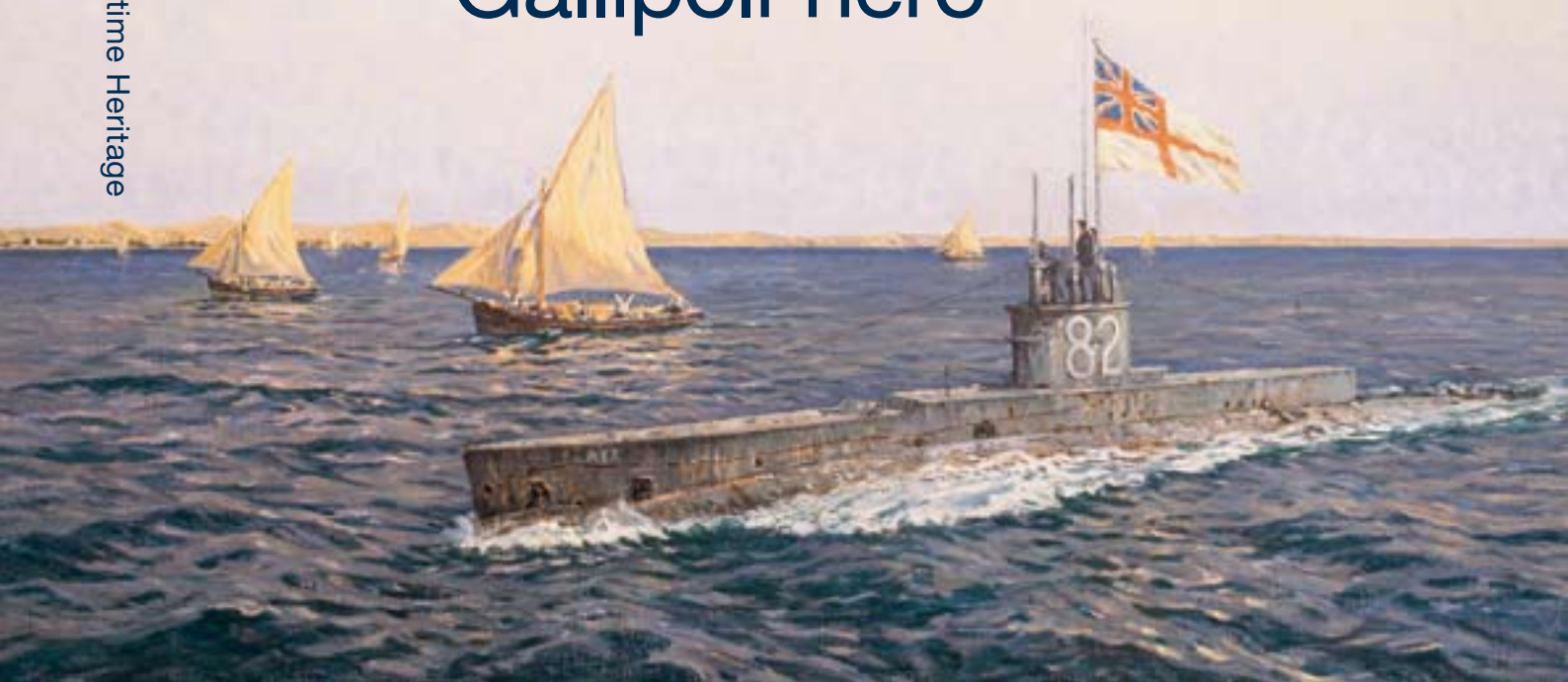




Australia's naval Gallipoli hero



What is an Australian submarine doing at the bottom of the Turkish Sea, why was it there in the first place and what fate befell the vessel and its crew? Until the recent airing of a TV documentary, Tim Smith, the Department of Planning's senior maritime archaeologist was one of only a few who knew the answers to these questions.

