

ANZAC Day

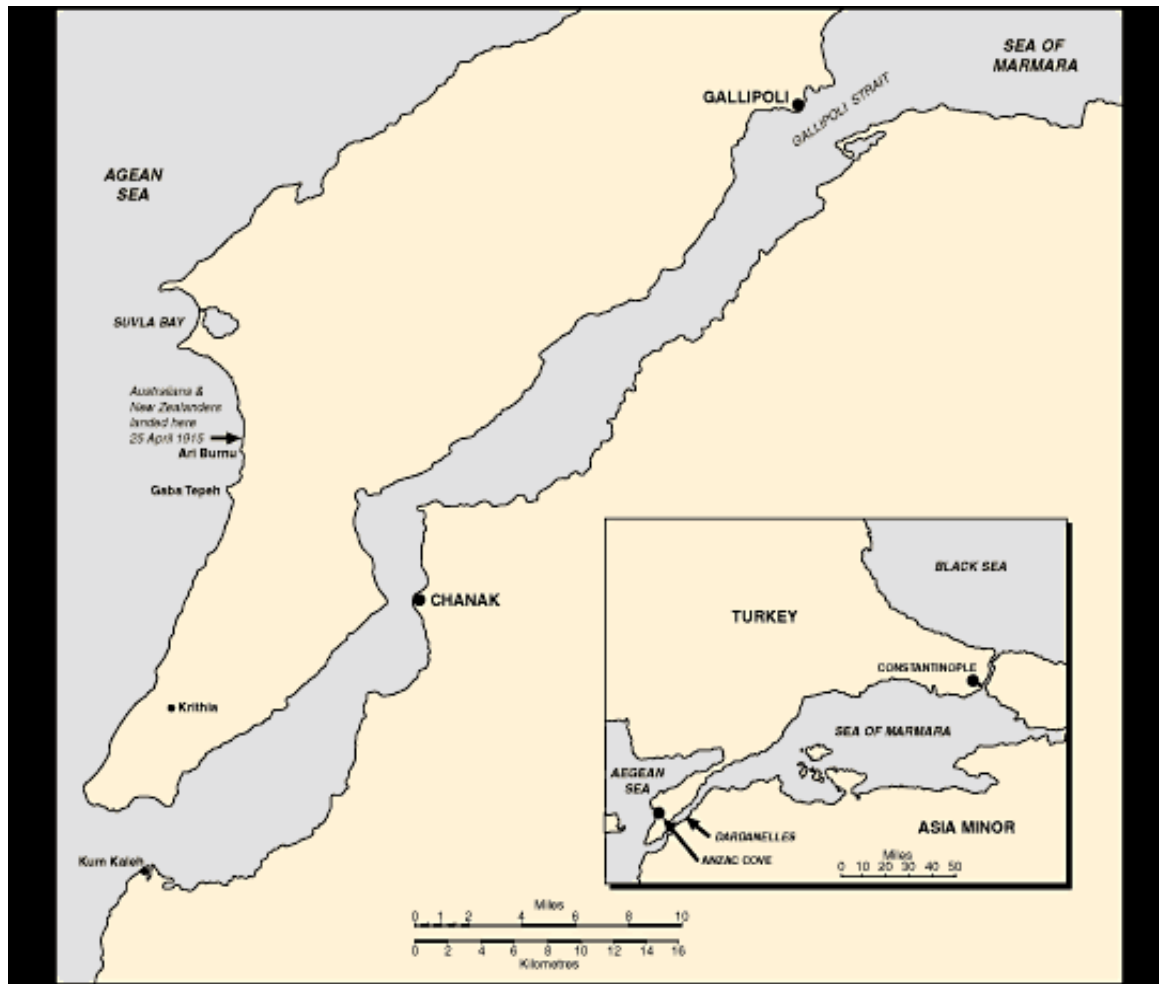


North Beach, Anzac

ANZAC Day is Australia's most important national holiday. It stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.



It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought on the Gallipoli Peninsula by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War.



In 1915 Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the allied expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula to open the way to the Black Sea for the allied navies.



They landed at Gallipoli on 25 April, meeting fierce resistance from the Turkish defenders.



The campaign dragged on for eight months.

At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated after both sides had suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships.



Over 8,000 Australian Soldiers were killed. News of the landing at Gallipoli made a profound impact on Australians at home and 25 April quickly became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who had died in war.

Early commemorations



Marches were held all over Australia in 1916.

Wounded soldiers from Gallipoli took part in the Sydney March in convoys of cars, attended by nurses.



The date 25 April, was officially named ANZAC Day in 1916 and was marked by a wide variety of ceremonies and services in Australia.



The first year in which all Australian states observed some form of public holiday together on ANZAC Day was 1927.



By the mid-1930s all the rituals we today associate with the day like dawn vigils, marches, memorial services, and reunions were firmly established as part of the ANZAC Day culture.

What does it mean?



Australians recognise 25 April as an occasion of national commemoration. Commemorative services are held at dawn – the time of the original landing – across the nation.

Dawn Service



The first official Dawn Service was held at the Sydney Cenotaph in 1927. Dawn services were originally very simple and followed the “stand-to” operational army routine.

The Anzac Day Service



A typical ANZAC Day service contains the following features: introduction, hymn, prayer, laying of wreaths, a period of silence, and the national anthem.



All over Australia on ANZAC Day wreaths/sheaths of flowers are placed on memorial monuments to commemorate war veterans.

