THE GALLIPOLIAN

the Journal of the

GALLIPOLI ASSOCIATION



HMTS 'RIVER CLYDE' AT V BEACH 25 APRIL 1915

PRICE TO NON-MEMBERS 2/6

CHRISTMAS 1970

T H E G A L L I P O L I A N

The Journal of the

GALLIPOLI ASSOCIATION

(Founded in 1969 on the campaign of 1915)

PRESIDENT	Brigadier B B Rackham CBE MC DL
VICE-PRESIDENTS	Vice-Admiral Sir Gilbert O Stephenson KBE CB CMG
	Lt-General Sir Reginald Savory KCIE CB DSO MC
	Air Vice-Marshal T C Traill CB OBE DFC
CHAIRMAN & HON SECRETARY	Major E H W Banner TD Claydene Cowden EDENBRIDGE Kent
HON TREASURER	A K Kirk Oakdene Ladyegate Road DORKING Surrey
COMMITTEE	Lt-Cmdr F E Garner DSC RN (Ret)
	H J Sayers
	Lt-Col F C Stigant

Price to Non-Members 2/6 CHRISTMAS 1970

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MESSAGE

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

I am delighted to accept the opportunity given me through the medium of the GALLIPOLIAN, to wish you all an enjoyable Christmas and a Happy New Year. I believe the latter will also be memorable.

I know that you would wish that this message should be regarded as coming from not only your President but also from each member to every other member. Let it therefore be so.

How many of you, I wonder, were around the Peninsula on Christmas Day 1915 ? I remember the day well. In the front line the Royal Naval Division had taken over from the French, and my company commander, William Ker, said: 'There are plenty of good dug-outs here - tin roofs, too.' The French had the sense to get in lots of the stuff, which incidentally all came from England. Christmas Day was gorgeous as far as weather and views were concerned, although I have spent the day in more congenial surroundings. No genial exchanges between us and the enemy, however. The Turks were jumping about all last night - thought we were going to attack. We all had plum pudding for dinner which was a great effort for someone.

Lastly, but by no means leastly, the success of the Gallipoli Association has amazed me. For this we owe an immense debt of gratitude to our Founder, Chairman and Honorary Secretary, Major Edgar Banner, and the members of the Committee. On your behalf and for myself, we do thank them most sincerely for their devotion to the cause of the Association and the pleasure they have already provided for us.

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DINNER NUMBER TWO

By G E Dale (RFA 59 Bde) (53)

Well, it's October 1st and here we are ready for the Annual Dinner, once more at the Royal Air Force Club (sponsored again by Col. Gething). No place like the bar for reunions. Here veterans of all ranks and services hobnob and clink glasses. No 'trendies'. Just white-haired old boys who couldn't respond now to a Call to Arms - but make it knives and forks and ....

Chairman tonight is our President, Brigadier B B Rackham and guest of honour, General Georges Lehr of the French Dardanelles Association. Also present, Captain Hasan Sariogolu, Turkish Naval Attaché; accompanied by our Turkish-speaking associate member, Brigadier Molyneux-Carter, a former British Defence Attaché in Turkey. As always, each diner is loudly announced and presented to the President and officers.

Now it's action ! Sixty chairs skuffle to announce the approach of liquidation for fish and fowl - easy meat for men reared on concrete biscuits. Talk and laughter rises to a dull roar - must be the 'din' in dinner. Four excellent courses vanish, plus our traditional last item - Turkish delight. "Damn good blow-out," I hear. "Where's that wine waiter?"

The French General speaks bravely in English; becomes an honorary member and proudly sports his Gallipoli tie. The smiling Turkish Captain speaks. (Tactfully he has been warned about our 'delight'). As the Chairman remarks, had he been born sooner he might have enjoyed mowing us down on those beaches, and now....

Up and down they go - the Chairman's an easy winner. But it's all very entertaining and high speed gas. The older the tongue, the better it wags. What eloquence ! What accumulated wisdom ! "All that gobbledygook and no mention of Major Banner?" "Hold your horses, pal," I say. "It's coming." Yes, the Major speaks too but is not his usual self. We are sorry to learn that he is overdue for hospital and all wish him a speedy recovery. After all, he is the Gallipoli Association.

