



HMAS AE2 - The Silent Anzac Project Brief March 2010

Introduction

1. This brief has been prepared by the AE2 Commemorative Foundation as an update on the project to protect, preserve and tell the story of Australia's World War I submarine, HMAS AE2 in preparation for the 95th anniversary of Gallipoli.

The AE2 Story

2. HMAS AE2 contribution and impact was significant; notably:

- The first Allied submarine to successfully penetrate the Dardanelles narrows as the landings took place on 25 April 1915.
- Two previous attempts had resulted in the destruction of both SM.
- Drove off a Turkish battleship bombarding the landing beaches.
- Harassed the supply lines in the Sea of Marmara for 5 days, delaying the build up of reinforcements and supplies during a critical period.
- Scuttled on 30 April 2015 after being fatally damaged in an engagement with the Ottoman torpedo boat Sultanhisar.

3. References for a more comprehensive account include:

- *Beneath the Dardanelles* a colourful account based on the two Commanding Officers' diaries.¹
- *Stoker's Submarine*² and *Australia's Submarines – A History*³ are more comprehensive/dispassionate accounts.
- A recent account of the crew's experiences as POW is available in the resources section of the website.⁴

4. The Allied submarine campaign that followed resulted in:

- Over 200 Ottoman ships sunk.
- Severe restrictions on the use of the Sea of Marmara for re-supply.
- Two VCs awarded to RN officers.

AE2 is one of the few Australian relics remaining from the campaign that forged our nation – unremarked in the Australian War Memorial or National Maritime Museum – the *Silent Anzac* indeed.

¹ *Beneath the Dardanelles*, Vecihi & Hatice Basarin, Allen & Unwin 2008

² *Stoker's Submarine*, Fred & Elizabeth Brenchley, Harper Collins, 2003

³ *Australia's Submarines – A History*, Dr Michael White QC, AGPS, 1992

⁴ From the Sea of Marmara to the North Gate of Baghdad

- The Story of Four HMAS AE2 Crew Members, *Colonel Marcus Fielding, Australian Army*

AE2 Found!

5. Found by a Turkish diving team led by Selcuk Kolay OAM in 1997, sitting upright and in good condition, on the bottom of the Sea of Marmara in 73m of water. Australian led expedition in 1998, "*Project AE2*" to dive on and positively identifying AE2 and commence site analysis.

6. The Submarine Institute of Australia Inc (SIA):

- Initiated a project to Protect, Preserve and tell the story of AE2 in 2004.
- Formed the AE2 Commemorative Foundation Ltd (AE2CF), a not for profit, limited by guarantee company, to conduct all activities.
- AE2CF operates a tax exempt trust of the same name, recognised charity.

7. The AE2CF acknowledges the seminal work of *Project AE2* and efforts by Dr Mark Spencer and Tim Smith⁵ in providing the historical antecedents to our efforts.

Assessment Phase

8. The AE2CF:

- Led the management of the Assessment Phase to determine options.
- Funded 50:50 Federal Government and Australian sponsors.
- Formed and led a project team comprising Australian volunteer experts.
- Jointly undertook activities with Turkish Institute of Nautical Archaeology.
- AE2's story and the dived expedition are well told in the Electric Pictures documentary *Gallipoli's Submarine* (attached).

9. An Inter Departmental Working Group, chaired by the RAN, continues to provide oversight and ongoing Government visibility of activities.

10. Assessment Phase concluded with a joint Turkish/Australian Workshop in Istanbul 26/27 April 2008. A report on the outcomes of the Phase was provided to the Government on 10 June 2008.⁶

11. The expedition provided critical data on the condition of AE2 (externally and a small portion internally) and insights into long term conservation priorities:

- The submarine was in remarkably good condition despite 93 years on the bottom, due to the relatively benign environment it rests in.

12. The 2008 Workshop unanimously recommended joint Turkish-Australian activities to safeguard AE2 and tell the AE2 story:

- Protect and preserve in situ.
- Complete an internal archaeological assessment using remotely operated vehicles (ROV) with suitable cameras and instrumentation.

⁵ Project AE 2 – Investigation of The Wreck of The HMA AE 2 Submarine Wreck Site, Turkey, October 1998 © NSW Heritage Office, Sydney NSW.

⁶ Operation Silent Anzac – Report To The Australian Government on The Assessment Phase HMAS AE2, 10 June 2008

- Undertake education programmes in Turkey and Australia to ensure AE2 and Sultanhisar⁷ roles in the Gallipoli campaign are better understood as a basis for ongoing friendship and cooperation.
- Defer any consideration of artefact recovery until the internal assessment results have been analysed.

