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***THE INTERTWINING STORY OF TWO GALLIPOLI  
VETERANS***



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## THE INTERTWINING STORY OF TWO GALLIPOLI VETERANS

There is one towering monument at Gallipoli that's particularly intriguing. It's not typical of the monuments you might expect to see on the peninsula; of heroic, rifle-wielding Turks or of Turkey's reformist president Mustapha Ataturk starring stern-faced and resolute toward an invading foe.



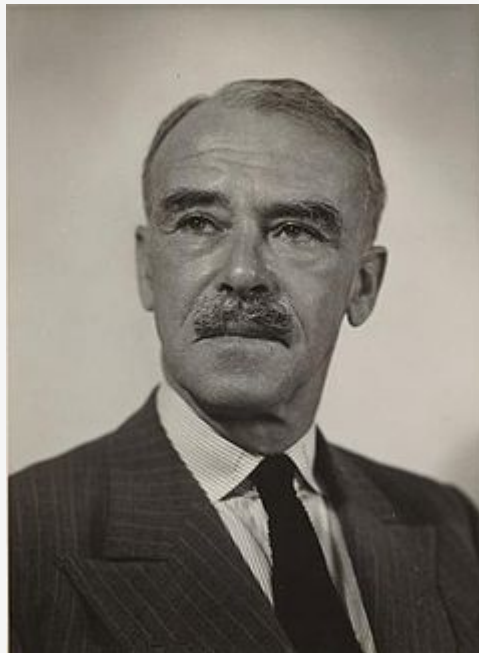
*The Statue of Respect to Mehmetçik*

It's not a monument depicting the ferocity of battle, of enemies locked in a fight to the death - rather, it is the embodiment of compassion. It is a statue of a Turkish soldier carrying a wounded Allied soldier in his arms. A cynical observer might conclude there are elements of jingoism and tokenism about such a statue - a Turkish victor displaying extraordinary kindness toward a defeated and disabled enemy.

The scene does seem unlikely; some of the most merciless, murderous hand-to-hand fighting carried out during WWI took place in the killing fields where the statue stands.

But a plaque at the statue's base has a reference to how the dramatic scene depicted was inspired by a story told by an Australian, a governor-general no less, more than 50 years after the battle. And if you join the dots from the GG's speech, the statue of the

two soldiers is distantly connected to an Australian general, a prime minister and Ataturk himself.



*Lord Richard Casey was a Gallipoli Veteran*

In 1967, Governor-General Lord Richard Casey arrived in Turkey to inspect the abandoned battlefields dotted along the west coast of the Gallipoli Peninsula. For Casey, this was as much of a personal pilgrimage as a state visit - 52 years earlier he had been a young lieutenant on this sliver of Turkish coastline facing an unforgiving enemy. Casey, then 25, was aide-de-camp to Major General Sir William Bridges, whose 1st Division was the first ashore on Anzac Cove on April 25, 1915.

Efficient, ambitious and often regarded as arrogant, the Scottish-born Bridges had been a career army officer, having enlisted first in Canada, then in England before settling in Australia, where he successfully founded an officer training college conducted along the lines of the United States' West Point Academy, the officer training school Duntroon. While generally disliked by his men during training in Egypt in 1915, the often aloof Bridges won their respect with his daily inspections of the frontline, seemingly oblivious of the dangers around him.

It was during one of these inspections, only three weeks after the initial landing, Bridges was shot through the thigh by a Turkish sniper - his aide, Lieutenant Casey, standing beside him at the time. Bridges died on a hospital ship from complications causing gangrene and his remains were interred back in Australia, *only one of two bodies brought home from the Great War.*

It was traumatic experiences like these at Gallipoli and the carnage witnessed on the Western Front that had a profound effect on Casey and, at war's end, he believed he was part of a younger generation who could do better.