REUNIONS IN 1971

LUNCH AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

22 April; Thursday. Duke of York's HQ

29TH DIVISION CHURCH SERVICE

25 April; Sunday. Holy Trinity Church Eltham 6.30 pm

ANZAC DAY PARADE: CENOTAPH

25 April; Sunday. A wreath will be laid by the Association, followed at 12 noon by a service in Westminster Abbey

ANNUAL DINNER

7 October; Thursday. Royal Air Force Club

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Further details will be included in later issues

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OBITUARIES

With deep regret the following names are recorded:

L V Hartley Late Newfoundland R 29 Division (209)
E W Wrelton Late RND Hawke Bn (201)
Commander E F Jeffery Late RNR (177)
D W Lynch-Watson Late R West Kent R (150)
Captain Edwin Cohen Late RMLI 1 Bn (7)
Commander F G Cadogan RN Late HMS Prince George (100)
F C Gibbons Late Middx Y and Leicester R (83)
Captain C R O Burge DSO RN Late HMS Canopus (49)

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REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 1970

Hats off to one of our Members, W Corbett Williamson MC (Gallipoli RM HQ RND) (37) who took the initiative in providing and laying a wreath for the Association at the War Memorial at his home town, Malvern, Worcs.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 1971 are due on the 1st January 1971 for all members who joined before 1st July 1970, which includes all numbers up to 298 inclusive, unless they have already paid for more than one year in advance.

It is earnestly requested the members will send their remittances to the Honorary Treasurer, Mr A K Kirk, at OAKDENE LADYEGATE ROAD DORKING SURREY, by the end of December in order to save time and money on reminders.

WE WANT YOUR MONEY by Excalibur

In these times of perpetually rising costs, including the threat of increased postage charge, the indulgence of members who are in a position to do so is craved for either an increase over the basic five shillings (25p) or alternatively a donation to the funds. It is of course the production of the GALLIPOLIAN which requires these extra funds, but as the journal seems to be appreciated I do hope to continue it indefinitely. Donations, however large, will be thankfully received.

WE DON'T WANT YOUR MONEY by 'X' Calibre

Those members who very kindly sent £1 or more as their first subscription have made our funds reasonably secure and it is not intended to raise the subscription above the basic five shillings (25p), at least in the foreseeable future. In some cases, however, I know members have little beyond their retirement pension and nothing extra is expected from them. Where even this amount is a hardship, the subscription may be omitted entirely on writing to me in time, so that the GALLIPOLIAN will be continued.

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OUR TIE IN GALLIPOLI 1970

Captain H N Lyster MBE MC, one of our members (192), writes of a pilgrimage, small in numbers but not in importance, which took place on the Peninsula on the 25th April this year. The party included the British and the Australian Ambassadors and other Embassy officials, with some wives, the British Consul-General in Istanbul, the British Defence and Air attachés at Anakara, the Chairman of the British Legion in Turkey and representatives of industry, etc., in Turkey. Turkish officials came over from Chanakkale. Wreaths were laid at the War Memorials, with a Turkish Guard of Honour.

On the previous day, the party had met in Eceabat and dined together. A coloured photograph was taken of Captain Lyster wearing his Gallipoli Association tie and this has been sent to us. The members, from the Ambassadors downwards, all signed a book as a token of their presence and this too has been received by the Association as a record.

MEMBERSHIP LIST

A new and up-to-date list has been prepared and a copy is being sent to all members. It is complete (less possible errors) up to 16 November 1970.

The number of members who had joined by this date is 337 but the net figure is a little lower.

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EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

S Parker Bird, late RAMC (249) writes:

It will probably interest members to know that on a recent cruise to Istanbul in the P & O ship 'Canberra' there was a notice in the 'Canberra News', printed daily in the ship, that any veteran of the Gallipoli campaign would be welcomed on the bridge by the Captain just before entering the Dardanelles. I happened to be the only veteran on board and enjoyed the honour of joining the Captain. He was good enough to take the ship near enough to be able to see V and W Beaches, Sedd-el-Bahr and Morto Bay. This gesture was very much appreciated.

But it seems strange that nowadays all references to our forces who were at Gallipoli are always described as Anzacs.

FLYING INFORMATION SOLICITED

Mr Barrington J Gray, of the London Museum, Kensington Palace, London W 8, writes as follows: (He is not a Gallipolian)

'I am collecting information for a series of articles on 'Pusher' aircraft used by the RFC/RAF in the Great War 1914-18. I would like to get in touch with any members of the Gallipoli Association who had anything to do with pusher aircraft in that theatre of war. If any of your members could help me, I would be most grateful.'

(Editor): Although the RAF was not in existence in 1915, the RNAS could be included if we have any members who had such experience.

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GALLIPOLI 1971

A holiday tour to Gallipoli and Istanbul is being arranged, subject to sufficient interest. It is being run by Lunn-Poly Ltd in conjunction with a standard package tour and so cannot be modified. The itinerary is as follows:

Leave Luton Airport by air on Friday 21 May, late evening. Arrive early next morning at Istanbul. Although the details of the first week are not finalised, the outline is transport probably by private coach to Eceabat, on the Gallipoli coast, or at Chanakkale and stay at a hotel for a week. If there is sufficient booking, the coach will remain with us for the week and be at our service to visit the three battlegrounds daily.

