

The Gallipolian

The Journal of the Gallipoli Association

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THE GALLIPOLIAN

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The Journal of the Gallipoli Association

founded by Major E H W Banner in 1969 on the Campaign of 1915 - 16

The Gallipoli Association
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This edition's cover:

Beltrame, Achille (undated): *I grandi pericoli della guerra navale: marinai che lavorano a togliere le mine dal Dardanelli sotto il bombardamento dei turchi.*

(The great dangers of naval warfare: sailors working to remove mines from the Dardanelles under the bombing of the Turks).

La Domenica Del Corriere (Sunday Courier), Illustrated supplement of the *Evening Courier*, Milan, 4-11 April 1915.

THE KING'S MESSAGE

Commemorating the 110th anniversary of the Gallipoli Campaign

His Majesty's message was read by The Princess Royal during a service at the Cape Helles Memorial on 24 April 2025.

Today, as we mark the one hundred and tenth anniversary of the Gallipoli campaign, I reflect on the memory of the dreadful losses suffered by so many during the battles. While the impact of these losses reverberates through history, we may take some solace in the warm friendships and deep alliances that have emerged from the desperation of Gallipoli, and which continue to endure after one hundred and ten years.

Although I am very sadly unable to be with you today, my special thoughts and prayers are firmly with you all as we pay tribute to and honour the brave soldiers who fought and sacrificed their lives during the Gallipoli campaign.

Charles R.

110TH ANNIVERSARY

On Thursday, 24th April, Princess Anne and her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, attended a commemorative service at the Çanakkale Martyrs' Memorial, located on the site known in 1915 as 'De Tott's Battery'. Here the Princess Royal delivered an address and laid red carnations to mark the anniversary.

Her Royal Highness then proceeded to a service at the Morto Bay French National Cemetery, where she laid a wreath and placed flowers on the graves of French soldiers lost during the campaign.

As president of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Her Royal Highness then visited the grave of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Doughty-Wylie, Royal Welch Fusiliers, posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on 26 April 1915, and whose is the only solitary known allied war grave on the peninsula. The King, as Colonel-in-Chief of The Royal Welsh, provided a card that read, "Everlasting Remembrance, Charles R." and which was laid with a wreath at the grave.

The Princess Royal then attended the memorial service at the Helles Memorial where she delivered His Majesty's message (above).

Next day, 25th April, Anne gave a speech at the Dawn Service at the Anzac Commemorative Site before moving on to the Australian service at the Lone Pine Memorial, followed by the New Zealand service at the Chunuk Bair Memorial, laying a wreath at each.

The Duchess of Edinburgh attended the Dawn Service and laid a wreath of white flowers, which included a handwritten message of tribute: 'In memory of all those who gave their lives,' at the New Zealand Memorial, Hyde Park Corner. The Duchess later attended the Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey, and later laid a wreath at the Cenotaph.



The Princess Royal lays a wreath at the Anzac Commemorative Site, North Beach, 25 April 2025.
(Courtesy Australian Broadcasting Commission)

[See photographs page 29.](#)

YOUTH AMBASSADOR APPOINTED

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Sophie Haworth in the new role of Gallipoli Association Youth Ambassador. The role is to help the Trustees promote the Association to a younger audience, to garner greater interest and engagement with the Association and its aims. This role also involves promoting the charity's mission, motivating donors, supporting events, and creating educational content to raise awareness among peers and the broader community. Part of the role will be to guide the Trustees on how to evolve the Association so that it can achieve these grand ideals.

Sophie Haworth is currently reading War Studies at King's College London; the passion for such studies was ignited by the 2022 cadet bursary tour to the peninsula arranged and part funded by the Gallipoli Association. Growing up in the naval city of Portsmouth, she has been surrounded by rich military heritage, working in the historic dockyards where the last remaining ship from the campaign is housed. At school, she was Head Girl, led the Army contingent of their Combined Cadet Force, and was Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Hampshire in her final year. Since moving to London, she has been increasingly involved with the GA, addressing the 2024 Annual Conference and formally assuming the Youth Ambassador role in April 2025. To contact Sophie, please email: youth@gallipoli-association.org

[See photograph page 33](#)

COLLINGWOOD CORNER MEMORIAL, BLANDFORD

James Watson Smith

Last year the Trustees reluctantly but sensibly took the decision that, due to there being fewer people now able to attend, this was to be the last official ceremony.

Therefore on 13th June 2025, a very fine Friday, the final gathering took place around the memorial. This ceremony was very well attended and was a fitting final official service.

Wreaths were laid on behalf of or by the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Sir Martin Connell on behalf of the Navy and RND, Stuart Adam, the Trustees of Collingwood Memorial, Captain Tim Davy of HMS *Collingwood*, Blandford Garrison, Dorset CC., Hugo Mieville, mayor of Blandford, The Gallipoli Association, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Royal British Legion. Martin Willoughby on behalf of Frederick Willoughby laid a wreath in memory of Lt Cdr W M Annand.

Thanks must be paid to the Blandford Garrison for providing lunch prior to the service and tea in the Officers' Mess afterwards. For 106 years the Adam family have been custodians of the memorial. Frederick Adam, who served at Gallipoli with the Royal Naval Division, tended the memorial from its unveiling in 1919 until his death in 1958. From 1950 he was helped by his son Roy, who after 50 years was awarded the MBE for his devotion, continuing until he suffered a stroke towards the end of his life, dying in 2014. Roy's son Stuart continued the family tradition from that time and as Chairman of the Trustees has had to sadly make this decision.

Having said that this is the final ceremony, a more informal gathering may be possible in the future. If so details will be made available. An account and history of the memorial appeared in *The Gallipolian's* Spring 2000 edition. [See photograph page 34.](#)



Guard of Honour by HMS *Collingwood*. Photo courtesy Keith Woodland.

COMMEMORATING LIEUTENANT HENRY MOSELEY

VE Day 2025 in Oxford

Alan Bingham

On 10 August 1915, Lieutenant Henry Moseley, an outstanding physicist and graduate of Trinity College, Oxford, was killed at Gallipoli.

Moseley is known for his work on the justification from physical laws of the atomic numbers in the periodic table, and what is now called Moseley's Law. He was nominated for the 1915 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. When war broke out, he volunteered for the Royal Engineers and served on Gallipoli as signals officer to 38 Brigade. He was 27 when he was killed at The Farm during the massive Ottoman counter-attack from Chunuk Bair. His body was never identified.

To commemorate Moseley, Trinity College dedicated a memorial to him on VE Day. The memorial takes the form of a rusted cast iron door to replace the existing old wooden door next to Trinity's Stuart Gates. Moseley would have many times passed through the old door on the short walk from the college to the Physics department.

The memorial door was designed by acclaimed sculptor Antony Gormley and Poet Laureate Simon Armitage, whose poem 'Hinge' appears in relief on its surface.



2nd Lieut. Henry Gwyn Jeffreys Moseley,
Royal Engineers.
Killed in action 10 August 1915.

"A series of raised concentric rings radiate out from the central silhouetted aperture, inviting passers-by to consider where things – the body, time, space – begin and end."

The dedication ceremony was attended by Princess Elettra Marconi Giovanelli, daughter of radio inventor Guglielmo Marconi.

The Gallipoli Association was invited to lay a wreath, which had been kindly donated by Dr. Alexy Karenowska of Magdalen College, Oxford. The Last Post was played by a student of Magdalen College, and Alexy hopes that this will become an annual service of remembrance.

[See photographs page 30.](#)

“GERMANS TO THE STRAITS”

Admiral Usedom's Naval Mission At The Dardanelles

Emre Özmen

“Germans to the front!” was Admiral Seymour’s order to Captain Usedom, who led the German naval expedition during the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900. Fourteen years later, Usedom would again lead a special German naval expedition, this time against the British Navy. In August 1914, as the war escalated across Europe, the Ottoman Empire, having declared armed neutrality after signing a secret alliance with Germany, was striving to complete its mobilisation. Determined to draw its new ally into the conflict as soon as possible, Germany was ready to offer all the support it could muster. To strengthen the defence of the Turkish Straits and accelerate the Turks’ entry into the war, Germans assembled a secret and special task force. German Emperor Wilhelm II pulled Vice Admiral Guido von Usedom, his old aide-de-camp, out of retirement to lead the mission. By the end of August, Usedom, accompanied by over 500 naval personnel travelling in disguise, embarked on a tense, week-long journey to Turkey, where he would stay for the next four years.

The idea of establishing Usedom’s special mission was sparked by a request from Admiral Souchon, commander of the German Mediterranean Division, who had arrived in İstanbul on 11 August with his two famous ships, *Goeben* and *Breslau*. Based on the assurance he had received from Admiral Tirpitz, Souchon requested additional personnel for his own ships on 15 August, and considered that reinforcements were also needed for the defence of the straits. Believing that strengthening the straits would expedite the Turks’ entry into the war, German authorities did not hesitate to accept Souchon’s request and arranged for an immediate deployment of reinforcements. On 19 August, a task force called ‘Special Command of the Imperial Navy in Turkey’ was formally activated and Vice Admiral Usedom, who had retired from the active service two years earlier, was appointed as its leader. Usedom’s task force, unlike the military mission that arrived in Turkey in 1913, had been established unilaterally, without any appeal from the Turkish side. In a letter to the German Naval Ministry dated 25 April 1915, German Naval Attaché Hans Humann noted that sending this task force as a *fait accompli* had placed the Ottoman Empire, then still a neutral country, in a difficult position. According to Humann, this move put Enver Paşa, Ottoman War Minister, at odds with the majority of cabinet members who favoured neutrality.

A force of a total of 458 volunteers, including two admirals, Usedom and Merten, was quickly prepared and the first group dispatched from Kiel on 20 August 1914. The Germans travelled in disguise as shipyard workers. If stopped in still-neutral Bulgaria or Romania, they were instructed to say they were heading to İstanbul to repair Turkish ships. To avoid drawing attention while passing through neutral territories, their uniforms and personal belongings were sent ahead to Budapest to be retrieved later, without knowing they would serve in Turkish uniforms. While Germany hoped this new military aid would encourage the Turks to enter the war, orders were in place for the personnel ‘To return immediately in case the Turks’

position changed.' The force gathered in Berlin and arrived in Budapest on 23 August. At this point, one officer and 89 men assigned to the light cruiser *Breslau* joined the group, bringing the total number of passengers to 548. They reached Sofia on 28 August and arrived in İstanbul the following morning. Expecting a grand Turkish welcome, Usedom was disappointed to find only a few local officers and Souchon there to greet him. Once in the city, the group was divided between two German embassy steamers, *General* and *Corcovado*, based on their assignments. Those bound for the Dardanelles boarded *General*, while Usedom and the others assigned to the Bosphorus defences boarded *Corcovado*.

