

The Gallipollian

***The Journal of the
Gallipoli Association***

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***The River Clyde* at V Beach, 25 April, 1915**

*by Charles Dixon - reproduced by kind permission
of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshires)*

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SUBSCRIPTIONS – 2013: A REMINDER

Members are reminded that subscriptions became due in January 2013. The rates are unchanged; namely

Members in the UK – £20 per annum (£18 if paid by Direct Debit)

Overseas Members – £25 per annum (£22.50 if paid by Direct Debit)

If you have not already arranged to pay your subscription by Direct Debit (or Standing Order under previous arrangements), please do so as soon as possible. Subscriptions outstanding on 1 July 2013 will result in membership being treated as lapsed and you will not receive further copies of *The Gallipolian*. The Acting Membership Secretary's address is shown inside the front cover.

Members paying by Standing Order are asked to check that the amount payable reflects the current rate of subscription. Those who have not altered their payment to the new subscription rate by 1 July will be treated as lapsed and will not receive the journal.

UK members who are not already paying by Direct Debit are asked to consider changing to this method of payment as it is very labour saving and cost-effective for the Association. Direct Debit forms can be downloaded from the Association website, or obtained from the Acting Membership Secretary. Those who subscribe via PayPal can obtain details for making or renewing payments from the Association website (www.gallipoli-association.org).

MINUTES OF THE 2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the 2012 AGM are enclosed with this issue of *The Gallipolian*.

GALLIPOLI ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

In his message enclosed with the Winter issue of *The Gallipolian*, the Chairman reported that work had begun on drafting a constitution for the Association and that it was hoped to submit it to members with the Spring issue.

Work on the constitution is well advanced but the need to consult the Charity Commission and to take account of their advice has meant that the document was not

ready for circulation by the time the journal went to press. It will therefore be the subject of a separate mailing to members.

AUTUMN LUNCH 2012

The Association's Autumn Lunch, which followed the AGM, was well supported by members with numbers exceeding those of recent years and we were well looked after by the attentive staff of the Naval Club. Our guest speaker, General The Lord Dannatt, GCB, CBE, MC, DL., Chief of the General Staff 2006-2009, gave a most interesting and wide ranging talk and was kind enough to take questions afterwards, an offer which members took full advantage! A selection of photographs can be found on pages 29 -30.

‘FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE’ – WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Each year, the Gallipoli Association has a Memorial Plot at the ‘Field of Remembrance’ in the grounds of Westminster Abbey, which is open in the period around Remembrance Day. Anyone can place a remembrance cross or symbol in the plot and 35 members availed themselves of the offer in the Autumn issue of *The Gallipolian* for the Association to arrange for crosses to be placed on their behalf.

The plots are set out by staff and volunteers from the Royal British Legion – a substantial undertaking given that there are well over 200 plots. The task of laying out the Association plot fell to my brother and fellow Association member, Clive, who placed some 50 crosses and other emblems on the morning of 6 November on behalf of Association members.

The formal opening by His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh, took place at 11.00am on 8 November 2012. After a brief service, the *Last Post* was sounded from the parapet of St Margaret's Church and the Silence kept. Afterwards, His Royal Highness toured the plots and spoke to veterans, service personnel and members of the organisations present, including our Chairman, and representatives of the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand High Commissions, whose plots were close to ours. A selection of photographs can be found on pages 30 – 31.

REMEMBRANCE DAY COMMEMORATIONS AT THE CENOTAPH

For the second year running, members of the Gallipoli Association took part in the Remembrance Day Parade and March Past at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

The Association contingent marched as part of the ‘Civilian Column’ whose individual contingents formed up on Whitehall outside the Old War Office Building prior to the Parade. Our contingent co-ordinator was Stephen Chambers who with Marc Stewart formed the left and right markers, the left marker handing the Association wreath to the British Legion ‘wreath taker’ on passing the Cenotaph.

As one might expect, the Royal British Legion’s organisation was faultless and everything went smoothly. Even the weather was kind and those taking part all agreed that it had been a rewarding and moving experience. A selection of photographs can be found on pages 32–33.

2013 ANZAC/GALLIPOLI DAY CEREMONIES IN LONDON

DAWN SERVICE

A Dawn Service will be held at the Australian War Memorial, Hyde Park Corner at 5.00am.

ST PAUL’S CATHEDRAL

A short service and wreath laying ceremony will take place at the Gallipoli Memorial in the crypt of St Paul’s Cathedral at 9.15 am for 9.30am on Thursday, 25 April. Wreaths will be laid by a representative of Her Britannic Majesty’s Government, by senior representatives of the Royal Navy, the Army and by the High Commissioners of Australia and New Zealand, and other high-ranking officials from France and Turkey. Members and friends are encouraged to attend this service which is arranged by the Association. It concludes in time to travel to The Cenotaph.

THE CENOTAPH

Two minutes silence will be observed at 11.00am during a service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. A wreath will be laid on behalf of the Association. Security measures will be in place in and around Westminster and only members and guests with named tickets (see enclosed booking form) will be allowed access to the west side of Whitehall. Access is by Clive Steps, which front onto Horse Guards Road. These lead into King Charles Street and thence into Whitehall. We will assemble close to the exit from King Charles Street at 10.25am.

Members are encouraged to join with us to march to the Cenotaph and should find and link up with the member of the Association appointed as our Marshall for the day, who will give the necessary instructions.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

As in previous years, we have been invited to join the ‘Anzacs’ at Westminster Abbey for a Service of Commemoration, which will commence at 12.00 noon. Members should be

seated by 11.40am. Those wishing to attend the service should apply for tickets on the booking form referred to above. Tickets for the Abbey and Cenotaph will be posted, so please remember to enclose a stamped and addressed envelope.

Medals should be worn at St Paul's, The Cenotaph, and at Westminster Abbey.

GALLIPOLI DAY LUNCH

The Gallipoli Day Lunch will be held at 'The Albert', 52 Victoria Street, Westminster, London SW1H 0NP. The cost is £27 for three courses including wine. A booking form is enclosed. Please book early to ensure a place as the dining area is limited to 50 people.

OTHER ANZAC/GALLIPOLI DAY CEREMONIES AND EVENTS

The enclosed commemorative events leaflet gives details of other Anzac/Gallipoli Day ceremonies and events. Additional copies are available from the Editor by post or e-mail (address inside the front cover of the journal). If requesting copies by post, please enclose a stamped (A5 size) and addressed envelope. Details can also be found on the Association website.

We ask that members unable to join with the Association in London make every effort to attend their nearest ceremony. The Editor is always pleased to receive reports and photographs of these ceremonies.

MAJOR GENERAL'S REVIEW

Members will have the opportunity to apply through the Association for tickets for the Major General's Review on Horse Guards Parade on Saturday 1 June. See enclosed booking form for details.

COLLINGWOOD MEMORIAL PARADE

The service at the Collingwood Memorial on the Downs, east of Pimperne, Dorset will take place at 3.00pm on Friday 7 June.

It is a popular and much appreciated tradition that those attending should, if possible, meet from noon onwards at the Anvil Hotel, Pimperne for introductions and lunch if required.

2013 GALLIPOLI ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

Meet the Historians: After the success of the inaugural conference last year when we had over 100 attendees, the committee are pleased to announce that a second conference will be held on Saturday, 1 June at the same venue, the Tally-Ho Conference Centre in Birmingham.

Details are given in the enclosed leaflet/booking form. Please book early to secure a place.

2013 GALLIPOLI BATTLEFIELD TOURS

The Association is recommending tours by two reputable battlefield tour operators who are planning two tours each, in May and September. Both tours offer distinctly different experiences. *Battle Honours Ltd.* specialize in small group, quality walking tours. *Spirit of Remembrance* offer a more gently paced tour by coach but with wider cultural additions. They have worked together to present you with the best options available.

Tour and booking details can be found on the Tours Page of the Association Website or you can contact the companies direct by e-mail or telephone. Please remember to quote 'Gallipoli Association' when booking.

Battle Honours

Website: www.battle-honours.co.uk

Email: enquiries@battle-honours.co.uk

Telephone: 01438 791020

Spirit of Remembrance

Website: www.spiritofremembrance.com/page/gallipoli-tour

Email: tours@spiritofremembrance.com

Telephone: 01634 233785

2013 AGM & AUTUMN LUNCH

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at The Naval Club on Wednesday, 16 October. The Autumn Lunch will also be held on this date. Further information, and a booking form for the lunch, will be given in the Autumn issue of *The Gallipolian*. Meanwhile, please make a note in your diary.

BOSTON MEMORIAL PLAQUE

As reported in the Autumn 2012 issue of *The Gallipolian* (No. 129) the Association are funding a memorial plaque to commemorate the Gallipoli campaign which is to be placed in Veterans' Way within the grounds of the Boston War Memorial.

Apart from a few minor details, the design and wording of the plaque, which will carry the Association badge in colour, have been finalised (see below) and we expect the plaque to be erected and dedicated this year, possibly before the next issue of the journal is published. Details will be posted on the Association website and should any members without Internet access wish to be kept informed, please drop a line to the Editor (address inside the front cover) and I will keep you posted.



The plaque to be placed in Veterans' Way Boston

BURIED TURKISH GUNS

The Winter 2012 issue of the journal carried a report by Guven Pinar that excavations had begun to dig out Turkish guns buried in 1918 around Kumkale. Guven has recently sent me a photograph of one of the six excavated guns – see page 33.

Known as the Halileli battery, the howitzer type guns (with barrels of 22, 24 and 26 cm in diameter), were manufactured by Krupp, and are said to have opened fire on the British/French fleet on 18 March 1915.

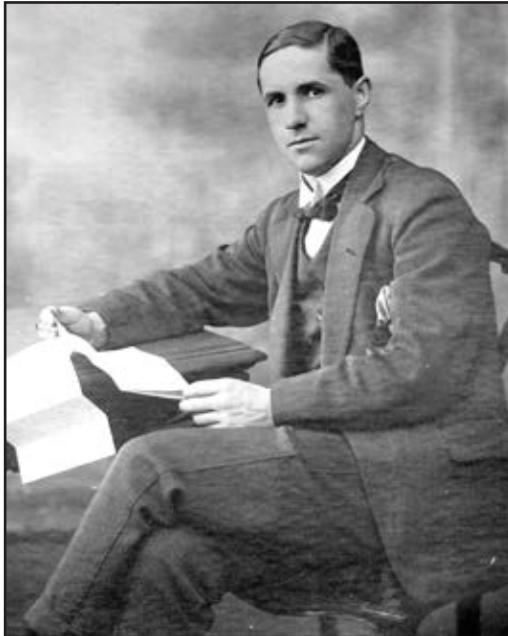
OLIVER WILLIAMS BENN (1887 – 1915)

James Benn

Territorial Army and the Outbreak of War

Oliver Williams Benn, younger brother of William Wedgwood Benn, was the fourth son of Sir John Williams Benn and Elizabeth Pickstone. He was born on 11 July 1887 at the family home at 17 Finsbury Square in the City of London. His father was elected as a Liberal Party Member of Parliament in 1892, and was also a founding member of Benn Brothers Ltd, the family firm created in 1880 working in publishing, the hardware trade and, in particular, producing a journal about cabinet making. Educated initially in London, in 1898, Oliver, aged 11, was sent to Lindisfarne College, a boarding school, situated at Westcliff-on-Sea near Southend. He stayed there until his late teens, and joined the family firm shortly after.

On leaving school Oliver joined the Territorial Army. What inspired Oliver to embark on a military career is unclear. However, in May 1911, aged 23, he applied to join the County of London Territorial Force. Despite a record of poor health in his teenage years, he received, on 26 May 1911, written confirmation from the Secretary of the County of London Territorial Force Association of a Commission into the battalion as a Second Lieutenant.



Oliver Williams Benn (1911)

Whilst serving as a territorial, Oliver continued to work in the family firm, and was later sent to Manchester where he represented the company as Northern Branch Manager. He obtained a transfer to the 7th Bn. Manchester Regiment (Territorial Force) but 'retired' from this post in June 1913, probably because he was returning to live in London. At the outbreak of war, Oliver re-enlisted and was re-commissioned on 22 November 1914. However, he was not given a return posting to the City of London Regiment, but instead joined the 9th Bn. Somerset Light Infantry [SLI]. A portrait of Oliver in uniform can be found on page 34.

Promoted to Captain, Oliver spent the winter of 1914/1915 with his battalion and readied men under his command for war. During this period, the 9th SLI were stationed at St Austell in Cornwall and Oliver spent much time learning to ride. A letter to his mother in the Spring of 1915 explained:

'Friday I was out riding and didn't get back until it was just time for mess. I went on a ride on Friday and the whole afternoon yesterday and I am going out again this afternoon. I am not getting a bit sore, but just stiff. You see, in a few weeks now we shall have our horses and I really must learn something about it.'

In other letters Oliver discussed some of the men under his command and clearly not all of them were to his liking:

'...when you have a keen and good lot of chaps like mine, it's worth going to a lot of trouble to keep them happy and get them well trained. I have been through my company with a 'tooth-comb' so to speak to find the undesirables – I have found two – both old soldiers and both drunk half their time. One man I have got put in gaol for 14 days and the other man I'm going to have discharged as an 'undesirable', which in military language is 'medically unfit for service'.

To Gallipoli

By early 1915, the 9th SLI had been confirmed as a 'Reserve Battalion' and throughout the war would be only used for training and transferring men to active units. Oliver would soon be one of these men, and in May 1915 was given orders to join a draft of reinforcements to join the MEF.

As with most Dardanelles-destined transports, Oliver's journey to Gallipoli took over two weeks. He boarded the transport, RMS *Orsova*, on 10 May 1915, just three days after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The *Orsova* was passenger liner built in 1909 and had only recently been requisitioned by the Admiralty. Indeed, it only returned to England from Brisbane in April, and had been due to return to Australia later in May.

RMS *Orsova* was scheduled to depart Plymouth on the evening of 10 May, but the sailing was postponed owing to the danger of German submarines in the English

Channel. She eventually departed on Wednesday 12 May. That day Oliver wrote a long letter to his mother, describing life aboard the ship:

'I should think that there are about 250 officers, 250 nurses (territorial and regular) and about 1000 or more men. You see some of the officers are going out with drafts to the Dardanelles straight away, but most of us are 'unattached', simply going to Egypt for further orders. She's a lovely ship – never done any transport work, and up to 3 days of us coming on board [she] was getting ready for a passenger trip to Australia, but the government took her and had her third class accommodation made to accommodate soldiers, and never touched a second and first class cabins at all. So I find myself in a state room on the first class deck with Capt. George – all polished furniture and nickel-work and stewards running around all the time.'

This reference to 'George' refers to Captain Laurence Edgar George, Oliver's friend, who was later attached to the Dublin Fusiliers and killed in the Battle of Gully Ravine.

RMS *Orsova* arrived at Malta on 19 May 1915, departed the same day, covering in excess of 900 miles before arriving in Alexandria on the evening of 21 May. As the ship approached the allied naval port, Oliver wrote home, albeit briefly, informing the family of his safe arrival:

'Darling mother, here we are at last. There are no certain orders as to what we are to do yet, but apparently we are bound for the same district as Will [Oliver's brother William Wedgwood Benn MP] – but of course I can't give you the name of the place here, because it would only be knocked out by the censor... I can't say when it will get posted, exactly, but as we have no definite orders, except to stand by for a move at a minute's notice.'

