

# The AE2 Commemorative Foundation Limited

## *Brief for Potential Sponsors or Service Providers*

*Preservation of the Australian Submarine HMAS AE2 and appropriate recognition of the role she and her crew played in the Gallipoli Campaign*

### **The Opportunity**

To be part of the effort to preserve the Australian World War I submarine HMAS AE2 and to recognise the hitherto unsung heroism of her crew for their exploits in the Dardanelles campaign in 1915. The deeds of the Australian soldiers who fought at Gallipoli have become legend, but the extraordinary story of the Australian sailors who also fought has yet to be told.



***The Crew of HMA Submarine AE2 as POWs in Turkey, 1915***

*Australian War Memorial Negative Number P00371.001*

## Background

The Gallipoli Campaign of 1915-16 is generally associated with the invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula by Allied forces including the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), in an effort to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war. The invasion was the beginning of eight months of costly land battles, ending with the evacuation of Allied forces.

However, another campaign was fought beneath the waters surrounding the Gallipoli Peninsula, one in which honours for both sides were even, with victories and disasters for both Australian and Turkish forces.

## The AE2 Story

In the early hours of 25 April 1915, HMAS AE2 entered the Dardanelles on the surface. Her mission was to create a diversion to the landings by 'running amok in the Narrows' and then enter the Turkish inland Sea of Marmara to cut the supply lines of the Ottoman army. Shortly before dawn, as the first boatloads of ANZAC soldiers were approaching the coast of the Gallipoli Peninsula AE2, under fire from Turkish shore batteries, dived into the heavily mined waters.

These minefields had already claimed three battleships of the British and French fleets and severely damaged three others. Two other Allied submarines had tried and failed the same task, resulting in their destruction.



### ***HMA Submarine AE2 'running amok in the Narrows'***

*Painting by Phil Belbin courtesy of the RAN*

Despite fierce Turkish opposition and against all odds AE2 succeeded. History suggests that a characteristically Australian approach, encompassing skill, bravery, fortitude and luck, meant she was the first of the Allied submarines to penetrate the Straits. AE2 paved the way for a number of other Allied submarines, causing great disruption to Turkish reinforcements moving on and around the Sea of Marmara.

The Australian submarine's success influenced the decision to continue with the landings and unleashed a submarine campaign that sank over 200 ships and denied the Ottoman forces the free use of the Sea of Marmara to supply their forces on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Her campaign ended five days later on 30 April 1915. The AE2 was lost, scuttled by her crew without loss of life, after being fatally damaged in an engagement with the Turkish torpedo-boat SULTANHISAR. Her crew of 3 officers and 29 sailors was taken as prisoners of war.

For more than 80 years, she lay hidden beneath the waters of the Sea of Marmara, undiscovered despite repeated attempts to locate the missing submarine, her story almost unknown except to a few historians. All this changed when, in 1998, after three long years of hard research, Turkish museum director and wreck explorer Mr. Selcuk Kolay found AE2 sitting intact and upright on the bottom in 73m of water - her final resting place.



**HMA Submarine AE2**  
Australian War Memorial Negative Number 301364

**Map of AE2's Exploits**  
Courtesy AWM "WarTime" magazine





## The 2007 Gallipoli Campaign

For too long, the story of AE2's contribution to the Anzac legend has been untold. This is the opportunity to correct that before the Centenary of the Gallipoli landings in 2015 so that AE2 can claim her rightful place in history.

The membership of the Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA) currently comprises serving and retired Navy officers and expert civilians with a collective knowledge in diving, maritime archaeology and engineering spanning some 500 years.

The SIA has members who have:

- Been involved in the dives on the wreck.
- Critical skills required in submarine engineering, project management and marine archaeology.
- Links to maritime museums and submarine community.

The SIA sponsored early activity to identify and commence the interpretation of the AE2 and, following Government financial support, has established and handed over responsibility for this project to the AE 2 Commemorative Foundation Ltd, a not for profit, limited by guarantee company operating a trust of the same name. With these skills and involvement, the Foundation continues to be engaged in the development and implementation of a long term master plan by the Australian and Turkish Governments for the management and preservation of AE2.

The Foundation seeks partner institutions that can complement its areas of expertise and assist with funding so that, together, we may tell the remarkable story of AE2.

## The situation now:

- Interested Australian and Turkish groups and the Australian Government have agreed the need for a hydrographic and archaeological survey to assess the material condition of the wreck.
- The Minister for Veterans' Affairs has announced that the Australian Government will provide substantial support to the Project.
- The Foundation has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Turkish Institute of Nautical Archaeology (TINA) and is preparing to jointly conduct a diving survey in September 2007 to assess the state of AE2.
- The Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) has agreed to support the expedition with a small Remotely Operated Vehicle. This may be able to enter the wreck to obtain images of the interior of the submarine.
- A group of volunteers from DSTO is developing a computer based 'virtual model' of AE2.
- The Turkish Navy has appointed a Liaison Officer to assist during the survey.



- A team of volunteers with the expertise to conduct the dived survey and prepare reports on the outcomes, including members of the Australian marine archaeology team involved in the 1998 dive, has been assembled and a successful mission rehearsal and training exercise was conducted in early February.
- The Foundation has concluded an agreement with the film company Electric Pictures for a feature length documentary film by an award-winning writer/director and production team to film the survey and tell the remarkable story of how a lone Australian submarine changed the course of a war.

Following the survey, a report on future options with a recommended way ahead will be jointly developed by the Foundation and TINA for consideration by the Governments of Turkey and Australia.

### What Are we Trying To Do?

*The Foundation's Objective is to tell the story of HMAS AE2's exploits in the 1915 Gallipoli campaign.*

### The Vision

*By April 2015 AE2 has been preserved, assumed its rightful place in the Gallipoli legend and interpretative displays are established in Turkey, the Australian War Memorial and in Maritime Museums throughout Australia.*

A strategy for achieving this vision can be downloaded from [www.ae2.org.au](http://www.ae2.org.au)

### The Foundation's Role

The Foundation's proposal to provide the necessary leadership for development of a long term management plan for agreement by all stakeholders and to manage the conduct of this critical survey has been accepted by the Australian Government:

- Fund raising will be undertaken by the Foundation to supplement the Government funding.
- The Foundation will apply for Government support as Deductible Gift Recipient status.

## Realising the Vision

The 2007 survey should be seen as part of a longer term plan, leading to the centenary of the landings in 2015. It is essential that we act now to survey, protect and if practicable, preserve the wreck in situ, while decisions on its future are taken by the Australian and Turkish Governments.

The Foundation is now seeking sponsors to fund or provide in kind services to assist in the conduct of the survey and preparation of the report to the Governments of Turkey and Australia.

*We are offering you the opportunity to become involved in this unique project to preserve one of Australia's few remaining, and significant, World War I relics and to ensure the story of its heroic crew is told.*



### ***AE2's bow draped in fishing nets***

*Courtesy of Dr Mark Spencer*

The Foundation estimates that this project will cost in excess of \$A6m over the next 10 years and has established a Trust for which Tax Deductibility will be sought.

In the first instance, potential sponsors (either financial or in kind) should contact the AE2 Commemorative Foundation Limited:



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