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founded by Major E H W Banner in 1969 on the Campaign of 1915

The Gallipoli Association

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Cover:

HMS Amethyst - 04:07 hrs on 14th March 1915
painted by Arnold Boyd, 1963, See article pages 54 – 64.
Courtesy of © William & Serpil Sellars Collection

GALLIPOLI ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Peter Biles

In one of the biggest Gallipoli conferences to date, more than 70 attendees gathered at the Royal Air Force Club on 2 November. The Gallipoli Association Chairman, Brigadier James Stopford, gave the welcome address and said ways continued to be sought to engage with a wider and younger audience. He added that the Association remained relevant and there was still a great deal to learn from the Gallipoli Campaign. Brig. Stopford thanked Tom Iredale, Stephen Chambers and Hester Huttenbach for putting the conference together.

The first speaker was Vice Admiral (Ret'd) Paul Bennett whose subject was *The Royal Navy today and the enduring lessons of Gallipoli*. Paul retired from the Royal Navy in 2022 after a career of 36 years. He commanded at every rank, including the UK's Amphibious Task Group. Reflecting on Gallipoli, he said that the tension between political and military leadership was as live today as it was in 1914. 'There will, and should always be, a constructive tension between the politicians and the Armed Forces, but right from the start, as Admiral Wemyss had described in his personal account of the Navy in the Dardanelles, there was incoherence.' He added: 'The reality is that it wasn't joined up ... there was a gap between Navy and Army in delivering combined operations ... whilst it would be a stretch to conclude that the experiences of 1915 were a direct catalyst for the improvements that we see today, it was most definitely a stark experience from which many lessons were absorbed into the continued rapid deployment of Royal Navy capability.'

The next presentation was by Professor Peter Doyle who spoke on '*Gallipoli 1915: the impact of terrain from forcing the Dardanelles to evacuating the beaches*.' Peter Doyle is Emeritus Professor of History at London South Bank University, and lectures on First World War trench warfare. He said the Gallipoli Campaign, as fought by the Entente in 1915, was ultimately controlled by two factors: the complexity of the terrain and the skill of its Ottoman defenders. Included was some fascinating analysis of the effect of geology. In conclusion, Peter said the failure to 'take the high ground' doomed the Allied campaign and intelligent defensive containment by the Ottomans defeated the Allies.

Guest speaker Sophie Haworth, was invited to talk about the impact of her Association-funded visit with the Army cadets to the peninsula in 2022. Sophie grew up in Portsmouth and spent a year living in New Zealand, which strengthened her interest in the Campaign. She thanked the Association for enabling her visit, igniting her passion for military history, which led her to enrol at King's College London, where she is currently reading War Studies.

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Dr Richard Farrimond offered the conference new insight into the man who commanded the Anzacs at Gallipoli. *Birdie: More than 'Soul of Anzac'* Field Marshal Lord Birdwood of Anzac & Totnes. According to Richard, Birdwood has received little attention from either British or Antipodean historians. Australian authors see him as a British general, while the British see him as closely associated with the Anzacs. Dr. Farrimond said the events at Gallipoli in 1915 had been 'the watershed of Birdwood's career.' He also described Birdwood as 'a man of Empire.'

For a third successive year at the conference, guests were treated to another of Arthur Meek's *Voices of Gallipoli*. The New Zealand playwright and screenwriter presented a verbatim account from an Anzac veteran who fought at Gallipoli. This year we heard the dramatic testimony of Henry Lewis, a 20-year-old apprentice motor mechanic from Wellington, who survived Gallipoli, but ended up deeply traumatised by his experience of hardship and fear.

See photographs for conference on pages 31 and 32; for Embassy reception on page 37.

BRITISH EMBASSY RECEPTION

On 4 November Her Excellency Jill Morris CMG, His Majesty's Ambassador to Turkey, graciously hosted a memorable reception at the British Embassy in Ankara. This diplomatic gathering was in honour of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, celebrating its significant contributions not just at Gallipoli, but on a global scale. The event also aimed to unite those who appreciate the importance of commemoration, fostering stronger cooperation.

After welcoming the distinguished guests, Ambassador Morris introduced two notable figures: Claire Horton CBE, director-general of the CWGC, and Ismail Kaşdemir, Director of the Gallipoli Historic Site Directorate. Ambassador Morris highlighted their vital roles in the preservation and commemoration of Gallipoli. Following the introductions, Claire Horton delivered an engaging talk on the CWGC's ongoing efforts, the challenges it faces, and its vision for the future.

Representing the Gallipoli Association was our overseas liaison officer and trustee, Thomas Iredale. He was able to use this valuable opportunity to share the mission of the Association and its education and outreach programmes. His discussions with guests, including Claire Horton and diplomatic delegates from New Zealand, Canada and Australia, as well as staff of the British Defence Attaché, underscored the importance of educational initiatives and reaching out to younger generations.

ŞAHİN ALDOĞAN: ALWAYS HOCAM

Bill and Serpil Sellars remember Şahin Aldoğan, one of Türkiye's leading experts on the Gallipoli Campaign, a former member of the association who was known to many through his writings and sharing of wisdom.

Neither of us can remember exactly when we first met Şahin Aldoğan, though it must have been more than 20 years ago. He was still working occasionally as a maritime engineer then, spending months overseas before returning to Türkiye and his beloved Gallipoli Peninsula.

Maybe we met through a mutual friend; maybe while sitting in a tea house and starting to talk, finding we had a shared interest in the history of the campaign of 1914–1916 and history in general; maybe meeting while walking over the battlefields. Şahin met many people in many ways, always leaving an impression of knowledge, passion, and humility. It doesn't really matter how we met, what matters is what came after. The long hours of talking, the sharing, the walking the battlefields and – on more than a few occasions – the drinking, which helped the talking and the sharing but not so much the walking.

Sitting at a table, books and maps scattered across the surface, we would look for answers to questions from more than 100 years ago, such as trying to exactly locate the position of all the Ottoman artillery on April 25, the day of the Allied invasion. I remember it frustrated him greatly that we could not find where one Nordenfeldt multi-barrelled gun was located that day. For Şahin, history was a science, not romance or false heroism, and science meant getting the facts right, all the facts.

For Şahin, the science of history meant that he was always looking for new information, new sources, seeking to learn, working to strip away fantasy and find truth. Not only did he seek truth, Şahin liked to talk about the truth he had found.

And when I say, "Şahin liked to talk", those who knew him well will smile at what is a massive understatement. In full flow, talking about a subject he was passionate about – and he was passionate about many things – Şahin talked long, fast, with excitement and in detail, often slipping into English when talking to Turks and Turkish when talking to foreigners like me.

I remember one day many years ago, the three of us driving out to the village of Büyükanafarta with Şahin in the back seat. Serpil was driving at 45 kilometres an hour but I am sure Şahin was talking at 75 kilometres, such was his enthusiasm to impart information and share knowledge.

As fountains, tracks, hills and fields flashed past as we drove, Şahin would tell us the story of each place. Which battalion was camped here when news came of the Allied landings, what part of the front was supplied by the dirt track that disappeared into the forests, who had their headquarters behind that hill. High speed history that made us regret not carrying sound recording equipment in the car.

When talking, Şahin had a number of phrases or words he liked to use, some that became a joke among his close friends, who in turn would use them when trying to describe what he would say in a particular situation. One such word was “Scandal!!”, usually said with his hand over his mouth when describing some terrible mistake made by someone incorrectly discussing history, or increasingly over the years, about damage done to the battlefields of Gallipoli as history was covered by cement in the name of development and tourism.

Another phrase he often used was: “I am not a historian”, said after someone praised his vast knowledge of history.

And in one way at least he was right, he was not a historian. There was no alphabet of letters after his name or honorifics like Dr, Associate Professor or Professor in front of it to indicate years spent in academia. Şahin’s degrees came in the field, studying the terrain of history, the battlefields and how the land – stained with the blood of martyrs and invaders – shaped events.

As a young man, he had sat and interviewed veterans of the Gallipoli Campaign, the men who were part of history, recording and remembering their names and their stories. Şahin was not a historian in the academic sense, but he was a historian in that he recorded, remembered and in time became part of the history of one of the defining events of the late Ottoman Empire.

Because of this, many researchers came to him for advice, for assistance and for knowledge.

Whenever Şahin said, “I am not a historian”, I would always reply, “No, you are the person historians come to to learn history”.

To generations of Turkish students of history, and to a lucky few foreigners, he was and will remain Hocam – Teacher.



Şahin Aldoğan (right) with New Zealand film maker Peter Jackson and Bill Sellars.

‘BORN LEADERS OF MEN OR AGEING RETIREES?’

A Study of Battalion Command in 13 (Western) Division in the Gallipoli Campaign

Richard Earl

13 (Western) Division

38th Brigade

6/King's Own – G W C Knatchbull
6/East Lancashire – A Cole-Hamilton
6/South Lancashire – H K Woods
6/Loyal North Lancashire – H G Levinge

39th Brigade

9/Royal Warwicks – C H Palmer
7/Gloucestershire – R P Jordan
9/Worcestershire – M Nunn
7/North Staffordshire – T Andrus

40th Brigade

8/Cheshire – The Hon. C Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby MP
8/Royal Welch Fusiliers – A Hay
4/South Wales Borderers – F M Gillespie
5/Wiltshire – J Carden
Pioneers - 8/Welsh Regiment – J A Bald

This article complements the author's earlier works "A Mixed Bag" A Study of Battalion Command at Suvla Bay' and 'A Study of Battalion Command in 10 (Irish) Division at Suvla Bay' which examined the performance of the battalion commanding officers (COs) of 10 (Irish) and 11 (Northern) Division and the claims that their COs were excessively old and incompetent.¹ Here I look at the third Kitchener division dispatched to Gallipoli, 13 (Western) Division, and the records of their battalion COs, in an attempt to dispel some pernicious myths on their experience, competence and professionalism. I will show that not only were

¹ Earl, R. "A Mixed Bag" A Study of Battalion Command at Suvla Bay' *The Gallipolian* No.150 (Autumn 2019) pp22-26; Earl, R. 'A Study of Battalion Command in 10 (Irish) Division at Suvla Bay' *The Gallipolian* No.164 (Spring 2024) pp9-15.

the battalion COs in 13 Division, for the most part, aged well under 50 and either serving, or recently retired, regular soldiers; but also that they put up a very creditable performance at Cape Helles and Anzac Cove in the summer of 1915.

Part of the first 'Kitchener' wave of divisions (K1) formed shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914, 13 Division comprised battalions from Wales and the west of England. Under the command of Lt. Gen. Sir F C Shaw the division trained on Salisbury Plain before embarking for the Dardanelles in July 1915. In a confidential document sent to Sir Ian Hamilton, GOC MEF, the division was graded as the second most efficient of the three in IX Corps.² Ultimately all three divisions would meet with eventual failure in their first offensive action of the war,³ and as a result a certain amount of opprobrium has been put on both senior commanders, and also on the battalion COs.

The British Official History of the campaign gives a damning indictment of the battalion commanders in IX Corps, stating that

'most of the brigade and battalion commanders were men well over fifty years of age who had retired before the war ...some were men who would never have attained command in times of peace, and they lacked the power of inspiring the well-educated and enthusiastic young civilians who had flocked to the army.'⁴

This confident assertion has been repeated by many subsequent authors.⁵ Alan Moorehead, for example, stated that many of the 'colonels ...were men who were well over fifty and who had been in retirement when the war broke out.'⁶ However, this perception that the early Kitchener battalions on active service were commanded by elderly, long retired 'dug out' officers has been comprehensively debunked.⁷

² Hickey, M. *Gallipoli* (John Murray, London 1995) p262. The National Archives, Kew (TNA) PRO30/57 Kitchener Papers, Hamilton to Kitchener 31 July 1915; TNA CAB19/31. Interestingly, Hamilton thought 13 Division was as good as the 11th, and better than the 10th.

³ For the definitive account of the August offensive see Crawley, R. *Climax at Gallipoli* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman 2014) *passim*.

⁴ Aspinall-Oglander, C F. *Military Operations: Gallipoli, Vol. II, May 1915 to the Evacuation* (Heinemann, London 1932) (hereafter OH) p140.

⁵ This phrase, or variations of it, can be found in, for example, Liddle, P. *The Gallipoli Experience Reconsidered* (Pen & Sword, Barnsley 2015). p152; Carlyon, L. *Gallipoli* (Bantam, London 2001) p421; Liddle, P. *Men of Gallipoli* (Allen Lane, London 1976); Lee, J. 'Sir Ian Hamilton and the Dardanelles' in Bond, B. (ed.) *Fallen Stars* (Brassey's London, 1991) p46.

⁶ Moorehead, A. *Gallipoli* (Wordsworth, Ware 1997:1958) p203.

⁷ Hodgkinson, P. 'British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War' unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham 2013.

Origins

In order to assess the performance of the 13 Division COs it is first necessary to examine how they came to command, their background and combat experience, and finally their performance in battle. Most of 13 Division's battalion COs were regular soldiers, either serving or recently retired. Two, George Knatchbull and John Bald, were serving regulars with the Indian Army; another two, Thomas Andrus and Hugh Woods were serving regulars with their battalions; four, Archibald Hay, Franklin Gillespie, Richard Price Jordan and Cecil Palmer were regular majors commanding their regimental depots; while Mervyn Nunn and Charles Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby came from the Reserve of Officers, the latter was a retired major from the Coldstream Guards who had seen active service in the Boer War and was sitting as a Conservative MP for the Stamford constituency; while the former had retired from the army in 1906 after strenuous service in various small colonial wars. Henry Levinge was a captain in the Special Reserve and Arthur Cole-Hamilton was a retired major, also with the Special Reserve. Perhaps the most unusual and interesting back story belongs to John Carden CMG, CO of 5/Wiltshire, who emigrated to South Africa at the age of 20 and spent the next two decades serving in a variety of police and volunteer units before becoming commandant of the North Rhodesian Police Force. In 1912 he retired to a cottage in rural Wiltshire where he remained until the outbreak of war saw him appointed as second-in-command of 5/Wiltshire before acceding to command in March 1915.⁸

Most came from their parent regiments, but a few were cross posted. For example Cecil Palmer was the Worcestershire Regiment depot commander on outbreak of war, but was appointed commander of 9/Royal Warwicks. Members of his parent regiment expressed their sadness when they heard of his death as he was '*a man of fine character, his loss was greatly regretted.*'⁹ Palmer was a man who believed in strict discipline and the bible, on one occasion reminding a young subaltern he spotted giving a rather lackadaisical salute that '*discipline begins with the officers*' before punishing him with additional drill. Despite this he was held in some awe, and prior to departing the UK he dramatically recited the Lord's Prayer to his assembled men at dusk before they marched off to war.¹⁰ It is, therefore, unsurprising that the Warwicks regimental history later recorded how his

⁸ <http://www.southafricawargraves.org/search/print.php?id=3357> Accessed 17 January 2024.

⁹ Stacker, Capt. H F *The Worcestershire Regiment in the Great War Vol. I.* (G T Cheshire & Sons, Kidderminster 1928) p92.

¹⁰ Miller, R. *Uncle Bill: The Authorised Biography of Field Marshal Viscount Slim* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 2013) pp34-38.

battalions fighting efficiency owed much to his '*unselfish enthusiasm and ability*'.¹¹ Not all had commanded their units since the outbreak of war. For example, Mervyn Nunn took command of 9/Worcester on the untimely death of its original commanding officer in January 1915. The regimental history recorded that he '*was to prove a splendid Commanding Officer, untiring in care for his men, up till his gallant death in Gallipoli*'.¹²

Age and previous service

Contrary to Aspinall's assertion that battalion commanders in IX Corps were aged well over 50, the average age in 13 Division was a shade over 45. Just four were aged over 50, two of whom, Nunn and Levinge, had only just turned 50 on landing on the peninsula. Of the others, Knatchbull was 53 and Cole-Hamilton the eldest at 56. In contrast, the remaining nine COs were relatively young men. For example, Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby, Hay, Andrus and Gillespie were all 42 years old, Bald was 39 and Woods a positively youthful 37.¹³

The various small wars of the late Victorian era provided a valuable proving ground for many young officers, and it is therefore unsurprising that all of our COs had seen active service before the outbreak of war in 1914. Nine (Woods, Levinge, Palmer, Jordan, Nunn, Hamilton-Drummond-Willoughby, Carden, Hay and Gillespie) served in the Boer War, three of whom (Hay, Jordan and Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby) were wounded. Carden also fought in the Matabele War. All received at least one of the various campaign medals and Jordan was appointed to the DSO. Hay also saw service in China, and Gillespie campaigned in Niger.¹⁴ Of the others Andrus saw extensive service on the North West Frontier of India, Cole-Hamilton helped suppress the Urabi revolt in Egypt and the Sudan, Knatchbull fought in the Burma Expedition of 1885-1887 in addition to service in China, and Bald was present at the relief of Peking, the culmination of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900.¹⁵

Although their most recent combat experience was over a decade before Gallipoli, that should not invalidate the positive benefits of having seen action. For example, Franklin Gillespie's active service in West and South Africa was put to good use on Gallipoli when he correctly predicted that a resolute attack into a nullah would

¹¹ Kingsford, C L. *The Story of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment* (London 1921) p196.