Oliver next wrote home a few days later, on 25 May, by which time he had arrived at Mudros Harbour. He wrote:

'Darling mother, we have arrived at our fighting base – the other place from which I wrote to you was the main base for stores etc. I can't tell you, of course just where we are, but it's the same place that Will came to, so I expect we are in the same neighbourhood. The journey here has been most interesting and I'm quite sorry it's over for lots of reasons... Now love, I expect I shall have seen some fighting before you get this. I shall do my duty and trust God. I can't do more.'

On the night of 25 May 1915, Oliver and the soldiers aboard the *Orsova* were transferred to a Royal Navy destroyer and taken to the peninsula arriving at Cape Helles on the morning of 26 May, most likely at W Beach. On arrival, he immediately wrote home and gave details of his experiences thus far. In this letter he explained that he had been posted to reinforce the 1st Battalion, The Essex Regiment who were already in the trenches in front of Krithia.

Oliver was sent to command a platoon of soldiers in X Coy. of the 1st Essex, who by late May, were in the line astride Fir Tree Spur (close to the current site of Twelve Tree Copse cemetery) to the south-west of Achi Baba. Oliver ended his first letter from Gallipoli by mentioning someone he had met that day; a face he recognised from home:

'We left our island yesterday and were landed here this morning. By the way – George Cregan is here. I met him this morning. Isn't it funny? Write to his people and tell them so.'

Lt. George Theodore Cregan was a friend of Oliver's from London. He was serving as a regimental doctor at the field hospital on W Beach, and Oliver seems to have bumped into him on arrival. Cregan survived the campaign, was later decorated for helping civilians in Armentieres on the Western Front, and survived the war.

Oswin Creighton, a padre with the Essex Regiment, who would later write of the campaign himself, was serving with the battalion at the time and in his Gallipoli diary, he recorded the arrival of the small band new officers for the Essex regiment on 26 May. One of these was Oliver:

'26th May 1915 – Eight officers arrived while we were lunching. They had just come from England. It appears [Lord Kitchener's Army] is to be turned into a reserve army, and these men were from it. They seemed good fellows, though rather inexperienced.'

Another man with Oliver that day was a young Lieutenant named John Hugh Allen. Lt. Allen was the son of a New Zealand diplomat and had studied at Cambridge, before joining the 13th Bn. Worcestershire Regiment. He had also travelled to the Mediterranean on RMS *Orsova* and would have known Oliver as a fellow officer. Lt. Allen wrote many letters home and these were posthumously compiled into a book by his sister entitled, *John Hugh Allen of the Gallant Company*. Allen's movements closely follow Oliver's and his accounts of what happened in the following days mirror something of Oliver's experience. Of the first day at Gallipoli, Allen wrote of W Beach:

'26th May – We landed this morning, and were taken charge of by the [Quartermaster] who, to our surprise, provided us with breakfast in his tent dugout... The camp stretches on a broken sandy slope from the sea-shore. We fought for every inch of it at the original landing. We are now being shelled from a hill inland about four miles away.../... Wounded are being carried or helped from the hospital to the embarkation place. Several aeroplanes have been up. The whole camp is a mixture of bell-tents, horse-lines, heaps of barbed-wire, hospitals. There are one or two clean and smart people about – but most are unshaved and their uniforms dirty. They look business-like. I expect we shall join our regiment. It is in the firing-line.'

Oliver, Allen and the men moved up towards the front that day to join the remainder of the 1st Essex. En-route, they stopped at Brigade HQ, situated at the Pink Farm and waited until nightfall to head to the firing line. Whilst waiting, Oliver wrote to his family about his first experience of being under fire from Turkish guns:

'26th May – It's very interesting here – we are waiting about a mile behind the line and the Turks have just found our range. They have been dropping shells all around us since four o'clock this morning, but their shooting is so terribly bad that whenever they get a shell in anywhere, we all give them a cheer. On the other hand, our artillery are apparently doing some wonderful work. So much I have learned here, but it's quite certain that the trenches are the safest place – because they are too near to be got at by their artillery and too well made for any damage to be done by rifle fire, if you have the sense to keep your head down.'

On the night that Oliver joined his new unit, they were already heavily involved in defending their position from suspected local Turkish attacks. Over the next two days, the Essex men received orders to dig an extension to the front line in order to advance the British fire-trench and link up with the battalions of the Manchester Regiment (part of 42nd Division) to their right. This was the first indication of the forthcoming British assault, due to take place early in June (Third Battle of Krithia).

The British command was adamant that the front line should be closer to the Turkish trenches than during the previous assault, earlier in the month (the Second Battle of Krithia). This plan required a number of new trenches to be dug across the peninsula. The 1st Essex were involved in this process and Oliver would have overseen its work over the subsequent three nights.

30 May was the last day that the Essex Regiment spent in the trenches and this day was personally important for Oliver too. That day had begun with him serving under Captain A G L Pepys, CO of X Coy. Captain Arthur Guy Leslie Pepys had commanded X Coy. since the battalion's arrival on W Beach on 25 April, and had previously fought in the Boer War, winning the Military Cross. He later rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and survived the war. That day, however, Pepys was wounded and had to be evacuated. In his place, Oliver was given sole command of X Coy. What happened to Pepys that day was recounted by Oliver in his next letter:

'Well mother, I have got what it has been my ambition to get... To cut it short, I have the command of the company in the firing line – on Saturday (sic) morning my captain was wounded in the mouth and so the commanding officer immediately sent for me and gave me the command – the old O.C. Company will be sent home I think because his wound is really serious – but then he was actually asking for trouble. He used to trot about on the top of the trenches without any cover and as cool as a cucumber.'

The letter was written by Oliver in the 'rest camp' near Gully Beach, about half a mile

beyond Pink Farm. Oliver used this period, 31 May – 2 June, to prepare for the assault on Krithia, scheduled to open on 4 June. He also wrote to his parents over two days to let them know how he was getting on. This was his final letter home. It began with a description of the Turkish artillery:

'Darling mother, they call this a rest-while so it is – but we're all getting stiff necks looking up at the shrapnel that the dear old Turks send over here in the solid belief that it hits us. It might if sometimes we didn't step to one side to let it go past. The official figures show that nearly 300 shells a day are fired over – when I tell you that the total casualties in the past three weeks have been 4 men and 11 mules in the rest camp – you can see why it is that we take very little notice of it all.'

Krithia

The following day, 2 June, Oliver continued the letter and wrote of the coming offensive on Krithia and the peak of Achi Baba. He obviously felt excited about what lay ahead:

'We are doing great things today. The artillery has stopped the enemy's artillery entirely and we have just received orders to move into the reserve trenches tonight, because the general has ordered that Achi Baba Hill has to be taken during the next two days. When that is done, then the worst part of the job is nearly over, and besides the men will get cheered up a great deal to get a change of scenery as they call it. We, in the reserve, will be largely out of danger and there is no reason why we shouldn't be, because the Regiment has constantly done their share'.

Oliver's final letter ended with a couple of further references. The first to his brother, William Wedgwood Benn, himself now in Egypt:

'I know God will take care of me and bring me home again – so don't worry a bit. Will, I have definitely found out, is in Cairo, about 1000 miles from here, doing police duty on the Suez, or that is to say, that is where his battalion is.'

He ended by outlining his plan for the rest of the day, 2 June. He was to return to the trenches with the Essex Regiment that night. This was the last communication the family ever had with Oliver:

'Have some lunch now – and then pack up my valise and sleeping bag and send it back to the base and then [I will get] my 'pack' for about 18 days in the trenches and then go to sleep until its dark, when we shall advance. Goodbye mother darling. Please don't worry and tell father it's so nice to be out here learning things and making a name, in addition to making a most interesting diary that one day will be read. All my best love darling to you, father and Rene [Oliver's Sister]. Your very happy boy, Nol''

The Battle of 4 June

The general plan for the attack did not greatly differ from the previous attempts on the Turkish positions – 30,000 men to be used initially with 20,000 in the first assault. Intelligence was uncertain on the number of Turkish forces facing the British and French, but it was estimated at between 25,000 and 28,000. General Hamilton was aware that an attack of limited scope by British forces was all that could realistically be achieved; hence he declared that the attack would make no attempt to capture the peak of Achi Baba. Instead, he limited the final objective to about 800 yards beyond the existing Turkish front line. The orders were issued to the units of 29th Division on 2 June, and the attack was set for two days later, at 12 noon. 29th Division would attack along Fir Tree Spur. They would have the 29th Indian Brigade to their left, atop Gully Spur, and the recently arrived 42nd Division to their right. The 29th Division would be led by four battalions in the front-line trenches; left to right: the Worcestershire Regiment, King's Own Scottish Borders, Royal Fusiliers and the Hampshire Regiment. Oliver's battalion, the 1st Essex, would wait, ready to be sent wherever there might be a gap, as instructed by Brigade HQ.

The launching of the attack on Krithia was preceded by a relatively short bombardment by the British and French artillery. It began at 8.00am when Turkish strong points were pin-pointed and then at 11.00am a more widespread artillery bombardment began. At 11.20am the bombardment ceased for ten minutes, when soldiers in the front trenches showed their bayonets over the trench parapets, cheered loudly and sang as means of enticing Turkish defenders to man their firing line. The Royal Artillery then continued its bombardment of the Turkish lines in an effort to kill as many exposed Turks as possible.

At 12 noon, the infantry attack was launched, and first waves surged forward. On Oliver's front, the 88th Brigade made some progress, but their chances were limited by the ineffectual artillery bombardment in their sector. However, shortly after 2pm the KOSBs and the Royal Fusiliers had achieved their first objectives, albeit 'in the face of strong opposition'. Casualties were reported to Brigade HQ as 'heavy'. Perhaps this had been predicted, because as soon as the attack was launched, Oliver and the 1st Essex were moved up to the original front-line trench to be on-hand to join the attack when required. Arthur Behrend, also attached to the 1st Essex and who wrote of his Gallipoli memories in his book *Make Me a Soldier*, detailed what the Essex men saw on their arrival in the old front line; at this stage a very confused place:

'At last we reached the [original] firing line. It was packed with men. The Jocks (fifth Royal Scots) were acting as battle police; they were responsible for the security of the old firing line in the event of an enemy counter-attack, and it was also their duty to prevent men returning from the front without good cause.../... Men of different regiments were now hopelessly mixed, and messages passed continuously in both directions.../...Everyone was in an impressionable mood, and the wildest reports of success and failure surged to and fro. Yet overall it was clear, even to soldiers as inexperienced in battle as ourselves, that the big advance had failed.' (p.144).

Each Turkish trench in the sector was given a number when marked on British trench maps. To understand Oliver's subsequent movements, it is important to understand the structure of the Turkish trenches. At zero hour, on 4 June, the Turkish trenches were labelled from front to back, H9 (Turkish front line), H10, H11 and H12. Each trench was about 150 yards apart and, for the most part, ran parallel to each other across Fir Tree Spur. The British had hoped to reach H12 by mid-afternoon, thus claiming four lines of enemy trenches. Second-Lieutenant Reeves of the 1/KOSB recalled his battalion's movements that morning:

'My men were splendid – nothing stopped them – we dashed to the 1st Turkish trench (H9) and all the enemy were standing there with white flags, their hands up. We dashed on the next trench (H10), the same thing happened there – all told about 56 prisoners. I collected some men, Worcesters and KOSB mixed by this time, and we rushed on to H11. All this time shrapnel whizzing all around and men falling. It was too awful... Our men in the meantime had got to H11, the third trench and a stiff bayonet fight went on – we eventually got possession of it and after that I saw them press on to the next one.'

Whilst this was happening, Oliver and the men of the 1st Essex continued to wait in the old front line. Finally, at 3.05pm, orders were received for the battalion to reinforce those who had gone over the top before them. Y Coy was given the task of reinforcing the King's Own Scottish Borders in front of them with two machine guns, and at 4.10pm Oliver's X Coy were ordered to support the Royal Fusiliers on their right. He and the rest of X Coy climbed 'over the top' for the first time into what had been no-man's land that morning. His company pushed forward, although as recorded in the battalion diary, 'this company came under heavy shrapnel fire and suffered considerably'. The official history of the 1st Bn. Essex Regiment explains what happened that afternoon, as the Essex men advanced into battle:

'After crossing the crest of the hill there was an open space across which we had to double in single file. The shrapnel directed against the armoured cars had ignited the scrub in several places. We gradually made our way up through the trenches, but there was great congestion and some terrible sights where the enemy's shellfire had done its work. Eventually we were held up for some time in a trench behind the main firing line.'

It is likely that the trench occupied by Oliver and his men would have been H11. The advance by the 88th Brigade had generally been successful, but not without its losses. This picture was repeated across much of the remaining front. General Hamilton, incorrectly believing his men had reached the slopes of Achi Baba, wrote that afternoon of the assault:

'[Our men were] on to the lower slopes of Achi Baba [and] had nothing between them and its summit but the clear, unentrenched hillside. They lay there—the line of our brave lads, plainly visible to a pair of good glasses—there they actually lay! We wanted, so it seemed, a reserve to advance in their support and carry them right up to the top. We said—and yet could hardly believe our own words—"We are through!"'

Casualties that day for the 1st Essex were: 2 officers killed and 2 wounded. Of other ranks, the battalion lost: 9 men killed and a further 36 wounded and 9 missing. Across the entire front however, the casualty returns for 4 June were much worse: 6,500 casualties in total, of which 4,500 were British. In the trenches, the Brigade orders for the 1st Essex (sent at 6.00pm that evening) were to 'consolidate our ground gained and prepare against counter attack'. Oliver would have spent the night, after his first day in open battle, with his men of the 1st Essex sandwiched in the line between the King's Own Scottish Borders and Royal Fusiliers, probably in trench H11.

Remarkably, the following day, 5 June, remained generally quiet in Oliver's sector. The War Diary of the 1st Essex records that the day was spent, 'strengthening positions and improving communications'. Even so, it is clear that the Turks attempted some form of retaliation that morning. Reports were received of a Turkish counter-attack at 7.10am, which the 1st Essex and neighbouring battalions quickly repulsed. Although no records survive, Oliver would probably have spent most of the day directing his men to reinforce their position and in communicating observations made of Turkish positions ahead.

The Turkish Counter-Attack on 6 June

As expected, at 3.30am the following morning – 6 June – the Turks advanced along the whole of the 88th Brigade's front. There are various references to the Turkish counter-attack in unit diaries, accounts and letters of June 1915. The *Official History of the War* relates:

'The Turks carried out a series of ineffective counter-attacks throughout the 5th June, and on the morning of the 6th, more reinforcements having reached them, they launched a determined attack on the new British line... on the front of the 88th Brigade the whole of the awkward salient in H12 was recaptured.'

The Turks surged forward that morning, with the intention of recapturing their lost trenches of two days earlier. Parts of the most exposed British forward trench, H12, were recaptured. However, other parts of the front line remained in British hands. Somewhere astride Oliver's position an act of heroism occurred that morning resulting in the award of a VC. The 29th Division's history explains what happened:

'6th June 1915... There was an anxious moment during a vigorous counter-attack by the Turks when it looked as if they had broken through at a particularly vulnerable point on our right at the junction of two battalions each commanded by a second lieutenant. One of these officers, Second Lieutenant R G Moor [sic] of 2nd Hants, then in command of his battalion, seeing the disorderly retirement in the sector of the battalion to his left, which for want of officers to control them, and realising the danger to his own battalion, with great presence of mind, and regardless of danger, rushed across the open, exposed to fire for 400 yards, and succeeded in heading the mob. He had to use severe measures to bring them

to their senses, even shooting the leaders of the panic. He then collected the troops in a hollow, organised them, and led them to the counter-attack.'

