prisoners' dismay at the general state of their accommodation sparked efforts to make their houses and barracks more comfortable, and thus more tolerable. At Angora, officers captured on Gallipoli were interned in (empty) houses belonging to members of the town's Armenian community. In his postwar memoir, Leslie Luscombe explained how the prisoners set about improving their bathing facilities:

> Running water was connected to the house but no bath or shower was provided. We overcame this disadvantage by installing an overhead shower in the *g'haftis hana* ['secret house' – toilet]. Above the hole in the floor we mounted on a cross bar and pulleys an empty kerosene tin with holes in the bottom and a separate sheet of galvanized iron to cover the holes set inside the tin. When a shower was required the kerosene tin was lowered and filled with water. It was then hauled up into position. By releasing the water we were able to obtain a refreshing cold shower. Necessity is the mother of invention.[107]

Upon their arrival at Afyon, these officers also created household items and utensils with which to furnish their quarters. Beds were a priority, and were constructed with materials and tools bought from the local bazaar. Luscombe again offers the best explanation of how the POWs improved their level of comfort by making 'normal' beds:

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[107] L.H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl – Australian* (Brisbane: W.R. Smith & Paterson, 1970), 61.

> The bedframe was of the usual dimensions, ie 3ft by 6ft 6in. The sides and ends of the frame were sawn from packing case timbers. They were then carefully planed and sand-papered and fitted together. When mounted on four (or sometimes six) stout legs, we derived much pleasure from our handiwork. Now for the mattress – this must also be a work of art. It was. With the rope we made a criss-cross pattern cradle. When suitably tightened and covered with a thick yourgon [feather-filled blanket] we had produced a bed that would be envied by many people in our so-called civilised countries.[108]

The construction of furniture became a business for some entrepenurial prisoners, who made desks, chairs, and other items for their fellow POWs. Though the majority of this furniture was quite rough, Luscombe believed that some "displayed really high-class workmanship that would have done credit to a cabinet-maker with all the appliances and means to boot."[109] Less practical items such as picture frames, tobacco boxes, and other trinkets were also popular as they allowed the officers to decorate their accommodation.[110]

The prisoners at Afyon also developed methods to mitigate sanitation concerns. Fleas, lice, and bugs were a pressing issue; not only did they make life uncomfortable, they could also spread disease. James Brown recalled how the officers at Afyon rid themselves of infestations of bugs:

> Every day, we carried our beds to the vestibule and poured boiling water over the woodwork and particularly into the crevices. Later, we painted the woodwork with creosote and succeeded in maintaining an almost impassable gulf between the verminous denizens and ourselves. Stockholm tar, painted on the woodwork, was used by others and proved an effective barrier. Sleeping became possible.[111]

As a medical student, Brown was aware of the perils of inadequate sanitary practices and of the need to keep camp areas clean. Claiming that flies were "foes to be dreaded quite as much as the enemy," Brown was instrumental in establishing camp sanitation schemes, including methods to effectively dispose of rubbish.[112]

Modification of physical conditions occurred mostly at larger fixed camps like Afyon and Belemedik. Smaller work camps, generally comprised of tents or wooden huts, were located further from marketplaces and bazaars, meaning tools and supplies were harder to come by. Moreover, POWs were transferred between work camps regularly so the desire to create a 'home' was not as pressing. Nevertheless, in these camps the prisoners developed other ways to actively minimise their physical discomfort. The effects of fleas and lice were overcome by decisions to sleep in the open, buckets were procured for the washing of clothes, wood was stolen from the rail line to make sleeping platforms, wool blankets were respun to make underwear and other garments and, in an effort to maintain general cleanliness and sanitation, prisoners bathed in local streams or negotiated with their guards to use their shower blocks.

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[108] Ibid, 65.

[109] Ibid.

[110] For the significance of decorative items in POW accommodation see Becker, "Art, Material Life and Disaster," 29-30.

[111] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 180.

[112] Ibid, 22 & 255. See also Repatriation Statement of Leslie Lambert, AWM30 B2.6.

Food was another challenge prisoners at all camps endeavoured to manage. Australian officers at Afyon recreated the traditional mess experience. They purchased their own food from payments provided to them by the Turkish authorities and were provided with an orderly – typically a prisoner from the ranks – to shop and cook for them. Funds were pooled to purchase items for the group, such as firewood to fuel cooking implements, and food and comforts parcels were shared. In this way, prisoners were able to blend Turkish food like *peckmez*, a grape extract, with more recognisable and thus acceptable items such as eggs, cheese, tea, biscuits, and meat. As the war dragged on and inflation rose within Turkey, prices of food and fuel increased, and the officers' ability to purchase locally what Thomas White called "European groceries" diminished. Bread became "an expensive commodity" and meat "a rarity" as buffalo and donkey replaced beef and mutton.[113] Nevertheless, by pooling their limited supplies and resources, using a cook from a similar cultural background, eating in messes furnished in the Western fashion with tables and chairs, and dining at specific meal times, the officers were able to manage their culinary experiences to some extent.

Prisoners from the ranks also worked to normalise their food and dining conditions. These POWs received rations from the Turks; chiefly bread, boiled wheat, and vegetables such as peas and beans. The arrival of comforts parcels, or money with which to purchase extra food from camp canteens or local markets, was celebrated as it meant these unpalatable rations could be supplemented. Prisoners at Changri in late 1915, for example, rejoiced after the arrival of money from the American

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[113] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 143.

Ambassador that they were able to buy and cook ‘English’ food in the ‘proper’ fashion:

> We could buy eggs, flour, meat, potatoes, raisins, bread, butter, onions and almost anything else in the eating line we wanted. We bought plates, cups, basins, knives and forks, and no longer squatted round a food tin in the heathen Turkish fashion. We bought frying pans and cooking pots, wood and charcoal; on fine mornings there would be a lot of small fires scattered about the square, where men would be boiling a pot of tea and frying a couple of eggs for breakfast.[114]

Like their officer counterparts, prisoners at work camps also divided into messes. John Beattie explained that during the early years at Belemedik the prisoners “used to have the same food as we would have at home.” But, as the war dragged on and supplies became scarcer, the prisoners “had to eat what we could get” and were forced to improvise further.[115] At Tasch Durmas, Reginald Lushington and his fellow POWs cooked their meals of beans and bread in metal wheelbarrows.[116] At Hadjikiri, Delpratt’s mess-mates constructed a camp oven out of mud bricks and sheet iron, and kept chickens to ensure a supply of eggs and meat.[117] George Kerr took on the role as caterer for his mess at Belemedik and experimented with meals drawn from the rations provided, creating dishes of macaroni and raisins when meat was unobtainable – though the others in his mess did not always appreciate his efforts.[118] As will be discussed later in this chapter, the prisoners also developed specific meals for special occasions.

The successful modification and improvisation of accommodation and food rested upon skills traditionally associated with the feminine domestic sphere. The importance of such ‘household’ skills was not unique to prison camps. Annette Becker argues that the war caused a general reversal in gender roles, as soldiers on all fronts assumed activities seen as the typical work of women, such as cooking, cleaning and sewing, on a daily basis.[119] Michael Roper also writes how a large proportion of life in the trenches of the Western Front revolved around domestic duties to minimise discomfort and ensure both physical and mental health.[120] As occurred in the trenches, in the POW camp environment such skills gained a particular currency as they helped prisoners manage their captivity.

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[114] Repatriation Statement of John Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks,* 38.

[117] Delpratt to E. White, 17 March 1918 and 2 June 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[118] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs,* 160 (diary entry for 6 February 1916).

[119] Becker, “Art, Material Life, and Disaster,” 27.

[120] Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 121-5.

While accommodation and food were the primary physical features of internment that the POWs had the time, means, and space to modify, the prisoners also worked to normalise other aspects of their captivity. Work, particularly on construction projects, was tightly regimented and therefore difficult to control. But in some instances work enabled the prisoners to alleviate other concerns. Allied doctor POWs worked at the hospitals of several permanent and work camps to mitigate prisoners' worries about the quality of medical care and hospital treatment they received. Despite suffering from the same lack of supplies as their captor counterparts, the captive doctors and medics administered to prisoners at Afyon, Belemedik, Tasch Durmas, Bor, Hadjikiri, and Gelebek. At Afyon, James Brown was permitted to visit sick prisoners and, as the war dragged on, he also established his own mini-hospital within the camp to treat fellow officers. Field Ambulanceman Deidrich Weidenhofer also made use of his experience at nursing and dressing stations to help at the Afyon hospital.[121] In the work camps, methods to prevent disease were introduced, particularly regular doses of quinine.[122] By mid-1917, POWs at Hadjikiri were taking three doses of quinine a week to prevent malarial attacks. With the shadow of the malarial outbreak of summer 1916 hanging over their heads, the Hadjikiri prisoners were especially grateful to their camp doctor – British officer C.M. Jones – and his efforts to ensure the continued health of the men in the camp. Similarly, D'Arcy Armstong explained to AIF authorities that the low death rate at Gelebek was due to the tireless work of Corporal Clifford of the Indian Medical Service. Clifford was captured at Kut and, according to Armstrong, "worked night and day for the patients, many prisoners have him to thank for their lives."[123]

Modification of the physical environment alleviated some of the immediate physical challenges of their captivity, and also represented a moral victory for the POWs. By normalising their accommodation through the construction of furniture and other household items, experimenting with food, and implementing schemes to maintain sanitation and health and treat the sick at a standard deemed appropriate for Britishers, the prisoners displayed for their captors an attitude of activity and positivity. Annette Becker writes in reference to French prisoners maintaining tattered uniforms in captivity that "the sewing needle replaces the rifle … In the camp the soldier is prevented from physical fighting, but by maintaining his uniform he fights symbolically, and remains part of his nation's wider struggle against the enemy."[124] In much the same manner, modifying their environment to manage and normalise standards of accommodation, food, medical care, and work allowed the Australians in Turkey to feel as though they too continued to fight symbolically.

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[121] Weidenhofer to L.H. Smith, 9 December 1955, Letters of Lt. Laurence Smith, No. 72 Sqdn, AFC, AWMPR83/100.

[122] Mosquito nets were also scrounged. Delpratt told his sister how he had managed to get several off a Petty Officer from the *AE2.* The nets were so important and difficult to obtain that Delpratt explained "gold won't buy them now." Delpratt to E. White, 4 August 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[123] Repatriation Statement of D'Arcy Armstrong, AWM30 B2.12.

In an extension of this continuation of the fight, the Australians also employed several tactics to alleviate the strain occasioned by the inversion of the racial hierarchy and to reinforce, or reassert, their cultural and racial superiority. One common method was to belittle their captors. Several camp Commandants and guards were singled out for being particularly friendly and fair – Ron Austin's first Commandant had been taken captive himself during the Balkan Wars and was sympathetic to the plight of his prisoners – though others were reported to be ignorant, greedy, gullible and untrustworthy.[125] They were also believed to be somewhat ridiculous. Captain Edward Keeling, a British officer held captive at Konia, reported that his camp Commandant was "an elderly, very dirty, unshaven, sometimes drunk, shuffling, galosh-wearing, dug-out Lieutenant-Colonel."[126] Camp guards, usually older men deemed unfit for the front, were nicknamed 'woolies' or 'greybeards' and their dress and equipment – "tattered blue uniforms" and "ancient blunderbusses" – were a source of amusement to the prisoners.[127]

A seemingly common method of belittlement involved exploitation masked as benevolence. In several camps the prisoners were permitted to send an uncensored letter detailing any complaints or issues regarding the administration of a camp to Turkish Headquarters at Constantinople.[128] These letters meant, according to one prisoner, that Commandants were the "abject slave" of their superiors and, to an extent, were dependant on the prisoners for favourable reports.[129] Presiding over a POW camp meant that active service could be avoided, and the prisoners made use of their Commandants' position.[130] For example, Keeling stated if a rule was set down that the prisoners did not like they told the Commandant "that sort of thing was not done in England," and it was overlooked.[131] The obvious poverty of the camp guards also allowed for their exploitation. According to Lushington, the guards knew they could benefit from the prisoners:

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[124] Becker, "Art, Material Life, and Disaster," 27.

[125] R.A. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner* (Melbourne: J. Haase & Sons, 19-), 6; Repatriation Statement of Harry Foxcroft, AWM30 B1.15. Daniel Creedon wrote in his diary that "promises with the Turks are like pie-crust." "Copy of Diary Written by D.B. Creedon," 13.

[126] Woolley, *Kastamuni to Kedos,* 4.

[127] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways*, 175. James Beattie also commented that the guards were equipped with "old-fashioned Snider rifles dated 1866." Repatriation Statement of James Beattie, AWM30 B1.3.

[128] E.H. Jones, *The Road to En-dor: Being an Account of how Two Prisoners of War at Yozgad in Turkey won their way to Freedom* (London: The Bodley Head, 1930), 98.

> They soon found out it was better to keep in with us … At times it was rather like a comic opera to see a British prisoner leading the way through a town in order to buy something, and the old grey beard of a guard trotting behind mildly remonstrating and being told to shut up.[132]

Guards were often coerced into escorting prisoners to marketplaces or into bringing supplies to the camps, usually for a fee or some other form of reward, such as extra food.

However, subtle belittlement masked as benevolence also gave way to open derision. Just as frustration and boredom among the POWs sometimes made them turn on each other, it also translated into the taunting and teasing of their captors. Such behaviour included the deliberate sabotage of roll calls and evening lock-downs, as well as the intentional 'misunderstanding' of camp rules and restrictions. Playing tricks on their captors was also a common pastime. The daughter of one ex-POW remembered her father joking about teaching his guards English words, but the wrong way round: "Dad told me that they played a lot of tricks on the Turks … telling them sit down meant stand up and stand up meant sit down and that sort of thing."[133] In a 1917 letter home Maurice Delpratt told his sister that, on one occasion, the prisoners had changed the words to a Turkish song about the British:

> When we were tramping to Khiangeri [Changri] the escort sang a song which we picked up. The only line I can remember is this one: *'Inglis asken salmon kaffa was'* – English soldiers are straw-headed. We sang it too but made a simple and obvious alteration.[134]

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[129] Ibid, 89.

[130] In a few cases, complaints from the POW population eventually led to the dismissal of certain Commandants, such as Masloum Bey from Afyonkarahissar.

[131] Keeling, *Adventures in Turkey and Russia,* 52.

[132] Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks,* 97.

[133] Interview with Ms Jan Delpratt, 29 November 2011.

[134] Delpratt to E. White, 21 July 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

Though it is doubtful that the Turks comprehended the change Delpratt and his comrades made to their song, this retaliatory measure allowed the prisoners a few moments of superiority over their captors.

One of the most blatant incidents of belittlement involved a British and an Australian officer at Yozgad officers' camp. In a fit of boredom, Elias Jones and Cedric Hill assumed the role of spiritualists who could direct the Turkish Commandant to buried Armenian treasure. The prospect of escape from Turkey was slim – the obviously different ethnic background of the prisoners made blending in with the local population difficult, while the isolation of the majority of the prison camps meant surviving long journeys across harsh terrain exposed to the elements was a difficult feat – but Jones and Hill realised the implications this con had for getting out of Turkey. The two men thus arranged a series of 'treasure hunts' designed to convince the Commandant and guards of their powers.[135] Hill planted items for the hunt in specific places to ensure his fellow prisoners could witness the event from one of the camp houses, believing "it might be fun to allow some of the others to watch us."[136] On the day of the treasure hunt Hill, and presumably his fellow prisoners, enjoyed watching the Turks embarrass themselves:

> When the piece of paper containing the first clue was found wrapped round a gold lira … the three Turks talked excitedly to and across each other. The Commandant shook hands with every one several times, Moise [camp interpreter] almost exploded with enthusiasm and to cap everything the bloodthirsty-looking little Cook tried to kiss Jones. Only with a tremendous effort of self-control did I manage not to laugh.[137]

Though Hill and Jones' act was designed to facilitate their ultimate escape from Turkey, an underlying aim was to 'get one over' and humiliate their captors. Belittling the Turks helped the prisoners reassert their superiority in the camps and temporarily inverted the captor-captive power structure.

Another of the ways in which the Australians attempted to emphasise their position at the top of the racial ladder and reinforce their sense of 'civilised' superiority was to play up their ‘Britishness’. Unlike in the many Japanese or German prison camps of World War II, where the thousands of Australians captured in the Pacific and in North Africa, Greece, Crete and Germany went to great lengths to ensure the maintenance of their national identity and culture, no particularly Australian identity was performed in Turkey. The Australians were too small in number and too diffuse among the disparate camps to develop a sense of identity independent of other national groups. Though some cultural differences were noted, and at Afyon several Australian officers banded together and nicknamed their residence ‘Australia House’, the Australians were effectively seen as British by their captors, by their fellow prisoners and significantly, by themselves.[138] The Australians were housed in British sections of camps, as distinct from the French and the Russians, they joined in with British messes, and they contributed to theatrical and musical performances centred on British culture. Even in sporting competitions, an aspect of prison camp life in which Australian POWs of the Second World War were determined to maintain national identity and prove their prowess, the Australians in Turkey competed as British.[139] After beating a French prisoner in a race put on as part of an Easter sports carnival at Belemedik in 1918, for example, Maurice Delpratt was proud to be called “the Wallaby who upheld the British prestige.”[140]

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[135] Successful escape attempts were rare among the POWs in Turkey. Several British prisoners, including E.H. Keeling, escaped back to Britain, but only two Australians achieved a similar feat, Thomas White and Cedric Hill (serving in the RFC). Both feigned medical complaints to eventually win their freedom. Thomas White convinced a medical board at Afyon that he required hospital treatment in Constantinople. While there, he was caught up in a train crash. White seized the opportunity and managed to evade his guards and, eventually, he and another POW were smuggled onto a ship bound for Odessa, from where they made their way to Salonika. For all his efforts, White made it back to British territory only two weeks prior to the Armistice. For more, see White, *Guests of the Unspeakable* and C.W. Hill, *The Spook and the Commandant* (London: William Kimber, 1975).

[136] Hill, *The Spook and the Commandant*, 94.

[137] Ibid, 113.

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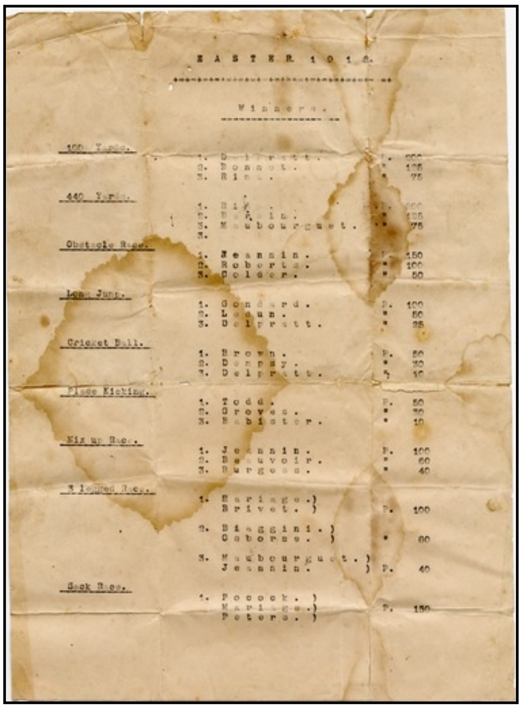
[138] Among other scholars, Peter Hoffenberg has argued that prior to the war Australians saw themselves as ‘overseas Britons’. Peter Hoffenberg, “Landscape, Memory and the Australian War Experience, 1915-18,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 36 (2001), 115. Peter Stanley has also stressed the strong link between Australians and Britain as signified by the term ‘imperial’ in the Australian Imperial Force. Stanley, “He was black, he was a White man and a dinkum Aussie,” 216.

[139] Several analyses of the importance of sport to the Australian prisoners of the Japanese have been published recently. See Kevin Blackburn, *Sportsmen of Changi* (Sydney: New South Publishing, 2012) and Roland Perry, *The Changi Brownlow* (Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2010).

[140] Delpratt to E. White, 1 April 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.



E A S T E R 1 9 1 8.

Winners.

100 Yards.	1. Delpratt.	P.	200
	2. Bonnett.	"	125
	3. Rin[illegible].	"	75
440 Yards.	1. [illegible]	P.	200
	2. [illegible]	"	125
	3. Maubourguet.	"	75
	3.		
Obstacle Race.	1. Jeannin.	P.	150
	2. Roberts.	"	100
	3. Colder.	"	50
Long Jump.	1. Gondard.	P.	100
	2. Legun.	"	50
	3. Delpratt.	"	25
Cricket Ball.	1. Brown.	P.	50
	2. Dempsy.	"	30
	3. Delpratt.	"	10
Place Kicking.	1. Todd.	P.	50
	2. Groves.	"	30
	3. Babister.	"	10
Mix up Race.	1. Jeannin.	P.	100
	2. Beauvoir.	"	60
	3. Burgess.	"	40
3 legged Race.	1. Mariage.) Brivet.)	P.	100
	2. Biaggini.) Osborne.)	"	60
	3. Maubourguet.) Jeannin.)	P.	40
Sack Race.	1. Pocock.) Mariage.) Peters.)	P.	150

Figure 2.8: List of winners from 1918 Belemedik Easter athletics carnival.
Source: Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

Such affinity with the British runs counter to the dominant narrative of Australian-British relations during the First World War. At the turn of the twentieth century when men from the Australian colonies, fuelled by heroic tales of cavalry charges from the Napoleonic Wars, had gone to fight the Boers in South Africa, they had initially been in awe of their British counterparts. However this soon collapsed into disillusion and disappointment, not least because of the brutal and incompetent methods used by the British to handle their Boer enemy. Disenchantment with the British was further reinforced during the First World War when being in close contact with British troops in the field and in training camps threw into stark relief the perceived physical and cultural differences between the Australians and their counterparts from the 'mother country'.[141] These differences were instrumental in sharpening the Australian troops' growing sense of national identity; as Alistair Thomson notes, "for most Australian soldiers the war was undoubtedly a potent experience of national self-recognition."[142] For the Australians in Turkey, however, asserting 'Britishness' was closely linked with asserting superiority and therefore minimised the sense of inversion that captivity wrought.

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[141] E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations during World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 172-4.

[142] Alistair Thomson, "Steadfast Until Death?: C.E.W. Bean and the representation of Australian military manhood," *Australian Historical Studies* 23 no. 93 (1989): 476.

The Australians also asserted their Britishness in their relations with captives from other national groups. The Turks had also captured troops from France, Russia, and India, many of whom lived alongside the Australians in the bigger work and convalescent camps, as well as at officers' camps and in hospitals. Opinions of their fellow captives were often couched in racial terms that emphasised the cultural superiority and civility of the Britishers. The French, though noted for their ability to put on a decent party, were often scorned for their attitudes towards imprisonment. Writing from a work camp in the Taurus Mountains, one Australian gave the French a backhanded compliment regarding their prowess at manipulating their captors:

> I think the French are better at getting what they want than we are … Like us they can be firm but they are quicker at knowing the time for meekness, and the assumption of it doesn't seem to go so much against the grain as it does with us.[143]

Russian captives were also praised for their affable nature and musical ability, yet they were also viewed condescendingly. Many prisoners noted that the Russians were unhygienic and suffered from high death rates caused by louse-borne typhus. The 1917 Revolution left the Russian prisoners destitute and, as John Halpin paternalistically noted, with no national aid agency to augment their rations the Russians were reliant on the charity of their captive comrades: "They come to us that they might live, because the Britisher … is the refuge of the helpless."[144] The Australians appreciated that the Russian prisoners were in such a parlous situation because of the turmoil in their homeland but, as with the French, did not believe them to be the equal of the British. As Halpin points out, many Australians viewed the Russians with great pity, which served to reinforce their ideas of British (and thus Australian) cultural superiority.

Australians also felt and exerted superiority over their Indian comrades by reproducing colonial power relations. The Turks had captured thousands of Indian troops at Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia, particularly after the fall of the Kut-el-Amara garrison in April 1916. Heather Jones explores the experiences of the Indian prisoners during the march from Kut into Turkey, and notes that, despite popular ideas that fellow Muslims received preferential treatment from their captors, Muslim Indians among the group were subject to harsh treatment.[145] In keeping with the hierarchy of the Indian Army, Indian troops were separated from their British superiors in the camps but often remained under their administrative control regarding the division of money and comforts. At one railway work camp in the Taurus Mountains, an Australian assumed the role of quasi-administrator of an Indian camp. As one of the highest-ranking troops at Hadjikiri, Maurice Delpratt was responsible for the distribution of letters and comforts among the prisoners at his camp and the Indian POWs at a nearby camp. Delpratt approached his job with a sense of superiority over his counterparts from the sub-continent:

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[143] Delpratt to E. White, 16 December 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[144] Halpin, *Blood in the Mists,* 180-1.

> The Indians live all together … They are, very unwisely, a mixed lot of Hindoos [sic], Mahommedans and Ghurkas, and row continually. I am afraid I don't know much about handling Indians, but I have more authority and get more respect now that they know they must come to me for all clothing.[146]

Edgar Hobson was assigned a similar quartermaster-like position over a contingent of 500 Kurdish workers while in a Railway work camp.[147] The authority that Delpratt and Hobson, as white Britishers, maintained over their comrades lower on the colonial and racial orders went some way to reaffirm their shaken sense of racial pride.

While the Australians emphasised their Britishness, many also aligned themselves with the Germans in Turkey to reinforce their place at the top of the racial hierarchy. As part of the alliance between the Central Powers, German military officers, healthcare professionals and civilian engineers were scattered throughout Turkey, and played a significant role in many of the prisoners' experiences of captivity. Sean McMeekin explains in his history of the German-Ottoman alliance that relations between the Germans and the Turks were fraught.[148] Several Australians commented on the obvious tension between the two groups. One believed that "you might as well mix oil and water as Turks and Germans," while another reported witnessing a street fight between German and Turkish troops in which several men were killed.[149] The Turks resented the presence of their Teutonic allies – one ex-prisoner claimed “the Turks used to state that Germans got all the medals and food and did not fight, while they received nothing and had to do the lot” – and the Germans, like the Australians, appear to have viewed Turkey as a backward place that offered only a “veneer of civilization.”[150]

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[145] Heather Jones, "Imperial Captivities: Colonial Prisoners of War in Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914-1918," in *Race, Empire, and First World War Writing,* ed. Santanu Das (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 187-9.

[146] Delpratt to E. White, 1 May 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[147] Repatriation Statement of Edgar Hobson, AWM30 B2.2.

[148] McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express,* 301-17.

[149] Repatriation Statement of John Romano, AWM30 B2.14; Repatriation Statement of Daniel Lightfoot, AWM30 B1.19.

Conversely, the Germans generally accepted the British and Australians as racial equals. A shared sense of whiteness transcended enemy boundaries and, according to one officer, the Germans “seemed to think it their duty to protect us, as fellow Europeans” against the Turks.[151] Laurie Smith believed the German pilots who brought down his plane deliberately hid him for as long as possible before he was finally collected by Turkish troops.[152] Fellow Flying Corps officer Douglas Rutherford expressed similar sentiments, claiming the Germans told him “they were sorry to see me a prisoner in the hands of the Turks.”[153] With few notable exceptions, the prisoners were grateful for the treatment they received from the Germans – particularly those of the Railway Company – and praised their efforts to assist the captives. Harry Foxcroft wrote that the Germans at his Railway camp gave prisoners absolute freedom, while Edwin Rose professed to be indebted to the Germans at his camp: “Many many thanks to all German engineers … my firm belief is that had the Germans not taken us over we would have all died of starvation disease and cruelty from the brutal Turks.”[154] James Brown was similarly thankful for the assistance that German nurses provided to wounded and sick prisoners, describing the three German sisters he worked with in Palestine as “ministering angels” who “did not in the least discriminate between friend and foe.”[155] In some cases, relationships between the prisoners and their German counterparts carried on after the war; Maurice Delpratt and his comrade Captain Jones, a medical officer captured at Kut, remained in close contact with the German nurse who helped Jones in the Hadjkiri camp hospital.[156]

Reaffirming cultural and racial superiority went some way towards mitigating the psychological strain of captivity, but other factors required the implementation of specific strategies to alleviate associated mental and emotional stress. These strategies ranged from light-hearted ways of bringing men out of a 'funk', to private means of escapism to combat loneliness and depression, to more formal, structured programmes designed to minimise monotony, allay fears for the future, and deal with death. One of the informal ways of overcoming depression was to consciously make light of their situation. Both George Kerr and Reginald Lushington noted that fellow prisoners gently ridiculed men who openly admitted to feelings of misery and hopelessness. In a diary entry for the first day of 1916, Kerr states "whenever anyone expresses an opinion here that does not sound happy, someone cries, 'all is lost' and raises a laugh at the expense of the speaker."[157] Similarly, Lushington recalled that "a certain grim humour prevailed" among the prisoners. Upon arrival at new lodgings in Ada Bazar – a barn that "an English farmer would never have put his cattle into" – a particularly glum-looking man was called out in front of the party and told "laugh, damn you!" by a fellow captive.[158] On another occasion Lushington observed a prisoner pull a large worm out of his ration of bread, to which another responded by laughing and telling him to "make a ham sandwich of it."[159] Irreverent humour was used as both a denial strategy and a tool to prescribe behaviour; gentle ribbing informed others how to act in order to cope and conform to the expectations of the group.

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[150] Repatriation Statement of D’Arcy Armstrong, AWM30 B2.12; White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 73.

[151] Keeling, *Adventures in Turkey and Russia,* 25.

[152] L.H. Smith, “Experiences of a Prisoner of War in Turkey,” 4, Letters of Lt. Laurence Smith, No. 72 Sqdn, AFC, AWMPR83/100.

[153] Repatriation Statement of Douglas Rutherford, AWM30 B3.3.

[154] Repatriation Statement of Harry Foxcroft, AWM30B1.15; Statement by Rose, 20 November 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Edwin Rose, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 179.

[155] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways*, 74.

[156] Captain Jones to Delpratt, 10 November 1919, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

Writing letters was another method used by the prisoners to respond to the psychological challenges of their captivity. Not only did letter writing maintain a connection with home for servicemen overseas, it also offered a break from monotony and a means of temporary escapism.[160] For some prisoners writing became a ritual and letters were written on the same day at the same time, while others preferred to add to letters every day to provide a diary-like account of their week. However, for some men, the writing of letters could also be a source of anxiety. Content and style had to be carefully gauged – prisoners worried that their letters were boring or would cause anxiety for their family – while for others the process of putting one's thoughts down for loved ones to read at home brought about a sense of despondency. One man reported feeling a "very pronounced fit of the blues" after completing a letter to a friend; perhaps he felt unable to express himself properly, or the act of writing brought back memories, or he wrote of plans for the future that seemed so far removed from the reality of the prison camp.[161] For those at home, though, letters from the camps were priceless signs of life and were treasured as such.

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[157] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, 141 (diary entry for 1 January 1916).
[158] Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks,* 81.
[159] Ibid, 77.
[160] Roper, *The Secret Battle,* 50.

Mess parties were another relatively common method of escapism. Parties and get-togethers between houses or huts allowed prisoners to let off steam and boosted morale, if only temporarily. Though technically banned, alcohol was a key ingredient in these celebrations and the ready availability and accessibility of homemade spirits in local markets and towns led to some colourful gatherings. Thomas White wrote that all prisoners in Turkey knew the aniseed-flavoured spirit *raki* as "a cheap and useful aid to forgetfulness," and many Australians appear to have used it as such.[162] George Kerr wrote evocative accounts of bouts of heavy drinking in the diary he maintained during the first years of his captivity. In mid-December 1915, he reported that his mess-mates at Belemedik smuggled in liquor and then over-indulged to the point of illness: "two of them were very sick outside our building while others were strolling about their rooms in various stages of intoxication."[163] Indeed, at Belemedik a party scene appears to have developed with Kerr himself a regular contributor. On the night of 3 March 1916 he reportedly "made enough row for a dozen" after drinking 20 small glasses of *raki* and the next day suffered from a terrible hangover: "felt very bad all day and, I believe, looked it."[164]

Parties were also held to mark special events or occasions. Where possible, prisoners' birthdays were celebrated. Writing after the war George Paltridge stated that one of his happiest moments at Afyon was his birthday in 1918. In a stroke of good luck and fortunate timing, he received an allotment of money and a Red Cross parcel three days before his birthday, which allowed him the funds and supplies to create a "dinkum Aussie feed" for himself and five others.[165] Several Australians also marked the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. At Belemedik the day was celebrated with wine and 'yarns' and at Afyon a 'sing-song' was organised. However, sadness seems to have dominated much of these proceedings. According to George Kerr, the men at Belemedik "became sentimental over the thought of the lads killed on the peninsula" while celebrations at Afyon were subdued due to the less than positive news regarding the besieged garrison at Kut.[166] The multinational nature of the camps also saw the Australians participate in cultural events such as St Patrick's Day and Bastille Day. On 14 July 1916 the French organised a Bastille Day party that turned into another boozy night, as evidenced by the bill: "the drink cost the party 50 piastres per head, the food amounted to 6 or 7."[167] The comments of a high-ranking Turkish official at a St Patrick's Day celebration in Belemedik indicate that the Turks were aware of the prisoners' penchant for alcohol: "during the concert we had a visit from Osman Effendi and later … from the Imperial Commissioner whose first remark was that this was the proper manner in which to enjoy ourselves – not by fighting and drinking."[168]

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[161] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, 144 (diary entry for 7 January 1916).
[162] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 130.
[163] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs,* 128 (diary entry for 17 December 1915).
[164] Ibid, 169-70 (diary entries for 3 and 4 March 1916).
[165] "Taken Prisoner by the Turks: Sgt G. Paltridge's Experiences," *Mt Barker Courier,* 21 February 1919, Papers of Sergeant George Richardson Paltridge, AWMPR01697.

Considerable efforts were made to observe markers of British culture and customs in the camps. The prisoners celebrated Christmas Day in as traditional a fashion as possible, usually by saving supplies in order to put on a special meal. In 1915 the prisoners at Changri were sent Christmas puddings from British civilians interned in Constantinople which, as evidenced by one man's letter home, enabled them to have a conventional Christmas feast: "We have just finished our Xmas dinner of Turkey and plum pudding and custard, mashed potatoes, nuts and apples and chocolates and English cigarettes."[169] Often sports events or concerts were also staged on Christmas Day. After a dinner of boiled turkey and plum duff on Christmas Day 1915, Daniel Creedon played in a football match between the Army and the Navy – which the Army won 4–1 – and later in the evening attended a concert.[170] Religious observance was also allowed in some camps. Christmas Day 1916 at Afyon saw a combined service taken by captive chaplains representing the Catholic, Methodist and Anglican churches.[171] New Year's Eve was also celebrated. A letter from Maurice Delpratt to his sister explains how the prisoners at Hadjikiri saw in 1918:

> We saw the old year out and the new one in with the Frenchmen, in the good old tin-can noisy way … After the Frenchmen had kissed each other (some of us were kissed too – I got one on each cheek from the French Sergeant) they made a decent brew of coffee and *koniak* and we soon forgot we were 'but poor prisoners'.[172]

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[166] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, 184 (diary entry for 25 April 1916); White, *Guests of the Unspeakeable,* 139.

[167] Ibid, 204 (diary entry for 14 July 1916).

[168] Ibid, 174 (diary entry for 17 March 1916).

[169] Suckling, "Unpublished Manuscript," 33; Delpratt to E. White, 25 December 1915, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[170] "Copy of Diary Written by D.B. Creedon," 15; "Diary of Able Seaman Albert Edward Knaggs R.A.N.," 12 (diary entry for 25 December 1915), Papers of AE Knaggs AE2, AWMPR85/96.

[171] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 84.

[172] Delpratt to E. White, 5 January 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

Alcohol and celebratory events may have helped the captives forget they were 'poor prisoners' but their effects were temporary. The highs brought on by parties often gave way to further feelings of despondency and depression. As Delpratt explained: "it's jolly while it lasts but there's a rather flat, listless feeling comes after."[173]

Structured ways to combat the psychological strain of captivity were also developed and implemented. Officers were the chief instigators, and usually the chief beneficiaries, of these more organised programmes. Their greater amount of free time allowed officers the opportunity to organise and run debating clubs, lectures and classes, concerts and theatrical productions, and sporting events. At Kedos, an officers' camp established later in the war at which several Australians were interned, instructional classes covering topics as diverse as art history, astronomy, shorthand, and car maintenance were popular, as were lessons in languages, including German, Spanish, French, Arabic, and, naturally, Turkish. The prisoners staged theatrical productions and in one, George Handsley dressed up as an 'Aussie' bushwoman.[174] The Kedos group also established a butterfly collection club, a group of prisoners who made their own musical instruments developed an orchestral society, and sports such as rugby, soccer, and badminton were played with improvised equipment. Kedos prisoners could even join a painting club. Officers purchased paints and brushes in the local markets and were assigned a guard to watch over them as they wandered the local area:

> The scenery at Kedos is lovely, a veritable paradise for the landscape artist, so all through the summer months there were fellows with drawing boards, paint boxes etc and a few of those less sensitive to ridicule with chairs and even easels to be seen wandering far and wide.[175]

The image of a POW carrying easel and brush wandering off to paint a landscape scene of the Turkish countryside is striking, particularly when compared with the conditions their counterparts still active in combat were experiencing on the various fronts.

Though Kedos was renowned as a particularly relaxed camp where officers were given a large degree of freedom, similar programmes were also developed at other camps. Officers at Afyon also appreciated the need to keep occupied.[176] As discussed earlier, medical student James Brown volunteered his skills at the Afyon camp hospital. His efforts helped sick and injured prisoners, and also allowed him to contribute in a positive way: "life assumed a rosier hue with the prospect of having something useful to do."[177] Leslie Luscombe and Thomas White formed their own debating club based on contemporary Australian political issues, and took it in turns to read texts sent to the prisoners by the American Embassy or other welfare committees, including such stalwarts as Shakespeare and Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*.[178] Languages and other skills were also studied. According to Brown, "the combined subjects being read covered almost the whole range of human knowledge."[179]

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[173] Ibid.

[174] Woolley*, From Kastamuni to Kedos,* 95.

[175] Ibid, 118.

Elements of these programmes were also established at various work camps, but to a far lesser extent. Work took up most of the men's time and energy, and those who pursued languages or educational classes usually did so informally. George Kerr, for example, taught English lessons to French submariners at Belemedik in exchange for French lessons, and trained other POWs in shorthand. Sports such as boxing and football, card games, and mess parties were the chief recreational outlets for the enlisted men.

Death in the camps was normalised through the prisoners' employment of traditional mourning practices. Prisoners often became what Bart Ziino calls "guardians of the dead" in much the same way as their comrades on the various fronts.[180] This included attending and speaking at funeral services, protecting personal possessions, contacting relatives and other authorities, and constructing and maintaining graves and cemeteries. In many camps the burial of the dead and associated funerals were organised by the camp administration. While some prisoners reported that the Turks took great care over the deceased, others believed their treatment of dead prisoners was callous. Several prisoners reported seeing prisoners placed in shallow graves with no markings.[181] At Angora in 1917, George Roberts stated that prisoners were not permitted to attend the burials of fellow captives:

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[176] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 75.
[177] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 174.
[178] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 75-77.
[179] Brown, *Turkish Days and Ways,* 178.
[180] Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), 22.

> They are taken to a room in the Hospital and washed and then conveyed on a stretcher to the Hospital's graveyard and buried by Turks (shrouds are unnecessary luxury according to these people) there are no marks to show where buried in certain places we know they are English that's all.[182]

Arthur Tierney reported a similar method of disposing of the dead at Nigde, where four of the men he was captured with died from disease and were buried in unmarked graves without the presence of any other prisoners.[183] Accusations of callousness can largely be attributed to cultural differences between the captives and the captors. Traditionally Muslim burials are conducted soon after death, typically within twenty-four hours, with the body usually buried in a simple white cotton shroud without a casket. Speedy burials might also have been necessitated by pragmatism. The funerals Roberts referred to were of prisoners who had died from typhus and other contagious diseases. The quick removal of the dead may have been brought on by the need to make room in hospitals or in an attempt to minimise the spread of illness by disposing of bodies soon after death.

In larger towns such as Angora and Afyon, prisoners were buried in the local Christian cemetery. When Lowes Skyring died of pneumonia at Afyon in 1918, he was buried in the town's Armenian cemetery, as was George King. Their graves were marked with wooden crosses erected by fellow prisoners.[184] At Belemedik, Allied prisoners were buried in a Christian cemetery that was also used by the Germans. After Len New's death following an accident in a work camp, the prisoners made him a wooden coffin and conducted their own funeral. A large party of prisoners attended the service at which hymns were sung and prayers recited.[185] New's grave was marked with a cross, though George Kerr later reported the cross was vandalised.[186] Brendan Calcutt was buried in a similar fashion by his fellow prisoners at Hadjikiri;

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[181] At Angora in 1915 Daniel Creedon witnessed the funeral of an English private, during which the grave was found to be too shallow: "the grave was about three feet deep and there were men's skulls and bones lying everywhere." "Copy of Diary Written by D.B. Creedon," 13.

[182] Roberts to Chomley, 20 November 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of George Roberts, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 177.

[183] Repatriation Statement of Arthur Tierney, AWM30 B2.14. The issue of unmarked graves is explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

[184] L. Doughty-Wylie to Red Cross, 18 February 1920, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of George Burdett King, AWM1DRL/0428.

[185] Kerr, *Lost Anzacs*, 188 (diary entry for 8 May 1916).

[186] Ibid, 198-9 (diary entry for 15 June 1916).

his marked grave was later photographed by Charles Bean on his postwar journey through Turkey with the Australian Historical Mission.[187] Similar funeral services were conducted in other work camps; in August 1918 at Gelebek Cecil Spencer recorded attending the funeral of a fellow prisoner and reading a portion of the funeral service, while Reginald Lushington reported that the eighteen prisoners who died of disease at Ismidt were buried in the town's Armenian cemetery, "laid to rest by our men and the burial service read over them."[188] Reproducing these traditional cultural funeral practices provided the prisoners with a way to cope with the impact of death.

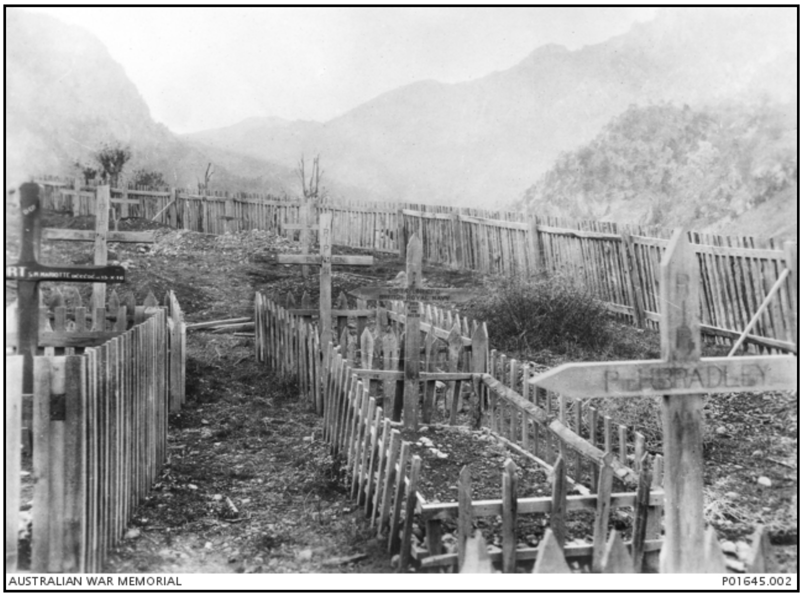

Figure 2.9: The Christian cemetery at Belemedik. Graves of POWs are enclosed and marked. Source: AWMP01645.002.

Prisoners also dealt with death in the camps by ensuring relatives and officials were aware of the loss. Bart Ziino, Joy Damousi and Pat Jalland have written of soldiers at the front taking on the role of agents for the bereaved during the Great War.[189] The prisoners acted in a similar manner. George Roberts of the 1st Light Horse was the unofficial liaison between the Australians in Turkey and the Red Cross regarding POW deaths. On several occasions he provided the Red Cross POW Department with lists of deceased Australian prisoners and, in doing so, was able to confirm the deaths of different men. In one instance, a list of dead New Zealanders compiled by Roberts was duly passed on to an appreciative New Zealand High Commission in London.[190] Aware of the poor communications between the camps and those at home, several men also took it upon themselves to directly inform family members of the death of a loved one. Lowes Skyring felt the loss of his friend Richard Stripling keenly, and wrote several letters to Stripling's family before his own death in late 1918.[191] Maurice Delpratt also wrote several letters to Brendan Calcutt's father after Calcutt's death in January 1917.[192] Ensuring family members knew the particulars of their loved one's death not only soothed or even facilitated the grief of distant loved ones, but also assuaged the strain of death for those in the camps.

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[187] Bean, *Gallipoli Mission*, 318.

[188] Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks,* 65.

[189] For discussion relating to the role of servicemen at the various fronts in facilitating the grief of the bereaved at home, and the ways in which such actions helped soothe their own grief, see Pat Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War, Medicine and the Funeral Business* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 59-64; Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9; Ziino, *A Distant Grief,* 22-9,

Conclusion

Several years after the war, pilot Laurie Smith wrote a memoir of his time as a prisoner of the Turks. In the unpublished account, he explained how he and his comrades had endured their captivity. According to Smith, the key to being "a good Prisoner of War" was humour.[193] While humour may have been one method of dealing with wartime imprisonment in Turkey it was, as this chapter demonstrates, not the only method employed by the POWs to endure their situation. The Australian prisoners were subject to multiple physical and psychological challenges while in Turkey. Their forced immersion in a culture perceived to be inferior to their own was a cause of anger and concern. Food, accommodation, transport, health care, work practices, and punishment were seen to be substandard and indications of their captors' uncivilised nature. The inversion of the racial hierarchy proved traumatic, while life as a POW and its associated mental and emotional stresses, such as sporadic communication with the world outside the prison camp, lack of privacy, feelings of failure, monotony, boredom, and the indefinite nature of imprisonment, weighed on their minds. In response to these challenges, the prisoners employed various methods to shape their conditions and normalise their situations. The prisoners adhered to sanitary measures, furnished and decorated their accommodation, experimented with food to make it more palatable and thus acceptable and, in several instances, fellow British POWs assumed responsibility for health care. Belittling the Turks, emphasising ‘Britishness’, and aligning with the other white (and therefore civilised) men and nurses in the camps – the Germans – reaffirmed racial superiority. Sporting events, theatrical performances, and educational programmes relieved the tedium of camp life, mess life mitigated feelings of loneliness and depression and offered brief respite, while reproducing cultural practices associated with mourning, such as performing funeral services, tending the graves of the dead, and writing to relatives, helped those in the camps manage the loss of fellow POWs. Such responses indicate that the prisoners were neither passive nor entirely powerless recipients of the captivity experience, but instead were active in their efforts to mitigate the strain of internment and cope with its manifold challenges. Of course, the prisoners were not the only ones who had to negotiate the captivity experience. How governments and other official parties adjusted to the unprecedented issue of extended wartime internment is the focus of Chapter Three.

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[190] Secretary New Zealand Government Officers London to Chomley, January 30 1918, ARC POW Department Case File of George Roberts, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 177.

[191] Skyring to A.L. Grant, 19 May 1918, ARC POW Department Case File of Lowes Skyring, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 190.

[192] Unfortunately there are no available copies of the letters Delpratt wrote to the Calcutts. However, Delpratt's anxiety over Calcutt's death and the effect it would have on Calcutt's parents is evident in several of the letters Delpratt wrote to his sister. See, for example, Delpratt to E.White, 24 May 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence: "Letters still come for poor Calcutt. I should soon hear from his father. I wrote him details of his son's death on 1st Jan. I kept his pay book, letters, watch and some other small things which I hope some day to be able to return to his parents. His parcels were distributed between the other members of his own battalion."

[193] Smith, "Experiences of a Prisoner of War in Turkey," 1, AWMPR83/100.

CHAPTER THREE

Networks of Support: Politics, Diplomacy, and Aid

According to Richard Speed, post-Enlightenment notions regarding the rights of the individual challenged existing ideas about POWs, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century wartime captives moved from being merely the "chattel" of their captor to persons worthy of protection.[1] Previous chapters have focussed on the experience and impact of capture and captivity from the perspective of those in the camps. This chapter widens the lens to examine the network of external agencies – government departments, neutral powers, and aid organisations – that adjusted to the role of protecting and supporting the prisoners in Turkey while upholding these new ideas about POWs. The impecunious state of the Ottoman Empire during the war, and thus the Turkish ability to adequately provide for and maintain POWs, was a key concern for British, Australian and other international authorities. The provision of money, food and other supplies to the prisoners was made a chief priority and each branch of the network worked within its respective framework to ensure, in spite of difficulties, the welfare of those in the camps. This chapter analyses the interactions between these different providers of welfare, the challenges they faced in organising, implementing, and administering aid to the prisoners, and how successful their efforts to enable the POWs to better cope with captivity were.