¹² Stacke, op.cit. p44.

¹³ To give a modern analogy, Lt. Col. H Jones was killed at Goose Green aged 42,

¹⁴ Kirk-Greene, A H M. 'The Niger Sudan Expeditionary Force, 1897' *Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research* Vol. 46, No. 185 (Spring 1968) p56.

¹⁵ *Quarterly Army List* January 1914; Davies, F & Maddocks, G. *Bloody Red Tabs* (Pen & Sword, Barnsley 2014:1995) p158.

result in a slackening of the enemy's fire.¹⁶ In another instance a junior officer from 7/Gloucestershire thought his CO, Richard Price Jordan, was very good and had ample experience from the Boer War which enabled him to make their pre-deployment training effective.¹⁷ Having landed at Anzac Cove in early August, 13 Division would play an important role in the forthcoming August offensive and there would plenty of opportunities for the battalion COs to demonstrate whether they were up to the task of battalion command in a modern war.

Gallipoli record

Shaw thought the men of 13 Division arrived on Gallipoli '*well trained and admirably led*'.¹⁸ But to what extent did the battalion COs live up to this assessment? Franklin Gillespie appears to have been a particularly forceful and competent officer. After the war the regimental history noted how he had been the battalion's mainstay during training, and that he was '*a soldier of real ability, a born leader of men... he had inspired confidence in his new officers and men by his soldierly qualities, his just treatment... and his constant care for their interests*'.¹⁹ Prior to the August offensive he insisted on personally reconnoitring the terrain around Anzac by destroyer. As a result he was able to lead his men in a successful flanking attack which won the praise of Sir Ian Hamilton, who later wrote '*the rapid success of this movement was largely due to Lieutenant Colonel Gillespie, a very fine man, who commanded the advanced guard... here was an encouraging example of what the New Army under good auspices could accomplish*'.²⁰ Given his admirable predilection for leading from the front it is perhaps unsurprising that Gillespie was shot through the head by a sniper on 9 August repelling a Turkish attack. His second in command called his death a '*great and irreparable loss*'.²¹ Similarly the battalion quartermaster recorded how he was '*ever a cheery soul and whatever he took up he put his whole heart into... working with unremitting energy, his just treatment of the men and his sterling soldierly qualities... made him deservedly popular with all ranks*'.²²

Richard Price Jordan particularly endeared himself to his Gloucestershire battalion, many of whom hailed from the border regions, by conversing with his men in fluent Welsh.²³ Conversely, Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby did not make a

¹⁶ Atkinson, C T. *The History of the South Wales Borderers 1914-1918* (Medici Society, London 1931) p156.

¹⁷ Imperial War Museum Sound Archive (IWMSA) Acc. 4609 M. Jenks, interviewed in 1979.

¹⁸ TNA CAB19/31 Statement of Maj. Gen. Shaw.

¹⁹ Atkinson, op. cit., p160.

²⁰ Ibid. pp155-157.

²¹ TNA CAB45/247 Diary of Lt. Col. M J de la P Beresford.

²² Ashwood, R. *Duty Nobly Done: The South Wales Borderers at Gallipoli 1915* (Helion, Warwick 2017) p158.

good impression on his fellow officers. In an unusual incident Brig. Gen. Webb Gillman caught him hiding in a corner devouring a rare tin of peaches which he refused to share with anyone.²⁴

In the finest traditions of the British army battalion COs on Gallipoli led from the front, and often paid the ultimate price. Cecil Palmer was the first 13 Division CO killed in action, shot through the head by a sniper on 25 July. At the time he was in the front line and had carelessly exposed his head above the parapet.²⁵ The brutal fighting at Anzac in early August claimed the lives of several other COs, four of them on the same day. Mervyn Nunn was killed, along with about half his battalion, in the Turkish assault on 10 August, however, the circumstances in which he fell are unknown.²⁶ His body was never identified, though he is believed to be buried in The Farm Cemetery. Arthur Cole-Hamilton was also killed with his battalion during this counter-offensive. John Carden's 5/Wiltshire were bivouacked in a poorly sited support position and the massed Turkish attack rolled over them before they could retrieve their weapons. Many men from his battalion fled into a ravine where they were trapped and starved to death. Carden fell, probably in the melee, his body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial to the missing.²⁷

Thomas Andrus was given command of a small column of two battalions, tasked with supporting 1/6 Gurkha's in their attack on Chunuk Bair. Unfortunately the difficult terrain and inexperience of his men resulted in them giving less direct support than planned.²⁸ Henry Levinge's battalion of Loyals were tasked with holding Chunuk Bair. On arrival he ascertained the front line trenches were dangerously sited, and attempted to strengthen them, and dig observations posts, but these measures



Lieut-Colonel Arthur Cole-Hamilton

²³ IWMSA Acc. 4609 M Jenks.

²⁴ Royal Artillery Museum (RAM) Gillman Papers MD 1161.11 Gallipoli Diary.

²⁵ TNA WO95/4302 War Diary 9/Warwick, Nevill to Aspinall-Oglander 17 Jan 1931; TNA WO95/4302 War Diary 9/Worcestershire, Sladden to Aspinall-Oglander 8 March 1931; RAM Gillman Papers MD 1161.11 Gallipoli Diary.

²⁶ Stacke, op. cit., p100.

²⁷ OH. Vol. II. pp.304-307; TNA WO95/4303 War Diary 5/Wiltshire.

²⁸ TNA CAB45/241 Andrus to Aspinall-Oglander 6 Dec 1930; Davies, H. *Allanson of the 6th* (Square One, Worcester 1990) *passim*.

were insufficient to stop a massive Turkish attack which overwhelmed the battalion, killing Levinge and many of his men.²⁹

After the failure of the August offensive, Shaw wrote a lengthy letter commending a number of officers from his division, including Woods who '*handled a very difficult situation with ... great skill and ably commanded his battalion*'; Jordan who '*gallantly led his battalion up the ridge to Chunuk Bair*'; Carden who '*did good work organising his battalion*'; Gillespie who '*handled his battalion with great skill and dash*'; and Knatchbull who was specially commended by an Australian brigade commander, John Monash.³⁰

Archibald Hay survived Gallipoli but fell in February 1917 during the Mesopotamian campaign, still in command of 8/Royal Welch Fusiliers.³¹ He is buried in Amara cemetery in modern Iraq. The circumstances of his death give the measure of the man. Crawling along a shallow trench he chose to expose himself rather than allow a private soldier to be put at risk. In doing so he was shot dead. His brigade commander later wrote that the indefatigable Hay had '*ably commanded*' his battalion on Gallipoli, and he wished to place '*on record the high regard in which he was held by all who knew him, both as a tried soldier and a brave comrade*'.³²

Despite being in command of the divisional pioneer battalion, John Bald was severely wounded just a few hours after landing whilst reconnoitring in preparation for an attack planned for the following day.³³ Bald had started the war as a double company commander with the 61st King George's Own Pioneers, but his career was ended by this dangerous wound which shot out an eye.³⁴

Later Career

Given the high fatality rate it is unsurprising that few of the original COs attained high command. The most successful was Thomas Andrus, who took temporary command of 39th Brigade in July 1916, was made permanent commander that

²⁹ Wylly, Col. H C. *The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment 1914-1919* (RUSI, London 1933) pp264-265.

³⁰ TNA WO95/4300 War Diary 13 Division Adj-Gen; Australian War Memorial (AWM) 3DRL/2316 Monash Papers, Personal Files Book 7, Shaw to Monash 17 Aug 1915.

³¹ Moberly, Brig. Gen. F J. *Military Operations: Mesopotamia Vol. III* (HMSO, London 1925) p121.

³² Dudley Ward, Major C H. *Regimental Records of the Royal Welch Fusiliers* (Forster Groom & Co., London 1929) pp76-77.

³³ Marden, Maj. Gen. T O. *The History of the Welch Regiment 1914-1918* (Western Mail & Echo, Cardiff 1932) p496.

³⁴ Monthly Army List August 1914 p.2130; RAM Gillman Papers MD 1161/12 Gillman to his wife 25 Aug 1915.

August and remained in post until September 1918.³⁵ His work as a battalion CO had previously won him praise, with Maude writing that they had done 'splendidly' in repelling a Turkish attack in Mesopotamia, and he appears to have performed creditably for the rest of the war.³⁶ John Bourne's considered assessment of him was that he was '*a dedicated and competent officer in the best Regular regimental tradition.*'³⁷

George Knatchbull also reached brigade command, taking over 38 Brigade on the death of its commander in August 1915. There seems to have been some question mark over his suitability, as Maj. Gen. Maude, GOC 13 Division, was asked to comment on whether he was competent to be appointed. Maude responded that he did not feel able to comment, having only been in command of 13 Division for a few weeks, but noted that exigencies of war had resulted in a general lowering of standards – hardly a ringing endorsement.³⁸ Privately Maude thought Knatchbull '*a bit old as a Brigadier*' and '*very moderate*' in his ability.³⁹ In any event, Knatchbull remained in post until his wounding by shrapnel that November.⁴⁰

Woods recovered from the illness that had invalidated him from Gallipoli in time to raise the 9th Battalion Tank Corps in late 1916. The battalion history comments that this was a challenging task as many of the men posted to the unit lacked technical knowledge.⁴¹ Whilst training in Dorset, Woods remembered a junior company officer who served with his South Lancashire battalion on the peninsula called Clement Attlee, and applied for him to join his unit.⁴² Attlee, of course, went on to become Prime Minister in 1945. Woods seems to have been a success in this role, being appointed to the DSO and promoted to command of 2 Tank Brigade in October 1918.⁴³

³⁵ Becke, Major A F. *Order of Battle of Divisions Part 3a: New Army Divisions* (Naval & Military Press, East Sussex 2007:1938) p36

³⁶ Syk, A. (ed.) *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-General Frederick Stanley Maude 1914-1917* (The History Press, Stroud 2012) p144.

³⁷ Bourne, J M. 'A New Army Battalion at Gallipoli: The 7th Battalion The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire) Regiment' in Crawley, R & LoCicero, M. (ed.) *Gallipoli: New Perspectives on the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, 1915-16* (Helion, Warwick 2018) p509.

³⁸ Liddell Hart Centre of Military Archives (LHCMA) Hamilton 7/1/43 Maude to Byng 12 Sept 1915.

³⁹ Syk (ed.) *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-General Frederick Stanley Maude 1914-1917* pp92, 98.

⁴⁰ Becke, op. Cit., p36; TNA WO95/4302 War Diary 38 Brigade.

⁴¹ TNA WO95/107 'History of the 9th Tank Battalion from November 1916 to 31 December 1918'.

⁴² Attlee, C. *As It Happened* (The Viking Press, New York 1954) p63.

⁴³ TNA WO95/107 'History of the 9th Tank Battalion from November 1916 to 31 December 1918'; Becke *Order of Battle of Divisions Part 4* p269.

By the end of the war seven of the Gallipoli COs were dead, two were commanding brigades, one (Heathcote-Drummond-Willoughby) was on the staff, George Knatchbull and John Bald had retired from the army due to their wounds, and Richard Price Jordan was still, remarkably, commanding 7/Gloucestershire in North Persia.⁴⁴

Conclusion

It can be seen that the battalion COs who landed on Gallipoli with 13 Division were far removed from the antediluvian Blimpish characters depicted by some authors. In truth they were, for the most part, experienced regular soldiers who courageously led their units from the front, and often paid the ultimate price. Six were killed and four wounded on the peninsula, and another was killed later in the war. Of those who survived the campaign, three eventually achieved brigade command – two of them being particularly successful in that role – while another remained in command of his battalion until the armistice.

This article concludes my review of the 39 men who led the infantry battalions of IX Corps to Gallipoli. It remains to assess how accurate were the assertions of some historians as to the suitability and competence of the men chosen to take their new units on active service. In fact the evidence is that they are quite wrong in this contention.

Far from being elderly, retired officers, the majority, 21, were serving regulars. Fourteen came from the reserve of officers, two were serving with the Special Reserve and only two were fully retired. They had an average age of 46, ranging from 56-year-old Arthur Cole-Hamilton to the distinctly youthful Hugh Woods, aged just 37 – both of whom served with the 13 Division.⁴⁵ Virtually all had prior active service, mostly the Boer War, and six held the DSO on the outbreak of war.

It is clear that service on the peninsula was a dangerous occupation for a battalion CO. In total, 14 were killed and 14 wounded – a casualty rate of nearly 72% – and a further three were killed later in the war. Most of those killed died in the first two weeks of August as the raw divisions of IX Corps attempted to break out of Anzac and establish a base at Suvla. At least eleven commanded at brigade level either temporarily or permanently. Naturally not all succeeded, but the overwhelming majority led their men courageously and skilfully under the most challenging of circumstances. The simple fact that 28 battalion commanders became casualties during the Gallipoli campaign is testament to their courage and devotion to duty.

⁴⁴ Moberly, Brig. Gen. F J. *Military Operations: Persia 1914-1919* (HMSO, London 1929) p480.

⁴⁵ It is curious that while the younger Woods was invalided from Gallipoli after just a few days service, Cole-Hamilton, nearly 20 years his senior, fell gallantly at the head of his battalion.

MORE 'LOST' LEMNOS PIERS

Site of Railway Pier, Engine Shed and Wreck 2023 / 2024

Steve Moore

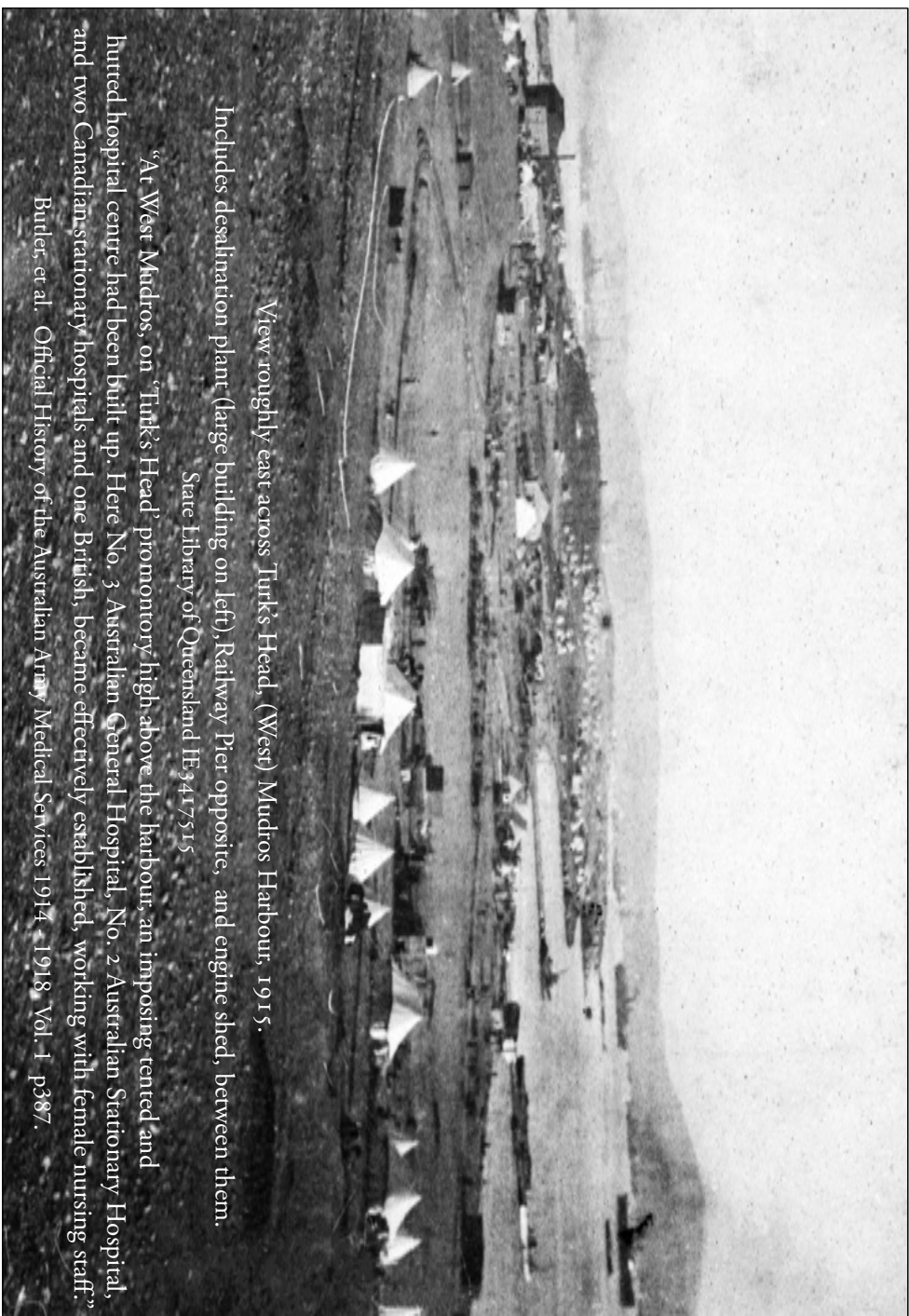
Another 'lost' pier location visited in 2023 was Railway Pier, using guidance from Bernie De Broglio's annotated map below. The pier is on Turk's Head Peninsula at West Mudros, on the opposite side of the bay to Mudros town. There was a water desalination plant and a large concentration of hospital sites and piers in this area, all related to the Allies' use of Lemnos during and after the Gallipoli Campaign.