Late last year Tim made his second trip to Turkey to investigate the vessel – his first was in 1998 when he was part of the team which confirmed the identification of the missing Australian E-class submarine as the HMAS *AE2*. A discovery made by the Turkish museum director and wreck explorer Selçuk Kolay.

Tim says he still recalls the sound of the sirens of the survey vessels from that trip, blasting out in triumph in the Sea of Marmara.

'There was a mixture of elation and emotion, as we sat above the exact spot where so much drama had unfolded in World War I.'

For many years the submarine has been a forgotten player in the making of the Anzac legend, but the role it played was recently revealed in a documentary *Gallipoli's Submarine*, made by Electric Pictures, which aired on ABC TV on the eve of this year's ANZAC Day.

It recounted how in April 1915, the *AE2*, which was under the command of Irishman Captain Henry Stoker (the nephew of Dracula author, Bram Stoker) had breached the heavily fortified and mined Dardanelles Strait. Its success was hard fought – it had been run aground twice, directly under heavily fortified coastal defences, scraped by deadly mine cables, and subjected to repeated attempts by Turkish defenders armed with explosive grappling hooks.

After sixteen hours submerged, and almost out of air and battery power, the *AE2* crept above the famous Narrows at Çanakkale and into the inland sea.

The boat took the first Australian combatants into battle on ANZAC Day, 25 April 1915, and by stopping Turkish reinforcements, and bombardment of the peninsula by sea, saved many hundreds of lives.

Signalling its successful passage of the Dardanelles was a factor in General Sir Ian Hamilton's decision not to evacuate the troops, following their first horrific twenty-four hours ashore.

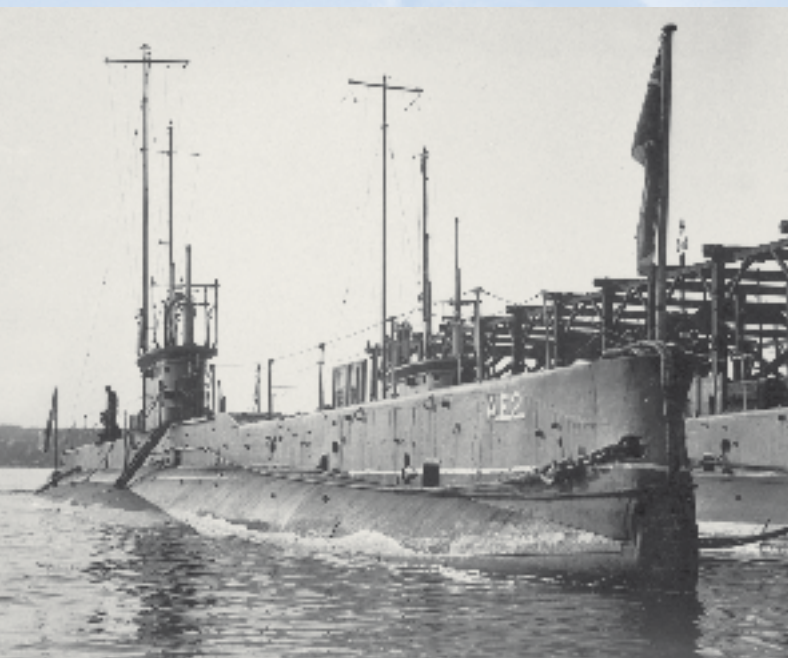
Buoyed by the submarine's news, thought of evacuation was overtaken by the order to 'dig, dig, dig, until you are safe' – the origin of the term 'Diggers'.

Sadly, the *AE2*'s luck was to be short lived. On 30 April 1915, it was attacked on the surface by Turkish naval vessels, holed and scuttled, and Stoker and his crew taken prisoner. They remained in Turkey for a further three years building tunnels for the Berlin to Baghdad railway – four dying in the prison camps.

The troops which had made it on shore remained there for eight terrible months.