13. The Australian Government has accepted the AE2CF's offer to take a leadership role in planning, managing and conducting an Implementation Phase:

- Accomplish the future activities agreed by both Governments.
- Funding will be sought from the Australian Government [Centenary of Gallipoli project] and sponsorship
- The AE2CF is being supported by the RAN.
- The Hon. Greg Combet AM is exercising ministerial responsibility.

**Assessment Phase unanimous recommendation:
- To Protect, Preserve in Situ
- Tell the story of AE2 and Sultanhisar for future generations**

Commemorative Plaques Project

14. Objective: to tell the AE2 and Sultanhisar stories:

- Installation of plaques at significant sites in AE2's journey to Gallipoli
- Plaque designed and sculptured by Dr Ross Bastiaan AM.



Figure 1 Sculptor Dr Ross Bastiaan AM with plaque

15. Installed in a prominent position at Garden Island, Sydney, adjacent to the RAN Heritage Centre.

⁷ Sultanhisar, an Ottoman torpedo boat critically damaged AE2 by gunfire which led to the scuttling of the submarine on 30 April 1915



Figure 2 - Joint unveiling by the Minister for Defence Support & Personnel, The Hon Warren Snowdon MP and Turkish Consul General on 22 April 2009

16. Second plaque unveiled at WA Maritime Museum 5 June 2009.
17. Future plaques or displays are proposed at Albany, the Australian National Maritime Museum and the Australian War Memorial.
18. Three bilingual Turkish/English plaques have been cast for Turkey:
 - Proposed for Kaba Tepe Display Centre on the Gallipoli Peninsula and Turkish Naval Museums in Çanakkale and Istanbul.
 - Proposed to unveil the first plaque during the Anzac Day 2010.
19. The Australian plaques have been provided with support of ASC, Thales, Austal and the SIA. First Turkish plaque is being sponsored by Australian Maritime Services Ltd (AMS):
 - Is an Australian company, based in QLD.
 - Designed the vessel traffic control system for managing the shipping in the Turkish Straits. (In a nice piece of symbology the maritime surveillance system that watches over AE2 today is designed by an Australian company).
 - Is bidding for the next phase, extending the coverage of this system.

The unveiling of the first plaque in Turkey will be an important milestone in the effort to tell the story in both countries and an important political and public foundation for the next afloat phase.

Education Programme

20. The objective of this programme is to:
- Clearly articulate and document the story of the AE2
 - Make this story as familiar as that of Simpson and his donkey to all Australian children
 - Provide an age appropriate education kit to every primary and secondary school in Australia
21. The proposal is being developed with the Curriculum Corporation. The initial phase, an educationally oriented website⁸ has been completed.
22. The website is the foundation of a comprehensive online information resource on AE2:
- Designed to support organisational requirements as well as host educational resources focused at Australian primary and secondary schools and their teachers.
 - The AWM, DVA and the RAN have supported the website through granting permission to link to existing relevant sites.
 - The AWM has also authorised the use of images of AE2 and crew.
23. Preparations are now underway to fully scope the project to enable an approach to philanthropic organisations in Australia for the necessary funding.

The Education Project will establish the AE2 and Sultanhisar story in an enduring and pervasive manner in Australia

Implementation Phase

24. The AE2CF is now developing plans for an afloat expedition to:
- Install Cathodic protection to arrest further decay.
 - Install physical measures to minimise the risk of further damage to AE2 from fishing boats or shipping and secure the wreck from plunder.
 - Complete the internal archaeological assessment using remotely operated vehicles to photograph the interior of AE2.
25. A Request for Proposal has been issued to 3 Turkish offshore services companies to refine the technical solutions and obtain planning prices. The AE2CF envisages that this phase be completed as part of the broader plans to celebrate the Centennial of Gallipoli.

⁸ www.ae2.org.au

Arrangements for Anzac Day Celebrations In Turkey 2010

26. The first plaque will be unveiled in Turkey during the Anzac Day celebrations this year:

- The venue and final arrangements are in the hands of our Turkish hosts and have yet to be confirmed.
- The Australian Consul in Canakkale is handling arrangements.

27. The Chief of Navy, VADM Russ Crane AO will be the senior ADF representative in 2010:

- This is most appropriate given his strong personal support to AE2CF.
- It is understood that he will present a museum display model of AE2 to his Turkish counterpart.
- The model has been donated by the AE2CF for display at the Turkish Maritime Museum at Cannakale.

28. We understand that an edited version of the documentary Gallipoli's Submarine may be shown prior to the dawn service.

The 95th anniversary of Gallipoli offers an opportunity to recognise AE2's contribution and support the efforts to protect, preserve the submarine and tell her story.



Peter Briggs AO CSC
RADM RAN Rtd
Chairman, AE2 Commemorative Foundation
19 Mar 10