Response of the Belligerent Governments

The Hague Convention of 1899, revised in 1907, was the first internationally recognised set of laws to codify the rights and responsibilities of belligerents during times of war. Articles 4-20 of the Annex to the Convention outlined provisions for the capture and internment of prisoners of war. According to these laws, prisoners of war "are in the power of the hostile Government," who is "charged with their maintenance." If no prior arrangement existed between the detaining and home nation, then POWs were to be treated on the same footing as troops of the captors' government.[2] All key world powers had ratified the 1899 Convention, and the majority the 1907 revision.[3] Thus, at the outbreak of war in 1914, it was widely understood that the humane treatment of any prisoners taken in battle was the responsibility of the captor government, and that the treatment of such prisoners should mirror that received by their own troops.

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[1] Richard B. Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 3.

These understandings were, as Speed writes, designed to promote comity between warring nations.[4] However, the unprecedented – and unexpected – number of captives taken by the belligerents during the Great War tested the feasibility of the Hague laws. Within the first six months of the war, between 1.3 and 1.4 million prisoners were taken in Europe, and numbers rose as hostilities continued. By the end of the war, approximately 8.5 million servicemen were in captivity.[5] The flaws of the conventions were exposed as the war dragged on, and many nations developed bilateral agreements to establish guidelines for prisoner treatment. As Heather Jones writes, there was "a disjunction between the universal aspirations set out in international law and the reality on the ground."[6] Some detaining powers, struggling to ensure the welfare of their own population, often relegated the care of large number of prisoners to the sidelines. Moreover, the 'equal footing' provision effectively permitted the inequality of treatment of prisoners. Such inequality, particularly regarding food, clothing, accommodation, and general conditions, were the key concerns of belligerent governments:

> Virtually everything that was subject to divergent interpretation or practice became the focus of controversy. Article 7 [of the 1907 Hague Convention] had, in effect, papered over the inherent contradiction between the implicit assumption of equal treatment and the reality of divergent practice and custom.[7]

Such 'divergent interpretation or practice' meant there was room for disagreement and controversy even though the convention was not technically breached.

The British government was particularly concerned about the treatment and conditions its prisoners experienced in Turkey. The Turkish policy concerning POWs, outlined in the Ottoman War Ministry's 1914 publication, the 'Manual Concerning Prisoners of War', indicates the Turks intended to operate within the framework of the Hague Conventions. The Turkish government made provision for the administration of prison camps, accommodation and supervision, financial support, and work, and outlined that any POWs would receive the same treatment as troops of equivalent rank from the Turkish forces.[8] However, as discussed in earlier chapters, the parlous state of the Ottoman Empire at the outbreak of hostilities was well known. Nearly six years on a constant war footing, coupled with violent internal ethnic tensions and dramatic political coups and counter-coups, had turned the once prosperous Empire into 'the Sick Man of Europe'. It was widely appreciated that Turkish troops were poorly equipped and often underfed, and that the Empire was effectively bankrupt. Turkish prisoners of war, particularly those in Russian hands, were, for various reasons, "not given a very high priority" and were largely neglected by the Turkish government.[9] While Young Turk leaders, including Enver and Talaat Pasha, were adamant that Allied prisoners of war in Turkey were not mistreated, they did acknowledge that lower standards of living caused many Western captives to suffer.[10]

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[2] Article 7 of "Annex to the Convention: Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV); October 18, 1907," http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hague04.asp

[3] Jonathon F. Vance ed, *Encyclopaedia of Prisoners of War and Internment* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 125-6.

[4] Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War,* 31.

[5] Neville Wylie*, Barbed Wire Diplomacy: Britain, Germany and the Politics of Prisoners of War 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 42.

[6] Heather Jones, "A Missing Paradigm? Military Captivity and the Prisoners of War, 1914-18," *Immigrants and Minorities* 26 no. 1-2 (2008): 26.

[7] Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War,* 32.

The focus of political efforts regarding British prisoners in Turkey was thus to ensure, as best as possible, that they received treatment and conditions on par with 'British' standards. A complex machinery of official government departments was established early in the war to obtain information about, and administer welfare and support to, captive British servicemen in enemy hands. The Directorate of Prisoners of War was established within the War Office, and the Foreign Office also created a Prisoner of War Department. The War Office department focussed on the provision of aid and welfare for prisoners, while the Foreign Office branch gathered information about POWs from escaped or repatriated ex-prisoners and communicated with the protecting powers.[11] In keeping with the Hague Conventions, a Prisoner of War Information Bureau was also created to keep records of prisoners in British captivity for transmission to the enemy.[12] In September 1915, the Government Committee on the Treatment by the Enemy of British Prisoners of War was also convened to document and verify instances of enemy abuse of prisoners. As Barbara Hately-Broad notes, the unprecedented nature of the work of these different departments and committees, coupled with uncertainty over who was ultimately responsible for POWs, led to inevitable tensions. Foreign Office refusal to continue work on prisoner of war matters in October 1916 meant the British War Cabinet was ultimately forced to create an independent POW Department, led by Lord Newton, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.[13] While the War Office department continued to work towards providing prisoners with financial and other forms of relief, Newton's department picked up the Foreign Office's liaison role.[14]

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[8] "Usera Hakkinda Talimatname Mat-baa-I (Manual Regarding Prisoners of War)," (Istanbul: Turkish War Ministry, Military Printer, 1914.) Ottoman Archives 1332/1914. Translated by S. Bulgu, September 2001.

[9] Yucel Yanikdag, "Ottoman Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-22," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34 no. 1 (1999): 83.

[10] Hoffman Phillip to E. Page, 2 June 1916, Prisoners of War in Turkey, NAA A11803 1914/89/364; E. Page to A. Balfour, 9 January 1917, Prisoners of War in Turkey, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. Mehmed Taalat Pasha, the Ottoman Minister for the Interior, emphasised the similarity in treatment of prisoners with Turkish soldiers in discussions with the American Ambassador in Constantinople. American Ambassador to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 9 January 1917, and A. Balfour to E. Page, 13 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. In at least one instance, the British Foreign Office outright rejected the idea that the prisoners received the same treatment as Turkish soldiers.

The chief issue for the War Office concerning the POWs in Turkey was the provision of money to the captives. In keeping with the Hague Conventions, the Turks paid captive officers at a rate commensurate with their rank; four shillings per day for lieutenants and 4/6d (four shillings and six pence) per day for captains and above.[15] The pay of a prisoner of war did not stop during his time in captivity, nor did any allotments or separation allowances he had organised to be deducted from his pay, and payments received by officers from the Turks were thus deducted from their accounts.[16] However, as discussed in the previous chapter, officers had to purchase their own food and fuel, and often also had to pay rent for their premises. As such, the British government permitted a ration allowance of 1/9d per day to cover the cost of officers' food. Non-commissioned officers and enlisted men received no pay from their captors but their food, clothing and accommodation requirements were supposed to be met by the Turkish government, so they did not receive a similar allowance.

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[11] Wylie, *Barbed Wire Diplomacy,* 43.

[12] For an overview of the role this organisation played regarding enemy prisoners in British hands, see Elliot Dodds, "For All Prisoners and Captives: The Work of the Prisoners of War Information Bureau," (London: Wightman & Co, 1917).

[13] Barbara Hately-Broad, *War and Welfare: British Prisoner of War Families 1939-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 141. The British government had attempted to create an inter-departmental committee to settle disagreements between the various departments but, as Hately-Broad notes, the lack of authority imbued to the committee meant that bickering continued.

[14] Ibid.

[15] "Australian Red Cross Prisoners of War Department – Financial Report by Mrs Mordaunt Reid," in M.E. Chomley, "Final Report on the Prisoners of War Department of the Australian Red Cross," 15-16. These amounts were agreed upon after some diplomatic to-ing and fro-ing between the British, the Germans and the Turks. See "Prisoners of War – Pay and Allowances," Prisoners of War – Miscellany, AWM10 4332/7/30.

[16] See "Encashment of cheques of Australian officers who are Prisoners of War," AWM10 4332/7/30 and M.E. Chomley, "Final Report," 16.

Inflation soon caused the price of food and fuel to increase dramatically, making the advances received by captive officers inadequate, while the rations received by the enlisted men were also deficient and required supplementing with food available from local markets. To remedy this the prisoners required money. The challenge for the British government was to discern exactly how much the prisoners needed. In early 1915 the War Office approved relief payments of three shillings per week to each British soldier prisoner of war. This amount was deemed enough to cover the captives' immediate wants and, as these payments were regarded as "in aid of maintenance," the funds were not deducted from the prisoner's pay.[17] In May 1917, after correspondence with the American Ambassador in Constantinople, payments were increased so that officer prisoners received a monthly payment equalling £4.10/- and NCOs and men the equivalent of £2.14/- per month.[18] Further application from the prisoners themselves to the British government in October 1917 led to even greater increases, and by January 1918 payments were set at £7 Turkish for officers and £6 Turkish for the other ranks. Towards the end of the year this was again increased to the equivalent of a maximum of £18 Turkish for officers and £10 for men.[19] These higher relief payments reflect the drastic rate of inflation in Turkey, and were for POWs to meet ever-escalating expenses relating to food, clothing and accommodation. Like previous payments, this money was not charged against the pay of the prisoners but was regarded as a free grant, and was sent from the War Office to the representatives of the protecting powers in Constantinople for distribution among the captives.

British efforts to provide financial relief to their POWs in Turkey also encompassed the Australian prisoners. The Australian government did not establish any official departments to deal with POW affairs. This was in keeping with the political and diplomatic arrangement between Britain and Australia at the time. Despite giving their permission and blessing for the formation of a federated Australia in 1901, the official view remained that Australia was part of a British nation, which, as Eric Andrews writes, "extended across the globe from the UK to Canada, Africa and the antipodes."[20] British control over Australian foreign affairs and interests continued during the war. At the outbreak of the conflict Australian troops and naval personnel were placed at the full disposal of the British and, while the Australian government committed to equip, pay, and feed its servicemen, and insisted that they be retained as national units rather than, as the British initially suggested, be subsumed into existing British regiments, they had little to do with how or even where their troops were used.[21] While Australian forces had taken a lead role in organising the capture of Rabaul and Nauru from German colonists in late 1914, the Australian government did not take an active interest in strategic decisions relating to the main theatres of war.[22] Prime Minister Andrew Fisher did not know AIF units were to take part in the Gallipoli campaign until they were already en route for the peninsula, while it was not until mid-1918 that an Australian general, John Monash, took command of Australian forces on the Western Front.

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[17] "Prisoners of War – Turkey and Bulgaria,"AWM10 4332/7/30. During the time of the First World War, twelve pence equalled one shilling, and twenty shillings equalled one pound. On an interesting side-note, the idea of 'maintenance' payments (or lack thereof) became a key issue for Australians repatriated from Japanese captivity during World War II. See Christina Twomey, "Compensating Captivity: POWs of the Japanese in postwar culture," paper presented at "Prisoners of War: The Australian Experience of Captivity in the 20th Century," Australian National University, 5 June 2013.

[18] "Prisoners of War in Germany & Turkey, 30 May 1917," AWM10 4332/7/30. One Turkish lira was the equivalent of 18 shillings, so these payments were based off a payment of five liras for officers and three liras for enlisted men.

[19] Foreign Office to Netherland Minister at Constantinople, 22 January 1918, Prisoners of War in Turkey – Allowances to, NAA A11803 1918/89/453; Chomley, "Final Report," 20.

As such, Australian authorities piggybacked on the British government's system of POW welfare to provide relief to their own prisoners in Turkey. This reliance meant that Australian financial relief efforts closely mirrored those of the British. For example, the same ration allowance received by British officers, 1/9d per day, was provided to captive Australian officers.[23] Indeed, such mirroring was seemingly expected. In mid-1915, the Australian High Commissioner was informed of the War Office's decision to provide money to British prisoners in Turkey. Though the British explained that the Australian government was free to make independent arrangements regarding their prisoners, the Colonial Office warned that it would be wise to keep all prisoners on an equal footing. Keen to ensure that previous tensions over the issue of pay – British soldiers had not reacted well to the discovery that their Australian counterparts were paid at a much higher rate – were not replicated in the prison camps, the Colonial Office went to great pains to point out that separation allowances and other allotments to dependants of British soldiers were minimal, meaning family members would not be in a position to supplement goods and comforts sent to the POWs.[24] In the face of such warning, the Australian government requested that existing British arrangements be extended to Australian prisoners. Relief payments for the Australians in Turkey were thus forwarded through the War Office to the protecting powers at the same rate as those provided to British prisoners. The British then made a claim on the Australian government for their share of the disbursement.[25]

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[20] E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations During World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 13. The British monitored Australian – and British – issues and interests in Australia through the position of Governor-General. As the chief representative of the monarch, the Governor-General acted as liaison between the two governments. Indeed, it was only through the Governor-General that Australian federal ministers could contact their British counterparts.

[21] Ibid, 47 & 114.

[22] Ibid, 47. Andrews argues that Australian readiness to organise the capture of the German-controlled islands was based largely on their geographical proximity.

[23] Chomley, "Final Report," 20.

However, not all official relief payments for Australians in Turkey went through the British system. The care of the Australians from the *AE2* initially fell to the Commonwealth Naval Representative in London, Captain F. Haworth-Booth. Certain allowances and special considerations for the nature of their work meant that submariners were highly paid men but, unlike their military counterparts, their dependants could not draw separation allowances, meaning the prisoners' families' ability to purchase and send extra comforts was limited. The Australian High Commissioner thus stated that the submariners would require a higher amount of financial relief.[26] Upon receiving official confirmation of their capture, the Naval Representative approved an advance of thirty shillings of pay per rating per month, and arranged a clever way of ensuring the prisoners received the money.[27] Howarth-Booth organised for a British bank with a branch in Constantinople to send 'dead money' – money that could not be transferred out of Turkey due to the war – to the senior Australian rating, Chief Petty Officer Harry Abbott, for him to distribute among the *AE2* men. The British bank was then reimbursed with a cheque from the

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[24] John Robertson, "Prisoners of the Turks," in *Anzac & Empire: The Tragedy and Glory of Gallipoli* (Melbourne: Hamlyn, 1990), 215-6. Nevertheless, tension between British and Australian POWs regarding the issue of pay was evident in the camps. Daniel Creedon stated that "there was a terrible lot of ill-feeling on the part of the Englishmen, apparently because we were being paid more than they. There were several pretty heated discussions about this." "Copy of Diary Written by D.B. Creedon," 14, D.B. Creedon Diary 1915, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

[25] Australian High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 8 July 1915, Submarine AE2 etc, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520. There was some confusion, owing to the nature of the money disbursed by the War Office, as to how the Australian government would come up with the funds to repay the British. General consensus was that if the money from which the prisoners had been paid had been raised by public subscription, then it was inappropriate to debit such payments from the men's pay accounts. Instead, the Australian Red Cross Society would meet the claim. See "Prisoners of War – Financial Arrangements, 1 November 1917," AWM10 4332/7/30.

[26] Australian High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 8 July 1915, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520.

[27] Commonwealth Office, London, to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, June 1916, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520.

Naval Representative.[28] The higher rates of pay of the submariners ruffled feathers in Britain. In July 1915, after an objection from the Army Council that it was "considered undesirable that one class of prisoners should be placed by Government action in a better financial position than the general mass," the Naval Representative was forced to hold off on further advances until the end of September, at which point payments at a reduced scale were to be arranged. [29]

Advances of pay were also given to the submariners in kind. In January 1916, each RAN rating in Turkey received two pairs of drawers, two pairs of thick socks, two flannel vests, one jersey or cardigan, one pair of boots and one serge suit. All British navy ratings in Turkey received the same clothing allowance.[30] But towards the end of that same year, other articles of clothing were supplied to the *AE2* prisoners in accordance with their specifications. Food parcels were also sent at the express request of the captive submariners. The total cost of the clothing and food was to be charged against the men's accounts.[31] However, this money was later refunded by the Naval Secretary, who stated "it is not desired that any charge for food parcels should be made against Australian Naval Ratings who are held prisoner by the enemy."[32] In November 1916 the Naval Representative in London ceased relief work for the men of the *AE2* after the submariners were added to the lists of the official Australian aid agency, the Australian Red Cross POW Department.

While the British War Office worked to ensure the provision of financial relief to the prisoners and the organisation of money for clothing and extras, the Foreign Office, and later Lord Newton's Prisoners of War Department, were involved in continued negotiations with the Turks for improved conditions and other arrangements. Issues such as camp inspections, the privileges afforded officer prisoners, the conditions of the camps, reprisal actions, and neutral internment were of major concern, with each belligerent attempting to guarantee reciprocal treatment of their captives. Such negotiations, as Speed notes, were often frustrating, haphazard, and drawn-out. Often one issue could take many months to resolve, and even then it was only on an *ad hoc* basis.[33] The Australian government was not directly involved with these negotiations. It was, however, informed of the essence of correspondence between the British and the Turks through a convoluted bureaucratic channel including the Foreign Office, the POW Department, the Colonial Office, and the Governor-General. Significant delays in the transmission of information were common; for example, Prime Minister Hughes did not receive a copy of an April 1918 report into the conditions at various prison camps in Turkey until some six months later, when the war was nearly over.

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[28] Naval Representative, London to Naval Secretary, Melbourne, 15 November 1915, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520. This avenue was eventually exhausted and by mid-1916 the Naval Representative sent advances to the prisoners via the International Red Cross Committee in Switzerland.

[29] Colonial Office to Australian High Commissioner, 6 July 1915, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520; Robertson, "Prisoners of the Turks," 216.

[30] Naval Representative, London to Naval Secretary, Melbourne, 29 January 1916, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520.

[31] Director of Victualling, Admiralty, to Official Secretary, Commonwealth of Australia, London, 23 November 1916, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520; Naval Representative, London, to Naval Secretary, Melbourne, 21 December 1916, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520

[32] Naval Secretary, Melbourne to Naval Representative, London, 8 March 1917, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520

One of the most significant agreements between the British and the Turks regarding prisoners of war was finalised in late December 1917. After a Swiss inspector's report highlighted the declining conditions in POW camps throughout Turkey, the British pushed for a face-to-face meeting with the Turks to discuss their concerns. Delegates from both governments met in Berne, Switzerland, to negotiate a reciprocal treaty of improved conditions and prisoner exchange. This treaty, which was known as the Berne Agreement, codified each belligerent's administration of prisoners of war. It outlined the establishment of camp help committees, to be chaired by the POW of senior rank in each camp, the process for censorship of incoming and outgoing mail and other printed material, the provision of religious services in the camps, and the ways in which prisoners could be punished.[34] It also detailed the responsibilities of the captor government regarding the maintenance of nominal rolls of prisoners and the issuing of death certificates.[35]

The Berne Agreement also established a programme of medical repatriation. Prisoners deemed sick or incapacitated could present themselves before a medical commission consisting of three doctors (two from the captor nation and one from the captive) and be assessed for early repatriation.[36] Those prisoners who were medically repatriated, once deemed fit for active service, were not able to serve on the battlefront or in lines of communication.[37] This agreement was translated into both English and Turkish and made available in both British and Turkish camps for all prisoners. By mid-1918 the British government, still concerned about what it now believed to be the "deplorable condition" of the prisoners in Turkey, pushed for a revision of the Berne Agreement.[38] Instead of forcing prisoners to go before a commission to determine their suitability for medical repatriation, the British wanted all prisoners who had been in either British or Turkish captivity for longer then eighteen months to be immediately exchanged.[39] By the time this policy could be agreed on, the war had ended.

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[33] Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War*, 33.

[34] Articles 12, 15, 17 and 18, respectively, of "Agreement Between the British and Ottoman Governments Respecting Prisoners of War and Civilians," Prisoners of War – Conference of British and Turkish Delegates, NAA A11803 1918/89/217.

[35] Articles 22 and 23, "Agreement Between the British and Ottoman Governments," NAA A11803 1918/89/217.

[36] Article 4, "Agreement Between the British and Ottoman Governments," NAA A11803 1918/89/217. It was through this avenue that Privates Patrick O'Connor and John Davern, both suffering from wounds received during the Gallipoli campaign, were repatriated early. In some instances prisoners used this agreement to affect an escape. Captain Thomas White, for example, managed to convince the

Richard Speed writes that the belligerents during the Great War "shared a common civilisation and a commitment to the ideals expressed in the international agreements they had reached."[40] The way the British government responded to the capture and internment of British and other Commonwealth servicemen in Turkey provides evidence of this commitment. Changing ideas about prisoners of war meant governments recognised they were to be protected and provided for, but the extent to which the Turks were able to successfully do this for any POWs they held was of key concern to the British and Australians. Despite initial inter-departmental confusion regarding responsibility for POW matters, the British government successfully organised measures to provide for the prisoners in Turkey, and actively worked for continual negotiations regarding their conditions and treatment.

The Role of the Protecting Powers

While British, and to a lesser extent Australian, politicians could organise welfare efforts related to the POWs, there was little they could do to actually implement these measures. Representatives of the protecting powers in Turkey performed the distribution of official relief and the execution of any diplomatic arrangements. A

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medical commission at Afyon that he was suffering from a chronic ankle injury, and was duly sent to a hospital in Constantinople to await repatriation to London. While out of hospital one day in Constantinople, White managed to escape his guards and stowaway on a ship bound for the Ukraine, from where he made his way back to Allied territory.

[37] Article 6, "Agreement Between the British and Ottoman Governments," NAA A11803 1918/89/217.

[38] Foreign Office to Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, 15 August 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/217.

[39] Foreign Office to British Ambassador to the Netherlands, 14 August 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/217.

[40] Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War,* 42.

protecting power is a neutral state that assumes responsibility for the interests of belligerents during times of war. Protecting powers have been involved in wars and conflicts throughout the world for many years. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, the United Kingdom took on the role of protecting power for the French; in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the United States acted as protecting power for both parties; and during the Spanish-American conflict of 1898, France and Austria-Hungary assumed the role of joint protecting powers for the Spanish.[41] As ideas regarding the humane treatment of prisoners of war shifted, so came the understanding that prisoners of war were one of the interests of belligerents, and thus one of the responsibilities of any protecting power.

Several neutral protecting powers operated during the First World War. Between the outbreak of war in July 1914 and their own declaration of war in April 1917, the United States of America acted as a protecting power and accepted responsibility for Allied interests in Germany and the Ottoman Empire, and German and Turkish interests in Allied nations. In Constantinople, American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau was responsible for the interests of British and Dominion prisoners of war, including negotiations with the Turkish government on behalf of the British, and vice versa. But the stalemate of the Gallipoli campaign meant that few prisoners were taken during 1915. Instead, Morgenthau found himself in the middle of tensions regarding the Turkish government and the Armenian population, and was kept busy compiling reports on his – and other missionaries' and diplomats' – observations of deportations and massacres. The stressful situation took its toll on Morgenthau's health and he was sent back to the United States in January 1916.[42]

Ambassador Abram I. Elkus arrived in Constantinople in April 1916 to replace Morgenthau. His arrival coincided with the fall of the Kut garrison, and Elkus was immediately thrust into negotiations between the British and the Turkish governments regarding the supply of food and comforts to the increased number of British and Dominion prisoners of war in Turkish hands. With the funds sent by the British government, he established a Constantinople-based committee dedicated to administering relief to the men in the camps. Two US Embassy staff members were seconded to the committee full-time, and two British civilians and a Dutch YMCA worker resident in the city were also involved.[43] The committee took over the YMCA building located next to the embassy and used it as their headquarters, meeting once every two weeks to discuss POW-related issues. This committee arranged for the distribution of money to the prisoners and stockpiled wool, cotton, blankets and overcoats for dissemination around the camps. Clearly the Americans had not anticipated an early end to the war.[44]

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[41] Howard S. Levie, "Prisoners of War and the Protecting Power," *American Society of International Law* 55 no. 2 (1961): 376.

[42] Henry Morgenthau, *Secrets of the Bosphorus* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1918), 256-67.

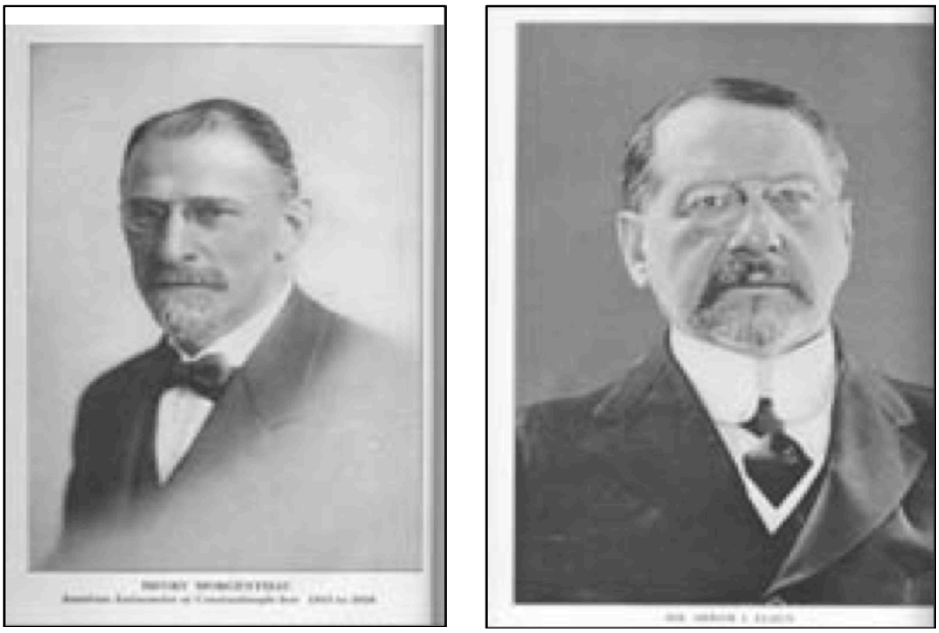

Figure 3.1: American Ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. Henry Morgenthau (1913-1916), left, and Abram I. Elkus (1916-1917), right.
Source: Kenneth Steuer, *Pursuit of an Unparalleled Opportunity: The American YMCA and Prisoner of War Diplomacy among the Central Power Nations during World War I, 1914-1923* (Gutenberg e-book, 2008).

However, the purchase, organisation and delivery of these goods proved challenging. Inflation soared in Turkey during the war and the cost of basic items greatly increased. The market for ready-made clothes was exhausted and even the price of cloth increased to over seven times its prewar price, from three piastres per square metre to twenty-two piastres.[45] The Turkish processes of POW administration also hindered the Americans. The Ottoman Red Crescent admitted that they did not know exactly how many prisoners were in the various camps in Turkey, nor could they provide information on men captured but not yet in an internment camp.[46] Elkus and his team lamented the inefficiency of Turkish authorities regarding their notification of new prisoners of war, or when prisoners were moved between camps. Such lack of communication between the Turks and the embassy made keeping track of new arrivals, or who had received what, extremely difficult, with the inevitable consequence that some prisoners missed out.

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[43] Elkus to E. Page, 19 December 1916, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[44] Elkus to E. Page, 19 December 1916, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. See also Steuer, *Pursuit of an Unparalleled Opportunity*.

[45] Elkus to E. Page, 6 February 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. According to captive officer Ron McDonald, at this time five piastres equalled one shilling. See Repatriation Statement of Ronald McDonald, AWM30 B1.22

Nevertheless, the Americans persevered with their welfare parcels, which typically included items such as chocolate, cocoa, sugar, treacle, tea, and simple drugs.[47] All supplies were sent through the Ottoman postal system, and were distributed to different locations by the Ottoman Red Crescent. The Americans sent itemised lists of the goods in each parcel to the prisoners for their acknowledgement. Confusion as to the origin of the supplies – prisoners believed they had come from the Red Crescent – meant that the Americans also added a US Embassy label on each parcel. Prior to December 1916 the volume of goods that could be sent was restricted to twenty bales of forty kilos per day but after some negotiation, the Americans convinced the Post Office to double this allocation.[48] An extra carriage on trains leaving one of Constantinople's main stations was also put at the Americans' disposal.[49]

As the war progressed and more prisoners were sent to work camps scattered throughout Turkey, the American Consuls at Smyrna, Mersina and Aleppo became involved in POW welfare work. However, the numbers of prisoners needing assistance and the desperate condition of many of the men in these camps taxed the smaller consulates. Prisoners in the Taurus Mountains, for example, were supposed to be supplied by the Americans at Mersina but the amount of goods required was too much for them. This explains, to some extent, why those Australians who worked on the Railway project felt they often missed out on relief supplies. Nevertheless, by late January 1917 the American Embassy had equipped each British prisoner of war with a suit of clothes suitable for the Turkish winter and could report the successful arrival of goods as diverse as quilts, socks, toothpaste, raincoats and Christmas puddings at various camps, including Afyon, Belemedik, Ismidt and Angora.[50] The prisoners appreciated the efforts of the Americans; after the war David Boyle reported to AIF authorities that "we were well clothed and looked after by the American Ambassador."[51]

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[46] Elkus to Sublime Porte, 4 December 1916, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.
[47] E. Page to A. Balfour, 9 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.
[48] Elkus to E. Page, 19 December 1916, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

The success of American relief efforts can be largely attributed to the efforts of Elkus and his team in Constantinople. Elkus' negotiating skills in the face of the often divided Ottoman authorities were of significant benefit to the the British government and thus the prisoners.[52] As noted above, he convinced the Turkish government and military officials to increase the number of parcels provided prisoners and, when the Turkish postal authorities refused to accept Embassy parcels in early 1917, he persuaded Minister for War, Enver Pasha, to permit the use of military transport to ensure the delivery of goods to the camps. Moreover, along with other American diplomats, he brokered an agreement with Austro-Hungarian authorities that relief supplies for prisoners in Turkey could have free passage through their territories.[53]

As their only official representative in Turkey, the British government relied on Elkus for advice on how to best support the prisoners. Often this meant following his recommendations regarding financial payments. For example, in early 1917, after discussions with Enver Pasha and reports from prisoners that the rations distributed by the Turks were insufficient, Elkus wrote to the American Ambassador in London, who then forwarded to the Foreign Office, that British POWs needed increased payments.[54] As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the War Office approved this increase. Elkus also drew attention to the fact that Indian officers received no welfare payments from the British and advised that a monthly allowance for these prisoners was necessary.[55] The American was also quick to protest against what he perceived to be unproductive diplomatic practices – specifically the threat of reprisals. As Heather Jones notes, the disconnect between international law and reality meant reprisals were a common method employed by belligerents to influence the actions of the enemy regarding POWs.[56] In January 1917, after the Foreign Office threatened to stop the passage of parcels to Turkish prisoners in Allied hands as an act of reprisal against the Turks' refusal to permit a neutral medical mission to visit the British prisoners, Elkus strongly suggested another course of action:

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[51] Repatriation Statement of David Boyle, AWM30 B1.4.

[52] In a letter to the American Ambassador in London, to be forwarded to the British government, an American Consular official in Constantinople expressed his frustrations at the multi-faceted nature of the wartime Ottoman authorities: "As you know there are five distinct ruling centres here, any one of which may interpose objections to a proposition. There is the Palace Group, and the Sublime Porte Group. Then there is the Military Government. Meshed in these, especially into the second, is the Committee of Union and Progress; this group has special influence in economic affairs. Then in the background is the German rule, potent above all in anything that may affect the military situation, and holding the financial whip besides. I mention these five Governments to explain in part the difficulty of getting things done. Every official seems to hesitate about assenting to requests for fear that there may be an objection somewhere else." Unsigned to E. Page, 13 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[53] Elkus to E. Page, 23 January 1917 and American Ambassador in Vienna to E. Page, 7 March 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[54] Elkus to E. Page, 15 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. Elkus recommended that officers should receive five Turkish liras (equivalent to ninety shillings) a month, and men three (54 shillings).

[55] Elkus to E. Page, 15 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. According to an unsigned memo from the American Embassy in Constantinople, dated 13 January 1917, General Townshend reported to the Americans that Indian officers were being well paid by the Turks and that they would not be in

> I beg leave to state that this threat would in my opinion be ineffective and unwise. According to our information very few parcels are thus forwarded and the Government here appears to be indifferent as to how the ordinary Turkish prisoner is treated. Should such a threat be made the Turkish government would probably retaliate by forbidding the sending by this Embassy of food and clothing to the British prisoners … which would result in more loss of life and greater suffering … I will of course transmit this threat if you so instruct me but I believe that in the present case threatening is now of no value.[57]

The delicate nature of Elkus' role as intermediary is clear. On the basis of this advice, the British abandoned their plans for reprisal action.[58]

Elkus' diplomatic skills were also used to arrange for the inspection of prison camps. Inspection of the conditions and treatment meted out to prisoners of war was another important responsibility of the protecting powers during the First World War. Rumours of poor treatment, especially after the capitulation of Kut, had been a point of contention for the British government since mid-1916. By December of that year they believed the conditions in Turkey to be "a disgrace to humanity" and frustrations rose over the seeming reluctance of the Turkish authorities to allow for objective reports of the conditions in which British prisoners were held.[59] Elkus continually encouraged the Turks to permit inspections. He stressed the need for reciprocity, arguing that American inspectors were able to visit Turkish POWs interned in Malta and Egypt, and that Turkish reluctance to allow similar inspections fuelled ideas of mistreatment:

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need of welfare payments. On the basis of this report the Americans initially discontinued their payments, but then believed "there may be doubts as to the wisdom of this policy."

[56] Jones, "A Missing Paradigm?" 26-7.

[57] E. Page to A. Balfour, 9 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[58] A. Balfour to E. Page, 13 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[59] A. Balfour to E. Page, 16 December 1916. NAA A11803 1917/89/377. The Foreign Office, though "loth to entertain notions of reprisals," threatened to stop the passage of parcels to Turkish POWs in Russia if inspections were not permitted.

> The continued refusal of the Imperial Government to allow this Embassy to send representatives to visit the prisoners of war will doubtless create the impression that the conditions existing in the prisoner internment camps in Turkey are so bad that the Ottoman Government is unwilling to have them inspected and made known.[60]

This approach worked; in early 1917 two Swiss representatives from the International Red Cross Committee, M. Boissier and Dr A. Vischer, were invited to inspect the camps in Turkey.[61] However, their visit was not without restrictions. Boissier and Vischer were only permitted to visit certain camps and were not allowed to freely mix with the prisoners, which Elkus argued affected the reliability of their report. Elkus emphasised the importance of comprehensive inspections of the camps in order to ascertain the prisoners' needs, stressing that "it is absolutely essential that the Embassy obtain first-hand knowledge of those needs through its own representatives."[62]

The Americans continued to act on behalf of the British government until their own declaration of war in April 1917.[63] The severing of diplomatic ties between the Americans and the Central Powers meant responsibility for Allied interests in Turkey passed to the Netherlands Legation in Constantinople, led by Monsieur van der does de Willebois.[64] The Dutch continued the welfare work established by the Americans, though, like their predecessor, their task was hampered by restricted access to supplies and high rates of inflation. Many prisoners commented on the poor quality of clothing sent by the Dutch to the camps and the seemingly sporadic ways in which parcels were distributed. David Boyle, who was full of praise for the Americans, felt

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[60] Memorandum from Elkus to Sublime Porte, 4 December 1916, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. Elkus also tried a different tack to encourage the Turks to permit inspections of the camps. One of Talaat Pasha's close friends had been taken prisoner by the British and Elkus believed he could be used as a bargaining tool to ensure improved conditions for those in Turkey. Elkus put to the British that if they released Talaat's friend, the Turks might potentially permit Embassy officials to visit the prisoners. E. Page to A. Balfour 9 January 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[61] "Notes on Visits of Swiss International Red Cross Delegates to Prisoners Camps," NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[62] Copy of letter from Elkus to Sublime Porte, 12 March 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377.

[63] British gratitude towards Elkus and his Embassy staff was expressed in an official telegram to Ambassador Earl Page and was also noted by several prisoners and other members of his Embassy offices. See A. Balfour to E. Page, 27 April 1917 and R. Frew to American Embassy Constantinople, 12 March 1917, NAA A11803 1917/89/377. Frew wrote: "I would like if it could be known at home how very grateful we feel to Mr Elkus for his untiring and so very effective efforts on our behalf. His extraordinary success in getting permission to help our Soldier and Sailor prisoners and the marvellous way in which – by infinite tact and persistence – he managed to get over all difficulties and succeeded in sending enormous quantities of supplies of clothing and food to the prisoners in the interior has been the means of saving the lives and adding to comfort of hundreds of our men."

[64] YMCA worker and Dutch national Johannes Van Bommel, who had previously been seconded to the American POW relief committee from the YMCA, was transferred to the Dutch legation and took on a supervisory role regarding POW relief.

"the Netherlands Ambassador did not trouble about us at all as he should have done" and believed his work for the prisoners "should be inquired into."[65] Inferences of neglect and poor administration were perhaps unfair. By the time the Dutch took over POW relief in Turkey the number of Allied prisoners scattered throughout the country was estimated at around 15,000. The Dutch staff entrusted to ensure the welfare of this large group of men numbered only 25.[66] Indeed, the British government recognised the enormous nature of the task before Willebois and his team, and explained that they would cover the costs of any additional staff he required.[67]

The Dutch also faced other challenges, particularly the misappropriation of funds by delegates. The connection they established with the Spanish Consul at Aleppo in an effort to ensure the arrival of relief to southern Railway camps proved disastrous. The Spanish Consul were sent significant funds every month from the British money forwarded to the Dutch in Constantinople on the understanding that they would supply extra food, clothing and supplies to the prisoners in the Railway camps, and distribute relief payments. However, during an inspection tour of the prison camps in early 1918, an Ottoman Red Crescent delegate observed that the staff at the Spanish Consul appeared to be more concerned with their own well-being than that of the Allied prisoners:

> One of the Consul's principal assistants is a certain Mr Prince, who was pennyless [sic] before the war and is now worth LT15,000. He spends each night several hundred of pounds in gambling … All these men are supplying for the prisoners is bad: boots bad, clothing bad, felt [for bedding] useless … Not only Prince but the whole staff should be dismissed. They are all personally interested in the buying and selling of prisoners [sic] supplies. They buy things not because the prisoners need them but because they want to buy them.[68]

It is little wonder that, in the prisoners' eyes, the Dutch did not seem to have the same success as the Americans regarding the despatch and delivery of relief parcels and payments.

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[65] Repatriation Statement of David Boyle, AWM30 B1.4. Other Australians were similarly scathing of the Dutch. Harry Brown wrote that ""The American embassy clothing was good, but that issued by the Dutch Embassy was very poor stuff and the winter clothing came at the end of the winter too late for cold weather. Owing to working conditions this clothing and boots only used to last 3 months." Repatriation Statement of Harry Brown, AWM30 B1.5.

[66] Steur, *Pursuit of an Unparalleled Opportunity,* 21.

[67] Foreign Office to Willebois, 28 April 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453. The Dutch diplomats working for the prisoners each received a salary of £100 per month, which came out of the money the British sent to the Dutch Legation. See Willebois to British Ambassador at the Hague, 19 August 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[68] Dutch Consul to Willebois, "Report from Rifki Bey," 12 April 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

Just as they had done with Elkus, the British relied on the discretion of Willebois in matters pertaining to the distribution of payments and supplies. By mid-1918 the British government was aware of the growing disparity between the camps – "in some they appear not to be intolerable … in others the state of the prisoners seems to be desperate and the men are dying for lack of nourishment" – and, as discussed earlier, had subsequently approved increased relief payments.[69] They entrusted Willebois to utilise the revised amount of funds, requesting that he "may be good enough to treat them as confidential … or make it clear that they are maxim [sic] rates and not to be issued universally nor irrespective of actual needs."[70] Their preference was for relief to be distributed in kind, but the Foreign Office had to defer to Willebois' judgement.[71] The British also relied on Willebois and his team to improve the Aleppo connection, and expressed "their best thanks" at his intervention.[72]

Like the Americans before them, the Dutch also worked to secure inspections of the camps. In keeping with the arrangements set out in the Berne Agreement, three Dutch delegates were permitted to visit certain prison camps between May and August 1918 and report back to Willebois on their findings. Dr E.E. Menten, J. Van Spengler and D. van Bommel provided a comprehensive report regarding the condition of the prisoners in various camps, the accommodation in which they were housed, the temperament of the different Commandants, and the type and amount of work in which prisoners were engaged.[73] Their report was duly forwarded to the British in late August 1918, who expressed their gratitude for the important insight into the condition and treatment of the prisoners and suggested avenues for the Dutch to pursue regarding improvements.[74] The cessation of hostilities meant such improvements were never implemented.

Caught in an invidious position between the belligerents, the Americans and the Dutch worked hard in their role as protecting powers to implement official welfare to the prisoners in Turkey. They were largely successful in their efforts to distribute funds and provide food, clothing and other comforts to the camps, in spite of difficulties relating to communication, transport, inflation, and an unfortunate case of misappropriation of funds, and helped the POWs better cope with their captivity. Furthermore, their negotiations between government parties, particularly regarding the inspection of prison camps by neutral observers, led to better conditions for both British (including Australian) and Turkish captives. The protecting powers, with what Richard Speed calls their "shared commitment to the liberal tradition," assisted the belligerents to abide by the international regulations governing the treatment of prisoners of war.[75]

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[69] Foreign Office to Willebois, 25 April 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[70] Foreign Office to British Ambassador at the Hague, 29 April 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[71] Foreign Office to Willebois, 25 April 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[72] Foreign Office to Willebois, 19 July 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.The Dutch called for an enquiry into the misappropriation of funds at the Spanish Consul. They also sent a Dutch tradesman, resident in Turkey from 1907, to supervise the work at Aleppo. The Spanish Ambassador in Constantinople also expressed his concern and promised that, if the staff at Aleppo were removed, he would replace them with more experienced diplomats from the Damascus Consul. Rifki Bey organised to send the food for the prisoners from Aleppo through Colonel Zia Bey, the Inspector General and Commandant of all prisoners along the Railway line. Paulus to Dutch Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Hague, 24 May 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[73] "Report by Menten and Spengler," NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

[74] Foreign Office to Willebois, 14 September 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.

Development and Work of Aid Agencies

Charitable organisations and aid agencies formed the third branch of the official network established to support POWs. In the early stages of the war independent charitable organisations and the prisoner's own family and friends could provide captives with food, clothes, money, and comforts. One of the early schemes established to provide aid and assistance to captive Britishers was Lady Victoria Herbert's 'Scheme for British Prisoners of War'. Lady Herbert, a goddaughter of Queen Victoria, started her London-based scheme as an act of *noblesse oblige* just after the outbreak of the war, and sent parcels of food, tobacco and other comforts to British prisoners in Germany. She encouraged other benevolent supporters to 'adopt' prisoners of war in both Germany and Turkey and send food and other comforts, such as tobacco, as well as letters. Lady Herbert herself adopted Australians Martin Troy and William Elston, both captured on Gallipoli, and sent the men monthly care parcels through her fund.[76] In Britain, Regimental Care Committees were a common channel through which prisoners received comforts. Many British regiments were raised according to locale, such as the Lancaster Fusiliers or the Durham Light Infantry, and these care committees operated on the premise that men and women from that particular area would look after 'their' sick, wounded, and prisoners. The number of care committees and other charitable organisations aimed at POW relief operating in Britain in the first years of the conflict was staggering; in a December

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[75] Speed, *Prisoners, Diplomats and the Great War*, 3.

[76] V. Herbert to P. O'Connor, 12 October 1916, ARC POW Dept. Case File of William Elston, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 60.

1916 statement the War Office estimated that there were more than 1,000 organisations for the benefit of prisoners of war.[77]

There were no restrictions on the size, form or number of parcels sent to captives in enemy countries during these early years. Family members, friends, battalion mates, benevolent ‘adopters’ and other concerned individuals could send anything to the prisoners, though there was no guarantee it would arrive. But by December 1916 the numbers of British and Dominion prisoners in enemy hands had increased, and the British government regulated the amount and type of parcels that could be sent to POWs. Such intervention was promoted as necessary to stop what was seen to be a confused and uneven system of unofficial aid, and to prevent food and other goods being utilised by the enemy. The War Office claimed that lack of restrictions on the sending of parcels resulted in an unfair distribution of food and comforts among prisoners; some prisoners in Germany were reported to receive very little while others received far more than they could possibly use.[78] Those in the fortunate position of being in receipt of excess parcels were known to have sold food and other goods to the Germans. This meant, according to the War Office, that “charitable organisations and persons who send parcels without due inquiry as to the need for them … run the risk of depleting the food supplies in this country in favour of the enemy.”[79] Restrictions also applied to clothing. Just as the War Office did not want British food falling into enemy hands, neither did it want to be providing the enemy with uniforms or other clothes.[80]

To enforce the new regulations, the government designated responsibility for charitable relief efforts to one London-based care committee, the Central Prisoners of War Committee (CPWC). In its role as the official care committee, the CPWC coordinated and controlled existing relief efforts to ensure War Office guidelines were complied with – though, as John Yarnall notes, not without some teething problems.[81] It also delegated certain aspects of POW welfare to other ‘authorised’ committees, ranging from those dedicated to certain groups of prisoners, such as the Indian Soldiers Fund, which looked after all Indian POWs, to those specialising in certain items or comforts, such as the Invalid Comforts Fund, which provided medicines and medical supplies to prison camps, or the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme which, in association with the Department of Education, sent POWs scholarly books and other reading material. In December 1916 the CPWC authorised the Australian Red Cross POW Department to assume responsibility for relief efforts for Australian prisoners in both Germany and Turkey. This organisation had been in operation in London since July, after the capture of approximately 470 Australians at Fromelles. The daughter of a Victorian judge, Mary Elizabeth Chomley, who had been living and working in a London hospital at the beginning of the war, took on the role of Honorary Secretary of the department.[82] By November 1918 Chomley and her team had organised the despatch of 395,595 food and 36,339 clothing parcels to Australian military and naval prisoners in enemy hands.[83] As will be discussed in Chapter Five, this organisation also played a significant role in the lives of the families of those imprisoned in Turkey.

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[77] “Prisoners of War: Relief Measures Explained,” *West Australian,* 12 December 1916.

[78] John Yarnall, *Barbed Wire Disease: British and German Prisoners of War 1914-19* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2011)*,* 108.

[79] “Prisoners of War: Relief Measures Explained,” *West Australian,* 12 December 1916.

[80] Chomley to F.M. Merson, 2 August 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of John Merson, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 131.

[81] Yarnall, *Barbed Wire Disease*, 109-10. Yarnall writes of the problems caused by the CPWC’s rush to control all relief efforts, at the expense of existing care committees and other associations. A British Parliamentary Joint Committee Report of July 1917 into the efficacy of the CPWC argued that representatives of local committees and associations should be incorporated into CWPC administration and work. The new, enlarged CWPC proved more successful.

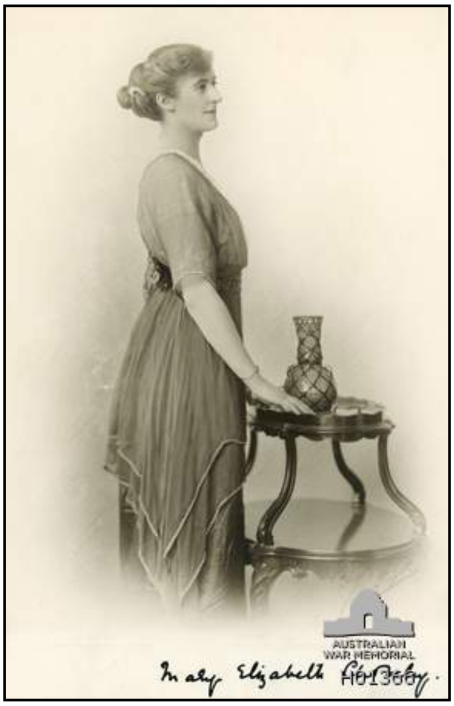

Figure 3.2: Miss Mary Elizabeth Chomley, Honorary Secretary of the Australian Red Cross POW Department during the First World War.
Source: AWMH01366.

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[82] There has been no significant scholarly work undertaken on Mary Elizabeth Chomley, with the result that very little is known about her life after the war. For a brief overview, see her entry on the *Australian Women's Register*: http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0133b.htm

[83] Chomley, "Final Report," 1.