Our initial intention was to locate the position of the engine shed which serviced the light railway that ran from Supply Pier to Oil Jetty, via North Pier, clearly indicated on the 1917/1920 chart below and visible on Google Earth. One of Railway Pier's uses was to supply coal to the adjacent water desalination plant built in autumn 1915 and which probably remained in use until at least 1920, when Lemnos was a temporary refugee camp for thousands of 'White Russians' fleeing the Russian Civil War.



Route of light railway, Turk's Head Peninsula, shown in blue.

The engine shed location was found relatively quickly. Concrete foundation pads, remains of stone walls, pieces of broken sheet asbestos, numerous pieces of coal, clinker and various pieces of rusty iron debris were visible. Also found was an interesting brass item, possibly dating to the Great War; or just a bit of someone's lost picnic kettle from more recent times?



View roughly east across Turk's Head, (West) Mudros Harbour, 1915.

Includes desalination plant (large building on left), Railway Pier opposite, and engine shed, between them.

State Library of Queensland IE3417515

"At West Mudros, on 'Turk's Head' promontory high above the harbour, an imposing tented and hurried hospital centre had been built up. Here No. 3 Australian General Hospital, No. 2 Australian Stationary Hospital, and two Canadian stationary hospitals and one British, became effectively established, working with female nursing staff."

Butler, et al. Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-1918 Vol. 1 p387.



Detail from sketch showing Turk's Head, piers and hospitals etc. in Butler, et al. *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914 - 1918. Vol. 1 ...* Melbourne, AWM, 1930 p334.

While investigating Railway Pier and the engine shed sites, we 'found' as a possible bonus - the wreck of a sunken lighter/ boat / barge.

An iron /steel riveted rib frame was clearly visible in the shallow water in the bay, with a short section of rusty iron /steel work protruding from the water at one end. In 2024 we returned to Railway Pier equipped with a mask and waterproof camera case to investigate the wreck more closely.

The wreck site is located some 90 metres offshore in the shallow water of the bay. Wading out to it was possible without swimming.

Visible above the surface was the rusty iron /steel 'post'. The outline of the wreck was clearly visible below the surface, resting on the sandy bottom of the bay, with the side facing the beach more deeply buried in the sand than the seaward side.

One end appeared 'squared off' and the other more 'rounded.' (Sorry if this landlubber's description offends any old sailors reading this).

Photographs were taken below the water of the visible remains, which included iron / steel structural cross ribs and longitudinal members. Some short upright vertical 'posts' were noted which did not reach the surface, unlike the visible 'post.'

All the iron / steel work was badly corroded and covered with heavy marine growth. Sand had accumulated in the hull framework over a considerable length of time, obscuring much of the internals of the wreck. No wooden components remained. See *photographs pages 34, 35, 36*.

We forwarded the details and images of the wreck to Bernie De Brogio, who had visited it in 2014. He in turn contacted Bill Sellars who has snorkelled over the sunken Gallipoli barges, lighters and boat wrecks.

Bill's view is that while he cannot categorically confirm the wreck is related to the campaign, it is of a type used at Gallipoli and is similar to the wrecked barges and lighters found in the waters around the Gallipoli Peninsula. He also commented that the same type of barges / lighters would have been used in Mudros Bay up to and including the time of the post-war occupation of Turkey which ended in October 1923.

Bernie also put us in contact with Rob Smith who had taken video and photographs of the wreck some years ago. Rob revisited the site in late July / August 2024 and accurately measured the wreck using a rope and measuring tape at 10.4m x 3.4m. Rob's more accurate measurements showed the dimensions of the wreck corresponded with those of a 'Y' lighter (source: *Navpedia*). The size and visual appearance of the wreck is also however similar to that of a 'horse boat', as shown



Various 'finds', left in situ.

Savage, A W. (photographer). State Library of Queensland.



“View from a pier”, (most likely Railway Pier), showing both steam and petrol locos, possibly the early construction stage of the engine shed and the inscription on the stern of the rowing boat. “Presented to No 3 Australian General Hospital by the Australian Red Cross Branch”

below in AWM image PO1722.001. Titled ‘Mudros Harbour 1915-04, Horses and equipment being loaded onto transports and boats’.

Another AWM image (G00905, below), shows horse boats in Anzac Cove at about 10am on 25 April.

We have only found limited technical information on horse boats and ‘Y’ lighters. (Unlike ‘X’ lighters – ‘black beetles’)

‘Karsten’ posted on the Great War Forum in October 2011, that:- “From 1906 flat bottomed steel horse boats were ordered by the Admiralty. Some 128 had been delivered up to 1916”, and it does appear from the images above, that horse boats were used in the April 1915 landings.

‘Y’ (or ‘X’) lighters were not available for the April landings, only arriving in time for use in the August landings at Suvla. (*Mitchell Report* pp 247-248).

Vessels, lighters and boats of all types and sizes were utilised during the evacuation in December 1915 and January 1916.

‘Y’ Lighters and horse boats would have been available for use in the Mudros anchorage during this time and up until the Allies left Lemnos, when the



Mudros Harbour, Greece. 1915-04. Horses, men and equipment being loaded onto transports and boats from the shore prior to the Allied landing at Gallipoli. AWM image P01722.001

occupation of Turkey ended in 1923. It has not been possible however to establish when this particular craft sank or was abandoned.

Based on the currently available information, it seems most probable that the 10.4m x 3.4m Lemnos wreck is either a 'Y' Lighter or a horse boat. A more detailed investigation by a naval historian would prove most valuable in establishing its precise type.

The wrecked 'Y' Lighter / horse boat adds yet another layer to our understanding of the important role of Lemnos during the Great War and as the major forward logistical base for the Gallipoli Campaign.

The wreck is easily visited simply by wading out into the shallow bay, to the right of Railway Pier. Don't forget your mask and please be kind to the fish; it's their home!

Railway Pier, the engine shed and the 'Y' Lighter / horse boat wreck are all to be found on Turk's Head Peninsula, on the opposite side of the bay to Mudros town. The beach is stunning even without the historic significance of the area and the bay shallow and safe for swimming after visiting Railway Pier and the engine shed locations; with the added bonus of the 'Y' lighter / horse boat wreck!



'Troops landing Anzac Cove about 10am. (Indian Mountain Battery). The horse boats with ends down had landed mules ... 'AWM image G00905.

CENOTAPH MARCH-PAST, REMEMBRANCE DAY 2024

Hester Huttenbach

Engineering works on the railways and sickness meant that six of our original members unfortunately had to cancel their attendance. The weather, however, was mild and dry, which made for a pleasant start to the day.

Once Big Ben had chimed 11.00am and the two-minute silence had been observed, the King laid the first wreath. He was followed by other members of the royal household and then the political dignitaries, before the short service which was led by the Lord Bishop of London, Dame Sarah Mullally.

The youngest member of our group, five-year-old Arden Doeh, was given the honour of handing over the Gallipoli Association wreath to be laid at the Cenotaph. He was absolutely brilliant and loved every minute of the day, especially the marching.

On our return to Horse Guards, the salute this year was taken by Prince William.

Thirteen of us then descended on the Admiralty public house for a well deserved sit down and lunch.

As usual we were a geographically mixed bunch, with two from America, one from Australia, two from Wales and the rest from scattered locations around England.

Afterwards, Arden told his parents that, when he was grown up he was going to marry Princess Charlotte. *See photograph page 38.*



TURKISH GENDARMERIE BATTALIONS IN THE SUVLA LANDING

Emre Özmen

More than three months had dragged on at Gallipoli since the landings of 25 April 1915, and the Allies were still nowhere near achieving their goals after a series of gruelling and bloody battles. To break the stalemate, the British launched the 'August Offensive' on 6 August 1915, opening a new front at Suvla with the landing of two of Kitchener's 'New Army' divisions – the 10th and 11th – aiming to establish a base and, "if possible," support the main effort at Anzac by securing the heights ahead. Opposing them were three battalions from the Anafartalar (Suvla) Area Command, sometimes referred to as the Anafartalar Detachment, two of which were *seyyar jandarma* (mobile gendarmerie).

The inception of the gendarmerie in the Ottoman Empire traces back to 1839. By 1846, it had developed into a full-fledged military organisation under the Ministry of War. Through the regulations of 1869 and 1871, each region of the empire was allocated a gendarmerie regiment, while each province was assigned a battalion. The companies within these battalions were dispersed across the districts of their respective provinces. Naming conventions were straightforward. Regiments, battalions, and companies were named after the administrative centres to which they belonged. The number of companies within each battalion varied, typically ranging from four to six, with an overall personnel strength of 200 to 300. During the mobilisation of August 1914, the battalions were classified into 'mobile' (*seyyar*) and 'stationary' (*sabit*). Stationary gendarmes continued their routine law enforcement duties, while some of the mobile gendarmes were made available to the army corps, poised for deployment in different locations when needed. Two of these mobile battalions, Bursa and Gallipoli, particularly made their mark in the Gallipoli Campaign.

Bursa Mobile Gendarmerie Battalion, led by Captain (later Major) Hasan Tahsin, arrived on the Gallipoli Peninsula as early as August 1914, and took part in the first two Krithia battles. The Gallipoli Battalion, under Captain Kadri – a Syrian Turk who had served with the Bursa Battalion shortly before the war – arrived on the peninsula around the same time as the Bursa Battalion but saw no serious action until August 1915. Both battalions were familiar with the Suvla area, having served there prior to the first landings of 25 April 1915. Two-thirds of the battalions, each with four companies, comprised regular gendarmes. However, following heavy casualties at Helles, the Bursa Battalion had to be reinforced with fresh conscripts. Both units, along with two infantry battalions (1st Battalion, 32nd Regiment and

2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment),¹ constituted the Anafartalar Area Command under a German cavalry major (Ottoman lieutenant-colonel), Wilhelm Willmer, at the end of June 1915. The dividing line separating the two battalions lay at the Karakol Gap, between Karakol Dag and Kirectepe Ridge. The area between Karakol Gap and Chocolate Hill (Pirnar Tepe) / Green Hill (Mestan Tepe) was held by the Bursa Battalion, whereas the area stretching from the Gap to Ejelmer Bay (Ece Limani) – i.e. Kirectepe Ridge – was the responsibility of the Gallipoli Battalion. As dawn approached every day, the main bodies of the battalions would withdraw from their positions, only to reoccupy them under the cover of darkness. Willmer prioritised secrecy, going to great lengths to maintain it. He strictly forbade his battalions from moving or conducting drills in the Suvla Plain during daylight hours. Instead, any necessary training activities and drills were conducted in the Tursun Plain behind Tekke Tepe. Willmer lacked sufficient forces to establish a continuous defensive line along the flat coastal area. Consequently, hills overlooking the coast were selected as key defensive positions. Furthermore, Salt Lake, typically dry in summer, was utilised as an emergency barrier. This involved removing the obstacle blocking the canal connecting to the sea (known as *The Cut*) and flooding the lake with water if necessary. The absence of machine guns was compensated for by using mountain guns as infantry weapons, positioning them close to the troops. Additionally, at certain places, landmines and tripwires were placed in front of the trenches.

On 6 August 1915, both battalions held their forward and main positions overlooking Suvla Bay with two companies each. Bursa Battalion's 3rd Company, led by Captain Fazıl, an officer with a cavalry background and second most senior in the battalion, was at Suvla Point and Hill 10. One half-platoon of the company (about 40 men) held the Gazi Baba-Suvla Point line, while one platoon occupied Hill 10. The rest of the company, including its commander, was at Cirak Cesme, 1500 yards northwest of Hill 10. The 4th Company, stationed on Chocolate Hill, had one platoon at Lala Baba. The Gallipoli Battalion was all set for action with two companies (2nd and 3rd) at Ejelmer Bay and the Masirlik, the area where today's erroneously-named Gendarmerie Cemetery stands. At this point, it is worth noting that the details provided in the British official history regarding the disposition of the Anafartalar Detachment on 6 August contradict both the Turkish official history and the war diaries of the two gendarmerie battalions. The author, Aspinall-Oglander, obtained information from his correspondence with Willmer in the 1930s, which was his main source on the subject. However, the information provided by Willmer from memory, who had by then donated most of his documents and maps to the Bavarian Military Archive, misled Aspinall. (*See map on page 33*).

¹ The 1st Battalion, 32nd Regiment was sent to reinforce the Agil Dere area only thirty minutes before the landing.

As the men of the 11th Division began coming ashore at B Beach at 21:30 on 6 August, the Bursa Battalion wasted no time jumping into action. Captain Fazil immediately alerted the battalion commander as soon as he heard the rifle fire from the sentries watching the beach and proceeded to Hill 10. He wrote a brief message to the battalion commander: 'It was reported that two torpedo boats were seen off Suvla Bay after dark. Rifle fire is now heard from Lale Tepe [Lala Baba]. The outpost has been reinforced with what's available. I'm heading to Softa Tepe [Hill 10]' Major Tahsin, stationed in the gully west of Kucukanafarta village, known as Kanlikopru Dere, wasted no time either — he took two reserve companies with him and headed straight for Hill 10. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment, in the north of Buyukanafarta village, began marching towards Chocolate Hill as per the prescribed plan. Remarkably, these movements mirrored an unintentional drill conducted during a false alarm on 16 July, with actions from that day being repeated almost exactly.

Tahsin arrived at Hill 10 around the same time when two companies of 6th Yorkshires launched their attack on Lala Baba:

It was reported from the Forward Outpost Headquarters that the enemy had landed troops at Lala Baba and that both our men responsible for opening the lake canal and the small post on Softa Tepe had engaged. I am now moving to Softa Tepe with two reserve companies and will report the outcome from there.

Tahsin at once made his way to the beach near The Cut to reconnoitre the ground himself. There he found his men tasked with opening The Cut and flooding the lake with sea water to render it impassable. The fact that the British marched across the lake in the following days suggests these men were unable to complete the task that night for some reason. Tahsin, upon realising the presence of crowded enemy parties around Lala Baba, deployed one of his reserve companies (1st) between Hill 10 and the lake. He naturally had difficulty grasping the situation in the dark of night. To streamline command and control, he persuaded Willmer to assign the Lala Baba-Chocolate Hill area to the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment, while assuming responsibility for the Hill 10-Suvla Point line himself. This decision was a good example of the adaptability and initiative needed in the chaos and unpredictability of combat.

Meanwhile, when the leading company (2nd) of the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment reached Chocolate Hill, the fighting on Lala Baba was nearing an end. Survivors from the platoon holding Lala Baba, which inflicted losses equal to its own size on the 6th Yorkshires, fell back on the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment. Tahsin, in a message recorded in the war diary, blamed the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment for the loss of Lala Baba, claiming they were late and had failed to reinforce the

position in time. Interestingly, no reports or messages from the 4th Gendarmerie Company regarding the fighting around Lala Baba were recorded in the Bursa Battalion's war diary. It is likely that this unit was reporting to the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment instead. Tahsin later wrote in his battle report:

I arrived at Softa Tepe at 21:30² with the reserve companies, the 1st and 2nd. Despite gathering information at Tuzla Canal [The Cut], the darkness of the night made it unclear where the landing had been made. Later, it became evident that a significant number of enemy infantry were around Lala Baba, and attacking Softa Tepe. Wounded men began arriving from the front line. By 00:30, as rifle fire from the direction of Salt Lake intensified and it became clear that the enemy was mounting an attack, the 4th Company of the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment was sent to reinforce that front, successfully repulsing the enemy's attempt.