Second Lieutenant George Moore, aged just 18, was subsequently decorated with the VC and went on to win the Military Cross and Bar in France and Belgium. He died of Spanish influenza in 1918, just 8 days before the Armistice.

But what of Oliver that morning? The clearest record of that morning's events is given in the diary of Lieutenant-Colonel Price, then commanding 1st Essex. He wrote (after the day's battle) that, during the early morning, the Turks had attacked and '*bombed two companies out of the British front line trenches [H12] ... Capt. Benn was on the right & this subsequently proved the most dangerous flank as a trench called H.13, recaptured by the Turks, was very strongly held and only 400 yards off*'. It seems that, as Oliver and his X Coy moved up, they were attacked by Turkish troops from both the front (in trench H.13), sides and behind. Oliver, positioned somewhere within this melee, began to order his men to retreat. Speculatively, perhaps Oliver let his men go first? Regardless, a retreat began and Oliver was hit, by shrapnel or bullet. The Essex men around him, knowing now that the situation was lost and facing superior Turkish numbers, continued the retreat. Oliver, at this point either wounded or dead, was left behind.

Oliver was one of the 6 officers who were killed or missing that day. Of the other ranks, it had been a very bad day. 16 were dead, 31 wounded and a further 59 missing. He had only been with the 1st Essex for nine days, of which two were spent resting and two in reserve. In the five days that he saw action with the regiment, he repulsed one Turkish attack, led his men into attack and then attempted to retreat from an exposed position. However, being killed so quickly was not extraordinary, bearing in mind the dangers associated with fighting at Hells. It was reported in the battalion diary that by the end of 6 June, of the 25 1st Essex officers that left England at the start of the campaign, only four remained on roll. All others were dead, missing or wounded. The following day, the battalion was relieved in the front line by the Royal Fusiliers.

The Search

Despite these events, questions still remain as to what exactly happened to Oliver that morning and, more importantly, why, like so many others, was he never found. There are clues which emerged to tell us more about his death. In the weeks following his disappearance, a number of regimental eye-witness accounts of the Turkish attack on 6 June were written which are filed in Oliver's service record. Unfortunately, they provide a somewhat contradictory account of exactly how he died. The first account was given by 10216 Private Merrick who served in the 1st Essex, X Coy. Pte. Merrick was himself injured in the attack and was interviewed in No.19 General Hospital, on Imbros. His report on Oliver's disappearance, transcribed by someone else, stated:

'During the fighting, the informant saw Capt. Benn, accompanied by his 'runner', Pte.

Clarke, go into a Communication Trench & afterwards in the 'melee' saw him lying apparently dead or unconscious in one of the other trenches. Sgt. White told the informant, on the following day, that Capt. Benn had been shot through the head'.

The following February, a further and quite remarkable eye-witness account of the day emerged. The account was given by a Corporal Noakes, a stretcher-bearer with W Coy, 1st Essex, and seems to contradict the previous version of Pte. Merrick. It suggested that Oliver had been initially wounded on 6 June, and had been treated in the field by Cpl. Noakes himself. The account states:

'Capt. Benn was very badly wounded in the thigh by a bomb in the [Turkish] charge of June 6. Capt. Benn was wounded at about 6 a.m. in a trench known as H12. Cpl. Noake's bandaged Capt. Benn's wound and then had to leave him with his servant Pte. Clark (sic), 1 Essex, W Coy. (Clark (sic) has since been reported killed)... Capt. Benn may be a prisoner'.

Back in London, the first communication concerning Oliver's disappearance to his family came via a telegram sent to Oliver's father, Sir John Benn, forwarded by the War Office. As with most telegrams to families of missing men, it indicated that Oliver could be a prisoner. William Wedgwood Benn, Oliver's older brother, also received a telegram confirming his younger brother's disappearance, while stationed in Egypt with the 1/1st City of London Yeomanry, just two months before he too set out for the Gallipoli peninsula (where he took part in the Yeomanry assault at Suvla on 21 August).

In London, Oliver's family spent the next few months desperately searching for news of their missing son. As with all missing at Gallipoli, the War Office made enquiries about the fate of missing soldiers through the American Embassy in Constantinople. Oliver's mother Elizabeth took on the role of collecting and coordinating as much information as she could gather about his final days. On 23 June, six days after hearing that he was missing, Elizabeth wrote to William in Egypt:

'We have no news yet, of course, this early, but I had an official letter saying that 'Lord Robert Cecil' was doing all he could to find out from the American Ambassador in Constantinople [in case] he was a prisoner – yesterday's paper mentioned that several other men, who were with [Oliver] are missing also; so it looks as if they are all together. Oliver's letter, written June 2nd, said that they were starting that night to advance on trenches in front of Achi Baba and that he had been called to command the Company as the captain was wounded. He was very happy, but would be doing very hard work. Although difficult, we just wait patiently and hope that the boy is safe and well.'

The reference to 'yesterday's paper' is interesting, as the family kept a newspaper cutting from *The Times*, indicating news had been received of 65 British prisoners being held by the Turkish army in Constantinople. She clearly hoped that one of these men was her son. Five days later William wrote in reply to his mother. Although William's own book on the First World War, *In the Sideshows*, made only fleeting reference to his

younger brother, he told his mother that he had been enquiring on her behalf. On 28 June he wrote:

'If Nol is alive he is being well treated, that I hope I have shown by sending the letter from Captain Churchill [Winston Churchill's brother]. If the dear old chap fell then worrying can do no good. We can only be proud of him. Whatever the truth is... I want you just to feel proud of him and think how he has advanced his life and done you credit.'

In late July, a long and welcome letter arrived in London from Oliver's friend, Lt

George Cregan RAMC, with whom he had shared conversations on W Beach. He began by describing how they had met, on the beach, in late May:

'I felt I wanted to write to you and say something about dear Oliver. The man, he arrived here, [and] we met quite accidentally and it was, I can assure you, a most joyful meeting. To see a well known face with happy past memories coming along is so cheerful to both, when all around here is being so constantly reminded that the time of a great many is well limited. Oliver and I had nice chats together and talked about home...'

Cregan described Oliver's movements during late May and early June:

'...we had tea together in my dug-out and talked under a cliff, which we all do here and which is recommended by the Head Quarters (sic). I saw him again the next day and he was his same old self, characteristically optimistic [and] very interested in his work and never wincing in regard to his duty, which he showed that he came out to do. He realised that there was danger but was always bright and jovial and said that whatever was to come, he was prepared to go ahead.'

Cregan sympathised with Elizabeth and John and their lack of news from their missing son. He also explained the circumstances in which Oliver had been lost:

'...he will, I suppose, be reported 'missing', which leaves so much for thought to his dear ones. Oliver was missing in a night attack which was taking place before Achi Baba in the operations which commenced with the June 4th advance... They were near the town of Krithia which is now a mess.../... I was very very sad when I went to the regiment, when they came out again from the trenches and found our steadfast, good old boy, was missing. I met the Essex quartermaster yesterday and it was then that I decided to write [to] you.'

Cregan ended his letter to the family with a reassuring note. Oliver had done his duty and his family must remember that. Even so, there was a sad tone to Cregan's letter, probably written from the same place that he had talked with Oliver just a few days earlier:

'I wish I could say something to comfort you in your sadness and anxiety, but I hope you will be content in the thought that, whatever has happened, Oliver was faithful and good and a brave man.'

The family's search for Oliver continued uninterrupted into 1916. They also began to

use contacts in political circles to aid the search. On 11 March 1916, a letter was written by John Gilbert MP, on behalf of William Wedgwood Benn. At that time William had returned from Gallipoli and was now serving in the Royal Naval Air Service aboard the seaplane carrier, *Ben-My-Chree*. A handwritten letter, addressed directly to Lord Robert Cecil, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, asked:

‘...please have the list searched and tell me if Capt. Oliver Benn, missing since June 6th/15 at Achi Baba, is amongst the names you have. He is Wedgwood Benn’s brother and family are most anxious to find any trace of him, so I shall be much obliged if you will do this for me’.

The reply from the Foreign Office, dated a week later on 20 March 1916, reiterated what the Benn family already knew, ‘The name of Capt. O W Benn has not appeared on any list of prisoners received from Turkey’.

The family felt Oliver’s loss grievously, especially his father and mother. Lady Elizabeth Benn never gave up hope of either finding him alive or piecing together more of what had happened. In Oliver’s father’s book, *John Benn and the Progressive Movement*, it is mentioned that Lady Elizabeth Benn:

‘Spent months visiting the hospitals in the hope of finding someone who might tell her something of his fate. From one man she heard that her son’s last word as he went over had been: “Mind there is no going back”. Other said they had seen him wounded’.

Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Oliver’s nephew, recalls that Elizabeth continued to write to Oliver each day, as she had done before he disappeared. She hoped that if he were a prisoner, he would still be able to receive letters from her. Anthony remembers how, when the war ended, all the letters she wrote were returned to her in London – every one unopened.

In time the family had to accept the inevitable. In many ways Oliver, like so many thousands of other young men of the First World War, died a hero. His letters did justice to the pride he felt as an officer in the army. He was happy to take his chance to see action and to do his bit in battle. He had undergone military training since joining the Territorial Army, almost exactly four years earlier, and would have been eager to put that training into practice. Sadly, his time in the front line was very short and his military potential was never properly realised. It is not known when the family accepted that their son and brother was dead, but perhaps they sought solace in the knowledge that Oliver had ‘done his duty’.

Oliver Williams Benn is commemorated on the Helles Memorial.

Editor’s Note: The author of the article, James Benn, is the great, great nephew of Oliver Williams Benn. James would like to hear from any members who can add to the story, or have any questions on the article. He can be contacted by e-mail at james.benn@hotmail.com

A JERSEY CASUALTY

I am grateful to Ned Malet de Carteret who sent me the following information about a Gallipoli casualty which appears on the website *The Channel Islands and the Great War*. This includes the following report which appeared in *The Jersey Evening Post* of Tuesday 22 June 1915

Roll of Honour. Death of Lieutenant Colonel G Hingston. We regret to announce the death of another gallant officer, Lieutenant Colonel George Bennett Hingston, third son of the late Richard Hingston and Mrs Hingston of 2 Upper Kings Cliff, who died on 16 June at Alexandria from wounds received in the Dardanelles. This distinguished officer was very well known in this Island and scores of his friends will regret to hear that his promising career has been brought to a close. He was educated at Highlands and later entered His Majesty's service. After much useful work at various stations he went through the Tochi campaign and had a very narrow escape, his horse being killed under him, whilst he was badly wounded. He went out to the present campaign in the East in command of the 29th Division of the Royal Engineers and whilst superintending the work of this important section during the fighting he received the injuries which caused his death. To his mother and other members of the family we beg to tender our sincere condolences in their bereavement

Lt. Colonel Hingston, is buried in the Alexandria Chatby War Cemetery. He was the elder brother of Major Edward Hingston, 54th Field Company, Royal Engineers who was killed in action on 28 March 1915, aged 44. He is buried in Estaires Communal Cemetery and Extension, France. Major Hingston was the husband of Mrs A Hingston of Poolmerick, Cobham, Kent.

Both men are commemorated on a family memorial in St Mark's Church, Jersey. The brass memorial tablet appears to have suffered from enthusiastic polishing over the past 90 years and does not photograph well. It reads:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
LIEUT. COL. GEORGE BENNETT HINGSTON
COMMANDING ROYAL ENGINEER, 29th DIVISION
DIED JUNE 16 1915 AT ALEXANDRIA
FROM WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION
JUNE 6th IN GALLIPOLI. AGED 47
ALSO OF
EDWARD KINGSTON
MAJOR, 54th FIELD COMPANY ROYAL ENGINEERS
KILLED IN ACTION IN FLANDERS
28 MARCH 1915 AGED 44

INFORMATION PLEASE

Do you have a question about some aspect of the Gallipoli campaign? Something you need to know about a regiment, a ship perhaps, or an individual, but have so far failed to find the answer. If so, there may be someone among the membership who could help? So please do not hesitate to send in your questions, long or short, and share your enquiry with the membership. Hopefully, someone will provide the answer or, if not the answer, another avenue or two to be explored.

‘FIGHTING MAC’ IN MONTREAL

Philip E. L. Smith

Introduction

Readers of Derek Hunt’s article on Lt. Col. Charles Melville Macnaghten, AIF, published in the Winter 2008 issue of *The Gallipolian* (No. 118), may be interested to know more about the final years of his life after he emigrated to Canada.



Lt Col. C M Macnaghten CMG

The story of his reluctant transfer to Australia after Gallipoli and Egypt, his desertion from his post at the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1916, his re-enlistment as a private soldier under a false name, and his subsequent active service in France in 1917 is well known¹. After being recognized in France while an acting sergeant he was re-commissioned under his true name, but as a second lieutenant. On 10 October 1917 he

was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force as permanently unfit for service and awarded a temporary disability pension. Later, wearing the insignia of his earlier rank as a battalion commander, he was invested at Buckingham Palace a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, a decoration awarded in 1916 for his conduct at Gallipoli².

His life immediately after the war is not easy to document. Following his discharge he chose to remain in the United Kingdom and never returned to Australia or resumed his former profession of solicitor. He had married Annetta Thirza Hopcroft in Australia in 1904, and in 1918 they lived at 6991-2 Warwick Square, London³. According to one source he worked for the Ministry of Labour from 1919 as a Deputy Assistant Secretary, involved in the rehabilitation of disabled servicemen⁴. He was present at the funeral of his father Sir Melville Macnaghten in London in 1921⁵. Just why he chose to move to Canada is uncertain, but the motives may have included boredom, disenchantment with life in post-war Britain and a desire to start afresh in new surroundings. He was far from unique. Many British veterans of all classes, too restless to settle back into civilian life or facing unemployment at home, emigrated to Canada in those years. The Empire Settlement Act passed by the British Parliament in 1922 offered financial aid to immigrants from the U K, including discharged soldiers and their families, in moving to Canada and elsewhere. Some took up farming, not always successfully, while others opted for work in towns and cities.

He sailed from Liverpool on 8 December 1922 on the Canadian Pacific liner *Montclare*. He travelled alone in Cabin Class. On the 'Declaration of Passenger to Canada' form he had filled out for the booking agent in London he gave his marital status as single⁶. Presumably his marriage had broken down earlier and this may have contributed to his decision to emigrate. There were no children. He listed his mother, Lady Macnaghten of Queen Anne's Mansions, London SW, as his nearest relative. He gave his occupation as Lieutenant-Colonel, retired. It was his first visit to Canada and he intended to remain there permanently, he said. He affirmed that his only physical defect was a slight lameness and that he was not mentally defective or tubercular. He stated that he had paid for his own passage, and declared the amount of money in his possession on entry to Canada would be \$250.00 (the equivalent of about £56 in 1922 prices). There was no mention of a passport, and he had obtained a Landing Permit before sailing. His final destination was shown as Montreal.

Because it was winter and the St. Lawrence river was frozen (ice-breakers had not yet made it a year-round shipping route), vessels normally heading to Montreal were diverted to the east coast ports of Halifax, Nova Scotia and Saint John, New Brunswick. From there passengers were taken by train to their destinations across Canada or to the United States. The *Montclare* docked in Saint John on 16 December after an uneventful crossing. He probably took the boat train immediately after the landing formalities, passed through the state of Maine in the United States into the province of Quebec, and reached Montreal the next day. The weather there was fine and cold according to the newspapers.