A total of 159 naval personnel, led by Rear Admiral Johannes Merten, were dispatched to the Dardanelles and arrived there the following morning. Along with Merten, the accompanying officers, Lieutenant Commander Wossidlo, First Lieutenant Reeder, and Chief Surgeon Rosenberger, also boarded *Lily Rickmers*, another German steamer. The rest were instructed by the Turks to remain out of sight to avoid drawing attention, particularly from any potential Russian spies, thus minimising any risk to the Ottoman Empire's neutrality. Confined to the barracks at Değirmenburnu (Fort No. 22) on the Gallipoli Peninsula until their Turkish uniforms were ready, the German personnel remained under detention for a week. On 6 September, now dressed in uniforms of the Turkish 'heavy artillery' class, they were ready to set to work. Although originally sailors, they were attached to the army, as the artillery units in the straits were under the jurisdiction of the land forces rather than the navy. In line with the policy of promoting German officers serving in the Ottoman Army, they were granted a one-rank promotion to the equivalent land forces rank. Vice Admiral Usedom, now a general, was appointed 'Inspector General of Coastal Fortifications and Mine Troops,' reporting directly to Turkish General Headquarters, i.e. Enver Paşa. Rear-Admiral Merten, promoted to Turkish lieutenant-general, was named 'Delegate of General Headquarters for the Dardanelles,' while Captain Kühlwetter, promoted to brigadier-general, was appointed 'Delegate of General Headquarters for the Bosphorus.'

Initially, an effort was made to assign a certain number of German officers and NCOs to each fort in the straits to train the Turkish gun crews. However, it quickly became apparent that this method was ineffective, mainly due to the language barrier. Despite this, a 'competitive friendship' had emerged between the German and Turkish soldiers, according to Captain Mehmet Hilmi, commander of Fort Rumeli Mecidiye (Fort No. 13). It was eventually decided to designate the strongest forts in both the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus as 'training' or 'model' batteries, to be manned almost entirely by Germans. The selected battery for the Dardanelles was Fort Anadolu Hamidiye (Fort No. 19) on the Asiatic shore, while Fort Yukarı Anadolukavağı (known to the Germans simply as 'Kavak') was chosen for the Bosphorus. Wossidlo, now a Turkish lieutenant-colonel, was appointed to oversee the training activities at the Dardanelles, where he also assumed command of Fort Hamidiye. In addition to Hamidiye, Fort Orhaniye (Fort No. 4), one of the forts at the entrance to the Dardanelles, was also handed over to the Germans by Usedom's order to ensure that the observation service was carried out by naval personnel.

According to the new command arrangement, Turkish battery commanders in the Straits remained under the authority of their Turkish superiors, but German delegates were granted the power to intervene when needed. German officers,



A group of Turkish officers and German NCOs from the heavy artillery at the Dardanelles in December 1914. A German sign and a portrait of Wilhelm II, crafted to celebrate Christmas, can be seen in the foreground.

The two Turkish officers marked with 'X' on the left are First Lt. Hasam, OC Dardanos Battery, and Second Lt. Mevsuf. Both were killed on 18 March

1915, and their battery was later officially renamed in their honour.

On the right, the individuals marked are possibly Wilhelm Radau (sitting) and Paul Sommerfeld, two German sergeants who were also killed on 18 March. (Author's collection).

except for the delegates, did not have a direct superior-subordinate relationship with Turkish officers and instead functioned as ‘instructors.’ German other ranks, on the other hand, regarded Turkish officers as their superiors, saluted them, and followed their orders. However, in case of any conflict, they still had the right to appeal to their own officers. This somewhat hasty arrangement caused confusion in command and control, leading to unrest among Turkish officers, particularly at the Bosphorus. Usedom acknowledged this in a report to the German Admiralty, though he considered it ‘the most viable method at the time.’ The Turkish Fortified Area commander at the Bosphorus, Lieutenant-Colonel Yakup Şevki, ran into serious disagreements with Brigadier Köhlwetter and later with his successor, Captain Reclam. Eventually, within a year, both Köhlwetter and Reclam were reassigned elsewhere, while Şevki also lost his post due to his uncooperative attitude and was given command of the famous 19th Division, succeeding Colonel Mustafa Kemal. At the Dardanelles, however, things went smoother. Both Usedom and Merten were satisfied with the cooperation of Brigadier Cevat Paşa, the commander of the Dardanelles Fortified Area, who had been educated in Germany and was fluent in German. While Cevat was reassigned to a different post a year later, Merten, who was more accommodating than Köhlwetter, remained at the Dardanelles until the end of the war. Today, the street where he stayed in Çanakkale is still known to the locals as ‘German Street.’

By mid-September 1914, extensive training activities had begun in both straits, with firing exercises as the core focus. Initially, Usedom was unimpressed with the performance of the Turkish coastal artillery officers but had a more favourable view of the ordinary Turkish soldier, whom he described as ‘raw’ and ‘countryside boys.’ He later wrote, ‘The officers proved to be better than previously thought, but they still require extensive training.’ Although the training of gun crews was of great importance, the naval mines would constitute the most vital defensive asset for the straits, as the shortage of modern ammunition remained a major challenge. Usedom noted in his reports that ‘there was only enough ammunition to withstand a single major naval attack.’ The problem was made worse by the neutrality of both Romania and Bulgaria, which blocked the direct transport of ammunition from Germany.

The Germans at the Dardanelles saw their first action on 19 February 1915 during the first systematic naval attack on the outer forts. Usedom, who was inspecting Seddülbahir at the time of the battle, found himself caught in the bombardment while trying to cross to the Asiatic side to see his Germans at Fort Orhaniye. He watched the attack from a torpedo boat, unable to reach the opposite shore, before finally returning to Çanakkale in the afternoon. Although Usedom emerged unscathed from the bombardment, the German commander of Fort Orhaniye, Sub-Lieutenant Hans Woermann, was killed when a shell fired from a French ship, likely *Suffren*, hit the command post to the left of the fort. Along with Woermann, his interpreter, Reserve Officer Refik, and a telephone operator, Private Hamit, were also killed. Woermann’s body, placed in a coffin draped with the Turkish flag, was initially buried somewhere behind the fort. Years later, his remains were reinterred at the German Military Cemetery in Tarabya, İstanbul. According to Wallau, a German NCO who served alongside him and survived the war, Woermann was ‘the first German to cement the alliance with the brave Ottomans with his blood.’ The

month of February also saw the allocation of duties in the Dardanelles become clearer and more defined. Following an order from Enver, all sea-related services, including mine operations, were transferred from the Fortified Area Command to the German Delegate, Merten. This led the Germans to play a crucial role in mine operations in early March and throughout the remainder of the war. The most significant of these took place on the night of 7/8 March, when the minelayer *Nusret* carried out a mission that would prove to be a turning point in the Dardanelles campaign. Although most of *Nusret*'s crew were Turkish, with a few Germans providing technical assistance, the operation was planned and ordered by Merten.



Lieutenant Commander Fritz Wossidlo (1877–1942) wearing the uniform of the Ottoman heavy artillery (photo: Deutschlands Admirale 1849–1945, vol 3).

After the limited and somewhat experimental bombardments of the main forts by the Allied fleet in early March, the German gunners faced their greatest test on 18 March, the day of the decisive attempt to force the Dardanelles. The German gunners at Fort Hamidiye began firing with great enthusiasm at 13:00, sending a total of 75 shells at the Allied ships throughout the day, and suffered twenty casualties in total, including four killed. Usedom later reported to Wilhelm II that 127 shell holes were counted in the fort's courtyard, yet material damage was minimal. For their contributions to the victory that day, both Merten and Wossidlo were awarded the İmtiyaz Medal, the highest military decoration of the Ottoman Empire. Wossidlo, in particular, demonstrated

remarkable leadership and bravery by climbing to a gun emplacement, gathering the gun commanders around him, and personally assigning the target, which at that moment was HMS *Irresistible*. Usedom was also present during the Allied attack, observing the battle from a hill near the town of Çanakkale, alongside Merten and Cevat. The main debate over the German contribution to the Turkish victory on 18 March concerns whether the Germans delivered the final blow that sank the outdated yet still formidable French pre-dreadnought *Bouvet*. Although Usedom initially believed that the ship had struck a mine, he and most of the other Germans later concurred that it was, in fact, a shell fired from the German-manned 35.5 cm guns at Hamidiye that sank her. On the Turkish side, the prevailing belief was that the shell responsible for sinking *Bouvet* was fired from Fort Rumeli Mecidiye (Fort No. 13) on the opposite shore. The view that mines played a role in *Bouvet*'s sinking has lost prominence in recent years, while the belief that the final blow came from a shell has gained ground. However, the debate remains unresolved as to whether it was delivered by the Germans or the Turks.

On 26 April, upon receiving news of the Allied landings, Admiral Usedom arrived in Çanakkale from İstanbul, this time to personally assume temporary command of the Fortified Area. However, the expected joint attack on the Dardanelles did not

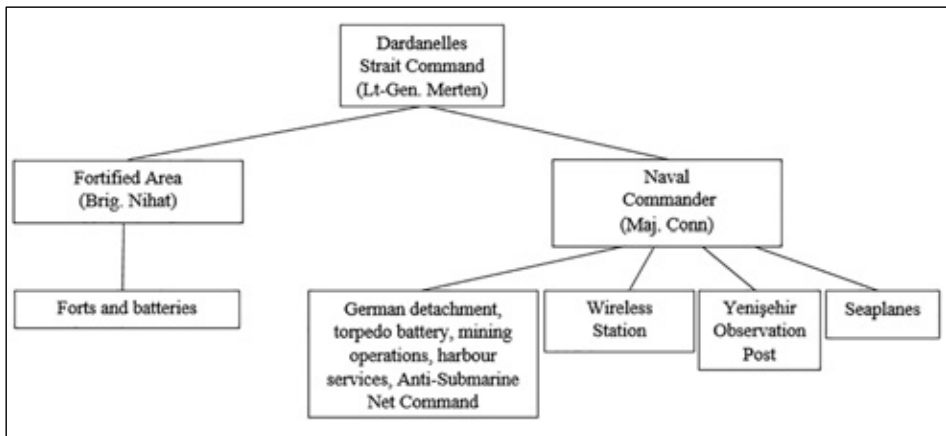
take place, and he decided to return to İstanbul several days later. As the fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula raged on, Usedom placed more emphasis on utilising the artillery on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles to harass the Allied forces at the southern tip of the peninsula. At Enver's orders, however, he had to share his artillery force with Liman von Sanders, commander of the Ottoman 5th Army defending the peninsula, with whom he had always had strained relations, sending a significant number of guns across the strait. Usedom believed that even if the army had to retreat, the batteries on the Asiatic side should remain in place, making him reluctant to reduce his artillery force. By late August 1915, more than 70 guns had been handed over to the army on the Gallipoli Peninsula from the Dardanelles and even the Bosphorus. Among them were two batteries of quick-firing 8.8 cm guns, totalling six, manned entirely by German gunners and previously stationed on the Asiatic shore near İn Tepe. The three-gun battery known as the 'Alman (German) Battery' was positioned behind Alçı Tepe (Achi Baba) on the Helles Front, while the other, the 'Usedom Battery,' named after Usedom himself, was deployed east of İsmailoğlu Tepe (W Hills) at Suvla. Throughout the land campaign, a total of 44 German gunners became casualties, including 21 killed, not only on the Peninsula but also on the Asiatic shore.