The report is somewhat confusing, as Major Tahsin appears to be jumping between events. However, the attack he mentioned was probably the attempt by a company of the 9th Lancashire Fusiliers around 01:00. Later, another attempt of advance by the Z Company of the same unit around 03:00, the first organised push towards the hill, also met with heavy resistance and even a counter-attack. As Tahsin and Fazil put these measures into action, they were completely unaware of the 11th Manchesters' advance along the coast toward Suvla Point, to such an extent that Tahsin noted in his report, 'As landings started from all directions at Buyukkemikli [Suvla Point], we found ourselves engaged across all our positions.' Upon hearing rifle fire from Suvla Point, he thought another landing was underway there. However, it was only the outpost firing at the beetles carrying the 9th Lancashire Fusiliers and the 11th Manchesters, who were coming ashore south of A Beach.

The 11th Manchesters, moving along the beach, reached Gazi Baba around 01:00 and raided the outpost there, whose strength had now increased to one platoon. As dawn broke (04:00), Tahsin realised the British were now pushing along Karakol Dag, threatening his right flank. He ordered the 3rd Company to fall back to a position about 700 yards southwest of what is now Azmak Cemetery and hold its ground there, while also guarding the two-gun half battery near today's cemetery. This decision prevented a potential annihilation of the company and thwarted the risk of the entire battalion being encircled or enfiladed. The remaining three companies scattered around Hill 10 were ordered to retreat about 800 yards, to near the intersection of Azmak Dere and Anafarta Road. Thus, by 06:30 on the morning of 7 August, the Bursa Battalion positioned itself along a line running from Point 28 to the intersection. Shortly after 06:30, the British finally occupied Hill 10 unopposed, which they had failed to locate and take during the night.

² Elsewhere in the war diary, this is recorded as "21.45", which is likely to be more accurate.

At the higher level of command, when Willmer and his chief of staff, Major Haydar, had finally fully grasped the situation and ordered the Gallipoli Battalion to reinforce Suvla Point, it was already 07:00, and the window for timely intervention had closed. This enabled the British to cover a distance of approximately 1.6 miles with relatively minimal opposition from a platoon before finally encountering the Gallipoli Battalion. An hour later, Willmer ordered the Bursa Battalion to retreat to W Hills (*Ismailoglu Tepe*), the main position to put up a final stand. At 09:00, while the Bursa Battalion was retreating, the Gallipoli Battalion finally came into contact with the advanced parties of the 11th Manchesters at Karakol Gap. Captain Kadri was unable to commit his entire battalion to the fight as he also had to keep a close watch over both



Captain Fazil, commander of the 3rd Coy, Bursa Bn. Later on, he briefly assumed the command of the battalion. He tragically died in a psychiatric hospital in Istanbul in 1950. Just only one of the many unsung heroes of Gallipoli. (Photo: Kitantik.com)

Ejelmer Bay and the Masirlik area against the threat of a landing, leaving him virtually with no local reserve force. Understandably, almost every message he sent during the day consistently included a plea for reinforcements. He had deployed the 4th Company to Karakol Gap, the company initially ordered to Suvla Point. Throughout the day, the only reinforcements reaching this company were two platoons (150 men) that could be spared from Masirlik and Ejelmer Bay. This force, without any heavy weapons, would not be able to hold on for long and eventually fell back to Jephson's Post (Sivri Tepe) during the night, after inflicting losses to the 11th Manchesters equal to half its own strength. Adding to the Manchesters' casualties was the fatigue from the distance they had covered, which prevented the battalion from advancing any further. Shortly after midnight, the Manchesters were relieved by the 5th Inniskilling Fusiliers, who were put to work to consolidate the position gained. In this fighting, the Gallipoli Battalion's strength in the front line did not exceed 500 until it was reinforced with one

regular infantry company on the evening of 8 August. It was only after 15 August that the battalion would be given a rest.

Getting back to the Bursa Gendarmerie, it was not until midnight on 7 August that the battalion could establish itself in the main position via Kanlikopru Dere. The mixed garrison on the hill, primarily composed of the Bursa Battalion and the 2nd Battalion, 31st Regiment, withdrawn from Chocolate Hill, was reorganised under Major Tahsin and named the 'Ismail Tepe Detachment.' Tahsin's main concern was the activity of the 6th East Yorkshire on his right flank, just south of Baka Baba, which raised fears that the Bursa Battalion was about to be surrounded: 'Our right flank is in a very dangerous situation. Our patrols saw enemy soldiers in the gully where the mountain battery fired,' he wrote in his night report on 8 August at 23:30. The 'enemy soldiers' seen were undoubtedly the 6th East Yorkshires' officer patrol sent out to Kanlikopru Dere. Although this flank had been reinforced with

40 dismounted cavalymen from the 2nd Company of the 4th Cavalry Regiment, by no means was this a sufficient measure in the face of an attack characterised by quick decision-making and dash, which the British command had utterly lacked in this operation. All the despair of the Turkish detachment on W Hills would finally give way to a sigh of relief when the attacking waves of the 12th Division were seen pouring down from the hills in the small hours of 9 August.

Last thoughts

The resistance of both gendarmerie battalions significantly added to the chaos and confusion that engulfed the British 9th Corps during the landing and afterwards, enabling the Ottoman divisions marching from Bolayir to reach the front just in time. When two battalions, particularly the Bursa



2nd Lieutenant Arakel (b.1890), an Ottoman Armenian, a platoon commander in the 1st Coy, Bursa Bn. Killed on the night of 6/7 August 1915 near Hill 10. One of the many who have no known grave.
(Photo: 1915'te Çanakkale'de Türk, 1957)

Battalion, which had previously lost most of its original rank and file, were forced to retreat, they carried out successful delaying actions, broke contact with their enemy skilfully, and prepared to continue fighting on the second line in compliance with the original plan. The Bursa Battalion's losses amounted to 177 wounded, 47 dead, and 36 missing, making up 30% of its overall strength. The only officer casualty was Lieutenant Arakel from the 1st Company, killed likely during the 9th Lancashire Fusiliers' attempt to advance on Hill 10. After 12 August the battalion saw no action for the remainder of the campaign, and remained on the peninsula for another year, renamed the 4th Battalion, 73rd Regiment. The Gallipoli Battalion, with casualties totalling 60 men, including 25 killed, was initially less heavily engaged compared to the Bursa Gendarmerie but played a major role in the subsequent fighting, especially on 15 August, suffering enormous casualties in defence of the right flank of the entire 5th Army. Among the losses was Captain Kadri, who was shot through the head and died of his wounds several days later. After 15 August, the battalion was assigned to guard Ejelmer Bay for the remainder of the campaign, remaining on the peninsula until late 1916, initially reorganised as the 4th Battalion, 75th Regiment, and later as the 3rd Battalion, 170th Regiment.

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About the Author

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REMEMBRANCE DAY IN BERMUDA

Antony Siese

Remembrance Day in Bermuda is always celebrated on the actual day which is a public holiday.

My son Martin provided back-up with a wheelchair and I wore my father's medals - he survived the Gallipoli Campaign but was medically discharged on 25 March 1916. In June 1916 he re-enlisted and thus had two regimental numbers.

The commemoration was led by Governor Rena Laglie. The Bermuda Regiment and band, police and other local organisations took part in the march. This year we had only five veterans marching. Although down in numbers, the reception from the assembled crowd was tremendous and very encouraging. This past year has seen a number of veterans die - all in their 90's. See photographs page 38.

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE

Once again we would like to place on record our grateful thanks to Association member Clive Summerson who planted the memorials on behalf of members for the opening of the Field of Remembrance on 7 November at Westminster Abbey.. This year was particularly tricky due to such hard ground but Clive managed it. Clive also writes out each dedication that you provide.



Speaker: Vice Admiral (Ret'd) Paul Bennett. *The Royal Navy today and the enduring lessons of Gallipoli*. Gallipoli Association annual conference. See page 3.



Speaker: Professor Peter Doyle. *Gallipoli 1915: the impact of terrain from forcing the Dardanelles to evacuating the beaches*. Gallipoli Association annual conference. See page 3.



Speaker: Sophie Haworth spoke about the impact of her Association-funded visit with the Army cadets to the peninsula in 2022. Gallipoli Association annual conference. See page 3.



Speaker: Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Dr Richard Farrimond spoke on the man who commanded the Anzacs: *Birdie: More than 'Soul of Anzac'*. Gallipoli Association annual conference. See page 3.



6 August 1915: dispositions of two companies each of the Bursa and Gallipoli Gendarmerie Battalions overlooking Suvla Bay.

Bursa's 3rd Company was at Suvla Point and Hill 10. One half-platoon of the company held the Gazi Baba - Suvla Point line, and a platoon occupied Hill 10. The rest of the company, including its commander, was at Cirak Cesme, 1 500 yards northwest of Hill 10. The 4th Company, on Chocolate Hill, had a platoon at Lala Baba.

Gallipoli Battalion's 2nd and 3rd Battalions were at Ejelmer Bay and the Masirlik. (See pages 23 - 30).



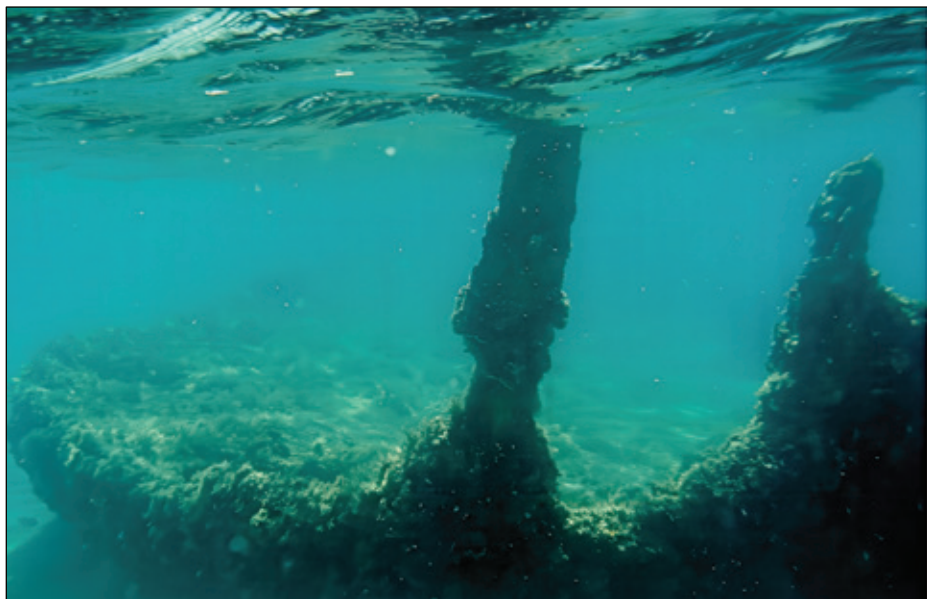
Remains of the base slab of the engine shed, Railway Pier, Mudros Harbour, Lemnos.
See pages 15 - 21.



Remains of Railway Pier. Wreck location in right middle distance.
Mudros Harbour, Lemnos.



Wreck looking towards Railway Pier, Mudros Harbour, Lemnos.
See pages 15 - 21.



'Rounded' end, submerged wreck off Railway Pier, Mudros Harbour, Lemnos.



'Squared off' end, submerged wreck off Railway Pier, Mudros Harbour, Lemnos.

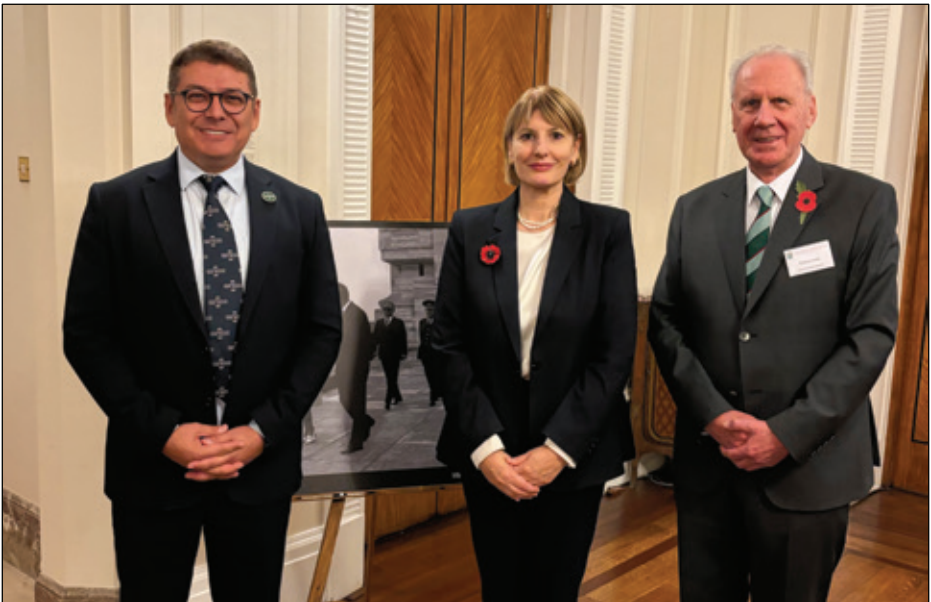
See pages 15 - 21.

Side view, submerged wreck off Railway Pier, Mudros Harbour, Lemnos.





Above: Group photo towards the close of the reception. L to R: Sergeant Aaron Graham (DA staff), Thomas Iredale (Gallipoli Association), Buğra Terzi, Didem Terzi (both ÇASAEN), Ambassador Jill Morris CMG, Claire Horton CBE (Director General CWGC), Adem Biçer (battlefield guide), Burak Gündoğan (CWGC manager Turkey), Colonel Jim Torbet (DA), Cdr Nick Mattock (DDA), Charles Garret OBE (Director Global Strategy & Int Relations CWGC).



L to R: Burak Gündoğan (CWGC Manager Turkey), Ambassador Jill Morris CMG, Thomas Iredale (Gallipoli Association)



Association member Antony Siese (left, foreground) and son Martin (holding wheelchair)
Remembrance Day ceremony, Bermuda 2024. See page 30.



Association member Antony Siese
and son Martin.
Remembrance Day ceremony, Bermuda 2024.



Arden Doeh handed over the Association
wreath to be laid at the Cenotaph. He's five and
was an absolute star. He loved every minute of
the day. (Photo by Nick Staines). See page 22.

6 AUGUST 1915 – A HELLES LEGEND EXAMINED

Edward Green

In 1903, Sir Ian Hamilton had watched as other officers' uncertain testimony faltered before the Boer War inquiry. Twelve years later, determined to avoid the same fate, he sailed for Gallipoli armed with a notebook – just in case.

The winner is asked no questions – the loser has to answer for everything. Soldiers think of nothing so little as failure and yet, to the extent of fixing intentions, orders, facts, dates firmly in their own minds, they ought to be prepared. Conclusion: In war, keep your own counsel, preferably in a notebook. ¹

A similar defensive reflex is apparent in his campaign despatches, which frequently portray him as the victim of factors beyond his control. 'Had it not been for ... fortune of war was against us ... by some freak of nature ... sheer bad luck'. Later writers were less forgiving, to the point where the contrast between Hamilton's version and the draft Official History caused one reviewer some unease.

I wonder if General Aspinall, absorbed in the writing of the History, is fully aware of the impression his narrative is building up regarding General Sir Ian Hamilton? ... The cumulative effect ... is to reveal Sir Ian Hamilton as an inept and futile Commander in Chief; as one indeed whose ideas and actions do not seem to have been always subject to the control of reason. ²

To be fair to Hamilton, taking Gallipoli was almost certainly beyond his resources. Unfortunately, it was such a well-publicised objective that there was no easy way to disguise failure. Unable to hide his lack of progress or openly blame the politicians who had sent him, he resorted to excuses – a very human response, if not a particularly gallant one. This article looks at one such excuse: his explanation for the failure of the attack that opened the August Offensive.

On 6 August 1915, as Hamilton prepared to launch his main attacks at Suvla Bay and Anzac, VIII Corps at Helles had the subsidiary task of distracting the Turks and pinning down their southern reserves. The first attack, on a single trench line west of Krithia Nullah, was assigned to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division, 'the best Brigade of the best Division of the Army'. ³ Its regular battalions – the 1st Essex, 4th Worcesters, and 2nd Hampshires – were veterans of the April landings, bolstered by fresh drafts from England during a rest period on Lemnos. With the addition of the 5th Manchesters, experienced Territorials from the 42nd Division, the attacking force numbered almost 3,000, and hopes were high when the men went over the top at 3.50pm. Yet within minutes the brigade had effectively been

destroyed, the 4th Worcesters alone losing 366 men *killed*, the highest one-day toll of any British battalion in the entire war. The Turks did not use their reserves, which were later sent north to meet the main British attack – the failure was total.