On Friday 28 May return by our transport to Attakoy, a seaside suburb of Istanbul, on the Marmara coast. The hotel is the Beach Hotel, with full board. Istanbul is readily accessible for sightseeing. On Friday 4 June we return via Lunn-Poly air travel to Luton Airport.

We may be invited to some Turkish veterans' function while on the tour.

Lunn-Poly have made available to us their full booking of 24 places, provided we can confirm early. The final cost will depend on our numbers on account of the coach booking, but it should not exceed £100 per head. Single-room booking is unlikely and members may pair off at any time.

Should only a few be interested then the scheme will have to be abandoned. Will those interested kindly write to me, with a return envelope, so that Lunn-Poly can be notified early in January. Because of the limited places they will be allotted firstly to members, then associate members, then wives and other relations and friends.

GALLIPOLI CHRISTMAS

Extract from 'LOST ENDEAVOUR' by Charles Watkins 6 Lan Fus (167)

Then all of a sudden and before even you're aware of it, Christmas Day looms up. On the morning of the sacred 25th you waken to find the whole war-scarred coutryside has been blanketed overnight by a heavy fall of snow. From our high vantage point we gaze down across the main gully. The ragged terrain has been smoothed off considerably by the thick soft blanket of snow and the snow sparkles in the morning sunlight. It's beautiful to look at and you feel a lifting of the heart as you gaze over the countryside. A stainless white blanket - hiding nearly all the ravages of war - stainless - except for the pink-splashed snow near your trench, from the blood of the wounded as they had staggered back after last night's hand grenade attack. Some super-brain, back in his snug dug-out on the beach, had been doing his homework and reasoned that, being Christmas, the Turks would be the last to expect a Christian grenade attack on Christmas Eve. Unfortunately for the grenade throwers, the Turk had been doing his own homework too, and had reasoned equally that being Christmas Eve it would be a good time to take advantage of Christmas relaxing. Result - a ghastly head-on clash.

Down below in the gully, the apotheosis of incongruity. Incredibly, on this Devil's own playground, someone had unearthed the Battalion's band instruments from their temporary storage and the bandsmen were gathered down there in the gully, their polished instruments winking and flashing in the morning's bright sun, and the strains of Christmas carols were wafted on the still morning air.

One of our chaps had a wonderful tenor voice. Back home, he used to earn a few extra shillings at week-ends, singing in pubs, and he accompanied the music of the band in mellow and heart-searing voice. Accompanying the distant strains of the band he even sang - right through - all the verses of 'Once in Royal David's City' - while the rest of us stood around in silence, staring into the void of space. Hushed and over-awed, we didn't dare meet the other's

eyes. The magic of music. Panoramas of other earlier and happier Christmasses rolled before us in a scenic flood and one of the younger boys sobbed unashamedly.

Then the music and the carols ceased. In the distance we could see the band moving off to another part of the gully, there to regale another lot of listeners with the spirit of Christmas. We sat around, quiet, for a bit - the blokes staring glumly down at their boots, scraping bits of mud off them, or twiddling with the tapes of their puttees - an awkward embarrassing spate of silence, every man deep-wrapped in his own private musings. It was left to Bill Howarth, one of our quieter types, to break the silence. In a low voice he asked, 'Sarge, does ta believe there's a God?'

Startled, the Sergeant regarded the questioner curiously. 'That's a b.... funny question tha be askin', Bill. But wot makes thee ask, lad?'

'Oh ! Ah dunno, Sarge. Being Christmas Day and all that. Just askin', like..... Does ta believe in God ?'

'Well, Ah suppose there must be one somewheers. That's wot they all say, anyhow.'

'But does ta thiself, Sarge, believe in God?'

The Sergeant stood up, fishing in his trouser pockets for a fag, while his gaze roamed over the parapet at the war-scarred terrain - the tops of the wooden barbed-wire supports protruding over the top of the snow - the distant view of the untidy improvised cemetery - one of the many - its numerous crude little wooden crosses now almost invisible under the fall of snow - the ever-present view of the hospital ship lying just off-shore, waiting till she gets her full complement of sick and wounded before making her periodic trip to the Military Hospital at Alexandria. Maybe, too, his eyes saw lots of other things - otherwise invisible things except to soldiers - lads who'd

'handed in their checks' in bewildered agony - lads who sti lived all around him, in uncomprehending and uncomplaining misery and despair, stoically sticking it out, drinking dee of the corrupting chalice brimful of the baleful brow of what we complacently label 'man's inhumanity to man'. Mayb he saw lots of other things that go to make up the sport of war. His expression was hard and bitter, his lips twisted and tight.