Merten, Usedom, and Cevat (left to right) posing together at the headquarters of the Fortified Area Command near Çanakkale, sometime after the naval victory on 18 March.
(Photo: *Das Illustrierte Blatt*)

As the war progressed, the German presence in the straits became more structured, with an expanding organisation. In late August 1915, the 'Coast Inspectorate' under Captain Reclam was established to protect sea transport to the 5th Army amid the growing threat of Allied submarines. Additionally, several seaplane squadrons were formed not only in the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus but also along the Black Sea coast. Most notably, in September 1915, the 'Strait Commands' were formally

established, replacing the somewhat ambiguous ‘delegate’ position. Merten was reappointed as ‘Commander of the Dardanelles,’ while Wossidlo, receiving a promotion, was transferred to İstanbul as ‘Commander of the Bosphorus.’ Around the same time, Usedom’s command was officially renamed the ‘General Command of the Straits.’ From mid-1915 onwards, German influence in the straits extended beyond combat activities into logistics. Captain Waldemar Pieper, who had been court-martialled in Germany in 1914 for causing the sinking of the cruiser SMS *Yorck* in the North Sea, unexpectedly found himself sent to Turkey, where he was appointed ‘Weapons Inspector’ under Usedom. He made a significant contribution to establishing artillery shell production in İstanbul, alleviating the severe ammunition shortages that had plagued the Ottoman forces defending the Dardanelles. Despite his tarnished reputation, Pieper’s success was so notable that it led to a pardon from the German Emperor, overturning his postponed prison sentence.



The command structure at the Dardanelles as of 1 November 1915.

Except for some limited organisational and staff changes, both Usedom’s headquarters and the Strait Commands retained their structures until the end of the war. In the first month of the war, 17 officers, including two admirals, were serving in the Turkish Straits; by February 1915, this number had risen to 26. By the end of the Gallipoli Campaign, the total number of officers stationed in both straits and at Usedom’s headquarters had reached 70. Personnel numbers continued to grow steadily, and by early 1917, a total of 77 officers and 810 other ranks were serving in the Straits. Unsurprisingly, this figure remained largely unchanged throughout the final two decisive years of the war. Following the Ottoman Empire’s defeat and the signing of the Armistice of Mudros, Usedom’s ‘General Command of the Straits’ and all its subordinate organisations were dissolved on 2 November 1918.

Today, 18 March, is the main commemoration day of the Gallipoli Campaign in Turkey, marking the defeat of a powerful combined naval force—though largely composed of old pre-dreadnoughts. The decision to establish this as the main commemoration day was made during the war, with the first ceremonies held in 1916. In the 107 years since the war’s end, the contributions of German naval

personnel to the victory on 18 March have remained largely overlooked, while discussions regarding the German role at Gallipoli have often centred on the controversial operational decisions of Liman von Sanders during the land campaign, sometimes veering into conspiracy theories.



Admiral Guido von Usedom
 Portrait by Wilhelm Victor Krausz
 Location 'Stamboul 1915'
 Courtesy Mesut Uyar

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“THE GREATEST DAY OF MY LIFE”

The story of Lieutenant the Hon. Arthur George Coke 1882-1915
Stephen Chambers



Lieutenant the Hon. Arthur George Coke, wearing the uniform of the Royal Horse Guards, 1914 (IWM HU 120148).

Arthur George Coke was born on 6 April 1882 in Paddington, London. One of five children, he was the second son of Thomas William Coke, 3rd Earl of Leicester, and the Hon. Alice Emily Coke (née White). The family were, according to the 1891 Census, living at 13 Cadogan Square, Chelsea, a household with 12 servants, including butler, valet, footman, lady's maid, nurse, housemaids, nursery maids, cook, kitchen maid and a scullery maid. Arthur was educated at HMS *Britannia* (a training ship for the preliminary education of naval officers) and joined the Royal Navy in 1897, retiring with the rank of lieutenant in 1903. On 10 May 1906 he married Lady Phyllis Hermione Essex (née Drury). They had two children; Lady Diana Merial Coke, born in 1907 and Anthony Louis Lovel Coke, born in 1909. At that time Arthur was working as a stockbroker and living at Flaunden House, Chesham, a picturesque market town located comfortably in the London commuter belt in Buckinghamshire.¹

On the outbreak of war Arthur Coke was commissioned into the 2nd County of London Yeomanry (Westminster Dragoons) as a second lieutenant² but was almost immediately transferred to the prestigious Royal Horse Guards (The Blues), serving with them in Flanders. After the First Battle of Ypres (19 October - 22 November 1914) and the start of trench warfare during the winter of 1914, Coke looked for his next adventure;

“What I am really very anxious to do is to get into Commander Samson's Armoured Cars. I hear they have the greatest sport in every way. They get a lot of exciting fighting, which is better than sitting in these infernal trenches”.³

In Belgium Samson's⁴ armoured cars⁵ were used primarily in a reconnaissance role in support of the naval brigades. In January 1915 Coke transferred as a lieutenant to Samson's fledgling armoured car detachment of the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS).



Officers of the Royal Horse Guards in 1914 with Arthur Coke in the back row, seventh from the left
(*The Tatler*, No. 701, 2 December 1914).

Back in England the detachment grew. They moved from Eastchurch in Kent to Wormwood Scrubs, the London recruiting and mounting base for what was retitled the Royal Naval Armoured Car Division (RNACD). The RNACD were stationed at the *Daily Mail* airship shed, a building that was constructed in 1909, supported and funded by the newspaper. During the First World War, the site and shed were handed to the Admiralty and renamed RNAS Wormwood Scrubs. Here the RNACD began their preliminary training. One Petty Officer Mechanic, David Fyffe, wrote,

"In view of our purpose in life, which is to act as motor-car cavalry for reconnaissance and advanced skirmishing work, our training has been nothing if not comprehensive. Besides the general motor-car and motor-cycle instruction which the nature of our work demands, we have also spent endless time and trouble in becoming thoroughly conversant with the internal economy of the Maxim-gun which forms the armament of our oars."⁶

In the new year Coke was sent off to Norfolk on coastal defence work, his section being billeted in barns on the Earl of Leicester's (his father's) estate. In Norfolk they took part in manoeuvres with a few exciting nights chasing Zeppelins which had begun raids over the area. The unit soon moved about 8 miles up the road to Brancaster, a welcome change as the RNACD men were becoming a little disgruntled staying at Holkham as the Earl charged each man 1/6d in payment for the straw they had slept on. Fyffe wrote that "*not for nothing is the Earl of Leicester known as the meanest man in the East of England.*" I wonder what they thought of his son. Fyffe wrote that:

"By this time we were getting very tired of playing about in England, and so when orders arrived late one night that we were to return to London at once, preparatory to going on active service, there was great rejoicing in the squadron and, I regret to say, an unprecedented consumption of the wine of rejoicing."⁷

Of the twenty squadrons that formed the RNACD⁸, it would be No.3 and No.4 Squadrons, with their purposed built Rolls-Royce armoured cars with revolving turrets, along with their Seabrooke lorries, which would be embarking for the Dardanelles.⁹ Leaving Wormwood Scrubs, they journeyed to Devon where they were stationed at Tavistock during early March, before sailing for the Mediterranean. This move from home to overseas service was primarily due to the canvassing by their unit's commanders, Commander Josiah Wedgwood MP, and his second-in-command, fellow Member of Parliament Francis McLaren. Fyffe wrote:

"What this means exactly, nobody knows. It looks like participation in the projected expedition against Constantinople but as the roads there are, by all reports, conspicuous by their absence, many people think that we are bound for Egypt for Canal patrol work with the oars, and that is a job that everybody is most anxious to avoid, the universal view in the squadron being "Active service at all costs".¹⁰

At the time of boarding SS *Inkosi* on 21 March 1915 for their new adventure, the RNACD had a far from certain future. The fantasy thoughts that they might be sent "*to land at Constantinople, and roll up to Vienna*" didn't bode well with the officers. McLaren confronted General Sir Ian Hamilton who "*promised to help us all he could*" but then he "*pointed out of course what is obvious to everyone and makes us rather a laughing stock - that for the Gallipoli campaign armoured cars are absurd.*" McLaren wrote "*conditions are so rough that they cannot even use cavalry, or any form of wheel transport, What then of our fate?*"¹¹ McLaren goes on to explain two alternatives "*1. To land in Gallipoli on our feet and use our machine guns to help the Army; 2. To find another job. I am trying both.*"¹² Wedgwood decided on one last appeal as it looked less likely that his squadron would be needed ashore for at least a month, or at worst they all feared that they could be returned to England or sent to Egypt. Accompanied by Coke, he went to see Hamilton on 18 April to offer their services "*in any capacity*".¹³ They got their wish.

Coke wrote that Hamilton wanted some marines to man the first troopship that lands.

“Isn’t it splendid, we have got the job – Wedgwood, Illingworth, Parkes and myself. Forty men were taking ten Maxims and putting them all round the fo’c’sle of the ship and we are to cover the landing of the first troops, who are 2,000 Irish Fusiliers (regulars). Captain Unwin of the navy is in charge of the ship with only twelve men (crew). He is going to beach her and has cut holes under the fo’c’sle for the men to immediately jump out and land ... I cannot think of anything more exciting, also we shall see the whole thing. We shall have the fleet behind us so if the Turks do shell us, I don’t think it will be for long although she is a pretty big target. Today we have been very busy building shelters over our guns. I think it will be short but sharp to take Gallipoli.”¹⁴

Leaving McLaren¹⁵, the drivers and best mechanics on board the SS *Inkosi* with the armoured cars, Wedgwood chose Douglas Illingworth, Charles Parkes and Arthur Coke to accompany him with 40 men and 10 machine guns. Wedgwood, in a very enthusiastic letter written a few days before the landing alludes to the plan;

“It is just exactly the job I should have liked to get ... The Captain is going to run this ship ashore so that the troops can disembark, dry-shod, and our guns, mounted on this ship, will cover the landing ... The captain calls this ship the Wooden Horse of Troy, for it looks like a collier gone wrong, and from it will spring men in thousands armed to the teeth...”