The POW Department was divided into subunits staffed by volunteers – primarily other Australian women living in London. These different sections assumed responsibility for food parcels, clothing (Attestation papers provided the prisoner's measurements) correspondence, finances, and general administration. As soon as a man was officially confirmed as a prisoner, the POW Department added his name to a central register for inclusion on separate indexes for these different sections, and sent him a letter outlining their work for POWs.[84] The Department meticulously recorded and acknowledged all correspondence with the POWs, which helped workers keep track of the location and condition of individual prisoners.

Chomley and her team appreciated the "very serious" position the prisoners in Turkey were in, particularly in regards to food.[85] The Department's food section sent each prisoner three 10lbs food parcels per fortnight (War Office regulations stipulated a rank-based system of supplying POWs with food – privates were to receive 60lbs per month and officers 100lbs – but Chomley adopted a more egalitarian approach).[86] Concerns about the quality of foodstuffs available in England at the time, and the desire to "maintain a standard of excellence," meant the Department's parcels always included Australian produce and goods. The arrival of items including IXL jam impressed the prisoners who, according to Chomley, "expressed themselves very much delighted" to receive such reminders of home in far away Turkey.[87] Regular packages of cigarettes and tobacco were also sent, along with parcels containing items specifically requested by POWs that were purchased using either money allotted to the Department by the prisoner, or funds authorised to be deducted from his pay.[88]

Like the official government departments and the protecting powers, the POW Department faced several challenges in its work for the prisoners. Though parcels were sent regularly, their actual arrival in Turkey could not be guaranteed. By March 1917, for example, Chomley had still not received any acknowledgements of receipt of parcels sent some five months earlier, while parcels of underclothes and boots sent to each man in January 1917 took, in some cases, nearly one year to reach the intended recipients.[89] Such low rates of acknowledgement and delays were frustrating, as it indicated the hard work of the Department staff was not always benefiting the POWs. Certain War Office and CPWC regulations and restrictions also proved trying. In January 1917 the War Office ruled that the POW Department could send only one parcel of boots and underclothing to each prisoner in Turkey, with no provision for further clothing parcels. After complaints from several Australians that the New Zealanders in their camps had received a uniform while they had not, Chomley replied: "We have been forbidden … I cannot understand how it is the New Zealanders have received theirs."[90] By November 1917 there were also restrictions placed on the number of parcels that could be sent to the men.[91] The day-to-day work of the Department was also hampered by the location and condition of its offices. The premises were badly ventilated, poorly lit, and dirty. The limited size of the office restricted the number of staff, which meant those who could work worked long hours. Chomley vented her frustration about the POW Department's offices in her postwar report:

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[84] Chomley, "Final Report," 1-2.
[85] Ibid, 9.
[86] Ibid, 4.
[87] Chomley, "Final Report," 4. Chomley estimated approximately two-thirds of the food contained in their parcels to the prisoners was of Australian origin. Lieutenant William Treloar wrote to Chomley specifically thanking her for a parcel that contained Australian jam, butter and biscuits. W.H. Treloar to Chomley, 15 May 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of William Treloar, AWM1DRL/428 Box 210.
[88] Mrs Mordaunt Reid, "Financial Report," 16.

> We lost many good workers who did not feel inclined to face the discomforts, and possible injury to their health, which might have been caused working under these circumstances. Those who remained often looked shockingly ill, and it was only their interest in their work and their realisation of its vital importance that made them remain at their post.[92]

Moreover, the Department's administrative premises were in a different part of the city from the parcel packing rooms. Wartime transportation difficulties made travelling around London difficult, and there was a sense of disconnect between sections.

Chomley and her team improvised to actively meet these challenges. Plans for the provision of parcels, money and other comforts were continually revised and refined. In an effort to overcome some of the limitations regarding the number of food parcels that could be sent, ten shillings was included in the fortnightly packages to enable the prisoners to purchase extras. When the parcel post was stopped altogether due to the closing of Austrian borders or the Post Office's refusal to accept parcels due to blockages, the Department sent remittances of cash instead. In her Final Report, Chomley even admitted, in at least one instance, to breaking War Office and CPWC regulations. In January 1918, contrary to restrictions, the Department despatched parcels of clothing to all Australian prisoners, which were successfully delivered.[93] Moreover, in December 1917, the Department moved to new, bigger premises at Grosvenor Road. Staff numbers increased and morale improved, but the separation of administration and packing room – and the attendant difficulties of coordinating the two sections – remained.

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[89] Ibid, 6. A brief scan of the men's POW Department case files reinforces Chomely's claim; Alfred Carpenter, for example, acknowledged in October 1917 receipt of the boots that had been sent in January.
[90] Chomley to A. Carpenter, 1 June 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Alfred Carpenter, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 33.
[91] Chomley to E. Gwynne, 10 December 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Ernest Gwynne, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 82; Chomley, "Final Report," 9; Chomley to F.H. Delpratt, 1 November 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Maurice Delpratt, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 52.
[92] Chomley, "Final Report," 12.

The work of the POW Department and the support and succour they provided POWs was gratefully recognised by the prisoners in Turkey. Chomley often received correspondence from the Australians thanking the Department for its efforts, even from those who did not regularly receive parcels. Submariner Benjamin Talbot explained his surprise at the contents of several of the parcels:

> You must excuse me writing these few lines to you but I think it my duty to write and thank you for parcels I have received through the Australian Red Cross. My first parcel I received was on my return from hospital to prisoners camp, just think of my surprise to be able to make a cup of tea, especially with milk and sugar [sic] a thing that had left my life as I thought, bacon and jam at my service. Oh, imagine my surprise when I received the other two, I must thank you again and again.[94]

Alongside other benefits, food parcels offered the prisoners the ability to supplement rations and normalise their diet – and thus better cope with captivity. Indeed, after the war, ex-POW Robert McColl explained to AIF authorities "it was mainly by our Red Cross parcels that we existed."[95]

Alongside the POW Department, other aid agencies also worked to offer succour and support to the prisoners in Turkey. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), based in Geneva, Switzerland, established a POW agency almost immediately after the outbreak of war.[96] As a neutral organisation, the ICRC's mandate was to monitor the belligerents' treatment of prisoners in accordance with the Hague Conventions and facilitate the transfer of information about all prisoners of war between enemy states. The Committee also operated as a channel through which correspondence and money could be sent to those in enemy hands – indeed, the POW Department forwarded cash remittances to Australians in Turkey through the ICRC.[97] As mentioned earlier in the chapter, neutral inspections of prison camps were conducted by ICRC representatives, as were negotiations regarding early repatriation of POWs and agreements for the internment of the sick, wounded, and maimed in neutral territories.

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[93] Ibid, 6.

[94] B. Talbot to Chomley, 10 February 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Benjamin Talbot, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 203.

[95] Repatriation Statement of Robert McColl, AWM30 B2.2.

[96] *The International Prisoners-of-War Agency: The ICRC in World War One* (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, 2007), 3.

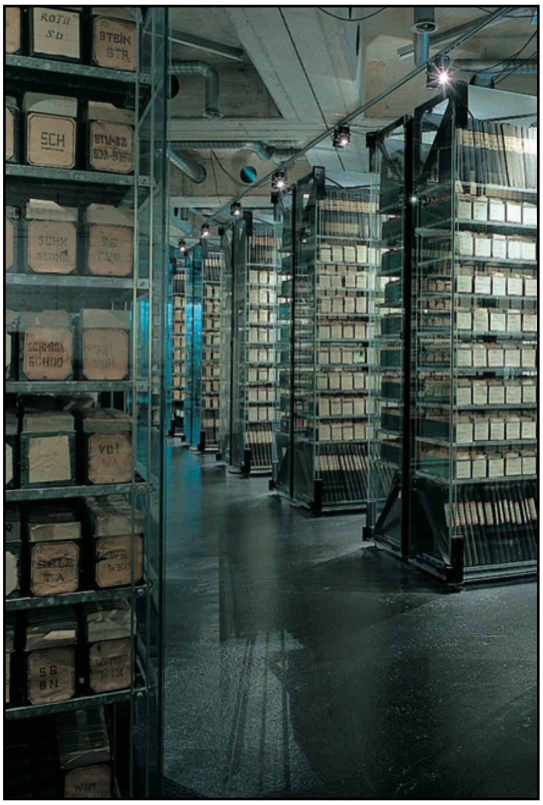

Figure 3.3: Archives of the ICRC's POW Agency on display in the ICRC Museum, Geneva.
Source: The International Prisoners-of-War Agency, *The ICRC in World War One*, 15.

The Turkish counterpart to the Red Cross, the Ottoman Red Crescent, also played a role in the dissemination of aid and welfare to the POWs. As discussed earlier, the Americans handed over supplies and provisions for the prisoners purchased with British funds to the Red Crescent for distribution among the camps. Despite allegations of inefficiency by the frustrated Americans, and accusations of corruption and deceit by at least one prisoner, several Australians commented favourably on the work of Red Crescent officials.[98] Leslie Luscombe remembered a positive experience with Red Crescent representatives at Angora in December 1915. Luscombe believed the official was anxious to impress the British prisoners, and he permitted them to take supplies of linen, cutlery and other household items from an Armenian warehouse in the town to furnish their accommodation.[99] Other prisoners also stated how a Red Crescent official responded to grievances against the Afyon Commandant by having him removed from his post and trialled for misconduct.[100] A comprehensive account of Red Crescent activity is documented in the 1918 report of Hussein Rifki Bey, an official of the organisation who spent nearly four months touring prison camps throughout Turkey. Rifki Bey distributed supplies on behalf of the Dutch and also compiled a summary of the different camps and how he had acted to improve conditions. He had, for example, impressed upon the authorities in Constantinople the need to make the censorship of reading material for prisoners more efficient, deemed that prisoners were to be given wood and charcoal for heating and cooking free of charge, and improved the prisoners' access to medicines and medical facilities at Afyon and camps along the Railway line.[101] Rifki Bey was also instrumental in highlighting the abuse of British funds by Spanish Consul staff at Aleppo. The Dutch delegate who received Rifki Bey's report stated: "it is quite evident that Rifki Bey has done a fine piece of work and has everywhere acted in the interest of and done his best for the prisoners."[102]

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[97] Mrs Mordaunt Reid, "Financial Report," 15.
[98] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable*, 84.

In the latter stages of the war another influential care committee dedicated to the prisoners of the Turks was established in Britain. The Prisoners in Turkey Committee (PITC) was formed at the insistence of Captain (later Sir) Edward Keeling, a British officer captured at Kut who later escaped from Turkey. Keeling believed that Britisher prisoners of war suffered from the inefficiency of a government obsessed with victory rather than their maintenance. Indeed, reflecting in his 1924 memoir on the restrictive regulations regarding POW aid, Keeling railed that the prisoners "fell between two stools during the war," and stated that the War Office "cared as little for them as butchers for meatless days."[103] The PITC included representatives of existing care committees, relatives of officer prisoners and other interested, and influential, people. They pushed for better awareness of the captives' conditions and the lessening of War Office restrictions in light of their specific situation. The PITC also prioritised the communication of rules and regulations regarding POW relief work to the families of those in Turkish captivity.[104] Through its efforts, the men in Turkey were sent more clothing and food – the number of food parcels increased by double – and the Austrian Government was convinced to reopen its borders to permit their passage.[105] The Prisoners in Turkey Committee was becoming a formidable force when the Armistice with Turkey was signed and the war ended, bringing about the cessation of the organisation.

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[99] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl*, 59-60.
[100] White, *Guests of the Unspeakable,* 84 & 174-5.
[101] Dutch Consul to Willebois, "Report from Rifki Bey," 12 April 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/453.
[102] Ibid.
[103] E.H. Keeling, *Adventures in Turkey and Russia* (London: John Murray, 1924), 235 & 177.

Conclusion

The provision of aid and support to the prisoners in Turkey was recognised by British authorities early in the war as crucial to ensure their continued welfare in captivity. Concerns about the extent to which the Turks would – or could – provide for prisoners of war, particularly in light of the 'equal footing' principle embedded in the Hague Conventions, meant relief efforts focussed on improving conditions and treatment to that of expected British standards. Such efforts rested upon the work of different branches within the POWs' external support system. Despite facing a multitude of challenges, government departments, the protecting powers and aid organisations improvised and responded within their mandates to mitigate the discomfort and distress of the prisoners – further emphasising both the widespread impact of captivity and the different ways in which the experience was managed. Systems to provide financial relief were established, improved conditions and reciprocal agreements with Turkish authorities were negotiated and implemented, and food and other comforts were distributed through a complex machinery of specific aid associations. Matters of diplomacy and convenience meant the Australians in Turkey also benefited from this support network. Many prisoners believed that their survival, let alone their ability to physically and psychologically cope with their imprisonment, rested upon the work of the different branches of the support network; Reginald Lushington wrote after the war that it was the British government and Red Cross societies that brought the rank and file out of Turkey.[106] Lushington's claim carries certain currency when the survival rates of different national groups of POWs are compared – as Heather Jones argues, the abandonment of Italian and Romanian prisoners by their respective governments to discourage troops from surrendering was central to their high mortality rates.[107] How captivity in Turkey was understood in Australia, and how those on the Australian homefront responded to and engaged with the prisoners and their plight, is the subject of the next chapter.

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[104] Prisoners in Turkey Committee, *Regulations and Notes for the Help of Relatives and Friends* (London: August 1918).

[105] Chomley, "Final Report," 9.

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[106] R.F. Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks 1915-1918* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, 1923), 64.

[107] Jones, "A Missing Paradigm?" 36. Exact figures are hard to discern, but at the end of the war it was noted that nearly 500,000 Italians were taken prisoner by Austro-Hungarian forces, many during the battle of Caporetto in October 1917. The contempt with which the Italian authorities held these prisoners is apparent in the volume about Italy in the First World War written by the American Ambassador to Italy, Thomas Nelson Page. The terrible conditions in which Italian soldiers fought against the Austro-Hungarian forces were not well known on the Italian homefront, and the men taken POW were described as "renegades" who had succumbed to "Defeatism." See T.N Page, *Italy and the World War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/Italy/PageTC.htm.

CHAPTER FOUR

Awareness and Engagement: The Prisoners in the Public Sphere

This and the subsequent chapter mark a shift in the focus of the thesis to the Australian homefront. Chapter Five examines the private sphere and assesses how the families of the prisoners in Turkey negotiated the emotional strain caused by the capture and imprisonment of their loved ones. This chapter is concerned with the public sphere, specifically the impressions of both the Turks and the POWs in Turkey that circulated in the Australian press, and how and why certain images of the prisoners and their captors were constructed. The chapter argues that portrayals of the Turks changed from unspeakable to honourable in order to validate the Allied withdrawal from the Gallipoli peninsula, while depictions of captivity in Turkey changed from that of a tolerable existence to an experience of brutality, neglect, and misery as different parties framed captivity as a narrative of suffering for the purposes of propaganda. How Australians responded to these changing representations of captivity in Turkey, particularly through critique of the government and engagement with patriotic or philanthropic work for the prisoners' benefit, is also explored. Understanding Australian perceptions of the Turks and the POWs offers insight into the wider impact of imprisonment and demonstrates that, like the men in the camps and the many politicians, diplomats, and aid workers involved with the provision of welfare and support to the POWs, Australians at home also absorbed and adjusted to this new wartime reality, and played an active role in managing the broader experience and impact of captivity.

Australian Perceptions of the Turks

As discussed in previous chapters, Australians had little contact with Turkish people prior to the First World War. In the 1911 national census, the last taken before the outbreak of war, 300 Australians identified as Turkish out of a total population of nearly 4.5 million.[1] Australian perceptions of the Turks were largely based on popular nineteenth-century British Orientalist ideas and their own interactions with those of an Oriental background in Australia – the Afghan cameleers.

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[1] James Jupp, ed., *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 709; *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia: Volume I – Statistician's Report*, compiled and issued by G.H. Knibbs (Melbourne, 1917), 85.

Jeremy Salt argues that Western – particularly British – impressions of the Turks in the 1800s varied depending on circumstances.[2] During the first half of the nineteenth century, British ideas of the Turks as a bulwark against Russian expansionism led to their alliance during the Crimean War and, as Albrecht Rothacher writes, there was "a wave of Turkophilia in the West."[3] However, multiple imperial conquests in what Salt calls "an age self-consciously and often aggressively Christian" made the position of Christians within the Ottoman Empire a key British concern.[4] Drawing on Christian prejudices against Islam dating back to the time of the Crusades, perceptions of the Turks shifted to highlight the brutality and oppression supposedly innate in their Islamic beliefs:

> Islam was held up as a sensual and depraved religion, a religion which destroyed all progress and happiness, a religion which ruled by the sword and which regarded the killing and plunder of infidels as being as much an act of worship as prayer.[5]

The portrayal of Islam as the direct opposite of Christianity bolstered ideas of European superiority and legitimised European incursions into – and designs on – Islamic territory in the Middle East.[6]

Reports of the massacre of Ottoman Bulgarians in the 1870s cemented ideas of Islamic inferiority and Turkish brutality and generated a wave of anti-Turkish sentiment throughout Britain. Perhaps the most strident proponent of these ideas was ex-Prime Minister William Gladstone. In his 1876 treatise on the massacre, titled *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, Gladstone denounced the Turks as

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[2] Jeremy Salt, "Johnny Turk Before Gallipoli," in *Before and After Gallipoli: A Collection of Australian and Turkish Writings,* ed. Rahmi Akcelik (Melbourne: Australian-Turkish Friendship Society Publications, 1986), 17.

[3] Albrecht Rothacher, "Review of *Infidels: A History of the Conflict Between Christendom and Islam*, by Andrew Wheatcroft," *Asia Europe Journal* 6 no. 1 (April 2008): 173.

[4] Jeremy Salt, "Britain, the Armenian Question, and the Cause of Ottoman Reform: 1894-96," *Middle Eastern Studies* 26 no. 3 (1990): 308.

[5] Salt, "Johnny Turk Before Gallipoli," 22-23.

[6] Edward Said provided the first comprehensive analysis of European discourses regarding 'the Orient' as the negative inversion of the West in his seminal book *Orientalism* in 1978. Said argued that the representation – or rather romaticised misrepresentation – of the Orient as a place of mystery and despotism reinforced ideas about the backwardness of Oriental societies and thus, by contrast, the superiority of the Western European world. See Edward Said, *Orientalism,* 5th ed (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 7-8 & 31-73. Asli Cirakman teases out this theory, particularly Said's belief in a uniform Western attitude to the Orient, and argues that Orientalist ideas changed, competed and altered among European powers during the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries. Asli Cirakman, *From the Terror of the World to the Sick Man of Europe: European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 8-13 & 171-2.

"the one great anti-human specimen of humanity."[7] Lamenting "the black day when they first entered Europe," Gladstone argued that the Muslim Turks' innate characteristics of depravity, backwardness, lustfulness and barbarism meant that "wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them and, as far as their dominion reached, civilisation disappeared from view."[8] In the wake of Gladstone's publication, public enmity towards the Turks was so great that British politicians and diplomats initially refused to provide support or relief for their second war against Russia in 1877.[9] Reports of attacks directed against another minority Christian group in the Empire – the Armenians – in the 1890s further emphasised images of the Turks as barbarous and cruel, despite Turkish protests that Muslims had also been victims of attacks from the Armenians.[10]

Ideas of European racial, cultural and religious superiority over the Turks were also used to explain the political, economic, and social decline of the Ottoman Empire into 'the Sick Man of Europe.' The ways in which this decline was explained indicate that there were contradictory and contested discourses of the Turks in circulation in the West during this time. The British – and others – blamed the systemic deterioration of the Empire not on the Turks' violent and warlike nature, but rather on other qualities perceived as innately Islamic, including avarice, lustfulness, and despotism. It was widely believed the Empire was riven by corruption and 'intrigue', while the Turks were seen as stagnant, backward, covetous, and capable of gross sexual indecencies. Indeed, Salt quotes a contemporary British MP who stated that when the Turks were not fighting they reverted to a state of "sloth, sensuality, and decay."[11]

These Orientalist ideas were reflected in Australia where, despite having limited contact with Turkish people, white Australians did have some experience with others of Islamic origin. Peta Stephenson argues that Australia has a long history of contact with the Muslim world, from Indonesian fisherman to Malayan pearlers and Afghan cameleers. The cameleers were the first Muslims to settle permanently in Australia.[12] First transported to Australia to augment Burke and Wills' expedition, camels were subsequently used to transport goods across the arid inland regions of the country and to open up new routes into isolated areas. Stephenson estimates that between two and four thousand Afghan cameleers settled in Australia from the mid-1800s to the 1930s, when expanded rail networks meant their work was no longer necessary.[13] Despite their important role in trade and exploration, white Australians believed the cameleers were "barbaric, immoral, 'pagan' and unclean."[14] Their cultural practices, religious beliefs and different appearance made them the objects of ridicule and derision and, as Christine Stevens writes, "the term Afghan began to embody a notion of contempt, of racial inferiority, of uncleanliness, brutality, strangeness and fear."[15]

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[7] W.E. Gladstone, *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (New York: Lovell, Adam, Wesson & Company, 1876), 10.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Salt, "Johnny Turk Before Gallipoli," 20. This attitude changed as the Russians advanced on Constantinople.

[10] The 1894 massacre of Armenians at Sasun was allegedly sparked by the actions of Armenian revolutionaries. A group of Armenian men launched an uprising that caused destruction and devastation among local Muslim villages. In retaliation Ottoman troops entered Sasun and massacred the Armenian population, showing no distinction between the revolutionaries and the innocent. Salt, "Britain, the Armenian Question, and the Cause of Ottoman Reform," 310.

[11] MP H. Richard, qtd in Salt, "Johnny Turk Before Gallipoli," 23.

Such vilification meant the Afghans formed tight-knit, isolated communities at 'Ghantowns' close to railheads and shipping ports in Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory. White Australians had minimal contact with the Ghantowns and, drawing on popular British captivity narrative tropes such as 'the Black Hole of Calcutta', adults warned white children to avoid the cameleers for fear of being attacked or kidnapped.[16] Mirroring the discourse of another Oriental 'other' – the Chinese on the goldfields – the cameleers were widely reported to have monopolised trade routes at the expense of white men, while

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[12] Peta Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming: Indigenous Muslims in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), 35. 'Afghan' was used as a collective term for the cameleers, regardless of whether they came from Afghanistan, Baluchistan, or what is now Pakistan. Their common religion is what bound them together as one group in the eyes of white Australians.

[13] Ibid, 35.

[14] Christine Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1989), 239.

[15] Ibid, 150.

[16] Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns,* 260. Captivity narratives as a genre date back to the seventeenth century but, as several scholars argue, they became increasingly popular during the age of imperialism in Britain. As white, Christian, Britishers travelled throughout the world through the process of exploration and colonialism, they were brought into close contact with racial 'others'. Their vulnerability regularly led to their captivity – indeed, historian Linda Colley argues that "captives and captivities were the underbelly of the British empire." Common 'captors' included Barbary pirates, Indians, Afghan tribesmen and, as the Australian and American colonies developed, Aborigines and North American Indians. For scholarly analyses of the British captivity narrative genre, see Joe Snader, *Caught Between Worlds: British Captivity Narratives in Fact and Fiction* (Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2000) and Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850* (London: Pimlico, 2003). For examples of captivity narratives in the Australian context, see Kate Darian-Smith, "The White Woman of Gippsland: A Frontier Myth," in *Captive Lives: Australian Captivity Narratives*, eds. Kate Darian-Smith, Roslyn Poignant, and Kay Schaffer (London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1993), 14-34. For an interesting analysis of the influence of captivity narratives on the memoirs of Australian ex-POWs of the Japanese in the aftermath of World War II, see Craig Barrett, "Remembering Captivity: Australian Prisoners of War of the Japanese" (PhD Thesis, University of Queensland, 2011), 141-73.

Ghantowns were professed to be hotbeds of syphilis and other diseases brought about by the Afghan's use of narcotics, their supposedly limited understanding of hygiene, and their loose morals. According to Stevens, the Afghans were "the untouchables in a white Australia."[17]

Thus, at the time of the outbreak of war in August 1914, Australian impressions of the Turks were far from favourable. These impressions manifested in parallel reactions – outward condemnation and contemptuous dismissal – to the Turks' entry to the war. Dismissal was evident in the ways in which the Turkish declaration of war was reported in the Australian press. The Ottoman Empire's alliance with the Central Powers was seen as having been brought about by German trickery, exploitation and manipulation of Turkish naivety. This was evident in November 1914, when a Queensland newspaper labelled Turkey "Germany's Catspaw," and the *Kalgoorlie Miner* explained to its readers that it was "Germany's evil influence" that had driven Turkey to war.[18] While the entrance of the Turks into the war on the side of the Central Powers was lamented, Australians were assured that Turkey did not pose a serious threat. The parlous state of the Turkish forces was well known; nearly six years on a constant war footing, including devastating casualties in the Balkans, had left the Army "tired out and worn down."[19] The Turks were therefore easily written off – the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated that the Turkish declaration of war would "hardly affect the general situation … the creation of a new sphere of hostilities will not involve the detaching of a single army corps from either of the old fronts."[20]

However, as it became clear that the Australians would face the Turks in battle, indifference was replaced by propaganda that drew on prewar British discourses to condemn the Turks' supposedly inherent barbarism. This shift could be attributed to the desire to portray the Turks as an enemy deserving attack by Australian troops. Australians were disappointed by the decision to divert the first convoys of the AIF to Egypt rather than send them straight into the European theatre. The Australian troops were eager to join the fight against the Germans on the Western Front and, though it was not an entirely unexpected decision, their halt in Egypt left many feeling disillusioned.[21] Inflating the warlike nature of the Turks thus legitimised the Australians' presence in Egypt and their potential use against what was believed to be a second-rate enemy.

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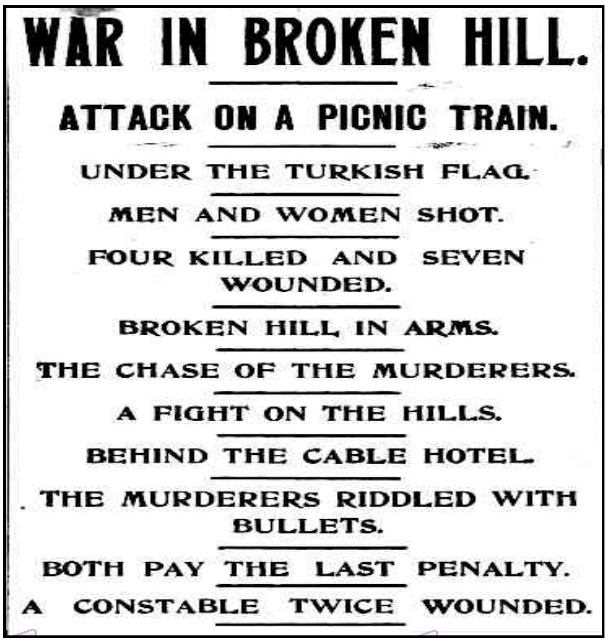
[17] Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns,* 150. Peta Stephenson demonstrates that interactions between Afghans and Aboriginal Australians, while still fraught, were more common, with many instances of intermarriage between the two goups. See Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming*, 42-7.

[18] "Turkey: Germany's Catspaw," *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 9 November 1914; "Turkey Joins the War," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 2 November 1914.

[19] Edward J. Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 10 & 25. Erickson states some 250,000 Ottoman troops became casualties during the Balkan Wars.

[20] "War with Turkey," *Sydney Morning Herald,* 7 November 1914.

The earliest anti-Turkish propaganda was generated by the so-called 'Battle of Broken Hill', and reflects the propensity of white Australians of the time to lump together different racial groups into one Oriental 'other'. The 'battle' occurred on New Year's Day 1915, when two Muslim men wearing turbans attacked a train carrying approximately 1,200 town residents. The attackers shot at the train, killing one man instantly and wounding several others, before they were shot dead by local police. While it was proven that the attackers were actually two disaffected Afghan residents of the Broken Hill Ghantown, Mullah Abdullah and Gool Mahommed, it was nevertheless widely reported that the culprits were Turks who attacked the train as an act of loyalty to the Turkish war effort.[22] This idea was aided in part by the fact that the two men had fired on the train while flying a Turkish flag.



WAR IN BROKEN HILL.

ATTACK ON A PICNIC TRAIN.

UNDER THE TURKISH FLAG.

MEN AND WOMEN SHOT.

FOUR KILLED AND SEVEN WOUNDED.

BROKEN HILL IN ARMS.

THE CHASE OF THE MURDERERS.

A FIGHT ON THE HILLS.

BEHIND THE CABLE HOTEL.

THE MURDERERS RIDDLED WITH BULLETS.

BOTH PAY THE LAST PENALTY.

A CONSTABLE TWICE WOUNDED.

Figure 4.1: Headlines from the local newspaper on the day of the attack in Broken Hill.
Source: *Barrier Miner,* 1 January 1915.

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[21] Charles Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918: Volume I – The Story of Anzac From the Outbreak of War to the End of the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign,* 11th ed (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941), 109-110.

[22] Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns,* 161-6. Abdullah had a personal motive for attacking the train – he had twice been accused of illegally butchering meat at the Ghantown and wanted to exact revenge on the Inspector responsible for the charges – while Gool appears to have been something of a religious zealot who, after years of being discriminated against in Australia, had applied to join the Turkish Army.

Anti-Turkish propaganda continued in similar vein as the likelihood of Australian participation in an action against the Turks increased. In mid-April the Melbourne *Argus* and the Adelaide *Register* were among many newspapers publishing a story about a Melbourne family's first-hand experience with the Turks that reinforced themes of Turkish cruelty and depravity. In June 1914, John Meerman and his wife, both naturalised citizens of Russian descent, travelled to Palestine with their three daughters – Ethel, Sarah, and Rebecca – to visit Mrs Meerman's family near Jaffa. Upon their arrival, Meerman was imprisoned by local Turkish soldiers and relieved of all his money. His wife and children were also the victims of alleged Turkish brutality:

> One man stole from my arm a bracelet which had been an engagement day gift and while some held me others began to see if there was anything else worth taking but they did not find the money. Then it was proposed that I should be stripped. The children, who are only eight, four, and one and a half years old, were clinging to my skirts crying, and at this suggestion Ethel, the eldest, began to scream. A Turk caught her nose, mouth and throat in his hand and silenced her so well that I thought she must be dead. She was black in the face. It was too awful.[23]

The image of Mrs Meerman, described by the paper as "a patient little woman with a pleasant manner and gentle ways," and her children being physically assaulted by Turkish soldiers, and the suggestion of sexual violence inherent in the threat of Mrs Meerman being stripped, no doubt angered readers.[24] Only the astute reader may have questioned the timing of the article – the Meermans reached Palestine in June 1914 and were held there for six months, meaning there was a five-month delay in the reporting of their experiences.

As news of the Gallipoli campaign filtered back to the Australian homefront, newspapers published reports focusing on the warlike nature of Turkish troops. On 1 May 1915, when the specifics of the landings were still unknown, the *Register* published a series of articles informing their readers about the men the AIF were to face. One column, titled "Born in Bloodshed," professed to explain the Turkish character. Printed alongside images of Turkish artillery and infantry troops, the article described the average Turkish soldier as "above all things a fighting animal" who had come from a long line of warriors.[25] According to the *Register*, the Turks had "fought some stupendous battles since the sanguinary debut of the Osmans" and as part of this legacy, the average modern-day Turk "asks for nothing better than the glories of the battlefield."[26]

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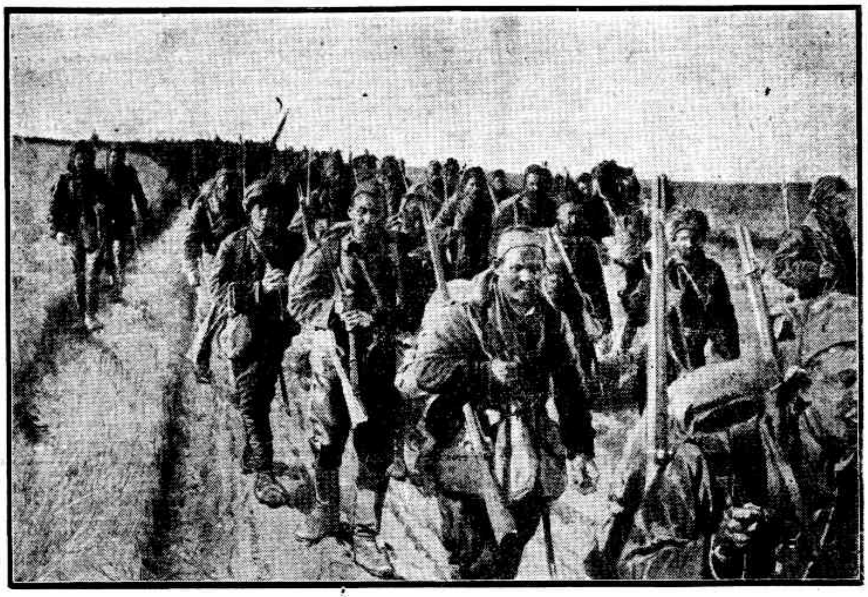
[23] "Saved from the Turks: Melbourne Family's Experiences," *Argus,* 19 April 1915.
[24] Ibid.
[25] "Turks Born in Bloodshed," *Register,* 1 May 1915.



TURKISH INFANTRY ON THE MARCH.

Figure 4.2: Image of Turkish infantry in an Australian newspaper.
Source: *Register,* 1 May 1915.

Images of Turkish troops as violent and brutal were also generated through other media, including cinema.[27] Alfred Rolfe's 1915 film, *The Hero of the Dardanelles,* is one such example. Aimed at bolstering dwindling recruitment numbers, the film was financed by the Department of Defence and was first screened in Melbourne in July 1915. The film highlights various themes, such as the role of women on the homefront and the contempt felt for pacifists, and also depicts the 'average' Turkish soldier.[28] In one key scene, William Brown, the 'hero' of the film, fights and kills a Turkish sniper who was shooting at Red Cross workers. As Antje Gnida and Catherine Simpson argue, by setting up the enemy as a merciless killer of non-combatants – in similar vein to the rumoured German slaughter of Belgian women and babies or, later, their execution of nurse Edith Cavell – Rolfe effectively portrayed the defenders on Gallipoli as villainous and unsportsmanlike.[29]

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[26] Ibid.

[27] For a discussion of the popularity of cinema in the prewar period see Daniel Reynaud, *Celluloid Anzacs: The Great War through Australian Cinema* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2007), 12,

[28] Reynaud, *Celluloid Anzacs*, 20-25.

Whether this propaganda influenced enlistment is impossible to tell, but it did have other ramifications on the Australian homefront. Despite warnings from the Minister for Defence, George Pearce, that the government was monitoring all suspected aliens, public feeling towards those of Central Powers descent was hostile.[30] Gerhard Fischer argues that it was the Germans who bore the brunt of this animosity – perhaps not surprisingly given they formed a highly visible part of the local community in many Australian cities and towns and were the main focus of Allied propaganda – but those of Ottoman origin were also subject to public paranoia.[31] A Department of Defence memorandum from early November 1914 directed the Commandant of the Melbourne military district to "locate agents of Turkish Government and keep all Turkish subjects under surveillance" and, as the *Argus* and other newspapers reported in May 1915, Australians called for the sacking of both German and Turkish workers.[32] Employees of the State Railway Workshops at Newport in Melbourne organised a meeting and drafted a resolution to the Railway Commissioner calling for the immediate dismissal of all workers "of German, Austrian and Turkish parentage under the age of 55 years" employed in the shops.[33] Australians of Turkish origin or descent were made to register as enemy aliens, report to local police stations weekly, and either offer their parole or be interned.[34] Other Ottoman subjects – the Syrian, Armenian, and Greek populations – were exempt from the restrictions set out in the 1914 *Aliens Instruction Act* if proven to be "well known to be opposed to Turkish regime and to be Christian."[35] Ottoman Syrians – a relatively visible group in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales – were only made to report once to their local police station, and then again if their address changed, and all Syrians, Armenians and Greeks who complied with the government's exemption criteria escaped the prospect of internment.[36]

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[29] Antje Gnida and Catherine Simpson, "Anzac's Others: 'Cruel Huns' and 'Noble Turks,'" in *Diasporas of Australian Cinema,* eds. Catherine Simpson, Renata Murawska and Anthony Lambert (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 95.

[30] "The Enemy's Subjects: Position in Australia," *Worker*, 19 November 1914.

[31] Gerhard Fischer, *Enemy Aliens: Internment and the Homefront Experience in Australia* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1989).

[32] Department of Defence to Commandant 3rd Military District, 5 November 1914, Turkish Subjects, NAA MP16/1 1915/3/1508.

[33] "Germans at Newport: Dismissal Asked For," *Argus,* 20 May 1915.

[34] See, for example, the digitised registration file of a Turkish subject who had offered his parole, NAA A401 BASHEER.

[35] Department of Defence Headquarters to Commandant 3rd Military District, 22 January 1915, Turkish Subjects, NAA MP16/1 1916/1537.

However, towards the end of 1915, Australian perceptions of the Turks changed dramatically. In defending their homeland the average Turkish soldier had demonstrated resourcefulness, stoicism and fighting prowess, qualities the Australian troops both admired and identified with. As discussed in Chapter One, the language used by Australian troops to describe their enemy changed; instead of the 'unspeakable' Turks, the Anzacs began referring to their opponent as 'Johnny' Turk, 'Abdul' or 'Jacko'. This changing sentiment of the soldiers was reported at home in newspaper articles presenting the Turk as a stubborn yet ultimately worthy opponent.[37] The opening paragraphs of an article published in the *Argus* on 2 November 1915 encapsulate this new attitude towards the Turkish enemy:

> The Turk is a sport! Every Australian soldier at Anzac will tell you that, and perhaps in homely phrase he will also remark that "Abdul is a white man!" It is neither athletic ability nor colour, however, that the Commonwealth soldier takes into consideration in sizing up the men who are opposed to him, but he has an unbounded admiration for anyone who plays the game, and in this respect the Turks has sprung something of a surprise. The Australians went to Gallipoli expecting that their dead would be mutilated … and that every rule of 'civilised' war would be broken, but they admit that they have been agreeably disappointed.[38]

In proving their 'sportsmanship' and adherence to the rules of 'civilised' warfare, the Turks had earned the admiration and respect of the Australian troops.

This changed attitude was given further currency with the publication of the *Anzac Book*. Originally conceived as a Christmas/New Year special to boost morale on the peninsula, the book evolved into a commemorative account of the Gallipoli experience after the evacuation in late 1915. Charles Bean, as editor, selected and rejected all material for the *Anzac Book,* allowing him to craft a highly stylised image of the Australian troops on Gallipoli based on quintessential Anzac ideals and values drawn from frontier bushman mythology, British military history, and allusions to the classical world.[39] Many of the supposed characteristics of the Australian soldier and the foundations of the Anzac myth are evident in the book; it is replete with tales of stoicism, bravery, larrikinism and irreverence, coupled with drawings, poems and cartoons depicting 'the average' Anzac. The book also pays homage to the Turkish enemy. One poem – titled "Abdul" – demonstrates an awareness of both the Turks' warlike reputation and the changed Australian attitude towards the average Turkish soldier:

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[36] Department of Defence Headquarters to Commandant 3rd Military District, 11 November 1914, NAA MP16/1 1915/3/1508; Department of Defence Headquarters to Commandant 3rd Military District, 22 January 1915, NAA MP16/1 1916/1537.

[37] Vahe G. Kateb presents an interesting analysis of media coverage related to the Turks during the Gallipoli campaign. In keeping with early impressions that the Turks were a brutal and bloodthirsty opponent, articles such as "Mutilation of the Dead," "Turks Cut Buglers Tongue Out," and "Gross Turkish Cruelty" appeared in newspapers including the *Age*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and the *Argus*. However, unlike stories of German atrocities, which were usually printed on the main page of newspapers, similar articles about the Turks were not given widespread coverage, instead printed mainly in 'Letters to the Editor' sections of the paper. Kateb notes that by July, articles sympathetic to the Turks such as "The Turks – Clean Fighters" and "Turks Good Fighters" were becoming more common. See Kateb, "Australian Press Coverage of the Armenian Genocide 1915-1923" (MA Thesis, University of Woolloongong, 2003), 128-30.

[38] "Turks at Close Quarters: Australians' Impressions," *Argus*, 2 November 1915.

> So though your name be black as ink
>   For murder and rapine,
> Carried out in happy concert
>   With your Christians from the Rhine
> We will judge you Mr Abdul
>   By the test by which we can –
> That with all your breath, in life, in death,
>   You've played the gentleman.[40]

"Abdul" was written by Charles Bean and, as David Kent points out, it is one of the only contributions to the book to express such glowing sentiment towards the Turks. Indeed, Kent argues Bean was the initial driving force behind the portrayal of the Turks as a worthy foe – for specific reasons.[41] By emphasising the stoicism and fighting prowess of the Turkish defenders on the peninsula, and stressing the Anzac-Turk relationship as one of mutual respect, Bean not only portrayed the fighting as 'noble' – important when there had been high casualties – but also legitimised the Allied withdrawal. As Gnida and Simpson write: "the portrayal of the noble Turk as respectful of Australian fighting qualities put the Anzacs on a pedestal as courageous and heroic fighters, who had to withdraw in Gallipoli because they had encountered a

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[39] Peter Londey, "A Possession for Ever: Charles Bean, the Ancient Greeks, and Military Commemoration in Australia," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53 no. 3 (2007): 345. According to Londey, Bean felt the 1st AIF had a specific resonance with the Athenians of the 5th Century BC: "The Athenians with their ideology of free-thinking citizens voluntarily putting their bodies at the state's service; who placed the commemoration of the war dead firmly in the public sphere; who even fought campaigns on Gallipoli: these were to Bean worthy forebears for the men of the Australian Imperial Force."

[40] C.E.W.B, "Abdul," in *The Anzac Book*, 3rd edition (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), 73-4.

[41] D.A. Kent, "The Anzac Book and the Anzac Legend: C.E.W. Bean as Editor and Image Maker," *Historical Studies* 21 no. 84 (1985): 386-7.

'worthy opponent.'"[42] In this regard, the Turks became the beneficiaries of attempts to explain Australian and British failures.

Bean's claims of positive Anzac attitudes towards their enemy and ideas of the Turks as an honourable foe quickly became part of the developing mythology of Gallipoli. The image of the Turks presented in the *Anzac Book* spread through the troops, the reinforcements in training camps and, eventually, to those at home. By mid-1916, the publishing house had sold nearly 104,500 copies as thousands of soldiers purchased the book through a direct deduction arrangement and sent it to family and friends in Australia.[43] The book was received with "unanimous enthusiasm and laudatory reviews," and its many messages – including that of the Turks as a noble opponent – became part of the growing understanding of the war for Australians both in battle and at home.[44]

Soon after the release of the *Anzac Book* Australian newspapers published tales of camaraderie between Australian and Turkish troops on Gallipoli, such as a *Brisbane Courier* article published in 1916 detailing a game whereby packages of food were thrown between opposing trenches.[45] Another article in a Melbourne newspaper, under the headline "A White Man Turk," related the story of how a Turkish soldier carried a wounded Anzac caught between the lines back to his own trenches. The Turk was reportedly regaled with "real Anzac cheers – cheers from the heart for a man who is a hero though our enemy."[46] Comparisons between the Turks and the Germans were also common. In one Western Australian newspaper, Australian ideas about the difference between the enemies were made clear:

> The German is a dirty swine who shoots at wounded and helpless men … The Turks will fight like the very devil at close quarters, but the moment the Germans see us coming at them with the bayonet they flop down on their knees and squeal. Johnny Turk will stand up to you with the bayonet and fight like a good old tough and won't give in till you've outed him. If he should prove to be a better or cleverer man than you at bayonet work – well, you're done in, that's all.[47]

Articles such as these highlighted similarities between the Turks and the Anzacs – particularly martial prowess, a 'never-give-up' attitude, and sportsmanlike conduct –

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[42] Gnida and Simpson, "Anzac's 'Others,'" 99.
[43] Kent, "The Anzac Book," 390.
[44] Ibid, 389.
[45] See, for example, "Playful Turks," *Brisbane Courier,* 1 January 1916.
[46] "A White Man Turk," *Camperdown Chronicle*, 4 May 1916.
[47] "The Turk and the Germans: A Comparison," *Northern Times* (WA), 30 December 1916.

and, as the Australians went into action on the Western Front, emphasised that it was the Germans who were the real enemy.

However, as Vahe Kateb explains in his study of Australian media coverge of the Armenian genocide, the Australian soldiers' experiences with the Turks were not the only ones making news. Newspaper articles and editorials covering the deportations and massacres of the Armenian population of the Empire drew on prewar discourses to portray the Turks as merciless killers of an 'unspeakable' nature. Interestingly, such articles were often printed on the same page as reports relating the latest news of Australian troops and of articles professing the humane behaviour of the Turks in battle.[48] While these articles indicate that there was a contesting image of the Turks projected for Australian readers during the war, the overwhelming representation of the Turks on the battlefield and in their relations with Australian troops was nevertheless one of fair play and worthy opposition. The plight of the Armenians was not used to discredit the Turkish enemy – indeed, many reports omitted the word 'Turk' or 'Turkish' from the headline and the body of the article, focussing instead on the Armenian perspective (for example, "Armenian Massacres" or "Armenian Atrocities").[49] Similar whitewashing did not occur in relation to stories of alleged atrocities committed by German troops. As Kateb argues, there was no visible Turcophobic intention in the Australian press after the Gallipoli campaign.[50]

Depictions of Captivity in Turkey

These changing perceptions and portrayals of the Turks were not, however, mirrored by similar changes in the representation of captivity in Turkey. Indeed, the opposite occurred. Rather than transforming from negative to positive, captivity was initially seen as a tolerable, if mundane, existence but, by the end of the war, was popularly perceived to be a miserable and potentially dangerous experience. This shift can be largely explained by government recognition of ways in which the prisoners could be used to bolster the war effort.

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[48] Kateb, "Australian Press Coverage of the Armenian Genocide 1915-1923," 142. Kateb argues that this was for purely pragmatic reasons – both articles related to the same part of the world.

[49] Ibid, 114.

[50] Ibid, 111. Robert Manne argues that the lack of recognition of the Armenian genocide in contemporary Australian collective memory of the war can be attributed to early efforts to portray the Turks as an honourable enemy. See Robert Manne, "A Turkish Tale: Gallipoli and the Armenian Genocide," *The Monthly* (February 2007): 1-21. This point is taken up in a later chapter.

The first mention in Australian newspapers of Allied forces taken prisoner by the Turks came with the report of the sinking of the British submarine *E15* which, in an attempt to break through the Dardanelles, ran aground and became stranded on the morning of 17 April 1915. Several members of the crew, including the Captain, were killed and the remainder were taken POW. The loss of the submarine was lamented and, in a reflection of early ideas about the potential brutality of the Turks, it was paternalistically reported that it was "a matter for congratulations" that Turkish troops had rescued the stricken survivors. Further information about the Gallipoli campaign trickled in slowly. As John Williams writes, there was "a fog over the Dardanelles," and information about the actions of the Allied troops after the landings on 25 April 1915 was limited.[51] In the meantime, a communiqué received from Constantinople reporting the defeat of the Allies and the capture of hundreds of Australian troops was published. The message from the Turks was reprinted under headlines such as "Turks Claim Victory and to have Imprisoned Australians" and sensationally detailed the repulse of the Australian landing parties back to their boats, the supposed defection of French Muslims to the Turkish ranks, and the capture of over 200 prisoners, including a Captain and a Lieutenant.[52] Although the bulk of this message was eventually reported as fake – the last statement was in fact correct, as Captain Ron MacDonald and Lieutenant William Elston were both taken prisoner on the first day of the landings – for readers, the prospect of Australian troops being captured by the then-popularly perceived 'unspeakable' enemy was brought to the fore.

