

Peter Rados

See these links from the National Archives :

his naturalisation

application <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=30612>

His WW1 service

record <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8023933>

From Asia Minor to Anzac Cove: the Odyssey of Peter Rados

Private No. 170 Peter Rados, at the age of only 23, had enlisted to serve Australian Imperial Forces and his new homeland. He was killed in action on 19 May 1915 and buried just a few miles away from his birthplace of Artake.

Australian records reveal that some eighty-three diggers in the First World War had either been born in Greece or were of Hellenic background. Twelve of these sailed to Lemnos and served at Gallipoli in 1915.

One of these diggers would sadly die during the campaign – Private No. 170 Peter Rados. Recently, *Neos Kosmos* reported how Melbourne student Michael Manoussakis visited his grave on the Gallipoli peninsula.

This is the story of Peter's odyssey, from Asia Minor to Australia and back again. It is the story of a determination to volunteer and fight for his new country. And of Peter's mysterious origins that will take us back to the plight of Asia Minor's Greek population in the early 20th century.

Peter Rados becomes an Anzac

A cook by profession and resident in Sydney in 1914, Peter had a strong association with Sydney's Panellinion Club, whose proprietor was Mr Jack Zervos.

We don't know, but maybe as a new migrant he found work in this club connected to Sydney's Greek community. And maybe he lived there too.

What we do know is that 23-year-old Peter went to the Randwick Recruitment Centre only weeks after the outbreak of the First World War to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force.

And so on the 18 August 1914, Peter was inducted into A Company of the 3rd Battalion AIF. On enlistment, Peter stood 5ft 6 inches tall, with brown eyes and dark hair. Their medical officer recorded that he had a scar on his chest. Peter recorded his religion as Greek Orthodox.

Peter's unit was among the first infantry units raised, having been formed within a fortnight of the declaration of war. Like the 1st, 2nd and 4th Battalions it was recruited from New South Wales and, together with these battalions, formed the 1st Brigade. The unit diary records the battalion as being formed at Randwick on 17 August 1914.

The 3rd Battalion embarked just two months later, sailing on the HMAT Euripides from Port Macquarie on 19 October 1914. After a brief stop in Albany, Western Australia, the battalion proceeded to Egypt, arriving at Alexandria on 3 December.

The unit then proceeded to the main Anzac camp at Mena, arriving on 5 December. In Egypt, Peter and his unit were kept busy preparing for their coming engagement, with route marches and training in 'musketry', night fighting and assaults.

Peter arrives on Lemnos

Peter and his unit departed Alexandria on 5 April aboard the HMTS Derfflinger, arriving at Lemnos at 9.30 am on 8 April.

Along with the rest of his comrades, Peter then embarked on further training in preparation for the coming landings at Gallipoli.

Photographs show the 3rd Battalion practicing embarkation from their ships and landing techniques in Mudros Harbour. Physical training was also an important part of their training. We see them marching on the shore and even enjoying a swim in the waters of the harbour.

Amongst all these preparations for the coming landing, they received lectures on 'Notes on the Turkish Army', 'Enemy Ruses and Espionage' and 'International Law', as well as the cooperation between artillery and infantry in the attack.

While they practiced disembarking from their transport vessel, the former German ship the Derfflinger, the unit diary records Peter and his comrades landing at Mudros village a number of times.

On the 17 April, 50 per cent of the battalion were allowed to wash their clothes at Mudros village.

To Gallipoli

The battalion departed Lemnos at 6.15 am on the 24 April on the 5-hour voyage to their anchorage point prior to leaving for Anzac Cove. They arrived at their anchorage at 10.55 pm and departed for Anzac Cove at 12.30 am on 25 April. Arriving at 4.00 am, they would be part of the second and third waves. The battalion was ashore by 8.30 am.

Peter thus took part in and survived the landings at Anzac Cove.

By the end of the first evening, Peter was one of the 16,000 men who had landed on the beaches. Fortunately, he was not one of the over 2,000 Australians who were killed or wounded on that first day.

Peter is killed defending Anzac Cove

Peter survived the landings only to be killed in action on 19 May 1915 at the Peninsula along with so many others. He was only 24 years old.

His unit diary records the fierce Turkish attack Peter's unit sustained on the 19th. Waves of closely packed Turkish infantry attacked the whole defence line at 2.45 am. The battalion had expected an attack and were ready for it, inflicting many casualties on the attacking forces.

However, the Australians suffered many casualties as the Turks retreated. The Diggers had emerged from their trenches to fire on the retreating Turks, exposing themselves to the fire of the Turkish defenders in the opposing enemy trenches. The battalion records that one officer was killed and two wounded, with 41 other ranks killed and 49 wounded. Peter Rados was one of those killed.

He was initially buried in Shrapnel Gully on the Peninsula, the service conducted by the 1st Brigade's famous and brave Chaplain William McKenzie, from Bendigo, Victoria.

He now lies at grave plot G 21 near Anzac Cove, in Ari Burnu Cemetery. Another 150 of his Australian comrades are also buried there.