The ship he refers to is none other than the SS *River Clyde* which would come ashore on V beach on 25 April 1915.¹⁶

Wedgwood and his officers positioned their machine guns on the bridge and the main deck. Wedgwood commanded a single maxim on the bridge, Illingworth had three guns on the port quarter, Parkes had three guns on the port side, and Coke was in the most prominent position with three guns on the fo’c’sle. “*This is to be my seat in the stalls,*” Coke told Wedgwood, “*and many a man now in England would give £1,000 for it.*” It was from Coke’s ‘seat in the stalls’ that he witnessed the tragedy of the V Beach landing. Although the *River Clyde* beached itself largely unhindered, it was soon obvious that Ottoman defenders that were positioned around the beach were still very much alive. The previous naval bombardment did little in destroying their positions, let alone suppressing their fire which was poured down into those landing. Illingworth wrote:

“Our old boat was riddled with bullets and hit a good many times by shells from the Asiatic coast. It is a ghastly thing to be in a ship stranded and unprotected in any way. Both bullets and shells went right through. I had a gun on the bridge and had put up plate which kept the bullets out, but several officers were killed beside me who would persist in standing up too much.”¹⁷

Minutes before the *River Clyde* beached, the crammed rowing boats of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers became easy targets for the Ottoman defenders. When the Royal Munster Fusiliers disembarked through the ship’s purpose-made sally-ports the combined casualties soon mounted. Wedgwood himself estimated that fewer than 10% made it to the shore. All the machine guns blazed away to suppress the Ottoman fire, doing their best to allow the RDF and RMF to get ashore. Pinned to the beach and a short rocky spit, every effort to advance was thwarted by the intense Ottoman fire. Clearly the V beach landing had failed.



His 'place in the stalls' - Arthur Coke (left), David Fyffe (second left) with the RNACD armoured car machine gunners (Stephen Chambers Collection).

Above V Beach witnessing the slaughter was none other than the RNACD former commander, Commander Charles Rumney Samson. Samson reported that "*the sea was absolutely red with blood to 50 yards out*" as the machine guns of Wedgwood's volunteer force did their utmost to rescue this landing from the disaster it had turned out to be. Illingworth wrote:

"The hillsides leading up from the little bay were covered with trenches, which were comparatively little damaged. So, we had to keep on firing hard to protect our handful of men on shore from being rushed and then land the rest under cover of darkness."¹⁸

It was that night that those still onboard the *River Clyde* could disembark, whilst those on the beaches could at last move from the body-strewn surf line. It was not until the morning of 26 April, after a renewed naval bombardment and suppressing fire from the machine guns on the *River Clyde*, that the breakout from the beach was achieved. Adding to the six Victoria Crosses already awarded to the Royal Navy for 25 April 1915 on V Beach, three more Victoria Crosses were awarded for that following day and the fight off the beach.

Later that day, with the beachhead secured, Wedgwood began to disembark his machine-gun crews to follow the infantry forward into positions above the village of Sedd-el-Bahr. The battle of the beaches was over. The advance on Krithia and Achi Baba was about to begin.¹⁹ The First Battle of Krithia began on 28 April as the British made their way forward from the beaches in an advance to contact operation. They were joined by the French who, after their diversionary attack at Kum Kale, had now landed at Helles. This battle allowed the allies to push forward just over a mile inland, over a three-mile front, but it was not without heavy casualties; almost 3,000 of the 14,000 engaged. What turned out to be an overly complex and poorly-communicated battle led to uncoordinated advances and loss of cohesion of troops. The casualties to date had been colossal, a rate that could not be sustained without reinforcements. Any thoughts of carrying Achi Baba by a *coup de main* were over when the battle ended that same day.

Between 30 April and 1 May a French, Indian and RND brigade had been landed to boost Allied numbers. Wedgwood originally planned for one section of machine gunners to be in the trenches for a 48-hour shift, the other two being kept in reserve to rest, however, as Illingworth explained in a letter, "*the fighting was much too fierce to keep to this rule*"²⁰ and two sections were kept forward. The Ottomans had also been reinforced and used this new injection of men to counterattack the newly established, but still weak Allied line on 1 May. At 10.00 pm, Ottoman artillery began a preliminary bombardment of the British and French positions, this leading to one of the largest Ottoman attacks yet seen on the peninsula. *En masse*, over 15,000 Ottoman troops charged forward in the dark, penetrating the Allied lines in several places. Illingworth, whose section was in the line between Krithia Road and Achi Baba Nullah, wrote that this was "*the most terrible time ... countless rapid fire from every rifle and gun ... no one can imagine what it is like who has not been in it.*" While Illingworth survived this onslaught and wrote "*I was indeed thankful when daylight came and they were driven off*",²¹ the squadron was to mourn the loss of their first officer, Arthur George Coke.

It was during the night counterattack, early 2 May, that Coke was killed by a burst of shrapnel. Coke's 'A Section' had been at rest at the squadron's base camp, leaving the other two sections holding the forward trench. Fyffe recorded in his diary,

"The camp was in rather an exposed position, being situated on the summit of an upstanding bluff rather less than a mile behind the firing line. Here on the grassy, tree-dotted plateau which commanded a view of the entire fighting area right forward to Achi Baba, we had stacked our stores, picketed our mules, dug shelter trenches and generally established an advanced base."²²

Rations, which had been organised by Coke, had arrived that night in the form of boxes of bacon, a welcome change to the past week which consisted of a diet of bully beef, biscuits and jam rations. On top of the bluff the section mixed with the French whose adjoining line stretched around Morto Bay to Eski Hissarlik. The French had also positioned some of their artillery close by, so it was soon to prove not one of the safest spots on Gallipoli.

Fyffe recorded in his diary what happened next.

"About one a.m. [Sunday, 2 May] I was awakened by someone shaking vigorously at my shoulder. "Wake up, wake up, they are shelling the camp. Get into the shelter trenches at once!" Just then, "Crack! --- crack, crack!" came from overhead as three shrapnel shells burst over the camp and the bullets came showering down through the foliage of the trees under which I was sleeping. Hardly had I time to throw off my blankets before another three lit up the ground with sudden white flashlights as their bullets pattered upon the ground all around us. This was becoming too warm all together and hastily I pulled on my boots, grabbed my overcoat and scuttled for the trenches on the edge of the plateau behind a low wall, being hastened on my way by still another salvo. The trench was full of half-dressed men cursing fervently at this disturbance of their first decent night's rest. All the rest of that night we crouched in the shelter-trenches while the Turkish guns plastered the plateau with shrapnel and the shells from a concealed French battery close behind our camp roared over our heads in reply. Just after a group of three shells had burst close overhead, there was a shout from farther along the trench. "Quick! Bring a torch, Coke's been hit!" Heedless of bursting shells we scrambled out into the open and ran along to where a group of men were bending over something that lay on the parapet of the trench. The electric torch was handed over and switched on and there, lying still and motionless with closed eyes, lay our Lieutenant whom we loved more than any other officer in the whole corps. A brief examination showed that he was beyond all human aid for the ball had entered his head just above the forehead and death had been instantaneous. There was nothing to be done but just to cover the poor still form and go back into our trenches over which the shells were still bursting in twos and threes. It was a very silent and miserable group that crouched amid the dirt that night. Several of the men did not attempt to conceal their grief for Coke had been one of ourselves, living with us and sharing all our hardships as well as our joys, and every man felt as if he had lost a personal friend. We recalled how untiring he had been in all matters affecting our comfort and well-being, and we thought with a pang that it had been he who had walked all the long way to the beach, to obtain for us, by tireless harassing of quartermasters and stores-officers, the very bacon

that had been such a Godsend to us the previous evening. It seemed impossible that he should really be gone away from us and we wondered what would become of Section A now that we had lost him. Half an hour later the CPO sent me forward to inform the Commander in the firing line of what had occurred and as I passed the shrouded form lying still and silent I thought of his beautiful young wife who had waved goodbye to us from the pier that night at Plymouth.”²³

Chief Petty Officer Mechanic George Gilbert recorded the death of Coke in an article published in the *Lincolnshire Echo* of 28 May 1915:

“On the 30th April we began to move our base forward to a mile behind the firing line, on the top of a hill, just in front of a French battery of 75 and 65mm guns, and we were shelled pretty badly here, the Turks endeavouring to find the big guns. It was here that we lost Lieut. the Hon. A. G. Coke on the 1st of May (Saturday, I think). In the evening, they made a serious attack on our lines and broke through our French lines on the right flank and penetrated pretty well to our base. Heavy fighting went on all night, and dawn broke to find Turks and French mixed together. The French Senegalese troops rallied and made a brilliant bayonet charge, clearing our foes back beyond our original first lines. It was at 3.30 am. Lieut Coke and several others including myself, were stood observing the fire from the edge of our base, when a shrapnel [shell] burst at our foot, killing Lieut. Coke instantly and raking us all pretty well.”



Arthur Coke's funeral, photographed by Douglas Illingworth. (Stephen Chambers Collection)

News of Coke's death was received by his family on 24 May 1915. The *'Diss Express'* of 28 May 1915 reported Arthur Coke, second son of the Earl of Leicester, being killed. A memorial service was held on 30 May. The *'Diss Express'* reported in its 4 June edition that “hundreds of people flocked to the church, and as the edifice was incapable of accommodating all, a crowd of large dimensions had to remain outside.” Conducting the

service was the Bishop of Thetford who read out the letter from Commander Wedgwood:²⁴

“Dear Mrs. Coke, Your husband, who knew no fear, was killed by a shrapnel bullet in the head. I think if he could have had his choice, he would have died like that. He is buried a few yards from where I sit, on the spot on which he fell, on the top of a cliff looking out over the battlefield. They have put a small wooden cross at his head. That night I had sent him back from the trenches, where had been for some time, to rest at the base; but we were heavily attacked, and he sent up to me at 1 a.m. to know if I wanted him back. That was the last I heard of him. He watched all night and was killed just at dawn, when the enemy was on the run. I cannot put on paper — I could never quite tell you — how I loved him and still miss him. — Yours very sincerely, J. C. Wedgwood.” The bishop then addressed the younger men of Holkham, with “what are you going to do in the face of this? Here is an example of one of your very own, with his splendid fearlessness and tremendous devotion to duty. What are you going to do? Let there be no hanging back, no playing the coward. Won't you avenge him?”