'Look out theer,' he said harshly, 'and then tha asks me if Ah believe in God.' He stopped short and none of us dared break the pregnant silence. We waited, expectant-like, for him to continue. Rarely had we seen our Sergeant so moved. Then he looked round at us, his eyes roving us a appreciatively. His face lost its bitterness and his lips loosened in a little smile. An unlettered man of little learning, our Platoon Sergeant, but maybe even he too saw t invisible aeon-old battle still raging between the primordi cruelty of man and the slow emerging force of love. In softer tones, and picking his epithets deliberately to off-set the gruff affection of his voice, he continued, 'And then Ah looks round at all you scruffy lot of b....s wot's bin me mates ever sin we left England - well - anyway, them of you as is still left - and when Ah thinks of all we've bin to one another, like.....Like brothers we was, all the time, and every one of you b.....s doin' the best 'e could. and then, maybe, you asks me again, like, do Ah believe in God..... So mebbe, then, Ah thinks a bit different, like ..... An' mebbe Ah says 'Yes'.'

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EDITORIAL NOTE: This issue contains another extract from 'LOST ENDEAVOUR' - a personal memory of the Gallipoli Christmas, and is topically included as it will no doubt arouse many memories. There are still a few copies avail-able of this book on application to the author, Mr. Charles Watkins, of 48 Clapham Road, Bedford, and who has had produced at his own expense a limited number of copies. There will be a small (less than cost) charge for this book

But it is definitely not a Book at Bedtime. Indeed, some of the episodes require a strong stomach, thanks to the author's insistence on absolute reality - as he saw it - (and even to the language at times !) But the author's compassionate treatment and understanding of the soldier more than compensates for the book's less salubrious episodes. The book enjoys an appreciative foreword by the Viscount Rochdale, son of the author's late Commanding Officer on Gallipoli, and who was able to assist and check some of the incidents from his own father's notes.

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A FAMILY OF 33 AT 21

By Lt. Colonel R T Tarrant VD (Anzac) (3)

17 August 1914 ! A memorable day in the history of Australia following the decision of the Federal Government to form a complete Army Division to go to the aid of the 'Mother Country'. NSW comprising an area of 309,433 square miles, was to recruit, among other units, the 1st Infantry Brigade. Men from all parts of the State answered the call to be among the first to join the four battalions. They were a medley throng; the professions, graziers, farmers, bank officers, students, clerks and men from the great 'Outback', to which were added serving militiamen, together with 'Compulsory Trainees', called up under the Defence Act as from 1912, provided the leaven of this mixed band of volunteers.

One was reminded of one of the patriotic songs sung in schools:

'If Britain stands in need
And war clouds o'er her fall,
We'll be there to answer
When the Empire calls.'

There was a grim determination to be in it ! Recruiting opened in the morning of that day at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, quickly filling the requirements of each unit, enabling the newly

appointed Commanding Officers to lead their men to temporary quarters in race-courses until established camps could be provided with reasonable facilities and amenities. The first few days of 'hard tack' rations and cold nights spent on seating in the grandstands, with only one blanket, were accepted and endured quite cheerfully by all ranks.

These men were not feather-bed soldiers; hardships at the beginning were not resented knowing that this was but a temporary transitional period in their new lives. Organised camp-life came after a few days of 'roughing it' in the open.

Events moved quickly; the new pattern AIF (Australian Imperial Force) uniforms were quickly made and proudly worn; rifles and full equipment including issues of clothing came from factories in a short space of time, keeping step with the varying stages of training.

Discipline of a high standard was accepted by all ranks; any misfits could be quickly replaced from a reservoir of surplus recruits, all very anxious to become one of the 'Originals' as they were afterwards known. Cliques and snobbery did not exist; esprit-de-corps came naturally to all ranks. There was but little time for entertainment; day and night training, restricted leave of absence left but little time for outside enjoyment. Yet, the men were happy with sing-song evenings and an occasional camp-fire concert, including items from the newly formed Regimental Band.

The high standard of training and conduct set by the CO for his officers became the testing ground for confirmation of appointments to the 2nd Battalion. I, among other young subalterns, had been posted to a 'half company' - re-organisation to platoons came later - as my family, to have and to hold. Although the age of recruits was 18 to 40 years, I did not question any of good material; those considered to be above the age limit were stout fellows, although two could have been the same age as my own father. At long last the appointments of officers appeared in Orders to the disappointment of some excellent fellows who were

surplus to establishment. I was not to be separated from my family ! We had a made-to-measure battalion of fighting fit men.

On 18 October, just two months after the formation of 1st Brigade, we embarked for active service - in France ? The voyage of seven weeks was highlighted when, on 9 November, HMAS Sydney sank the German cruiser off Cocos Islands. We all joined in the victory celebrations. Later we learnt that the Emden had crossed the rear of our convoy the previous night. There was a much closer watch kept following this incident.