Life in Montreal

He already had a job lined up before leaving Britain. In his Declaration he stated that he would take up a position in Montreal with a W Ormiston Roy who had an office on St. James Street in the business district. Roy, a Scot, was the general superintendent of Mount Royal Cemetery, the large English Protestant cemetery atop Mount Royal overlooking the city. He spent his entire career in this administrative post and was sometimes described as a landscape architect⁷. We have no information on how Macnaghten obtained the position or the nature of his duties. No records of his employment now exist in the cemetery's archives. Probably it was office work, and one possibility is that it was in part related to post-war arrangements for the burial of local veterans in the cemetery on behalf of the Imperial War Graves Commission. How long he remained with the non-profit Mount Royal Cemetery Company and his reasons for leaving are also unclear. Less than two years later he had changed jobs.

In September 1924 he was taken on by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) company as a clerk in the disbursements section of the accounting department at the Head Office in Montreal – see photograph on page 34. The CPR was an enormous organisation, by far the biggest corporation in Canada, operating not only a transcontinental railway and hotels in Canada but also passenger ships across the Atlantic and Pacific and, some years later, an international airline. The Head Office building in the downtown area employed many hundreds of people, from top executives to those performing routine administrative and clerical work. Unfortunately the company's records of Macnaghten's service are sparse and the microfilmed pages are now nearly illegible⁸. His exact duties cannot be determined, no evaluations of his work by his superiors are available, and salary and promotions are not recorded. There is no indication he became a qualified professional accountant. He may have been content in this work, for which he was obviously over-qualified, since he remained there for the next five and a half years. It was hardly stimulating or challenging, but it offered a degree of stability and routine that he apparently valued. It is not known if during those years he travelled to other parts of Canada, visited the United States, or ever returned to England. As a railway employee he would have been entitled to reduced rates for travel on its lines.

Only one letter written from Montreal can now be traced. It was a three-page note to General Lord Birdwood, the commander of Anzac troops at Gallipoli, and was dated Anzac Day 1924. Addressing him as 'My dear General', he began: *'It is only right and fitting that I should write to you today, of all days in the year. Nine years ago today, Sir, you were making history, and each of us was trying to help you in our own small and paltry way'*. He apologized for not replying sooner to a letter dated 23 January and explained that in that month while walking to his office he slipped on an icy street and fractured his right wrist. He complained that the broken bones had been badly set by the doctor and he found it hard to write⁹. Whether the office mentioned was Roy's is not clear. He said nothing more about his life in Montreal. At the time Birdwood was in India in command of the Northern Army. He had been instrumental in restoring Macnaghten's commission in 1917. Macnaghten asked him for a copy of a photographic portrait

recently taken. The two men seem to have been on friendly terms although Macnaghten is not mentioned in Birdwood's autobiography¹⁰.

Nor can much be learned about his personal life and activities in Montreal. While not a recluse, he appears to have led a very private life, leaving virtually no public traces of his presence in the city. He was never listed in Lovell's annual *City Directory*, suggesting either that he was a lodger rather than a tenant or owner of a flat or house, or, for a time, lived in suburbs outside the city limits. No contemporary photograph of him can be found. A few scraps of information come from obituaries in Canadian newspapers. Several mentioned his interest in sports including cricket, football and tennis, and one stated that he acted for many years as umpire of the McGill University cricket club. No other interests or tastes are cited, however, nor are there references to other organisations or associations including the Royal Canadian Legion. No Canadian clubs are cited in his *Who's Who* entries¹¹. He may, however, have belonged at some point to the United Services Club of Montreal which he gave as his mailing address in the 1924 letter to Birdwood.

Nothing can be said about his social life such as friendships or more intimate relationships, his interactions with his fellow workers, or whether he sought the company of expatriates like himself. We have no idea if he spoke French or mingled socially with the French-speaking majority in the city; perhaps not to any important extent, since in those days unofficial relations between the two linguistic groups were usually characterised by a kind of polite mutual avoidance. In the 1920s Montreal was the largest and most prosperous city in Canada, with a population of about 800,000. It was also a wide-open city with an exuberant night life, a reputation for fashion and food, and an underworld fuelled in part by Prohibition in the United States. What Macnaghten thought of this hedonistic ambience is unknown to us. And how well did he adapt to the physical climate? Montreal winters are moderate compared to those in some other parts of Canada – not very different in fact from Boston or New York – but they may have seemed long and harsh to someone who had spent most of his life in India, Britain and Australia. He did have one painful fall on an icy sidewalk. One wonders if his love of sports extended to skiing, skating, ice hockey, snow-shoeing, tobogganing, curling and other winter activities popular in Montreal.

Little can be related about his contacts with family and friends in Britain and Australia. He may not have seen his mother and siblings again after his departure in 1922. In his letter to Birdwood he mentioned having recently had a long letter from their friend Charles Buckley, presumably an army comrade. He also wished he could be in London that summer for the Wembley Exhibition and other attractions. Like his father he remained a loyal son of Eton. His brief obituary in the College paper stated that '*he was a most devoted Etonian and throughout his adventurous career was a regular subscriber to the Chronicle*'¹².

The Final Year

He left the employ of the Canadian Pacific Railway in April 1930. The surviving records do not reveal if he was let go in an economy move at the start of the Depression, if his health had deteriorated, or if he had simply chosen early retirement. His state of health is not described and his pension, if there was one, could not have been substantial after less than six years on the payroll. As far as is known he did not move to another job. There is no clue to his financial situation at the time. Earlier he may have inherited something from his father, perhaps enough to allow him to leave the Civil Service and emigrate, and later from his mother who died in 1929. Nothing suggests he was a classic remittance man with regular support from his family after emigrating.

He died after a brief illness on 4 February 1931 in his rooms at 4596 Coolbrooke Avenue, a street probably located in the suburb of Dorval near the present Pierre Trudeau international airport. This was at the time a placid country village on the river, served by the railway for which he had worked. We do not know if he died alone or was being nursed. He was in his fifty-second year and had spent just over eight years in Canada. His funeral was held on 6 February at St. Matthias' Anglican Church in Westmount, a municipal enclave within Montreal. It is not certain that he was a parishioner there or elsewhere; in the Passenger Declaration of 1922 he gave his religion as Presbyterian. The rector who officiated at the service, the Rev. Gilbert Oliver, MC, had served in the British army in France and the two men may have known each other personally.

One newspaper reported that '*...many friends and relatives*' were present in the church, but unfortunately no names were given. It was a fair, cold day with snow covering the ground. The body was transported to the Mount Royal Cemetery and cremated on 16 February 1931¹³. The delay may have been caused by the need to consult his family in Britain. The only family member mentioned in the cemetery record was his father. The cause of death was given as '*pleurisy and pneumonia of right lung – wounded in war*'. The record does not state how his ashes were disposed of; no grave marker exists in the cemetery and none can be found elsewhere such as in the veterans' Field of Honour. They may have been scattered locally by friends. Another possibility is that they were returned to England to his relatives which included a brother and two sisters¹⁴. His parents were buried in the churchyard of the Sussex village of Ovingdean, now part of Brighton and Hove, where his paternal grandfather had lived; his ashes may have been placed there with them. He left no will, at least not in Quebec, and we know nothing about the value and disposal of his estate and belongings including his private papers, pictures and decorations. They too may have been returned to his family.

An Evaluation

It has been suggested recently that after Gallipoli Macnaghten suffered from emotional damage and some form of psychological illness, perhaps post-traumatic stress disorder or shell shock, the consequence of a combination of sustained active service, enormous

mental stress, physical injuries and, possibly, survivor's guilt. This would have been aggravated by his later experiences in France where he was again wounded and also suffered from recurrent malaria. He confided to a friend in a letter that his nerves were gone, he slept little and was having terrible dreams¹⁵. His official service record confirms his own account of his condition. A medical board evaluation in September 1917 shortly before his discharge described him as suffering from complete nervous breakdown, sleeplessness, bad dreams, loss of memory, and irritability. The ground for his release was, in the terminology of the day, neurasthenia¹⁶. It seems likely that he never fully recovered. His temperament, according to one Australian writer who knew him before the war, had always been highly-strung and sensitive¹⁷. While it is risky to offer interpretations so long after the event, the anonymity and self-effacement of his life in Montreal can perhaps be better understood in the light of both his natural temperament and his wartime experiences.

Yet it would be wrong to suppose that he looked back on those experiences with undiluted revulsion or became a committed pacifist or anti-war advocate. As late as 1924 he was expressing nostalgia for his days on Gallipoli. In the letter to Birdwood, after reminiscing about the difficult landing at Anzac Cove and the fighting at Lone Pine, he wrote: *'But those were great times, and much as I hated it all – the heat and the flies and the dirt etc., it was a man's life and I sometimes wish I was back there with all those great hearted fellows. Civil life and all its petty little squabbles and bickerings seems so paltry and squalid'*. Clearly he was a man who enjoyed the camaraderie of military life and the excitement of combat. Perhaps the last sentence offers a clue to his decision to emigrate after the war.

In spite of the obscurity of his final decade his passing did not go unnoticed in Canada. Besides brief death notices there were fairly detailed obituaries, perhaps written or inspired by acquaintances, in at least four daily newspapers¹⁸. Some contained factual errors, reflecting probably the difficulty of obtaining accurate details about his life, but all paid tribute to his exceptional war service and his bravery. One (the *Globe*) vividly contrasted the days of glory of *'Fighting Mac, darling of fortune'* and his last inconspicuous years. The anonymous writer, perhaps a Montrealer, inserted a note of pathos. *'Now he is dead, and a strange people will have only a fleeting memory of a middle-aged man, broken by ill-health, who, for a while, was employed here'*.

Dr. Philip E. L. Smith is a retired professor of Middle Eastern archaeology living in Montreal. He is the author of three previous articles in *The Gallipolian*: 'John Gallishaw and Gallipoli', No. 118, Winter 2008, 'Gallishaw after Gallipoli', No. 119, Spring 2009, and 'A Gallipoli Stamp from Newfoundland', No.120, Autumn 2009.

NOTES

1. C. D. Coulthard-Clark, 'Macnaghten, Charles Melville (1879-1931)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 10 (Melbourne University Press, 1986), pp. 344-45.
2. 'Fighting Mac', *The Advertiser*, Adelaide, S. A., 21 Feb. 1919, p. 9. This seems based on an earlier article in the London *Daily Mail* (date unknown).

3. Electoral Registers, 1847-1965, City of Westminster. London, Eng.: London Metropolitan Archives, Guildhall.
4. Darryl Kelly, 'Lt Col Charles Macnaghten, CMG. The Duntroon Deserter' in *Just Soldiers* (ADDC, Aspley, Queensland, 2004), p. 147. Kelly erroneously states that Macnaghten worked for the Ministry until 1927 and emigrated to Canada in 1928.
5. *The Times*, 19 May 1921, p. 13.
6. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ocean Arrivals (Form 30A, Individual Manifests), 1919-1924. Rolls T-14939, T-15248.
7. Brian Young, *Respectable Burial: Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery* (McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 2003).
8. Letter to author 16 Oct. 2009 from Pension Services, Head Office, Canadian Pacific, Calgary, Alberta.
9. Australian War Memorial, AWM38 488667, Records of C. E. Bean 1924-1947, letter of C. M. Macnaghten to General Birdwood, 1924.
10. William Riddell Birdwood, Baron, *Khaki and Gown, an Autobiography* (London & Melbourne, Ward, Lock, 1941).]
11. Col. Charles Melville Macnaghten, *Who Was Who*, 1929-1940, vol. III, p. 882 (Adam & C. Black, London, 1941).
12. Eton College *Chronicle* 12 March 1931.
13. Information from Mount Royal Cemetery Records Office to author, 2009, 2012. Coincidentally, one of the most enthusiastic promoters of the crematorium, the first in Quebec, years earlier was W. Ormiston Roy, his first employer in Montreal. Possibly Roy attended the ceremony.
14. His younger sister Christabel (1890-1974) had in 1910 married the future Lord Aberconway of the shipbuilding family. In her chatty memoirs written late in life her brother's war service is briefly mentioned, but not his post-war life or his death; she admitted she was not close to her two brothers and had seen little of Charles when growing up because of the difference in their ages. Christabel Aberconway, *A Wiser Woman? A Book of Memoirs* (London, Hutchinson, 1966).
15. G. M. Galvin, 'Shellshock: Where military medicine and military discipline collided'. A presentation to the Military History Society of Western Australia, 20 Feb. 2007. See <http://www.vcfact.org.au/wp-filez/Shellshock.doc>
16. National Archives of Australia, B2455, WW1 Service Records, Lt. Col. C. M. Macnaghten 1914-1920.
17. A. J. O. B., An appreciation. Charles Melville Macnaghten. *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 Feb. 1931, p. 10.
18. The *Montreal Gazette* 6 Feb., p. 10; the *Montreal Herald* 7 Feb., p. 1; the *Montreal Star* 5 Feb., p. 42, and an unusually long one titled 'Hero of Gallipoli dies in obscurity' in the *Toronto Globe* 7 Feb., p. 3. Unfortunately none provided portraits.

Acknowledgments. For their help I thank the following persons and institutions: Mount Royal Cemetery Company Records Office, Montreal; Human Resources and Industrial Relations, Head Office, Canadian Pacific, Calgary, Alberta; the late Professor Mary MacKinnon, McGill University, Montreal; Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Montreal; David Hannaford, Barrie, Ontario; the National Archives of Australia, Canberra; the National Library of Australia, Canberra; the Australian War Memorial, Canberra; Tony Cunneen, Beecroft, Sydney, NSW; Penny Hatfield, Archivist, Eton College, Windsor. John Kalbfleisch, journalist, was helpful with suggestions and found Macnaghten's life a worthy topic for his column on local history in the *Montreal Gazette* 7 February 2010.



The Gallipoli Association's Autumn Lunch at the Naval Club [Page 3]



The Gallipoli Association's Autumn Lunch at the Naval Club [Page 3]



General, The Lord Dannatt, GCB, CBE, MC, DL., speaking at the Autumn Lunch
[Page 3]



The Gallipoli Association Plot at the Field of Remembrance [Page 3] Photograph – Clive Summerson



Close-up of part of The Gallipoli Association Plot at Field of Remembrance
[Page 3] – Photograph Clive Summerson



HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visits The Gallipoli Association Plot where he is met by the Chairman [Page 3] – Photograph Frances Speakman



Some of the Gallipoli Association contingent in Whitehall prior to the Remembrance Day Parade [Pages 3–4] Photograph David Mason



Wreaths laid at the Cenotaph during the Remembrance Day Parade [Pages 3–4] Photograph David Mason



The Gallipoli Association wreath (lower right) laid at the Cenotaph [Pages 3–4]
Photograph David Mason



One of the Krupp guns recently excavated at Kumkale [Page 7]
Photograph Guven Pinar



Portrait of Oliver Williams Benn [Page 9]



Windsor Street Station, Montreal – the former Head Office of The Canadian Pacific Railway [Page 24]



The Nordenfelt Gun outside the Royal Fusiliers Museum, Tower of London [Page 52]



John Howell Diving on the Milo [Page 54]



Watercolour of W Beach 1915 painted by Archie Paton 3rd Field Coy. Divisional Engineers RND [See Page 56]

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM GALLIPOLI

I am extremely grateful to Michael Seal for sending a collection of photographs taken by his uncle, John Alexander Chisholm Taylor (known to the family as 'Chick'), during the Gallipoli campaign.