The service ended with the Last Post.

Today Arthur Coke is commemorated on the Helles Memorial to the Missing in Gallipoli. At home Coke's name is on the magnificent brass plaque inside St Mary Magdalene Church, Flaunden. In Norfolk he is on the Roll of Honour on the Holkham village War Memorial which was erected by his father. His name also features on the Holkham Hall Roll of Honour, a framed list of people from the Holkham estate who served in the armed forces. One of the most elaborate memorials to Coke is in St Withburga's church in Holkham. Here on the north aisle a marble wall monument is framed by a broken pediment with the Coke coat of arms in a cartouche with the family motto *Prudens qui patiens* (The prudent man is patient). Beneath are the regimental badges of the Royal Horse Guards and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, and central is a portrait bust in a roundel showing Coke in three-quarter view, modelled on his portrait photograph, his wavy hair brushed back, staring out as if at the enemy.

In 2024, as part of the Gallipoli Association's Helles Battlefield Survey Project, I visited with the team the RNACD camp area. Using a mixture of original photographs, eyewitness descriptions and a period map, we were able to locate the site of the base camp. By using this position, we were then able to find Coke's buried place ([See photos page 32 - 33](#)). The original photographs of his grave and burial party were matched perfectly to the ground as it is today. We paid our respects to Arthur George Coke and the men of the Royal Naval Armoured Car Division - "*Si vis pacem, para bellum*".²⁵



-
- To the Dear and Gallant Memory of
 ARTHUR GEORGE CORIE
 3RD SON OF THOMAS WILKINS 3RD EARL OF LEICESTER
 BORN April 6TH 1885 Killed in action May 2ND 1915
 The first person in the Royal Navy
 On the outbreak of War with Germany was in England a
 commission in the Royal Horse Artillery and fought on London
 October 31ST to December 3RD in the first battle of Ypres
 Then by his own wish he was transferred to the
 Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and went to the
 Dardanelles with a Squadron of Unarmoured Motor Craft
 With his Machine Gun in the S. M. Motor Gunboat he helped to
 cover the landing of troops of the 1ST Division at
 Soudia Bay on Sunday April 25TH 1915 in his own words
 "The greatest day of my life"
 He landed and went on land till dawn on Sunday May 2ND
 He grieved all for his Country and was buried where he fell
 His Family and Friends who mourn him
 Ever Faithfully, In God
 His Mother and Father
 His Sister and Brother

In Remembrance
Memorial to Arthur Coke in the parish church
of St Withburga on the Holkham estate,
Norfolk.

SEE YOUR ARTICLE IN PRINT!

Articles for the Gallipolian

Articles and smaller items of interest about any aspect of the Gallipoli campaign are always welcome. These should be submitted direct to the editor, preferably by email, at editor@gallipoli-association.org.

It is not always possible to feature articles in the issue following submission although where there is an element of topicality the editor will try to accommodate them. The editor can provide notes for the guidance of contributors on request.

NSW / ACT CHAPTER INAUGURAL MEETING

Paul Simadas

The New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory Chapter in Australia of the Gallipoli Association held its first seminar in May 2025. Titled “Service at Gallipoli and Afterwards in the Great War, commemorating the 110th anniversary of the Campaign”, the seminar was held on 3rd May 2025 at the Anzac Memorial in Sydney and attracted an attendance of over forty people, including UK member Debbie from Dundee, Scotland, who was visiting Australia at the time.

This was also a joint meeting between the *Families and Friends of the First AIF*, and the Australian New South Wales branch of the *Western Front Association* and ensured a good turn-out for the day.

Three presentations were made by descendants of Australians who had served at Gallipoli and who had then gone on to serve elsewhere in the Great War.



Craig Laffin (left) and Paul Simadas delivered a joint presentation on Sister Nellie Laffin. Her story appears in *The Gallipolian* no. 167.

Ian Faulconbridge talked about his research into his three great-uncles in “The Cook Brothers at War.” One of the brothers, George Cook, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his gallantry at Gallipoli.

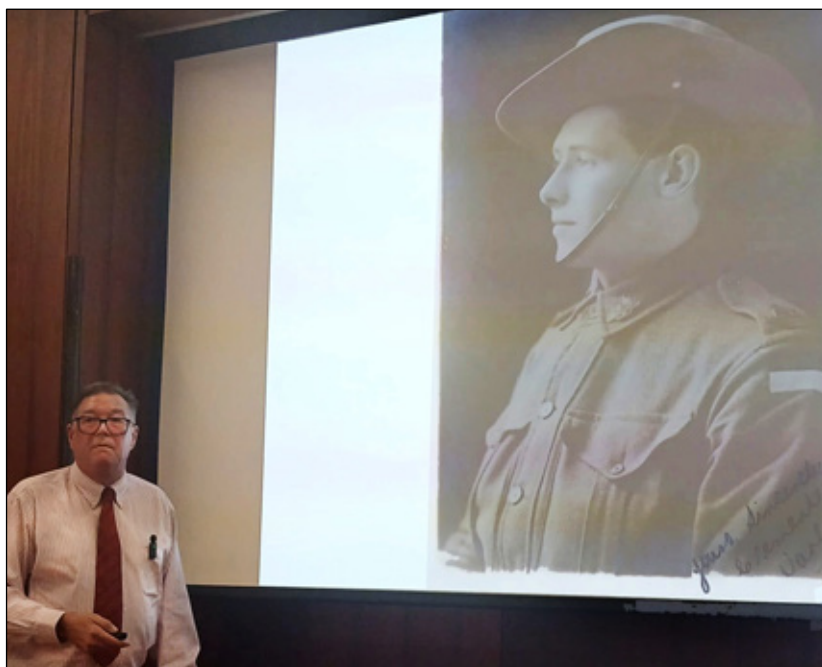
The meeting then paid tribute to Nellie Alfreda Laffin, née Pike, an AANS nurse who served for several months on Lemnos in 1915, and who became the very first woman veteran and full-member woman member of the Gallipoli Association in the 1980s after being initially enrolled as an associate member. Craig Laffin, a grandson of Nellie, was present and spoke fondly of Nellie’s passion to serve her country and tend the wounded in the war.

Paul Simadas, the chapter chair, delivered a short presentation in honour of Nellie’s service in Egypt, Lemnos and England, and of her story as the GA’s first woman member.

The final talk was by GA member Andrew Dunlop, who presented a talk titled *Clement York Varley, ASC and AFC 1914-1919*. Varley served as an Australian Army Service Corps NCO at Gallipoli and in France, before

volunteering for pilot training. Clement declined the offer of 1914 home leave made in 1918 to men who had served at Gallipoli, and instead extended his service to become a pilot in the Australian Flying Corps. Though the war ended in the meantime, he flew over England as an instructor pilot until July 1919.

Members and guests assisted in making the event a great success with raffle prizes and an afternoon tea to top things off. Thank you to all who supported this event.



Andrew Dunlop describes the service of Clement Varley and showed several interesting items relating to his service, including his pilot log books and wartime photographs.

See Andrew's article 'Fire over the Peninsula', [pages 53 - 55](#).

NORDENFELDT GUN WHEREABOUTS

[From *The Gallipolian* No. 131, Spring 2013]

Then editor (Foster Summerson) wrote:

I am grateful to Richard Szwed for alerting me to the existence of the Nordenfeldt Gun, which was captured by the 2nd Bn. Royal Fusiliers at 'V' Beach on 25 April 1915. The gun, which Richard describes as being of the 'pom-pom' type, is on display outside the Royal Fusiliers Museum at the Tower of London. Sadly, the museum is only accessible if you pay the hefty admission charge to visit the Tower!

Can any member advise whether this gun is still on display?

I HARDLY KNOW HOW TO START THIS LETTER

Colonel A S Taylor OBE DL

So begins a letter, written from Suvla Bay on the 11th August 1915, by 108 Serjeant (Drum Major) Charles Faulkner to his mother. Sjt Faulkner and his father, 106 Company Serjeant Major Bill Faulkner, were both serving with D Company the 1/1st Herefordshire Regiment, a territorial battalion of 158 (North Wales) Brigade in 53 (Welsh) Division. Father and son had both been members of the Herefordshire Rifle Volunteers and founder members of the battalion when it was formed in 1908 as part of the territorial force. CSM Faulkner had been awarded the Volunteer Forces Long Service Medal in 1902. Another son/brother, 109 Joseph, had been serving with the 2nd Battalion in the UK and had been discharged medically unfit in May 1915.



CSM William (KIA 9 August 1915), Sgt Joseph and Drum Major Charles Faulkner (seated).

The battalion had landed at Suvla Bay overnight on 8/9 August. Amongst the confusion they were soon in action advancing on the southern flank towards a dry

river course – the Azmak Dere. Their advance is captured in a 1922 oil painting by Charles Dixon ([See page 31](#)).

Sjt Faulkner's letter was published in *The Hereford Times*.

Dear Mother, I hardly know how to start this letter, I am so much upset. We landed on August the 9th at 0600hrs. Our Navy was very busy shelling the hills. We were drawn up on the sea shore and were not there more than an hour when the enemy started shelling us. Some of the Welsh I believe were killed. The first to be hit in our regiment was Stanley Mailes (out of the market) but after a little while the shelling died down. We had dinner which we brought with us off the boat.

Then towards the evening we were ordered to get ready to go into the firing line. Dad and I were together up till then. We extended over some very rough country. I should think we had got about 2 miles when the enemy started to shell us with shrapnel shells, just like that one we have got at home, so we had to drop down and take our luck; it was awful. I thought the Regiment would have been all cut up.

Well Mam I can hardly steady myself to tell you that one of the bullets from the shells hit dad. So after the Turks stopped shelling I got a little further up dodging the snipers. The first fellow I saw was young Phelps (the butcher's son) coming back bleeding, shot in the arm. He said 'Oh dear I've got hit - go up along there I believe your father is wounded'. I then saw the stretcher bearers with another of our company Jack Wood shot through the leg. I went on but I could not see or find Dad anywhere. It was then getting dusk so I made off in the direction of the beach. I had not gone many yards on this rough country when I heard someone groaning; it was a fellow from Leominster a Sergeant in B Company shot through the shoulder from shellfire. Well I had to give up hope of finding poor old dad and I took the fellow to hospital also Tom Wright (out of Lawrence Terrace) he was hit in the arm. When I got to the dressing station I was deadbeat. Then I made for our headquarters but I had to give up and drop down on the sands with some artillery men till the morning. I could not sleep thinking about poor Dad. When I got in next morning I was told he had been picked up and taken to the hospital but was quite dead so I never saw him again try and bear up till I return.