Then came the surprising news that we were to disembark at Egypt where four months of training was carried our on the sands of the desert; where all ranks spent hot days, and sometimes cold nights during the time intensive tests were undergone to develop both leadership and physical fitness for any field of war. Would it be France ?

Like the Arabs, we folded our tents, for a sudden and silent night march from Mena Camp to Cairo to entrain for Alexandria. There was no pillar of fire to guide us towards the unknown destination. Our exodus from under the Sphinx and pyramids brought no regrets !

After boarding our transport, we joined that great armada of other troopships among which were ships of the Royal Navy. I shall never forget the gorgeous colour of skies at sunrise, heralded in with the many bugle and trumpets sounding 'Reveille' and again 'Retreat' at the close of each day, echoing and re-echoing across that wide expanse of unruffled water. 'The calm before the storm' was felt by some of us. What were the feelings of men from other lands ? There were troops from the British Army, including the 'Glorious 29th Division', New Zealanders to join with us later in our first action, Indians and French Metropolitan and Colonial detachments. Added to these were units of Royal Naval Brigade and RMLI.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE ROAD TO SUVLA 1915

By J H C Murray Lovat's Scouts (95)

'Your age?' 'Sixteen.' 'Go out that door and come back three years older.' Thus I was enlisted into the Lovat Scouts Yeomanry, in Edinburgh, in September 1914. Our Base Depot was in Beauly, Inverness. On assembly there, we set off by troop train for Kimbolton, Hunts. We arrived there having 'lost' several en route, who had apparently enlisted in a moment of absentmindedness and had thought better of it on the way South. Unwilling soldiers were not wanted and if they took themselves off - good riddance. Soon after arrival in Kimbolton, our Colonel addressed us. King's Regulations on serious military crimes were read out in each case ending with 'Maximum Penalty, Death'. That shook us all from cloth caps to bowler hats and instilled in us a necessary ingredient of military discipline. The death penalty remained in force until conscription was enacted in 1916. In Kimbolton in the summer of 1915, a crofter from the Western Isles disappeared. Three weeks later, he reappeared. Up before the Colonel and asked where he had been, he said, 'Ach, I went home to get in the crop.'

After 12 months' training in England, we sailed (S S Andania) for the Near East in September 1915, with saddles in the hold and wearing riding breeches and spurs. On arrival at Alexandria, we were issued with infantry equipment and sent to Gallipoli. A 'little ship', the 'Sarnia' took some of us to Suvla at dusk. Two stokers, up taking the air, remarked 'Unlucky blokes, them. Us, we'll sleep in our bunks tonight.' The Turks entrenched on the heights of the Anafarta Ridge, could see everything we did. Two of us they would ignore, but three brought over a shrapnel shell. While in the support trenches one day, I saw two RAMC wheeling a man on a stretcher down from the front line. Came a shrapnel over their heads, the stretcher was dropped and the two RAMC made off in all directions, followed close at their heels by the patient.

One morning at stand-to, as No 2 on the Vickers 303, I fell asleep on my feet, leaning against the gun emplacement. My No. 1, intent on watching the Turkish lines, did not notice. Round the traverse came the Orderly Officer, saw me

asleep, but instead of putting me on a charge, gave me a hard smack on the side of the head and moved on without a word. A kindly action. Our front was perhaps 100 yards from the Turks with only a tree between us. One morning hanging on the tree was a wooden periscope with a paper visible in it. Peppered by our marksmen nothing exploded. Brought in at dawn by one of us, probably with the connivance of the Turks who must have seen him, it was taken down to Brigade HQ. There a message on the paper in Turkish was translated: 'Russia is beaten, France is beaten and you are beaten, so come along with us and we'll give you a good time in Constantinople.' Offer not taken up.

About that time, a WO Order came round, inviting those who had enlisted under age, to inform their CO and they would be repatriated. But for myself the ties of comradeship had become too strong and I remained silent. One evening as we came to the surface for stand-to, a blaze of light lit up Suvla Bay and there lay the old 'Mauretania', then a hospital ship. Wishful, longing eyes were cast towards her and her luxuries - water in abundance, baths, comfortable beds, and good grub. Not for us, but she was a beautiful sight. In support trenches, one of us developed what looked to the MO like cholera. Yellow flags were set up around our trenches. After days of investigation it was discovered that the culprit, very thirsty one night, crept into the cookhouse trench, where the dixies were always filled up at night for the morning tea, took a long swig from a dixie, awakened a cook, who told him he had just drunk from a dixie in which the cooks had washed their socks! Yellow flags were removed forthwith.