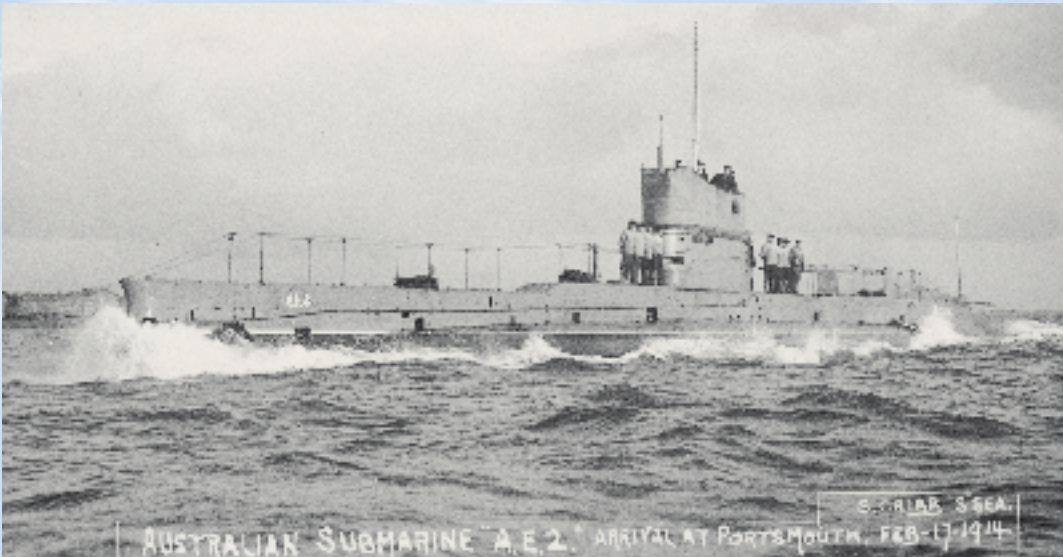
Despite its destruction, the *AE2* showed that submarines could be effective in breaching the Straits, and thereafter Allied submarines successfully blockaded the inland waters of the Turkish Sea.

The role of the *AE2* in the War has been revisited because of investigations into the state of the wreck and questions about its future management. These investigations were the reason for the archaeological expedition late in 2007, which was conducted under the auspices of the *AE2* Commemorative Foundation Ltd. The Australian archaeological team, under Tim's direction, was joined by Turkish colleagues from the Turkish Institute of Nautical Archaeology (TINA).



Main image: *AE2 in the Sea of Marmara April 1915 – oil on canvas, 1925 Charles Bryant (Australian War Memorial ART09016)*

Left: *AE2 in dock in Sydney c. 1914 (Australian War Memorial H11559)*



Port bow view of the submarine AE2 on arrival at Portsmouth in 1914 to prepare for the voyage to Australia (Australian War Memorial PO1075.043)

Based in an isolated Turkish village called Karabiga, the team had eight days to pursue a daunting range of tasks, including mapping the structure of the vessel, photographing all features, undertaking corrosion and hull thickness surveys, doing a battle damage survey, a marine biological study, and at the same time, obtaining footage inside the wreck, and key environmental data.

Despite the soft corals, algae and fishing nets which shroud

it, the wreck of the AE2 is unmistakable. It lies in 72 metres of water at the bottom of the Sea of Marmara, close to the infamous Dardanelles Strait. Divers had to use the latest in rebreather diving technology to sustain their long descents, and had decompression stops totalling two-and-a-half hours.

The expedition achieved its objectives by gathering vital information on the state of AE2 and its rate of corrosion. The

data obtained will be used to preserve and promote the site.

Meanwhile, school curriculum materials are already being developed to elaborate on the Royal Australian Navy's role at Gallipoli. A heritage plaques program in Australia and Turkey will also revisit important contact points with AE2.

Finally, Australia's naval Gallipoli hero can take its rightful place in ANZAC Day commemorations.

STOP PRESS

On ANZAC Day this year, Tim Smith returned to Turkey as a member of a specialist taskforce to debate the future of the AE2 wreck site at a technical workshop in Istanbul.