We have lost a great many fellows wounded and missing. The rest of the Regiment returned today 11 August for a rest. Major Carless is in command he said he was very, very sorry and Captain Rogers also expressed how sorry he was; he also has been hit just over the eye and through the hand. I have not been back to the company but am on ration convoy duty for the supply depot to the rear of the firing line. We take the iron rations, as they are called, on the backs of mules up to the support lines. We have to dodge the snipers. What is left of the Battalion has gone back into action tonight. At the time of writing we're under shellfire and I have just been smothered with dirt. I saw the grave where Dad was buried just behind the hospital with three more near him. Jack Cook is all right up to the time of writing; you might tell his wife, also Sjt Bracher (of Guildford St). Our troops are pushing forward and I hope will keep doing so and get it over soon.

CSM Faulkner was 51 years old, a carpenter from Hereford. His son, Charles was also a carpenter and Joseph a plumber. Charles served throughout the war with the Herefords and rejoined the battalion (as did Joseph) on the reformation of the Territorial Army in 1920.

Charles continued as drum major and died 'on the ranges' during an 'MG Pairs Practice'. His death certificate states: 'Died from heart failure due to fatty degeneration of the heart and brought on by sudden exertion after a meal'. The certificate is signed by the County Deputy Coroner - O B Wallis – who had been a captain with the battalion at Suvla Bay.



Drum Major Charles Faulkner (right) with Col H E P Pateshall who had served at Suvla Bay as a 158 Brigade Staff Officer – possibly taken on the reformation of the battalion in 1920 when Col Pateshall was Commanding Officer

The author, Colonel Andy Taylor, is the honorary curator of the Herefordshire Light Infantry Museum, Suvla Barracks, Hereford.



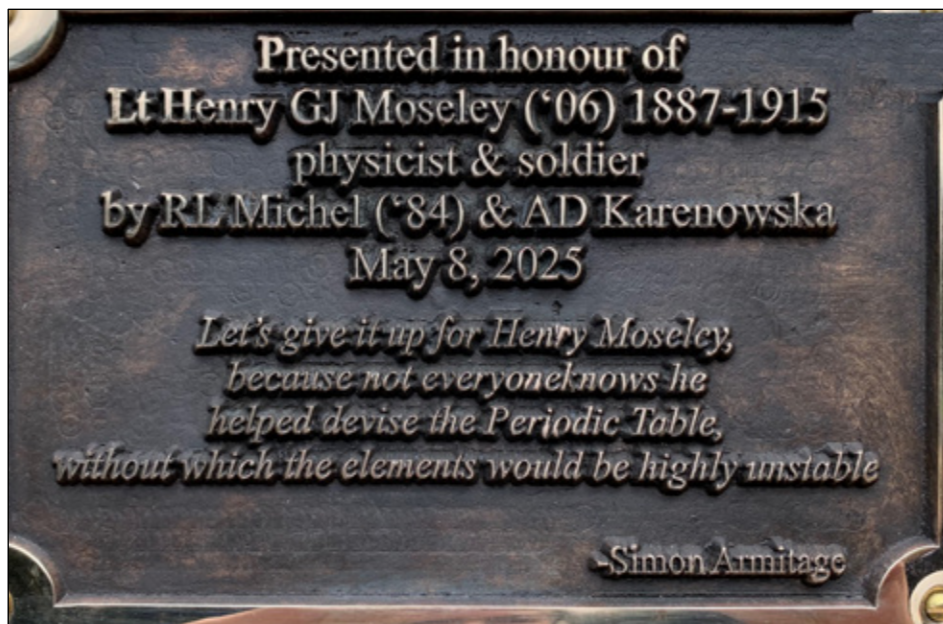
Above: The Princess Royal lays a wreath at the Helles Memorial, 24 April 2025. *See page 2.*

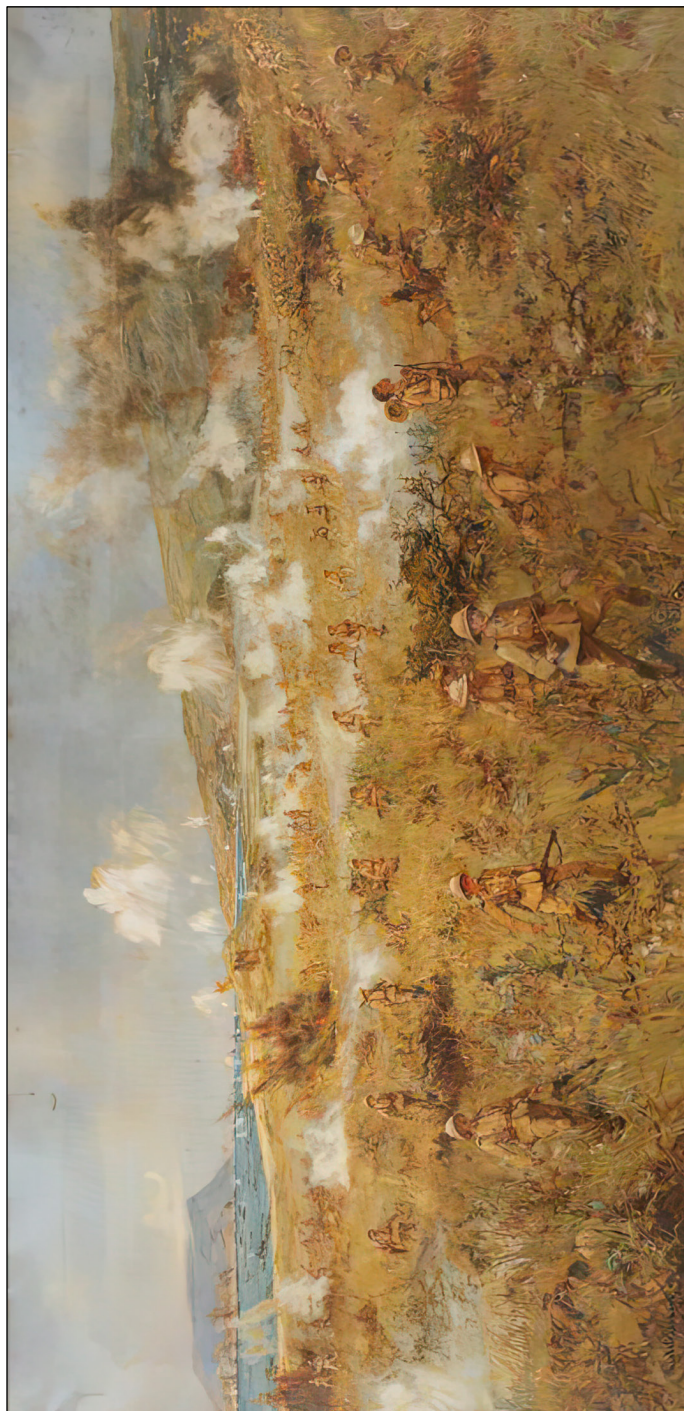
Below: The Duchess of Edinburgh laid a wreath during the Dawn Service at Hyde Park Corner.





Remembering Henry Moseley. Alan Bingham at the memorial door, Trinity College, Oxford, and laying a wreath on behalf of the Gallipoli Association. See page 5.





Advance at Suvla – Charles Dixon

The 1st Battalion, Herefordshire Regiment (TF), Landing at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli, Turkey, 9 August 1915
The Herefordshire Light Infantry (TA) Museum. See pages 26 – 28.



Then & Now – Lieutenant Arthur George Coke's grave, 1915 – 2024. (Stephen Chambers Collection).

Next Page (Top). Memorial placed on site of Lieutenant Coke's grave, 2024. - *Prudens qui patiens.*





Photo to left and both on page 32 relate to article on Lieut. Coke.
See pages 14 – 23

Below: Sophie Haworth, Youth Ambassador for the Gallipoli Association, receives the award of Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Hampshire from Lord Lieutenant Nigel Atkinson. See page 3.

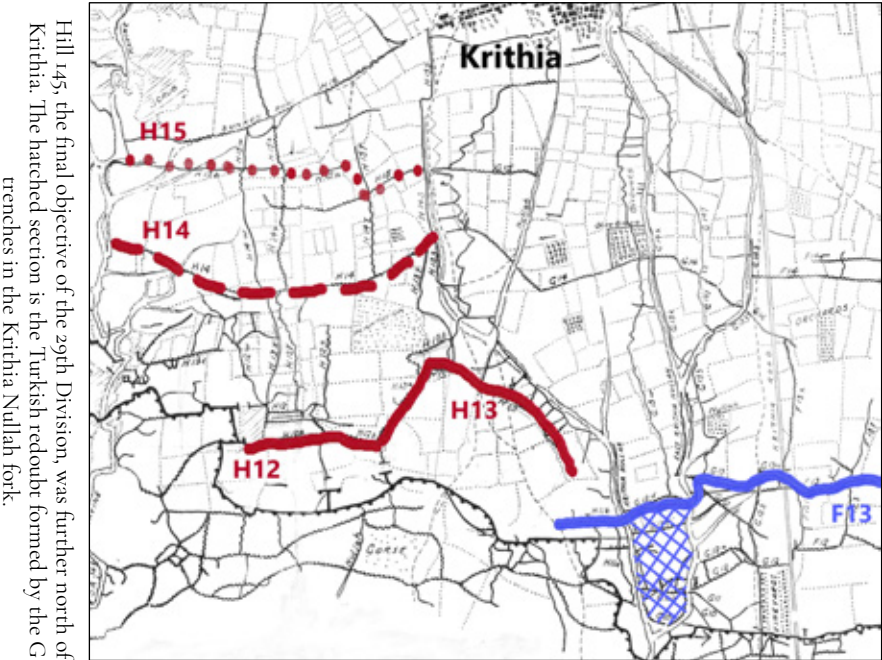


Photographer: Keith Woodland



Above: Address by Stuart Adam, chairman of the Trustees Collingwood Memorial. See page 4.

Below: A marked-up map of the trenches to be captured under Army Corps Order 14



Hill 145, the final objective of the 29th Division, was further north of Krithia. The hatched section is the Turkish redoubt formed by the G trenches in the Krithia Nullah fork.

(explained in the article *In Defence of General Street*, pages 56 -58.)



Above: Local residents watching smoke from the fire at Anzac from Bigali, August 2024.
Below: The Farm Cemetery, with Suvla Bay in the distance, through burnt trees. *See pages 53 - 57.*



Photographs: Andrew Dunlop



Above: With Bulent at the location of D Coy's position on 2 May 1915, and shrapnel found there ...
 Below: S beach looking towards De Totts' Battery position, then and now. See pages 37 - 40.