The loss of the *AE2* submarine provided the first confirmed report of Australians taken prisoner by the Turks. On 12 May 1915 several Australian newspapers published a British Press Bureau statement outlining the fate of the submarine and the capture of its crew.[53] The next day, the *Argus* printed a full crew list, with the disclaimer that it was not yet known which ratings were actually on board at the time of capture.[54] As information about the ill-fated August offensive reached home, reports that more Australians had fallen into Turkish hands were published. While it was known that Australians had been taken prisoner, information about their condition or the treatment they received from their captors was limited. Commonwealth *Hansard* reports from 1915 indicate the lack of knowledge the Australian government had regarding its POWs in Turkey at this time. In the House of Representatives in June, July, and August, government ministers reported that they, and other officials, were unsure as to how many Australians were in Turkish hands and, furthermore, could not envisage when such details would be available.[55]

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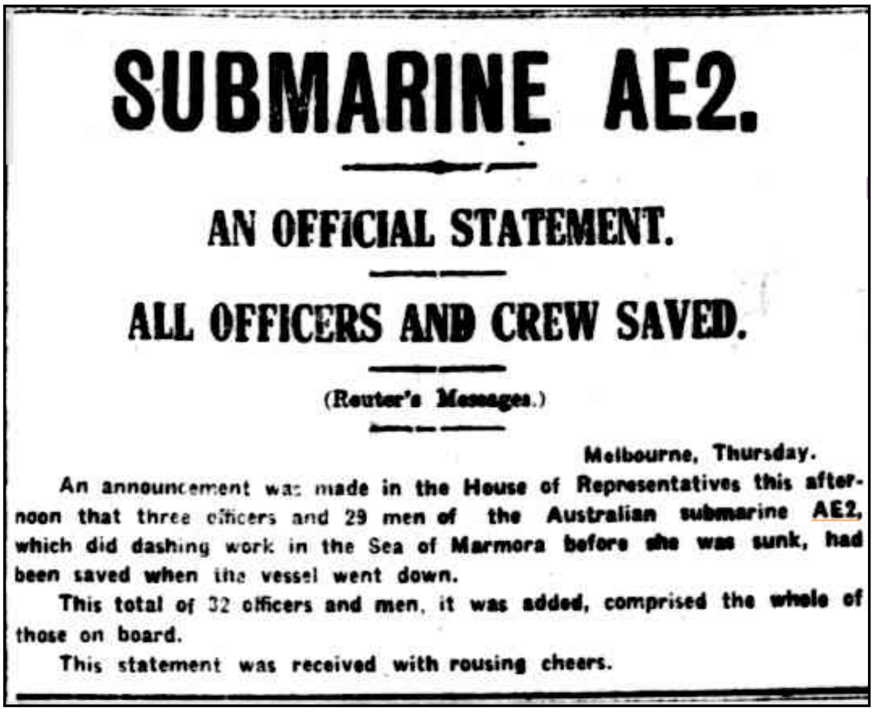
[51] John F. Williams, *Anzacs, the Media, and the Great War* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999), 75.

[52] "Turks Claim Victory," *Daily News* (Perth), 29 April 1915. Similar articles were published in the Melbourne *Argus*, the *Brisbane Courier*, and the Adelaide *Register.*

[53] The publication of this statement was the cause of some consternation at the Naval Office in Melbourne. They believed that the Naval Censor should have deferred to their Department before permitting the publication of this announcement as it was still an unconfirmed report: "The Naval Censor is to be informed that important cases of censorship, as to which doubt exists, should be referred to the Naval Board before publication is permitted." Naval Secretary to Captain-in-Charge Naval Establishments, 15 May 1915, NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520.



SUBMARINE AE2.

AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

ALL OFFICERS AND CREW SAVED.

(Reuter's Messages.)

Melbourne, Thursday.

An announcement was made in the House of Representatives this afternoon that three officers and 29 men of the Australian submarine AE2, which did dashing work in the Sea of Marmora before she was sunk, had been saved when the vessel went down.

This total of 32 officers and men, it was added, comprised the whole of those on board.

This statement was received with rousing cheers.

Figure 4.3: Newspaper article relating to sinking of *AE2* and capture of the crew.
Source: *Barrier Miner,* 10 June 1915.

The absence of information about the prisoners, coupled with what Kerry McCallum and Peter Putnis claim was a reliance on purposefully "glorified reporting" in the first half of the war to meet censorship requirements and ensure homefront morale, meant that early portrayals of capture and internment in Turkey were reassuring.[56] In June 1915 it was reported that the American Ambassador in Constantinople would act as intermediary between the Turks and the British on all matters regarding British and Commonwealth prisoners of war. In the same month, a small article in the *Argus* stated that those in captivity were, according to the Americans, “being treated well” and were “in good health.”[57] Many of these early reports echoed the style and content of the limited media coverage of the most recent British experience of wartime captivity – that of the POWs of the Boers during the South African War of 1899-1902. With some exceptions, Boer military POW camps were portrayed as well equipped and relatively comfortable, and it was popularly perceived that prisoners of the Boers enjoyed a fair degree of liberty, including the ability to purchase beer and newspapers.[58] A feature article in a May 1900 edition of the *Queenslander* stated that prisoners interned in Pretoria – the main Boer military POW camp – were treated well and provided with adequate rations and medical care. One POW even told the article’s author that the prisoners at Pretoria were treated like gentlemen: “there has not been a hard word spoken to us since we were taken prisoner.”[59] Fifteen years later the *Queenslander* published an article based on an extract from a letter written by an Australian officer captured on Gallipoli that portrayed captivity in Turkey in a similar vein:

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[54] "The Dardanelles: Australia's Submarine," *Argus,* 13 May 1915.

[55] CPD *(House)*, "Question: Australian Prisoners in Turkey," 30 June 1915, 4452; CPD *(House),* "Expeditionary Forces: Prisoners of War," 16 July 1915, 5024; CPD *(House),* "Question: Expeditionary Forces," 19 August 1915, 5915.

> I am living real well but it is a darned lazy life. I study most of the day and play bridge or chess at night … the Turkish officials are exceedingly kind and courteous. Most of the time I was at their headquarters and in Constantinople I was treated more like a guest than a prisoner.[60]

Other reports reinforced this idea. Another *Argus* piece, for example, headlined “As Comfortable As Possible,” drew upon a letter from a British captive who explained “we receive very kind and considerate treatment.”[61] With captivity represented in this manner, it is understandable that several of the families of those confirmed as prisoners of the Turks were sent congratulatory notes from other relatives and friends upon hearing of the capture of their menfolk. Their sons, brothers, or husbands were no longer subject to the dangers of the battlefront, and could look forward to ‘a darned lazy life’ for the duration of the war.

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[56] Kerry McCallum and Peter Putnis, “Media Management in Wartime,” *Media History* 14 no.1 (2008): 21. Stringent censorship measures instigated by the government dictated what newspaper editors could and could not publish. Any material deemed offensive to Britain or the Allies, or that had the potential to incite disaffection among readers regarding the war effort, or that contravened any of the regulations in the *1914 War Precautions Act* was not permitted to be published.

[57] “Prisoners in Dardanelles,” *Argus,* 28 June 1915.

[58] See, for example, “British Prisoners at Pretoria,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 December 1899. For reports of bad camps, see “The Boer War: Starving British Prisoners,” *Brisbane Courier*, 11 July 1900 and “The War: Sufferings of British Captives,” *Camperdown Chronicle*, 10 May 1900.

[59] “Prisoners at Pretoria,” *Queenslander*, 5 May 1900. English escapee and future Prime Minister Winston Churchill, then working as a journalist, reinforced this image when he stressed that though the prisoners at Pretoria were despondent and life in the camp was dull, “relatives … need have no fear for their life or health.” See “The British Prisoners at Pretoria,” *Sydney Morning Herald,* 7 February 1900.

[60] “A Prisoner of War: Somewhere in Asia Minor,” *Queenslander*, 2 October 1915.

[61] “Held by the Turks: Letter from An Officer,” *Argus,* 13 September 1915.

Media coverage of the prisoners remained limited throughout 1916. Major papers of the capital cities – the *Brisbane Courier*, *Argus*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Register* – printed ten, fourteen, twelve, and seven articles specifically related to the POWs in Turkey, respectively. These reports focussed on lists of names of prisoners, instructions on how to send letters to the internment camps, or the work performed by the protecting powers and aid agencies to provide POWs with money and provisions. Very little was reported about the actual conditions of captivity or the treatment the prisoners received. While it was noted that information about the captives was limited and communication with the camps was difficult, articles entitled “Anzacs in Turkey Have No Immediate Wants” or “Turks Kind To Prisoners” continued to portray the prisoners as living quite comfortable lives.[62] Published around the same time as Australians went into action on the Western Front, these articles offered an idea of captivity that stood in stark contrast to the growing lists of dead and wounded from France. Moreover, they reflect the changing ideas of the Turks from unspeakable to honourable enemy and indicate that concerns for the POWs – who, at their own admission, were reportedly treated more like guests than prisoners – were not particularly great. Indeed, in early 1917, an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* comparing prison camps in Turkey and Germany argued that soldiers and sailors held by the Turks were better off than their counterparts in German hands.[63]

However, in mid-1917, as enlistment numbers continued to dwindle and support for the war on an increasingly divided Australian homefront faltered, ideas and impressions of internment in Turkey underwent a drastic change. The numbers of Australian POWs in Turkey increased after the Battle of Romani in August 1916 and the Gaza campaign in April 1917, while the numbers of Australians in German hands had similarly risen after Fromelles and First and Second Bullecourt.[64] The desperate government exploited this heightened awareness of Australians in captivity, using the treatment of prisoners of war by the enemy as a strategy to both encourage eligible men to enlist and boost support for the war effort.[65] The publication of an impassioned speech given by Senator Pearce outside Melbourne Town Hall in July 1917 marked a significant shift in rhetoric regarding the POWs of the Turks and their experiences of captivity. Pearce told his audience about "the callous brutality and the inhuman treatment of the unfortunate soldiers who have had the awful fate of falling into the hands of the Turks" and stated that the stories coming from the Turkish camps "are such that would make your blood run cold."[66] In keeping with Bill Gammage's claim that shame replaced patriotic fervour as the major inducement for recruitment from 1917 on, Pearce argued that it was only more eligible men enlisting that could save the prisoners and bring those responsible for the mistreatment of Australian servicemen to justice:

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[62] “Prisoners of War,” *Argus*, 27 July 1916; “Turks Kind to Prisoners,” *Register,* 29 August 1916.

[63] “Prisoners of War,” *Sydney Morning Herald,* 16 January 1917.

> Is it conceivable that there are men in this country whose souls are so dead that they will stand by and take no part in a war in which victory for the Allies means that vengeance shall be executed upon that Ottoman Government for its cruelties perpetrated upon our soldiers?[67]

Pearce drew on long-standing Orientalist discourses to frame the prisoners' experiences of captivity in such a way that would resonate with the Australian public.[68] His comments about "callous brutality" and "inhuman treatment" echoed prewar ideas about Turkish treatment of the Bulgarians and Armenians and white Australian fears of the Islamic cameleers. However, in a notable departure from these ideas that reflects the significance of the developing impression of the Turk as a noble enemy, Pearce emphasised that the Turks themselves were not to blame for the mistreatment of POWs. Instead, he encouraged Australians to blame the Turkish government and, above all, the German military.[69] By emphasising the suffering of Australians in Turkey, Pearce hoped to shame eligible men into joining the fight to beat the real enemy – the Germans.[70]

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[64] Over 3,800 Australians were taken POW by the Germans between May 1916 and the end of the war. The largest groups were taken at Fromelles – approximately 470 men – and First Bullecourt – 1,170.

[65] Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War,* 4th ed (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2010), 25. The Australian government were not the only belligerent nation to use POWs for recruitment purposes. In Britain, posters depicting wounded British POWs being deliberately mistreated and humiliated by their German captors were also in popular circulation. One of the most famous – titled "Red Cross or Iron Cross" – portrayed a visibly wounded British prisoner watching a German nurse pour a glass of water onto the ground in front of him, above the phrase "There is no woman in Britain who would do it. There is no woman in Britain who will forget it." This poster was designed to encourage young woman to volunteer as nurses. See Imperial War Museum, Art.IWM PST 13544.

[66] "Australia's Duty: The Need for Recruits," *Leader*, 7 July 1917.

[67] "Australia's Duty: The Need for Recruits," *Leader*, 7 July 1917; Gammage, *The Broken Years,* 25.

[68] Prime Minister's Department to Governor-General's Office, 16 January 1918, "Prisoners of War in Turkey – Treatment of," NAA A11803 1918/89/5.

From this point, media coverage of the prisoners in Turkey became increasingly alarming. Reports detailing the suspension of the parcel post between Britain and Turkey and the fact that the prisoners were not acknowledging receipt of comforts packages sent by the Red Cross reinforced Pearce's rather grim image of captivity. Public anxieties were compounded by reports from relatives that some men had not been heard of for nearly six months. In November 1917 the *Sydney Morning Herald* printed a letter to the editor written by prominent rural journalist, William M. Sherrie, in which he hinted at the possibility of a high casualty rate among the POWs. Sherrie, who was also the father of a captive Cameleer, stated "our boys who have made the great sacrifice for their country and for humanity might be perishing of starvation or dying from pestilence."[71] By the end of the year, comparisons between conditions in German and Turkish POW camps had swung back in Germany's favour, with newspaper reports stating prisoners in Turkey were "generally worse off than in Germany."[72]

In early 1918 stories of the poor condition of those in Turkish captivity became more prevalent as reports from escaped prisoners and those repatriated on medical grounds gave further credence to ideas of mistreatment of POWs. Ex-prisoners arriving in England spoke to government and aid agency officials of the life of a captive in Turkey being one of bad food, hard work and regular bouts of debilitating sickness. The first two Australians to reach England from Turkey – Patrick O'Connor and John Davern, both medically repatriated via Holland in early 1918 – gave interviews to Colonel Murdoch of the Red Cross, which were then reprinted in Australian newspapers. According to O'Connor and Davern, the prisoners had received "passable treatment at first" but then suffered from worsening conditions. In their interview the two men tapped into pre-Gallipoli discourse about the Turks to state that they “unanimously condemn the unfailing inhuman treatment they received.”[73] Despite the questionable nature of this evidence, O’Connor and Davern’s stories added weight to the idea that captivity in Turkey was not the easy existence portrayed earlier in the war.

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[69] "Australia's Duty: The Need for Recruits," *Leader*, 7 July 1917.

[70] In early 1918, the Australian government looked to the POWs again – a representative of the Prime Minister's department cabled the protecting powers for permission to print an official report into the conditions of the Turkish POW camps, as they "considered it would probably improve recruiting." Prime Minister's Department to Governor-General's office, 16 January 1918, NAA A11803 1918/89/5.

[71] "Australian Prisoners in Turkey," *Sydney Morning Herald,* 10 November 1917.

[72] "Australian War Work in London," *Sydney Morning Herald,* 31 December 1917.

Reports regarding the fate of British troops taken prisoner after the capitulation of Kut further shook the image of a relatively comfortable captivity. The arduous march the captives were forced to make from Kut into Anatolia was reported under headlines that accused the Turks of deliberate mistreatment.[74] Such allegations led to discussion of the true nature of POW casualties; in June 1918 the *Triad* reported on “rumours … that many of the Australians who have died in Turkey from one stated cause and another have really died from exposure and slow starvation.”[75] Articles relating to developing military policies regarding the repatriation of POWs gave further currency to the implication that poor conditions had taken a toll on the captives; the *Brisbane Courier* explained to readers that, at the end of hostilities, repatriated prisoners were to be treated as invalids and would only return to Australia “when their health and other conditions permit.”[76]

While it is impossible to tell how – or even if – enlistment rates were influenced by these changed representations of imprisonment in Turkey, the sensationalised accusations of brutality and mistreatment did foster a change in public engagement with captivity. One of the results of this change was criticism of perceived government inaction to ameliorate the prisoners’ lot, particularly claims that the captives had been abandoned by the government that called upon them to volunteer to fight. In May 1918, William Sherrie again wrote to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Strident in his criticism of the Australian government’s response to the POW situation, Sherrie was also far more direct with his concerns for the prisoners:

> It has been mentioned … Australian prisoners are succumbing to attacks of “fever and dysentery.” In other words, they are perishing of starvation, resulting from bad and insufficient food, aggravated by unhygienic conditions. And while this heartbreaking tragedy is slowly working itself out, while our lads (who gave their all that Australia might remain safe and free from enslavement by a ferocious alien Power) are being

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[73] “Back from Turkey: Australian Prisoners’ Stories of Captivity,” *West Australian,* 25 February 1918. A version of this report also appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the Hobart *Mercury,* the Melbourne *Argus*, the *Brisbane Courier* and the Adelaide *Register* around the same date.

[74] See, for examples, “Sufferings of British Prisoners: Men Captured at Kut,” *Leader,* 16 February 1918, “The Brutal Turk: Fate of Kut Prisoners,” *Register,* 8 May 1918 and “Shocking Turkish Revelations: Intense Sufferings of the Kut Garrison,” *Brisbane Courier*, 23 November 1918.

[75] “Australians in Turkey,” *Triad,* 10 June 1918.

[76] “Prisoners of War: Dealing with Repatriated Men,” *Brisbane Courier,* 26 March 1918.

> slowly done to death under circumstances of unimaginable cruelty and misery, their bodily sufferings [are] no doubt accentuated by the inexpressibly bitter reflection that they have been practically abandoned by their own country.[77]

Drawing on the anxieties of the families of those held captive in Turkey, Sherrie asked Pearce how long relatives of the POWs would have to put up with the "seeming indifference" of the government regarding those who had "the misfortune" to fall into enemy hands.[78] Sherrie had internalised the stigma of surrender – evidenced by his reminder that the prisoners "gave their all" before they were captured – and felt that the sense of shame associated with captivity was the chief factor behind what he termed the "let-someone-else-look-after-our-men doctrine" of the government in relation to POWs.[79]

Some newspapers also professed outrage at the perceived passivity of Pearce and the government. An article in an October edition of the Adelaide *Advertiser* relating the formation of the Prisoners in Turkey Committee in London argued that Australia should form a similar organisation:

> The question is, what is Australia going to do about it? Does she know of these conditions? Does she know how many of her prisoners in Turkey are living or dead? Does she care? She has paid and equipped her men in a way that had made them the envy of their soldier comrades. By their magnificent gallantry they have won for themselves and her the admiration of the world. Are her care of and pride in them to fail when they have the misfortune to fall into captivity? The fate of the British prisoners there is also at last – thanks to the Prisoners in Turkey Committee – rousing widespread anxiety and attention. Is Australia alone to say nothing in defence of her sons who have suffered so much?[80]

Accusations of government inaction were, however, misguided. As discussed in the previous chapter, the diplomatic circumstances of the time meant the Australian government was reliant on Britain and the protecting powers to communicate with the Turks and implement aid to the prisoners. Pearce was therefore not in a position to publicly proclaim – or offer – Australian government assistance to the POWs.

By mid-1917, then, perceptions of capture and captivity at the hands of the Turks had shifted from that of a monotonous, though tolerable, existence to a distressing experience of neglect and ill-treatment. John Williams writes that Australians at home were particularly vulnerable to war propaganda promoted in the press.[81] Unlike in Britain, where the presence of soldiers on home leave or in hospitals allowed for conflicting or comparative perspectives on what was being said on the British homefront about the war, there was little space for a competing voice in Australia. Just as Australians eagerly consumed press reports about the superiority of Anzac troops, they also accepted reports about captivity in Turkey. By tapping into prewar discourses of the Turks as an inherently barbaric and callous race and popular captivity narrative tropes to encourage eligible men to volunteer for active service, ideas of capture as a 'misfortune' and internment as a period of suffering and misery became the dominant public discourse regarding captivity in Turkey.

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[77] "Australian Prisoners in Turkey," *Sydney Morning Herald,* 10 May 1918.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] "Our Prisoners in Turkey: The Need for Action," *Advertiser*, 16 October 1918.

Patriotic Endeavours for the POWs

The increasingly stark impressions of captivity presented in the Australian press also fostered increased public engagement with the POWs through the medium of patriotic work. One of the first instances of efforts on the homefront related to the prisoners in Turkey was the work of Miss Rita Duffy. As a young woman with relatives of her own away at the war, Rita was anxious to contribute to the supply of clothing and other necessities destined for the men at the front. However, her self-professed inability to sew pyjamas or knit socks meant she developed a different method of providing comfort to Australians overseas. Having heard of the capture of several Australians on Gallipoli, Rita took it upon herself to write to the prisoners:

> Down I sat – pen in hand – with a double sheet of foolscap in front of me. I began to write to the Australian Prisoners of War in Turkey … I addressed them as 'my dear unknown brothers' and tried to convey to them, by mentioning 'blue skies' and 'good crops' etc that things were going fairly well in Australia, and that they were not forgotten.[82]

Her letter, dated 6 September 1915, reached the Australians at Angora later that year and was then circulated among other Australian prisoners at Afyon. It was the first letter from Australia delivered to those men captured in the Dardanelles and was received warmly.[83] Rita's work for the prisoners, designed to relieve tedium and ensure the captives did not feel forgotten, demonstrates the impression of captivity as a tolerable existence that was popular during the early stages of the war.

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[81] Williams, *Anzacs, the Media and the Great War,* 264.

[82] Rita Hilton, "Hands Across the Sea," Hilton (nee Duffy) Rita; Luscombe, L.H. (Lieutenant), AWMPR01552

[83] Rita Duffy's correspondence with the Australians in Turkey continued until the Armistice. Rita married in 1917 and several prisoners wrote to send their congratulations. See, for example, L Luscombe to R. Hilton, 24 February 1918, AWMPR01552. See also Dianne Rutherford, "The Write Support," *Wartime* 30 (2005): 40-1.

Other homefront efforts for the prisoners rested on the more organised work of patriotic associations. Melanie Oppenheimer writes extensively about the vast array of patriotic organisations and charitable funds established in Australia from 1914 onwards.[84] These organisations aimed to provide assistance to Australian servicemen, their dependants, and other overseas victims of war, and were based on the same principles as those established during the Boer War: public subscription, fundraising, and private donations. During the war participation in, or donation to, such organisations and their myriad funds were a way for those at home to perform their patriotism and show support for Australian troops and their families. The significance of public desire to contribute to the war effort is reflected in the strong response to the work of these organisations, with approximately £14,000,000 raised during the four years of the conflict.[85]

During the early years of the war there was little government control over patriotic work. As Oppenheimer notes, if an individual or a group possessed the necessary networks and finances to send money or comforts overseas, they were free to do so. One such organisation established early in the war by a group of women in Melbourne identified the prisoners in Turkey as worthy recipients of their work. In April 1916 the Victoria League of Victoria, together with the Lady Mayoress' Patriotic League, organised the shipment of three cases of books to the captives. Like Duffy's letter-writing, the Melbourne ladies' efforts reflect the awareness of Australians on the homefront regarding the prisoners in Turkey at this time; as it was reported that the men were "kindly treated," the Victoria League sent the books to help alleviate their "extremely dull" lives.[86]

The Australian Red Cross was one of the biggest patriotic associations in operation during the war. Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, the wife of Governor-General Ronald Munro Ferguson, established the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society in Melbourne at the outbreak of war, and encouraged the wives of each state's Governor to inaugurate their own state branches. The Red Cross had a strong presence on the Australian homefront. The national headquarters, presided over by Lady Helen, was situated in Government House, Melbourne, and divisions were founded in every Australian state. A multitude of town, suburb and country branches were also established; according to official historian of the Australian homefront, Ernest Scott, there was "no hamlet or township … too small for the formation of a red cross [sic] branch."[87]

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[84] Melanie Oppenheimer, *All Work, No Pay: Australian Civilian Volunteers in War* (Walcha: Ohio Productions, 2004).
[85] Oppenheimer, *All Work, No Pay,* 27.
[86] "Woman's Realm," *Argus*, 8 April 1916.

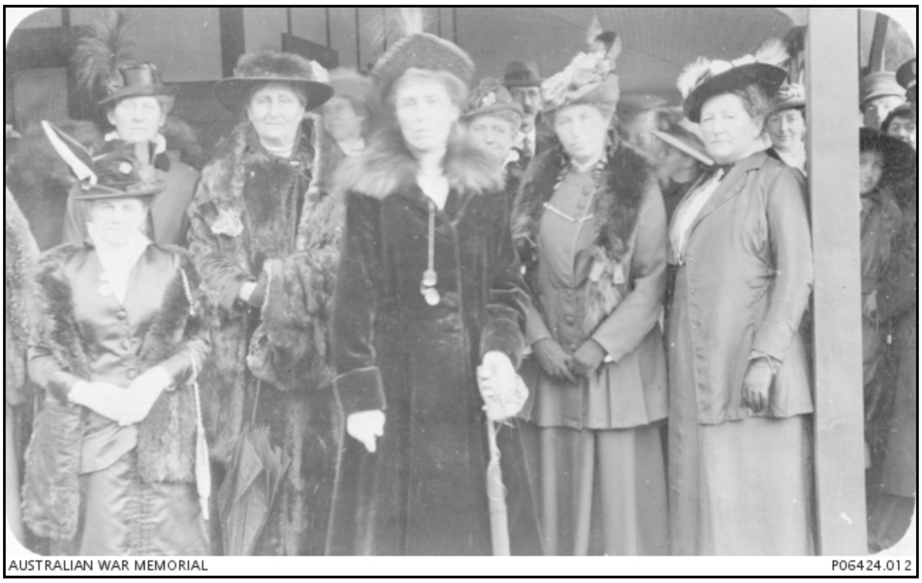

Figure 4.4: Lady Helen Munro Ferguson (centre) and other dignitaries in Melbourne, June 1916. Source: AWMP06424.012.

With its vice-regal patronage and appeal to Australians from across all social classes, the Australian Red Cross was a chief supporter of various war causes. Under its auspices clothing, medical aids and other goods were sent to Australian troops at the front, rehabilitation and convalescent programmes were organised for sick and wounded returned soldiers, women volunteers were trained to work as nurses in both civilian and military hospitals and convalescent homes, food depots and kitchens were established for the benefit of soldiers' dependants, and funds were raised for civilian victims of war overseas.

The Red Cross was also the chief provider of support to Australian prisoners of war. As the provision of help to POWs became, at the British government's insistence, more centralised and regulated, the Australian Red Cross POW Department in London assumed responsibility for all relief work relating to Australian prisoners of war in Germany and Turkey. The Red Cross in Australia bolstered its efforts through the formation of the Red Cross POW Fund (RCPF). Its goal was to provide financial assistance to the POW Department to help with the expense of relief parcels which, as numbers grew, became increasingly costly. The RCPF did not differentiate between prisoners in Germany or Turkey. All monies raised were channelled to the POW Department for Chomley and her team to disburse as they deemed necessary. As such, there is little evidence of RCPF work specifically for the prisoners of the Turks.

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[87] Ernest Scott, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 – Volume XI. Australia During the War,* 7th ed (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1941), 703.

Like other patriotic funds, the RCPF relied on a combination of private donations and the fundraising efforts of various small groups. Families and friends of the prisoners were some of the most regular contributors to the fund, but many other Australians also gave their time and money to the POWs' cause. An October 1916 edition of the *Argus,* for example, indicates that several Melbourne citizens donated amounts varying from ten shillings to £1 to the fund throughout the month, while the New South Wales state division of the Red Cross received £2,147 in donations to the RCPF during the 1916-17 financial year.[88] As noted above, donations and contributions to the RCPF were for the benefit of all Australian POWs, but occasionally money was donated for a specific prisoner. Once these monies reached London, they were held against the prisoner's name and could be used to supplement basic food parcels, or purchase special items as requested by the captive.[89] As noted above, family members were naturally the chief contributors for particular men, but others also donated on behalf of certain individuals. Sometimes a Red Cross branch associated with a locality from which a prisoner came made a donation in his name; the Coolamon Branch in New South Wales' Riverina region regularly donated £1 for Wagga Wagga local John Kerin of the *AE2,* while Stanley Jordan received a monthly donation from the Soldier's Aid Society in his hometown of Lismore, New South Wales.[90]

The desire to supply aid to Australian POWs increased from mid-1917 onwards as public awareness of captivity grew. The increasingly stark impressions of captivity portrayed in the Australian press were mirrored in the work and rhetoric of the Red Cross as it also used a narrative of suffering to press for donations. Articles and advertisements in newspapers related to the work of the POW Department in London, and the RCPF tapped into impressions of Australian prisoners of war as brave but unfortunate men. Such representation of POWs by patriotic associations was also common in other nations. Brian Feltman argues in his work on German POWs in Britain during the First World War that humanitarian organisations from belligerent nations often portrayed prisoners "in less than flattering terms."[91] While such images were not easy for the captives themselves to accept – as Feltman writes, "prisoners took little comfort in being portrayed as disarmed soldiers begging for the enemy's mercy" – reliance on Red Cross parcels and funds to supplement rations left those in enemy hands with little choice other than to accept charity.[92] Maurice Delpratt understood how POWs were represented in Australia, explaining that "we are humble in knowing what useless nuisances we are."[93] Nevertheless, Delpratt stressed that the prisoners appreciated the work that was performed in their name: "we are proud that we are of those same people who make such sacrifices for us."[94] Indeed, at his camp at Hadjikiri the prisoners performed a special toast to those who helped ameliorate their lot – at meal times the men raised their mugs and said: "we think of those who thought of us."[95]

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[88] "National Funds," *Argus,* 2 October 1916; "Statement of Receipts and Disbursements of the New South Wales Division from 1st July 1916 to 30th June 1917," *Sydney Morning Herald,* 31 August 1917.
[89] Chomley, "Final Report," 15.
[90] See, for example, "Individual Prisoners of War, 9/11/1918," Papers of Chomley, Mary Elizabeth, AWM1DRL/0615, File 12.

Donations to the RCPF came from various sources and in different amounts. In Queensland in late December 1917, the Western Women War Worker's Association, an organisation of women in the isolated western rural districts of the state, paid £5 to the RCPF.[96] Other patriotic funds also donated some of their earnings. The Victorian Education Department's War Relief Fund, which was inaugurated in the same month as war broke out, was one such patriotic endeavour that gave to the prisoners' cause.[97]

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[91] Brian K. Feltman, "Letters from Captivity: The First World War Correspondence of the German Prisoners of War in the United Kingdom," in *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in First World War Studies*, eds. Jennifer Keene and Michael Neiberg (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99. Feltman quotes a speech from an ICRC representative in which POWs were described as "a class of unfortunates of an almost novel type … powerless, incapable of resistance, delivered to the tender mercies of the enemy who has compelled them to lay down their arms and plead for their lives."

[92] Feltman, "Letters from Captivity," 99.

[93] Delpratt to E. White, 18 August 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid. This toast also indicates the fear of the POWs that they would be forgotten, and the gratitude they felt to those who remembered them.

[96] "Women's Department: Queensland Women's War Work," *Queenslander,* 1 December 1917.

[97] Gilbert M. Wallace, *How We Raised the First Hundred Thousand: An Account of Two Years' Work for the Education Department's War Relief Fund Victoria* (Melbourne: Lothian, 1917), 3. This patriotic fund raised a total of approximately £327,000 by mid-1918. For a detailed analysis of the work of the Victorian Education Department Fund see Rosalie Triolo, *Our Schools and the War* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2012).

This fund was based on the efforts and work of teachers, administrators and children from State schools across Victoria. They were particularly generous with the money they raised and goods they produced; by October 1916, the fund had already donated over £1,256 to the Victorian state branch of the Red Cross, £3,250 to the French Red Cross, over £11,000 in materials for Australian troops overseas, £10,000 to Caulfield Repatriation Hospital, £400 to the Anzac Buffet in London, and nearly £20,000 to benefit Belgian, Serbian, Montenegrin and Polish civilian casualties.[98] £1,500 was also given to the RCPF.[99] As Rosalie Triolo explains, the Victorian Education Department was a large organisation with access to a vast number of volunteers and support staff for its war relief work, which helps explain its many donations to various causes.[100]

In several instances, donations were made to the RCPF after special events were dedicated to the prisoners' cause. These ranged from performances of theatrical companies or musical groups to specific fundraising days. Designated days for the benefit of particular war causes were a common means of encouraging donations and raising money for patriotic associations during the war. They also, according to Ernest Scott, allowed the general public the chance to relieve some tension and anxiety.[101] 'Button days', in which small decorative buttons, much like badges, were sold and the proceeds then forwarded to the relevant fund, were a typical approach. The sale of these buttons served two purposes; they helped raise money for war-related causes, and they allowed the purchaser to physically display their patriotism and loyalty to the troops and the war effort in general. In late November 1917 the editor of the Melbourne *Argus* was urged to spread the word about a possible 'button day' specifically aimed at prisoner of war relief:

> As an ardent supporter of the Button Fund collections I should like to urge the organisers … to arrange for a Prisoners' Day and that without delay … Can we not have a button day "for all prisoners and captives"? These touching words from the beautiful Litany might be inscribed in white letters on a grey button.[102]

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[98]. Wallace, *How We Raised the First Hundred Thousand,* 28-9.

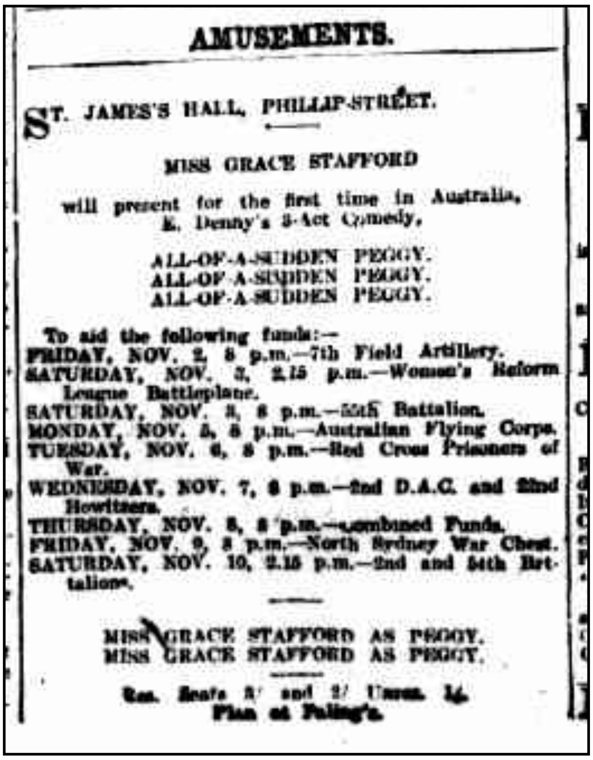
[99] "Schools War Fund," *Horsham Times*, 8 January 1918.

[100] Triolo, *Our Schools and the War,* 69-103.

[101] Oppenheimer, *All Work, No Pay*, 28; Scott, *Australia During the War,* 728. Some examples of these special days include 'Belgian Day', held on 15 May 1915, and in which £100,000 was raised in New South Wales alone for the benefit of Belgian civilian victims of the war, 'Violet Day' on 1 August 1915 to provide accommodation and food for soldiers in the cities, and 'Homes Day' in September 1918 to provide houses for wounded soldiers.

[102] "War Prisoners' Day," *Argus,* 30 November 1917.

The proposed button day was welcomed by one respondent – the mother of a prisoner in Germany – who explained: “as we mothers are not permitted to send parcels of food &c to our dear sons, we must try and help by swelling the funds of our good Australian Prisoners of War Committee.”[103] While it appears that this button day never eventuated in Melbourne, others did occur. In Adelaide in September 1917, for example, a group of patriotic ‘circles’ came together to sell buttons for POW relief at stalls during the annual Adelaide show.[104]



AMUSEMENTS.

ST. JAMES'S HALL, PHILLIP-STREET.

MISS GRACE STAFFORD
will present for the first time in Australia,
E. Denny's 3-Act Comedy,

ALL-OF-A-SUDDEN PEGGY.
ALL-OF-A-SUDDEN PEGGY.
ALL-OF-A-SUDDEN PEGGY.

To aid the following funds:—
FRIDAY, NOV. 2, 8 p.m.—7th Field Artillery.
SATURDAY, NOV. 3, 2.15 p.m.—Women's Reform League Battleplane.
SATURDAY, NOV. 3, 8 p.m.—55th Battalion.
MONDAY, NOV. 5, 8 p.m.—Australian Flying Corps.
TUESDAY, NOV. 6, 8 p.m.—Red Cross Prisoners of War.
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 7, 8 p.m.—2nd D.A.C. and 22nd Howitzers.
THURSDAY, NOV. 8, 8 p.m.—Combined Funds.
FRIDAY, NOV. 9, 8 p.m.—North Sydney War Chest.
SATURDAY, NOV. 10, 2.15 p.m.—2nd and 54th Battalions.

MISS GRACE STAFFORD AS PEGGY.
MISS GRACE STAFFORD AS PEGGY.

Res. Seats 3/ and 2/ Unres. 1/.
Plan at Paling's.

Figure 4.5: Advertisement for comedy show in Sydney in aid of different patriotic funds, including the RCPF.
Source: *Sydney Morning Herald,* 27 October 1917.

As the war dragged on and the state of the German and Turkish homefronts grew more dire, the plight of Australians in enemy hands became of even greater concern to the Red Cross.[105] The Queensland state branch estimated that it sent approximately £2,100 per month to London for the purposes of providing relief to Australians in enemy hands, but that to continue this work it needed “money – always more money.”[106] An article from a July 1918 edition of the *Queenslander* again plucked at the emotions of readers, asking them to “picture the life of these unfortunate men" and "think of the misery should parcels fail to come."[107] Readers of the *Daily News* in Perth were similarly pressed upon to imagine "the pangs of hunger of the unfortunate prisoners of war."[108] Those who did not donate were accused of negligence equal to that of the men's captors: "If you do not do your share in support of the Red Cross movement you place yourself among the culprits who have contributed to the delay of the parcels or, worse still, to the non-materialisation of the parcels."[109] The act of contributing to patriotic funds during the war was positioned in terms of the performance of civic responsibility, placing considerable pressure on those at home to respond. Donations to patriotic funds were often published in local and state newspapers and, as Oppenheimer notes, the fear of being accused of being unpatriotic or indifferent was one of the factors that motivated Australians to "give generously 'til it hurts."[110] As with efforts to encourage recruitment, shame became a major persuasive factor in ensuring continued support for war relief work.

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[103] “War Prisoners Day – A Prisoner’s Mother,” *Argus,* 4 December 1917.
[104] “Red Cross Button Day,” *Register,* 4 September 1917.
[105] “Prisoners of War: Who Will Help Them?” *Queenslander,* 19 October 1918.
[106] Ibid.

Appealing to the Australian public through images of the captives as helpless victims and ideas of patriotism based on a combination of loyalty and fear worked. Individuals and families continued to donate money for the prisoners' cause. Mr W.T. Robertson of Brisbane donated £8/6/8 in the latter half of 1918, while the Sparsholts, also of Brisbane, gave £2/2. In late 1918 Mr Sam Crouch of Auburn, Western Sydney, donated £5 after taking advantage of crowds waiting to welcome returned soldiers at his local railway station to collect on behalf of the RCPF.[111] Donations were also received from groups or associations such as sporting teams or theatrical companies that held special events for the benefit of the fund. The Women's Hockey Association of New South Wales, for example, held a sports meeting at the Sydney University Oval in August 1918 in aid of the prisoners' cause while, in the same month in Tamworth, in regional New South Wales, a local revue company staged a carnival night, with all ticket monies given to the RCPF.[112] In July 1918 another £6,300 was donated by the Victorian Education Department's War Relief Fund after school children across the state participated in a week of ‘self-denial’ specifically to raise funds for food and comforts parcels for Australian POWs.[113]

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[107] "Red Cross Succour for Prisoners: Are You Sharing In It?" *Queenslander,* 27 July 1918

[108] "Red Cross Appeal," *Daily News*, 15 May 1918.

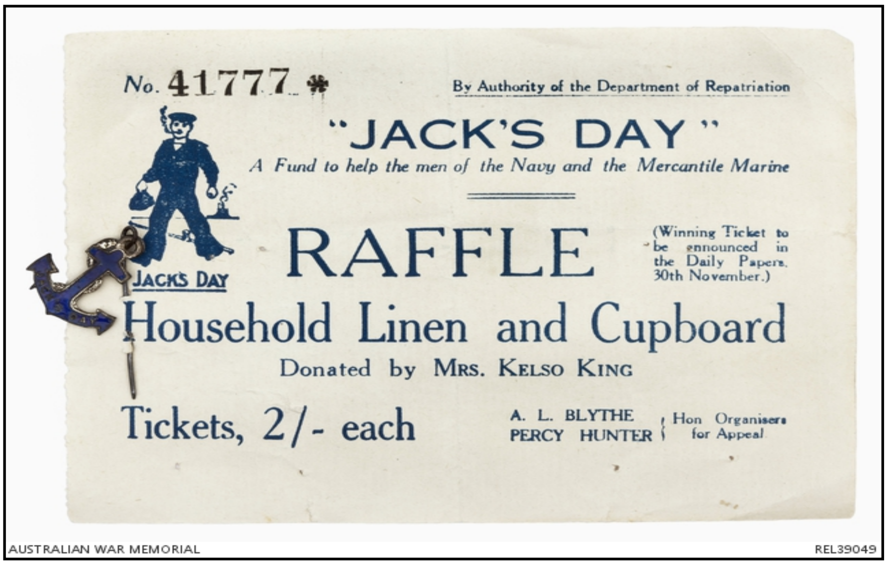
[109] "Red Cross Succour for Prisoners: Are You Sharing In It?" *Queenslander,* 27 July 1918.

[110] Oppenheimer, *All Work, No Pay,* 30.

[111] "Auburn: Well Done," *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate*, 19 October 1918.

[112] "Women's Hockey," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1918; "What-Oh Revue," *Daily Observer* (Tamworth), 15 August 1918.

Special fundraising days continued to be held for the benefit of the RCPF until the end of the war. On 1 November 1918, buttons were sold and a raffle was held in New South Wales and Queensland for ‘Jack’s Day’ in order to raise money for men of the Navy and Mercantile Marine, including naval prisoners of war.[114] Other specific days, *sans* buttons, were also held on behalf of Australian prisoners. July 1918 saw the advent of ‘Prisoners of War Day’ in Hobart. A carnival fair and an auction of goods was held at the Tasmanian capital’s City Hall, followed by a display of homing pigeons, a parade of local school bands, and a visit by ‘Madame Camouflage.’[115]



No. 41777 *

By Authority of the Department of Repatriation

“JACK’S DAY”

A Fund to help the men of the Navy and the Mercantile Marine

RAFFLE

(Winning Ticket to be announced in the Daily Papers. 30th November.)

JACKS DAY

Household Linen and Cupboard

Donated by MRS. KELSO KING

Tickets, 2/- each

A. L. BLYTHE
PERCY HUNTER } Hon Organisers for Appeal

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

REL39049

Figure 4.6: Raffle ticket and badge sold on ‘Jack’s Day’, November 1918.
Source: AWMREL39049.

Red Cross branches across the country also organised their own fundraisers. Town and country branches arranged appeals for donations from their locale, which they would then forward to the RCPF. In June 1918 in Tasmania, the Launceston Red Cross branch bottled and sold preserves at a local market in aid of POW relief, while an annual meeting of the Port Adelaide Red Cross Circle in November 1918 recorded they had raised £365 throughout the year for the fund.[116] State branches also contributed. The Queensland state branch of the Red Cross employed a novel approach to bolster donations by opening a 'Prisoner of War Gift House' in the Colonial Mutual Society rooms in Brisbane in mid-1918. Instead of appealing for direct financial contributions, the Gift House Committee called for the donation of premium items they could then sell, with all proceeds to go towards POW relief. In newspaper articles in both the *Brisbane Courier* and the *Queenslander*, the Committee asked citizens for "plate and silver, lace and linen, vases and jewelry [sic] – things of real value – that may be sold for good figures."[117] This appeal for assistance continued to play on the emotions and sense of duty of those on the homefront by reinforcing impressions of the prisoners as desperate victims: "There are thousands of people in Queensland who would be glad to give some piece of plate or china to help the lonely, heart-weary Australian boys who stand in such need of succour."[118] The Gift House's inventory upon their closure in late November 1918 indicates that the call for goods was obviously well received; they still had in stock "a number of solid silver table appointments, sapphire, pearl and diamond rings, gold bangles, a beautiful cameo brooch and other jewellery."[119]

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[113] “Education Department Fund Totals £327,226,” *Leader*, 27 July 1918; Triolo, *Our Schools and the War,* 40. Rosalie Triolo explains that ‘self-denial’ – purposefully denying oneself pleasurable activities or items – was a popular method employed by school children to raise money for various causes.

[114] “A Day for Jack,” *Sydney Morning Herald,* 20 July 1918. Ten percent of all monies raised on ‘Jack’s Day’ were set aside for the aid of captive naval servicemen, such as the submariners of the *AE2*.

[115] “Prisoners of War Day,” *Mercury,* 13 July 1918.

As news of the Armistice and the release of the prisoners from Germany and Turkey reached Australia, the RCPF closed. The POW Department in London used leftover funds to provide entertainment for ex-prisoners while they awaited repatriation, while the Red Cross at home diverted all remaining monies and goods to new projects established to provide for the influx of servicemen returning from the war. With their internment at an end, the Red Cross believed the prisoners would no longer have need for the funds specifically raised on their behalf. In the aftermath of the war, the upkeep of convalescent homes and hospitals for the maimed, blinded, gassed and shellshocked, and the care of physically and emotionally fragile returned soldiers, became the major focus of charitable organisations and patriotic funds. Different forms of sacrifice and suffering that had genuine currency during the war quickly lost their legitimacy in the postwar period. Just as Joy Damousi argues in relation to 'sacrifical mothers' losing the primacy of their position in the years after 1918, the suffering of POWs, which had been emphasised so publicly during the latter stages of the conflict, was swept aside as Australians at home were confronted by the visible effects of prolonged industrialised warfare on their menfolk.[120] The impact of this effective dismissal of the prisoners and their experiences is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

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[116] "Patriotic Funds," *Examiner*, 22 June 1918; "Port Adelaide Red Cross Circle," *Register,* 6 November 1918.

[117] "Prisoners of War: Who Will Help Them?" *Queenslander,* 19 October 1918. A similar approach was taken by the Doncaster branch of the Australian Women's National League, which held a sale of gifts in aid of Australian POWs in September 1918 that raised over £100. "National Funds," *Argus*, 13 September 1918.

[118] "Prisoners of War," *Queenslander*, Saturday 28 September 1918.

[119] "Prisoners of War Gift House," *Brisbane Courier*, 23 November 1918.

Conclusion

During the First World War, Australian impressions of the Turks shifted from overtly negative to positive as the interactions of Australian and Turkish troops on Gallipoli were reported as one of mutual respect and the Turks were portrayed as a noble enemy. Depictions of captivity did the opposite. Public awareness of captivity in Turkey was limited during the early years of the conflict, with imprisonment popularly perceived to be little more than a bore for the men in the camps. Early press reports drew on the experiences of POWs in Boer captivity to make up for lack of information about the prisoners in Turkey. Homefront efforts to help, which centred mainly on writing letters and shipping books in attempts to relieve the POWs' monotonous existence, reflect this. However, Australian public engagement with the POWs increased during the war as impressions of internment became progressively more stark from mid-1917 onwards. In much the same way as representations of Australian soldiers were constructed from existing discursive fields and tropes, so too were representations of captivity. Drawing on prewar ideas of the Turks as an inherently brutal Oriental 'other' – ideas fostered by popular nineteenth-century British perceptions of the Turks and white Australian views on Afghan cameleers – the government used the prisoners as a means to encourage enlistment. The subsequently alarming images of captivity this propaganda generated, coupled with increased numbers of Australians in German hands after major battles on the Western Front, was exploited by patriotic funds established to ameliorate the prisoners' lot. These associations also presented captivity as a period of intense suffering in order to elicit a specific response from the Australian public – the donation of time, effort and, importantly, money. Such awareness of, and engagement with, the prisoners’ cause indicates that POWs had a significant impact on the Australian homefront during the war, and that the Australian public actively responded to this unprecedented wartime experience to help the prisoners cope with their predicament.

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[120] See Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 26-45.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Community of Understanding: Families and Fictive Kin

On 13 August 1917 Mrs Christina Boyle wrote to the Honorary Secretary of the Red Cross POW Department, Elizabeth Chomley, about her captive son, David. “My poor boy, been 3 years in the King’s service, 2 years as a prisoner on the 8th of this month. Oh those 2 years, dear Miss Chomley!”[1] While captivity was a trying time for the men in the camps it was, as Mrs Boyle hints in her letter, also difficult for their families at home. Michael McKernan, Janette Bomford, and Barbara Hately-Broad have noted in their work on families of prisoners of war during World War II that the effects of having a loved one in a prison camp somewhere in an unknown country were often devastating.[2] This chapter maintains focus on the impact of captivity on the Australian homefront to analyse the challenges faced by the families of the prisoners in Turkey, and how they coped with the emotional strain brought about by the peculiar absence of their loved ones. It centres on the different forms of separation they experienced and argues that to overcome the stresses of these separations, the families formed an unofficial global network of what Jay Winter terms ‘adoptive’ or ‘fictive’ kin upon which they drew to ensure their loved one was not forgotten, and to benefit from a sense of mutual support. Understanding how these POW families felt about the capture and internment of their loved one, and how they responded to the emotional challenges it posed, emphasises that those affected by captivity actively worked to adjust to the realities of imprisonment.