Chisholm Taylor was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant into the 1/10th Battalion (Territorial Force) of the Manchester Regiment, which was formed at Oldham at the outbreak of war. He sailed with his battalion, then part of the East Lancashire Brigade of the East Lancashire Division, on 10 September 1914 bound for Egypt, arriving at Alexandria two weeks later. While in Egypt the battalion undertook training and garrison duties which included manning the defences along the Suez Canal. On 5 May 1915, the battalion sailed from Port Said for Gallipoli arriving at V Beach on 9 May.

In all there are some 30 photographs just over half of which feature scenes on the peninsula, the remainder being taken on Imbros where the battalion was rested in late June, having 'suffered severely' during attacks on enemy trenches in The Vineyard/Krithia Nullah sectors on 18 June.

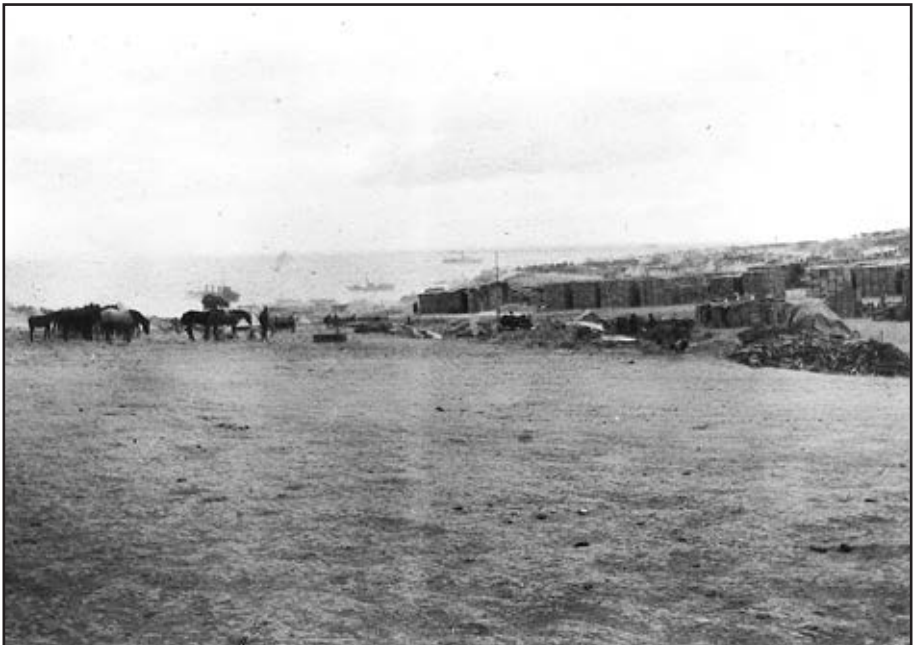
The first five photographs, as captioned by 'Chick' (who commanded 'A' Coy.) are reproduced below. More will feature in later issues.



Troopship going to Gallipoli – Australians sharpening bayonets!



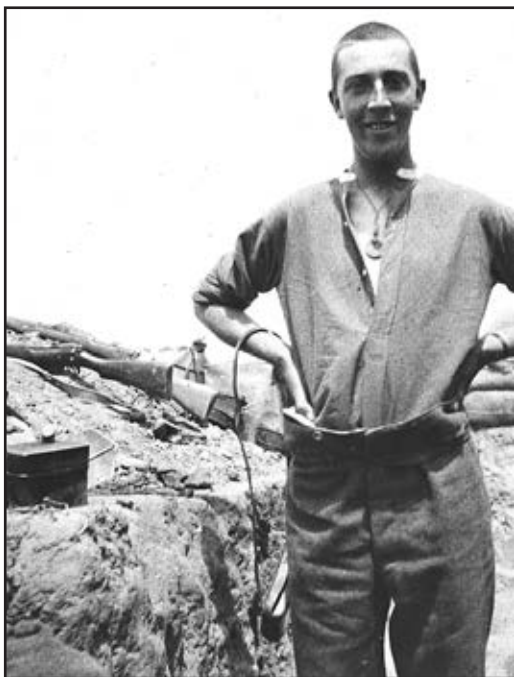
River Clyde – V Beach



W Beach, Gallipoli



Quartermaster's Dump, Gallipoli



Me! at my dugout

BRITISH MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AT SUVLA BAY, AUGUST 1915 – PART 2.

Sarah Pikarski

The first part of this article, which was published in the last issue of *The Gallipolian*, (No.130) examined the intelligence available to those who were responsible for planning the landings at Suvla Bay and why more had not been collected, as well as assessing the degree to which the failure of command played a decisive role in the failure of the attack. This concluding instalment considers the effects of the terrain and the lack of water on the eventual outcome of this part of campaign.

The effect of the terrain

Another important reason for the failure at Suvla, the effect of the terrain, is less frequently discussed and often underrated. Knowledge of the terrain was vital for strategic planning and for determining the best tactics once on the ground. In April, many problems were encountered with the terrain on the peninsula, yet in August, the attack was ordered despite little being known of Suvla and the surrounding area: its hills, shrubs, gullies and ravines. These features slowed down the troops and impeded unified attacks. They further made the men vulnerable to snipers and surprise attacks by the Turkish forces, who intimately knew the area and how best to exploit it. The problems caused by the terrain were made far more serious by the fact that the landing and initial attack were to be made in the dark. For the sake of secrecy, very little of the intelligence that was needed, was actually collected. Troops required the best possible information on the topography of the area that they were to attack, especially as they were doing so at night and it was inexcusable and fatal, not to provide it.

Suvla Bay appeared the perfect landing site, with its wide beaches and seemingly flat plains. Had GHQ taken a closer look at the country itself, they would have realised they were basing their assumptions on misconceptions. The ground on which the troops were expected to attack was considerably more difficult than it had appeared from the sea or the air. Suvla was made up of ‘rough stony ground, cut up into a tangled succession of steep ravines’, with ‘foliage through which it was impossible to force one’s way’. Some paths were ‘only broad enough to allow one man to pass at a time’. It is hard to imagine any topographical features less suited to a night operation. The loose sand, muddy beaches and hills seamed with gullies and peaks were even more problematic to the young untested troops used at Suvla. Officers were only provided with a basic appreciation of the topography before they landed. Maps were marked with paths believed to be usable, but not all officers had access to maps and even for those who did, finding the paths was extremely difficult. Resultantly no officer knew the country well enough before he landed.

The failure to provide adequate information on the topography of the Suvla Bay area was a significant oversight, compounded when it is realised that problems were anticipated, including by Hamilton and especially for a night attack. Despite this, no effort was made to determine possible problems and remove them. As such, it was not realised how significantly the terrain favoured the Turkish defenders. This absence of information for the British was particularly important as Turkish troops in the area and especially the Bavarian officer, Major Willmer, who commanded the Anafarta Detachment, knew the area extremely well. They knew the best places from which to defend and how to delay their attackers whilst awaiting reinforcements, whilst the British lacked knowledge with which to attack.

The *Naval and Military Combined Handbook* specifically detailed that planners should know the topography of the land they were to attack and the ‘effect of features on its attainment’. The British acquired limited information from the maps that they had captured from Turkish soldiers, but not nearly enough detail for the planning of an attack. The limited aerial reconnaissance that was undertaken before the landing was focussed on what were perceived to be the most important factors: the number of Turkish troops in the area and the defences that would obstruct the attackers. As a result, aerial observers and analysts were not instructed to pay attention to the terrain. Though the height of the flights would have limited the information that could have been collected, some useful intelligence could have been gathered, had GHQ been looking for it. Even more significant is that there was the opportunity to send patrols from Anzac beach to collect this vital information, but Hamilton refused to allow this.

The most important way in which the topography of the Suvla area contributed to the failure of the operation is that those planning the timing for the capture of objectives, did not have a realistic impression of the difficulties that would be faced by the troops. The men were set an impossible task; to advance four miles in the pitch darkness and capture the surrounding hills by daylight. Even highly trained troops, which the men of IX corps were not, would have struggled to achieve this. The Dardanelles Commission, probably being over cautious, believed that men could only move through the scrub at Suvla at about half a mile an hour in daylight, slower at night. Hammersley confirmed that ‘marching over thick country in the pitch dark was slow’. We already know that as Stopford saw these hills as a bonus to holding the beach, the troops did not push on as hard as GHQ intended, but it was also the reality that what had seemed feasible on a map was not nearly so easy in reality. The difficulty of troop movement near Suvla Bay, even on the most basic manoeuvre, was not appreciated in the planning of the operation. Kannengiesser believed that moving at night in difficult valleys held up the British far more than the Turkish defences. A lack of topographical information resulted in GHQ expecting the men to be able to move and capture objectives far faster than was possible.

Another important fact of which GHQ remained ignorant, was that the area around Suvla Bay, with its stunted oak trees, was particularly suited to concealing snipers, even at very close distance. Turkish snipers and soldiers could move from tree to tree to

scrub, picking off British men without being seen. Had the British been aware of this they would have been able to compensate, with men detailed to kill the snipers or simply by avoiding the worst areas. Instead, many men needlessly perished. In addition to this, the shrub and ravines were such that attacking troops could find themselves face to face with the enemy without warning. Holly bushes and oak trees that lay upon the slopes concealed the Turks, leaving the British unsure if they were faced with a few snipers or a whole battalion. The Turks were also able to train their fire between the areas of scrub, pinning the British back. This gave the impression of a greater opposition to the British attack and resulted in an even slower advancement.

Those behind the operation had also failed to realise the effect of the terrain on the ability of the troops to maintain direction, let alone affect a unified and cohesive attack. It was almost impossible for Brigadiers to order an attack in thick scrub and scarred ravines, as they were unable to see most of their men. Men with an inadequate knowledge of the terrain could easily find themselves completely alone as attacks became confined to the goat tracks between the bushes, where men were forced to walk in single file. This lack of unity and the devastating effects of an inadequate knowledge of the terrain are illustrated by the case of a battalion of the Norfolk Regiment. On the 12 August, 17 officers and 230 men went into the scrub in an attack. The dense undergrowth separated them into small groups, which were neither seen nor heard from again. Those planning the operation needed an accurate description of the problems the troops would face and patrols would have identified the impassable scrub, gullies and ravines. Hamilton prevented the investigation of these factors by not allowing these patrols.

Vital time in a mission that relied on speed could also have been saved had intelligence confirmed that the Salt Lake was totally dry. The lake did not have an ideal surface, with patches of sticky mud in which men would sink to their ankles, but it was passable. The edge was also found to be negotiable for vehicles and guns. Instead it seemed that officers who had seen maps of the area expected to find streams leading into a lake. Crossing the dry lake presented a far better option than taking the long route around it, as it halved the distance to the hills. The troops were, however, instructed to move around the lake on the night of the landing and along the Turkish front, which resulted in the loss of many British men. As the landing was to be made at night, it was necessary to guarantee that the lake was dry, as it would have been far too dangerous to attempt to cross in darkness otherwise. The reconnaissance that was carried out seemed to show that it was dry, but could not provide the necessary guarantees. Despite Hamilton's obsessive secrecy, an unauthorised destroyer fired a shell into the Salt Lake, suggesting, but not guaranteeing, that it was dry enough to cross on foot. This led a few, including Willmer, to suspect an attack in the general area. A reconnaissance patrol would have been able to accurately determine whether the area would support troops for an attack, and would have been far less likely to attract attention. Even if they had, the Turks would probably only suspect that they had discovered another raiding party. For the sake of secrecy, proper reconnaissance of the lake was banned, to the detriment of the mission. Had more been known, vital time would have been saved, significant when the

speed of capturing the surrounding hills would dictate success or failure. By the time the lake was confirmed as dry on the 7th, the element of surprise had been lost and the Turks were able to rain shrapnel on the men crossing this open area.

The most important way in which a detailed knowledge of the topography of the Suvla Bay area could have impacted on the attack is that it might never have gone ahead. Hammersley told the Dardanelles Commission: *'now that one knows the ground better, I do not think that it was a feasible operation'*, whilst even Hamilton later described it as 'impractical'. As the attack was to take place at night, all problems were exacerbated. If they had still decided to proceed with the attack, at least they would have done so with a detailed knowledge of the problems that could be encountered, and would resultantly have been far better equipped to deal with them.

Aerial reconnaissance and maps provided an inadequate picture of the topography of the Suvla Bay area. They gave no indication of the thick vegetation that would prevent unified attacks and need to be bypassed, nor did they reveal the gullies and ravines that impeded the troops making rapid progress. There was also a basic and easily addressable failure to determine whether the land that was to be crossed was able to support troops and equipment. From their experiences on the Gallipoli peninsula, those in charge of the attack at Suvla should have realised the necessity of topographical information and insisted on accurate reconnaissance. The failure to collect this intelligence was negligent and jeopardised the operation. As a result of their poor knowledge, a mission that was adversely affected by poor command became almost impossible. The problems that were encountered at Suvla as a result of the topography of the area could have been greatly reduced or avoided had enough intelligence been gathered before the attack and it is possible the mission might never have been undertaken.

Lack of water

The severe shortage of water amongst the troops at Suvla Bay was another vitally important contributor to the failure of the mission. Made far worse by the constant, almost shade-less temperatures of over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit, a lack of water removed more men from the battle than the Turkish troops did. On 7 and 8 of August, it was one of the most important reasons that the officers on the ground at Suvla ordered their men to rest and not, as they should have, to push on and capture the unoccupied hills. If there had been enough water, there would have been far less resistance to advancing. Suvla Bay was the one area where all of the landing troops could almost certainly have been adequately supplied with groundwater. Reconnaissance patrols could have confirmed the presence of the water sources marked on the captured Turkish maps. Equally importantly, they could have ensured that these contained accessible and drinkable water. In this way, all the troops could have been provided with water and this important cause of failure could have been eliminated.

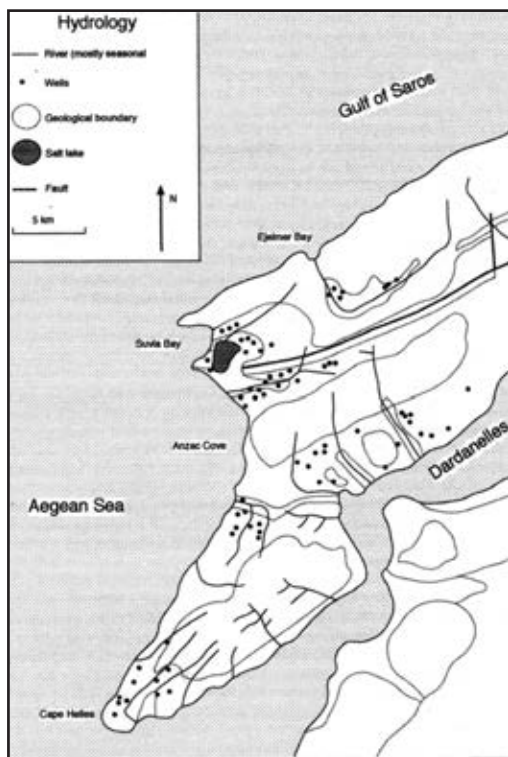
Both the Army and Navy were responsible for the failure to supply tanks of water to the

troops at Suvla. Their plans to land four, 50 ton water carriers on the first day failed in practice, and as a result, some men had no water for 3 or 4 days. Most of the troops were fully laden, and with the heat, became severely dehydrated and resultantly lethargic and confused. Many were suffering from dysentery, which made their need for water even more acute. The seriousness of this can be seen in the fact that some men on the firing line went mad through lack of water and others resorted to drinking their own urine. Men were also unwilling to move away from the beach, as it would take them longer to get water when it arrived. Stopford believed that 'owing to water, men could not advance' in the crucial first few days of the attack. Importantly to a mission that depended on forces pushing on rapidly, officers were not aware that had they advanced often only a few hundred metres, they could have found a well or spring with enough water for their men.