Photographs courtesy of Margaret Carter

MY GRANDFATHER'S SHORT TIME IN GALLIPOLI

Margaret Carter

On 2nd May 1915 my paternal grandfather, 9827 Lance-corporal Richard Thomas Buckle of D Company, Second Battalion, South Wales Borderers, sustained a severe shrapnel wound to the head. Oral family history was that he had been scalped by the Japanese. My research however discovered that he had actually been wounded whilst serving in Gallipoli!

Sergeant-major Stanley Bean listed Richard's wounding in the nominal roll and casualties of D Company (a copy kindly supplied by Celia Green, archivist at the Royal Welsh Regimental Museum, Brecon). His wounding and eventual honourable discharge is also recorded on page 249 of John Dixon's *A Clash of Empires - The South Wales Borderers at Tsingtao, 1914*, thus proving you cannot always trust the verity of stories handed down in families!

Grandad was a career soldier who enlisted in the SWB in February 1908. He served with D Company in India and South Africa, and then in China for two years. Britain and Japan had formed an alliance, both being concerned about the German naval presence in the Pacific Ocean. The Germans built the city of Tsingtao complete with a port and a base for the German navy with a garrison of 4000 troops (not to mention a brewery). The SWB were sent from Tientsin, where they had been based in northern China, to fight alongside the Japanese army to take Tsingtao. This helps to explain the family myth of the Japanese scalping!

The Regiment returned to England in January 1915 where they were garrisoned in Coventry and Rugby.

In March 1915, according to the 2nd Battalion's war diary, the troops were inspected by the King near the Blue Boar Inn on Dunsmore Road, Coventry, prior to sailing from Avonmouth to Egypt. On the 10th April they were at sea on the SS *Alaunia*, stopping off at Lemnos on 11th April where they practised disembarking and rowing. From Lemnos they sailed to Tenedos. On 24th April they boarded HMS *Cornwallis* (less 'A' Company, which had been detached to land at 'Y' Beach with the KOSB), sailing to Morto Bay and landing at S Beach at 07.30 on 25th April 1915.



The only photograph the family has of my grandfather, Richard Thomas Buckle

Richard was amongst the first ashore with 'D' Company, which landed first in a flanking movement on the rocks at the extreme point below De Tott's Battery, a disused work on top of the cliff above S Beach, where the great Turkish memorial now stands. They immediately, 'in shirt-sleeves and without packs' scaled the cliff, out of sight of the defenders. The Turkish outpost platoon occupied a trench about half-way up the cliff, overlooking S beach, and, along with a trench on the beach itself, poured a 'hot fire' into 'B' and 'C' Companies as they landed. D Company at once headed for their objective - to clear the trench overlooking S Beach, and achieved their aim relatively easily, as the *Official History* (p236) states:

'... the flanking company met with no opposition, and, scrambling to the top of the cliff, the men soon held the Turks below at their mercy.'

By 8 am the whole position was safely in British hands; one of the few objectives reached on 25th April 1915. Major Edward Margesson, who commanded D Coy's assault, was killed soon after reaching the top of the hill.'



Aerial photograph showing the landing on 25th April 1915 at 8.00 am (Grandfather is in one of the little black dots!). It was taken by Flight Lieutenant C H Butler, who was part of Commander Charles Rumney Samson's squadron (Royal Naval Air Service) based at Tenedos at that time. The squadron's logbook records the flight as "recon, spotting flight and Midshipman Sissmore (observer), 6.30 am to 8.30 am, in a Henry Farman biplane"

My thanks to Bernard de Broglie for spotting this in an album at the Imperial War Museum (catalogue reference 9008-06).

D Company remained a few days at De Tott's until it marched by night to X Beach and then up to the front line towards Krithia.



D Coy's location, 2 May 1915

Grandfather suffered his head wound on 2nd May 1915 during the major Turkish counter attack. He was evacuated from the Peninsula, arriving at Cottonera Hospital, Malta, on 5th May. He was honourably discharged on 10 October 1915 “as no longer physically fit for war service.”

I know very little about the following few years in Richard's life. He married Beatrice and they had two children, one of whom was my father, born in 1917 in Newport, South Wales. My father had no happy memories of his father. Grandfather was a disturbed man and was treated for acute depression, and neurasthenia, and suffered from delusions. Like many Gallipoli veterans he never spoke about his army service. He was not impressed with his medals, which I had refurbished after they were discovered in the coal shed, where they had lain for several years.

Sadly in 1924 he committed suicide by coal gas poisoning. Reporting on the coroner's inquest the headlines in the *South Wales Argus* read “Suicide at Newport. The After Effects of Shell Shock”.

In September 2024, greatly assisted by the brilliant Turkish guide Bulent Yilmaz Korkmaz and using information and maps from Mike Crane and the author Stephen Chambers we located to within a few yards where D Company fought on 2nd May 1915. This was in the White House trenches (which became the Eski Line) to the right of the West Krithia Road. Even after 109 years there was evidence of bullets, fuse caps, shrapnel, rum jar shards and, sadly, bones.

In September 2024 I stood in the location where Richard Buckle sustained his wound on 2nd May 1915. A man from a small hamlet in Monmouthshire, having previously never travelled out of South Wales but whose army career enabled him to see the world – India, South Africa, China, Egypt, Malta, Lemnos and Gallipoli. Looking down I found a large chunk of shrapnel at my feet. Who knows ...?

Acknowledgements

Bulent Yilmaz Korkmaz, Bernard De Broglio, Stephen Chambers, Mike Crane, Celia Green, Royal Welsh Regimental Museum, Brecon.

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[See photographs on page 36](#)

‘‘Margesson (photograph below) was buried on the evening of April 25, three yards away from one of De Tott’s walls. As would happen to so many of the graves left by the invading forces when they evacuated Gallipoli, his could not be located by the Imperial (later Commonwealth) War Graves Commission. Thus, he is today commemorated on the Helles Memorial.’ (Garipey Ch 5). 2nd Lieutenant Hugh Nevile of 2nd Battalion, SWB, wrote in his diary: Breakfast 4.0 Landed at 7.0. Opposition luckily fairly slight but losses in landing and there was a good sniper or two who accounted for M, B & C & J (Major Margesson, KIA 25 April 1915, Lieut. Behrens DOW 25 April 1915, Lieutenant W J Chamberlain and Captain D G Johnson, both wounded).



LIFE GIVEN IN RESCUE

A stirring story is told of how Private William B. S. Good died at Gallipoli, while endeavouring to rescue two men who had been overcome by the gas from an exploded mine.

With his brothers, Privates Horace and Lindsay Good, Private William Good was attached to the 22nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Brigade. He was the eldest son of Mrs W Good, of 'Goodhurst,' Archie's Creek, near Dalyston, and was 27 years of age.

Writing to their mother, on behalf of himself and brother, Private Horace Good describes the incident as follows:

A couple of men went to examine an exploded mine, and were overcome by the gas caused by the explosion. Volunteers were called for, and though there were dozens of volunteers Will was among the first half-dozen, and went in when the gas was at its worst. The result was that he got it so badly that he did not recover.

Will is not the only one who lost his life trying to save others. Two doctors, a couple of Red Cross men, Lindsay and I worked for two hours trying to bring him round, but he showed no signs of recovery at any time. Even when the doctors gave up we did not like leaving him. He was laid to rest in the cemetery at 7.30 p.m. on October 29.

Poor Will, he was always thinking of you all, and looking forward to the day when we would all be together again. He died a hero, and you will all feel proud of him.

The mother has also received letters of sympathy from Colonel H. Crouch, officer commanding the 22nd Battalion, and Captain Chaplain T. P. Bennett, of the same battalion. (*Herald* (Melbourne) 15 Jan 1916 pt).



92 Private William Barrett Silk GOOD, 22nd Battalion AIF.
Died of asphyxiation in Tunnel C2 (Johnston's Jolly),
29 October 1915, aged 27.

He was buried in Shrapnel Valley Cemetery alongside Lieutenants C H W Thom, Lieutenant F D A Bowra, and 4116 Sapper Frederick John Harold Currington, all of 4 Field Coy Australian Engineers, and 1960 Private Gustav Stelling, of the 22nd Battalion, all of whom died in the same incident.

REMEMBERING ONE SUSSEX YEOMAN

439 SQMS Percy John Baker

1/1st Sussex Yeomanry

30 May 1884 to 7 December 1915

Roger Billings

This is not the first occasion that the name Percy John Baker has appeared in *The Gallipolian*. To the best of my knowledge two previous editions of the journal have contained brief references. The first of these, one of the very few to draw attention to 1/1st Sussex Yeomanry at Gallipoli, appeared in issue 128 (Spring 2012), entitled 'Remembering Three Sussex Yeomen'. The article does not appear to be credited to anyone, but it dealt with the loss due to enemy action of 439 SQMS Percy John Baker, 1877 Trooper Frederick James Toop and 3559 RSM John William Graham. The second article, which appeared in issue 156 (Autumn 2021), was submitted by Ian Binnie, the association's education co-ordinator, based partly upon information supplied by me, and was entitled 'A Gallipoli Lock-Down Project'. The personal objective on this occasion was to ensure that SQMS Percy John Baker was entered into the Gallipoli Association Roll of Honour. It included an outline of Percy John Baker's time with Sussex Yeomanry, as well as articles researched by family members of David Wilkinson, Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment and John Costello, Lancashire Fusiliers. Since the publication of this last article, I have continued to research the civilian life of Percy John Baker along with his military service, a task which is now into its ninth year, and which has been the catalyst for a string of other Sussex Yeomanry-related research projects, as well as research into other family members who served in the Great War. I thought that perhaps now was the right time to set on record some of my further work with, in part, the objective of emphasising the Gallipoli contributions made by the men of Sussex Yeomanry, a regiment which has hitherto been rather overlooked; a point of omission also made by the author of the 2012 article. The main focus of this current article, therefore, is to describe the circumstances in which 430 SQMS Percy John Baker met his death.

