

**Stage 5 History**  
**Year 9 Students**  
**Topic 2      Australia and World War I**

Inquiry questions: How and why was the Anzac legend created? What was the impact of World War I on the Australian home front 1914-18? Outcome: 5.10 selects and uses appropriate oral, written and other forms, including ICT, to communicate effectively about the past for different audiences.

**Exercise 3: ANZAC Slave Labourers**



**Source A:** One of the construction sites of the Baghdad Railway at Tachdourmas in the Taurus Mountains of southern Anatolia. c.1918

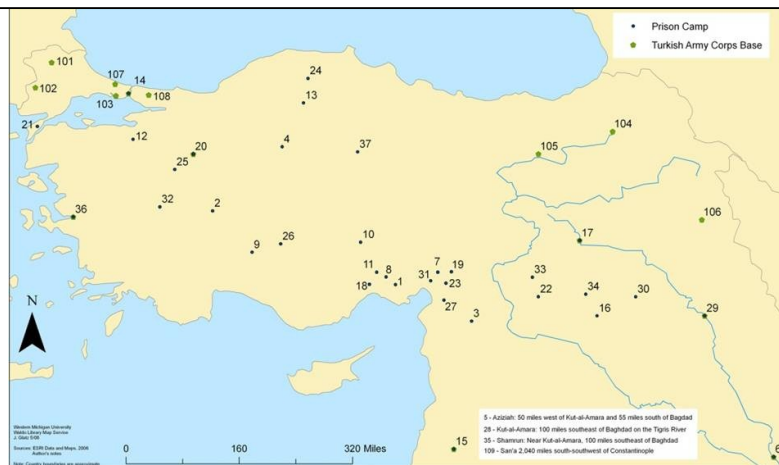


**Source B:** Burial place of 552 Private William Allen, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, AIF. Belemedick, Anatolia (Taurus Mountains, southern Turkey) c.1916.

**Source C:** Extracts from the unpublished diary of HMAS AE2 Able-Seaman John Harrison Wheat, pages 36-37. Australian War Memorial File 3DRL/2965

*We arrived at the village or town of Belemedik on [the] first day of February [1916]. This was our first introduction to the renowned Baghdad Railway, which proved to be our destination. Here I had better give a brief note on the importance of the Baghdad Railway to the enemy, ..., the Taurus Mountains, ... . It passed the twelve tunnels in twelve miles until it reached Belemedik on the south side of the mountains. All the munitions, produce et cetera had to be unloaded and reloaded at these two stopping places, changing from the broad to narrow gauge lines. ...*

*The Germans immediately increased the number of workers to 30,000, made up chiefly prisoners of: Greeks, Armenians and Turks unfit or military duty. ... Generally speaking, for the first six months - February to July - of this work, say up to the time of my first attempted escape - [in] August 1916, the German company treated the prisoners fairly well, because food was cheap and the supply adequate. When the number of prisoners increased, food became scarce and the sick became more numerous. Then conditions altered, and we suffered accordingly, being animals of burden only.*



## Activities

1. Describe what you think is happening in Source A.
2. Using Sources A and B, describe the climate and other conditions endured by the ANZACs and the Greek, Armenian and Assyrian slave labourers they were working with.
3. If you had to write a caption for Sources A and B, what would they be?
4. Using Source B, explain what you think happened to Private William Allen from when he was captured to when he was laid to rest.
5. Using the material available on the Genocide Education website, explain why Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians were being used as slave labourers on the construction of the Baghdad Railway.
6. Drawing on the information in Sources A, B and C, write a short story about the experiences of ANZAC prisoners-of-war being used as the Ottoman Turkish Empire's slave labourers on the Baghdad Railway.