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[1] C. Boyle to E. Chomley, 13 August 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Boyle, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 23.

[2] Michael McKernan, *This War Never Ends: The Pain of Separation and Return* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2001); Janette Bomford, “Fractured Lives: Australian Prisoners of War of the Japanese and Their Families” (PhD Thesis: Deakin University, 2002); Barbara Hately-Broad, *War and Welfare: British Prisoner of War Families, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). Margaret Reeson has also discussed the effects of captivity on families of civilian internees of the Japanese during World War Two. Margaret Reeson, *A Very Long War: The Families Who Waited* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2000).

Initial Concern for 'Missing' Men

The First World War disrupted families throughout the world and was, as Jay Winter writes, truly an event in family history.[3] Parents, siblings, partners, and children going about their daily routines at home were dogged by a sense of apprehension and unease. Michael Roper suggests that families experienced more worry than their loved ones on active service; while life on the battlefront typically involved long stretches of boredom interspersed with shorter periods of intense activity and fear, families at home were in a constant state of anxiety.[4] Worry began with enlistment and heightened as departure led to an unknown, and interminable, period of separation.[5] Families could rely on brief notes from training camps, souvenir-style postcards, or hastily scribbled messages from the front to provide some relief from the continuous strain. Australian literacy rates were high in the lead up to the Great War and the majority of servicemen were in some form of communication with their families. Though letters would take a long time to reach Australia from the various locations of battle, their eventual arrival helped ease some of the anxieties of those at home. The men who became prisoners of the Turks were no exception. Prior to capture Fred Hancock maintained a regular correspondence with his father before he was taken POW in early 1918, outlining his thoughts about Egypt, his transfer from the Light Horse to the Flying Corps, and his experiences of action in the skies over Palestine, while Maurice Delpratt sent his family in Queensland picture postcards of Egypt and field service postcards before being sent to Gallipoli.[6]

However, capture brought correspondence to a halt, and families at home were thrust into a world of waiting for news. Some were spared too long a wait to discover what had happened; where large groups had been captured together and their fate was clear, as was the case of the *AE2* submarine or those caught up in the capitulation of the Kut garrison, the families were notified relatively quickly of their loved ones'

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[3] Jay Winter, "Kinship and Remembrance in the aftermath of the Great War," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century,* eds. Jay Winter and Emmanual Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 42.

[4] Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 87.

[5] Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Damousi claims families in wartime shifted into a sense of 'anticipatory bereavement' after the departure of their loved one, which any form of communication could help alleviate.

[6] See, for example, Papers of Lt F. Hancock 1st ALH and No 1 Sqd. AFC, AWM2DRL/530 and Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

POW status.[7] However, as noted in Chapter One, the majority of men taken prisoner were captured individually or in small groups. Their absence in the aftermath of large battles or smaller missions was not readily verified and they were first listed as 'missing'. This simple word struck terror into the hearts and minds of families at home.[8] News of a 'missing' man's fate could take months or longer, or never be resolved, and relatives were sometimes literally sick with worry. Mrs A. Campbell, the mother of Alan, a young Private posted missing on Gallipoli in August 1915, was seriously ill during the six months she waited to hear what had become of him, "the long anxiety concerning her son having told greatly on her health."[9] Stanley Jordan's mother was similarly anguished. One month after she had heard her son had been listed as missing in June 1915, Alice still had not had any news of him. She wrote to the Commandant of her son's military district desperate for information:

> The suspense is unendurable, he is my only boy, and only 20 years old … so please can you give me any advice what to do. Had I heard he was killed I could have borne it better. Please help me if possible, and earn the heartfelt gratitude of his heartbroken mother.[10]

Siblings also suffered from lack of news. In many cases, the sisters and brothers of the missing carried a double burden; they worried not only about their lost sibling, but also about their anxious parents. Maurice Delpratt's family were crippled with anxiety after discovering he was posted as missing in June 1915. They feared the worst for Maurice, and were also highly concerned about the strain his disappearance would have on their recently widowed father: "I am afraid this will be a terrible load of care for Father to shoulder … Many previously reported missing men have been found but this seems a long time."[11]

The palpable anxiety of Mrs Campbell, the Delpratts, and Stanley Jordan's mother was experienced in hundreds of households across the country as many other families also endured the agony of 'missing' before their loved ones were confirmed dead or as prisoners of the Turks. So terrible was the alternative that several actively hoped for captivity, believing that even though their husbands, sons, brothers, or fathers would be at the mercy of the enemy, they would be alive. The family of missing Light Horseman James Kelly wrote several letters to the AIF Base Records Office in Melbourne to try and ascertain his fate. They had received no news of him since he was posted missing in August 1916, and were anxious to discover if "there is any hope of him being a prisoner of war."[12] James Kelly was eventually confirmed as a prisoner, much to the relief of his family. For most of the families of the missing, though, their hopes would be crushed.

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[7] See the Naval Secretary's *pro forma* letter to relatives of *AE2* submariners regarding the loss of the ship and presumed capture of the crew in Submarine AE2 etc., NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520.

[8] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 36. For an eloquent analysis of the agony of 'missing' for families of Australian servicemen, see Pat Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 90-96.

[9] L.M. Fraser to Base Records Office, 23 January 1916, NAA B2455 CAMPBELL ALAN.

[10] A. Schofield to Commandant Lee, 25 July 1915, NAA B2455 JORDAN STANLEY RUPERT.

[11] E. White to Delpratt family, 22 July 1915, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence. Maurice Delpratt and Stanley Jordan were officially confirmed as prisoners of war later that year, ending months of misery for their families. Campbell was also confirmed as a POW, but his distraught mother was later told that he had succumbed to wounds in a Turkish hospital soon after his capture.

The AIF attempted to alleviate the concerns of some families of missing men who, on the basis of strong evidence such as legitimate eye witness reports or, in some cases, the lack of a body, were assumed to have been captured. Edgar Hobson's family was notified of his probable capture after the battle of Romani in this way. At a Board of Enquiry assembled to determine the cause of his disappearance, several witnesses testified they had seen an unwounded Hobson cut off by a party of advancing Turks and it was decided, based on this evidence, that he had been taken prisoner.[13] Similarly, the widowed mother of Alfred Poole, a pilot in the Australian Flying Corps posted as missing in January 1918, was notified of the presumed capture of her son after a Board of Enquiry heard from eye witnesses who had reportedly seen Poole land in enemy territory and be approached by Turkish cavalry officers.[14]

This reliance on convoluted means of communication and varied sources of evidence to determine whether a man had been taken prisoner meant that, inevitably, mistakes were made. Based on the reports of his comrades, John Halpin's family were officially notified that he had been killed in action after the May 1918 attack at Es Salt.[15] For two months his family believed their beloved son and brother was dead, until a telegram from the Spanish Consul in Damascus confirming that Halpin had been taken prisoner was forwarded to the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Bureau in London, and duly sent on to Halpin's relieved next of kin.[16] In a similar case, the family of Leslie Luscombe, reported killed in action on Gallipoli in August 1915, had the surreal experience of having their son effectively come back from the dead after they received a cablegram from him later that month stating that he was a prisoner of war in Constantinople.[17]

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[12] A. Johnson to Base Records Office, 1 September 1916, NAA B2455 KELLY JH.

[13] "Proceedings of Board of Enquiry, 25 August 1916," NAA B2455 HOBSON E.

[14] "Proceedings of Board of Enquiry, 12 March 1918," NAA B2455 POOLE AA.

[15] John Halpin, "A Captive of the Turks," *Reveille* 8 no. 3 (November 1934): 10.

[16] CPWC to London Bureau, 15 July 1918, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of John Halpin, AWM1DRL/0428.

This also worked in reverse, and missing men were incorrectly listed as prisoners. As the case of William Fender demonstrates, such errors were heartbreaking for the families concerned. Lieutentant Fender was posted as missing after the March 1917 attack on Gaza. Witnesses saw him shot through the shoulder – one fellow Cameleer provided first aid for Fender's wounds – but no one could conclusively state what had happened to him after the main body of troops had retired in the face of the Turkish counterattack. A few days later, however, an enemy pilot dropped a message over Australian lines stating that Fender was wounded and a prisoner. This news was communicated to his family, as was a message from another Australian POW stating that he had been in a Turkish hospital with Fender.[18] Fender's family eagerly wrote to their son but received no reply – many of their letters were returned marked 'unknown'. After a lengthy investigation spanning nearly two years, it transpired the original message confirming Fender's POW status was written by a captive English officer, who had only sent his name after hearing a passing comment from a fellow Australian prisoner. His confused and desperate mother, convinced her son was lying in a "paralysed and helpless condition" somewhere in Turkey, asked the Red Cross to further inquire into his fate.[19] But in September 1919 it was officially confirmed that William Fender had died of his wounds hours after the Gaza attack had concluded, probably while still on the battlefield; for two years his family had been writing to a dead man.[20]

While the news their loved one was *presumed* captured helped to allay the fears of the families to some extent, a true sense of relief came only with official confirmation that he was a prisoner. Such confirmation came through various channels. AIF Base Records or the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Department informed many families of the POW status of their loved ones after making enquiries to their Ottoman counterparts. George Drysdale's mother, who made multiple attempts to discover the fate of her son after he was last seen with two other soldiers at Katia in August 1916, was relieved of her anxieties when the Red Cross informed her of "the welcome news" that a Turkish cable had confirmed her son was a captive.[21] In one instance, it was the enemy that ensured an Australian prisoner's family was notified of their son's capture. German flying ace Oberlieutenant Gerhard Felmy wrote to pilot Claude Vautin's commanding officer to inform him that he had shot down and captured Vautin in Palestine in 1918, and specifically instructed him to forward a photograph of the two men to Vautin's parents as proof that their son was alive and well.[22] This chivalrous action by the German officer hints at the universality of the agony of families of the missing during the war.

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[17] L.H. Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl – Australian* (Brisbane: W.R. Smith & Paterson, 1970), 50.

[18] Extract from Major Lamb to London Bureau, 5 June 1919, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of William Fender, AWM1DRL/0428

[19] L. Fender to Base Records, 24 June 1919, NAA B2455 FENDER WM.

[20] Extract of note from S/Sgt Rook, September 1919. ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of William Fender, AWM1DRL/0428. Fender was later officially confirmed as 'died of wounds 19/4/1917'. He is the officer that is consistently referred to as the one officer who died in Turkish captivity. Because of Fender's official KIA classification, it is correct to state that no Australian officer died in Turkish captivity.

Often confirmation first came from the prisoner himself. The captive men were aware that their disappearance would be causing anxiety for their loved ones, and tried various means to get a message home. In several cases their letters reached their families. Mrs. Elsie Manning, the sister of Roy Clarke of the 6th Light Horse, received a letter from her brother outlining his capture in mid-July 1918, five weeks after his disappearance, and well before she had received any definite news from either the AIF or the Red Cross.[23] Elsie took the letter to the Sydney Red Cross office, which forwarded it to Base Records in Melbourne, which in turn instigated inquiries to determine whether the letter constituted legitimate proof of capture. For Elsie, official confirmation from the AIF was not necessary; the letter in her brother's handwriting was evidence enough and she immediately sent a cable to be forwarded to her brother: "glad safe letter and money following."[24] Frederick Gannon's fate was similarly confirmed after his brother received a postcard written by him while in hospital in Damascus. Gannon was listed as missing after the Battle of Amman in March 1918 and his postcard, which arrived some five months later, was no doubt joyfully received by his anxious family.[25]

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[21] See ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of George Russell Drysdale, AWM1DRL/428.

[22] G. Felmy to Captain Murray-Jones, 14 July 1918, qtd in F.M. Cutlack, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 – Volume VIII. The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theatres of War* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1935), 72-3.

[23] NSW Division ARCS to Base Records Office, 15 July 1918, NAA B2455 CLARKE R.

[24] Red Cross to Clarke, 7 August 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Roy Clarke, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 38.

[25] Sydney ARCS W&M Bureau to London Bureau, 16 August 1918, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of Frederick Arthur Gannon, AWM1DRL/0428.

The prisoners also tried other means to ensure their POW status was made known to those at home. Men captured later in the war took the advice of their veteran captive comrades and wrote directly to the POW Department in London, asking representatives of the Department to inform their families. Believing that a letter to the geographically closer aid agency had more chance of reaching its destination than one sent to Australia, Deidrich Weidenhofer wrote to Chomley requesting she communicate with his parents in South Australia "with the object of letting them know you have heard from me."[26] In a similar vein, James Young wrote to extended family in Britain and asked them to get word to his family in Australia. Young penned a letter from Aleppo to his British grandmother, stating "as it will take a long time for a letter to reach Australia I would like you to try and let mother know that I am well."[27] Others asked comrades to include their names on any letters they sent out, in the hope that the recipient would somehow get in touch with the other man's family. Lowes Skyring was so desperate to ensure his mother found out about his capture after he had been posted missing at Amman in March 1918 that he asked a British POW to get his father to send a cable to Skyring's mother in Queensland. The British soldier, Sergeant W. Bramble, wrote:

> An Australian chap here, a very nice boy and an only son, is greatly worried because letters home take something like 5 or 6 months to reach Australia and he fears greatly for his mother's anxiety … To help him and to save two or three months in the news reaching his parents I promised I would ask Dad to cable to his people … I know Dad would be glad to do a service which would ease any mother's heart.[28]

Skyring hedged his bets; he also wrote to Chomley asking her to tell his mother "that I am doing A1."[29]

However it came, confirmation that their loved one was no longer missing, but was officially a prisoner of war, was initially met with profound relief. Family and friends rejoiced in the news that their loved one was still alive. Private Stanley May, the soldier brother of POW Herbert May, assured Vera Deakin of the Australian Wounded and Missing Bureau that he was "very pleased to hear this news and also my people at home will be pleased to hear this who have been worrying a lot over my Brother of late [sic],” while friends of the Delpratts wrote to the family to let them know they were “so delighted to hear the good news about dear old Maurice.”[30] However, as they were confronted with the reality of having a loved one in Turkish captivity, the initial happiness of those at home diminished.

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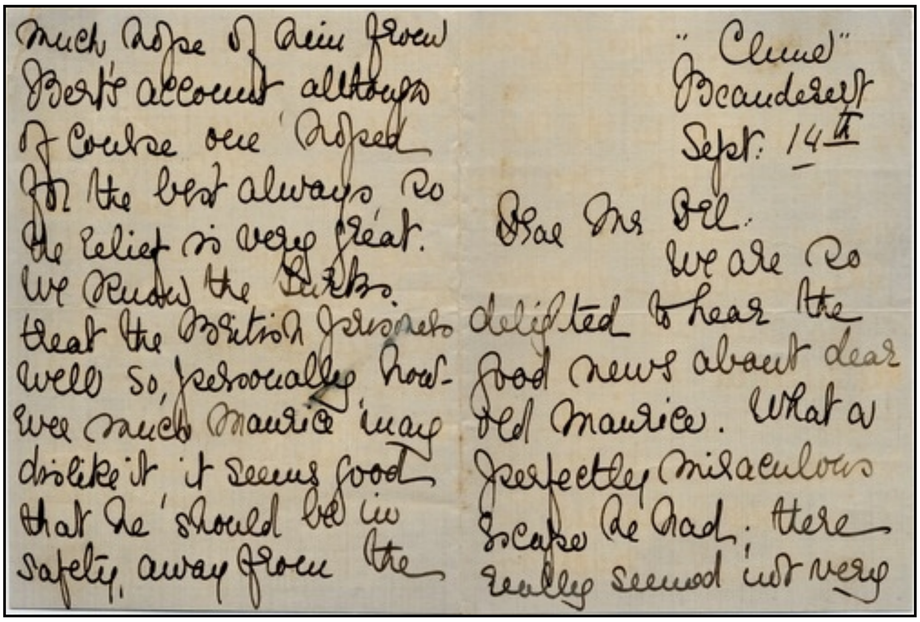
[26] Weidenhofer to Chomley, 25 July 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Diedrich Weidenhofer, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 227.

[27] Young to Grandmother, 13 April 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of James Young, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 235.

[28] Extract of Sgt W. Bramble to Mother, 19 May 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Lowes Skyring, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 190.

[29] Skyring to Chomley, 21 July 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Lowes Skyring, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 190. Skyring's 'A1' health deteriorated immediately after this letter was written; he died of pneumonia on 9 August.



"Clune"
Beaudesert
Sept: 14th

Dear Mr Del.
We are so
delighted to hear the
good news about dear
old Maurice. What a
perfectly miraculous
escape he had; there
really seemed not very

much hope of him from
Bert's account although
of course one hoped
for the best always so
the relief is very great.
We knew the Turks
treat the British prisoners
well so, personally how-
ever much Maurice may
dislike it it seems good
that he should be in
safety, away from the

Figure 5.1: Letter from family friend to the Delpratts congratulating them on the news of Maurice’s capture.
Source: Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

The Strain of Captivity-Caused Separation

Physical, communicative and emotional separations were experienced by thousands of the families of Australian servicemen during the Great War. For the families of prisoners of war, such feelings of separation were intensified by the particular ambiguity of captivity and the restrictions it imposed.[31] As psychologist Edna J. Hunter discovered in her work on American captives in Vietnam, families of POWs are thrust into a world of prolonged and indefinite stress, with family members typically suffering from “feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, powerlessness, anger, guilt and rage."[32] In keeping with the general demographic of the 1st AIF, the majority of those taken prisoner by the Turks were bachelors with either a parent or sibling listed as next-of-kin. Relatives' thoughts and feelings regarding these stresses can be read in correspondence to military authorities, the Red Cross, and to their captive loved ones.[33] Such correspondence indicates, regardless of their relationship with the captive, that family members of the prisoners in Turkey felt the strain of separations exacerbated by captivity and, during the period of imprisonment, expressed many of the feelings Hunter identifies.

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[30] S. May to V. Deakin, 31 July 1917, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of Herbert May, AWM1DRL/0428; B. Persse to J.H. Delpratt, 14 September 1915, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[31] Walter and Angela Busuttil, “Psychological Effects on Families Subjected to Enforced and Prolonged Separations Generated under Life-Threatening Situations,” *Sexual and Relationship Therapy* 16 (2001): 207-228.

The sense of physical separation felt by the families of all Australian servicemen was amplified for the families of the prisoners because of their lack of knowledge regarding the Ottoman Empire. As discussed in previous chapters, Australian awareness of Turkey and Turkish people was limited. In the last national census taken before the war the number of people in Australia who identified as Turkish was approximately 300. Their culture was shrouded in Orientalist ideas of depravity, lustfulness and barbarism, their food was not well known, and their customs were believed uncivilised. In contrast, the Western Front and the sites of battle in the biblical areas of Palestine and the Middle East were well documented and easily recognisable in maps and newspapers, and the German people, though portrayed in wartime propaganda as barbaric Huns, were white, Christian, Europeans. For most of the families of the prisoners in Turkey, the interior of 'Asia Minor' (as it was sometimes called) and the Turkish way of life was a mystery.

Lack of awareness and understanding of the captor nation and the captor proved difficult for the prisoners, but it also affected their families. The ability to determine the location of a captive loved one is an important means by which families maintain a sense of connection with their POW sons, husbands, brothers and fathers. Families of US servicemen captured in Vietnam, for example, went to intense efforts to find out all they could about their man's capture and the location of his prison camp.[34]

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[32] Edna J. Hunter, "Captivity: The Family in Waiting," in *Stress and the Family: Coping with Catastrophe Volume II,* eds. Charles R. Figley and Hamilton I. McCubbin (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1983), 167.

[33] The material in the Red Cross POW Department files is quite rare. Marina Larsson discusses the lack of extant written material from the homefront to the battlefront, and the subsequent need for historians to assess family responses to the experiences of servicemen in the reflections of soldiers' letters home. See Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs: Living With the Scars of War* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009), 44.

[34] Edna J. Hunter "The Prisoner of War and His Family," in *Prolonged Separation: The Prisoner of War and His Family*, ed. Edna J. Hunter (California: Centre for Prisoner of War Studies, 1977), 31.

Half a century earlier, the families of the Australians in Turkey had been similarly desperate to identify where their menfolk actually were. In January 1917 Mrs F.L. Adams wrote to AIF Base Records in Melbourne, desperate to pinpoint the location of her captive son. She had received a postcard from Francis, an Air Mechanic captured at Kut and interned at Bagtchi, but had no clue as to where his camp was. Mrs Adams begged the office staff to "please inform me of the locality of Batche [sic] as I am unable to find it on any maps."[35]

Captivity also exacerbated issues of communication between the men and their families at home. External censorship affected what the families could know of the prisoners' lives in captivity, and vice versa. As part of their policy regarding POWs, Turkish military authorities imposed censorship checks on the letters leaving and entering their prison camps. Several original letters from Australian prisoners bear evidence of the censor's scissors; many have sentences or entire paragraphs, obviously deemed too controversial or specific, chopped out. The prisoners and their correspondents understood censors read their letters. Maurice Delpratt's sister, Elinor (Nell) White, appreciated that their letters were not private. Nell complained of being unable to write freely: "I rattle off pages to Bert [brother on active service] but to you I always feel the fear of the censor upon me!"[36] In return, Maurice wrote of potentially censorable events in a family-friendly code. He wrote of his flogging, for example, as "having just received from a nice person with a sense of justice quite his own something I've seen Mr Dixon [family neighbour] give his boys."[37]

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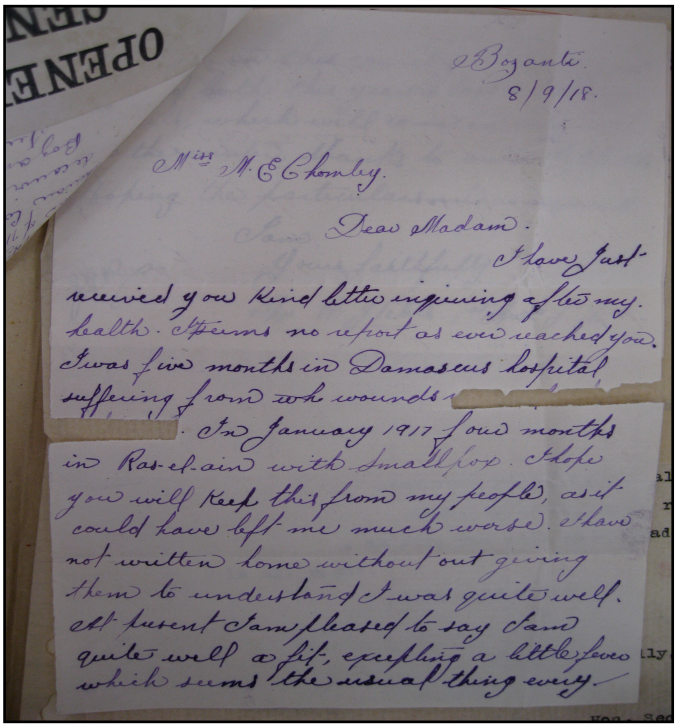
[35] F. Adams to AIF Base Records, 17 January 1917, NAA B2455 ADAMS FL.

[36] E. White to Delpratt, 12 May 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[37] Delpratt to E. White, 4 August 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.



Bozanti.
8/9/18.

Miss M. E. Chomley.

Dear Madam.

I have just received you Kind letter inquiring after my health. It seems no report as ever reached you. I was five months in Damascus hospital suffering from wh wounds

. In January 1917 four months in Ras-el-ain with Smallpox. I hope you will Keep this from my people, as it could have left me much worse. I have not written home without out giving them to understand I was quite well. At present I am pleased to say I am quite well & fit, excepting a little fever which seems the usual thing every-

Figure 5.2: Evidence of the censor’s scissors in a letter from Robert Peters to Elizabeth Chomley. Source: ARC POW Dept. Case File of Robert Peters, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 163.

Chomley and the POW Department were also aware of the censor and were equally as careful about what they included in their letters to the prisoners. Towards the end of the war in particular, Chomley, in efforts to maintain morale, would often finish her letters with a subtle message indicating the progress of the British troops. To Reuben Blechynden she wrote “I expect you are too far away to hear much news of what is going on. You can keep up your spirits though, as everything is as you would wish”; Charles Carr was informed “all sorts of things are happening and we expect that you will all be in very different circumstances soon”; and Roy Clarke was told “everything is going on very well here … I hope you will keep up your spirits until the time comes for you to return home, which I hope it is not far distant now.”[38]

As discussed in Chapter Two, there was also an element of self-imposed censorship at work in the communications between the prisoners and their families. In much the same way that soldiers on the frontlines censored their own descriptions of life in the trenches or in the desert, prisoners self-censored their accounts of captivity, particularly regarding their health and well-being, to protect their families. Many existing letters to relatives contain cheery messages about the man's health and his life in the camps; phrases such as 'I am doing A1' were particularly common. Marina Larsson refers to such self-censorship in communications home as "epistolary silences."[39] As was the case in her work on injured servicemen writing to their families from hospitals and convalescent homes, cheery messages professing health and happiness were also far from the truth for many of the prisoners. While, with few exceptions, the Australian officers were sitting out their captivity in relative comfort – pilot Fred Haig's mother knew of her son's good treatment and that he had been permitted enough liberty to see the sights of Constantinople – the majority of captive enlisted men were subject to much poorer working and living conditions which impacted on their health.[40] After responding to a Red Cross enquiry into the state of his health by writing "malaria fever has taken hold of me and I cannot get rid of it … dysentery I have had four attacks and it has left me in a weak state," Ernest Ingram also wrote to his mother imploring her not to worry as he was "quite well."[41] Similarly, Robert Peters, who contracted smallpox while in Turkey, begged the Red Cross not to inform his family of his potentially fatal infection: "I hope you will keep this from my people, as it could have left me much worse. I have not written home without giving them to understand I was quite well."[42]

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[38] Chomley to R. Blechynden, 21 September 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Reuben Blechynden, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 19; Chomley to C. Carr, 11 October 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Charles Carr, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 33; Chomley to R. Clarke, 21 September 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of John Clarke, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 38.

Michael Roper argues that the desire to protect family members at home – particularly mothers – was seen as a manly act of duty.[43] While it is impossible to tell how many families believed their men's accounts of good health and enjoyment of camp life, it is clear that some families recognised their loved one was putting on a brave face. Nell White wrote to Maurice outlining her appreciation of his writing in such a way: "We are always grateful for your brave efforts to keep us comparatively free from anxiety about you. I think it is a great help for Father that you write as you do. Of course, we know that you are making the best of things for our sakes."[44] But even direct communication left great uncertainty. Nell analysed Maurice's letters for deeper meanings: “You said ‘at work again’ which points to your having been ill.”[45] The performative nature of correspondence between the prisoners and their families masked real feelings and worries. It was only by reading between the lines, or finding cracks in the mask, that those at home could discern the more realistic condition of their captive loved one.

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[39] Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs*, 48.

[40] M. Haig to Chomley, 19 October 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Frederick Haig, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 82.

[41] E. Ingram to Chomley, 5 October 1918 and E. Ingram to Mother, undated, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Ernest Ingram, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 100.

[42] R. Peters to Chomley, 8 September 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Robert Peters, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 163.

[43] Roper, *The Secret Battle,* 63-4.

[44] E. White to Delpratt, 8 March 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

Temporal issues were another key concern regarding communication. During the war the increased volume of mail sent between Australia and servicemen overseas, coupled with delays imposed by wartime shipping restrictions, meant that it took considerably longer for windows into ‘normal’ home life to reach the troops, and for a glimpse of battlefront life to reach the families at home.[46] Letters from the front were usually a month out of date by the time they reached home, leading to tragic stories of wives and mothers receiving letters from loved ones killed in action, written and posted before their deaths. The families of the prisoners had to contend with this general lag in communication, and the added delay of getting the letter from Turkey to London. The Ottoman postal system was notoriously inefficient; in a typical example of racial denigration, Chomley blamed this seemingly haphazard organisation on the uncivilised nature of the Turkish people.[47] However, some families were lucky in that they heard from their captive loved one quite regularly. A great number of Maurice Delpratt’s letters reached his sister in Queensland, many within a month of being sent. Clearly surprised, Elinor told Maurice that “we get more letters from you than from Bert,” their brother on active service in Palestine.[48] Delpratt’s proximity to a large base camp may have helped ensure the eventual arrival of his letters home, or it could have been simple good fortune that so many of his messages made it to Australia while others did not, for the majority of the POWs’ families experienced long silences in between communications. It was not unusual for relatives to wait four or five months between letters from the camps, with some families reporting delays of nearly ten months.

The inefficiency of the postal system worked both ways. As discussed in Chapter Two, letters from friends and family often took excruciatingly long to reach the prison camps. Many never reached their destination. The postal fee for sending letters into and out of Turkey was waived and many family members reported they wrote at least once a week. Yet, despite following specific instructions from the Department of Defence and the Red Cross as to how to address letters to prisoners, the return of undelivered letters was common.[49]

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[45] E. White to Delpratt, 12 March 1918 and 8 March 1918, Maurice George Delprat Correspondence.
[46] Damousi, *The Labour of Loss,* 19.
[47] Chomley to Mrs Flatt, 18 September 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Charles Flatt, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 65.
[48] E. White to Delpratt, 16 June 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

The sporadic nature of the Ottoman postal system also impacted on the arrival of food and comforts parcels in the camps, a fact that added to the families' anxieties. As discussed in the previous chapter, newspaper reports from the latter years of the war concerned with the conditions of the Turkish POW camps painted a rather grim picture and the families, aware of the privations the prisoners were suspected to be suffering, were naturally concerned and desperate to help.[50] During the early years of the war private parcels could be sent to all captives, but this practice was stopped in mid-1916 when the British government deemed it necessary to control the amount of food and clothing sent to their POWs.[51] Regulations were changed and, though private parcels could still be sent to officers as long as a special coupon was used, for the majority of 1917 only the Red Cross was able to pack and send parcels to enlisted men in Turkey. During this time several prisoners' families expressed profound sadness at their inability to personally pack and send items of comfort and memories of home.[52] In his discussion of families of British soldiers in France during the Great War, Michael Roper stresses the significance of the comforts parcel in providing solace to both parties. Those at the front received special treats and extras, while, through the inclusion of items deemed necessary for protection from sickness, such as food, clothes, and home remedies, families were able to reduce their sense of powerlessness over the health and welfare of their sons, brothers, husbands and fathers.[53] Restricting the sending of parcels to an external agency meant the families of the prisoners were less able to select and send specific items to minimise their loved ones' discomfort, and thus reduce their own sense of powerlessness. Maud

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[49] As discussed in Chapter Two, the movement of prisoners around different camps also exacerbated this problem.

[50] V. Elston to Chomley, 25 February 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of William Elston, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 60. Violet wrote of the "horrible accounts of the Prisoners in Turkey in today's *Argus*."

[51] M.E. Chomley, "Final Report on the Prisoners of War Department of the Australian Red Cross Society," 1.

[52] Such restrictions also caused upset among the families of other Dominion prisoners. As Jonathan Vance writes, the implicit class-based discrimination angered Canadians who wanted to send private parcels to men of the ranks. Jonathan F. Vance, *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War through the Twentieth Century (*Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 47-8.

[53] Roper, *The Secret Battle,* 93-101.

Gilbert, the mother of Cameleer George Gilbert, found it "very hard" that she was not able to send her captive son the scarf and soap she had specifically picked out for him.[54] Indeed, John Yarnell argues that the official reintroduction of private parcels in December 1917 – albeit at a restricted rate of one per quarter and limited to next-of-kin only – was a measure designed to minimise the strain felt by relatives of the POWs, rather than provide for the captives.[55]

Families also worried about the actual arrival of parcels in the camps. To reach the men parcels had to take a convoluted route – from London they travelled to Geneva and then through Austria before arriving in Constantinople, where they would then have to be despatched throughout the camps in remote areas of Turkey – and were subject to long delays, often of eight months to a year.[56] Adding to the concern of those at home was the fragile nature of the transport agreement; the parcel post between London and Turkey was completely shut down in 1917 and for another six months in 1918 as a result of Austrian border closures.[57] Frustrated relatives expressed concern over the amount of supplies the men received. Charles Flatt's mother was deeply worried about her son, claiming that the men at his camp were surely "nearly starving," while John Merson's cousin was similarly concerned about clothes for the captives, particularly as the War Office forbade the sending of replacement uniforms "for fear it should fall into enemy hands."[58] Such concern over the health and comfort of the prisoners was centred on fears for their capacity to cope. Edna Hunter notes that parents of POWs, in particular, infantilise their captive child and typically express doubts about his or her ability to withstand the rigours of enforced imprisonment, particularly strange food, isolation, and lack of exercise.[59] Frederick Ashton's mother, Frances, expressed these concerns in a letter to the Red Cross POW Department: "He has been a prisoner since the famous landing at the Dardanelles and he has had a very rough time indeed, being without bread, meat, tea or sugar for 4 months, and months and months without boots or a change of clothing."[60] Mrs Ashton was clearly worried her son was struggling with the restrictions of prison camp life.

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[54] M. Gilbert to Chomley, 28 June 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of George Gilbert, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 74.

[55] John Yarnall, *Barbed Wire Disease: British and German Prisoners of War, 1914-19* (Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2011), 113.

[56] Chomley, "Final Report," 6.

[57] Ibid, 9. Chomley makes reference to the closing of the borders in her letters to the POWs' relatives. It was also raised in her Final Report on the work of the POW Department. The border issue was only resolved after the Austrians were "threatened with a very mild form of reprisal" by the British Government. See.

[58] Mrs Flatt to Chomley, 1 July 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Charles Flatt, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 65; Chomley to Capt. F. M. Merson, 2 August 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of John Merson, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 131.

[59] Hunter, "Captivity: The Family in Waiting," 177.

Alongside their concern about the physical condition of the prisoners, families were also anxious about their emotional wellbeing. Aside from alleviating physical discomfort, another reason friends and relatives worried about whether the men were receiving parcels and letters was their fear they would think they had been left to languish. One concerned relative of Colin Spencer Campbell felt sure "it must make them feel they are quite forgotten if nothing ever reaches them."[61] Alan Kimber's sister was desperate to ensure that reminders of the outside world reached her brother, explaining to the Red Cross that she "would not like him to think for one moment that he had been forgotten."[62] William Jones' father was also anxious for his son to receive a parcel, to "let him know that his relatives are not to blame for failing to get in touch with him."[63] Adding to fears that their men would feel neglected was the fact that life at home was marching ahead and the prisoners were missing out on significant family developments and events. This was an issue for all servicemen and their families – those away at the war missed the births of children, marriages of siblings, and deaths of parents. The Delpratts tried to keep Maurice up to date with family milestones. In several letters, Nell described his new goddaughter, his nieces' move from junior to secondary school, his brother's wedding, and the deaths of several close family friends. Maurice appreciated her efforts to keep him informed – "I like hearing all family doings and must start a Brandings book so as to keep a correct count of the nephews and nieces" – but was saddened to hear all he was missing within the close-knit family; he was disappointed to receive news of his brother's engagement after the scheduled day of his wedding, and wrote of being unable to remember the names of all his new relatives.[64] Relatives worried about the length of time their loved one had been a POW, and the effects it might have. David Boyle's mother appreciated that his time in extended imprisonment might affect her son: "it seems such a long time since my dear boy left home … it [captivity] must be dreadful."[65] The Delpratts also recognised Maurice was in a unique situation that was testing his endurance, asking "how can we ever do enough for you when you are back to make up for all this weary time?"[66]

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[60] F. Ashton to Chomley, 13 January 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Frederick Ashton, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 7.

[61] M. Bowry to Chomley, 6 December 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Colin Spencer Campbell, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 32.

[62] H. Kimber to Chomley, 4 April 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Alan Kimber, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 112.

[63] W. Jones to Chomley, 18 March 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of William Jones, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 107.

[64] Delpratt to E. White, 16 February 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

The strain of physical, communicative, and emotional separation took a toll on the families of the prisoners, with many expressing feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, impotence, and powerlessness. But, faced with a seemingly interminable period of misery and worry, the prisoners' families responded by actively and co-operatively working to alleviate the burden of their collective concerns.

Realising the Global Network

Only a relatively small number of families were directly affected by captivity during the First World War. Over 330,000 Australians served overseas during 1914-1918, of whom approximately 4,000 were taken prisoner. During the Second World War, in contrast, thousands of Australian families were affected by the capture and internment of loved ones. Thirty thousand Australian servicemen, thirty-two Army nurses and thousands of civilians became prisoners of war in World War II. The Japanese captured the majority of these POWs – nearly 22,000, including an entire division of the 2nd AIF – in the early months of 1942.[67] Their imprisonment became one of the defining experiences of the war in the Pacific and a major issue on the Australian homefront; historian Michael McKernan quotes one concerned relative who conservatively estimated that if every POW in Japanese hands had six people at home worrying about them, then nearly 140,000 Australians were in some way affected.[68] Most families of POWs in Japanese hands experienced total silence once their loved one was captured, with many not knowing if their husband, father, son, or brother had even been taken prisoner until the end of the war. Newspapers printed grim articles about Japanese brutality, and POW affairs became a key concern for the Australian government. A self-help movement developed and formal organisations designed to support the families and friends of the captives, including the national Australian Prisoners of War Relatives Association (APOWRA), were created. By 1943 this organisation had 9,000 members and a regular magazine, and its leader, Sydney Smith, the father of a prisoner in German captivity, was in regular contact with Prime Minister John Curtin regarding POW issues.[69]

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[65] C. Boyle to Chomley, 11 December 1916, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Boyle, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 23.
[66] E. White to Delpratt, 8 March 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.
[67] 8,591 Australians were taken prisoner by the Germans and Italians in Europe and North Africa.
[68] McKernan, *This War Never Ends,* 42.

The families with loved ones in Turkish captivity during the First World War did not form a similar organisation. Instead, they developed an informal, private network linking together those affected by imprisonment. Jay Winter describes such networks as a form of 'fictive kinship'; the coming together of people not necessarily related by blood or marriage but connected instead by shared understandings of, or interests in, a certain event or experience.[70] Much scholarly work has been undertaken on the role of groups of fictive kin to provide support for, and commemoration of, the maimed, the disfigured, and the bereaved in the aftermath of the Great War.[71] These private networks were formed as a reaction to the distressing situations in which many people found themselves, and demonstrate what Winter sees as "the powerful, perhaps essential, tendency of ordinary people … to face together the emptiness, the nothingness, of loss in war."[72] Networks of fictive kin were not restricted to the postwar period; as the connections developed by the families of the prisoners of the Turks indicates, these groups were also formed by those affected by specific events or experiences during the war.[73]

The prisoners' families' network of fictive kin comprised three branches. As the only formal organisation that dealt specifically with Australian prisoners of war, the Australian Red Cross POW Department in London was the main point of contact for those with loved ones imprisoned in either Turkey or Germany, and formed the cornerstone of the network.[74] AIF Headquarters in London and Base Records in Melbourne were also involved in some POW-related affairs and also communicated with prisoners' families, but many found their banally bureaucratic and terse manner upsetting. Evidence of their brusque approach can be found in the service records of many POWs, and has even been passed on in family stories. The nephew of a prisoner who died in Turkey remembered his relatives discussing how distressed they were after receiving an abrupt, unsigned reply to a request of Base Records to forward a letter to their son: "As there is nothing to be gained by forwarding the letters through the Department, it is suggested that in future you … send direct."[75]

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[69] McKernan, *This War Never Ends,* 29.

[70] Jay Winter, "Kinship and Remembrance," 40-60

[71] As well as Winter, see Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004) and Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs: Living with the Scars of War* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2009). For an example of fictive kin operating on a smaller scale see Peter Stanley, *Men of Mont St Quentin: Between Victory and Death* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2009).

[72] Winter, *Sites of Memory*. 53.

[73] For the fictive-kin style role the Red Cross Wounded and Missing Bureau enquirers played during the war in passing on information about the deaths of servicemen to their families, see Eric Schneider, "The British Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau: A Case of Truth-Telling in the Great War," *War in History* 4 (1997): 296-315.

[74] The POW Department's sister branch, the Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau, was also involved in the network, though to a far lesser extent.

In contrast, evidence of strong bonds between the families of the prisoners and the POW Department exists in the men's case files, many of which contain years of correspondence between the prisoners' relatives and friends, and the Honorary Secretary of the Department, Mary Chomley. The Red Cross workers acted as a conduit between the prisoners and their families. They gently offered advice and guidance to relatives and informed them of official policies and regulations, while simultaneously looking after the interests of those in the camps. Chomley and her team were well known to the family and friends of the captive men, and vice versa, and in the course of their correspondence they were privy to both the happiness and grief of those at home.[76]

Alongside the Red Cross there were other, more private, aspects to the network. The small number of men captured by the Turks meant that families also very much depended on each other, and the comrades of their captive loved ones, for information, support, and consolation. Though there were other homefront associations and organisations designed to support the relatives of those embroiled in the war, such as Dr Mary Booth's Centre for Soldiers' Wives and Mothers, these organisations were targeted at the families of those killed and maimed in the war, or the families of those still fighting, not at the relatives of those taken prisoner, whose anxieties and concerns were somewhat different. Extended family, particularly those in England, also formed part of the network. These kin in the traditional sense of the word were enlisted by Australian-based families to communicate with the POW Department or the local relatives of other prisoners, and pass on to the Department money and letters sent from relatives and friends in Australia. The Sydney-based Gilman family recruited their London aunt to help with the search for news of their captive son, Ellis:

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[75] Base Records to E. King, 5 October 1915, NAA B2455 KING GEORGE B. Keith King explained this family story to me in a letter dated 11 January 2012.
[76] Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 30.

> I know how difficult it is to get any information about our poor fellows in Turkish hands, but I should be so grateful if you could get me any news or in all events tell me the correct way in which to address letters to him. His father and mother in Australia have asked me to make enquiries for them.[77]

The inclusion of these extended family members, and the families of prisoners who enlisted in Australia from other locations, such as New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa, made this a global network.

Fictive Kin Mitigating the Angst

The seeds for this extensive informal network were evident in the ways many families discovered the POW status of their loved one. But it was once the particular stresses of captivity became clear that it realised its potential to overcome or alleviate the angst of families. One of the ways fictive kin helped those with men imprisoned in Turkey was by overcoming the sense of physical separation. Bart Ziino has explored the importance of knowing the location, style, and appearance of a fallen soldiers' grave to the Australian bereaved, arguing that these details allowed family and friends to imagine the final resting place of their loved one. Such 'imagined connections' helped facilitate the acceptance of loss and the grieving process.[78] In a similar way, the families of those in Turkey strove to discover as much as possible about their loved one's location in an effort to imagine his life as a captive. Being able to picture their loved ones' captivity helped families of prisoners foster a connection between the prison camp and home, and eased concerns about the POWs' welfare. In discovering the daily life of their prisoner – what he did for work, how he spent his leisure hours, what kind of food he ate, and who he associated with – relatives were able to hold on to their loved one and keep his presence in the family alive. A clearer understanding and appreciation of Maurice's captivity was important for the Delpratts; Elinor was eager to learn all she could about her brother's day-to-day experiences so that "bit by bit we are able to picture your life a little better."[79]

Relatives turned to the global network for assistance in creating these connections. A friend of Maurice Delpratt's aunt enquired about the location of his camp, Hadjikiri, asking the Red Cross POW Department whether it was close to a Railway, and whether this would enable the men to receive letters.[80] The Red Cross's reply – "as far as we know [it is] a working camp. We understand it is not far from the Railway, in fact we believe the men to be working at the construction of the Railway line" – soothed Delpratt's aunt's anxiety about his ability to receive comforts parcels and helped her construct an idea of her nephew's daily activities.[81] Similarly, the Red Cross was asked to describe Harry Foxcroft's camp at Ada Bazar to a relative. Their response – "one of our workers is a lady who has spent a great deal of her time in the East and knows the district in Asia Minor in which Ada Pazar is situated ... She tells us it is a large town on the Baghdad Railway in a fertile agricultural district" – helped give some indication as to Foxcroft's living and working conditions, while Frederick Ashton's father, a Corporal in the AIF kit stores in London and a regular visitor to the POW Department offices, was also told of "re-assuring [sic]" news about the conditions his son was living in after Chomley spoke to a British officer who had escaped from Turkey. After interviewing the escapee, Chomley felt "very much happier about the condition of our men" and told Ashton's father she "thought you might like to know what I was told."[82]

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[77] C. Gilman to Chomley, 12 September 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Ellis Gilman, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 75.

[78] See Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

[79] E. White to Delpratt, 16 June 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

The network also helped mitigate communication difficulties. The POW Department assisted with the despatch of mail to the prisoners. Relatives and friends sent letters to their loved ones via the Department as, like the prisoners themselves, they believed mail would have more chance reaching its destination this way than through private post.[83] Chomley actively encouraged family members to send any letters through the Department, reasoning they had the most up-to-date addresses for the men and could redirect any mail that was likely to go astray. In their covering letters family members expressed their desire for information. As we have seen, if the Department had any news, a volunteer would duly reply. For those they could not immediately assist, Chomley and her representatives wrote carefully worded letters explaining to anxious parents, siblings and wives that opportunities for prisoners to write were limited, and that letters and postcards would quite often go missing in the post. In one case Chomley light-heartedly tried to pass off the lack of mail from one man's son as typical boyish carelessness.[84] Such letters helped calm the concerns of relatives. After receiving a message from Vera Deakin of the Wounded and Missing Bureau, Noel Sherrie's mother, Bessie, explained that while she was longing for a message from her son, she appreciated no news was essentially good news: "after reading your letter … that the mail from Turkey was so irregular … I knew I just had to expect not to hear so you see what your letter did for me."[85]

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[80] Mrs Rawlins to Chomley, undated, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Maurice Delpratt, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 52.

[81] Letter from Chomley to Mrs Rawlins, 5 March 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Maurice Delpratt, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 52.

[82] Chomley to Cpl. Ashton, 19 November 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Frederick Ashton, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 7.

[83] For an example of this, see the letters from Phillip Fook's cousin to Chomley, in which she asks for a letter to Fooks to be forwarded through the Red Cross. ARC POW Dept. Case File of Phillip Fooks, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 67.

Families who did receive letters from their loved one also wrote to the POW Department, informing them of any relevant information gleaned from their communication. Occasionally a prisoner's family sent in the original letter or postcard they had received for Chomley and her representatives to scrutinise. This must have been difficult for, as Joy Damousi writes, letters received during the war "became precious, even sacred."[86] They represented cherished connections with loved ones – after all, they had written it, touched the paper and sealed the envelope – and relatives usually asked that they be returned, a request with which Chomley readily complied. Other families sent verbatim copies to Chomley, and on to extended family and friends. Copying out letters, usually by hand, was a time-consuming process and indicates the strength of the desire for information, and the sense of mutual obligation families felt to the POW Department and those similarly affected.

Many families received news of their loved one because of the sharing of information through the network. After enquiring at the Red Cross for news of his captive brother, William, Chomley was able to tell G.L. Rayment that a recently received letter from an Australian POW officer had mentioned that William was in the Taurus Mountains and was "well."[87] Similarly, William Falconer's sister was informed of his move from a work camp to a convalescent camp after a letter from George Burdett King, another Australian prisoner, was received by the Department.[88] The Red Cross also facilitated the spread of information by putting relatives of the men in Turkey in contact with each other. Many case files contain requests from a prisoner's family for the contact details of the relatives of another prisoner their loved one might have mentioned. For example, the brother of Keith Hudson asked Chomley for the contact details of Edgar Hobson's family, as Keith had mentioned Hobson in a letter.[89]

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[84] Chomley to S. Curran, 11 July 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Curran, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 47.

[85] B. Sherrie to V. Deakin, undated, ARC Wounded and Missing Bureau Case File of Noel Sherrie, AWM1DRL/0428.

[86] Damousi, *The Labour of Loss,* 19.

[87] Chomley to G.L. Rayment, 22 December 19-, ARC POW Dept. Case File of William Rayment, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 172.

[88] Chomley to Mrs Middleton, 16 September 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of William Falconer, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 62.