Hamilton did not assign blame for this shock defeat. Instead he explained in his third despatch that the Turks, whom he had considered a ‘half-beaten enemy’ after Allied advances in June and July, had been unexpectedly bolstered by three factors: ‘one moral, one material, and one fortuitous’. The ‘moral’ – that they were energised by news of German victories – was pure speculation. The ‘material’ – that they were fresh, not war-worn remnants – was true, but the British had known of the arrival of Turkish reinforcements so it hardly excused the decision to attack. The ‘fortuitous’, however, was more substantial:

The enemy trenches selected for our attack were found to be packed with troops and so were their communication trenches, the reason being, as explained to us by prisoners, that the Turkish Commander had meant to launch from them an attack upon us. We had, in fact, by a coincidence as strange as it was unlucky, anticipated a Turkish offensive by an hour or two at most. Sure enough, next morning, the enemy in their turn attacked the left of the line from which our own troops had advanced to the assault. A few of them gained a footing in our trenches and were all killed or captured. The remainder were driven back by fire.

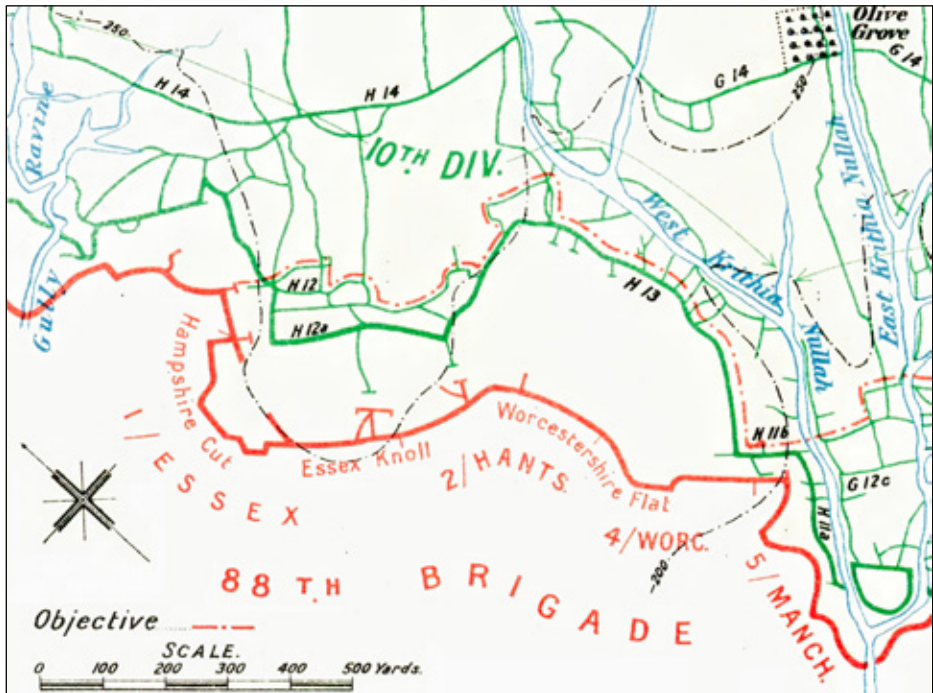
This claim was the foundation of a new Gallipoli legend – years later, elderly survivors were still lamenting the ‘lost opportunities’ in attacking first rather than letting the Turks break themselves upon the British line.⁴ It appears in Henry Nevinson’s *The Dardanelles Campaign*, Compton Mackenzie’s *Gallipoli Memories*, and many other accounts; even the war correspondent Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, who had noted ‘This may or may not be the truth’ on first hearing it, ⁵ removed that remark before publishing his diary as *The Uncensored Dardanelles*. It was still widespread enough in 1965 for Robert Rhodes James to assert in *Gallipoli* that the Turks at Helles were ‘themselves preparing for an attack’, a statement repeated for 21st century readers by Rhys Crawley’s excellent *Climax At Gallipoli*. It neatly explained the unexpected loss, but – to borrow some of Ashmead-Bartlett’s skepticism – was it the truth?

‘By an hour or two at most’

Hamilton was not simply making things up, of course. At 6.46pm on 7 August, the day after the failed attack, his HQ on Imbros had received a wire from VIII Corps HQ which stated in part:

The Turks have counterattacked continuously with great vigour and boldness and still show signs of maintaining their offensive. They are new troops and prisoners state that they intended in any case to attack us last night or to-day.⁶

It arrived just as he was due to update Lord Kitchener on the offensive, and he duly added its information on Turkish plans to his report – after dropping that uncertain ‘or to-day’.



From map 'The Battle of 6th/7th August at Helles: Apsinall-Oglander, Official History Vol. 2.

Attacks were made on the afternoon of 6th August, in the southern section [Helles], and on the right of the Anzac position ... 9 machine guns have already been taken and 500 Turks made prisoners. We learn from the latter that the troops in the southern area have been relieved by fresh divisions ... and that the Turks had planned an attack for last night which, however, we forestalled.⁷

He was not alone in adjusting the timing. The idea that a Turkish attack had been not merely on the cards but actually imminent made the surprise defeat appear more understandable, and other versions soon shrank the supposed gap between the British and Turkish attacks down to almost nothing. Major Lucas of the 87th Brigade staff was quick off the mark in his diary for 7 August: 'Prisoners stated that

when we attacked the Turks had already organised an attack, they had their trenches full of men and were just about to start when we began'.⁸ Similar remarks by senior officers at Helles appear in diaries and letters from 11 August onwards, suggesting some degree of endorsement by VIII Corps around then – though perhaps not endorsement in writing, since no two versions are exactly alike. General De Lisle, GOC 29th Division, wrote 'Prisoners state Turks had meant to attack on 6th at 4pm and had large forces massed. This accounts for ... the unexpected opposition my fine fellows encountered',⁹ and was echoed by General Egerton, GOC 52nd Division ('The Turks were, it is now clear, on the point of attacking'),¹⁰ Captain Marshall, ADC to GOC 42nd Division ('We anticipated their attack on our lines by four hours'),¹¹ and Colonel Darlington, OC 5th Manchesters ('We hear now for certain that the Turk was about to attack us on the evening of the 6th').¹²

These versions were not necessarily known to Hamilton at the time; indeed, a Press Bureau release in his name on 19 August was the most cautious yet, stating that the Turks had been forestalled by 'about twenty-four hours'. By the time he came to write his despatch, however, that had changed. The first draft, written by a staff officer who had consulted VIII Corps' original message, placed the Turks' attack on 'the night of the 6th or the morning of the 7th'.¹³ Hamilton amended it to say that they had been pre-empted 'by an hour or two at most', upgrading its description of their trenches from 'held more strongly than usual' to 'packed with troops' for good measure. Since the effect was to absolve the British of responsibility for the defeat, it is reasonable to wonder what evidence prompted his changes; unfortunately, the prisoners' actual statements have not survived to corroborate either version.

'As explained to us by prisoners'

In the absence of the original statements, another question arises. Hamilton's claim rested squarely on the idea that prisoners had revealed a Turkish plan to attack the 88th Brigade – but where did those prisoners come from?

In terms of chances to take prisoners, the facts of the battle are not promising. The 1st Essex captured a tiny piece of trench on the far left, but few of the 4th Worcesters or 2nd Hampshires even reached the enemy line, and the 5th Manchesters were forced to withdraw with 'no intelligence and no prisoners'.¹⁴ It is therefore surprising to see Hamilton imply in his report to Kitchener, quoted above, that his information about a Turkish attack at Helles came from the '500 Turks made prisoners'. That was poorly worded and quite misleading. A briefing paper¹⁵ issued shortly afterwards shows that five hundred prisoners had indeed been taken on 6/7 August – but at Anzac. Just ten were recorded at Helles, of

whom only *one* was from the 88th Brigade's area. One man's testimony could hardly have provided sufficient intelligence to draw firm conclusions about enemy plans. Even allowing for undercounting – some wounded Turks were rushed to hospital without being logged – this flaw in Hamilton's claim is not easy to fix.

One possibility is that the intelligence had been misunderstood. Regardless of any assumptions made later, it is notable that the two earliest sources quoted above – VIII Corps' wire and Major Lucas' diary entry, both on 7 August – do not connect the Turkish attack with the 88th Brigade at all. VIII Corps' line 'Prisoners state that they intended in any case to attack us' forms part of a report on that morning's new attack by the 42nd Division east of Krithia Nullah, and Major Lucas' 'Prisoners stated ...' remark comes after a description of that day's fighting by the 42nd Division and the French. Furthermore, nine of the ten prisoners reported at Helles, the most likely source of VIII Corps' information, were captured by the 42nd Division. On that basis it is reasonable to wonder if it was actually the 42nd Division's attack on 7 August, *not* the 88th Brigade's on 6 August, which was originally reported to have found the Turks preparing an assault of their own. This theory fits with the heavy Turkish counterattacks on 7 August, but it implies a serious failure by VIII Corps to correct the record when the report was wrongly used to explain the defeat of the 88th Brigade. It also opens up the possibility that the planned Turkish attack might have been a *response* to the recent attack of the 88th Brigade, rather than an offensive coincidentally arranged beforehand.

There is another possibility: that the intelligence was unreliable from the start. Hardly any prisoners were taken at Helles on 6/7 August. The 42nd Division's handful were all from the same trench, limiting their wider knowledge; their officer, the only one for whom any record survives, was no help at all, being 'uncommunicative' apart from some gloating.¹⁶ Even if some of them talked freely, there was a high risk of misinterpretation, particularly about intentions and timings. Interrogation on Gallipoli was not an exact science, as British guidelines make clear.

Many prisoners when first brought in expect to be ill treated and are consequently frightened, so that their answers to questions are necessarily vague and inaccurate... Attention is particularly called to the advisability of frequently repeating, and that in different form, a question on a point about which information is particularly required... Through faulty interpretation a totally wrong impression and incorrect facts are easily given.¹⁷

'The Turkish Commander had meant to launch from them an attack'

Suppose, however, that prisoners really did report that an attack had been planned on the 88th Brigade's front. Is there any other evidence to support that?

Hamilton's despatch shows that he regarded a Turkish attack in the same area on 7 August as proof that an offensive had been in the works: 'Sure enough, next morning, the enemy in their turn attacked the left of the line from which our own troops had advanced'. His interpretation, however, is at odds with the records of the units involved, which show that it was a counterattack to retake the small piece of trench taken by the 1st Essex the previous day. The 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who had relieved the Essex in the captured trench during the night, recorded that at about 8am their platoons were driven out by grenades and shrapnel, followed closely by some Turks who then had to be bombed out of the British line. A first-hand Turkish account, from the officer Mûnim Mustafa, confirms the limited objective of the fighting: 'The commander ordered that the regiment's honour be upheld by counter-attacking and driving the enemy from that small section'.¹⁸ If Hamilton mistook this minor action for something larger, it was probably because of two messages his HQ received from VIII Corps, before and after:

06.30 29th Division unable to maintain themselves in positions gained which have been reoccupied by Turks.

10.00 Turks bombarded and then counterattacked our trenches in the neighbourhood of H12 and H12a this morning. Some of the enemy effected a lodgement in our Southern Barricade but were all killed or captured and our line is intact.¹⁹

The first message was straightforwardly wrong: the Turks had retaken most of their trenches, but the Dublins would not be ejected until 8am. As a result the second message, which actually described the Turks' successful recapture of their own trench, appeared to be reporting a new attack on the British line. It was not Hamilton's fault that this error ended up in his despatch, as his staff's first draft had relied on VIII Corps' messages in reconstructing the battle; the draft did not treat the attack as evidence of a pre-planned offensive, though, so that was presumably another of Hamilton's own additions.

The most direct way to find out what the Turks had been planning, of course, was to ask them. In 1915 the War Office could hardly ring up and enquire, but in 1919 some enterprising British officers in occupied Constantinople put hundreds of questions about Gallipoli to a surprisingly receptive Turkish General Staff, including Question 183:

Q. Did the Turks intend to attack themselves on 12th July or 6th August?

A. They had no intention of doing so.²⁰

It is tempting to end this article here! Of course it is not conclusive: the General Staff could have been lying or mistaken, the planned attack could have been too minor to appear in their records, and so on; still, it is highly persuasive. The 2012

Turkish Official History lends it support, stating that Vehip Pasha, the new commander at Helles, had lobbied hard in July to end 'the habit of attacking every time a fresh force was available' and eventually got his way:

The strategy was to stay on the defensive; in case of an attack by the British or French, the aim was to counter-attack after breaking these attacks, weakening them both in terms of strength and morale.²¹

Unaware of this change in strategy, Hamilton had spent much of July on tenterhooks amid reports of an impending Turkish attack that never materialised; he may have been too ready to see offensive intent where there was none.

'The enemy trenches selected for our attack were found to be packed with troops and so were their communication trenches'

Whether or not the Turks were planning a full offensive, the remaining point in Hamilton's claim should be addressed: were their trenches 'packed', and if so was that what foiled the British attack?

This is a tricky point to judge, especially given the brief and hazardous glimpses of the Turkish line that were all most of the survivors got, and it is hard to distinguish genuine recollections from those influenced by later information. Certainly none of the battalions' war diaries refers to their target trenches being packed. The 4th Worcesters and 2nd Hampshires both attributed their failure to flanking machine gun fire instead – a risk explicitly acknowledged by a 29th Division memo in July, which observed that 'troops have suffered not so much from the fire of the defenders of the trench as from the fire of Machine Guns placed in positions behind and to the flank'.²² The 5th Manchesters blamed 'entirely unsubdued rifle and machine gun fire', and while their colonel did refer to trenches 'bulging with Turks' in a letter shortly afterwards, accounts from his men suggest that they were initially able to capture much of the Turkish front line before being forced to abandon it by enfilade fire and a heavy counterattack from Krithia Nullah.²³ The 1st Essex, meanwhile, reported taking their first trench easily, then suffering heavy casualties from shrapnel and gunfire which left them unable to withstand the waves of counterattacks that followed. Similarly, three of the Worcesters who reached the Turkish line and survived captivity to tell the tale do not mention finding many Turks on arrival; all three were overpowered by subsequent counterattacks that they lacked the bombs and manpower to fend off.²⁴

This seems at first to bear out the second part of Hamilton's point, that the Turkish *communication* trenches were packed: counterattacks from connecting trenches overwhelmed the remnants of the 88th Brigade, and witnesses reported seeing massed reinforcements moving up from the nullahs behind the Turkish position.²⁵ There was not necessarily anything strange about that, however. Reactive defence

was at the heart of Vehip Pasha's new strategy, and the Turkish *Official History* gives a plausible account of how it worked on 6 August:

When the bombardment started, the soldiers and machine guns in the front line were moved to shelters at the rear as ordered, to prevent casualties before the infantry attack; only lookouts were left ... The machine guns on the left of the 1st Division were moved to engage the British from the flank; as it turned out, their effective fire would play a role in the fate of the battle ... Around 4pm the British attacked on a front running from the 29th Regiment to the 2nd Battalion on the left of the 30th Regiment. At first the trenches of the 2nd Battalion and the centre of the 29th Regiment fell into enemy hands, but the redeployed machine guns of the 1st Division inflicted heavy losses from the flank on those British who had not yet reached the Turkish trenches ... Reserves waiting in the shelters behind were mobilised, and they assaulted the British in the captured trenches with grenades and mortars, without giving them time to organise, and destroyed them there.²⁶

If the communication trenches appeared full, then, it may have been because troops had been concentrated behind the front line for a rapid counterattack. The tactic should not have been wholly unexpected – the Anzacs had considered something similar on Gallipoli already,²⁷ and the principle of a lightly-held front line was later common in France – but it appears to have caught the British by surprise. Noting the remarks in Hamilton's despatch about the unanticipated resilience of the 'half-beaten enemy', the Turkish *Official History* comments:

It is clear from these lines that General Sir Ian Hamilton had concluded that the Turks were rendered half-beaten by the loss of a few square kilometres of ground. This was his biggest mistake, and it would have painful consequences for his great offensive.

Conclusion

Hamilton was sacked in October; by the time he submitted his despatch he had been home for some weeks, relying partly on his own notes in amending the draft provided by his staff officer Major Aspinall. Years later it was Aspinall who wrote the *Official History*, and it is striking that its detailed chapter on the Helles attack contains no mention whatever of a planned Turkish offensive, or indeed any of the excuses which he and his former chief had included in the despatch. Perhaps by then he had reached the two conclusions suggested by this article: first, that it is unlikely that the Turks were about to launch an offensive on 6 August; and second, that whether they were or not is almost irrelevant, *because the British attack would have failed either way*. The 88th Brigade had to charge over open ground, in broad

daylight, against prepared positions, after a bombardment criticized²⁸ for its 'total inadequacy' – when did such infantry attacks ever succeed?