Through business connections he befriended Stanley Melbourne Bruce, who would become Prime Minister in 1923, appointing Casey as Australia's Liason Officer in London. Bruce had become something of a political mentor for Casey who was able to relay all sorts of intelligence from England to Australia but their friendship was bound by an indelible, mutual experience - Gallipoli.

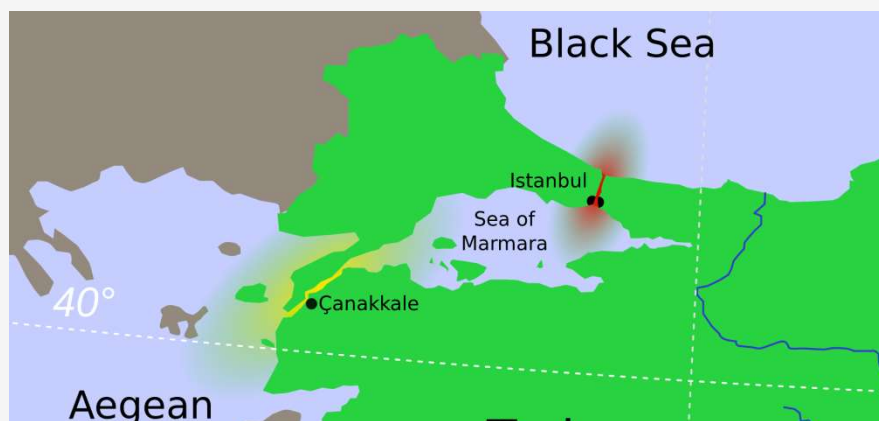
*Stanley Melbourne Bruce, one of the former Australian Prime Ministers, was also a Gallipoli veteran.*

At the outbreak of war in 1914, Bruce arrived in London to oversee family business matters and enlisted in the Worcester Regiment before being seconded to the Royal Fusiliers as a temporary captain, landing with British forces at Cape Helles on the

southernmost point on the Gallipoli peninsula. The young captain was later involved with the British landing at Suvla Bay to the north, where he was awarded the Military Cross for making contact with a section cut off from the advance.

It was this wartime recognition that would prove useful in his election as prime minister; campaign posters depicting a uniformed Captain Stanley Melbourne Bruce MC were received enthusiastically by the post-war electorate. But his loss of office to James Scullin in 1929 would eventually bring in another strand to the unfinished business with Gallipoli. It was Scullin's successor Joseph Lyons who appointed Stanley Melbourne Bruce as High Commissioner in London, inadvertently kick starting a remarkable career as an international statesman.

His tough negotiating skills saw him appointed as Australia's representative at the League of Nations and, in 1936, he was unanimously elected as President of the Montreux Convention in Switzerland to determine who controlled the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.



*Until 1936, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles was administered by an international commission.*

Since the early 1920s this vital waterway had been placed under the supervision of the League of Nations and, fearing the rise of fascism, Turkey put forward a proposal to regain control of the straits. Stanley Bruce played a pivotal role in restoring the Dardanelles to Turkey, something President Ataturk never forgot.

These two Gallipoli veterans - who once stood face to face in a terrible war - became lifelong friends, Ataturk presenting Bruce with a solid gold cigarette case inscribed with his signature and two interlocked military stars, a symbol of their union through the ferocity of battle.



*The Golden Cigarette Case that Mustafa Kemal presented to Bruce.*

Bruce carried the cigarette case with him every day until his death in August 1967. When he died, there were two framed photographs on his office desk - one of his wife and the other of Ataturk. That very year saw Bruce's protégé Richard Casey, now Governor-General of Australia, return to Gallipoli where he gave a speech recounting a remarkable story from the campaign.

A wounded British officer lay in no man's land while a ferocious battle raged around him. A white flag tied to the muzzle of a rifle appeared from a Turkish trench and the shooting suddenly stopped. A Turkish soldier climbed from the trench, picked up the British officer, delivered him to the Australian lines and returned to his own side.

Whether the story is true, no one will ever know. But certainly there is no end to the amount of remarkable intertwining stories emanating from that far-flung land.

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