The human mind tends to rid itself of unpleasant memories, but to retain the less unpleasant, hence one remembers best perhaps the lighter side of it all. Nevertheless, it was no picnic, with death at our elbows night and day, lack of sleep, exhaustion, filth and all the miseries of warfare. Look back in anger? No. It made men of us.

DULCE BELLUM INEXPERTIS

'War is sweet to the untried'

ON THE WAY via S S Southland

By Captain D M Penrose T D 1/7 Essex R 54 Div (185)

Then we went aboard and settled, dropped our kitbags on the deck,
And our bunks were now allotted when our final numbers check.
So we sailed out of the harbour mid loud cheers and greetings kind,
From our guardian friends the Navy and some others left behind
Then away across the ocean! Our adventures had begun
Though we thought about our homeland, yes, most every mother's son.
Soon old England's coast line faded as we watched it from the sea
And then some of us just wondered what it meant to you and me.
Some had never left their homeland, no, not even for a day
Yet here we were now sailing, yes, already miles away.
To what ending to our journey, no, not one of us could know
But the call had come, we'd answered it; the call had come to go.
For our Nation's sake we'd answered nor would you refuse the call
For we knew that upon each of us would rest her rise or fall.
But we pushed aside these sentiments to look around our ship
And as we'd to make the best of it why not enjoy the trip?
We explored each nook and cranny or as much as was allowed
Though not everyone together for too many make a crowd !
We had boat drill, wore life-jackets, wrote some letters, had our grub
And with certain limitations, we could sometimes get a tub.
We had army exercises just to try to keep us fit.
Oh! and some of us were seasick, which we didn't like a bit !
We played cards and joined in sing-songs and could smoke to keep us bright
But that we weren't allowed to do, well, not on deck at night
For Hun submarines might sink us if they once could see a light.

At Sea. Gibraltar

We left the Bay of Biscay then and reached Gibraltar
Straits
When suddenly there bustled up fierce guardians of
those gates.
They challenged us by semaphore sent at colossal speed
It might have been all up with us if we had paid no
heed!
Destroyers having signalled us, we than passed safely
through.
They gave some hearty cheers for us; and us? We cheered
them too.
These were our Royal Navy friends, fierce watchdogs of
the sea
They'd kept a friendly eye on us. Thus may it ever be.

Malta

We sailed on into Malta, soon, an Island in the sea.
The whole thing was quite new to us, as new as new
could be.
The native boys are marvellous, they dive and swim so
well.
Then boatmen came long side of us with many things to
sell.
A few of us got leave on shore but how the streets do
smell!
They milk the goats outside each house: how strange
that seems to tell!
We found the air was very hot and sunlight very bright
And all the people whom we saw wore clothing very slight.

Hospital Patients

Now too we saw for our first time, some soldiers wearing
blue,
This brought the war much nearer still to light our
mental view.
They did not wear their khaki here but this they wore
instead:
Blue trousers, yes, and jackets, too, white shirt and
tie of red
And some were using crutches, too and some looked very
ill

But all the battle-tales they told gave us a quiet thrill.
One thing seemed clear to everyone they all were brave at hear
And were quite sure that in the end we'd 'tear the foe apart'!

Alexandria

Then back on board we went again and soon we put to sea,
The weather was much warmer now and warmer soon would be.
The sea was blue, the sky was too, wherever one might look,
The kind of scene that you can find in any travel book.
We sailed to Alexandria, a large Egyptian town,
A seaport too of dazzling hue, at which some padres frown!
Our ship tied up beside the quay as safely as could be
And there we found a sight which brought a smile to you and me.
For here we found a sentry just looking at the quay.
'What are you doing there?' we asked, and he at once replied
'I'm looking out for submarines, that's why I'm on this side.'
Some nurses with us on the voyage now went ashore to stay
For some of us might need their help upon a later day.
Then once again we sailed away now only troops on board.
Perhaps we'd be in time to fight, we hoped so, praise the Lord!
We did not want the war to end until we'd had a go
For that is what we'd joined up for - to fight we'd have you know!
Then as our ship was sailing out a happy thing occurred
A simple incident you'd say, but how our hearts were stirred.
People in little sailing-boats came near to us and cheered
And waved and cheered and waved again and then away they steere
And we steamed out from that bright land, steamed northward to the foe
Or so at least we hoped and felt it might at last be so.
And then among some islands, we thought that they were Greek
Our ship was steered between them that she sport might seek.
And as the day was fading, in harbour we arrived,
We heard that it was Mudros, from Greece this name derived.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE NAVY'S GREAT CHANCE

By Captain L A K Boswell DSO RN psc (74)

In his Naval Memoirs, Roger Keyes, who was the naval Chief of Staff throughout the Dardanelles campaign, says on page 186 'I wish to place on record my opinion that from the 4th April 1915 onwards, the Fleet could have forced the Straits and entered the Marmora with sufficient force to destroy the Turco-German fleets. This operation would have cut the communications - which were sea-borne - of the Turkish armies in Gallipoli and on the Asiatic side, and would have led immediately to a victory decisive upon the whole course of the War.'

