The field rations at Gallipoli were poorly planned, partly because of the expectation of an early breakout and advance to Constantinople by August. Thus, the soldiers were not provided with the equipment or supplies needed for prolonged trench warfare.

The daily rations were supposed to include 450 grams of canned Corned (Bully) Beef, a similar amount of Army ("Hard Tack") biscuits, 113 grams of bacon, cheese and a serving of peas, beans or dried potatoes. Tea was provided, plus jam and sugar. It was impossible to distribute hot meals to men based in trenches on the other side of steep cliffs. Instead, they did their own cooking e.g. digging shallow pits to light small fires.

Difficulties with access meant a day's rations for soldiers near the frontline would often have to last for 2 to 3 days. Bully Beef and/or Army biscuits were the staple of most meals, especially in the early months. The rock hard biscuits and lack of water (the initial ration of 4.5 litres was cut by 75%) meant that oral health suffered. Men were suffering bleeding gums, then developed mouth ulcers which often became infected. The soldiers then had to be evacuated for dental care. The biscuits could also break your teeth unless softened in tea or ground up to make porridge or to thicken stews made with Bully Beef.

Many men gave up eating during the day due to the swarms of flies. Breakfast may have been a biscuit porridge with sweetened condensed milk (if available) or biscuits and jam. Stews of Bully Beef and crushed biscuits with onion or thyme were frequent main meals.

The unsatisfying and monotonous diet affected the soldiers' morale, plus their physical and psychological well-being.

As the months went by, supply and thus food variety improved, with the provision of cheese, sweetened condensed milk, bacon, some rice and fresh bread. However, the importance of fruit and vegetables was not fully realised. Canned fruit and vegetables would have significantly improved the nutritional quality of the rations.

Soldiers could sometimes buy chocolate and/or dates from the YMCA hut. On rare occasions nuts and raisins were sold. The Australians and New Zealanders were delighted to receive food parcels from home e.g. a boiled fruit cake, a box of chocolates or a few cans of sardines.

Seven weeks before the evacuation from Gallipoli, an editorial in the Medical Journal of Australia responded to a returned colonel's descriptions of the conflict by calling for a "change to the monotonous and "nauseating" rations blamed for an average weight loss of 28 pounds (12.7 kgm) in the troops". Lack of water and a high sodium diet exacerbated the thirst of frontline troops. The rations were low in fibre, Vitamins A and C. Lack of Vitamin C caused scurvy which impaired wound healing. Given the role of Vitamin A in immune function and protecting against infectious disease, the low intakes could well have contributed to the high mortality rates from dysentery and typhoid. The combination of poor nutrition, unsanitary living conditions and lack of rest took their toll. Dysentery, septicaemia, tetanus and typhoid affected many Australians and caused the evacuation of thousands of men.

The Turkish forces had a more varied diet, similar to that of the Roman legions: wheat bread, olive oil, nuts and dried fruits. Their meals were centrally prepared and included fresh local foods; although often lacking in meat. French and Indian divisions had better rations than the ANZACs, with more vegetables and bread.

The quality and variety of rations for the Australians improved considerably on the Western Front, where the soldier's diets were also supplemented by regular food parcels from home and by purchasing food from the local population.

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