The multinational nature of the Turkish camps meant the Department occasionally received similar requests from the families of men from other nations, particularly the British. In an overlap of networks, the mother of a Royal Flying Corps POW wrote to Chomley asking for contact information for the next-of-kin of Ronald Austin and Oliver Lee, the two Australian pilots who had tried to assist her son before the three men were captured together. She wanted to write to Austin and Lee's families to let them know about the circumstances of their sons' capture.[90] Similarly, the wife of a British officer requested she be put in touch with "the relations of all her husband's fellow-prisoners," including those in Australia, so she could write and ask what they knew of the location and conditions of the camp in which their men were interned.[91]

In some instances, families turned straight to each other, bypassing the POW Department. A letter from Mrs Bessie Sherrie hints at a developing correspondence between her family and the Fenders, who had heard of Noel Sherrie's capture and wanted to inquire about their son, William. A relationship between the relatives of the captured submariners from the British *E7* also flourished; the mother of the captured Commander, Archibald Cochrane, wrote to the relatives of all her son's crew, including Australian Ernest Gwynne's family.[92]

Along with assisting in sharing information about the POWs, the network also helped allay fears about the families' impotence to help their men, and their worries that their loved one would feel forgotten. In her role as organiser of the food and comforts parcels sent from London, Chomley was able to ensure, within reason, the inclusion of certain extras in the prisoners' parcels or the forwarding of sums of money at the request of relatives and friends. Edgar Green received the extra surprises of a chess set and chocolate in his parcels thanks to his sister Maude, who sent money to Chomley with covering letters emphasising the fact that her brother was "very fond" of the sweet treat.[93] Chomley was not afraid to veto some requests. After a relative of Clyde Currie asked the Department to send him some cream to accompany his Christmas pudding, Chomley sardonically replied "do you think that cream would keep for the 8 or 10 months it sometimes takes to get parcels delivered in Turkey?"[94] To the consternation of many relatives and friends, regulations forbade the Department from listing the names of donors on parcels to prisoners. Families had to be content with the idea their loved one would (potentially) receive the items, and hopefully understand that they had contributed to its contents. The ability to include these extras depended on the family's financial situation. While Colin Campbell's father was "most willing to send any money which can help at all," not all relatives were in a position to forward sums of cash.[95] Nevertheless, Chomley assured these anxious families that the Red Cross would continue to send the maximum amount of comforts possible and "do all we can to look after your boy."[96]

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[89] L. Hudson to Chomley, 13 June 19-, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Keith Hudson, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 97.

[90] Mrs Evans to Mrs Reid, 10 June 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Ronald Austin, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 8.

[91] CPWC to Chomley, 21 August 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Leonard Heathcote, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 89.

[92] C. Green to Chomley, 18 December 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Ernest Gwynne, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 82.

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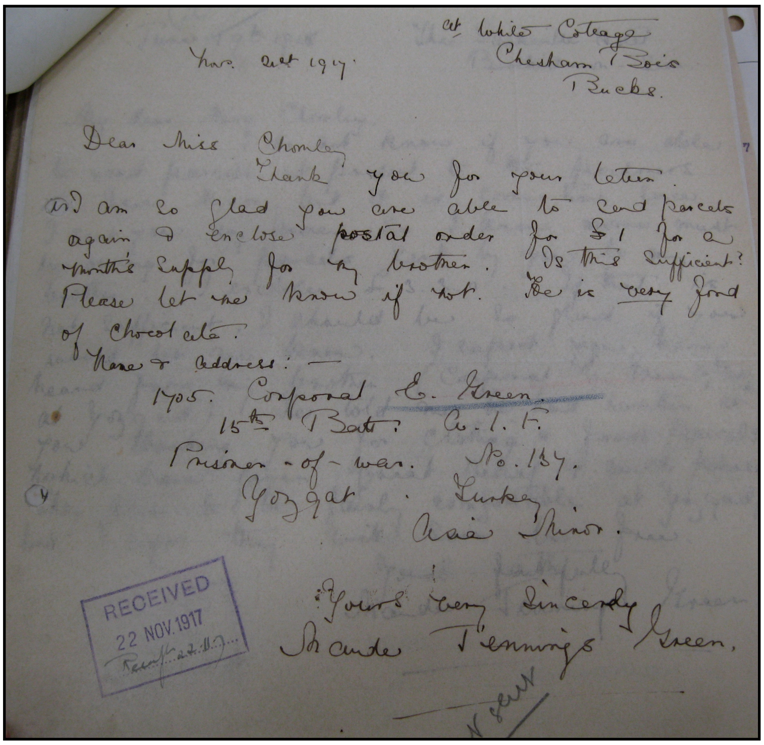
[93] M.J. Green to Chomley, 21 November 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Edgar Green, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 79.

[94] Chomley to Mrs Woods, 15 December 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Clyde Currie, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 48.

[95] T. Lusk to Chomley, 7 September 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Colin Campbell, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 32. Government policy that a man's allotment stopped upon being listed as missing may have adversely affected the ability of families to provide for their POW. Allotments were only reinstated after official confirmation that a missing man was a POW. See, for example, Base Records to A. Smith, 22 July 1918, Letters of Lt. Laurence Smith, No 67 Sqdn, AFC, AWMPR83/100.

[96] Chomley to C. Boyle, 27 January 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Boyle, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 23.



at White Cottage
Chesham Bois
Bucks.

Nov. 21st 1917.

Dear Miss Chomley
Thank you for your letter.
I am so glad you are able to send parcels again & enclose postal order for £1 for a month's supply for my brother. Is this sufficient? Please let me know if not. He is very fond of chocolate.

Name & address: —
1705. Corporal E. Green
15th Batt. A.I.F.
Prisoner-of-war. No. 137.
Yozgat. Turkey
Asia Minor.

Yours very sincerely
Maude Jennings Green.

RECEIVED
22 NOV. 1917

Figure 5.3: Letter from Maude Jennings Green to Elizabeth Chomley requesting the addition of chocolate in her brother's parcel.
Source: ARC POW Dept. Case File of Edgar Green, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 79.

Perhaps the most poignant way by which this private network assisted the families of the prisoners was in the case of death. Fifty-four Australians died in Turkish captivity, from wounds received prior to capture, from accidents in the work camps, and from disease. The delay in communication between prison camp and homefront meant that, quite often, a man had died many months before any official confirmation of his death reached AIF Headquarters or the POW Department. If the Red Cross did discover that a man had died, usually via an official death list compiled by their Ottoman counterparts or through correspondence with a fellow POW, Chomley wrote to the family to break the sad news. Often, though, families would learn of the death of their loved one through more brutal means. For the family of George Drysdale, the discovery of his death came only when his mother had one of her own letters returned marked *'decede'*. Too distraught to write herself, Edith Drysdale enlisted her married daughter in London, Mary, to ask the POW Department for confirmation of George's death. An upset and frustrated Mary wrote: "it does seem hard that one gets such bad news in that way, with no further information."[97]

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[97] M. Alexander to Chomley, 21 July 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of George Drysdale, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 56.

The Drysdale family was not alone; several other relatives of POWs who perished in Turkey found out about the death of their loved one in a similar fashion. Noel Sherrie's family learned of his death after a postcard written by a family friend working as a nurse in France was returned marked *'mort'*. The friend wrote to the Red Cross in May 1918 for confirmation and expressed her concerns for the effect such drastic news would have on Sherrie's already distressed mother in Australia: "It seems too dreadful if it is true. I do not know what Mrs Sherrie will do – what it will be for her thinking he died there – a prisoner."[98] In a few particularly devastating instances the unreliability of communication with Turkey meant some families did not learn that their prisoner had died until after the Armistice. Claude Redman's family had no idea that their much-loved son and brother had perished in a Damascus hospital soon after his capture in March 1918. Redman's father and sister made persistent enquiries of the Red Cross and AIF Base Records to no avail; it was not until February 1919 that the family received an unofficial report of his death from disease, a finding made official at a Court of Enquiry later that year.[99]

In efforts to learn more about the death, families of deceased prisoners turned to the global network for help discovering 'particulars'. As discussed in Chapter Two, fellow prisoners were occasionally able to initiate communication with the relatives of their deceased mates to provide some details. Maurice Delpratt immediately wrote to Brendan Calcutt's father after his death in early January 1917. While Delpratt undertook this task partly to soothe his own grief, he also realised the importance to the relatives of hearing the news from someone who was with the deceased, and provided Calcutt's father with an account of his son's last days and burial, assuring him he would protect Brendan's personal effects.[100] Aware of the unreliability of the Ottoman postal system, Delpratt also reported Brendan's death to his sister and asked her to communicate with Mr Calcutt. In a clear example of a fictive kin style relationship between the Delpratts and the Calcutts and of the global network in action, Elinor assured her brother that she had been in contact with his dead friend's father: "I told Mr Calcutt those official photos had been taken [of Brendan's grave] …

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[98] B. Butler to V. Deakin, 28 May 1918, ARC Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau Case File of Noel Sherrie, AWM1DRL/0428.

[99] See NAA B2455 REDMAN CLAUDE THOMAS. Redman was suspected to have died from cholera. A fellow POW reported Redman was taken away on a stretcher and that the Turks, fearful of an outbreak of the disease, placed all their other prisoners in isolation.

[100] See, for example, Delpratt to E. White, 24 May 1917, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

I quoted all your letters in which there was any mention of his son."[101] In a similar case, the mother of Alfred Nelson, who died in November 1916, was provided with information about her son's death from one of his captive comrades, Alfred Carpenter. Mrs Nelson was so grateful for the details she obtained from Carpenter that she sent him ten shillings for him "to share with his chums as he wishes."[102]

The bereaved also wrote to the Red Cross or directly to other prisoners to uncover details. George Drysdale's sister asked Chomley for the names and addresses of her brother's comrades so she could determine the exact date of his death and place of burial, as did Edgar Green's sister, Maude, while Mrs Adams, "anxious to get all the news I can of my boys [sic] last days," wrote to Captain Thomas White for information.[103] One of the most distressing pleas for assistance came from the family of Irish-born Air Mechanic David Curran. In August 1917 Samuel and Esther Curran were informed of their son's death based on news the POW Department had received from another prisoner.[104] With no further information available, Curran's family tried different branches of the network to obtain details. They first wrote to Chomley to express their anxiety and enquire if she could communicate with the prisoner who had first notified them of David's death:

> We hope the sad news is not true and are anxiously waiting for further news from you if it is true we want you to get all information you can from the Prisoner of War who communicated the news to you concerning his death … I wonder was he wounded or what was the cause of his death? … Please try and find out all you can about him.[105]

The Currans also approached the prisoner who had informed the Red Cross themselves, stating "we should like to keep in touch with someone who knew him," and wrote numerous letters enquiring how their son had died and where he was buried.[106] This correspondence continued through to the end of the war, when Esther again sent a heartfelt plea to Chomley, asking for the names of any ex-prisoners who would be passing through Belfast and who could call in on her and her daughter.[107] Recently widowed – the blow of their son's death reportedly bringing on Samuel's own passing – Esther was desperate to talk with anyone who had been with her son in Turkey.[108]

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[101] E. White to Delpratt, 8 March 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[102] R. Nelson to Chomley, 9 July 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Alfred Carpenter, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 33.

[103] Mrs Adams to Chomley, 7 August 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Francis Adams, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 1.

[104] David Curran was captured at Kut and endured the march from Baghdad into Turkey. He died at Nisibin around August 1916, reportedly from a combination of exhaustion, exposure and malaria.

[105] E. Curran to Chomley, 3 August 1917, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Curran, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 47.

[106] Ibid.

It is difficult to determine whether Esther ever did discover the full details of her son's death, as the end of the war brought about not only the liberation of the prison camps in Turkey but also the closure of the POW Department. The severing of this crucial branch of the network effectively left the community of fictive kin without a facilitator. For families like the Currans, the Drysdales, the Sherries, the Redmans and the Calcutts, any unofficial investigations regarding the deaths of their loved ones came to a stop. The best Chomley could do for Esther Curran was promise that she would leave a note requesting information about David from any repatriated prisoner passing through London.[109] For the families of those prisoners who returned home, the closure of the POW Department, and the subsequent end of the network, brought messages of gratitude. Ernest Ingram's brother was profusely appreciative of Chomley and her team, and wrote a letter of thanks which highlights the strain felt by prisoners' families:

> I also take this opportunity of thanking you and your society for the benevolent and untiring devotion extended to my brother … also for the kind way in which you from time to time informed our parents of his health and conditions while he has been so placed in the hands of the enemy.[110]

Others were similarly thankful and in the many messages Chomley received, the importance of the network is made resoundingly clear. Perhaps the simplest, but most poignant, came from the sister of Leslie Lambert: "very many thanks for all you have done for us."[111]

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[107] E. Curran to Chomley, 26 March 1919, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Curran, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 47.

[108] E. Curran to Chomley, 26 February 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Curran, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 47.

[109] Chomley to E. Curran, 26 March 1919, ARC POW Dept. Case File of David Curran, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 47.

[110] A.J. Ingram to Chomley, 19 August 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Ernest Ingram, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 100.

[111] D. Lambert to Chomley, 4 June 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Leslie Lambert, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 113.

Conclusion

As Mrs Boyle suggested in her letter to the Australian Red Cross POW Department in 1917, wartime captivity affects not only the captive; it has consequences that extend out far from the prison camp into the lives of families at home. Relatives and friends of prisoners of the Turks had to endure the agony of the period of 'missing', and once official confirmation of their man's POW status was received they experienced the stress of separations exacerbated by the peculiarities of captivity. Physical separation was aggravated by the unfamiliarity of the enemy territory in which their loved one was imprisoned, communicative distance was made worse by the unreliability of the Ottoman postal system and by censorship, while emotional separation was intensified by the impotence of the families to help their men, and their fear that their captive loved ones would feel forgotten. Yet the families of the POWs did not passively accept the emotional strain captivity caused. By sharing information among, and leaning on, their network of fictive kin, they were able to escape what Jay Winter calls "the shadows of uncertainty" and gain some measure of support, reassurance and, in some instances, condolence.[112] This global network of families, friends and others formed a much-needed community of understanding, and found and established new ways to ease their unique concerns.

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[112] Winter, *Sites of Memory,* 44.

CHAPTER SIX

Repatriation, Return and Remembering: The Legacy of Imprisonment

The enduring legacy of war for Australians is the focus of a growing body of scholarly work. Marina Larsson, Alistair Thomson, and Stephen Garton, among others, have explored the experiences of soldiers who returned from the First World War and have noted that war service, and all it entailed, often had a lasting impact. Several historians, including Michael McKernan, Rosalind Hearder, and Janette Bomford, have studied the experiences of ex-prisoners of the Japanese in the aftermath of World War II, highlighting the specific, lingering effects these men faced as they attempted to rebuild their lives as civilians. This chapter builds upon these two avenues of historical enquiry to explore what happened to the prisoners of the Turks after the war, and how the experience of captivity was managed in the postwar period. It analyses their experiences of, and feelings about, the end of the war and their return home, and explores the process by which the dead were located and commemorated. It also examines the physical and psychological impact of their time in captivity, with particular focus on how private feelings of inferiority were reinforced publicly, and assesses their place in Australian memory of the war. The chapter argues that adjusting to civilian life after captivity was difficult for many of the ex-prisoners and that, though captivity in Turkey had lasting effects in the private sphere, it made far less of an impression in the public.

Armistice and Homecoming

The Armistice between the Ottoman Empire and the Allies was signed on 30 October 1918 at Mudros Harbour. Overstretched, under-resourced, and cut off from communications with the other Central Powers after the capitulation of Bulgaria, the Turks sought a separate peace agreement. The Mudros agreement included provisions for the demobilisation of the Turkish Army, the Allied control of various transport and communication infrastructures including the rail network, ports and anchorages, and the telegraph network.[1] It also outlined instructions for the transfer of all prisoners of war to Constantinople for immediate handover.[2] At the time of the Armistice, 140 Australians were scattered throughout various prison camps in Turkey. News of the Mudros agreement reached these camps through different means; Edgar Hobson was told by his Commandant at Nisibin that the men, no longer prisoners, were "his guests," while Leslie Luscombe and his fellow POW officers at Afyon were informed by an interpreter.[3] Representatives of the protecting powers told others, while some found out through newspapers or local residents.

Prisoners reported mixed feelings upon the end of their captivity. For Luscombe, still desperate to do his part for the war effort, finding a way to rejoin his battalion and continue the fight against the Germans was of utmost importance.[4] For others, celebrations were in order. Maurice Delpratt told his sister that "we all went mad" upon receiving confirmation of the Armistice at Afyon. Prisoners hoisted a Union Jack flag over the Armenian Church and marched into the town bazaar.[5] At San Stefano, Reginald Lushington reported his billet had been in "a seething uproar" once they heard the news and "like foxhounds suddenly let out we streamed out to Freedom."[6] But celebrations came in different forms. As soon as Ron Austin heard of the Armistice, his thoughts turned to disposing of the belongings he had accrued while in captivity. Together with his roommate, Austin organised an auction for the local townspeople. Low bidding prices frustrated the two men, and they instead decided to destroy the items:

> A crowd formed outside [the house], chiefly women and children, and we would hold these things up and ask them how much they would give. They only made low bids and if the bid was not enough Pettit used to chop the thing up with an axe and we made the people pretty wild. They were crying, shouting, and yelling, asking us not to smash these things up; but we said unless they paid a fair price we were going to break everything. We sold an odd thing just to keep them going, but we chopped up almost everything we had there.[7]

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[1] "Text of the Conditions of the Armistice with Turkey, as settled," Armistice Terms with Turkey and with Austria-Hungary, NAA A11803 1919/89/106.

[2] Ibid. The agreement also detailed the immediate, unconditional handover of all interned Armenian subjects to the Allies.

[3] Repatriation Statement of Edgar Hobson, AWM30 B2.2; L.H Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl-Australian* (Brisbane: W.R. Smith & Paterson, 1970), 100.

[4] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 100.

[5] Delpratt to E. White, 3 December 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland;

[6] Reginald Lushington, *A Prisoner with the Turks 1915-1918* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, 1923), 98.

[7] R.A. Austin, *My Experiences as a Prisoner* (Melbourne: J. Haase & Sons, 19-), 40-41. This is the only documented account of revenge-like action perpetrated by an Australian prisoner of the Turks.

Austin's foolhardy actions indicate the desire of a disaffected captive to exact some small measure of revenge on the people he held responsible for his vicissitudes as a POW, but they also demonstrate a lack of compassion for those lower on the perceived racial hierarchy, who had also suffered through the hardships of wartime Turkey.

Regardless of their feelings, getting out of Turkey was the primary concern of the ex-prisoners. There were no heroic stunts to liberate the camps and, in some instances, the men were effectively left to make their own way to Constantinople. Prisoners at San Stefano simply walked out of their camp and into the offices of the Dutch legation, where they were welcomed with money, food and comforts parcels, and accommodated in a hotel. Others who reached Constantinople, such as Charles Flatt from Daridje, or George Talbot, who had been working in a fabric factory in the capital, were similarly welcomed and accommodated. The ex-prisoners were free to roam the city before they left onboard the *Katoomba*, the first troopship to enter the Dardanelles after the Armistice.[8] The *Katoomba* transported the men to Salonica, then Taranto in southern Italy, where they entrained for Calais. From Calais they sailed to Dover, and reached London on 8 December.

For those in work and rest camps further in the interior, getting to Constantinople was not feasible. Indeed, as escaped British prisoner Edward Keeling argued in his 1924 memoir, the idea of establishing one central collection point for prisoners reflected the lack of appreciation the military authorities had for the situation in Turkey.[9] Those in the Nisibin area were transported via the newly occupied rail network to Aleppo, and then to Tripoli and Port Said.[10] Others were instead sent to Smyrna (present day Izmir). Prisoners at work camps in the Taurus

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Indeed, as Hank Nelson and other POW scholars note, revenge attacks by ex-prisoners on their captors are rare in Australian prisoner of war experiences.

[8] Repatriation Statement of Charles Flatt, AWM30 B2.14; Arthur Jose, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 – Volume IX. The Royal Australian Navy,* 9th ed. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1941), 491. 26 Australians were embarked on the *Katoomba.*

[9] E.H. Keeling, *Adventures in Turkey and Russia* (London: John Murray, 1924), 184. The only exception was the men interned at Bor convalescent camp, who left Bor on a train approximately two weeks after the Armistice bound for Constantinople. These men were entrained for Itea, in Greece, and then travelled to Toranto where they followed the same route as those before them, and arrived in London on New Year's Day 1919. See AWM30 Statements of Cahill, Campbell, Fooks and Tierney.

[10] Repatriation Statement of Edgar Hobson, AWM30 B2.2. Keeling was in charge of the transport of POWs from this region. See *Adventures in Turkey and Russia*, 184-190, for a description of his return to Turkey in late 1918 to facilitate repatriation of the prisoners.

Mountains travelled on trains to Afyon, where officers organised with the stationmaster passage by train direct to Smyrna.

Upon arrival in Smyrna, the ex-prisoners were welcomed in much the same manner as those in Constantinople. Officers were accommodated in buildings requisitioned by the American Red Cross, were taken in by local French and English families, or stayed in hotels. According to Leonard Woolley, “the Turks had by now washed their hands of us” and the ex-prisoners were able to wander the town, visit the theatre and the bazaar, and dine in local restaurants.[11] Ron Austin, obviously feeling more benevolent towards his fellow POWs than the Afyon locals, treated several of his comrades to champagne dinners.[12] From Smyrna the men were repatriated to Alexandria by the hospital ship *Kanowna*, then travelled to Port Said, where they were concentrated at the No. 14 Australian General Hospital and received medical treatment from Australian doctors and nurses.[13] The trip onboard the *Kanowna* was particularly exciting for submariner John Wheat, as it marked the first time he had seen an ‘English’ woman – a nurse – in over three years.[14] Landing at Alexandria was also a special moment for Delpratt, who had embarked for Gallipoli from the same wharf over three years earlier.[15] For Edgar Hobson, arrival in Egypt also brought with it the realisation that he was free from life as a captive of such an alien culture; he completed his report to the AIF by stating “thanking God that I am now once more amongst my own people.”[16] These signs of familiarity marked significant moments in the prisoners’ reverse transition out of captivity, as they offered reminders of places and people associated with home and normality.

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[11] C.L. Woolley, *From Kastamuni to Kedos: Being a Record of Experiences of Prisoners of War in Turkey 1916-1918* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1921), 108.

[12] Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl,* 102

[13] Jose, *The Royal Australian Navy,* 489. The *Kanowna* took some 900 British prisoners to Alexandria from Smyrna, including 50 Australians.

[14] J.H. Wheat, “Unpublished Manuscript,” 33, John Harrison Wheat Papers, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

[15] Delpratt to E. White, 3 December 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

[16] Repatriation Statement of Edgar Hobson, AWM 30 B2.2.

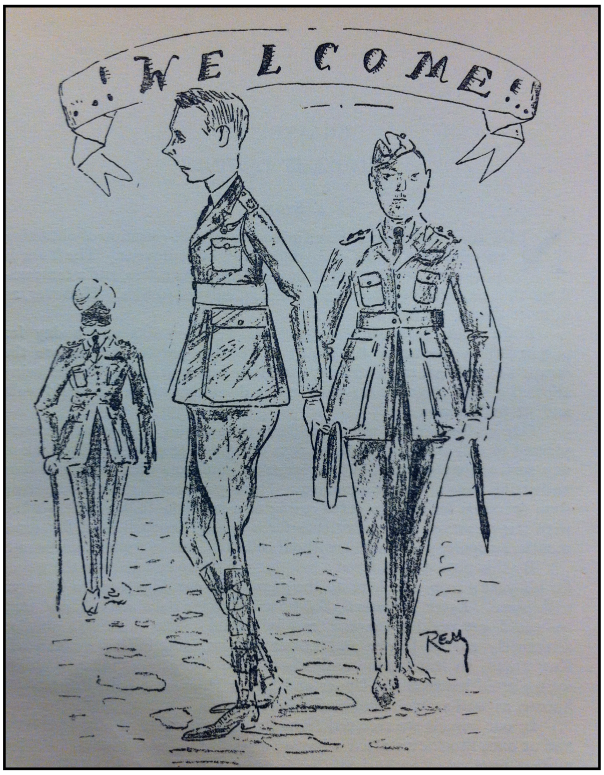

Figure 6.1: Cartoon published in Turkish newspaper at Smyrna to welcome ex-prisoners.
Source: Woolley, *From Kastamuni to Kedos,* 109.

The Australian government had specific interests in repatriated prisoners. The Department of Defence was eager to "counteract any Bolshevik propaganda" that threatened British claims to the moral high ground regarding their conduct during the war, and wanted to create a comparison study between the treatment of British POWs in enemy hands and the treatment of enemy POWs in British hands.[17] Major John Treloar, officer-in-charge of the Australian War Records Section, despatched an Australian photographer to Calais to take pictures of the recently liberated men. However, to his consternation, the official photographer arrived too late to photograph the worst cases. An AIF Representative at Calais stated that "so many of our British prisoners have been receiving such excellent treatment from British and Allied authorities that by the time they reach here, the prisoners have regained their bodily strength."[18] Existing photographs were too cheerful, seemingly "taken with a view of showing the lighter side."[19] According to the Secretary of the British Photographic Section, "in nearly all the cases the men are smiling with pleasure at the thought that they are free once more."[20] Clearly, ideas about the usefulness of prisoners for propaganda purposes, first realised during the war to boost recruitment, were still in circulation.

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[17] Australian High Commissioner to Major J.L. Treloar, 10 December 1918, Photographs of Repatriated POWs, AWM16 4375/11/49. It should be noted that the ex-prisoners of the Germans were the main targets of this interest.

[18] F.A. Chaffey to J.L. Treloar, 23 December 1918, AWM16 4375/11/49.

[19] J.R. Browne to J.L. Treloar, 18 December 1918, AWM16 4375/11/49.

Those who arrived in Egypt were also of specific interest to the AIF. A memorandum was issued instructing all officers, NCOs and enlisted men returning from Turkey to submit a full report of their experiences of captivity. It compelled the men to "give a faithful comprehensive picture of the circumstances attending the capture and life in enemy country."[21] Items to be addressed in the postwar report included 'treatment while being conveyed to place of internment', 'nature of employment and scale and nature of rations' and 'when and how news received of great British advance'. A separate section asked for information about missing men or those who died as prisoners.[22] Like the photographs, these reports were collated for the benefit of the Australian War Records Section. Questions focussing on experiences of captivity marked a different approach towards prisoners of war from early 1918, when the first medically unfit repatriates were brought back from enemy countries. These prisoners were asked to complete a similar report with far less importance placed on their time in captivity; in a letter dated 22 February 1918, Treloar explained to AIF Headquarters in London that "the circumstances of a man's capture are of greater historical value than the details of his treatment as a prisoner."[23] During the war significance was placed on information prisoners could provide about the strength of enemy forces or ways to avoid potential capture. The cessation of hostilities meant the emphasis shifted to the experiences of Australians at the hands of the enemy and the stories they could provide for both propaganda purposes and trials of those accused of breaches of the international laws of war.

While the authorities wanted to use the prisoners, they also acknowledged the difficult nature of their experiences. In a move that suggests the AIF and the Department of Defence felt ex-prisoners of war deserved some measure of special treatment, the repatriated prisoners were offered the choice between priority return to

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[20] J.R. Browne to J.L. Treloar, 18 December 1918, AWM16 4375/11/49.

[21] "Memorandum to All Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and Men returning as Prisoners of War from Turkey to Egypt," AWM30 B18.2. Ex-POWs arriving in London were also made to submit the same report.

[22] Ibid.

[23] J.L. Treloar to AIF Headquarters London, 22 February 1918, Enquiries re: Repatriated Prisoners of War, AWM16 4376/50/2.

Australia, or two months paid leave in England.[24] Many opted to immediately return home. The desire to be reunited with anxious relatives, or to restart civilian life after years away, was strong. For one ex-POW, the fact that he was "not in love with the army" was motivation enough, while another admitted that he was "rather afraid of the English winter."[25] 45 ex-prisoners of the Turks left for Australia before the end of 1918.

Others took the opportunity to visit England, where they were given back pay and allowed to travel. Although in some instances men were concerned they would be deemed selfish by family for not returning to Australia straight away, many were overcome with excitement that they would finally be in the 'motherland'. As Richard White points out, travel was a keen motivator for enlistment.[26] The ex-prisoners expressed wonder and delight at touring sites of historical and cultural significance that, from their prison camps, many may have assumed they would never get the opportunity to see. For those travelling from Calais, such as Luscombe, spotting the iconic white cliffs of Dover was a particularly poignant moment: "Ever since the Declaration of War … I had looked forward to the possibility of catching sight of these White Cliffs."[27] In London the prisoners joined other Australian servicemen and explored Westminster Abbey, Tower Bridge, and the Houses of Parliament. Delpratt conveyed his excitement in a letter to his sister in Queensland: "Here I am in London with my mouth wide open at its wonders."[28]

The ex-prisoners received a welcome reception in England. Officers could partake of the British Empire Hospitality Scheme's many facilities for accommodation in stately homes across the country, or take a room at a hotel. Repatriated prisoners were not charged for lodging at soldiers' hostels, and were able to join sightseeing tours, attend the theatre, and meet up with old friends. British civilians, keen to entertain an Australian, accommodated some. Colin Campbell told Elizabeth Chomley of the POW Department of his appreciation of the family who accommodated him during his period of leave: "I am having a lovely holiday so far and hope it continues. The people where I am staying are very kind to me they cannot do enough for me. I feel absolutely at home one cannot help it."[29] The POW Department had set aside funds to provide entertainment for Australians returned from both Turkey and Germany, and many men were treated to afternoon teas and other meals at the Department's offices. Some were also able to travel to visit family in Scotland, Ireland and Wales, while others, including George Kerr, went to France.[30]

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[24] AIF Headquarters London to Dept. of Defence, Melbourne, 5 November 1918, REPATRIATION, AWM27 424/28; Dept. of Defence to AIF Headquarters, 10 November 1918, AWM27/424/28.

[25] "AIF Demobilisation Form," Repatriation Case File of George Handsley, NAA M18950 PT1; K. Cahir to Chomley, 21 November 1918, Papers of Chomley, Mary Elizabeth, AWM1DRL/0615, File 2.

[26] Richard White, "The Soldier as Tourist: The Australian Experience of the Great War," *War & Society* 5 no. 1 (1987): 66.

[27] Luscombe*, The Story of Harold Earl,* 107.

[28] Delpratt to E. White, 19 December 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

While the initial transition out of captivity proved relatively easy for many repatriated POWs, there is evidence to suggest that others struggled. Several were hospitalised for medical conditions for extended periods of time. Joseph O'Neill was one of many ex-POWs transferred between different hospitals in England – O'Neill spent time in various hospitals and rest homes between December 1918 and his embarkation for Australia in May 1919 suffering from recurrent attacks of acute malaria.[31] Chomley and others at the POW Department visited those in hospital, where they found the health of the repatriated prisoners "better than we had expected," but presciently noted that "a very large number of cases … will need care and consideration for a long time to come."[32]

For others, the stigma of surrender and internment continued to prey on their minds. At Chomley's afternoon teas, several ex-POWs were introduced to dignitaries and notable men of the military who were interested in their experiences.[33] Delpratt told his family about meeting the previous Governor of Victoria, Lord Carmichael, and his wife:

> I think we managed to interest the old man though a lot of his questions were a long way out of our depth. Certainly he looked down our noses when Lady C held matches to light the cigarettes of the 'splendid defenders of the Empire' – both of us with 3½ years service … in Turkey![34]

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[29] C. Campbell to Chomley, 14 February 1919, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Alan Campbell, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 32.

[30] For a description of George's time in Paris, see Greg Kerr, *Lost Anzacs: The Story of Two Brothers* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 227-231.

[31] See Repatriation Case File of Joseph O'Neill, NAA B73/54 R67430.

[32] M.E. Chomley, "Final Report on the Prisoners of War Department of the Australian Red Cross Society," 11.

[33] Chomley organised introductions between the prisoners and these other significant guests, which included, among others, Generals Birdwood and Brudenell White, and Mrs W.M Hughes. See "Final Report," 10.

[34] Delpratt to E. White, 26 December 1918, Maurice George Delpratt Correspondence.

Delpratt's obvious excitement at meeting such prestigious individuals and being in what he termed "exalted presences" could not quite quash his lingering doubts about how capture and imprisonment affected others' perceptions of him as a soldier.

Some men also appear to have indulged in questionable behaviour and acts. In an article outlining some of the problems faced by American ex-POWs from Vietnam during the repatriation process, American Army psychologists Robert Ursano and James Rundell argue that, for those moving from a period of prolonged imprisonment to freedom, "the brief period of euphoria upon release is often replaced by a period of overstimulation."[35] Ursano and Rundell state that many ex-POWs compensate for things they have been denied, or have missed out on, during their internment. Overeating, for example, is a common problem for repatriated prisoners of war.[36] Several Australians repatriated from Turkey appear to have tried to reclaim lost time or experiences; many did not return from leave while a few were admitted to hospitals suffering from venereal disease (VD). The excitement of release got the better of Ernest Ingram in Egypt – he went AWOL twice in January 1919, was admitted to hospital with VD once in February and again in April, and was charged with resisting arrest and using threatening language to superior officers while they attempted to return him from another AWOL episode in April.[37]

For those who did remain in England and were well enough and able to participate, educational and vocational classes or apprenticeships were available.[38] Prime Minister Hughes and General John Monash, in charge of repatriation and demobilisation, developed these programmes for two reasons: to maintain morale – Monash argued that the "violent extinction" of the common purpose holding together the AIF could lead to loss of *esprit de corps* among the troops – and to instil ideas of "useful and efficient future citizenship" and facilitate the transition of the men from soldiers to civilians.[39] Hughes and Monash wanted the troops to explore ways they could be of benefit to themselves, their families, and the state in postwar Australia, sentiments that were echoed by Edward Millen, Minister for Repatriation, in the booklet *What Australia is Doing for Her Returned Soldiers*.[40] The schemes outlined by Monash and in Millen's booklet encompassed educational work and also industrial employment. Many Australians availed themselves of these opportunities in diverse fields such as engineering, architecture, accountancy, farming, dentistry and textiles. Some requested extra training in their previous field, while others recognised that the effects of war rendered them unable to resume their prewar occupation and were placed in retraining programmes.[41] These training classes and employment opportunities kept several ex-prisoners in England until late 1919. The last ex-prisoner to return to Australia (excepting those who were permitted discharge outside of Australia) arrived in March 1920.[42]

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[35] Robert Ursano and James Rundell, "The Prisoner of War," *Military Medicine* 155 no. 4 (1990), 177.

[36] Ibid.

[37] See "Casualty Form – Active Service," NAA B2455 INGRAM ERNEST.

[38] Educational classes and vocational training were also implemented in France and the Middle East while men awaited repatriation. Those in the Middle East were eventually transferred to the United Kingdom as problems related to the employment of white Australians alongside native Egyptians were envisaged. See Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees, *The Last Shilling: A History of Repatriation in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), 125.

[39] Lloyd and Rees, *The Last Shilling,* 116-7.

(Re)Locating the Dead

Fifty-four Australians never returned from Turkey. As discussed in Chapter Two, these prisoners died from disease, accidents, or wounds received during battle and were generally buried in the Christian cemeteries of the various towns or work camps in which they were interned. Where possible, their graves were marked by fellow prisoners and particulars were forwarded on to the military authorities, the Red Cross POW Department, and, occasionally, their families. Upon the cessation of hostilities, political instability within Turkey and worries over the continued maintenance of existing graves made their identification a priority.

Indeed, locating the graves of all deceased Australian servicemen was of central importance in the immediate postwar period. The Australian Graves Services (AGS), often working in tandem with the British Graves Registration Unit, oversaw the identification and exhumation of the remains of Australian soldiers from various battlefronts and maintained records for relatives. In 1920, after recognising the desperate need of the bereaved to obtain information about the graves of loved ones, the AGS, together with the government, published a booklet titled *Where The Australians Rest*. Bart Ziino notes that the sketches of cemeteries and memorials to the missing in the booklet offered the relatives of the deceased a sense of connection with the distant graves, and reassured them that their lost husbands, fathers, sons and brothers were cared for.[43] The many cemeteries on the Gallipoli Peninsula and in France and Belgium naturally dominate the booklet, though the graves of prisoners of war were also mentioned:

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[40] E.D. Millen, *What Australia is doing for her Returned Soldiers* (Melbourne: H.J. Green, 1918).

[41] Lloyd and Rees, *The Last Shilling,* 125. Gallipoli POW William Mackay, for example, who was left with extensive scarring after being shot in the back and buttocks, received training as a wool classer as his reduced mobility made returning to his prewar position as a miner unlikely.

[42] NAA B2445 CAMPBELL COLIN. Campbell worked at the AIF Headquarters in London upon his repatriation from Turkey. He met and married a British woman in September 1919 and they travelled to Australia together in early 1920.

> Even in far Turkey, in the wild passes of the Taurus Mountains, there are the graves of Australian soldiers who were captured … High up on the summit of the railway line in the Amanus Mountains … near Hadschikiri [sic], are the graves of perhaps a score of British or Dominion soldiers … Steps are being taken to trace all such outlying graves in Turkey.[44]

Despite assurances that prisoners' graves had been identified, the booklet offered no comforting sketches or passages describing their location.

In the early 1920s the Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) formulated a provisional policy for British POW graves in Turkey. Graves located northwest of the Taurus Mountains were to be concentrated to Constantinople, while those in the southeast would be relocated to another nearby British cemetery. This policy of relocation excluded the graves of Indian prisoners, which remained in their original locations.[45] The process of concentration took some time. Diplomatic tension between the British and the nationalist Turks continued to make work and travel in Turkey difficult, and the drawing of new national borders caused some confusion as to who was responsible for graves in prewar territories.[46] Furthermore, the work of identifying graves, constructing cemeteries and establishing memorials on Gallipoli was given precedence.[47] The relocation of dead POWs did not begin in earnest until after the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

The first to be exhumed and reinterred were the remains of prisoners buried around the Constantinople area. In March 1924, the brother of Francis Easton, who died from pneumonia in November 1916 and was buried in a Catholic cemetery at Ismidt, was informed that Francis' remains had been reinterred at Haidar Pasha Cemetery, a small cemetery in Constantinople given to the British by the Turks during the Crimean War as a place to commemorate the dead of that conflict.[48] Aware of the potentially upsetting nature of such news, AIF Base Records assured John Easton that the reburial had been performed "with every measure of care and reverence" and that a religious service was held.[49] Easton's response to the movement of his brother's grave is not noted, though it is probable that he and his family experienced some distress. The Eastons were particularly determined to obtain photographs of Francis' original grave immediately after the war, and had even requested an extra twenty-four copies on top of the three free photographs provided by the government to all next-of-kin.[50] The family had obviously fostered a strong relationship with the Ismidt grave, which the reburial may have broken.

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[43] Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves, and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), 85-6.

[44] *Where The Australians Rest* (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1920), 65.

[45] "Draft Resolution: War Graves in Asia Minor," Asia Minor – Graves In, CWGC WG920/1.

[46] The British graves at Kars caused some consternation. These graves were located in an old Russian cemetery, which had been handed over to the Turks without recognition by the British Foreign Office.

[47] Director of Works to Controller of Administration IWGC, 14 May 1920, CWGC WG920/1.

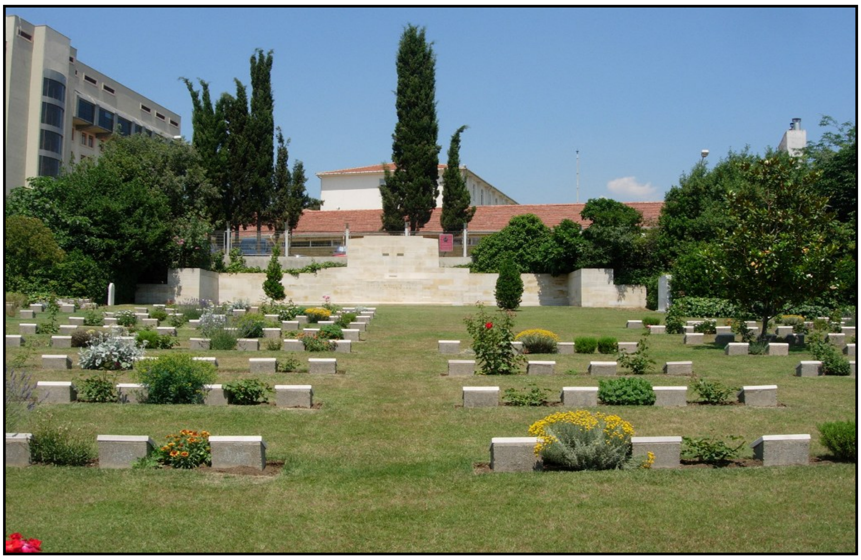

Figure 6.2: Haidar Pasha Cemetery, Istanbul.
Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Some three years later, a similar process of reburial was performed for the remains of prisoners buried in the Turkish interior. In 1927, Brendan Calcutt's grave at Hadjikiri in the Taurus Mountains was deemed "unsuitable for permanent retention" and his remains were exhumed and reburied in Baghdad North Gate

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[48] Along with approximately 6,000 graves from the Crimean period, the cemetery contains the graves of 407 First World War Commonwealth servicemen, including eleven Australian prisoners, many of whom, like Easton, were moved from original gravesites at various locations around Constantinople. Several casualties of the Second World War, and a memorial to Hindu soldiers of the Indian Army, are also located at Haidar Pasha.

[49] Base Records to J.E. Easton, 1 March 1924, NAA B2455 EASTON FP.

[50] J.E. Easton to Base Records, 23 August 1921, NAA B2455 EASTON FP. The Eastons received the extra photographs in April 1922.

Cemetery.[51] Calcutt's parents, who had lost another son on Gallipoli, were informed of the reinterment and assured that the process, though regretful, was necessary to "ensure the future maintenance and upkeep" of Brendan's grave.[52] Like the Eastons, the Calcutts were guaranteed that "the work of re-burial has been carried out carefully and reverently" and that their son could now be permanently commemorated.[53]

However, complete reburials were not always possible. As with many of the graves found in France and on Gallipoli, individual prisoners' remains became tangled with other bodies and, over the months and years, identifying marks, papers, and uniforms were damaged or degraded. In these instances, the identification of specific men was not feasible. The bodies of three Australians buried at Adana, southeast of the Taurus Mountains – Francis Adams, Jim Lord and Charles Smith – were recovered for reinterment, but their individual remains could not be identified. Their families were notified of the exhumation of the original graves and were informed that the collective remains were buried in three graves at Baghdad North Gate. Each grave was marked by a headstone inscribed with the name and particulars of one of the men, and the words "buried near this spot."[54]

Distressing as exhumation and reburial may have been, families at least knew that their loved one had a permanent grave. Pat Jalland notes that approximately 25,000 Australians who died during the Great War were never identified, and were instead listed as missing.[55] The bodies of several prisoners were similarly never recovered from original burial sites in Turkey. In 1928, ten years after the end of the war and eight years after the publication of *Where The Australians Rest*, relatives of the eleven Australians buried in the Armenian Cemetery at Angora were informed that IWGC's efforts to locate their graves had failed. Instead of reburial, these men would be commemorated on a memorial in Baghdad North Gate Cemetery. Trooper Andrew Day's mother received a letter informing her that as no identifying markings of her son's grave could be traced, his name and regimental particulars would be inscribed on a "special Kipling memorial":

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[51] Secretary AGS to IWGC, 21 April 1927, NAA B2455 CALCUTT B. Baghdad North Gate Cemetery was established in April 1917 when the Indian Expeditionary Force took the city from Ottoman troops. The cemetery contains the graves of over 4,100 Commonwealth casualties of World War I, including 21 Australian prisoners originally buried in Asia Minor. Some 300 Commonwealth servicemen from the Second World War are also buried at Baghdad North Gate, as well as Turks and civilians. The current instability in Iraq has meant that the continued maintenance of the cemetery has been affected.

[52] Base Records to J.R. Calcutt, 17 June 1927, NAA B2455 CALCUTT B.

[53] Secretary AGS to IWGC, 21 April 1917, NAA B2455 CALCUTT B.

[54] Secretary AGS to IWGC, 15 August 1927, NAA B2455 ADAMS FL.

[55] Pat Jalland, *Changing Ways of Death in Twentieth Century Australia: War, Medicine and the Funeral Business* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006), 42.

> TO THE MEMORY OF THESE 265 SOLDIERS AND SAILORS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE WHO DIED AS P. OF. W. AND WERE BURIED AT THE TIME IN THE CEMETERY AT ANGORA, ADA BAZAR, BOZANTI, ISLAHIN AND NISIBIN BUT WHOSE GRAVES ARE NOW LOST.
> "THEIR GLORY SHALL NOT BE BLOTTED OUT."[56]

The Angora Memorial was established specifically for prisoners of war but, in other cases, prisoners whose bodies could not be found were added to general memorials for the missing in the vicinity of where they were believed buried. One such memorial was established at Basra, southern Iraq, in March 1929. The Basra Memorial commemorates some 40,500 'missing' Commonwealth servicemen who died primarily in the Mesopotamian theatre during and immediately after the First World War, including seven Australian prisoners.[57] Three Australian Gallipoli POWs whose bodies could not be recovered, Alan Campbell, Elvas Wilson, and William Warnes, were listed alongside nearly 5,000 of their fellow Anzacs on the Gallipoli Lone Pine Memorial.

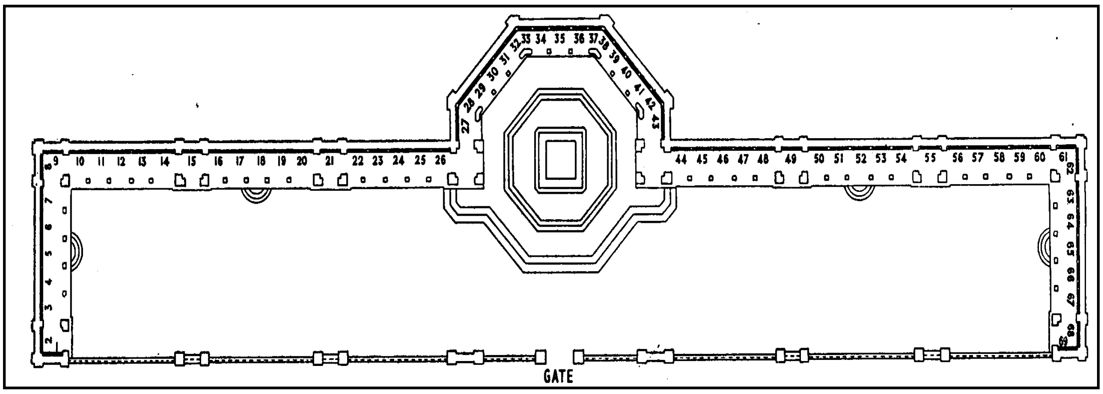

Figure 6.3: Layout of panels at the Basra Memorial, Iraq. The names of the Australian prisoners are located at panel 65, with two Air Mechanics captured at Kut – Soley and Williams – also inscribed at panel 43.
Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The reinterment of dead POWs in official War Graves Commission cemeteries relieved families of concerns regarding the care of their loved one's grave. Public anxiety over the fate of Australian graves on the different fronts was largely based on worries regarding their ongoing treatment and maintenance. The care of graves on the Western Front was seen as guaranteed – the Australians were buried in an Allied cemetery in European soil, and fellow Christians maintained the gravesites. Australian graves on Gallipoli were, however, a cause of significant concern. Worries regarding the appropriate respect that Christian graves would be afforded by the Turks drove the speedy construction of official cemeteries and memorials on the Peninsula.[58] Similar concerns preyed on the minds of those whose loved ones died as POWs in Turkey. The brother of Allan Kimber, whose remains were, along with several other Australians, moved from Nidge camp cemetery to Baghdad North Gate in 1927, was pleased that Allan's final resting place was not in Turkish territory. While Kimber's remains could not be individually identified, his brother explained to Base Records that he and his family were "quite satisfied that everything possible has been done in order to perpetuate his memory," adding that "it is a great consolation to know my Brother is now buried in British territory."[59] Even though the Kimbers were unlikely to ever visit Allan's grave in Baghdad, knowing that his body rested in what Ziino calls "some distant extension of Australia or England" brought solace to the bereaved family.[60] Families of deceased POWs who could not be identified struggled with the knowledge their loved one would forever lie in Turkish soil; as the mother of deceased *AE2* submariner Michael Williams explained to Prime Minister Hughes in a letter written after the war, "my son was buried as A Turk which is hard on true Britishers."[61]

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[56] Base Records to C. Day, 3 February 1928, NAA B2455 DAY A.

[57] The memorial at Basra had to be moved from its original location on the west bank of the Shatt-al-Arab in 1997 due to the sensitivity of the site. It is now located near Nasiriyah. The Australians are: Sydney Crozier, George Donnison, Claude Redman, Norman Sherwin, Richard Stripling, Thomas Soley and Leo Williams.