Why from the 4th April? This was a good three weeks before the Army landed with the object of occupying the Peninsula, and was in fact the date on which the 8 'Beagle' class destroyers became operational as minesweepers. With their special heavy sweep wires they could tear a passage through the moored mines instead of laboriously dragging them aside into shallow water like the North Sea trawlers, who were the only sweepers available in March. The latter could only sweep at 5 knots and so just stem the 3 knot current down the Straits, making them an easy target for the Turk gunners. The destroyers could sweep in formation at 16 knots (the maximum speed of the battleships in formation) and thus they could have led the line of battleships straight through the minefields in one dramatic blow, introducing an element of surprise and shock on the Turks, who were used to slow and cautious advances on our part.

The fleet's big attack on 18th March failed because the trawler minesweepers needed the overwhelming close range gunfire support of the battleships before they could sweep the minefields, and the battleships couldn't close the batteries until the mines had been swept. With the destroyer minesweepers available this problem was solved.

That the solution was not just one 'on paper' was shown by the results actually achieved by them on April 25th and 26th. The combined programme agreed with the Army was

	Army	Navy
1st day	Land and take Achi Baba	Sweep bombarding area up to 14000 yds from Forts
2nd day	Occupy Kilid Bahr plateau	Sweep up to 8000 yds from Forts
3rd day	Occupy Forts	Force passage into Sea of Marmora

Destroyer Minesweeping Operations

Captain Heneage of the 'Albion' was put in charge of the sweeping force and issued detailed orders to fit the above programme. Lieutenant F H Sandford, the Torpedo Officer of the 'Irresistible' (sunk on March 18th) was responsible for the technical equipment, and I was his midshipman 'doggie', running the Picket Boat which laid the mark buoys from which the destroyers started their sweeps.

On the 25th April the four pairs of destroyers made several runs and swept an area two miles wide in a few hours, supported by HMS 'Agamemnon'. A new line of mines laid by the Turks on 31st March was dealt with. The destroyers were under heavy fire which was ineffective owing to their speed.

As we all know, in spite of their heroic efforts on the beaches, the Army did not reach their Achi Baba objective, but Captain Heneage decided to go on with the sweeping and next day continued up to 8,000 yards from the Forts, the nearest any ship had got in daylight. Another line of mines, laid on March 28th, was dealt with and once again the Turkish gunners failed to hit them although the fire was heavy and continuous.

The enemy had no idea what the destroyers were up to. General Hans Kannengiesser in his book 'The campaign in Gallipoli' describes on p.104 how the destroyers made repeated attempts 'to reach land' at full speed under heavy fire as far as the Soghon Dere but were driven back by the

batteries! Such is the fog of war. Incidentally the In Tepe batteries fired off more than half their stock of ammunition.

As two pairs of sweepers could clear a passage through the minefields 500 yards wide, enough for the battleships in single line ahead, and four pairs were available, there was a margin for casualties. The forcing of the Narrows by the fleet alone had become a reasonable risk of war. And yet in the many books written about the campaign, only an occasional oblique reference is made to this great fact, such as 'if only the re-organised sweepers had been available earlier'. They were available for three weeks before the army landed, and only Admiral de Robeck's change of heart before his meeting with General Sir Ian Hamilton on March 22nd stopped them being used.

Floating Mines and Torpedo Tubes

The Turks had a small number of Ramis mines, which are suspended from a float on the surface, and they had sent some down on the current during the March operations. We had picked up a sample and discovered by trial that a light sweep wire on the surface between the destroyers would chop off the float and so sink the mine. In this way both the moored and floating mines would have been cleared out of the way of the battleships.

There was one fixed torpedo tube mounted on a pier at Kilid Bahr, which could fire a torpedo across the Narrows, but the pier was in full sight of a ship coming up the Straits, and close range gunfire from the fleet would have damaged the tube long before the torpedo was fired.

Only one thing remained to stop the fleet - the heavy artillery in the forts at the Narrows.

The Forts

The forts looked quite impressive with their rows of 1885 model Krupp guns, but compared to our battleships they had two weaknesses. They were loaded by hand, taking four to five minutes, compared to the 45 seconds of the ships' 12-inch turrets, and the 10 seconds of the ship's 6-inch guns. The latter were effective at ranges under 8,000 yards, and their rapid fire at point blank range would have driven the Turk gunners from their open platforms, brave men though they were. This had happened at the forts at the Entrance on February 25th. Secondly the forts had no fire control system to enable them to hit a moving target, and the hundreds of rounds they fired on March 18th only produced one hit on a British ship, the 'Agamemnon', where the damage was unimportant. At the end of that day the forts had nearly used up the only shells that were effective against the armour of the battleships. The German Official Account, 'Der Kampf um die Dardanellen, 1915' says on page 74: 'Most of the Turkish ammunition had been expended.... the long range H E shells, which alone were effective against armour, were nearly used up. Fort Hamidieh had only 17 of them, Kilid Bahr but 10.