The Australian and Turkish participants agreed to recommend to the Australian and Turkish Governments that the wreck is left in situ. Issues such as recovery of artefacts for display will be discussed following further archaeological survey.

An expedition report, which contains the results of the archaeological survey, is available at the Submarine Institute of Australia's website www.submarineinstitute.com



Classified information reveals all!

For the first time there may be an answer to why the Japanese midget submarine wreck M24 was found off Sydney's Northern Beaches. According to Tim Smith, M24 Project Manager, 'Sub Lieutenant Katsuhisa Ban and his Petty Officer Namori Ashibe did not take their submarine there on a whim'.

A detailed evaluation of once classified Japanese and Allied intelligence reports, indicates far more flexibility in the allotted recovery positions for the midgets than was previously understood.

'While it is true the midgets were to rendezvous off Sydney's Royal National Park, M24 appears to have been taken to a previously assigned collection point off Broken Bay.

'The wreck in fact lies halfway along this historic journey path.

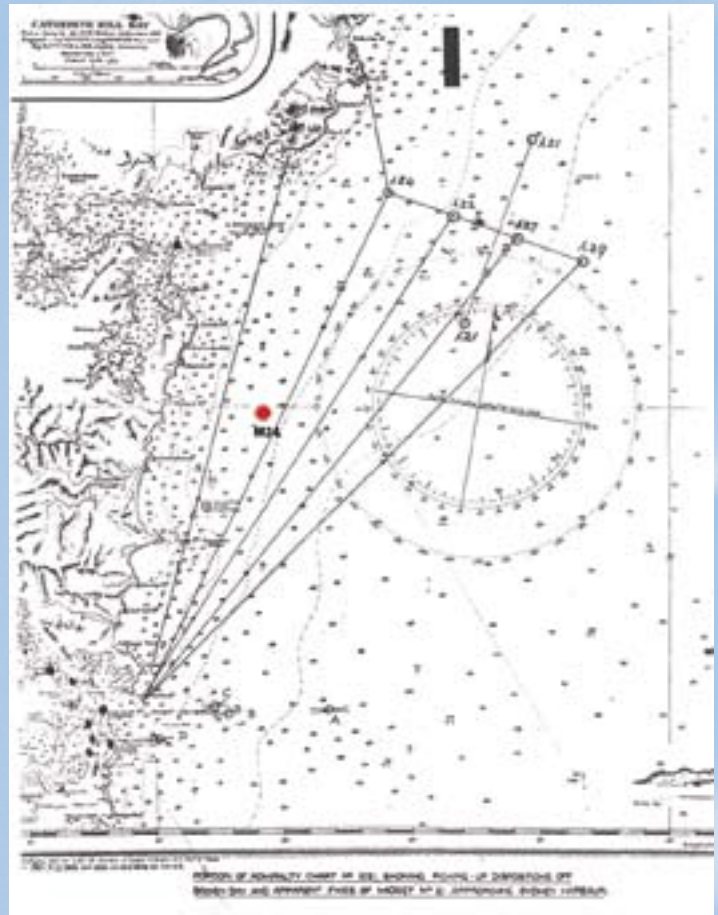
'The collection places were probably far more interchangeable, depending on conditions and operational needs', Tim says.



Model of M24 built by Animax Films

It is now likely that the crew were either overcome from bad air, fatigue or mechanical malfunction. They would have arrived at the present wreck position at daybreak and have been forced to stay submerged until nightfall. This may have been an impossible situation for the crew to endure after some 13 to 14 hours in combat.

The wreck was added to the State Heritage Register late last year. A report on the ongoing archaeological surveys is now available at: www.heritage.nsw.gov.au.



This map, redrawn from captured documents from the raid, shows the original northern rendezvous path. The wreck of M24 is plotted and sits on the original track to its 'mother' submarine I-24 off Broken Bay. Reproduced from: Japanese midget submarines attack on Sydney Harbour 31st May - 1st June 1942, Navy Office, Melbourne, 1 August 1942, Australian War Memorial (AWM69, 185)