Along with identifying, relocating, and commemorating the dead and missing, the government and military authorities also acknowledged the grief of the bereaved by honouring their lost loved ones. Like the families of all Australians killed in action, the families of deceased prisoners were eligible to receive specific commemorative items, including brass memorial plaques, a memorial scroll and message from the King, a register of all British and Dominion war graves in the cemetery in which their loved one was buried or commemorated, and service medals. These treasured items, together with the soldier's personal effects such as jewellery, clothing, and Bibles, helped facilitate what Tanja Luckins calls the transition from the experience of loss to the process of memory-making.[62] However, not all next-of-kin were interested in mementoes of their loved one's service. The wife of Bert Wood, who died of his wounds soon after his capture on Gallipoli in August 1915, renounced her claim to Bert's war medals in favour of his mother. Mrs Wood had also lost two brothers and a nephew, and told Base Records "I do not think I need anything more to remind me of that cursed war."[63] As Luckins notes, tangible evidence of their loss sometimes brought distress rather than comfort for the bereaved.[64]

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[58] Ziino, *A Distant Grief,* 59-81.

[59] W.C. Kimber to Base Records, 13 November 1927, NAA B2455 KIMBER ALLAN THOMAS.

[60] Ziino, *A Distant Grief,* 59.

[61] M. Williams to W. Hughes, 1 September 1919, Submarine AE2 etc., NAA MP472/1 5/19/2520.

For some, this distress was expressed as a desire to punish the perpetrators of their grief. Maude Jennings Green, whose brother Edgar died from pneumonia following Spanish influenza just prior to the Armistice, was "haunted" by the fact that "no one can ever make up to him for all he has suffered."[65] Francis Adams' father was similarly angry at the death of his son and the treatment he had endured during the march from Kut into Turkey. In early 1919 he wrote to Base Records about the possibility of prosecuting the Turks for the mistreatment of POWs, asking "can you tell me if any action is to be taken in regard to the inhuman treatment these men received as I considered they were murdered."[66] Adams was not alone in calling for the prosecution of the Turks for their treatment of POWs; in November 1918, the Executive Committee of the Prisoners in Turkey Committee passed a resolution calling for the War Office to demand the Turkish government compensate the families of deceased prisoners, and that the British government ensure "guilty individuals be punished."[67]

The prosecution of those accused of violations of international law – the term 'war crimes' was not in popular parlance until later in the 1920s – was a key aspect of the postwar treaties between the Central Powers and the Allies.[68] In Europe, as

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[62] Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People's Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War* (Fremantle: Curtin University Books, 2004), 133. See also Jen Hawksely, "In the Shadow of War: Australian Parents and the Legacy of Loss," *Journal of Australian Studies* 33 no. 2 (2009):189.

[63] H. Conway to Base Records, 1 March 1921, NAA B2455 WOODS B

[64] Luckins, *The Gates of Memory*, 189. In later life Bert's wife obviously changed her mind; she applied for his Gallipoli Medallion in November 1967.

[65] M.J. Green to Chomley, 15 December 1918, ARC POW Dept. Case File of Edgar Green, AWM1DRL/0428 Box 79.

[66] F. Adams to Base Records, 5 February 1919, NAA B2455 ADAMS F L.

[67] H. Bentinck, Chairman PITC to Secretary War Cabinet, 5 November 1918, Repatriation for Turkish ill-treatment of Prisoners of War – Copy of Resolution by Executive Committee of Prisoners in Turkey Committee, National Archives Kew, CAB 24/69/24.

[68] Daniel Marc Segesser, "The Punishment of War Crimes Committed Against Prisoners of War, Deportees and Refugees during and after the First World War," *Immigrants and Minorities* 26 no. 1-2 (2008): 138-9.

Heather Jones writes, popular impressions of the treatment meted out to prisoners of war by the Germans led to a wave of new negative ideas and rhetoric regarding the former enemy.[69] Under the auspices of the Treaty of Versailles several members of the German military were tried at Leipzig in 1921 for the mistreatment of prisoners of war. Three junior officers were found guilty and sentenced to periods of time in civilian prisons.[70] These seemingly lenient sentences sparked outrage and protest in Great Britain, France, and the US. However, British delegates in Leipzig argued that such trials were in fact a significant victory for the Allies; as Daniel Segesser writes, the trial and conviction of supposed German war criminals by a German court carried more weight in Germany than would any trials conducted by an Allied court.[71]

The prosecution of Turks accused of similar crimes was more complicated. Official government reports into the treatment of British prisoners of war in Turkey produced immediately after the war highlight alleged mistreatment, particularly of those prisoners captured at Kut. Together with allegations of the massacre of Armenians, these accusations formed the basis of the push for trials.[72] The 1920 Treaty of Sevres made provision for the trial by domestic courts-martial of those accused. However, frustrated by the slow process and low conviction rate, the British moved several of the Turkish accused to Malta – Allied-occupied territory – to face an international tribunal. These prisoners were later released after the British were accused of infringing Turkish sovereignty. Pressure from the Ankara-based Turkish nationalist party, including the taking of 29 British soldiers and civilians as hostages, also forced the British to concede defeat.[73] In 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne, which outlined the formation of the new Turkish nation, and which made no provision for the prosecution of those accused of crimes against prisoners of war or against Armenians, replaced the Treaty of Sevres. Punishing those believed responsible for the mistreatment of POWs was no longer possible. By the end of the 1920s, the relocation of prisoners' remains, or the memorialisation of those whose bodies could not be found, was complete. Accusations of crimes against prisoners of war were dropped, and international recognition of the peace treaty with the new Turkish nation meant that further prosecutions were not undertaken.

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[69] Heather Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany 1914-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 313.

[70] Alan Kramer, "The First Wave of International War Crimes Trials," *European Review* 14 no. 4 (2006): 447. Some 860 Germans were accused of war crimes, 14% of which related to mistreatment of prisoners of war. However, only 45 of those accused were actually tried. Kramer notes that the Leipzig Trials were something of a test of Germany's good will.

[71] Segesser, "The Punishment of War Crimes," 143. Heather Jones provides interesting background information regarding the trials and the testimony of British ex-POWs. See Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War,* 295.

[72] For a detailed report regarding allegations of mistreatment of POWs by Turkish authorities, see "Turkish and Turko-German Offenders Against the Laws of War" in *First and Second Interim Reports From the Committee of Enquiry into Breaches of the Laws of War*, *with Appendices,* 3 June 1915, 169-235, National Archives Kew, CAB 24/85/6.

[73] Kramer, "The First Wave," 445. See also "Negotiations with the Turkish Nationalists for the Mutual Release of Prisoners of War," National Archives Kew, CAB 24/127/71.

Postwar Health and the Repat

As the immediate impact of captivity receded, its longer-term effects emerged. For some ex-prisoners of the Turks, captivity had minimal impact on postwar health and wellbeing. One Light Horseman captured at Romani in 1916 wrote in his 1920s memoir that he had returned "little the worse for my terrible experiences while prisoner of war in Turkey."[74] However, analysis of previously unexplored Repatriation Department records suggests that, for others, it left a more indelible impression.

Of the 142 ex-prisoners who returned to Australia, sixty-five extant case files detail some form of contact with Repatriation authorities.[75] These files offer a snapshot of the diversity of ways in which support was offered to all returned servicemen in postwar Australia.[76] Some outline assistance regarding vocational training. D'Arcy Armstrong applied to the Department in July 1919, less than one month after his discharge, for help securing training in accountancy. Repat officials offered Armstrong, who had worked as a clerk for three years prior to enlistment, a job at the Brisbane Repatriation Commission, and a position at the Central Technical College.[77] Others, like Edgar Hobson, requested temporary loans to enable the purchase of equipment and goods necessary for the resumption of prewar occupations. Hobson had worked as a wool classer before the war and, after obtaining similar work on a sheep station in Queensland's Western Downs, required a loan of ten pounds from the Department to purchase a tent, work clothes, boots, blankets, and other supplies he would need for his new position.[78] Two men – William V. Kelly and George Gilbert – successfully applied for closer settlement blocks; Gilbert ran a dairy farm and Kelly grew maize and potatoes.[79] However, as was the case with many other soldier settlers, Kelly had to vacate his block in July 1925 owing to the failure of his potato crop.[80]

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[74] J.R. Foster, *Two-and-a-Half Years a Prisoner of War in Turkey – Related by Trooper G. W. Handsley* (Brisbane: Jones and Hambly, 19-), 64.

[75] This is not to say that the other 77 did not also have dealings with the Department. According to archivists at the Department of Veteran's Affairs, World War One case files were often destroyed when a man passed away. As such, this can only be a part history of the postwar experiences of the prisoners.

[76] For a comprehensive overview of the development of the Australian Repatriation Department and its role in the lives of returned servicemen from the major wars of the twentieth century, see Lloyd and Rees, *The Last Shilling.*

[77] Repatriation Case File of D'Arcy Armstrong, NAA BP709/1 M19901 PT1.

The majority of ex-prisoners entered into correspondence with the Repat regarding health and pension issues. Each applicant claimed his problems were the result of time spent on active service and in captivity, and requested government assistance with medical care and financial compensation. It is within this correspondence and subsequent medical records that data about the longer-term effects of captivity can be obtained and assessed. Moreover, these records provide insight into how the ex-prisoners constructed captivity for those who held significant influence over the success or failure of their claims. For an application to the Repat to be successful, the illness, injury or incapacity had to be proven to be the direct result of, or aggravated by, war service. One way regular ex-serviceman could prove the validity of their claims was through medical records kept by casualty clearing stations, field hospitals, and bigger base hospitals both overseas and in Australia. For ex-prisoners claiming for incapacities suffered as a consequence of captivity, similar documentation was impossible to produce. Turkish records could be requested, but this was often a long, drawn-out, fruitless procedure. The link between captivity and ill health was thus difficult to prove to officials who had not experienced capture and internment themselves, particularly when documentary evidence was virtually non-existent. As such, to emphasise the legitimacy of their applications, the ex-prisoners followed similar patterns to their regular ex-service counterparts with regards to the language and rhetoric of their claims. Good health prior to war service was emphasised in nearly all applications, as were ideas of enduring the consequences of war service independently for extended periods of time. The ex-prisoners also tapped into those impressions of wartime imprisonment made popular during the latter years of the war – poor quality and insufficient rations, substandard accommodation and health care, physically demanding work, and exposure to disease – to portray their experiences as ones of suffering that necessitated compensation. In many instances, their supporters – wives, family friends, fellow ex-POWs and local doctors – did the same.

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[78] Repatriation Case File of Edgar Hobson, NAA BP709/1 M15754 PT1.

[79] Repatriation Case Files of William Kelly and George Gilbert, NAA B73/77 R57060 and NAA B73/29 H & R41707.

[80] "Precis of Evidence, December 1933," Repatriation Case File of William Kelly, NAA B73/29 H & R41707. For more on the Soldier Settlement scheme in Australia, see Lloyd and Rees, *The Last Shilling,* 43-61 and Marilyn Lake, *The Limits of Hope: Soldier Settlement in Victoria, 1915-38* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Malaria was one of the most significant issues for the ex-POW population in the immediate postwar period. Malaria was endemic to many of the regions in which Australians served, including Egypt, Gallipoli, the Sinai desert, Palestine, and Mesopotamia.[81] In 1931, the Department recorded that 1,647 pensions had been given to ex-AIF members for malaria.[82] Malaria was also, as discussed in Chapter Two, a problem in Turkey.[83] Many ex-prisoners believed that limited treatment in captivity had led to continued health complications and argued that recurrent attacks left them weak and unable to work. George Gilbert was one of twenty-three ex-POWs in receipt of a pension for malaria at some point after discharge. Gilbert initially received twenty-five percent of the full pension rate until his payments were reduced to 12.5 percent in 1923.[84] Gilbert continued to receive this rate of pension until the late-1930s, when a medical investigation determined that he was suffering from post-malarial debility, and stabilised his pension at the fortnightly rate of 18/8.[85] Gilbert was fortunate to have his pension stabilised. Other ex-POWs in receipt of pensions based on malarial infection had them cancelled as the years went on, some without investigation. Colin Campbell was told in May 1932 "the state Repatriation Board has decided that you are no longer suffering from malaria, or any effects thereof, and your entitlement for treatment and war pension for this condition is accordingly cancelled."[86]

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[81] See A.G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-1918 – Volume I. Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, 2nd ed (Melbourne: Australian War Memorial, 1938), 72, 231, 605 & 705-11, and F.M. Cutlack, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 – Volume VIII. The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theatres of War,* 11th ed (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1941), 8.

[82] See Table 72 in A.G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-1918 War – Volume III. Special Problems and Services* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1943), 973.

[83] Hikmet Ozdemir, *Ottoman Army 1914-1918: Disease and Death on the Battlefront*, trans. Saban Kardas (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 94-100.

[84] According to Stephen Garton, in 1920 the 100 percent war pension was forty-two shillings per week. Using these figures as a reference, Gilbert would have initially received ten shillings a week, then just over five. He also received pension benefits for his wife of four shillings and seven shillings for his children. See Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 92 and Repatriation Case File of George Ernest Gilbert, NAA B73/77 R57060.

[85] Repatriation Case File of George Ernest Gilbert, NAA B73/77 R57060.

[86] Dep. Comm. Repat to C. Campbell, May 1932, Repatriation Case File of Colin Campbell, NAA BP709/1 M40183 PT1.

Dysentery and gastric troubles were another key issue, with fifteen ex-prisoners pensioned for digestive conditions in the postwar period, including chronic diarrhoea, stomach pain and vomiting. Like malaria, dysentery was a common complaint in wartime Turkey. Lack of treatment upon initial infection could lead to a chronic form of the disease, which caused intermittent periods of constipation and diarrhoea, abdominal pain, vomiting, and anorexia, often for many subsequent years. George Roberts, who endured debilitating stomach issues during the 1920s and early 1930s and applied to the Department for medical and pension assistance in January 1936, suffered from chronic dysentery. He complained of pain in the stomach, constipation, and feeling ill after eating. Roberts told Repat officials that he had suffered from food that was "bad and scarce and sometimes uneatable" while in Turkey and that lack of clothing and blankets to protect against the elements had left him susceptible to the disease, as well as typhus and malaria.[87] Roberts stated in his claim that disease was so prevalent and medical care so limited in the POW camps that "it was die or get over it the best way you could."[88] His claim was initially rejected but, on appeal, the Melbourne Commission's Senior Medical Officer argued it was "reasonable" to attribute his condition to war service and captivity.

Problems associated with 'nerves' were another chief postwar health concern. Twenty ex-prisoners claimed Repat assistance for nervous troubles. Foreshadowing what those who endured captivity at the hands of the Japanese would report in the years after World War II, the ex-prisoners of the Turks told Repatriation medical officers that they suffered from insomnia, nightmares, depression, inability to concentrate, anxiety, and extreme nervousness.[89] Several prisoners linked digestive troubles to nervous conditions.[90] In 1934, William Mackay applied to have his nervous troubles assessed by the Department. A doctor's report compiled after his examination paints a picture of a man in severe psychological distress:

> This man is in a state of nervous strain the whole time. There is constant tremor of the hands which he tries to control with only partial success. There is an occasional facial

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[87] "Statement by Roberts, 7 December 1935," Repatriation Case File of George Roberts, NAA C138 H107606 PT1.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Studies into the postwar experiences of Australian prisoners of the Japanese – the largest number of Australians to return from a period of wartime captivity – suggest that forty-six percent suffered some form of anxiety-related illness. Rosalind Hearder, *Keep The Men Alive: Australian POW Doctors in Japanese Captivity* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2009), 195-8.

[90] At least five ex-POWs – Ellis Gilman, William V. Kelly, Francis Matthews, George Roberts, Leslie Lambert – were in receipt of pensions for digestive issues related to nervous trouble.

> tic and his expression suggests that he is far from normal … His voice is loud and expressionless. I should say that his neurosis is fairly severe.[91]

The ex-prisoners were not alone in being diagnosed as ‘far from normal’ in the postwar period. Michael Tyquin suggests some eight percent of all British returned servicemen were believed to have suffered mental or emotional troubles during and after the war, while a 1931 Australian Repatriation Department report indicated that some 829 applications had been received from returned servicemen claiming shellshock – an umbrella term applied to those who presented with symptoms such as tremors, paralysis, mutism, extreme emotional responses, and other so-called ‘hysterical’ reactions to life in the trenches and its attendant stresses – and over 5,000 from men claiming for neurasthenia.[92]

The construction of captivity as a period of intense suffering could also be of benefit in claims related to nervous trouble. William Mackay explained to Repat officials that “the treatment meted out to prisoners of war in Turkey did not improve my constitution.”[93] His nervous issues were, he believed, the result of being “knocked about a lot.”[94] However, the senior medical officer at the Brisbane Department believed that his troubles were not particularly incapacitating, and instigated an investigation into Mackay’s work and social habits to ensure he was not embellishing his problems. Eventually, a diagnosis of neurosis was added to Mackay’s previous claims for wounds, and he was pensioned at the rate of seventy-five percent.[95] In his claim for ‘nerves’, Maurice Delpratt and his wife also highlighted the features of POW life they believed led to Maurice’s condition. Mary Delpratt called her husband’s time in imprisonment a “nerve-wracking [sic] experience” and believed that it was “too horrible” and “a wonder they [ex-POW] are not permanently mad.”[96] Her testimony indicates that she had also become a victim of captivity; as Betty Peters discovered in her work with the wives of ex-POWs of the Japanese, the psychological troubles suffered by ex-prisoners also exacted a severe toll on partners and relationships.[97] Delpratt himself argued that "the everlasting drag and the fear and uncertainty" of captivity had played on his mind and stated that "the bugs, the lice, the funerals" and other privations, coupled with a beating he received, had left him feeling depressed and anxious.[98] Ernest Ingram's application for nervous trouble was also framed around his experiences of captivity. His claim was accepted in April 1936, after a doctor's report suggested his health concerns – particularly 'loss of self control' – were directly linked to his time as a POW: "such privation and apparently hopeless outlook during his captivity … must inevitably cause serious nervous trauma in one so young at the time."[99]

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[91] “Specialist Report by Dr S.F. McDonald, 3 August 1934,” Repatriation Case File of William Mackay, NAA BP709/1 M21112 PT1.

[92] Michael Tyquin, *Madness and the Military: Australia’s Experience of the Great War* (Sydney: Australian Military History Publications, 2006), 13; See Table 72 in A.G. Butler, *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-1918 War – Volume III. Special Problems and Services* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1943), 974. Neurasthenia differed from shellshock in that it was characterised not by hysteria, but by chronic feelings of fatigue and weakness.

[93] “Form U: Record of Evidence,” W. Mackay to Repat, June 1934, Repatriation Case File of William Mackay, NAA BP709/1 M21112 PT1.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Memo by C.C. Minty 4 September 1934, Repatriation Case File of William Mackay, NAA BP709/1 M21112 PT1.

[96] Mary Delpratt to Repat, 17 July 1937, Repatriation Case File of Maurice Delpratt, NAA BP709/1 M32040 PT 1.

Though a successful claim for 'nerves' meant access to medical and financial assistance, some ex-prisoners felt the stigma of diagnoses related to psychological trouble. In the 1930s Lancelot Lightfoot was unhappy with his diagnosis of neurosis attributed to what one doctor later stated was the "not inconsiderable rigours of life as a POW in Turkish hands."[100] Lightfoot clearly still felt ashamed some thirty years later when, after admission to a Repatriation Hospital for treatment, he was placed in a psychiatric ward. Lightfoot expressed his anger in a letter to the Department, which was annotated and forwarded to the hospital:

> He has a thing about psychiatric wards (stigma etc) and feels very strongly that admission to a ward of this sort is a reflection on his integrity and an indication that he is mad. 'How could he explain such a thing to his grandchildren, friends, and fellow members of the T&PI Association?' is the theme he labours.[101]

Before the war, mental illness carried a long tradition of social stigma and was seen as a typically feminine condition. But, with the dawning of the new form of industrialised warfare and the widespread carnage it brought, the numbers of servicemen suffering from various nervous troubles increased dramatically. Though there was a persistent undercurrent of non-believers, who argued that those with psychological disorders were simply effeminate cowards or malingerers with a pre-disposition to mental illness, sufferers' perceived 'unmanly' behaviour was made more socially acceptable by the fact that it was usually connected to direct combat experience.[102] Even though they suffered from similar complaints, the ex-prisoners did not share that experience of prolonged exposure to bombardment and shellfire and their troubles could therefore not be made more acceptable by linking them to the dynamic, masculine world of combat. That Lightfoot's neurosis was never attributed to combat experience was another possible factor behind his obvious discomfort with his diagnosis and subsequent treatment.

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[97] Betty Peters, "The Life Experiences of Partners of ex-POWs of the Japanese," *Journal of the Australian War Memorial* 28 (1996).

[98] Delpratt to Repat, 8 October 1937, Repatriation Case File of Maurice Delpratt, NAA BP709/1 M32040 PT 1.

[99] Dr L. Bond to Repat, 3 March 1936, Repatriation Case File of Ernest Ingram, NAA C138 R/M/H84881.

[100] Undated doctor's memo, Repatriation Case File of Lancelot Lightfoot, NAA D363/42 M13575.

[101] A/Dep.Comm to A/Med.Sup RGH, 11 September 1963, Repatriation Case File of Lancelot Lightfoot, NAA D363/42 M13575.

As the returned prisoners aged, health concerns such as ulcers, arthritis, hernias and heart disease became more prevalent. Like their regular service counterparts, many of the ex-POWs lodged speculative or rather hopeful claims to the Repat – though the ex-prisoners argued that these multiple health problems were the result of increased susceptibility caused by a weakened constitution brought about by captivity. In some instances, drawing on narratives of suffering as a POW to explain such health problems worked. George Paltridge first approached the Repat in 1936 claiming a history of chronic ill health stretching back to his days as a prisoner. Paltridge argued his time in Turkey left him prematurely debilitated and unable to work. After years of examinations and rejections, another medical assessment in 1948 diagnosed Paltridge suffered from avitaminosis as a prisoner, and stated that his symptoms were the result of debility "caused by conditions during time as POW."[103] Emphasising his ex-POW status eventually worked in his favour, and Paltridge was pensioned at the rate of fifty percent.[104] In 1963 Fred Haig, aged 68, applied to have a hiatus hernia (a bulging of the stomach into the diaphragm) accepted as a war disability. A pilot during the war, Haig successfully argued that his multiple war-related issues – including his crash-landing in 1918, the removal of hydatid cyst contracted while in Turkey, his "weakened state while a prisoner," and Spanish influenza also contracted in Turkey – contributed to the deterioration of his diaphragm muscles, and thus his hernia.[105]

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[102] For cynical attitudes towards shellshock see Tyquin, *Madness and the Military,* 33-8.

[103] "RMO's Report, 3 November 1948," Repatriation Case File of George Paltridge, NAA D363/46 H9587.

[104] It is interesting that this diagnosis and acceptance of claim for pension correlates with the end of World War Two and the return of the prisoners of the Japanese, many of who suffered from similar chronic diseases.

[105] F. Haig to Repat., 3 April 1963, Repatriation Case File of Frederick Haig, NAA B73/15 R88740.

The Repatriation Department also considered applications from the relatives of ex-servicemen who died from illness or disease believed to be related to war service. The families of several ex-prisoners who passed away applied to have the death officially recognised by the Department, thus making them eligible for funeral payments and ongoing pension benefits. Common causes of death included cancers and problems associated with heart or vascular disease, such as heart attacks, stroke, and myocarditis. Tuberculosis caused several deaths, two men died in accidents, and another two – Stewart Stormonth and Keith Hudson – committed suicide. The deaths of ten ex-POWs were officially attributed to war service and, again, the suffering of POWs in captivity was a key theme in these applications.[106] Joseph O'Neill died in December 1937 at the age of 45 years when his gastric ulcer haemorrhaged. With two small children to provide for, his widow Violet approached the Department for assistance. Her first application was refused but her appeal, supported by a statement from O'Neill's doctor that emphasised the ongoing constitutional effects of captivity – "the deficient treatment and insufficient nutrition whilst prisoners greatly undermined their resistance … Many Australians suffered severely from malaria and intestinal diseases and emaciation in some cases extreme" – was successful.[107]

However, many claims for health problems or death associated with experiences of captivity were not successful. Matthew Sloan suffered from recurrent attacks of malaria for several years after the end of the war. He first applied to the Repat in October 1935, citing that he had been "a victim" to the disease ever since his captivity, and was unable to continue working on his dairy farm.[108] While enquiries were made of Turkish authorities regarding records of Sloan's medical treatment as a POW – a futile pursuit, as the response from the Turks was that POW records were lost – Sloan was asked to provide a report outlining the reasons he believed his ill health was related to his time in captivity.[109] His statement draws on the impressions of captivity that circulated towards the end of the war:

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[106] These applications related to the deaths of Joseph O'Neill (1937), Roy Clarke (1937), Ellis Gilman (1938), Robert Griffiths (1941), John Halpin (1941), Archibald Hewitson (1954), Leonard Heathcote (1955), Maurice Delpratt (1957), William V. Kelly (1957), and Ron Austin (1965).

[107] Dr R.H. Strong to Repat., 15 November 1938, Repatriation Case File of Joseph O'Neill, NAA B73/54 R67430.

[108] M. Sloan to Repat., 24 October 1935, Repatriation Case File of Matthew Sloan, NAA BP709/1 M20001 PT1.

[109] Turkish Authorities to Australia House, 4 September 1936, Repatriation Case File of Matthew Sloan, NAA BP709/1 M20001 PT1.

> On the 1st May 1918 I was captured by the Turks during the Es Salt fighting. Their treatment of prisoners was brutal. With next to no clothing we slept on the bare ground, not even a handful of straw to lie on, no shelter of any kind over us. Rain or fine I never had even an old bag to put over me at night. Food – you could not call it food at all, a respectable pig would not eat what was given to us. Broken in health and body and well neigh broken in spirit.[110]

Sloan buttressed his claim with letters of support from family members, friends, and persons of influence in his town, including the local Reverend and Justice of the Peace. Each stated that captivity had had a deleterious effect on Sloan's health. Nevertheless, his application was rejected, as were his subsequent appeals, with the Senior Medical Officer stating that "the evidence does not support a claim that conditions found on investigation are related to W/S [war service]."[111]

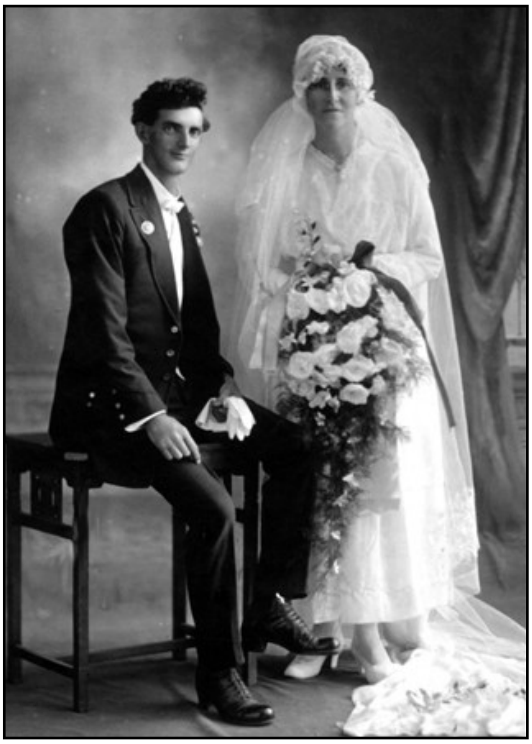

Figure 6.4: Matthew Sloan – then 26-years-old – on his wedding day in April 1920.
Source: Courtesy Winifred York.

Others also had their applications rejected. Concurrently with Haig lodging his successful claim for hiatus hernia, Ron Austin applied to have Parkinson's disease accepted as due to his war service. Diagnosed with the degenerative disease in the late

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[110] "Form U: Record of Evidence," M. Sloan to Repat., 9 December 1935, Repatriation Case File of Matthew Sloan, NAA BP709/1 M20001 PT1.
[111] Memo by C.C. Minty, 29 September 1936, Repatriation Case File of Matthew Sloan, NAA BP709/1 M20001 PT1.

1950s, Austin argued that his time in Turkey had caused its onset. In the early 1960s his local doctor wrote a letter of support:

> This condition has gradually progressed until now he needs a lot of help. The burden of his care is becoming more than can be arranged for. We apply for consideration of his case as due to, or aggravated by, privations suffered while a prisoner. I think it very probable, but we have few who might have suffered similar treatment as prisoners under the conditions which he suffered.[112]

Despite this supporting documentation – which indicates that doctors were complicit in deliberately portraying captivity as an experience of suffering that had the potential to cause legitimate health concerns – Repat officials rejected Austin's claim, arguing that Parkinson's could not have been caused by war experiences of over forty years previous.[113]

Applications for death as attributable to captivity experiences were also rejected.[114] In May 1933 Mary Earnshaw applied to have her husband, Frederick's, sudden death from heart failure related to carcinoma of the stomach attributed to war service. Mary wrote to the Repat in late June that year, arguing that her husband's health had been adversely affected by his POW experiences. Due to her "poor circumstances," Mary requested financial assistance in the form of a war widow's pension.[115] Several other doctors and family friends supported her claim, including one man who drew on a narrative of suffering to explain Earnshaw's declining health upon his return:

> He [Earnshaw] was never the same man after he came back. Before going to the war he was as hardy and healthy a man as you could find anywhere. He gradually went back [downhill] till the last 2 years he was practically an invalid. He never said much but at times he would mention that his constitution was ruined by what he went through.[116]

Nevertheless, in October 1933, the Repat refused Mary's claim, stating "carcinoma of the stomach is a constitutional condition and could have no possible relationship to war service."[117] Amy Stormonth's claim to have her husband's death from suicide in September 1935 recognised as due to war service was also rejected.[118] The cause of Stewart Stormonth's suicide was never fully understood; while officially it was attributed to financial stress his family believed he had an underlying nervous issue related to his experiences of the war. Amy expressed her grief and guilt over Stewart's death in a letter to a fellow ex-POW: "I'm afraid until too late we did not realise how ill Stormy was."[119] For these applicants, ex-POW status and the construction of captivity as an experience bound to have inevitable postwar consequences did not guarantee a positive outcome.

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[112] E. Littlejohn to Repat., 2 May 1963, Repatriation Case File of Ron Austin, NAA B73/0 M118571.

[113] "Repat. Report, May 1963," Repatriation Case File of Ron Austin, NAA B73/0 M118571.

[114] Applications regarding the deaths of Frederick Earnshaw (1933), Stewart Stormonth (1935), Frederick Gannon (1937), William Mackay (1941), Edwin Rose (1943), Timothy Cahill (1947), Ernest Ingram (1954), Francis Matthews (1958), Vincent Parkinson (1960), George Paltridge (1961), Matthew Sloan (1963) and William Simms (1973) were all rejected by the Repat as attributable to war service.

[115] M. Earnshaw to Repat., June 1933, Repatriation Case File of Frederick Earnshaw, NAA B73/0 M11857.

[116] P. Gallagher to Repat., 25 September 1933, Repatriation Case File of Frederick Earnshaw, NAA B73/0 M11857.

Rejected claims, suspicion over late applications and lack of documentary evidence, and close investigation of bodies, minds, and sometimes lifestyles caused a sense of bitterness among the ex-POW population with regards to the Repat.[120] However, there is no evidence to suggest that ex-prisoners of the Turks were subject to more scrutiny, or suffered more rejection, than other returned servicemen. Indeed, as Marina Larsson and other scholars of repatriation in Australia note, feelings of discontent about Repatriation authorities' rulings were a popular discourse among all ex-servicemen and their families.[121] *Smith's Weekly* – a patriotic newspaper popular among members of the 1st AIF – even dubbed the Repat 'the cyanide gang', and made it a priority to critique the rulings of Repatriation authorities and promote cases of perceived injustice.[122] Despite the fact that many ex-POWs had their claims approved largely because of their history of captivity, there was nevertheless a general feeling among many of the ex-prisoners that they had been badly done by. Matthew Sloan, for example, strongly believed his many applications were rejected because officials and doctors had not properly taken into consideration his time in Turkey.[123] In a 1947 speech to the House of Representatives regarding the proposal of a 'three shillings a day' payment to all Australians held captive by the enemy during World War II, Thomas White also stressed what he saw was an ambivalent response to ex-POWs of the First World War from the Repatriation authorities:

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[117] Dr Crowe to Repat., 19 October 1933, Repatriation Case File of Frederick Earnshaw, NAA B73/0 M11857.

[118] For more on the issue of suicide among returned servicemen and the Repat see Garton, *The Cost of War,* 25-8.

[119] A. Stormonth to T. White, 31 January 1936, Repatriation Case File of Stewart Stormonth, NAA BP709 M20283.

[120] The ex-POWs were not alone in lodging late claims. Marina Larsson notes that the number of applicants for war disability pension increased dramatically during the 1930s and, by 1937, just under half of all returned servicemen had applied. There are several reasons to explain this delay. That the peak of claims occurred during a period of severe economic depression, when any financial assistance could benefit those facing periods of prolonged unemployment, was noticed warily at the time by the Repatriation Department. Less cynically, Larsson suggests that delayed applications were due to the simple passage of time, and correlate with the transition of the men from youth to middle age and inevitable decline in health and fitness. Another possible factor for delayed applications to the Repat is the veteran's own recognition of a problem. The excitement of return meant any health concerns were often glossed over or downplayed by the ex-POWs in efforts to speed up the demobilisation process. Some returned prisoners obviously felt reasonably healthy and did not see a need to highlight any issues until later in life. Others did not want to become reliant on government payouts. Indeed, one ex-POW justified his delayed application by stating: "my only reason for not applying before was solely because I felt I 'could paddle my own canoe'". See Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs: Living With the Scars of War* (Sydney: Universtiy of New South Wales Press, 2009)*,* 215 & 209 and Lightfoot to Repat., 27 January 1938, Repatriation Case File of Lancelot Lightfoot, NAA D363/42 M13575.

[121] Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs,* 217.

> As prisoners of war they disappeared from the face of the earth. They were lost souls. When they returned to civil life they were Rip Van Winkles … The position of men who have disappeared for a long time is not understood by repatriation officials.[124]

Drawing on his own experiences, and those of his fellow ex-prisoners, White argued that "the sufferings that men underwent as prisoners of the enemy countries have imprinted on them a mark that will not become apparent for years." He argued that a special body should be formed to ensure the continued welfare of World War II ex-POWs and identify specific health issues among the group – something he clearly felt he and his comrades had been denied upon their return from Turkey.[125]

Public Reinforcement of Private Inferiority

White's feelings towards the Repat – and those of other ex-POWs like Matthew Sloan – can be attributed to the seeming public reinforcement of the prisoners' own feelings of inferiority and sense of difference from other returned servicemen. As discussed in earlier chapters, capture and imprisonment caused the prisoners to question their contribution to the war. Involvement in the war effort took on particular currency in postwar Australia, when the fighting spirit and martial prowess of the Anzacs were celebrated throughout the country and the returned serviceman was held up as the epitome of manly success. Some ex-prisoners felt they had fallen short of the expectations of the Australian soldier and thus failed to meet the prescription for contemporary masculinity. Halpin expressed these feelings in his memoir, writing that the prisoners had not only surrendered their bodies to the Turks, but had also "surrendered manhood."[126] Instead of suffering in the trenches of the Western Front, or participating in the victorious charge into Palestine, the prisoners had finished the war in a Turkish prison camp, where many had worked for the enemy. Such obvious differences between their war and those of their counterparts fostered a sense of shame and guilt among many of the ex-prisoners for, as Michael Tyquin writes, "despite the much vaunted larrikinism and casualness of the Australian psyche, in reality there was little room for personal failure in war."[127]

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[122] Lloyd and Rees, *The Last Shilling,* 187-208; Garton, *The Cost of War,* 96.

[123] "Reasons for Appeal," September 1963, Repatriation Case File of Matthew Sloan, NAA BP709/1 M20001 PT1.

[124] White, *CPD (House*), "Australian Prisoners of War Speech," 25 March 1947, 1106-7. Many thanks to Christina Twomey for pointing me in the direction of this source.

[125] In 1945, the Department of Repatriation did not want to be seen to be offering special assistance to ex-prisoners over returned servicemen in general. Those who had endured captivity in Japan and Germany were kept within the same framework as other veterans and, like the prisoners of the Turks before them, had to prove their claims of incapacity related to imprisonment. For more on the repatriation experiences of the prisoners of the Japanese see Garton, *The Cost of War,* 219-27, McKernan, *This War Never Ends*, 153-72 and Janette Bomford, "Fractured Lives: Australian Prisoners of War of the Japanese and Their Families" (PhD Thesis, Deakin University, 2001).

Maurice Delpratt's shame at becoming a POW has been noted in previous chapters. This shame would continue to haunt him long after the war finished. In a statement to the Brisbane Repatriation Department in 1937, Delpratt's sense of inadequacy is clear: "I worry and brood continually on the fact I had failed so badly to serve my country and had, in fact, served my country's foe by helping to build a railway to be used against my own mates."[128] Delpratt's wife, Mary, argued that his embarrassment at becoming a POW led Delpratt to develop what she described as a "distinct inferiority complex" and made him reluctant to discuss his experiences.[129] Amy Stormonth wrote that she had also noticed her husband's reluctance to discuss his war experiences, and tried to speak to him about it on several occassions, "but he always replied 'don't worry about me, I am quite alright', and that was all I could ever get out of him."[130]

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[126] John Halpin, *Blood in the Mists* (Sydney: The Macquarie Head Press, 1934), 122.

[127] Tyquin, *Madness and the Military,* 9.

[128] Delpratt to Repat., 6 October 1937, Repatriation Case File of Maurice Delpratt, NAA BP709/A M32040 PT1.

[129] Mary Delpratt to Repat., 17 July 1937, Repatriation Case File of Maurice Delpratt, NAA BP709/A M32040 PT1.

[130] "Statement by Mrs A.P.R. Stormonth, 21 September 1935," Repatriation Case File of Stewart Stormonth, NAA BP709/1 M20283 PT1.

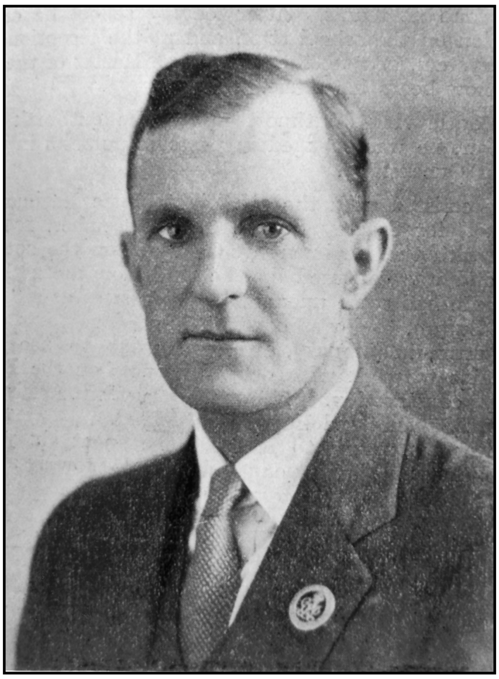

Figure 6.5: Maurice Delpratt, c1928.
Source: Courtesy The Southport School.

These concerns were compounded by lack of public awareness of, or interest in, the prisoners' experiences. As discussed in Chapter Four, newspapers printed articles during the war about the prisoners in Germany and Turkey, and many Australians helped raise funds to ensure the continued work of welfare agencies on behalf of the captive men. However, this awareness was quickly overwhelmed in the aftermath of the war by the stories of servicemen returned from victory in France and the Middle East. As Alon Rachamimov writes, the Western Front was always going to garner the most attention in the postwar period as it was where the main belligerents deployed the majority of their troops.[131] Moreover, it was the site of the most 'different' war experiences – industrialised warfare and technologically advanced weaponry called for new tactics that diverged from 'traditional' battlefronts. Other fronts, and other experiences, quickly became viewed as "side-shows."[132] This was something William Randall experienced first-hand upon his return to his Victorian hometown. Randall accepted an invitation to a convention for returned servicemen, and was placed last on the list of speakers. The organiser of the event justified Randall's position by explaining that, though "Private Randall was equally as good as the others," the rest of the guests "had been in France."[133] An obvious hierarchy of experiences operated at this event in which those who fought on the Western Front occupied the top rung, publicly emphasising the lustre of the combat experience and reinforcing any private sense of inferiority Randall felt.

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[131] Alon Rachimimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 222.
[132] Ibid.

Lack of public awareness of ex-POWs and captivity experiences was a phenomenon common among many nations in the aftermath of the war. Heather Jones suggests that ex-prisoners in Britain and Germany were victims of a "historical amnesia" in the period between the end of the First World War and the outbreak of the Second, as POW experiences and issues were largely forgotten in favour of ongoing reconciliation between the former belligerents.[134] In other European states, ignoring, and in several instances openly attacking, ex-POWs was widely practised. According to Reinhard Nachtigal, French POWs returned from Germany were accused of disloyalty, while Italian POWs returned from captivity in Austria were charged with mass defection and, in a terrible irony, were interned in Italian gaols and prison camps.[135] Austro-Hungarian POWs repatriated from Russia were the subjects of intense scrutiny and surveillance by a government that feared they had been exposed to Bolshevism or indoctrinated in anti-Habsburg beliefs.[136] Russian POWs returning to the new Soviet state were openly dismissed, as they were largely pre-Red Army forces who had, as Nachtigal writes, "fought on the side of reaction."[137] When placed in this international context, Randall's experience of rejection seems relatively benign, but it was still there.

The Australian public reinforcement of the prisoners' sense of inferiority with regards to their counterparts was also expressed in unit and battalion histories. These accounts were a popular publishing phenomenon in the postwar period and contributed to the burgeoning literature related to Australian participation in the war. However, they also helped perpetuate the lack of recognition of the experiences of the prisoners of the Turks. With few exceptions, battalion and regimental histories rarely mentioned those of their members who became POWs, except in footnotes or columns of statistics. The author of the 15th Battalion history wrote that his battalion was "proud of their record of never any large numbers of prisoners being lost to the enemy" when, in reality, the 15th had the second highest number of men taken POW by the Turks.[138] Such statements offer further evidence of the low regard in which prisoners of war were held.

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[133] "For the Empire: Australia's Heroes – Avoca Girls' Patriotic Fund Entertains Returned Soldiers," *Avoca Free Press,* 8 March 1919, Randall Family Papers, Heritage Collections Library, State Library of Victoria.

[134] Jones, *Violence Against Prisoners of War,* 315.

[135] Reinhard Nachtigal, "The Repatriation and Reception of Returning Prisoners of War, 1918-22," *Immigrants and Minorities* 26 no. 1-2 (2008): 176. Nachtigal explains that the Italian government took a particularly hard line against their POWs returned from Austrian captivity due to suspicions that they had voluntarily surrendered to escape fighting. As mentioned in a previous footnote, the decision to go to war against Austria-Hungary was not popular among Italians, and the harsh conditions experienced by Italian troops in the Alpine regions were not well known on the Italian homefront.

[136] Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War,* 193.

[137] Nachtigal, "Repatriation and Reception," 177.

The public position of ex-POW memoirs also compounded personal feelings of inferiority and difference. Nine Australian ex-POWs published accounts of their captivity in the form of memoirs. The majority were published in the late 1920s and the 1930s, including perhaps the most well known, Thomas White's *Guests of the Unspeakable.* These early memoirs received some critical attention. The 1933 Hobart *Mercury* review of White's memoir called it a "record of remarkable adventure and disregard of danger," while *Reveille* claimed in 1934 of John Halpin's *Blood in the Mists* that "no member of the AIF has written a more magnificently dramatic story."[139] Nevertheless, these memoirs could not compete against the plethora of those produced by soldiers who fought on the Western Front. First World War POW memoirs lack what Alon Rachamimov calls the "edge and urgency" of battle memoirs, and also contain an element of apologia, whereby the ex-POW narrator feels compelled to explain their capture and captivity and appeal for understanding from the reader.[140] Moreover, the POWs' experiences of suffering – lack of food, overcrowding, hard labour and disease – were familiar forms of adversity for many readers who had lived through pre- and postwar economic depression, and were banal in comparison to accounts of gas attacks, barbed wire, flame-throwers, machine guns and trench life told by those who had fought in France and Belgium.[141] Thus, while the POW memoirists sensationalise the horror of their time as captives of an inferior race, they also highlight the vast differences between their experiences and those of their counterparts who remained on the battlefront. According to Rachamimov, these differences ensured ex-POWs were relegated to “an inferior place” in the hierarchies of commemoration that developed in the aftermath of the war.[142]

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[138] T.P. Chatway, *History of the 15th Battalion Australian Imperial Forces War 1914-1918* (Brisbane: William Brooks, 1948), 2.

[139] *Mercury*, 24 February 1933; *Reveille,* 7 no. 10 (June 1934), 15.

[140] Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War,* 227.

[141] Ibid.

Popular Australian perceptions of the Turks also exacerbated the lack of public awareness and appreciation of the prisoners’ experiences. After the war – despite a brief episode of public anxiety in the early 1920s over the care of Australian graves on the Gallipoli peninsula, which was mollified by reports from IWGC workers and inspectors emphasising the role of the Turks as “trustworthy stewards” of the sacred ground – the Turks were widely portrayed as an ‘honourable enemy’.[143] Officials of the Turkish government participated in an Anzac Day ceremony at Gallipoli in 1933, and in 1934 Ataturk, as leader of the Turkish nation, made his famous tribute to the Gallipoli dead: “Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives … you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country … After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.”[144]

Ataturk’s words soothed the anxieties of the bereaved and secured the place of the Turks in Australian memory of the war. Several battalion associations and clubs wrote to thank the Turkish President for his nation’s willingness to protect Australian graves. This expression of gratitude towards the Turks and the undercurrent of praise for the old enemy contained in such letters angered at least one ex-POW. In August 1934 John Halpin wrote a scathing letter to the editor of *Reveille*, calling for his fellow ex-servicemen to acknowledge the experiences of the prisoners of the Turks:

> Let those who wish to publicly express their appreciation of our erstwhile foes weigh the experiences of comrades in this conflict as a whole, and not overlook the dead who fell, not as victims of the cleanly bullet or bayonet, but before unleashed savagery, brutality, and bestiality, and the onslaughts of which they were helpless to oppose … Hate does not enter into the matter, neither does undeserved admiration. We can all forgive, but in the silence of our hearts, forget? No, that is impossible.[145]

Halpin’s somewhat melodramatic letter suggests a disconnect between the prisoners’ experiences of the war and the emerging popular narrative about ‘the Australian’ experience of the Great War, which privileged the experiences of those who fought on the Western Front and Gallipoli, and emphasised the honour of the Turks.

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Ziino, *A Distant Grief*, 80.

[144] www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/ataturk.asp For an interesting analysis of the deeper meaning behind Ataturk’s ode, see Antje Gnida and Catherine Simpson, “Anzac’s Others: ‘Cruel Huns’ and ‘Noble Turks,” in *Diasporas of Australian Cinema*, eds. Catherine Simpson, Renata Murawaka and Anthony Lambert (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 101

[145] John Halpin, “Praise of the Turks: A Captive in Reply,” *Reveille* 7 no. 12 (August 1934): 6.

First World War POWs were pushed even further back in Australian public consciousness after the Pacific War. Jennifer Lawless notes that racism is a key feature of most of the early memoirs written by ex-POWs of the Turks. Drawing on Robin Gerster's analysis of captivity literature in *Big-Noting*, Lawless argues that the emphasis on mistreatment and lurid stories of brutality were the prisoners' attempts to 'get back' at their former captors by playing on prewar prejudices against the Turks.[146] However, in a country steadily incorporating the Turks into their defining national legend as an 'honourable enemy', these prejudices were losing traction. It is possible, therefore, that the prisoners' memoirs served another purpose: to build on impressions of captivity as an experience of unrelieved suffering made popular during the latter years of the war and cement the prisoners' place within the national narrative. But, just as the ex-POWs' stories were lost amidst the outpouring of literature related to the Western Front, any ideas of the POWs of the Turks as victims of a brutal captivity experience were forgotten after the liberation of the World War II Japanese POW camps. The prisoners of the Japanese also experienced the inversion of the racial hierarchy, but the horror of their captivity was more corporeal. The unprecedented number of captives and their accounts of the murder of prisoners – both men and women – slave labour, brutal physical and psychological punishments, and the privation of the Pacific prison camps, meant that these POWs usurped what little niche the prisoners of the Turks' had carved as victims of captivity.