When the newly-arrived 156th Brigade had been shattered attacking the same position on 28 June Hamilton had avoided acknowledging it, leaving them out of his tributes until their general complained. The loss of the 88th Brigade could not be so easily overlooked, but nor could it be explained away: the troops were relatively experienced, fresh, and well led; they had all available artillery support; the battle plan was pre-approved and did not depend on progress elsewhere. Under such circumstances, the report of a planned Turkish attack was probably not scrutinised too closely before being used to explain the defeat. When Hamilton came to write his despatch he was a thousand miles and several months removed from the battle, and under pressure to justify his decisions; it would be no surprise if he used the most favourable version of events he could recall hearing.

With its only evidence on the battle coming from Hamilton and a few other officers, the Gallipoli inquiry had to conclude that the trenches attacked on 6 August were 'occupied by a very strong force of Turks collected there for the purpose of an attack on the British position'. Nevertheless no excuses could mask the failure of the whole campaign, and Hamilton never held command again. As Bonar Law observed after reading his report on the August Offensive, he was always *nearly* winning.

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SEE YOUR ARTICLE IN PRINT!

Contributions for The Gallipolian

Articles and smaller items of interest about any aspect of the Gallipoli Campaign are always welcome. These should be submitted direct to the editor, preferably by email, at editor@gallipoli-association.org. It is not always possible to feature articles in the issue following submission although where there is an element of topicality the editor will try to accommodate them, or refer them to colleagues responsible for the Association website. For those considering the submission of articles the editor can provide notes for the guidance of contributors on request.

DISCLAIMER

Readers are reminded that the observations and opinions expressed in articles and letters published in *The Gallipolian* are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of either the editor, nor of the Association.

YET MORE ON THE LOST PIERS OF LEMNOS

Nick Baker

Further to Steve Moore and Margaret Carter's article, 'More Lemnos Lost Piers' in *The Gallipolian* No. 165 describing a return visit to the remnants of 'Sports Pier' on the eastern shore of the Lemnos anchorage, I have been able to identify a photograph which shows this structure in use by the Royal Navy during the Gallipoli campaign.¹ This picture, published in the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* of 16 October 1915, proves beyond doubt this particular pier was already built by late 1915 as a means of accessing the eastern side of Mudros Bay.² It also further reinforces the proposal that its use was principally of a recreational nature which probably gave it its name.³ Proof of location comes from a comparison between the western topography of Lemnos in modern photographs and that of 1915. The caption of the 1915 photograph reads, 'Jack Ashore at the Dardanelles. Men of HMS Lord Nelson about to return to the ship after having had leave to go ashore for exercise at Mudros'.

A group of around one hundred men can be seen on or near the pier whilst a steam pinnace approaches. A close look at the sailors reveals some interesting details. Most are in typical First World War Royal Navy 'tropical' uniform consisting of white smock, bellbottoms and a broad brimmed hat, although there is a single instance of a dark boiler suite and there are a number of peaked caps, possibly worn by petty officers. There are also a number of royal marines in their distinctive white tropical kit and Wolseley pattern pith helmets. One, standing in clear view of the photographer, holds a bugle – presumably it was his job to sound 'recall' at the end of the leave period. Two men stand with their boots off, one with rolled up trousers, possibly anticipating a wet boat ride or indicating a previous paddle – we can only guess. Of particular interest is a man in the centre of the group clearly performing enthusiastically for the camera. He has what looks like a scarf or shawl around his neck, whilst his right hand grips what appears to be a snake. It probably is, although not a real one. Bead snakes were a popular souvenir in the eastern Mediterranean during the First World War, often made by Turkish prisoners and then sold, or sold to locals for resale, to allied servicemen (the author's grandfather brought one back from Macedonia).⁴ Thus, our eager sailor appears pleased to

¹ Moore, S and Carter, M. 'More Lemnos Piers', *The Gallipolian*, No.165 (2024), pp37-41

² 'Jack Ashore at the Dardanelles', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 2 (196). Vol. LXXXIV (16 Oct 1915), p184.

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⁴ Rogers-Recklies, A. *Bead Crochet Snakes: History and Technique* (UK, Recklies Beading Press 2007), pp23-24



Sports Pier from the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* of 16 October 1915

display his latest mementoes to the photographer, grinning broadly as he does so. It is interesting to note that no-one else appears to be smiling, although one or two 'poses' are being struck, indicative of the fact that for working-class men, being photographed, even in 1915, was a serious moment requiring a steady and somber, or perhaps simply somewhat quizzical, countenance.

HMS *Lord Nelson*, to which the men were shortly to return was, as many readers will know, a vitally important ship in the eastern Mediterranean. One of the famously 'disposable' old battleships (until the Ottomans started to sink them!) she was something of a hybrid, and was Britain's last pre-dreadnaught, although commissioned after *Dreadnaught* herself was brought into service. Indeed, one reason for this was that *Lord Nelson's* and her sister ship's *Agamemnon's* partially-completed turrets and guns were re-allocated to *Dreadnaught* to speed the latter's construction. Thus, whilst both *Lord Nelson* and *Agamemnon* may well have been somewhat dated in terms of design there was nothing particularly 'old' about them when war broke out and, as a result, both were dispatched to the eastern Mediterranean as highly capable assets (indeed, both saw more action than *Dreadnaught* ever did). Both took part in the various Gallipoli bombardments. In one of these *Lord Nelson* was struck by a stone cannonball from an Ottoman battery (possibly contributing to Churchill's lifelong belief the Turks were running out of ammunition). This, some twelve inches across, came to rest on the battleship's deck from which it was



Royal Marine bugler



Sailor with souvenirs, including bead snake

Details from photograph on page 50

recovered by flag officer, Lt/Cdr. Arthur B A Baker.⁵ It was later deposited in the parish church close to the Baker family home in Longcross near Chertsey, Surrey, along with a ship's ensign. Unfortunately, with the church long since declared redundant and turned into flats the location of these interesting Gallipoli campaign artefacts is now unknown (unless anyone knows differently).⁶

With *Lord Nelson* as flagship, she and *Agamemnon* shared responsibility as lead units of the various eastern Mediterranean deployments both during and after the Gallipoli campaign. The Treaty of Lemnos was signed aboard the latter in October 1918. Following this *Lord Nelson* as part of an allied fleet sailed to Constantinople, finally fulfilling the British aim of navigating 'the straits' and placing the Ottoman capital under their guns, albeit under entirely different circumstances to those envisaged in 1915. Given that ships on foreign station tended to retain their crews without relief most of the men in this photograph would have been present

⁵ Lord Nelson class battleships (1906) (naval-encyclopedia.com) viewed 21 August 2024

⁶ Mee, A (ed.), *The King's England: Surrey* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), p207

throughout all these operations. Outdated and not worth refitting, *Lord Nelson* was rapidly disposed of and scrapped (in Germany!) in 1922.



HMS *Lord Nelson*, showing her formidable, if outdated, main and secondary batteries

Steve and Margaret also include in their recent article a photograph of an intriguing boulder on the beach adjacent to Sports Pier into which is carved a word in Latin script upon which they invite further comment.⁷ This is formed of an indistinct letter (Steve suggests an 'A' or 'V' or 'AL') followed by 'ECTOR'. I tentatively suggest this may be 'HECTOR'. HMS *Hector* was a requisitioned merchant ship used as a balloon ship during the Gallipoli Campaign, and there is every reason to think her crew would also have visited Sports Pier for recreation and may well have carved the ship's name as a permanent memorial to their presence. On the other hand, if the indistinct letter is 'AL' then ALECTOR is a personal name that occurs in Greek Mythology which may have meant something to a classically-educated serviceman. Or it may be none of these. The 'Lost piers of Lemnos', it would seem, still have much to reveal.

⁷ Moore, S and Carter, M. 'More Lemnos Piers', *ibid* p37

‘MISSING’ SHIPS

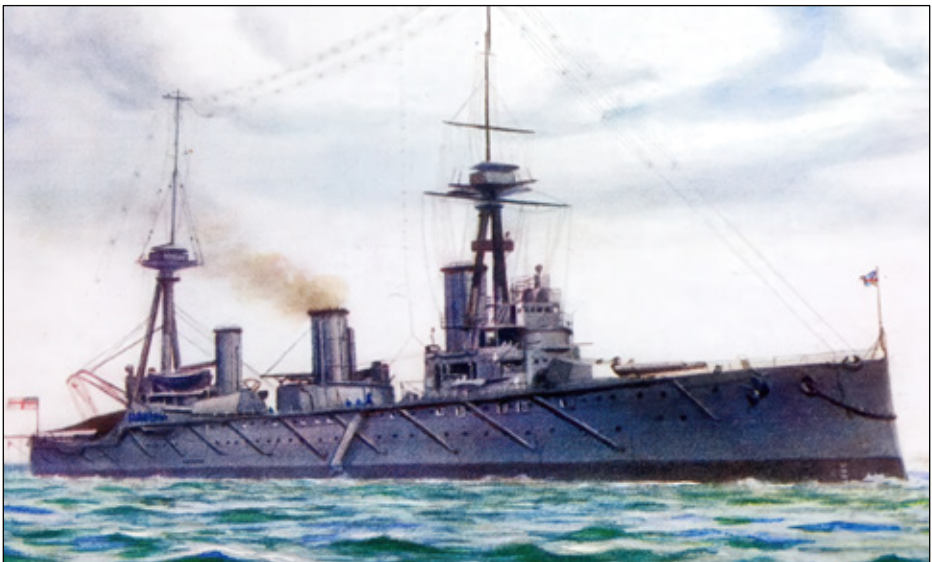
Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Graham CB CBE

In April I visited Gallipoli for the third time, this time in the company of two ex RN captains. Not only did we give the naval participation and actions throughout the campaign full and detailed consideration but this time paid proper attention to the list of ships on the Helles Memorial recorded as having taken part in the campaign between 1914 and 1915.

We were struck by the fact that two battle cruisers, HMS *Indomitable* and HMS *Indefatigable*, were not recorded yet had shelled the outer forts on 3rd November. Thus they were properly in action in the Dardanelles theatre but were withdrawn so took no further part in the campaign.

Researching the naval records shows that neither ship has the battle honour *Dardanelles 1915*, but this is not surprising since their part in actions ‘in area’ took place in 1914. Given that the Helles Memorial states that ships involved in the area between 1914 and 1915 are listed it seems a little unfair that these two are omitted. Of course it may be that the shelling of the forts took place two days before the formal declaration of war with Turkey so technically, and officially, the Dardanelles campaign had not actually begun.

HMS *Indomitable* was withdrawn and fought at Dogger Bank in 1915 and at Jutland in 1916. HMS *Indefatigable* was sunk at Jutland in 1916.



HMS *Indefatigable*

HMS AMETHYST - 14TH MARCH 1915

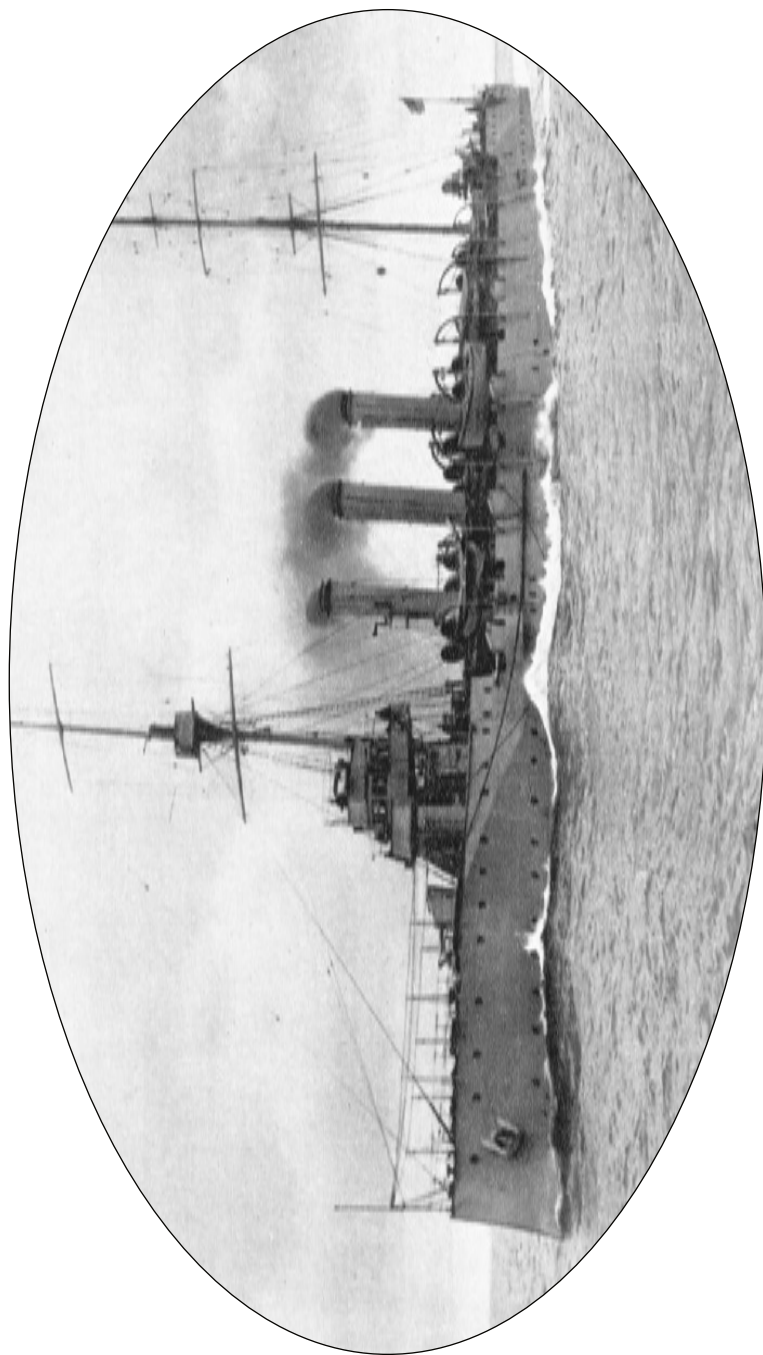
Michael D. Robson

It was fascinating to read Dr. Bruce Cherry's article 'In a Corner of a Foreign Field' [*The Gallipolian*, No.165] on the Cemeterios do Inglese in Rio de Janeiro, and the veteran Chief Stoker Robert G Verey DSM who is buried there; far from home and far from the Dardanelles.

Dr. Cherry mentions "unspecified actions on 13/14th March 1915" and I hope that the following will throw some further light on this brief, but costly episode. The first part is taken from "The proceedings of HMS *Amethyst* while at the Dardanelles" by Lt. Cdr. E L Morant RN,¹ which appeared in *The Naval Review*, Vol. IV, March 1919, and describes in some detail the naval action during which Chief Stoker Verey gained his Distinguished Service Medal.