Suvla Bay had one important advantage over both Anzac and Helles beaches as it had local and available supplies of water throughout the summer, which could have provided enough water for the troops. Poor intelligence and command negated this advantage. Willmer believed that the provision of water behind the Turkish lines contributed to their success in holding back Stopford's men. If the British had captured these water sources, they would have held this advantage. Captured Turkish maps told the British that there were numerous springs and wells in the Suvla area and were, in the most part, accurately marked. It took until about 3:00pm on the 7th, however, to find the first natural water. A lack of maps, as a result of Hamilton's secrecy, meant the position of water was not passed on to the men who would be landing. GHQ also believed there would be water below the earth's surface, but the troops who were invading Suvla were new and inexperienced and had no idea how to search for it. Even many officers were unaware of the presence of this water. Most water sources were discovered by accident and their location relayed by word of mouth. Secrecy reduced the use of the inadequate intelligence that the British did have. Hamilton believed 'nothing so vital [as water] could be left to hearsay', but by banning reconnaissance patrols and low level aerial reconnaissance, he intentionally determined that this was what happened. The 1913 *Manual for Combined Naval and Military Operations*, which both Hamilton and Stopford should have followed, states that: 'water on land should be pinpointed before the operation'. At the very least, water should have been located as soon as the troops had reached the shore. This was vital, as no plans were made to deliver water to the men who were to hold the heights around Suvla Bay, as it was assumed that there would be enough water for them in the hills. The operational order even stated that there was water in the Anafarta valley, without having verified this information. Even for the men on the beaches, the tanks were only intended to supplement the natural water. Hamilton and Stopford relied on the accuracy of captured Turkish maps and the transport of water to Suvla until groundwater was found, with no provisions should this go wrong.

The topography of the Suvla area proved vitally important in preventing the British troops from quickly and easily locating groundwater. Dense scrub and numerous gullies and ravines on the hills, resulted in the troops walking within metres of water sources,

never knowing one was nearby. It had been assumed that the troops would easily discover water, when intelligence would have shown that this was far harder than it appeared and could have pinpointed water for them. When attacking and under fire, locating water became even more difficult. Some troops found water with the help of an interpreter and by digging holes. Other officers had no one with them who knew the terrain and did not have enough information to find water, even that marked on a map. More intelligence was needed so that officers knew the land before they attacked. There was enough water in the vicinity of Suvla to last the duration of the operation, if they could have found it – see map below. Reconnaissance patrols could have provided the officers with the intelligence to do this, eliminating much suffering and saving time.



Hydrology of the Peninsula [From *Grasping Gallipoli* by Peter Chasseaud and Peter Doyle. Reproduced by kind permission of Peter Doyle]

The difficulty of locating water was not the only problem preventing it being obtained. The Turkish forces had planned to obstruct a landing near Suvla by rendering wells unusable. Turkish and German officers would have been aware that their maps had been captured and that their enemy would know where their resources could be found. They therefore obstructed the British by making as much water as possible unusable. During the day, snipers fired on some wells, some were surrounded by land mines and others

were poisoned with the bodies of dead Turkish soldiers. Some were naturally full of mud, or contained very little water. These problems were not known before the attack and it was only on the 14 August that a warning to take care when using wells for these reasons was sent to the troops. This was an unfortunate oversight, which could easily have been corrected by reconnaissance patrols in advance of the attack. On one of the few patrols that took place in the months preceding the attack, water was located, proving that this type of reconnaissance was feasible. There is no excuse for these problems not having been identified and dealt with before the attack, but for the sake of secrecy this was not done.

It is necessary to note that this lack of water need not have jeopardised the whole operation as significantly, had the officers commanded the men forward, rather than accept their thirst as an excuse for rest. When ordered to push forward, objectives were captured, but because of a lack of water, orders to attack were delayed and vital time was lost. The lack of water contributed more seriously to the failure at Suvla as a result of poor leadership than it would have done otherwise. It need not, however, have contributed at all had enough intelligence been collected.

The thirst and dehydration of the troops at Suvla that resulted from having no water for many days, seriously contributed to the failure of the attack. If officers and men had been aware of the availability and position of the groundwater that GHQ believed to be in the area, and which could have been pinpointed by reconnaissance patrols, a lack of water would never have been such a serious problem. Instead, men were allowed to rest when they should have been ordered to advance and in the time that was lost, the Turks reinforced the area. With enough water for the troops, it is far more likely the attack would have succeeded and with detailed intelligence, this water would probably have been available.

Conclusion

By 21 August 1915, the failure at Suvla Bay was concrete. Britain had lost 5,300 men and achieved only a fraction of Hamilton's original plan. On 7/8 August, the Turkish troops would have been unable to hold off a united British attack, but this was never ordered. Coupled with the failure at Anzac, the Allies had failed in what proved to be their last attempt to capture the Gallipoli peninsula. The success of the attack at Suvla Bay might not have been enough to guarantee the success of the Gallipoli campaign, but its failure greatly reduced any hope of victory. The lack of intelligence that contributed to three of the most important factors behind this failure meant the landing had little chance of succeeding, even before a man had set foot in the bay.

Suvla Bay was not the sideshow Hamilton treated it as; it was pivotal to the successful outcome of the capture of the peninsula. The intelligence available, in particular that from aerial reconnaissance, albeit limited, provided them with mostly accurate reports on the trenches, guns and forces they were to face at Suvla, both before and during the

operation. Though sufficient for those at GHQ and Hamilton, it was not enough to convince Stopford or Reed that their task was achievable. Patrols would have reinforced the intelligence that had already been collected and should have been enough to convince them of the accuracy of the intelligence reports they were shown. With this additional information, it is far more likely that Stopford would have planned a strong offensive, befitting the reality of the situation. With decisive leadership, the officers commanding at Suvla would have been forced to attack, and not dig in and rest as Stopford's orders allowed them to. The officers on the ground would also have been far better equipped to deal with the problems they encountered had the intelligence that had been collected, been well distributed. Most importantly, detailed maps should have been thoroughly examined well in advance of the attack, to allow the officers to plan the best way to progress as the situation evolved. In these ways, it is much more likely the attack would have succeeded.

More accurate intelligence on the topography at Suvla would also have been vital to the success of the mission. Patrols before the attack would have revealed many of the problems that contributed to failure, such as the dense scrub, gullies and ravines, which significantly favoured the defender, hid snipers and broke up a unified attack. The men were given often-unrealistic targets, as those in command were unaware of the problems that the terrain would cause. With this information, those in charge of the operation could, at the very least, have planned to deal with possible complications. It is also feasible that the operation would never have gone ahead. The absurd secrecy surrounding the mission meant they were never afforded the chance to make these decisions.

Similarly, the inadequacy of the intelligence collected was shown by the mayhem that resulted from the severe shortages of water amongst the men at Suvla. This situation could have been avoided had the men known where the many natural sources of water could be found. Patrols could have pinpointed the locations of the groundwater and wells marked on captured Turkish maps and ascertained that they contained accessible and drinkable water. This would almost certainly have removed this as a contributory factor to the failure of the Suvla Bay attack.

The lack of intelligence available for the Suvla Bay landing and attack did not result in its failure. Better intelligence might, however, have been enough to swing the battle in favour of the British. For this reason, intelligence is of far greater importance to the failure at Suvla Bay than the historiography reflects. The intelligence that was needed for the successful outcome of the mission is nothing more than was advised in the handbooks given to officers, yet the man in charge, Sir Ian Hamilton, chose to neglect this in favour of excessive and rigid secrecy. This led to miscalculations in the planning and conduct of the operation, which became even more serious as the attack was to begin at night. Together, the failure of command, a lack of knowledge of the topographical features in and around Suvla Bay and the limited information available as to the location of drinkable groundwater in the area, guaranteed the attack would fail.

More detailed intelligence on all possible aspects of the attack, which could have been gathered by reconnaissance patrols, would have reduced the problems that were encountered. When taken in conjunction, the reduction or removal of these problems would have vastly improved the likelihood that the attack at Suvla would have succeeded. The British failed to collect enough detailed intelligence and that which they did collect was neither properly utilised by those in command nor properly distributed to those who would participate in the attack. Hamilton ordered that secrecy be prioritised over the collection and distribution of intelligence. This directly led to many avoidable problems and as a result, he incurs the ultimate responsibility for the failure of the attack.

LETTER FROM GALLIPOLI

I am grateful to **David Childs** who sent the Editor a copy of a letter written by Lt. Col. Richard Throckmorton¹ who served at Gallipoli as second-in-command of the 8th (Service) Battalion the Royal Welch Fusiliers, before being promoted lieutenant-colonel in November 1915 to command the 5th (Service) Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment. The 5th Bn. landed at V Beach on 17 July and remained on the peninsula until 6 January 1916 when they embarked for Mudros.

The letter is of particular interest in that it touches on the execution of a sergeant – John Robins – on 2 January 1916.

The Robins Case

The execution of Sgt. Robins was the subject of two previous articles in *The Gallipolian* – the first, by Rosemary Clarke, entitled ‘Shot at Dawn Memorial – The Gallipoli Three’ was published in the Autumn 2005 issue (No. 108) and the second, ‘The Gallipoli Three – Another View’ by the current Editor in the Spring 2006 issue (No 110). The case is also examined in *Shot at Dawn* by Julian Putkowski and Julian Sykes and in *Blindfold and Alone* by Cathryn Corns & John Hughes.

The salient points in this sad story are that the 5th Wiltshires were in the trenches in the Suvla sector and on 3 December Sgt. Robins refused to go out on patrol with 2/Lt. MacMillan. Robins was charged the following morning with ‘*disobeying in such a manner as to show wilful defiance of authority, a lawful command ...*’ He stood trial before a Field General Court Martial on 7 December when MacMillan told the court that he had warned Sgt. Robins to accompany him on patrol but Robins replied that he was not well enough to go. He was sent to see the doctor who reported him fit to go on patrol, whereupon 2/Lt. MacMillan ordered Robins to go with him, to which Robins replied “*I am not well enough. I will not go*”.

Robins, who conducted his own defence, declined to give evidence or to cross-examine

the two prosecution witness but made a statement to the effect that he had served 8 years in India and suffered from bouts of fever and on 3 December had been unwell for several days, which had been made worse by the wet weather. He told the court that *"... he had been out here for nearly five months and this is the first trouble I have ever been in. I have always done my duty. This would not have happened if I had been quite well. At the time I did not realise the seriousness of what I did."*

Sgt. Robins was found guilty, and sentenced to death. In a letter recommending the sentence be carried out the Acting CO of the 5th Wiltshires (presumably Throckmorton had not then taken command) commented that *'he had previously spoken to Robins about neglecting his duty and that he had been impertinent to 2/Lt MacMillan on another occasion, and did not consider Robins to be a good NCO'*. It is questionable whether these comments should have been made as they were not given at the Court Martial where the adjutant had stated that *'... although Robins' conduct sheet had been lost in the recent flood, to the best of his knowledge, apart from an entry on home service, Robins had a clean sheet'*. The sentence was confirmed at Brigade and Divisional level, and by General Monro, commanding the MEF. From the surviving papers it would appear that a significant, and probably the determining factor, in the sentence being confirmed was that Robins was an NCO.

The Throckmorton Letter

Jan 1st 1916

Last night, beastly cold, thank goodness they will leave us here for a bit. The men are all on fatigues all day cleaning up things. The last lot we relieved have left everything lying all over the place. One Bn. found 7 lovely large lined leather waist-coats which came down right over ones hips, I wish I could [get one] !

I seldom spent a more unpleasant time than seeing in the New Year. A Sgt. of ours has been tried by Ct. Mt., and I heard yesterday a.m. had been condemned to be shot, but I was not to let him know anything till the official papers came. These arrived about midnight, and Adj. came and woke me up – I was very tired and had gone to bed early. He had to be shot at 8.00 a.m. I at once wrote straight to Div. and protested at such short notice as man would want to see clergyman etc. Poor Greany had to go and warn him, horrible task, and I sent off an orderly to try to find chaplain which he could not so as most of them had gone away. However, Div. did postpone, Bde. had fixed time, and he is to be executed [at] 8 to-morrow. Thank goodness I have nothing to do with it as Cheshires actually do the job. I have not even seen him, but he is in a frightful state and never expected it. It is a bad case as he refused to go on patrol twice. I got a parson for him to-day.

All this took till past one o'clock. I walked over today to Bde. Hd.Q., about two miles right along the high ground in the open, all heather and scrub, quite nice. They had a lot

of secret instructions to give etc. I came back the same way, the road in the Gully is knee-deep in mud, absolutely nothing has been done to put it right since the storm tho' it could easily have been. One of our Water carts stuck there last night and we have to send all our men with cans to empty it and then to drag it out which they managed to do.

It is quite funny living on these terraces, cut along the cliff, which of course is not straight up and down tho' very steep. There are about 3 or 4 and the sea is about 12 yards from the bottom. We are eating nothing but bully beef and biscuits, as I suppose they want us to finish off some of the surplus, but we brought a good box of stores, and some flour which is a great boon. Managed to get a bath of sorts which was welcome as I had not been able to wash for 48 hours. We were short of water last night owing to the accident with the water cart. I found Bat. [who appears to be a pet dog or cat] very dainty but Charles says when he fetched him, he found him sharing a tent with 4 men, one of whom had apparently nothing to do but look after him. He had a large box filled with straw, his own blanket, and was being fed on rice and milk!! No wonder he turned his nose up at our homely fare! He is very happy and sleeps quietly in my dug-out. The guns excite him and he runs out whenever one fires near to see what is up. Mails and parcels are apparently a thing of the past, at any rate the latter. I have been sent 3 bottles of port to-day which I hope I shall get to keep the cold out. I found quite a library in my dugout, including magazines and some stories of Hichens' which I don't think I have read. My only pencil is getting shorter and shorter and one can only write on one side of this paper. Shan't post this for a day or two as I am not sure what mails are leaving. Port just arrived and a fresh loaf of bread.

The Sgt. sent to say that he would like to see me just now, so I went and shook hands and asked if I could do anything. He has left a letter to his Coy. to be read, rather a manly one. It was rather painful, of course he is just reported as having died and his people no nothing.

Jan. 2nd.

Beastly cold but fine. The Sgt. was shot at 8 this a.m. I saw him march off, he bore up wonderfully well to the end I believe, and waved his hand to me as he passed.

I am posting this to-day as we are sending down to where letters are taken and in this uncertain time it is as well to post when you can. The fire in the mess is very grateful and comforting, I am writing there.'

Lt. Colonel Richard Courtenay Brabazon Throckmorton was killed in action on 9 April 1916 in the battle of Sannaiyat in Mesopotamia, aged 49. He has no known grave, and is commemorated on the Basra Memorial, Iraq. (Panel 15). He was posthumously mentioned in despatches (LG 19 October 1916).

