

Life at Gallipoli soon became a struggle for survival. In some places the Turkish trenches were only nine metres away from the British and ANZAC troops. In summer the heat and dust were dreadful. Water was extremely scarce and had to be carried by mules in cans from supply ships. Flies were everywhere, smothering every scrap of food and causing widespread dysentery. Men soon grew weak and had to be sent to hospital ships offshore. Of seven ANZAC battalions examined in September 1915, 78% of the men had dysentery and 64% had skin sores.

SOURCE D

From A. Herbert, *The Great War – I was There*

We walked from the sea and uphill through a field of tall corn, filled with poppies, through another field, then the fearful smell of death began as we came across scattered bodies. We came over the top of the hill and 4,000 Turkish bodies lay among the thyme and myrtle. It was a nightmare.

The fighting area became littered with corpses, rotting in the hot weather. The stench became so unbearable that temporary ceasefires were sometimes arranged while both sides buried the dead. Winter came. The dust and heat turned to mud and snow. Water now poured down the hills into Allied trenches. Blizzards swept over men without overcoats, huddled together for warmth, caking them with freezing mud and ice. On 28 November the cold reached its worst. Men simply died where they slept. 15,000 died of exposure.

SOURCE E

From *The War Diary and Letters of Tom Eades, 1915–17*

At dusk the rifle bullets fell thickly and we laid in our hole listening. The Turks are no more than 180 metres away. The new trenches are too low down. More men get killed on the beaches than tucked up in the cliffs where we are. Salt beef today, hard biscuit and only one pint of tea for drink all day. Kept the bottom half inch for shaving.

The evacuation

The stalemate lasted until December 1915. It was then decided to call off the attack. The problem was how to evacuate the Allied troops under the noses of the Turks. The evacuation was the only real success of the whole campaign. From 12 December, groups of men were secretly led at night from their trenches to waiting boats and quickly ferried away. Blankets were laid along tracks to deaden the sound of boots. Mules had sacking tied round their hooves. Supplies were destroyed with acid.

Those who remained tried to deceive the Turks by lighting extra cooking fires and firing rifles up and down the deserted trenches. On 21 December the last troops slipped away from Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove. More than 8000 had escaped without a single death.