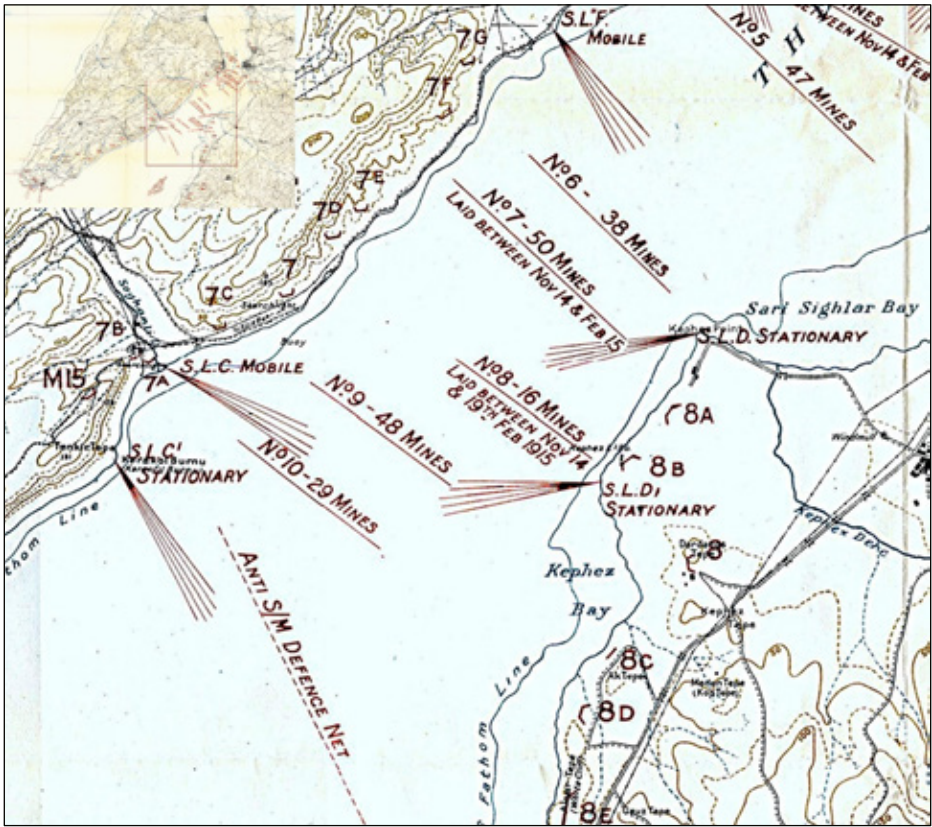
"13th and 14th. [Saturday & Sunday, March 1915]

According to scheme, we arrived off the entrance at 10.45 p.m., and waited there, while the Cornwallis² entered the Straits and opened fire. At 1.30 a.m. she came out, and 7 trawlers (one leader and three pairs) and 5 picket boats, covered only by the Amethyst,³ went up. It was a fine clear night, and although no moon, the ships must have been easily discernible long before they got into the direct rays of the searchlights. We kept station 1½ miles astern of the sweepers, to cover them if necessary and yet prevent our drawing attention to them. The enemy must have seen us at once, for they fired rockets and showed lights along the shore as we proceeded up. The trawlers steamed in line ahead along the European side, to get above the minefield before shooting their sweeps, and no shots were fired, although three searchlights were kept focussed on them as they crossed the minefield. By 3.50 they were through and preparing to shoot their sweeps, when the enemy opened fire, at first spasmodically. At 4 a.m. The Amethyst was above Suandere Bay, and opened fire on a searchlight to the south, in order to create a diversion. Immediately Fort No. 7 (European side) and Fort No. 8 (Asiatic side)⁴ [*See map page 56*] concentrated on us, while Suandere light battery⁵ fired shrapnel at the bridge and forecastle. The forts seemed to get the range at once, and the first hit was a 6 inch (15cm) shell probably from Fort No. 7. It entered the stokers' mess deck high up on the port side forward, and passed out of the starboard side 2½ feet above water line without exploding. It carried away the shafting from the conning tower of the steering wheel and starboard telegraph. On the bridge very little was noticed. Just then two floating mines were sighted right ahead, and on orders being given to put the helm over to port, it was found that the wheel was disconnected, and the starboard telegraph was found to be jammed when an order was given to



Reported to Have 'Rushed' the Narrows as far as Nagara: The British Light-Cruiser 'Amethyst' (Mentioned in Despatches).

The 'Amethyst,' a light-cruiser which is credited at the moment of writing with having daringly 'rushed' the Narrows of the Dardanelles, is a ten-year-old unarmoured ship of 3000 tons and 22 knots speed, mounting twelve 4-inch 25-pounder quick-firers and machine-guns, and manned by 296 officers and men. Her presence with the Dardanelles Fleet is something of a surprise. The 'Amethyst' was named in despatches as one of the light-cruiser squadron in the attack off Heligoland in August, and at the battle off the Dogger in January. The 'Amethyst' is stated to have traversed the length of the Narrows as far as Nagara, regardless of the Turkish batteries and mine-field, and to have returned safely with casualties of 28 killed and about 30 wounded. - (*Photograph by Russell, Southsea.*)



Composite map indicating the lines of mines (Nos. 6 – 10) which were to be swept this night, searchlights, etc, (from *Naval Operations*, Vol.II, by Sir Julian S. Corbett)

go astern. Verbal orders to the engine room arrived just in time to avoid the mines, and hand steering was connected up after the helm had been put hard to port direct at the steering engine itself.

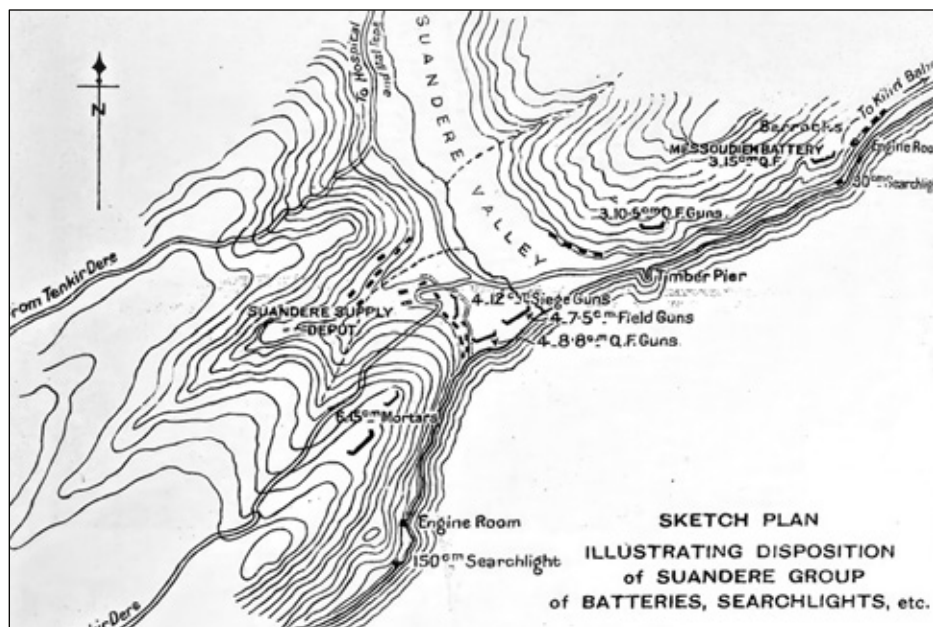
The luck which had served us on previous nights had deserted us at last. It had been found impracticable to keep the stokers at action stations all night, and they were caught with one watch in their hammocks on the mess deck, and another, just relieved, in the bathroom washing. It was in these compartments that most of the casualties occurred.

As soon as the helm was reported hard to port, we went full speed ahead and circled towards the Asiatic shore, but during the period while there was no way on the ship, she had been badly hit. The 6 inch shots apparently came from Fort No. 7, and Suandere light battery kept up shrapnel fire all the time, but did little beyond lodging the nose of a shell in the foremast. Each burst overhead was followed by a

hiss as the bullets struck the water to starboard. As soon as the ship's head was pointed down the Straits, the enemy's fire ceased to be accurate, and soon stopped altogether. We arrived at the entrance at 5.12 a.m., just as dawn was breaking, and were able to ascertain the damage done to ourselves and, the trawlers. Some had been badly hit, but all were afloat. Although slightly down by the bow, the ship was able to steam to Tenedos, and after embarking a doctor from the Cornwallis, we went there and anchored at 6.30 a.m.

The hull had been struck nine times. Eight were by 6 inch common, and the base of one was inscribed 'V.S.M. 1910.'⁶ Some did not burst or break up at all. Had they been high explosive the ship would certainly have sunk. All the hits came from the port side, and numbered from forward the results were as follows:-

1. Fore upper mess deck.- The nose of a shrapnel, which did not penetrate the ship's side.
2. Petty Officers' mess deck.- Shell entered port side on water line and broke up inside; no men were stationed in this compartment.
3. Stokers' mess deck.- Entered high up on port side forward, passed through diagonally, and out starboard side 2½ feet above water line. Apparently it did not break up, but killed two men in their hammocks. It destroyed the beams supporting the deck above, and the shafting of the steering wheel and starboard telegraph. This was probably the first hit.



Sketch plan of Suandere Batteries & Searchlights which caused most of the damage to *Amethyst* (from *The Mitchell Report*, 1919)

4. Entered same compartment and burst in the drinking tank. It wrecked the whole compartment and killed or wounded most of the men who had not escaped after the previous projectile had passed through. Most of the seriously wounded were found here, and one man dead without a mark on his body. The compartment was flooded to a depth of two feet owing to the pipes of the firemain being shot away, and some water entered the store-room below, while the after bulkhead was pierced in many places by splinters.

5. Pierced gunwale plating port side forward and splintered large piece off the armoured shield of No. 1 port 4 inch gun, which killed or wounded all the gun's crew⁷ except one man. The shell burst in the hatch leading down to the barracks, broke up a box of 3 pdr. ammunition, causing a small cordite fire, and damaged the 3 pdr. gun on the starboard side.

6. Entered E. R. A.'s.⁸ bathroom and burst in the ammunition hoist, large portions of the shell passing through the stokers' bathroom and, out the starboard side on the water line. The partition between the bathrooms, and the distributor box for the forward light circuit, were torn to shreds, and both bathrooms completely wrecked. All the 14 men in the bathroom were killed and terribly mutilated; the compartment was flooded to the water line, and that part of the ship plunged in darkness.

7. Pierced ship's side on the water line and flooded a wing bunker, but the projectile was never found.

8. Hit aft, and put both torpedo tubes out of action. The port tube was thrown several feet and its racer⁹ smashed into fragments, which were found all over the ship. Splinters pierced the starboard tube and the buoyancy chamber of the torpedo inside, jamming it into the tube. It damaged the Captain's galley and starboard hammock nettings, and destroyed the coaming of a hatch. A signalman on a message was killed.

9. Passed through gunwale plating and both sides of engine-room casing, damaging some 4 inch shell racks. Three projectiles were broken, one lyddite and two common, but none exploded, though the powder of the common shell blazed up. Several marines at the after guns were wounded by splinters, mostly in the legs.

The casualty list resulting from this action was 22 killed, five died of wounds, six seriously wounded, nine wounded, and 18 slightly wounded; a total of 60 out of a complement of 288. The officers were very lucky, none of them appearing on the list though three had slight cuts and scratches. The losses of the trawlers were one officer and three men killed, one officer and three men seriously wounded. All the trawlers had reached the top of the minefield, but only one pair had been able to carry out a sweep, the rest having had their winches and sweeping gear shot away.

On anchoring, all ships sent boats to transport our wounded to the French hospital ship *Canada*¹⁰ which was present, and during the forenoon the Rear-Admiral¹¹ came aboard to inspect the damage. It was arranged that the *Blenheim*¹² should carry out temporary repairs, sufficient to carry us on till such time as a dockyard refit became possible. By the afternoon the remains of the killed were brought up and identified, and the *Ribble*¹³ took them to sea for burial."

The captain of *Amethyst*, Commander George James Todd RN, was mentioned by Vice-Admiral S H Carden in his despatch of 17th March 1915:

In connection with the operation of the night 13th-14th March I desire also to bring to their Lordships' notice the name of Commander G. J. Todd, 'Amethyst.'

'Amethyst' was hit several times by large projectiles, and had her steering gear and engine-room telegraphs put out of action. Arrangements were quickly made to man the hand-steering wheel, and improvise engine-room communications. Both during and after the action Commander Todd was very ably assisted by Lieutenant James C. J. Soutter, Senior Lieutenant of 'Amethyst,' who was indefatigable in his efforts.¹⁴

Commander Todd's own report on this night's action included the following reference to Chief Stoker Verey;

I have the honour to forward the following further report... Chief Stoker Robert G Verey, official number 284974, this Chief Petty Officer on hearing the order to man the hand wheel at once proceeded to the hand wheel compartment aft and connected up. The promptness with which he performed this duty largely assisted in saving the ship from further damage by gun fire. His services were later invaluable when investigating the damage sustained by the ship. The stoker's mess deck was flooded to a depth of three feet and there was no means of ascertaining the damage except by close examination of the flooded compartment. The conditions under which he carried out this duty were particularly trying and his progress was greatly hampered by want of proper light and the presence of a large number of killed and wounded, caused by the bursting of a 6 inch shell a short time before.¹⁵

The Supplement to the *London Gazette*, 16 August 1915, p8135, records that as well as Chief Stoker Verey, *Amethyst's* PO 2nd Class George T Lumb also received the Distinguished Service Medal. A further six petty officers and seven signalmen serving as volunteers on the trawlers on the night of 13-14 March 1915 received the DSM as well.

The Distinguished Service Cross was awarded to Sub-Lieutenant Stephen Augustus Bayford, RNR, HMS *Majestic*, and to Midshipman James Charles Woolmer Price, HMS *Ocean*:

These officers were both in command of picket boats on night of 13th-14th March. When *Ocean's* boat lay helpless, having been struck in the boiler-room by a shell, *Majestic's* took her in tow, under heavy fire, the conduct of these two young officers being altogether admirable, as was their handling of their boats.

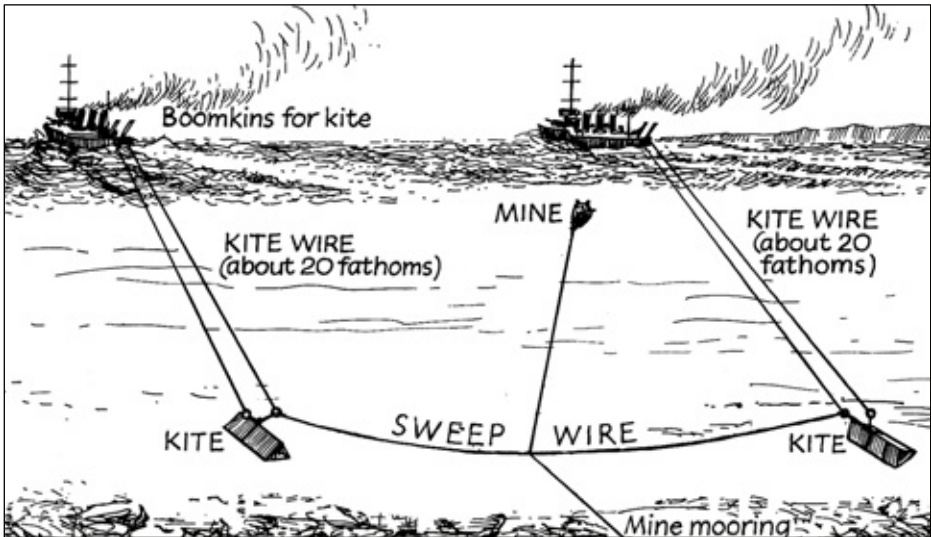
Gunner (T) John William Alexander Chubb, R.N. also received the DSC;

Mr. Chubb, when a volunteer in trawler No. 488, on the night of 13th-14th March, brought his vessel out of action in a sinking condition, his commanding officer and three of the small crew being killed.

This action in which HMS *Amethyst* played so prominent a part and in which her crew paid so high a price, marked a pivot point in the Royal Navy's Dardanelles campaign.



German manufactured Carbonit Co. contact mine
of the type encountered in this action
(from *The Mitchell Report*, 1919). NB: the mine's horns are not shown here.



Sketch of minesweeping method employed - NB: this is post 4 April 1915, as destroyers are shown, however, trawlers used the same system on 13-14 March 1915
(from *Dardanelles – A Midshipman's Diary* by H M Denham, pub. by John Murray Ltd., 1981).