Acceptance of this usurpation is noticeable in the tone of two memoirs written by ex-POWs of the Turks after World War II: Leslie Luscombe's autobiography, *The Story of Harold Earl*, and C.W. Hill's memoir, *The Spook and the Commandant*.[147] Lawless notes that these later publications, particularly Luscombe's, present a "moderate, good-humoured, and balanced assessment" of life as a POW and offers this as evidence that the prisoners' time in Turkey was not as bad as earlier memoirs made out.[148] However, it also indicates Luscombe's acknowledgement of his place in the hierarchy of Australian wartime captivity experiences. Impressions of the prisoners of the Turks as victims no longer resonated in the public consciousness, dominated as it was by those who endured captivity under the Japanese.

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[146] Jennifer Lawless, "The Forgotten Anzacs: Captives of the Turks," *Southerly* 65 (2005), 29.

[147] Leslie Luscombe, *The Story of Harold Earl – Australian* (Brisbane: W.R. Smith & Paterson, 1970); C.W. Hill, *The Spook and the Commandant* (London: William Kimber, 1975).

[148] Lawless, "The Forgotten Anzacs," 33.

These instances of the public reinforcement of any private sense of inferiority or difference felt by the prisoners of the Turks, and the collective ‘forgetting’ of their experiences, may have contributed to the prevalence of nervous disorders among the ex-POW population. Eugene Michail notes that tension between individual and collective memory was a common problem for veterans of the First World War. The fact that this was the first ‘total war’ involving multiple fronts and multiple levels of mobilisation meant that more groups were able to claim connections with the war effort, but the limited scope of the media meant that more were left out.[149] Christina Twomey further explores the potential ramifications of being overlooked in collective memory. She argues that those who have endured unusual experiences within a specific historical episode, such as war, need to express their story in order for the experience to become “integrated into the life history” of the subject.[150] If they cannot because their different experiences are not recognised within the broader historical narrative – if there is no “receptive audience for the tale” – the trauma of the difference will cause recurrent problems for those involved.[151] Though Michail and Twomey write in relation to different groups – the British who fought on the Salonika Front during World War I, and the civilian internees of the Japanese in the aftermath of World War II – their insights can be usefully applied to the prisoners of the Turks. The lack of public space within which to discuss their experiences of captivity, or public interest in their experiences, meant any personal sense of inferiority and difference the ex-prisoners felt was compounded, to the potential detriment of their psychological well-being. Furthermore, as Alistair Thomson notes, the inability of individuals to reconcile their own experiences with the collective memory of an event leads to a sense of alienation, which perhaps explains the reluctance of men like Stewart Stormonth to talk about their time in captivity.[152]

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[149] Eugene Michail, “‘A Sting of Remembrance!’: Collective Memory and Its Forgotten Armies,” in *British Popular Culture and the First World War,* ed Jessica Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 242-3.

[150] Christina Twomey, “’Impossible History’: Trauma and Testimony Among Australian Civilians Interned by the Japanese in World War II,” in *History on the Couch: Essays in History and Psychoanalysis,* eds. Joy Damousi and Robert Reynolds (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 157.

[151] Ibid. Twomey calls this ‘unexpressed history’.

[152] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 216.

The Prisoners in Contemporary Collective Memory

The lack of public awareness of the POWs of the Turks – and ideas of their experiences as inferior and different – continued into contemporary times until they, and their counterparts who experienced captivity in Germany became, according to Peter Stanley, "invisible in the Australian story of the war."[153] One measure of their limited impact on Australian collective memory is their lack of specific memorialisation. The devastation and magnitude of the First World War led to the construction of thousands of war memorials in Australia. As Jay Winter notes, these memorials were the sites of developing commemorative processes and events, and now act as the bearers of the collective memory of the war.[154] The names of those who became POWs were inscribed on the local and state memorials where they lived, and the names of those who died in Turkish captivity were listed on the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour, but without indication of their POW status. There is no single memorial to the prisoners of the Turks – as a group – in Australia. Conversely, there are several Australian memorials dedicated to the Turks. In return for the official renaming of 'Anzac Cove' by the Turkish government in 1985, memorials to Kemal Ataturk were established on Anzac Parade, Canberra, and at Albany in Western Australia. The Canberra memorial, situated diagonally opposite the Australian War Memorial, consists of a bronze likeness of Ataturk, a plaque on which his famous speech is inscribed, and a garden.[155] At Albany, Ataturk is honoured with a life-size statue that overlooks Ataturk Channel, the body of water linking King George Sound and Princess Royal Harbour. These are the only memorials in Australia to represent an enemy commander.

Other aspects of public memory have continued to omit the prisoners of the Turks from the national narrative of the Great War while simultaneously privileging the position of their ex-captors. Just as shifting ideas of the Turks during the war were explored through the medium of film, the postwar idea of the 'noble Turk' has also been a popular discourse within Australian cinema. Charles Chauvel first portrayed the formidable but noble Turk in the 1940s film *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, and these themes were also a significant aspect of Peter Weir's 1981 *Gallipoli*. Catherine Simpson writes that films like *Gallipoli*, made during a period of revival within the Australian film industry, fed into renewed ideas of Australian nationalism centred on anti-British sentiment.[156] *Gallipoli* positioned the enemy as comrade more than foe, and emphasised the fact that both the Australians and the Turks were victims of their respective Imperial overlords. Weir's film spawned a renewed interest in the Anzacs and their experiences on the peninsula, and inspired a number of other documentaries, TV series, and feature films.[157] In each of these productions, characteristics supposedly similar to both the Australian and Turkish soldiers, such as courage, mateship and a sense of 'fair play', are emphasised to highlight the special relationship between the two nations.

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[153] Peter Stanley, "Introduction," in *Stolen Years: Australian Prisoners of War* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial/Department of Veteran's Affairs, 2002), 4.

[154] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 78-116.

[155] "Australian Government National Capital Authority – Anzac Parade, Kemal Ataturk Memorial," http://www.nationalcapital.gov.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=213%3Ah2s7-anzac-parade&catid=57%3Aql-menu-visiting&Itemid=202&limitstart=12

In more recent times, this special relationship has been key to commemorative events. The Turkish presence is now integral to Anzac Day. Descendants of Turks who fought during World War I have participated in the annual Anzac Day parade in Melbourne since 1996 and, though then President of the Victorian Returned and Services Leage (RSL), Bruce Ruxton, initially opposed their participation, they were later accepted as full RSL members. In 2006, descendants of Turkish servicemen who fought in the Great War were officially permitted to march.[158] This ruling has not been extended to descendants of other wartime enemies, nor does it seem likely that it will be in the foreseeable future. After welcoming the Turks into the RSL fold in 2006, Victorian President Major-General David McLachlan told the *Age* newspaper "I could never ever see … Japanese veterans of the Second World War marching in an Anzac Day march … they were a dreaded enemy that was despised by the Australian veterans."[159]

The Turks thus occupy a more central position in the collective memory of the war than those Australians they took prisoner. Ken Inglis argues that contemporary Australian willingness to publicly commemorate the Turks could be read as "an act of gratitude to the enemy without whom there would be no ANZAC."[160] Indeed, the continuity of Anzac rests on the mythology of 'the noble Turk'. As discussed in Chapter Four, simplifying the Turks as a formidable but honourable enemy justified and validated the Allied withdrawal from the peninsula in late 1915. Furthermore, the 'special relationship' between the two nations has, in part, led to an influx of Australians travelling to Gallipoli and the perpetuation of the legend. Any critique of Turkish actions during the war, such as their treatment of prisoners or, as Robert Manne writes, their role in the alleged deportation and massacre of large numbers of Armenians, could lead to the reevaulation of Australian actions.[161] Such reappraisal could, as Catherine Simpson writes, cause the very essence of Anzac – the bravery, egalitarianism, 'fair-play' mentality and the innate martial prowess of the Australian soldier – to crumble: "Australia has an important need to whitewash Turkey, because in whitewashing Turkey it, by association, whitewashes itself and makes its formative national narrative … more simplistic and complete."[162]

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[156] Catherine Simpson, "From Ruthless Foe to National Friend: Turkey: Gallipoli and Australian Nationalism," *Media International Australia* no. 137 (2010), 61-2.

[157] Simpson, "From Ruthless Foe to National Friend," 62.

[158] Kevin Fewster writes that Turks actually joined Anzac Day parades since the 1970s but that large numbers did not agitate for inclusion until the 1990s. The official decision to permit descendants of Turkish veterans to participate in Anzac Day parades was based on the fact that the two nations had fought together during the Korean War, rather than any associations with Gallipoli. Fewster suspects this was probably more of a technicality than a measure of real feeling. Kevin Fewster, Vecihi Basarin and Hatice Hurmuz Basarin, *Gallipoli: The Turkish Story* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 19.

[159] Qtd in Carolyn Webb, "Anzac march open to 'Johnny Turk' – but that's it," *Age,* April 12 2006.

Nor have the prisoners made much impact on Australian collective memory of captivity. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, the POWs of the Japanese dominate this aspect of Australian history. However, this is a relatively recent phenomenon. It was not until the 1980s that these POWs were commemorated as a specific entity. Previously, ex-POWs of the Japanese worked to be treated as ex-servicemen (and women) rather than ex-prisoners, and other parties, including the RSL and Department of Repatriation, pushed for their integration into general World War II commemorative practices and events. However, by the 1980s, feminist and pacifist critiques of war led to a rising interest in the individual's experience of conflict, and the stories of these POWs assumed greater currency.[163] In what Ken Inglis calls "a spirit of amendment," memorials to the prisoners of the Japanese were constructed in Australia and at their sites of captivity.[164] There are now many different examples of memorials honouring these POWs, including a series commemorating Australians who died in Borneo on the Sandakan Death Marches –

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[160] Ken Inglis and Jock Phillips, "War Memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A Comparative Survey," *Australian Historical Studies* 24 (1991): 191.

[161] Robert Manne, "A Turkish Tale: Gallipoli and the Armenian Genocide," *The Monthly* (February 2007): 1-21.

[162] Simpson, "From Ruthless Foe to National Friend," 62-3.

[163] Bomford, "Fractured Lives," 286-7.

[164] Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), 370.

such as the memorials in Sydney's Burwood Park and in Brisbane's New Farm Park, and a memorial constructed at Sandakan in 1986 – a stone tablet commemorating the Australian nurses who perished in the Bangka Island massacre which was unveiled by the lone survivor, Vivian Bullwinkel, in 1993 and the memorial to those who worked on the Burma-Thai Railway in Thailand.[165] This memorial was opened in 1998 at the notorious Hellfire Pass cutting.[166]

The first official national memorial dedicated to Australian prisoners of war, the Changi Chapel, located in the grounds of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, Canberra, reflects the dominance of the POWs of the Japanese in Australian ideas of wartime captivity. Erected in 1988, the chapel was constructed from the remains of a chapel built by Allied prisoners in Changi. As a memorial to all Australian captives, the Changi Chapel is limited. Situated in the grounds of a military college, its accessibility may be perceived as an issue by the public, and, with its obvious links to the prisoners of the Japanese, it effectively excludes thousands of other Australians who experienced captivity in the hands of different enemies.[167] It was this lack of recognition of other Australian prisoners that drove the construction of the Australian ex-POW Memorial in Ballarat, Victoria. Unveiled in 2004, this memorial takes the form of a 130 metre long wall of granite, upon which the names of over 37,000 Australians who experienced captivity in conflicts from the Boer War to Korea are inscribed. The Ballarat memorial cost an estimated $1.8 million, of which $200,000 was provided by the Department of Veterans' Affairs – the remainder raised through the efforts of the Ballarat branch of the RSL and other community groups.[168] In September 2008, after years of debate over the legitimacy of its claim to being a 'national' memorial, the Ballarat monument was attributed official national status.[169] The Ballarat monument is the only Australian memorial on which the prisoners of the Turks are commemorated as POWs.[170]

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[165] Ibid, 372-4.

[166] For information about the Hellfire Pass Memorial see the Department of Veteran's Affairs website: http://www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/OAWG/war_memorials/overseas_memorials/thailand/Pages/index.aspx

[167] Lachlan Grant, "What Makes a 'National' War Memorial? The Case of the Australian Ex-POWs' Memorial," *Public History Review* 12 (2006), 92-3.

[168] Ibid, 94.

[169] Dominic Brine, "Ballarat ex-PoW memorial gets national status," http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2008/09/30/2378198.htm

[170] There is a memorial to the Australian submarine flotilla of the First World War – the *AE1* and *AE2* – at the Garden Island Naval Chapel in Sydney. This stained-glass window memorial was dedicated to

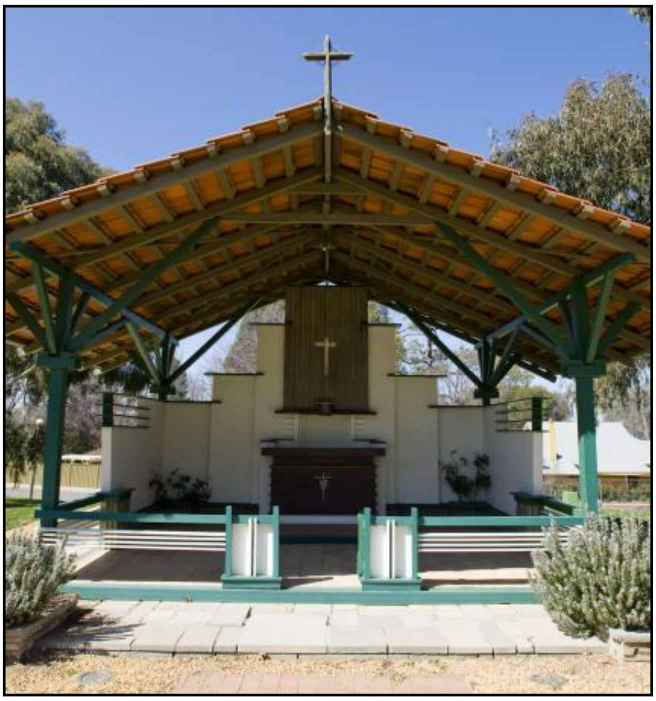

Figure 6.6: The Changi Chapel at Royal Military College Duntroon.
Source: www.visitcanberra.com.au

The place of the prisoners in the private memory of the war is a different matter. All of the descendants of returned prisoners interviewed or contacted for this thesis were aware of their father or grandfather's status as an ex-POW of the Turks; however, nearly every interviewee claimed that the former prisoner did not discuss his time in captivity. But the war and captivity was a key motif of their family history. For example, the daughter of one ex-prisoner captured at Romani in late July 1916 was never allowed to wear red nail polish as a teenager. It was not until many years later she learned that red nails reminded her father of the Bedouin women he had seen search the pockets of the dead while he lay wounded on the battlefield, before being collected by the Turks.[171] The same ex-prisoner forbade his children from keeping pet birds in cages. The family's dogs lived in long runs rather than in kennels, and their horses were kept in stables with large yards for exercise. According to the daughter, the one thing her farmer father hated more than anything about captivity was the lack of freedom.[172]

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the memory of those who lost their lives when the *AE1* disappeared off the coast of New Guinea, but does also mention the capture of the crew of the *AE2*.

[171] Interview with Elsie (Tot) Flottman, 7 February 2012.

[172] Ibid.

Other interviewees indicated a far greater awareness of their family member's experiences in Turkey. The Delpratt sisters recounted several stories of their father's captivity that became family folklore, including his glory at the Belemedik Easter Carnival in 1918, the happy times he spent with his friend Gaffney at Hadjikiri, and Turkish singing and dancing. Maurice even taught his eldest daughter how to count in Turkish. One story youngest daughter Jan remembered particularly fondly was how the prisoners first attempted to communicate with their captors regarding the food they wanted:

> They got someone to sit on some straw on the floor and pretend to be a chook and they would pull eggs out from under this fellow … then they tied one fellow up on all fours then they got down underneath and tried to milk him 'cos they wanted some milk. The people viewing them outside [the civilian prison] would put a finger up like this [near their heads] and go 'sen-deli, sen-deli [you crazy, you crazy].'"[173]

Like many of those who experienced captivity in other conflicts, Delpratt obviously focussed on the humorous incidents when discussing his time in Turkey with his family. Jan's knowledge of the malaria and typhus epidemic that swept through Maurice's camp during 1916 and 1917, or the obvious distress he felt at the death of his friend Brendan Calcutt, came only after reading his letters long after he passed away. Revisiting her father's experiences through his letters encouraged Jan and other family members to travel to Turkey and retrace Maurice's path from Gallipoli to Constantinople, Afyon, and into the Taurus Mountains. Their journey was documented in a blog for all the Delpratt family and friends to view – a private pilgrimage for a family touched by a distinctive experience of the war.[174]

As the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War approaches, along with the many significant anniversaries that will arise between 2014 and 2018, the Anzacs and the Australian experience of war will be of increasing public and private interest. There has already been a boom in academic and popular texts about the war in the past two to three decades, from biographies of individuals, fresh analyses of various battles, and histories of various units and battalions, to analyses of grief and mourning, and studies of the long-term effects of war service for veterans and their families. Bart Ziino notes that, since the 1980s, there has also been a dramatic increase in the number of families writing about the war experiences of their relatives, and the transmission of private memory.[175] As those who experienced the war passed away, the next generation(s) have picked up the baton; it is the children and grandchildren of veterans who are tracing their family war history, often inspired by letters, diaries, and other mementoes. While Ziino and others caution that this process is more about appropriating the past than remembering it, there is no doubt that interest in the war is also ever increasing in the private sphere.

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[173] Interview with Jan Delpratt, 29 November 2011.

[174] For a discussion of the 'pilgrimage' phenomenon, see Bruce Scates, "In Gallipoli's Shadow: Pilgrimage, Memory, Mourning and the Great War," *Australian Historical Studies* 33 no. 119 (2002): 1-21.

The popularity of academic and private histories of the war is mirrored by a rising interest in POW experiences other than those of the prisoners of the Japanese. In 2011 two books relating to the experiences of Australians captured by the Germans on the Western Front were published: an edited version of William Cull's 1919 memoir *At All Costs*, retitled *Both Sides of the Wire*, and David Coombes' *Crossing the Wire*, a book based largely on oral histories of ex-prisoners first interviewed in the 1980s.[176] Peter Monteath's comprehensive study of Australian prisoners of war in Germany during World War II was also released in 2011, to significant acclaim.[177] This indicates that there is a developing market for more marginal stories of Australians in captivity, and of Australian experiences of war in general.

Conclusion

The legacy of imprisonment in Turkey offers further insight into this atypical experience of the Great War. The ex-prisoners' experiences of, and feelings about, leaving Turkey and returning home demonstrate that the men faced a number of challenges while making the transition out of captivity to civilian life. Dealings with the Repatriation Department indicate that the personal impact of captivity extended far into the postwar period; analysis of extant case files show the physical and psychological effects of their time in internment and demonstrate what the prisoners believed, or at least professed to believe, were the distinctive features about captivity that contributed to their ill health. However, the public impact of captivity in the aftermath of the war was limited. Despite initial interest in the prisoners for propaganda purposes, and concerted efforts to identify and officially commemorate the dead, public awareness of their experiences was eclipsed by the developing national narrative of the war, the increasingly positive popular perception of the Turks and, after World War II, the prisoners of the Japanese. In contemporary times, popular memory of the Great War continues to simplify the experiences of 'the Anzacs' into a hegemonic tale of martial prowess and innate soldiering skills while privileging the position of their ex-captors. The prisoners are thus remembered primarily in the private memory of their descendents. Adjusting to the aftermath of captivity in Turkey proved difficult not only for several of the ex-prisoners themselves, but also for other parties. The prisoners of the Turks were marginalised after the First World War – relatives, government and military authorities, the IWGC, and the Repatriation Department all had difficulty comprehending and incorporating the prisoners' experiences into their understanding of the war. Today, so too do we.

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[175] Bart Ziino, "A Lasting Gift to His Descendants: Family Memory and the Great War in Australia," *History & Memory* 22 no. 2 (2010), 126.

[176] Aaron Pegram, ed., *Both Sides of the Wire: The Memoir of an Australian Officer Captured during the Great War* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2011); David Coombes, *Crossing the Wire: The Untold Stories of Australian POWs in Battle and Captivity During WWI* (Sydney: Big Sky Publishing, 2011).

[177] Peter Monteath, *P.O.W: Australian Prisoners of War in Hitler's Reich* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2011). For an example of a review of Monteath's work, see Peter Pierce, "Peter Monteath: P.O.W.," *Australian Book Review* (July-August 2011), https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/component/k2/56-july-august-2011/419-peter-monteath-p-o-w

CONCLUSION

Nearly 4,000 Australians were held as prisoners of war between 1914 and 1918. Of these, 196 were captured and interned in Ottoman Turkey. For these men, captivity was an unexpected outcome of their volunteering to fight for the Allied war effort. For the Australian military authorities, the government, the prisoners' families, patriotic organisations, Australians on the homefront, the Imperial War Graves Commission, and the Repatriation Department, extended captivity at the hands of a wartime enemy presented unprecedented challenges. For all it involved or affected, captivity in Turkey necessitated new responses in order to successfully cope with this largely unanticipated consequence of war.

As noted in the Introduction to the thesis, how Australians felt about and responded to this novel experience has been neglected in the historiography of the First World War. As symbols of defeat or failure, POWs do not easily fit into the scope of traditional military history. Even Charles Bean, for whom the experience of the ordinary Australian soldier was so important, struggled to find space for prisoners of war in his official histories. Nor have the POWs, or the impact of their experiences, warranted much attention in the developing socio-cultural history of the conflict, which has thus far focussed on changes to Australian wartime politics, economics, and society, the legacy of both physical and psychological war wounds for returned soldiers and their families, the development of new commemorative practices, and the rise of the Anzac legend. With some noteable exceptions, the prisoners of the Turks have been marginalised in Australian history. This thesis draws on many sources – several of which, such as Repatriation Department case files, records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, private correspondence, and interviews with descendants, were previously unexplored – to fill this significant gap in the literature by providing the first analysis of the experience and impact of captivity in Turkey – specifically how Australians managed the diverse challenges this unique situation posed.

It has offered a new perspective on the experiences of the Australians in Turkish prison camps by demonstrating that they were not passive recipients of capture and internment, but actively managed their conditions and treatment. Captured under varied circumstances and in different locations, the prisoners had their first indications of what they would face as POWs of such a radically different enemy behind Turkish lines and on their journeys towards imprisonment. Their experiences either confirmed or changed their perceptions of the Turks, and adjusting to their new status as prisoners of war caused many to feel anger, despondency and guilt that they had failed to live up to the popular expectations of the Australian soldier. The first phase of coping with captivity involved reflecting on and accepting this transition from combatant to captive.

Managing captivity was also about implementing methods and strategies to mitigate the physical and psychological challenges of internment. By modifying their accommodation, food, work practices, and health care the prisoners were able to manage their conditions, while implementing formal strategies such as sports and educational classes and more informal means of escapism such as mess parties, offered ways to beat 'barbed wire disease'. Moreover, asserting Britishness, aligning (somewhat paradoxically) with the Germans in Turkey, reproducing traditional cultural practices, and replicating conventional funeral procedures allowed the POWs to normalise camp culture and alleviate both the trauma of the inversion of the racial hierarchy and of the intrusion of death into the (relatively) safe camp environment.

In moving beyond a simple narrative of prison camp life, the thesis has explored the perspectives and voices of others who had to adjust to this unprecedented situation and cope with the many challenges it posed, and has emphasised that it is not only the POWs themselves who felt the impact of captivity. The Australian government was not in a political nor diplomatic position to make important decisions regarding the POWs, and were reliant on the British to determine the scale of official relief efforts, administer and implement such relief through the protecting powers, and confer with the Turks on agreements about camp inspections and, in the latter stages of the war, early repatriation for the medically unfit. As protecting powers, the Americans, and later the Dutch, assumed the role of intermediary between the belligerents, which often placed them in a delicate – and difficult – diplomatic situation. Moreover, administering relief in an area suffering from hyperinflation and chronic shortages of food and other supplies proved frustrating. Supplying welfare to the POWs was also a challenge for the Australian Red Cross POW Department which, in October 1916, became the chief care committee responsible for all Australians in enemy hands. War Office restrictions, limited communication with the men in the camps, and (initially, at least) inadequate premises and staff made the daily operations of the Department difficult. Nevertheless, this network of official support actively managed the provision of welfare to the POWs.

Captivity in Turkey also affected the prisoners' families. The emotive correspondence between the parents or siblings of those in Turkey and the Red Cross POW Department in London is testament to the anxiety felt by the prisoners' loved ones at home. Minimal understanding of the geography of Turkey and the customs and culture of the Turkish people, coupled with limited communication coming out of the camps, meant families found it difficult to foster imagined connections with their captive menfolk. This intensified their fears about the physical and emotional well being of the POWs. To mitigate these concerns, and thus manage the impact of captivity, the prisoners' families developed an informal, intimate network of fictive kin among which information and news was shared. This network, which also included Elizabeth Chomley of the POW Department, offered support and solace for the anxious families and, in some cases, commiseration and consolation for the bereaved. The development of such a network indicates that, like the men in the camps, the families of the POWs were similarly neither passive nor powerless in the face of this difficult situation.

In assessing the ways in which the POWs were portrayed on the Australian homefront, the thesis also elucidates the discourses about captivity that circulated in the public sphere during the war. Though captivity in Turkey was initially believed to be a tolerable, if monotonous, existence, by the end of the war the dominant homefront impression of captivity was that it was an experience of misery, neglect and brutality. This starker representation was driven largely by government authorities and patriotic organisations, as awareness of POWs was heightened after the capture of Australians on the Western Front. With little meaningful interaction between those in the camps and those at home, the Australian government and the Red Cross held a monopoly over the ways in which the captivity experience was framed. Each employed narratives of suffering to portray prisoners of war in such a way as to elicit specific responses from the Australian public – increased enlistment and more donations. Such impressions resonated with Australians at home as they tapped into popular prewar discourses about the Turks and fears of the Oriental 'other.' How Australians engaged with these ideas – specifically through critique of perceived government inaction and donations to and work for the RCPF – further demonstrates the wider impact of captivity and the ways in which ordinary Australians attempted to help actively manage the experience of wartime imprisonment.

Extending the analysis into the postwar period demonstrates that the impact of captivity could be a long-term one. The relocation of deceased POWs, though believed by the families involved to be a positive and necessary action, caused inevitable upset to those who had lost sons, brothers, and husbands in such an atypical manner. Repatriation records explain how the ex-POWs fared as they restarted their lives as civilians, and how the effects of their time in captivity manifested in physical health troubles such as malaria, chronic stomach conditions and other issues. As well as dealing with these physical health concerns, the stigma of captivity compounded personal feelings of inferiority and led to a prevalence of psychological issues among the returned POWs. While it is evident that the Repatriation Department was unsure as to how to handle ex-POWs, the returned prisoners and their supporters drew on those impressions of captivity that gained currency during the latter years of the war to construct their claims for medical and pension benefits in such a way as to elicit positive responses from the authorities. Despite the heightened awareness of captivity as a legitimate war experience during the war, the influx of returned servicemen from the Western Front and from battle in the Middle East led to the effacement of the POWs from the developing Anzac legend. The simplification of 'Anzac' in more contemporary times continues to marginalise experiences of the war that do not fit within the hegemonic national narrative, while the experiences of the World War II prisoners of the Japanese dominates POW historiography and popular perceptions of Australians in enemy captivity. The prisoners of the Turks themselves have long passed, and their stories are now mainly recalled in the private memory of their descendants.

Of course, a thesis can only ever be a partial history. In exploring the experience and impact of captivity in Turkey, the possibilities for further investigation into this aspect of Australian history become apparent. Extending the scope to include additional international sources would shed more light on the transnational approach to POW welfare that developed during the war. British War and Foreign Office records detailing the rise of POW-specific government departments and their work would provide a more detailed overview of what was being said about, and done for, the POWs of the Turks in Britain. Analysis of the Committee of the International Red

Cross files related to the POWs may also prove fruitful. This previously unexplored material – currently the subject of a large-scale digitisation project due to be completed in time for the centenary of the outbreak of the war – could illuminate the role of this organisation with regards to diplomatic negotiations, prison camp inspections, and communication with family and friends of the POWs.[1] Incorporating the impact of captivity in Germany on Australians, particularly on the families of those POWs during the war and in the postwar period, would be useful in terms of finding similarities or differences in the ways in which those affected managed this experience of internment. Moreover, an examination of how – if at all – the experiences of POWs from the First World War influenced Australian responses to wartime captivity during World War II would present a worthwhile study.

In concluding this thesis, it is perhaps appropriate to outline its contemporary significance and relevance. On 25 April 2015 thousands of Australians will mark the centenary of the Gallipoli landings. This will be an occasion that will be remembered, however problematically, as the birth of the Australian nation.[2] This date will also mark 100 years since those first Australians – Lushington, McDonald, Elston and Ashcroft – were captured by the Turks, and thus 100 years since Australians first entered extended wartime captivity. Whether the Gallipoli commemorations – or, for that matter, any of the other official occasions that will be held to mark the centenary of wartime events deemed important to Australians – will make any mention of prisoners of war is doubtful. They remain too peripheral to our national history and memory of the conflict. And yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, the capture and internment of Australian prisoners in Turkey was central to the war experiences of many Australians and, for some, continued to be a significant factor in their postwar lives. In contributing to our understanding of the ways in which captivity in Turkey affected Australians and how different parties adjusted to and coped with this unprecedented experience, this thesis not only widens our appreciation of Australia's diverse POW history, but also offers a very timely reminder of the complex and multifarious experiences of Australians during the First World War and in its aftermath.

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[1] The archives contain a total of six million individual index cards, and occupy approximately 400 linear metres.

[2] For a discussion of the problematic nature of the idea of Gallipoli being 'the birth of the nation,' see Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, eds., *What's Wrong With Anzac: The Militarisation of Australian History* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).

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4376/50/2:	Enquiries re: Repatriated Prisoners of War
AWM18 9982/3/2:	Comforts for Prisoners of War in Turkey
9982/3/4:	Despatches from Netherlands Minister of the Hague regarding P.of.W in Turkey – forwarded from Foreign Office
AWM27 424/28:	REPATRIATION
424/29:	Agreement Between the British and Ottoman Governments Respecting Prisoners of War and Civilians
AWM30 B1.1-B1.33:	Statements of Repatriated Prisoners of War from Turkey (Infantry)
B2.1-B2.14:	Statements of Repatriated Prisoners of War from Turkey (Light Horse and Camel Corps)
B3.1-B3.3:	Statements of Repatriated Prisoners of War from Turkey (Australian Flying Corps)
B18.1:	Nominal Roll of Prisoners of War in Turkey
B18.2:	Miscellaneous Statements (duplicates) made by prisoners of war, particulars of Australians who died while prisoners of war in Germany, and memorandum to prisoners of war returning from Turkey to Egypt
AWM133:	Nominal Roll of Australian Imperial Force who left Australia for service abroad, 1914-1918 War

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AWM1DRL/0428:	POW Department Individual Case Files 1914-1918 War
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AWMPR01466:	Papers of Kinder, H.J.E. (Stoker, Petty Officer)
AWMPR01552:	Papers of Hilton (nee Duffy), Rita
AWMPR01697:	Papers of Sergeant George Richardson Paltridge
AWMPR01708:	Papers of Trooper Cecil Spencer
AWM2DRL/530:	Papers of Lt. F. Hancock 1st ALH and No. 1 Sqdn AFC
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AWM3DRL/3325:	Records of Air Mech. K.L. Hudson AFC 1914-1918
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NAA BP709: M13235: John Sloan
M14301: William Simms
M15754: Edgar Hobson
M19901: D’Arcy St George Armstrong
M20001 PT1 and PT2: Matthew Sloan
M20283: Stewart Stormonth
M21112: William Mackay
M32040: Maurice George Delpratt
M40183 PT1 and PT2: Colin Spencer Campbell
QM13230: Douglas Rutherford
QM58368: Joseph McElligott

Victoria

NAA B73: M53760: Frederick Earnshaw
M85619: Harry Foxcroft
M87463: Thomas Chalcroft
M95609: Thomas White
M118571: Ronald Austin
M119889: William Bailey
R41707 and H41707: William Vincent Kelly

R41745: John McPherson
R45911: Keith Cahir
R45911: James McKenzie Sloss
R55776: Timothy Cahill
R57060: George Ernest Gilbert
R58760: Leonard Heathcote
R64614: William Kelly
R67430: Joseph O’Neill
R86833: Egbert Smith
R88740: Frederick Haig
R92248: Charles McLean
R115248: Ronald T.A. McDonald

New South Wales

NAA C138: C37969: Frederick Gannon
C116775: Robert John Peters
H82284: Alfred Anderson Poole
H107606: George Roberts
M40328: Roy Clarke
M99882: Vincent Parkinson
M111549: Harold Vidler
M037992 and H37992: Phillip O’Hare
R37985: Leslie Lambert
R37987: Francis Matthews
R38914: Robert Wright Griffiths
R40092: Archibald Hewitson
R80371: Arthur Thompson
R83162: Ellis Richard Gilman
R84881, M84881 and H84881: Ernest Ingram
R92258: Thomas Halliday
R97315 and C97315: Alexander Crocket
R/C114492: Frederick Jeffery

Tasmania (held in Sydney)

NAA P107: M3567: Oliver Matthew Lee

South Australia (held in Sydney)

NAA D363: 23987: Benjamin Briant
H9587: George Richardson Paltridge
R9588: Edwin Rose
M13575: Lancelot Lightfoot
M31773: Alfred Carter
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Appendix One: POWs by Service

AE2 Submarine, Royal Australian Navy

Name	Rank	Date of Capture	Place of Capture
Bray, Cecil	Private	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Cullen, James	Stoker	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Falconer, William	Telegrapher	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Harding, Horace	Stoker	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Jenkins, William	Stoker	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Kerin, John	L/Stoker	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Kinder, Henry	Stoker/PO	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Nichols, Albert	A/Seaman	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Suckling, Charles	Stoker	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Thomson, Albert	L/Signalman	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Wheat, John	A/Seaman	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara
Williams, Michael	Stoker	29/30 April 1915	Sea of Marmara

Australian Flying Corps

Name	Rank	Date of Capture	Place of Capture
Adams, Francis	Mechanic	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
Austin, Ronald	Captain	19 March 1918	Kerak, nr Dead Sea
Challinor, Ronald	Lieutenant	1 May 1918	between Es Salt/Amman
Curran, David	Mechanic	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
Haig, Frederick	Lieutenant	1 May 1918	between Es Salt/Amman
Hancock, Fred	Lieutenant	20 January 1918	Kalkilleh, nr Nablus
Heathcote, Leonard	Lieutenant	9 March 1917	nr Gaza
Hudson, Keith	Mechanic	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
Lee, Oliver	Lieutenant	19 March 1918	Kerak, nr Dead Sea
Lord, William	Mechanic	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
McElligott, Joseph	Lieutenant	1 May 1918	between Es Salt/Amman
Munro, James	Mechanic	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
Parkinson, Vincent	Lieutenant	4 January 1918	Jenin
Poole, Alfred	Lieutenant	20 January 1918	Kalkilleh, nr Nablus
Rayment, William	Mechanic	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
Rutherford, Douglas	Captain	1 May 1918	between Es Salt/Amman
Soley, Thomas	Corporal	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
Sloss, James	Private	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara
Smith, Laurence	Lieutenant	27 June 1918	Katrana
Treloar, William	Lieutenant	September 1915	Es-Sinn
Vautin, Claude	Lieutenant	8 July 1917	nr Gaza
White, Thomas	Captain	November 1915	nr Baghdad
Williams, Leo	Mechanic	29 April 1916	Kut-el-Amara

Australian Light Horse/Imperial Camel Corps

Name	Rank	Date of Capture	Place of Capture
Angus, John	Trooper	19 April 1917	Gaza
Armstrong, D'Arcy	Driver	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Blechynden, Reuben	Trooper	19 April 1917	Gaza
Brennan, Martin	Trooper	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Briant, Benjamin	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Brockhurst, Henry	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Cahill, Timothy	L/Corporal	14 December 1917	Jerusalem
Carlin, Cyril	Private	30 November 1917	nr Jaffa
Campbell, Colin	Trooper	19 April 1917	Gaza
Carr, Charles	Trooper	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Clarke, George	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Clarke, John	Private	8 August 1916	Mageibra
Clarke, Roy	Private	28 March 1918	Amman
Crockett, Alexander	Private	28 March 1918	Amman
Crozier, Sydney	Trooper	28 March 1918	Amman
Currie, Clyde	Corporal	19 April 1917	Gaza
Day, Andrew	Driver	4 August 1916	Romani
Delpratt, Maurice	Sergeant	28 June 1915	Gallipoli
Dodd, Joseph	Trooper	19 April 1917	Gaza
Donnison, George	Troper	28 March 1918	Amman
Drysdale, George	Sergeant	4 August 1916	Romani
Duffy, Patrick	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Earnshaw, Frederick	Sapper	14 December 1917	Jerusalem
Easton, Francis	L/Corporal	4 August 1916	Romani
Farley, Harold	Private	28 March 1918	Amman
Flatt, Charles	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Fooks, Phillip	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Gannon, Frederick	Private	26 March 1918	Amman
Gilbert, George	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Gilman, Ellis	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Halliday, Thomas	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Halpin, John	Sergeant	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Handsley, George	Private	4 August 1916	Romani
Hebbard, Herbert	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Hewitson, Archibald	L/Corporal	28 March 1918	Amman
Hobson, Edgar	Private	4 August 1916	Romani
Ingram, Ernest	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Jeffery, Frederick	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Jones, Daniel	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Kelly, James	Private	4 August 1916	Romani
Kelly, William	L/Corporal	14 December 1917	Jerusalem
Kelly, William V	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Kennet, Victor	Trooper	4 August 1916	Romani
Kimber, Allan	L/Corporal	19 April 1917	Gaza
King, Walter	Sergeant	28 March 1918	Amman
Lambert, Leslie	Trooper	1 April 1918	Amman
Littler, Wilson	Private	4 August 1916	Romani
Mathews, Francis	Driver	1 May 1918	Es Salt
May, Herbert	Trooper	19 April 1917	Gaza
McColl, Robert	Private	4 August 1916	Romani

Maguire, Robert	Driver	19 April 1917	Gaza
McPherson, John	Sergeant	2 November 1917	nr Bersheeba
Merson, John	Sergeant	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Miller, George	Driver	I May 1918	Es Salt
Mitchell, Ernest	Driver	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Moll, Walter	Private	28 March 1918	Amman
Newton, Edwin	2/Lieutenant	11 October 1917	Palestine
O’Hare, Phillip	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
O’Neill, Joseph	Private	2 November 1917	nr Bersheeba
Otway, Charles	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Paltridge, George	Sergeant	19 April 1917	Gaza
Patten, Charles	Trooper	4 August 1916	Romani
Peters, Robert	Private	4 August 1916	Romani
Picton, Edward	Corporal	28 March 1918	Amman
Redman, Claude	Trooper	28 March 1918	Amman
Richardson, Duncan	Trooper	4 August 1916	Romani
Roberts, George	Private	4 August 1916	Romani
Romaro, John	Private	3 December 1917	nr Jaffa
Rose, Edwin	Private	4 August 1916	Romani
Savill, Frederick	Sergeant	19 April 1917	Gaza
Scroop, Percy	L/Corporal	4 August 1916	Romani
Sherrie, Noel	Trooper	19 April 1917	Gaza
Sherwin, Norman	Trooper	28 March 1918	Amman
Simmons, William	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Simms, William	Corporal	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Skyring, Lowes	Private	1 April 1918	Amman
Seaton, Robert	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Sloan, John	Driver	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Sloan, Matthew	Driver	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Smith, Charles	A/Corporal	28 March 1918	Amman
Smith, Egbert	Sergeant	3 May 1918	Es Salt
Smith, Leslie	Private	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Sommerville, James	Corporal	4 August 1916	Romani
Spencer, Cecil	Trooper	28 March 1918	Amman
Stripling, Richard	Private	28 March 1918	Amman
Sullivan, Harold	Sergeant	4 August 1916	Romani
Talbot, George	Private	4 May 1918	Es Salt
Thomson, Arthur	Driver	1 May 1918	Es Salt
Thorneycroft, Henry	L/Corporal	2 November 1917	nr Bersheeba
Tierney, Arthur	L/Corporal	19 April 1917	Gaza
Vidler, Harold	Private	19 April 1917	Gaza
Ward, John	Trooper	4 August 1916	Romani
Weidenhofer, Diedrich	Private	1 April 1918	Amman
Young, James	Private	28 March 1918	Amman

Infantry

Name	Rank	Date of Capture	Place of Capture
Allen, William	Private	28 June 1915	Gallipoli
Ashton, Frederick	Private	25 April 1915	Gallipoli
Bailey, William	Sergeant	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Beattie, John	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Brooke, Vivian	L/Corporal	2 May 1915	Gallipoli
Boyle, David	L/Corporal	9 August 1915	Gallipoli

Brown, Harry	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Cahir, Keith	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Calcutt, Brendan	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Campbell, Alan	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Carpenter, Alfred	Private	10 August 1915	Gallipoli
Carter, Alfred	Private	10 August 1915	Gallipoli
Chalcroft, Thomas	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Cliffe, William	Corporal	8 May 1915	Gallipoli
Creedon, Daniel	Private	28 June 1915	Gallipoli
Davern, John	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Dowell, Thomas	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Drake, Sydney	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Dunne, Bernard	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Elston, William	Lieutenant	25 April 1915	Gallipoli
Foster, Edwin	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Foxcroft, Harry	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Francis, David	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Goodwin, Shirley	Lieutenant	December 1915	Gallipoli
Green, Edgar	Corporal	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Griffiths, Robert	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Hennessy, John	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Hodges, Louis	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Hodsdon, Charles	Corporal	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Jenkins, Albert	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Jones, William	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Jordan, Stanley	2/Lieutenant	28 June 1915	Gallipoli
Kelly, Joseph	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Kerr, George	Corporal	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Kerrigan, Robert	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Kilmartin, Hugh	Sergeant	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
King, George	Private	28 June 1915	Gallipoli
Leyden, James	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Lightfoot, Lancelot	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Luscombe, Leslie	Lieutenant	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Lushington, Reginald	Private	25 April 1915	Gallipoli
Mackay, William	Private	10 August 1918	Gallipoli
Masterton, James	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Mathers, Chapman	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Matthews, Charles	Private	28 June 1915	Gallipoli
McDonald, Ronald	Captain	25 April 1915	Gallipoli
McLean, Charles	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Nelson, Alfred	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
New, Leonard	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Neyland, Niven	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
O’Callaghan, J	Private	28 June 1915	Gallipoli
O’Connor, Patrick	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Passmore, James	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Randall, William	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Rawlings, Alfred	Sergeant		Gallipoli
Samson, Harold	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Shelton, Harold	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Sherlock, Thomas	Private	2 May 1915	Gallipoli
Stormonth, Stewart	Lieutenant	8 August 1915	Gallipoli

Stringer, William	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Thomas, John	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Troy, Martin	Private	4 May 1915	Gallipoli
Warnes, William	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Wiffen, Arthur	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Williams, Walter	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Wilson, Elvas	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli
Wood, Bert	Private	8 August 1915	Gallipoli

Australians in the British Forces (not included in total)

Name	Rank	Date of Capture	Place of Capture
Brown, James	Lieutenant RAMC	April 1916	Katia
Gwynne, Ernest	A/Seaman *E7* Submarine	September 1915	Sea of Marmara
Hackman, Trevor	Flight Commander, RNAS	February 1917	Constantinople
Hill, Cedric	Lieutenant RFC	May 1916	Palestine
Mitchell, Reuben	A/Seaman *E14* Submarine	January 1918	Sea of Marmara
Piper, Thomas	Lieutenant, RNAS	February 1917	Constantinople
Wilson, Archibald	L/Stoker *E7* Submarine	September 1915	Sea of Marmara

Appendix Two: POW Deaths

Name	Details	Buried/Commemorated
Adams, Francis	• August/November 1916 • Adana • Malaria & dysentery	Baghdad North Gate
Allen, William	• December 1916 • Belemedik • Malaria & dysentery	Baghdad North Gate
Angus, John	• November 1917 • Nidge • Enteritis	Baghdad North Gate
Brooke, Vivian	• After capture • Gallipoli • Wounds	Ari Burnu, Gallipoli
Calcutt, Brendan	• December 1916/January 1917 • Hadjikiri • Septicaemia	Baghdad North Gate
Campbell, Alan	• After capture • Gallipoli • Wounds	Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli
Creedon, Daniel	• February 1917 • Angora • Enteritis & typhus	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Crozier, Sydney	• After capture • Amman • Reportedly bayoneted	Basra Memorial
Curran, David	• August 1916 • Nisibin • Malaria & exposure	Nisbin Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Day, Andrew	• February 1917 • Angora • TB	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Donnison, George	• After capture • Amman • Wounds	Basra Memorial
Drysdale, George	• April 1917 • Angora • Typhus	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Easton, Francis	• November 1916 • Ismidt • Typhus/pneumonia/dysentery	Haidar Pasha
Green, Edgar	• October 1918 • Yozgad • Spanish flu	Baghdad North Gate
Hennessy, John	• December 1915 • Constantinople • Wounds & dysentery	Haidar Pasha

Hodges, Louis	• After capture • Gallipoli • Wounds	Haidar Pasha
Hodsdon, Charles	• January 1916 • Constantinople • Wounds	Haidar Pasha
Jenkins, Albert	• January 1916 • Constantinople • Wounds & pneumonia	Haidar Pasha
Jeffery, Frederick	• November 1917 • Nidge • Dysentery	Baghdad North Gate
Jones, William	• January 1917 • Afyonkarahissar • Dysentery	Baghdad North Gate
Kelly, Joseph	• August 1915 • Constantinople • Wounds	Haidar Pasha
Kennett, Victor	• February 1917 • Ismidt • TB	Haidar Pasha
Kerrigan, Robert	• February 1917 • Afyonkarahissar • Malaria	Baghdad North Gate
Kimber, Allan	• November 1917 • Nidge • Dysentery & malaria	Baghdad North Gate
King, George	• August 1918 • Afyonkarahissar • ? disease	Baghdad North Gate
Leyden, James	• August 1915 • Constantinople • Wounds	Haidar Pasha
Lord, William	• November 1916 • Adana • ? malaria	Baghdad North Gate
Mathers, Chapman	• February 1917 • Angora • Enteritis & typhus	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
May, Herbert	• November 1917 • Nidge • Dysentery	Baghdad North Gate
Munro, James	• October 1916 • Adana • Dysentery & abscess	Baghdad North Gate
Nelson, Alfred	• November 1916 • Angora • ? disease	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
New, Leonard	• May 1916 • nr Belemedik • Work accident	Baghdad North Gate
O'Callaghan, James	• April 1917 • Angora • Enteritis	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate

Patten, Charles	• February 1917 • Angora • Malaria	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Rayment, William	• November 1916 • Adana • Nephritis	Baghdad North Gate
Redman, Claude	• May/November 1918 • Damascus • ? cholera	Basra Memorial
Savill, Frederick	• November 1917 • Nidge • Beri-beri	Baghdad North Gate
Scroop, Percy	• December 1916 • Angora • Dysentery & rheumatic fever	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Shelton, Harold	• September 1915 • Constantinople • Wounds	Haidar Pasha
Sherlock, Thomas	• June 1915 • Constantinople • Wounds	Haidar Pasha
Sherrie, Noel	• June 1917 • Damascus • Wounds	Damascus Commonwealth War Cemetery
Sherwin, Norman	• After capture • Amman • Reportedly shot	Basra Memorial
Skyring, Lowes	• August 1918 • Afyonkarahissar • Pneumonia	Baghdad North Gate
Smith, Charles	• September 1918 • Adana • ? disease	Baghdad North Gate
Soley, Thomas	• June/July 1916 • Nisibin • Unknown	Basra Memorial
Sommerville, James	• April 1917 • Angora • Typhus	Angora Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Stripling, Richard	• May 1918 • Gelebek • Work accident	Basra Memorial
Sullivan, Harold	• February 1917 • Angora • Chronic enteritis	Angora Memorial
Ward, John	• March 1917 • Angora • Pneumonia	Angora Memorial
Warnes, William	• After capture • Gallipoli • Wounds	Lone Pine Memorial. Gallipoli
Williams, Leo	• August 1916 • Adana • Unknown	Basra Memorial

Williams, Michael	• September 1916 • Bagtchi • Dysentery	Bozanti Memorial, Baghdad North Gate
Wilson, Elvas	• May 1916 • Yozgad • Typhoid	Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli
Wood, Bert	• August 1915 • Constantinople • Wounds	Haidar Pasha