NOTES

1. Lt. Colonel Richard Courtenay Brabazon Throckmorton was born on 22 December 1866, the eldest son of Richard Charles Acton Throckmorton, heir presumptive to the 9th Baronet Throckmorton of Coughton Court, Alcester, Warwickshire, and nephew of Sir William Throckmorton, Bt., of Coughton Court, Warwickshire. Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant Royal Welsh Fusiliers (RWF) on 24 August 1887 from the Militia, he was promoted Lieutenant on 2 July 1890 and Captain on 8 May 1896. He served with 1st Bn. RWF throughout the South African War 1899–1902 and received the Queen's Medal with five clasps and the King's Medal with two clasps. He was adjutant 2nd Volunteer Battalion RWF from 22 August 1903 to 25 August 1904. He retired on 12 January 1907, but was recalled for service in 1914.
2. Most of the information in the above note is published on website of *The Offley Family Society* to whom the Editor is most grateful.

KING EDWARD VIII'S VISIT TO GALLIPOLI

The following report appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on 4 September 1936. Sadly the 'Special Correspondent' gives few details of the background to the visit, or to the itinerary followed. However, the official biography of King *Edward VIII* by Philip Ziegler (Collins 1990) reveals that the visit to Turkey – the first ever by a British Monarch and the first by a European Sovereign since the visit by the Kaiser 40 years before – was a private one to the Mediterranean made on Lady Yule's yacht *Nahlin*.

It appears that the King's original intention was to holiday, with Mrs Simpson and others, on the French Riviera but was advised against it by the Foreign Office because of the political instability in the area caused by the Spanish Civil War. Though essentially a holiday, the Mediterranean cruise, which included visits to Yugoslavia and Greece, was seen as having a positive impact in helping to re-establish British prestige in the countries visited. The King was met in Istanbul by Atatürk who accompanied him in an open car (normally Atatürk used an armour-plated limousine!) to the British Embassy. After dinner the King returned to the *Nahlin* and stood on the bridge for an hour and a half where he acknowledged the applause from crowds gathered on a fleet of illuminated vessels that circled the yacht.

WAR GRAVES SEEN BY THE KING

FLOWERS TENDED IN A WILDERNESS

From a Special Correspondent

When King Edward visited the Empire war cemeteries of Gallipoli yesterday, he was able to see for himself that stories told of the desecration of graves by the Turks are untrue. In the course of the pilgrimage – the first to the Peninsula by a member of the Royal Family since the epic of 1915 – the King saw the studied care with which the graves have been tended amid their wild and desolate surroundings.

There are 31 war cemeteries on the Peninsula. Six of them are in the Helles area on the southern extremity, and 25 stretch in a chain from Suvla Bay to Anzac Beach. Of the 8,968 identified graves, 5,740 are of the United Kingdom's fallen. 2,773 are Australian, and 412 New Zealand. In addition, the names of 26,883 men who have no known graves are commemorated on the memorials at Helles, Lone Pine, Chunuk Bair, Hill 60 and Twelve Tree Copse. The construction and maintenance of the cemeteries was one of the hardest tasks which the Imperial War Graves Commission had to undertake. Sir Fabian Ware, permanent vice-chairman of the Commission, told me yesterday that some of the burial grounds are on hillsides, some in deep gullies, and others practically on the beaches which saw the heroic exploits of the Empire forces in the ill-fated attempt of 1915.

The cemeteries in the Helles area are surrounded by a Mohammedan population; those in the north are in practically uninhabited country. The cemeteries are surrounded by wall of stone rubble and are planted with flowers and shrubs. Little hedges of rosemary flourish valiantly in the climate. Tall screen walls are built at the upper end of some of the cemeteries. In other cases pylons take the place of the screen wall.

Above Cape Helles stands the most impressive memorial of them all. Towering 100 feet into the sky – an everlasting landmark to ships entering the straits – it bears the names of 12,000 men of Great Britain and Ireland [the latter figure appears to be a misprint as 18,985 sailors, soldiers and marines from the UK plus 1,530 soldiers of the Indian Army are commemorated], and of 200 Australians, who died in this sector. The War Graves Commission has a representative at Chanak, across the Narrows, who controls a corps of Turkish, Greek and Russian gardeners responsible for the upkeep of the cemeteries. Only recently, the Commission's Chanak representative – Mr T Millington, an Australian who fought in the Gallipoli campaign – reported that official Turkish visitors to the cemeteries had placed wreaths on the memorials to the memory of their former enemies.

NORDENFELT GUN

I am grateful to Richard Szwed for alerting me to the existence of the Nordenfelt Gun, which was captured by the 2nd Bn. Royal Fusiliers at 'V' Beach on 25 April 1915. The gun, a multi-barrelled machine gun, is on display outside the Royal Fusiliers Museum at the Tower of London – see photograph on page 35. Sadly, the museum is only accessible if you pay the hefty admission charge to visit the Tower!

TWO VISITS TO GALLIPOLI

John Howell

In 2006 I had such an urge to visit Gallipoli that I bought an air ticket in Melbourne and found myself in Eceabat less than two weeks later!

On the first day of my visit, I did a tour of Anzac Cove and the surrounding area. On the following morning I met the tour bus again as they had kindly offered to drop me at the Anzac Cove Visitors Centre. From there I explored alone, and walked along the coast road to Beach Cemetery and then headed up the slopes. From the start of Shrapnel Valley I climbed a steep path to Plugge's Plateau. To my right was Shrapnel Valley and Monash Gully, with Quinn's Post beyond. A stumble down those slopes would have led to an arrival at the bottom, covered in cuts and scratches!

Just below the rim of Plugge's Plateau was the Razor's Edge, and I was drawn to it. I cautiously made my way across, with the crest of the ridge so sharp that I had my arms outstretched like a tight-rope walker. This led me to Russell's Top and the back of The Sphinx. Looking down on to Ari Burnu I could clearly see the outline of a wreck in shallow water. From Russell's Top, I scrambled onward, through trenches, old wire and star pickets. I saw bones sticking out of the ground, and was startled from my solitude by a tortoise trundling by. After some confusing 'bush-bashing', I climbed from Australian trenches and walked across that narrow strip of green that is The Nek. When I stopped and looked around and behind me, uncontrollable and unexpected tears rolled down my face. Only a visit to this barren terrain can really show you the absolute impossibility of it.

It was a quiet time of year, and on the following days I wandered over the Peninsula. Not only did I have time to see all there was to see, but I had some wonderful experiences. Late one afternoon, tired and wishing my day's expedition was over, I was picked up by a farmer driving a tractor. I sat high on the mudguard over a back wheel and put my arm around his shoulder. We grinned at each other as we bounced along the road. I'm sure it was out of his way, but he drove me up the main street of Eceabat and pulled up at the hotel door!

Leaving early another morning, I walked to Kilit Bahir, and then some kilometres on to the statue of Seyid Onbasi carrying that massive shell. A local bus came along and took me south to the imposing Turkish memorial, where the school kids on an excursion clamoured around me for photographs. I could tell them nothing other than I was an '*Ow-stra -lee-en,*' but this pleased them greatly. I soon found that simply being an Australian made Turkish people welcome me everywhere. Whether this is the same for British or French visitors I have no idea.

From the Turkish Memorial, I walked to Seddul Bahir and waded in the shallows at 'V' Beach, before a late lunch in the village. By dusk I had walked and hitched lifts to the Anzac Cove Visitors Centre via Kum Limani, but it was drizzling and I was wet and tired. A kind lady picked me up and dropped me at the 'Boomerang Bar' at the edge of Eceabat. The old man behind the bar was called Sergit, and I had met him some days before when looking for his son Mehmet. Mehmet was supposed to organise snorkelling tours at Anzac Cove, but he was in Istanbul for a party. I was so grateful to Sergit that evening. He gave me a dry shirt, and cooked me a hot meal. I kept calling-in on him,

asking about the return of Mehmet. I could still visualise that wreck outline off the shore. Finally, Sergit said *"Tomorrow, I take you myself!"*

The next morning we went out the back and he uncovered an old Vespa scooter. I climbed on the back and we went to his house. He produced fins and a mask, and I had my own wetsuit. Next stop was Anzac Cove. I changed on the beach and he sent me off with a vague sweep of his arm. After half an hour or so, I finally swam over what I now know to be the wreck of the 'Milo.' The water was clear, and I was able to see almost the whole wreck below me. When we got back to Eceabat I realised his generosity had given me a wonderful day. I now knew that my new friend was an old sponge diver, and had worked as an oil rig diver in the 1960's. He said he might just get back to a bit of snorkelling, but the water was always cold on 70 year old bones. I gave him my wetsuit and we shook hands. Soon I was off to Istanbul.



John Howell and Sergit

Two years later I returned to Eceabat with my wife, Lia. We called in to the Boomerang Bar one afternoon as I had some photos for Sergit. When Mehmet said *"My Dad has died"* there was a long and awkward pause. None of us could talk. Mehmet eventually broke the silence: *"Tomorrow you both come with me and my friends! We close the bar, and we have a picnic and snorkel again at Anzac Cove! We celebrate my Dad!"* And so we did; six of us piled into his little van with food and beers, with those in the back on an assortment of old wooden chairs. Lia and I both had wetsuits, and this time our camera was in an underwater housing. We swam and dived, and drank a toast to the man who brought the strange bunch together. A photograph of John diving on the Milo can be found on page 35

If you are thinking of going to Gallipoli, then go! But make sure you see more than the

view from a tour bus, and the bar of your hotel. Walk around and talk to the locals. Give yourself the chance to enjoy the people and their culture. They live in what is nearly a sacred place for many of us, and it is just the same for them.

A CASUALTY OF THE EVACUATION FROM HELLES

John Scruton was born at 36 Vicars Street, Eccles, Lancashire on 15 September 1890. On leaving school he was apprenticed as a joiner and continued in this trade until he enlisted at the Royal Marines Depot, Deal on 8 February 1915, being posted to the 3rd Field Company, Divisional Engineers, Royal Naval Division.

Very soon Sapper 1234(S) John Scruton was bound for Gallipoli, landing at W Beach where he was engaged on building piers. I know this to be the case because he noted on photographs of 'W' Beach, published in an article about Gallipoli in *The Listener* dated 29 April 1931, 'This is where I landed' and 'This is the Landing Stage I helped to build.' There is also a photograph of soldiers bombing for fish (captioned 'Something Izaak Walton Didn't Know') where he noted 'JS in the Mid [dle] of the boat catching Fish by Bombs'.

We also have glimpse of what life was like in the early months of the campaign as he wrote a very cheerful letter to the local paper (sadly the cutting bears no indication of the name of the paper, or the date):

It may be of interest to your readers to read of the happenings out here in the Dardanelles, as I know the districts which your paper covers have contributed well towards the men thousands of men out here. I can assure all at home that we are not on a picnic but from the lips of men with upwards of 20 years' service, who have been through previous campaigns, 'we are fighting one of the toughest battles ever experienced.' Every man of us is under shell fire, whether in the trenches or otherwise. But we English soldiers are not alone. There are thousands of French, Australians, Canadians, Senegalese etc., though each contingent lives practically a separate life from each other and has an allocated part along the firing line, occasionally being supported by each other. There is nothing in the territory we occupy up to now but miles and miles of rough country with the sea on each side, in which we bathe regularly, and a plentiful supply of shower baths which we have fitted up. Drinking wells and pumps are everywhere to be found. There are no shops or buildings whatsoever. Our naval gunners saw to that before the landing, for wherever there stood a Turkish fort, gun or shelter of any kind, 'Our Lizzie' and others have left their trade mark.

We have just one small canteen, which often after walking a few miles you are disappointed to find sold out, or, if not, things are very dear and only a few goods can be bought. We really want a Y.M.C.A. tent, and I hope before long we shall have one. Tobacco, sweets, soap, stationery, lead pencils, pipe lighters and newspapers are the chief

needs of the majority out here. We get plenty of good plain food, and as much clothing as required given us, with a small allowance of tobacco and lime juice occasionally. The fighting progresses slowly but indeed surely, though the Turks make a good stand considering our bombardments by land, sea, and air. Without doubt, the back of their resistance is broken, and after more steady work by the good supply of Kitchener's Army now out here, supported by our battleships which have been and are doing noble work, victory will soon be ours, and the chief buildings of Constantinople will soon be flying the Union Jack.'

Despite being kept busy, it seems that John Scruton and his comrades did have some time to themselves. Apart from fishing – see above – one of John's friends, Archie Paton, did some painting and gave John a small watercolour, which is reproduced on page 36. This appears to show part of 'W' Beach, possibly the area known as 'Port Talbot.'



Sgt. John Scruton

John Scruton was promoted to Sergeant and as far as can be established he remained on the peninsula until the evacuation from Helles in January 1916. This must have been a very busy time for the 3rd Field Coy. who were given the task of blowing up the ammunition magazines in the final hour(s) before the evacuation. While engaged in this task Sgt. Scruton was badly injured following the premature explosion of a magazine, which appears to have also ignited a petrol dump. He was evacuated to Malta and treated for burns and shock and discharged to *HMS Egmont*, Malta. However, he was later admitted to the Royal Naval Hospital, Malta where the following report on his condition was made by the Deputy Fleet Surgeon, on 29 March 1916 and endorsed by Fleet Surgeon Hommatt before his discharge to England on 2 April:

[Sgt. J Scruton] was severely burned on Hands & Face on the Evacuation of Cape Helles on the 9th Jan 1916 by Petrol. Almost 1 hr. afterwards he was in a very violent explosion.

He was treated in a R.N. Hospital, Malta from Jan 22nd to 13th March when he was discharged to his ship. Since then he has suffered with attacks of dizziness, constant and severe Headaches and Insomnia. He suffers from a very marked degree of perspiration of his hands, which in itself is sufficient to incapacitate him from doing his duty. He has and is still suffering from severe Nervous Shock and is sent to Hospital with a view to Survey.

Evacuated back to England he was treated at the Chatham Royal Naval Hospital and later at the Divisional Hospital, Blandford. Despite his injuries there appear to have been some good times at Blandford. There are photographs (sadly not of sufficient quality to reproduce here) of the medical staff and patients outside the main entrance to the hospital – one of the patients being in a donkey cart. There are also photographs of German prisoners ‘Tree-felling at Blandford Camp’ and of a ‘German Prisoners’ Concert Party’ to which it appears that patients were invited. However, Sgt Scruton’s condition did not improve and on 13 September he was referred by Surgeon Dykes at Blandford to the Mount Done Hospital Bournemouth with a report that noted:

... he was involved in an explosion and was very much burned on. Hands and face and was unconscious for some time after. He has never been in good health since. He has losses of consciousness which come on sudden [sic] and last various times... He has no confidence in himself and is unable to sleep at nights. Before his injuries in Gallipoli his C.O. Major Teale RE stated to me that he was one of his best and most reliable men. I beg to submit him for Hospital treatment.

Nine days later, on 22 September, Medical Officer Cox at Mount Done referred Sgt. Scruton to ‘The Board of Survey’ at Blandford with a report outlining the symptoms already noted, adding that:

‘He has been in an absent minded state, loses his way when out, writes several letter in one day home, forgetting that he has already written ... suffers a great deal of pain in the head ... afraid to be by himself and will not go out alone. Condition has not improved within the last six months.

John Scruton was ‘Surveyed Out of Service’ at Blandford Hospital on 17 October 1916 and three days later sent home with an Attendant and there ended his naval career.