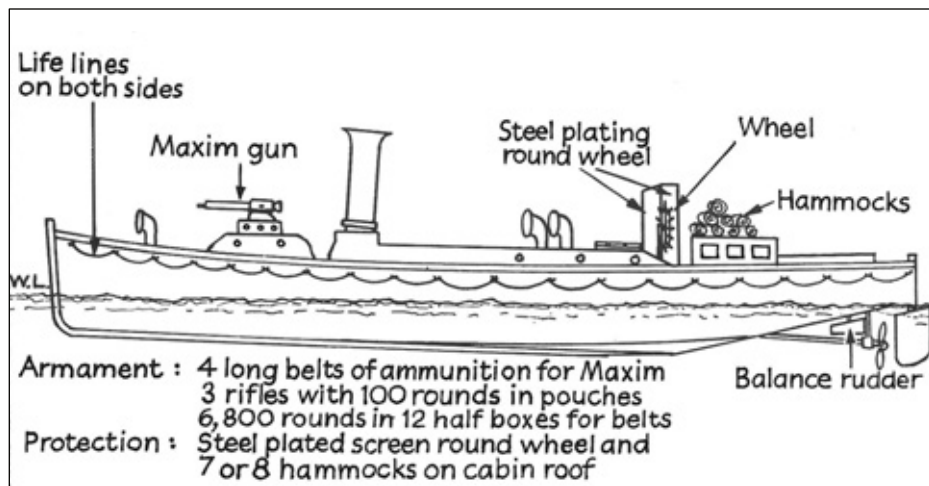
At this stage of the campaign the navy was minesweeping with fishing trawlers manned by civilian crews. They swept in pairs, 400 yards apart, with a 2½-in. sweep wire passed between them. This wire was kept under water and at the correct depth by two 12ft. prism kites. The surface current flowing down the Dardanelles was about 4 knots, but varied with the wind. This together with the drag imposed on the trawlers by their sweep, meant that when sweeping, they could barely make any headway up the straits against the current, thus becoming sitting ducks for field artillery and the guns of the forts on either side. They were therefore forced to sail up the Dardanelles, passing over the minefields and under the Ottoman guns, before they could turn about together, each with their opposite number, get their sweeps out and join them up, and only then proceed to minesweep down the Dardanelles with the flow of the current. The 1919 *Mitchell Report* puts it thus:

... the sweepers, handicapped as they were by inferior speed and personnel, would be confronted with the task of sweeping a passage through five lines of mines (Nos. 6-10), illuminated by three searchlights, under fire of 74 guns, 6-in. and below, almost at point blank, range – a truly formidable task, which, none the less, was attempted. Furthermore, the draught of the trawlers was known to be greater than the depth of the mines, and, indeed, on one of the two occasions on which the minefield was successfully entered, a trawler was lost by striking a mine. It is scarcely, therefore, to be wondered at that it

was found necessary ultimately to stiffen the personnel of the sweepers with active service officers and men.¹⁶

On the evening of 13 March 1915 therefore, six battleships and the *Blenheim* each provided volunteers; three men to each of the seven trawlers - one officer, one petty officer and one signalman. The officer was armed with a revolver in case of trouble when the civilian fishermen came under fire.¹⁷

A preliminary bombardment by the *Cornwallis* was supposed to take care of the Ottoman guns and searchlights, after which the light cruiser HMS *Amethyst* and a destroyer would cover the work to be done by the seven trawlers. These were assisted in minesweeping by five picket boats searching for mines using explosive creeps. The latter consisted of a three-pronged exploding grapnel, holding a 2½lb. tin of guncotton which was used to blow up a mine's cable when caught. The grapnel was attached to 2 fathoms (12ft.) of chain, which was not affected by the explosion. In turn, the chain was attached to a rope (and electric cable) at least five times as long as the depth of water. This device was towed well behind the picket boat and the guncotton detonated electrically when the No.1 (of a five-man team) felt he had caught a cable.¹⁸



Sketch of a typical 56ft. Picket Boat as used at the Dardanelles
(from Denham: *Dardanelles – A Midshipman's Diary*)

At the commencement of the sweep, two trawlers collided when attempting to pass the sweep wire from one to the other. In all, five of the trawlers were badly damaged by enemy fire. Only two were left with their gear intact, and were able to minesweep down the Straits. Two of the picket boats (typically only 56ft. or less in length and commanded by midshipmen) had some success with their creeps,

exploding four which released mines.¹⁹ These mines then drifted down the Dardanelles to be detonated by British gunfire at the entrance.

The navy learnt some hard lessons that night. The spotting of *Amethyst's* guns onto the searchlights was found to be extremely difficult and almost impossible when the lights were turned onto that ship. Sweeping at night with the slow-moving civilian fishing trawlers was now deemed impractical. Carden's telegram to the Admiralty later that afternoon, reporting on the previous night's effort concludes "Fleet sweepers will be urgently required to precede the Fleet ... These were asked for in my [telegram] 19 [of] January 10th."²⁰

This short but expensive action proved to be the last straw and new tactics had to be urgently sought. Commodore Keyes wrote:

We have come to the conclusion that organized as their defence now is, we cannot effectively clear the minefield at night. So our great advance begins in a few days, i.e. a sledge hammer attack at long range ... old battleships closing in when the fire is silenced to smother the forts and batteries while sweepers clear the minefields, and let us get close to the Narrows to finish the forts.²¹

Three days later Carden had taken sick leave, never to return. John Michael de Robeck was now the vice-admiral in command and the great, but alas, equally ill-fated attack on the Narrows took place on 18th March 1915.

The awful destruction and loss of life suffered by *Amethyst* allowed Chief Stoker Robert Verey and his shipmates to display exemplary courage and fortitude, though many paid the ultimate price. At least one crewman was also very deeply affected by this experience; Signalman Harold Arnold Boyd, J8238.

Boyd came from a family of photographers, but in 1910 he had chosen to join the Royal Navy as a boy of 16 years. On his 18th birthday in 1912, he became an ordinary signalman, and in that rank he joined *Amethyst* on 26 February 1915. Boyd's character was recorded as 'very good' and more often than not his ability was reported as 'superior.' In August 1915 he was promoted to leading signalman. The action in the early hours of 14th March was at least the sixth time that he and *Amethyst* had accompanied the trawlers into the minefield, under the beams of the searchlights and gunfire from both shores. These experiences had exacted a heavy toll upon Boyd. In 1917 he was a patient at St. John's VAD Hospital, Hull, and later that year was discharged from the navy, suffering from neurasthenia; a term today referred to as PTSD).²²

The shelling of his ship and the resultant casualties amongst his shipmates left young Boyd with vivid memories which would haunt him for the rest of his days. After a spell with his own photographic studios in Hastings and in St. Leonards, Boyd eventually settled in St Austell, Cornwall, where he became an artist. In 1963

he painted his old ship, the *Amethyst*, depicting her in her hour of extreme peril, and clearly showing the entry point of the first Ottoman 15cm shell. On the reverse of his canvas he even noted the precise time and date: “04:07 hrs on 14th March 1915.” Today that painting is in the collection of William and Serpil Sellars of Eceabat [who have kindly given permission for it to be published on the front cover of this edition - ed.], and I am grateful to Bill for bringing it and Arnold Boyd's story to wider attention.



Signalman Harold Arnold Boyd RN

Photo from <https://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/HastingsPhotgrsBO.htm>
and there credited to Denise ('Dee') Boyd Martin)

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to: Dr. Bruce Cherry, William & Serpil Sellars, Bernard de Broglio, Capt. Roy C Swales BSc, RN rtd., Murray Ewen, and the generous researchers of the Great War Forum [<https://www.greatwarforum.org/>], David Owen, KizmeRD, Matlock1418, seaJane and The Treasurer.

Notes

¹ At the time of this action E L Morant was a Lieutenant RN and *Amethyst's* navigator.

² HMS *Cornwallis* – a Duncan class battleship built 1901, sunk by U-boat off Malta 1917.

³ HMS *Amethyst* – a Topaze class light cruiser built 1903.

⁴ Fort No.7 (European side) the 'Rumeli Messudieh Battery' with three 15cm. L/45 QF guns. Fort No.8 (Asiatic side) the 'Dardanos Battery' with five 15cm. L/40 QF guns.

⁵ The Suandere Bay area had a number of guns with calibres ranging from 7.5cm to 12cm.

⁶ Indicating the British manufacturer (Vickers, Sons & Maxim Ltd.) and the year made (1910).

⁷ This hit is probably that described by 17 year old 1st Class Boy George Dixon J28849:

... the next killed two out of my gun crew, tore the leg off another, splinters in leg and arm on the other, and me, lucky, was hit in the shoulder. I had just gone for another projectile; had the gun been loaded I should not be writing this. When I was hit all I remember was a great yellow flash and a roar." (quoted by Jim Grundy in his book *Hell and Confusion*, Little Gully Publishing, 2024). In the letter quoted in the *Sheffield Telegraph*, 27 April 1915, Dixon made light of his injury, referring to it as a 'scratch', however his Admiralty record shows he was 'severely wounded.

⁸ ERA = Engine Room Artificer

⁹ The 'racer' was the semi-circular rail on which the torpedo tube was turned to aim and fire

¹⁰ See Bernard de Broglie's article in *The Gallipolitan* No.165, for further details on the French Hospital Ship *Canada* and her service at the Dardanelles

¹¹ Rear-Admiral J M de Robeck, second in command to Vice-Admiral Carden

¹² HMS *Blenheim* - built 1890 and serving at the Dardanelles as a Destroyer Depot Ship and doubling as a repair & salvage ship

¹³ HMS *Ribble* - a River class destroyer built 1904

¹⁴ From <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/50790220/robert-george-verey>

¹⁵ From <https://www.naval-history.net/WW1Battle1503Dardanelles2.htm>

¹⁶ The Mitchell Report - in full, the 'Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Attacks Delivered on and the Enemy Defences of The Dardanelles Straits, 1919' published by Admiralty, Naval Staff, Gunnery Division, April 1921

¹⁷ *Gallipoli* by Capt. Eric Wheeler Bush DSO**, DSC, RN., George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975.

¹⁸ Details from *Torpedo Drill Book* 1914 (corrected to May 1915), HM Stationery Office

¹⁹ The Mitchell Report

²⁰ Winston Churchill, Vol.III, Companion Part I, by Martin Gilbert, Heinemann, 1972.

²¹ The Keyes Papers, Vol.I, 1914-1918, edited by Paul G. Halpern PhD., The Navy Records Society, 1972. (see Commodore Roger Keyes' letter to his wife 15 March 1915)

²² From <https://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/HastingsPhotgrsBO.htm>

[Any errors or omissions are mine - M.D.R.]

CHRISTMAS BILLIES

Miss Ruby Leighton of Caulfield, is in receipt of the following letter in acknowledgment of a billy sent away by her.

Lemnos Island Xmas Day.

Dear Miss Leighton, — I am very glad to be able to write and express my gratitude and appreciation of your delightful billy. The contents are all deeply appreciated, and just the thing I have been longing for. The perpetual hard biscuit diet has been now broken for a day or two at least. I don't exactly know how to thank you, but believe me I thank you very much.

I am not fortunate enough in knowing Melbourne or Victoria, having enlisted from Northern Queensland; but from what the Victorian chaps I have met say, it

must be great. This is the first letter I have written for months, not having many to correspond with. It is very cold here, and has been raining for the last week, and we can't get dry, once wet. Snow, too, at times. So it's in sharp contrast to the warm summer days and nights in Australia at the present time.

Thanking you again for your kindness. — I remain, yours gratefully. Trooper Elmer Dayton, 5th Light Horse Regiment. (*Corowa Free Press* (NSW) Tuesday 7 March 1916 p3).

A MEDITERRANEAN LULLABY

Near Gallipoli 1915

By R C Chadwick ISO AB HMS *Edgar* (416)

On a beautiful sunny afternoon in 1915 and during a lull in our usual activities of patrolling and bombarding the Turkish positions on Gallipoli, the old cruiser HMS *Edgar* was lying at anchor in a little bay behind Kaffelo and the Captain had given the ships company a 'make and mend', in other words a chance for the boys to get their 'heads down'.

However our whaler was the duty boat and was lying tied up astern on the after boom, and so as I was the Coxswain I appointed AB Davies to be the afternoon watch boat-keeper, and later after about two hours I decided to give him a break and so I proceeded astern with this intention, only to find, on looking over the stern, that there was no boat or AB Davies, but looking out towards the skyline and almost a mile away I could just spot Davies standing in the whaler frantically waving; apparently he could not have secured the boat properly and whilst he was having a nod, the gentle lapping of the boat had worked the painter loose and the boat had drifted away.

I immediately contacted the duty officer and explained and he reported this to the Commander - result 'hell let loose' as the order was given to clear lower decks and work main derrick to lower the Picket Boat. Eventually Davies and the whaler were recovered, he to be placed on the Commanders' report, and the ships crew cursing him to all eternity for having disturbed their 'shuteye'.

What a catastrophe, and should a German U-boat have popped up and taken him prisoner would he have been posted absent without leave, or believed missing?

(Originally published in *The Gallipolian* No. 31, Christmas 1979).

BOOK REVIEWS

Steve Chambers

Peninsula Press

Edited By: John Wilson, Stephen Ede-Borrett

Softback/eBook: 298 pages

Publisher: Gosling Press (2024)

ISBN: 9781874351061

The *Peninsula Press* was a news sheet produced throughout the campaign from May 1915 to January 1916. Initially it was produced daily but as the campaign continued it reduced in frequency to weekly. The editor was believed to have been Captain William Maxwell. Maxwell was a British journalist, soldier, writer and civil servant. He had been a war correspondent during the Anglo-Sudan War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), and the Balkan War (1912). During the First World War he reported on the First Battle of the Marne in September 1914. He joined the general staff and was Chief Field Censor on the staff of Sir Ian Hamilton's GHQ. In later life Maxwell became a section chief in the Secret Intelligence Service.

The *Peninsula Press* was typically a single sheet with two columns with an wide range of information covering military information from all theatres of the conflict as well as political stories from around the world. It also, on occasion, included information on actions that had taken place on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The various sheets, whilst containing a regular flow of news, often put a positive spin on events; propaganda at its best.

The publishers believe that this is the first time all 96 editions have been brought together in a single volume; a feat they achieved by scouring the world's collections. I believe this is true as I cannot remember ever seeing a full set, and original copies are today extremely rare. This book is a recommended gem of a purchase.

The book is available direct from the publisher (post free in the UK) at www.goslingpress.co.uk. It is also available from Amazon. As a special offer, Association members can get a £2.00 discount on the softback edition at checkout.

Letters From Helles

A debate among readers is whether it is better to read the printed book, or to listen to the audiobook. There are benefits to both of course. Thanks in no small part to technology, listening to audiobooks has become an increasingly popular alternative to reading print books. They are just as informative, entertaining, and beneficial to

brain health as reading written text, and are also versatile, as you can listen on your commute to work, whilst out walking, or at the gym.

The Gallipoli Association has been made aware of a new audiobook-style podcast of Sir Henry Darlington's book *Letters From Helles* (1936). This is a book some of you may be familiar with and possibly fortunate enough to own. The original book contains a series of letters written from the battlefields of Egypt and Gallipoli by Lt-Col Darlington to his wife Mabel during his time as the commanding officer of the 1/5th Manchester Regiment (127th Infantry Brigade), 42nd Division.

Each letter also contains detailed annotations, which have been researched and written by Association member Dudley Giles, in order to add additional context.

There are two versions of this podcast, the shorter, unannotated version (3:19 hrs), and the longer, annotated version (6:01 hrs). The first episode is entirely free, the remaining chapters are £7.00 and £10.00 respectively.

To find out more information please use the following links:

- Three-hour version: <https://app.hiro.fm/channel/letters-from-helles>
- Six-hour version: <https://app.hiro.fm/channel/annotated-letters-from-helles>

If you haven't tried an audiobook or podcast before, this is your chance to give it a go! Recommended listening.

LAST POST

It is with regret that the Association learnt of the death of the following members:

Mr Robert Frank Hooley - Member 2544, died 24 June 2024, aged 70.

Mr Şahin Aldoğan, former member of the Association, died 10 July 2024.

See tribute by Bill Sellars in this edition, pages 4 and 5.

Mr Ian Clayton - Member 8236, died 19 September 2024.

Major Tonie Holt died 5 September 2024

Dr John Kenyon - Member 7340

Dr Kenyon was the grandson of Captain, later Lt-Colonel, Herbert Kenyon, adjutant of the 7th Indian Army Mountain Artillery Brigade at Anzac, on whom he contributed an article in *The Gallipolian* No 155 of Spring 2021.

Mr Michael Cairns (17 August 1951 to 23 July 2024)

A kind, unassuming gentleman with the biggest heart'

It is great sadness we learnt of the death of Michael (Mike) Cairns our honorary treasurer. Mike joined us in 2022 (Member 8335) and managed our financial affairs in an extremely efficient and positive way presenting detailed accounts at our Trustees' meetings and for our annual accounts.

Mike was a proud family man who gained a first class degree in Economics at Warwick University. He qualified as a chartered accountant and moved from his roots in Lincolnshire to London in the 1990's. After working with a major accountancy practice in the City he became company secretary of a firm on Lloyd's brokers and underwriting agents. His knowledge of taxation and financial affairs was very wide and enabled him to set up complicated software, including an in-depth analysis of our own accounts.

He will be sadly missed by his wife Julie, his children Sam, Kelly and Tom, his grandchildren Henry, Elliot, Toby, Freya and Brooklyn, and by members of the Gallipoli Association.





OBJECTIVES

To advance education for the public benefit by raising public awareness of the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915 and by encouraging and facilitating the study in the legacy and lessons of that campaign. To keep alive the memory of the campaign and to ensure that all who fought or served in it, and those who gave their lives, are not forgotten by applying such means as the Trustees deem fit.



*The River Clyde at V Beach, 25 April 1915, William Lionel Wyllie.
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Caird Collection*

The Gallipoli campaign is characterised by countless deeds of heroism and endurance. It took place in an area smaller than Southampton amid appalling conditions - heat, flies, lack of water, equipment and proper sanitation. Later on rain and a freak spell of sub-zero temperatures had to be endured, to say nothing of the desperate close-quarter fighting throughout the campaign. Some 559,000 Allied personnel were committed, of whom 420,000 were British and Empire troops, including 50,000 Australians and 9,000 New Zealanders, and 80,000 French. The cost in human terms was terrible. The Allies had 250,000 casualties, of whom approximately 58,000 were killed, with only 11,000 having known graves. Ottoman forces, with some Germans, numbered between 300,000 and 400,000 and of these some 87,000 were killed. The evacuations in December 1915 and early January 1916 were masterly operations – one of the great feats of military history.