Peter Rados – of Athens or Artaky?

But like many Anzac records, the files contain a mystery – where was Peter born?

When he joined up on 18 August 1914, Peter stated that his place of birth was Athens in Greece. As if to support this, he listed his next of kin as Peter Rados, resident of 28 Arcades Avenue, Athens.

Yet his Service Record File reveals that this may have been a ruse.

After his death, the file records mail was returned from this address, with the annotation 'whereabouts unknown'.

He left a will leaving all his property to Mr Jack Zervos, of 37 Park Street Sydney, NSW. This was the address of the Panellinion Club, of which Mr Zervos was the proprietor.

In 1916, Mr Zervos was writing to inquire about Peter's Will.

At the end of the war, Peter's older brother Nick Rados began corresponding with the Australian Army regarding the whereabouts of his brother Peter. Nick had been born in 1890, a year before his brother Peter. He was a waiter and had arrived in the US in 1914 from Constantinople, the capital and main outward transit point of the Ottoman Empire.

He was now writing on behalf of Peter's family. Nick was a resident of Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA.

This correspondence reveals the secret to Peter's origins.

For while it is not totally clear, it is more than likely that in 1891 Peter had been born in Asia Minor, probably in the village of Artaky or Artake (Αρτάκη in Greek), on the coast of the Sea of Marmara.

The Rados Family of Asia Minor

On 29 January 1919, Nick wrote that Peter had used the address of his parents on his enlistment. His actual place of birth – and "where his people were from" – was Artaky in Asia Minor, then part of the Ottoman Empire.

Nick wrote that Peter feared that to list his real place of birth may have affected his enlistment, as he had been a "Turkish subject".

Yet even the supposed address of his parents is suspect. For Nick writes in the same letter that the last place his parents were heard from as living was in Smyrna.

From Smyrna his parents had appealed through the American "Ambassador" (consul) for news of their son's fate, "28 months before". Nick records that as Peter's parents had not been heard from since, then Nick was the next of kin.

In May 1919 Nick wrote again to the Australian military authorities. He wrote that Peter had four surviving sisters living in Artaky (now known as Erdek), part of what would become modern Turkey, but then under Allied military supervision since the end of the First World War.

Artaky lies on the southern coast of the sea of Marmara, not many miles from where Peter was killed at Gallipoli.

Like many Greeks in Asia Minor, both Peter and his brother Nick had left Asia Minor before the outbreak of the First World War to seek a better life abroad.

For Nick, the United States was his destination. For Peter it was Australia.

We know that behind them lay their mother and father, in Smyrna, and their four sisters. Their sisters were Mareka, aged 15, Antho, aged 13, Smaro, aged 11 and Georgia, aged 10.

In 1917, Nick had reported to US authorities that he was supporting these sisters in Artaky. As Nick wrote to the Australian authorities:

“...they were in a very poor condition as they have lost all during the war. Their father and mother died two years ago through the hardship of the war. Strato Largina is acting as their guardian – he is living in the same town as they do.”

Peter had left just in time. The peoples of the Aegean coastal region had suffered particularly during the First World War. If they were not evacuated as either civilians or potential fifth columnists, they would have suffered the privations of being part of the war zone. Allied submarines would have been visible from Artaky – the famous E11 British submarine voyaging nearby on a number of occasions during the Gallipoli campaign.

Nick requested that the Australian authorities do what they could to ensure that Peter’s effects and property was awarded to his sisters, who were in dire need in Asia Minor – “as an act of charity”.

In June 1919, The Australian Army acted, writing to Mr Jack Zervos in Sydney asking him to consider this request.

We don’t know what the response of Mr Zervos was to these pleas for help – or the fate of Peter’s young sisters in far off Asia Minor.

What we do know is that they were soon to face the horrors of the war in Asia Minor and the subsequent catastrophe for the Christian community there.

One can only hope that they made their way to safety in Greece or beyond.

An Asia Minor Greek returns

Given his roots lay in Asia Minor, it is interesting to speculate what would have gone through young Peter’s mind as he looked on Lemnos – only recently liberated from Ottoman rule itself. He would no doubt have felt an affinity with its people and their lives.

I wonder whether he meet up with Pavlos Gyparis and his two battalions of Greek volunteers, one of Greeks from Asia Minor – like Peter – who volunteered to help the Allied cause at Gallipoli.

And his landing at Gallipoli would have been something of a homecoming, walking again on the soil of Asia Minor, not too far from the place of his birth and where his family resided.

His death and burial on the Gallipoli shore was an unfortunate homecoming for this son of Asia Minor. But in a way, given his roots in nearby Erdek (Artaky), his grave at Ari Burnu is strangely appropriate.