Editor’s Note: I have compiled this article from papers given to me some years ago by his daughter, Joan Moore, who I met while conducting a tour at the Imperial War Museum. We later began a brief correspondence in which I was able to tell her a little about the RND and to send her some photographs taken at W Beach in the mid-1990s. In reply, she sent me the original of the painting and some related documents and

photographs which she asked me to pass on to the museum. I did so, retaining photocopies (with her permission) for a possible future article. Joan told me that her father had made a slow recovery on discharge from hospital, no doubt aided by a loving wife and family.

A TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN REGINALD SALOMONS

Readers will recall that the Autumn 2012 issue of *The Gallipolian* (No. 129) featured an article by Mr Frank Stevens entitled ‘To Gallipoli with The Sappers of Southborough’, together with a letter from Driver Mills (1/3 Kent Field Company, RE), which was kindly provided by the Kathy Chaney, Salomons Site Librarian, Canterbury Christ Church University (Salomons campus).

Kathy Chaney also drew my attention to the discovery by a local historian, **Mr Andy Saunders**, of a letter from Major A F Ruston (commanding 1/3 Kent Field Company) to Sir David Salomons expressing sympathy on the death of his son, David (known as Reginald, or Reggie) and outlining the circumstances in which it occurred. Unfortunately, space did not permit the inclusion of the letter in the Autumn 2012 issue but I thought it should be reproduced here as it provides more information – and an officer’s view – about the sinking of the *Hythe*. I am grateful to Mr Saunders for allowing it to be reproduced in the journal.



Captain Reginald (Reggie) Salomons

2/11/15

Dear Sir David,

You will some time since have learnt of the death of your son Capt. Salomons and will be anxious to hear how it occurred.

We were on our way by sea to the advanced base on Thursday last when, within a few miles of our journey's end, our little mine sweeper was run into by a patrol vessel and sank within 10 minutes of the collision. Our sweeper was ill prepared for such a calamity and but few – less than half – of the troops and crew were rescued. Among those who went down was Capt. Salomons. He did what he could to get a boat out and to keep the men from panic and when he was unable to save them and the vessel went down, he went down with them for I believe he could not swim. If he could, I believe he would have chosen to go down with them. The last I saw of him was just a few moments before the vessel went down, and he was then getting the men on the boat deck on to the starboard quarter to balance an increasingly rapid list to port. At the beginning the two vessels clung to each other for a few minutes and about 50 men and several officers scrambled across onto the other vessel but though Capt. Salomons was warned to get over also himself he would not do so and I am sure that it was because he would see his beloved men off first. Unfortunately the vessels separated before more than a mere handful could get into a position of safety so that he was left [?] without any hope of getting the majority of the men rescued.

I myself was in the engine room at the time of the collision and only reached the deck to see the last one or two scramble across and the vessels drift apart, and I owe my own life to the fact that I am a fair swimmer and was able to swim away from our vessel just before she went down. When we took account of the number saved I almost wished I had gone down too, for less than half the Company remained.

I am sure you would like to know that there was no panic and that Southborough Company behaved as they always had done in a way that did honour to them. There was practically no aimless crying out as they went down. Some of the survivors in writing home have made it appear perhaps as if there were a lot of this, but I myself was surprised to hear so little crying and drew the conclusion from this that the majority were in a position to be rescued, a conclusion which was rudely dashed to the ground when we counted up the rescued.

The collision was at night and both ships were navigating without lights – a universal practice where shells and torpedoes have to be avoided. Later on destroyers arrived and played their searchlights on the wreckage while their boats and those of the ship which ran us down picked up those who were clinging to it or swimming about. There were only one or two non-swimmers among the saved, I am sure that many more would have been rescued had we all been fixed up with life belts or all been swimmers.

I cannot end this letter without saying how deeply we the survivors, officers and men, all regret our loss and feel for you and Lady Salomons in your terrible bereavement. I have never had an officer who supported me more loyally and wholeheartedly or who was so devoted to the Company. When I remember how by the force of circumstances I stood in the way of Capt. Salomons commanding the Company he had raised and kept together I always feel that – though through no fault of my own – I was in a way an interloper and I don't believe that anyone else would have behaved in the courteous and unselfish way that he did to me. His whole behaviour

was entirely free from that show of a sense of injury which ninety nine men out of one hundred would have shown in similar circumstances.

In his dealings with the men he always put them first and never grudged any amount of trouble to make them comfortable and happy. We who are left will miss him more than we can say and will always feel proud of the fact that we have served with or under him.

We are now refitting and will proceed to the front as soon as the refitting is completed. We have lost everything except our carts and technical stores which were on another vessel, but are thankful to have escaped with our lives. I am afraid that many homes at Southborough and Tunbridge Wells will be rendered desolate by this calamity, but they will all be cheered by the thought that their lost dear ones died like brave men in the service of their King and Country.

*Yours sincerely,
A. F. Ruston*

REPUTATION OF THE *MANICA*

Peter Ford

Members will be aware of the Kite Balloon ship *Manica*, which served at Gallipoli from 9 April until 13 September 1915, her balloon being a distinctive feature at a time when aerial warfare was in its infancy. John Mackworth described how she was continuously in action directing gunfire from the warships onto the forts and gun batteries. Whenever the flashes of enemy guns were seen, the balloon observers directed a devastating counter-fire on them from ships offshore (see the article published in the Spring 1996 issue of *The Gallipolian*, No. 80).

Whatever the degree of success of her operational role it was said that the *Manica* and her balloon were regarded with affection by the troops. When the balloon was flying, the Turkish guns stopped shelling the beaches, which allowed the troops to swim untroubled. Inevitably under such circumstances the *Manica* developed a reputation. Unfortunately, this appears to be that she was smelly and a ‘rust bucket’. Some of this is understandable given that she was an ex-manure ship, but was it justified?

In his memoirs, Flight Commander John Mackworth describes how he had just returned to the Admiralty from the French Balloon School at Chalais Mandon when a request from General Birdwood for a ‘kite balloon’ was received. The Admiralty had a problem with the request as there was no land from which to fly a balloon. Mackworth solved the problem by suggesting that it should be flown from a ship. His idea was rapidly agreed and just 17 days later he was in charge of No. 1 Kite Balloon Section on a converted ship sailing for the Mediterranean. The ship chosen being the *Manica*, a 4,120 ton tramp steamer found hauling manure along the Manchester Ship Canal.

Conversion involved removing the ship’s foremast, building a balloon platform and

modifying her internally to provide space for the crew and stores. To do this the vessel would have been cleaned for the workmen to be able to modify her and undertake the necessary welding. Once conversion work was complete, the *Manica* was commissioned. Is it conceivable that any Royal Navy officer would have allowed her to go to sea without having the ship scrubbed from stem to stern? An article in the *AAC journal* (the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Anti-Aircraft Corps journal) describes the commissioning of another Balloon Ship, the *Mendeleaus*. When she set sail from Birkenhead her decks were covered in 2 inches of tar and grease, yet, by the time she reached Dover the decks were spotless. It is unlikely that the *Manica* would have been treated any differently.



A 'Drachen' type balloon is held steady aboard the SS Manica, while its observer waits to climb into the basket, off the Gallipoli coast, summer 1915
[Reproduced courtesy of the IWM ©Neg. HU.66626.]

A possible reason for her reputation could be the lingering smells from the meat supplies provided when the vessel left Birkenhead. John Mackworth records that they were issued with half a ton of rotten meat. At Gibraltar, on their way out to Gallipoli, the Admiral in charge was invited to a trial inflation of the balloon. The first thing he noticed was the smell from the rotten meat; he arranged for it to be removed and buried ashore and fresh supplies provided, but all this happened well before they arrived in the Dardanelles. Once on station it was said that the greatest danger to the crew was not from the 48 bombs, 4 torpedoes or the enemy gunfire directed at the *Manica*, but from the bread, which was always mouldy, the meat rotten or inedible, and the water which

could vary in colour from clear to a muddy brown, like weak tea! All the crew had dysentery and three men were invalided home because of it. In this, the *Manica* was probably no better or worse than any other ships on station or the troops ashore. It seems unlikely, therefore, that she was unduly 'smelly', or different from the rest of the ships, except during the time of her pre-war duties.

The *Manica's* reputation as a 'rust bucket' could have stemmed from the comments of the engineering officer. In the work-up in Mudros Bay before the landings he is reputed to have stated that her decks were held together by paint and rust. This statement may have had some truth but she was only 15 years old, having been built by the British and Colonial Steamship Company in 1900. Later, after service in the Mediterranean, the *Manica* went to East Africa before being re-named the *Huntball* on 20 August 1917 and served as a collier in Bombay. On 28 June 1918 she was sold to Japanese owners and renamed the *Kyokuto Maru* and later the *Shindsei Maru* before being broken up in 1933-34. Not bad for a rust bucket!

There can be less dispute about her nickname as 'the floating mine'. She was equipped with 250 cylinders of hydrogen gas at a pressure of 1,800 lbs. per square inch, 2,000 gallons of petrol, 600 rounds of 12 pounder ammunition, 500 rounds of 3 pounder, and 2,000 rounds of .303 ammunition, as well as chemicals to make hydrogen. One well-placed bomb could have had spectacular results!

As with many nicknames there is an element of truth in their origin. I would suggest, however, that those relating to the *Manica* were mostly ill-founded and more likely to be a sign of the traditional derogatory way troops tend to show affection by highlighting some uncomplimentary characteristic of something they love!

QUARTERMASTER'S STORES

The following items are available from the 'Stores'.

The Gallipolian Archive CD – the CD is currently out of print but it proposed to issue an updated version in 2013.

Standard Ties – in Association colours are available price £8.50 including UK postage. [Europe £10.30. Rest of the World £10.90]

Silk Ties – silk, non-crease ties in the Gallipoli Association colours – green bands for the land of Gallipoli and blue-grey for the waters of the Dardanelles, with narrow stripes of navy-blue and scarlet for the services – are available at £17.50 including UK postage. [Europe £19.30, Rest of the World £19.90]

Blazer Badges – hand embroidered wire and silk blazer badges are available at £8.00 including UK postage. [Europe £9.80, Rest of the World, £10.40]

Lapel Badges in the Association colours are available, price £6.50 including UK postage. [Europe £8.30, Rest of the World £8.90]

Simpson Badges – produced by the Anzac Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland. The badge is oval in design and 2 inch in size showing Simpson in classic pose with his donkey. Each badge costs £4.20 including UK post. [Europe £6.00, Rest of the World £6.60]

Binders, which hold 6 copies of *The Gallipolian* are available finished in attractive simulated leather, coloured maroon, with the title blocked in gold on the spine. Price per Binder is £7.25 including post in the United Kingdom [Europe £9.20, Rest of the World £10.00]

Polo Shirts in ‘Green’ or ‘Maroon’ with Association badge. Sized: ‘Small’, ‘Medium’, ‘Large’ and ‘X Large’. Please state colour and size required with order. Price: £14.50 [Europe £16.50, Rest of the World £19.00]

‘Gallipoli Trench Map CDs’ – includes over 400 maps and 10 Watercolours, the latter by Sapper Moore-Jones, the New Zealand Official War Artist. Price £17.00 including UK postage & packing. [Europe £18.80, Rest of the World £19.40]

Orders with payment, cheques and postal orders made out to ‘The Gallipoli Association’, to the Secretary, James Watson Smith, Earleydene Orchard, Earleydene, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 9JY.

BOOK REVIEWS

JOHNNY THE LEGEND AND TRAGEDY OF GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON

Author: John Philip Jones. Publisher: Pen & Sword Military 2012.

Contents: 264 pages, 28 photographs, 7 maps. Price: £25.00.

Why ‘Johnny’ you may ask? Evidently it had originally been intended for Hamilton to be called John like his forebears, but Ian is the Gaelic equivalent. Later during his service career, when joining Sir Frederick Roberts, the Commander in Chief of the Madras Presidency as one of his two ADC’s, the other being Neville Chamberlain of snooker fame, the use of ‘Johnny’ as his nickname became established.

There have been two previous biographies; that by his nephew Ian Hamilton published in 1966 and more recently in 2000 by our member John Lee, both take the broad canvas of Hamilton’s life while the present volume focuses entirely on his military career. The author describing Hamilton as a tragic hero, of early hope, indeed of unusual success during a career which embraced service in Burma (briefly), on the North-West Frontier of India, in Egypt and the Sudan and South Africa not forgetting his time in the Far

East observing the Japanese-Russian War of 1904-1905. However on reaching the highest level of command, at Gallipoli in 1915, he failed.

The Gallipoli chapter has the title 'Corpses lined up like rows of broad beans' the description by a Turkish officer of the scene at V Beach. As always the 'what-ifs' come crowding in. The author in summing up believes that five requirements might have made all the difference and the Dardanelles would have been opened. These were a larger force of 150,000 men, more time to work out a plan, a larger number of landing boats, a meticulously prepared fire plan for using the big guns of the Fleet and finally a landing place, he suggests Suvla where three divisions could have landed.

Having said this he ponders Hamilton's own capacity asking whether he had sufficient drive or ruthlessness, did he have enough experience of high-level operational command? And concludes that long years on the staff in India blunt an officer's mental capacity for war and slow the speed of reactions. Jones reminds the reader in his final chapter Military Philosopher of Hamilton's writings which reveal 'clarity, wit and style' and of his forecasts in 1921 of the changes to take place in warfare.

THE DEFENCE OF THE DARDANELLES

Author: Michael Forrest. Publisher: Pen & Sword Maritime 2012. Contents: 254 pages, numerous illustrations & maps, ISBN 9781 7815 0522, Price £25.00.

With the sub-title 'From Bombards to Battleships' this admirable book provides first an historical backcloth to the defences along the Dardanelles, commencing with the Persian invasions circa 500BC. Among the numerous illustrations and maps I was amazed to see a picture of the 'Dardanelles Gun' a mighty bombard cast in 1464 which now resides in the Royal Armouries Museum, Fort Nelson, Hampshire. It has a bore of 635mm and was capable of firing a 300kg ball up to 1,500m. The main part of the book consists of an in depth study of the fortifications and the events of 1915 in which they played such a key role.

The final chapter is one that will particularly interest members visiting the Peninsula; it describes the fortifications today, some still used by the Turkish military. As the author says of the latter 'Ignore these signs at your peril.' However, 25 batteries are accessible and full details and photographs are provided. A major disappointment is that there is no mention of the Gallipoli Association. One wonders if the author is aware of our existence? He does, however, refer in glowing terms to the website of our member Piotr Nykiel.

David Saunders

RESEARCH GROUP

Clare Church, Research Group Co-ordinator

Members are most welcome to join the Association's Research Group which meets from time to time by mutual arrangement at the National Archives, Kew.



OBJECTIVES

*To keep alive the memory of the
Gallipoli campaign of 1915.*

*To ensure that the men who fought and died
in the campaign are not forgotten.*

*To encourage and facilitate the study of the
campaign so that lasting benefit can be
gained from its valuable lessons.*

The Gallipoli Campaign is characterised by countless deeds of heroism and endurance. It took place in an area smaller than Southampton amid appalling conditions, such as 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, 80,000 French, 50,000 Australians and 9,000 New Zealanders. The cost in human terms was terrible. The Allies had 250,000 casualties, of whom 50,000 were killed with only 10,000 having known graves. Turkish forces with some Germans, numbered between 300,000 and 400,000 and of these some 87,000 were killed. The evacuation in December and early January 1916 was a masterly operation – one of the great feats of military history.