The forts would have been useless after quarter of an hour. Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador at Constantinople at the time, describes on page 148 of his book 'Secrets of the Bosphorus' how George A. Schreiner, a well known correspondent of the Associated Press, spent March 18th at the Dardanelles and that evening discussed the situation with General Mertens, the chief technical officer at the Straits, who said: 'We expect that the British will come back tomorrow morning. I should advise you to get up early and take to the Anatolian Hills. That's what we are going to do.'

So only Admiral de Robeck's lack of informed judgment prevented the fleet from reaching Constantinople. What would have happened then is a political question.

The Political Judgment

In February 1915, the Foreign Secretary Grey, Lord Kitchener at the War Office and Winston Churchill (advised by Admiral Hall, the Director of Naval Intelligence) were quite convinced that the arrival of a British Fleet off Constantinople would lead to a revolution there against the Young Turk Party which had brought Turkey into the war.

This idea has been pooh-poohed by many people, who have been misled by the way the Turks fought later on during the war. They may not have realised what a tremendous boost to Turkish morale came from their defeat of the 'invincible' Royal Navy on 18th March, and the subsequent failure of the Allied Armies to reach their objectives on the Peninsula.

Fortunately we have first hand and reliable information from a discerning neutral source, the American Ambassador who had been in Constantinople since 1913, and who knew all the people concerned. In his book (see above) on page 128 he says: 'Lord Kitchener, in giving his assent to a purely naval expedition, had relied on a revolution in Turkey to make the enterprise successful. Lord Kitchener has been much criticised for this..... however, I owe it to his memory to say that on this point he was absolutely right. Had the Allied Fleet once passed the defences of the Straits, the administration of the Young Turks would have come to a bloody end.'

Further on he analyses the situation and shows how the Turkish Empire was about to break up into its component parts in March 1915, and ends up 'As for Constantinople, the populace there..... would have welcomed the arrival of the Allied Fleet with joy ..... for this would relieve them of the controlling gang, emancipate them from the hated Germans, bring about peace, and end their miseries.'

It was not altogether de Robeck's fault. He was a typical product of the system, a Navy obsessed by the big gun battle between Dreadnoughts, and

which had largely ignored other forms of naval warfare, submarines, torpedoes, mines and particularly in this case, minesweeping.

Had Keyes and Sandford got together in February when the fleet started its attack, the Dardanelles 'Victory' might well have shortened the war by two years, and would certainly have saved countless lives in Gallipoli, Palestine and Mesopotamia.

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THE INVISIBLE BREAD

By R M Gale, formerly 2 Naval Bde RND (113)

On June 4th 1915, the 2nd Naval Brigade took a battering and the Collingwood Battalion were almost wiped out. Apart from working parties, carrying parties and several orders to stand to, we had a quiet time for a fortnight. We got the regular rumours of course, we were going to Egypt, France or even to England. ('Blighty' had not reached us then.)

But then some of our Infantry actually did embark. Rumour come true! Then on 19th June we in the Brigade Signal were told to parade for the beach. We lined up, well after dark of course, and I remember that there were about thirteen men instead of the standard thirty. In addition to our personal kit, various signal gear had to be carried but when my turn came the Sergeant gave me a bulky sack saying, 'Hang on to this, Gale. It's bread and if you lose it we shall all be on biscuits.' Who would not have hung on to a sack of bread in those days ?

We marched in column of route to V beach and then had to wait for a battalion to embark. After a few minutes we saw the familiar flash of Asiatic Annie and everyone dived for cover. When the shell had dropped harmlessly into the sea, we recovered our loads and went on to the trawler and after some trouble found deck space to squat on.

I awakened in the harbour at Imbros and, clutching our loads we got into a lighter and finally on shore. It was a

gay march to the field where were to camp. The cooks got busy and the bacon smelt good.

'Now, Gale,' said the Sergeant, 'where's the rooty ?' Conscious of virtue, I cut the string. It contained nothing but saddlery !!

I never solved the mystery but it took me a long time to live it down.

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SNACKS

A mug of 'Sergeant-major's tea, hot, strong and well-sweetened with condensed milk was always welcome to the troops if ever it came our way.

By contrast clover tea was not so welcome (made with three leaves - four if you're lucky !).