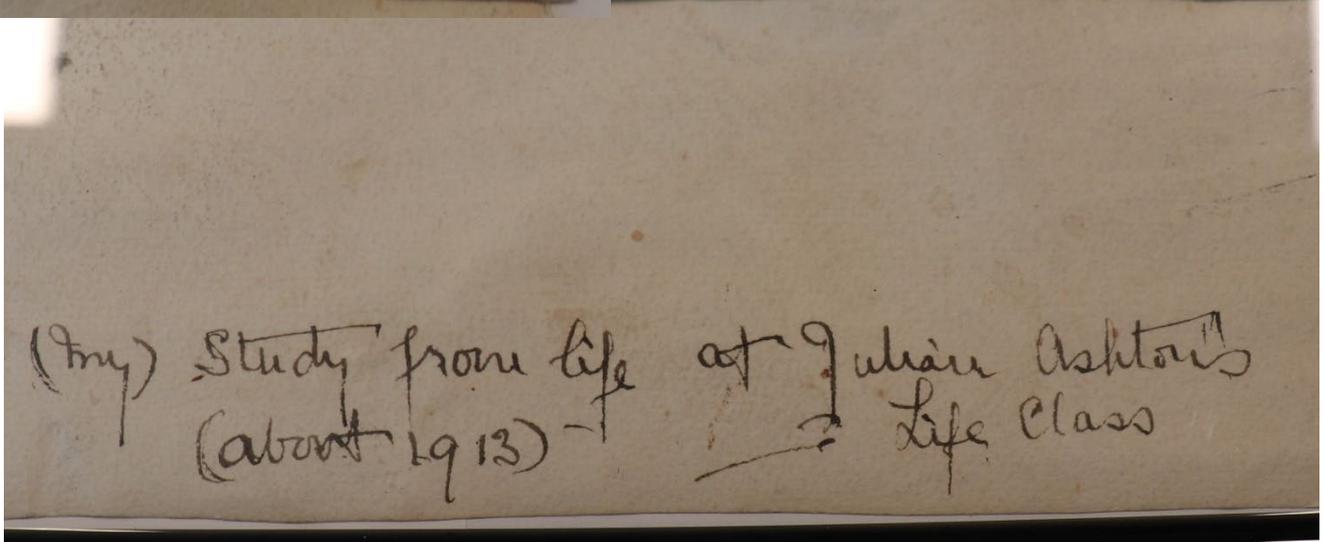
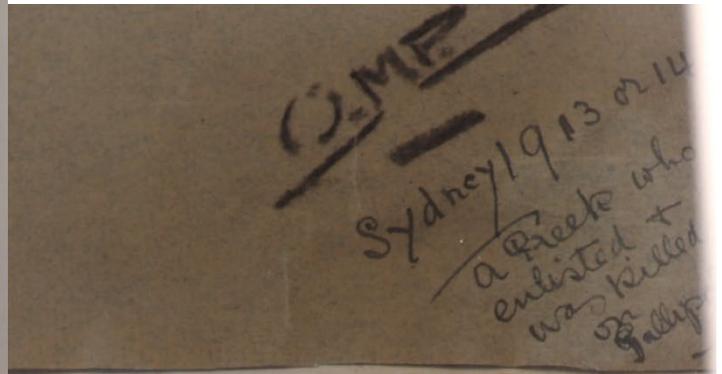
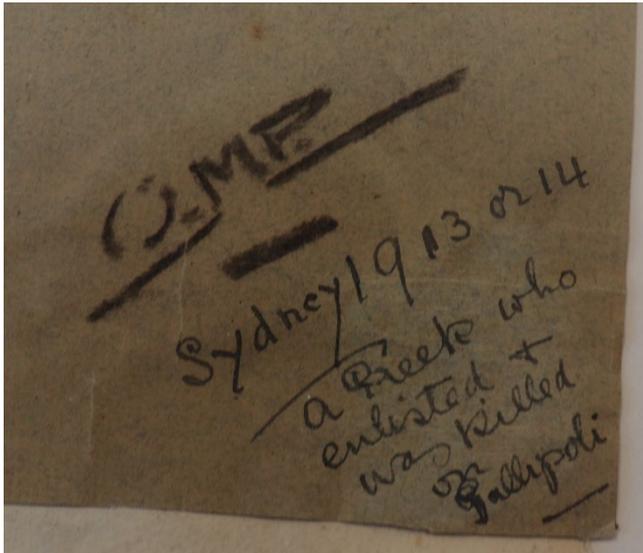
In 1920, the Australian Army sent Nick Rados his brother’s war medals – the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal, “...as mementoes of the gallant service rendered by the late No. 170 Private P. Rados -3 Bn AIF”.

Vale Peter Rados.

Lest we forget.

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Private Peter Rados, AIF of Artakoy, Asia Minor.

He was the only soldier of Greek background who enlisted in the Australian army, and died at Gallipoli on 19 May 1915. The life drawing was completed by Olive Muriel Pink in 1913 in Sydney. (From Jim Claven's book 'Lemnos & Gallipoli Revealed')

<https://sparc.utas.edu.au/index.php/study-from-life-by-olive-pink>

citation : "Olive Pink Collection - UTAS SPARC P6-24"