First, some context behind the project, which began during a house clearance in 2017. Percy John Baker was, or would have been, a great uncle to my late wife. His sister, Dorothy Baker, was my wife's grandmother. Dorothy married another servant of 1/1st Sussex Yeomanry at Gallipoli, Stanley West Barrett, and they lived at Aldwick Farm near Bognor Regis in Sussex. The Baker family line had made its living from corn-milling and worked or owned a number of Sussex mills from sometime in the 1820s. Later, the Bakers acquired a tower-mill at Barnham which was operated by the family until the 1980s. The mill was worked from 1880 until 1934 by John Baker, Percy's father. Percy, as his eldest son, would in time have taken over the business and ownership of Barnham Mill. After the 1980s, my wife's father, John Barrett, came into part ownership of the mill, along with some of its contents. Those contents included papers, photographs and medals belonging to Percy John Baker which found their way to John Barrett's home at Aldwick Farm. When John Barratt became infirm and was found a place at a local care home, the family set

about clearing Aldwick Farm of all manner of belongings dating back some 90 years. The Percy Baker-related ephemera, including the medals, was placed in a box for disposal in a skip. Fortunately, I rescued them from this fate and brought them to our home in Suffolk. At the time I had no knowledge of Great War medals, but after about six months I decided to try to understand what had been saved. One of the medals was a 1914-15 Star, named '439 SQMS Percy J Baker, Suss Yeo.' Also present were ribbons for a British War Medal and a Victory Medal, the medals themselves both sadly missing, and a Territorial Force Efficiency Medal (TFEM). The photographs included an un-captioned portrait of a military sergeant, whom I now know to be Percy John Baker, along with other postcards of the same man and images of what appeared to me to be army training camps, addressed to Dorothy Baker and postmarked Arundel 1911 and Tonbridge 1912. There were a number of other photographs of military unknowns, some of whom I was later able to identify. Several were of 29044 L/Cpl Leslie Barrett, another of my wife's great uncles, of 19th (Queen Alexandra's Own) Royal Hussars, who was killed in a cavalry charge against machine-guns near Brancourt-le-Grand on 8 October 1918, an action described in David Kenyon's book *Horsemen In No Man's Land*. Two more photographs, clearly taken at a private function, included Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig and General Sir Edmund Allenby. I have no idea where these came from or how they came to be at Aldwick Farm.

From my ongoing research of Sussex Yeomanry regimental service numbers, I have estimated that Percy John Baker enlisted with the Sussex Imperial Yeomanry in March 1902. Evidence for this is provided by his TFEM. I have not been able to find any military papers for him, but it can be assumed, again on the basis of his TFEM, that he re-enlisted in 1908, and attended annual summer training camps up until 1914. The photograph I have of him from 1912 shows him in dress uniform with Sergeant's stripes, and those taken at Canterbury in 1915 show him in service uniform with additional insignia to indicate the rank of Squadron Quarter-Master Sergeant. He is also photographed at Canterbury in a group of officers and NCOs, one of the officers being Captain Hanbury Lewis Kekewich who would command 'C' Squadron in which Percy served. Kekewich would later provide a description of how Percy was wounded and died at Gallipoli.

The story of the regiment's integration into the South-Eastern Mounted Brigade (SEMB) and the brigade's entraining at Canterbury for Liverpool to embark on RMS *Olympic*, otherwise designated HMT 2810, will be familiar to most readers. The brigade was transported from Mudros to its Gallipoli landing by the SS *Sarnia*, a requisitioned former London & South Western Railway cross-channel turbine steamer.

The SEMB HQ War Diary states that after landing at 'W' beach on 7 October the men proceeded to bivouac in Gully Ravine, and spent the next three days 'resting', which probably meant digging in and organising themselves. Westlake¹ adds that these initial bivouacs were located at Gully Farm.

Lieut-Colonel Herbert Ivor Powell-Edwards² relates that first encounter with Gallipoli as the men made their way to the site chosen for them to bivouac:

¹ Westlake, R. *British Regiments At Gallipoli*. Leo Cooper, Barnsley. 1996

² Powell-Edwards, H I. *The Sussex Yeomanry and 16th (Sussex Yeomanry) Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment 1914-1919*. Andrew Melrose Ltd., London. 1920.

We were recommended to keep on our present side of the road, as the opposite side was bullet-swept. This was indeed self-evident from the noise, and our water cart, which arrived later and was left in the track we followed, 'stopped' two or three that night. The spot at which we halted became our permanent 'dump' - a sort of rear headquarters where all our heavier kit remained until the evacuation. It was the bed and east side of Gully Ravine. At the south end of the area a perpendicular cliff fell sheer into the bed of the Gully, but further north the slope of the Gully formed an irregular incline and on this eastern bank we lay that night listening to the occasional rounds of gun-fire from a battery in position immediately above us and the steady 'plop plop' of bullets into the opposite bank. There was continuous rifle fire from the direction where we judged the line to be.



439 Squadron Quartermaster-Sergeant Percy John BAKER
Sussex Yeomanry.
Died of wounds 7 December 1915

On 9 October the SEMB was attached to the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division, a Territorial infantry division recruited largely from Manchester, with all of its officers and approximately half of its other ranks then attached to 127 Brigade for instruction and familiarisation with the battle ground. This work continued until 13 October during which time the SEMB suffered two men of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles killed and a man from the Royal Army Medical Corps wounded. Fred Gibbon³ refers to the arrival of the SEMB in the following way:

During October the South-Eastern Mounted Brigade (dismounted) was attached to the 42nd Division. The Brigade consisted of the East Kent, the West Kent and the Sussex Yeomanry under Brig-General Clifton-Browne. It remained attached to the Division until evacuation, and officers and men proved the best of comrades. A system of fortnightly reliefs was instituted, the 125th and 127th Brigades holding the right sub-sector, with HQ at the zigzag in the Gully; the 126th Brigade and SE Mounted Brigade the left, or coastal, sub-sector, with HQ at Gurkha Bluff.

Powell-Edwards relates:

The scheme of education of the Brigade involved a preliminary visit to the trenches by officers and NCOs in parties, and subsequent short periods in the line by troops and squadrons, before the Brigade took over a section of the Front.

The original scheme was that the line to be taken over by the Brigade would be in the neighbourhood of 'Border Barricade', and on this assumption all ranks were to go up to that sector for educational purposes and to familiarise themselves with every detail of it.

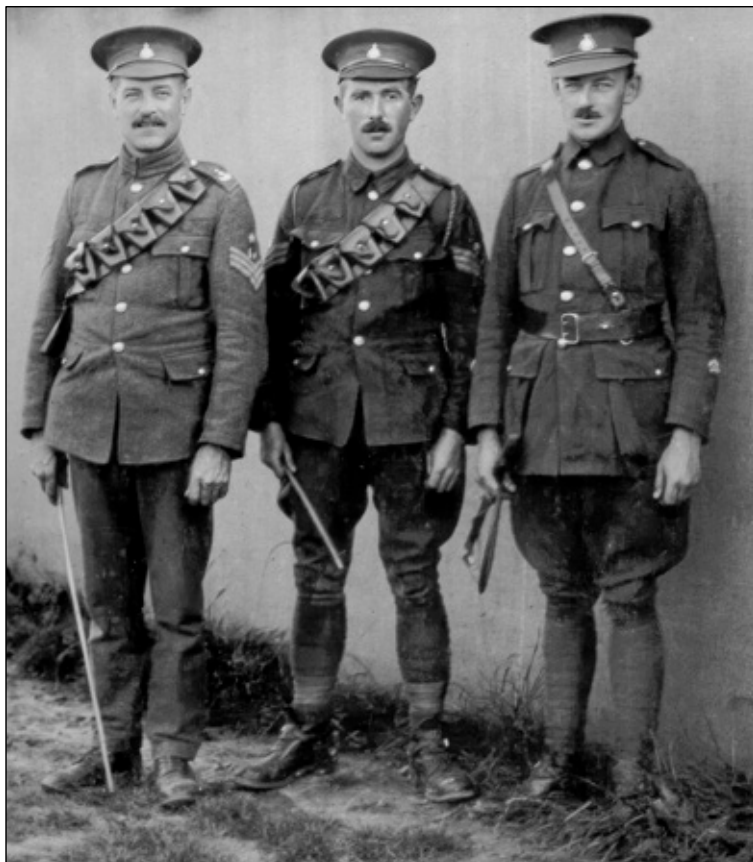
On October 8th some junior officers and NCOs went up to the line for a forty-eight hours' tour of duty, and on the 9th the first case of dysentery occurred in the regiment. From that time forward dysentery became an ever increasing scourge due no doubt chiefly to the clouds of flies which made life a burden during all hours of daylight; though, by the time the Regiment landed, these pests were, according to older residents, not nearly so bad as in August and September, when it had been literally impossible to eat at all between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Even in our time the blanket roof of a dug-out after dusk was always so thick with flies as to be in appearance quite black.

The SEMB War Diary contains a roster of officers of the Sussex Yeomanry and the total number of other ranks, taken on or about 9 October. The list includes Major G P Whitfield, Major H I Powell-Edwards, Major C B R Hornung, Captain A W W Lyon and Captain H L Kekewich, the latter being in command of 'C' Squadron. The number of other ranks was 434.

Not long after their arrival at Gully Farm the commander-in-chief, General Sir Ian Hamilton, visited the regiment. He recalls in his book *Gallipoli Diary* meeting the Sussex Yeomanry in Gully Ravine on 10 October. He noted that 'they made a brave showing' and was informed that many of the men had caught enteritis.

³Gibbon, Frederick P. *The 42nd (East Lancashire) Division 1914-1918*. Country Life & George Newnes, London. 1920.

According to the SEMB War Diary, at the end of the period of familiarisation with the front line, one the men from Percy Baker's squadron was involved in an incident for which he was recommended for a gallantry award. On the night of 13 October, the Turks exploded an underground mine south-east of a point on the British line known as 'Cawley's Crater'. Some men in the firing line, themselves engaged in tunnelling, were incapacitated by gas and had suffered wounds from the explosion, becoming entombed by falling debris. 2348 Trooper William O Orme of No.1 Troop, 'C' Squadron was among those volunteering to attempt a rescue. One man was recovered, the others not so, although there is an account, not recorded in the war diary, that suggests two more of those men may have been recovered later. Brig-General Clifton Browne, Officer Commanding SEMB, recommended Trooper Collis for an award. Collis later received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He was also awarded the French Croix de Guerre. Collis lived in Henfield before the war and later appears to have emigrated to Montreal where he worked as a civil engineer for the Canadian Pacific Railroad.



SQMS Percy John Baker (left), Canterbury, September 1915.

When in the line the men lived and slept in the fire trench, on the fire step. There was a so-called dug-out for officers in command of any particular section of the line; which as a rule was no more than a small recess either in or a few feet back from the fire trench. All food was man-handled up from kitchens which were some hundreds of yards back down the communication trenches or dug into the face of the cliffs overlooking the sea. The narrowness of the fire trench and the crowd in it made any movement in the trench a nuisance to everyone and the keeping of it clean a difficult problem.

Powell-Edwards:

On October 14th an order was circulated for an operation intended to take a rise out of the Turk. The scheme was that a fire should be lit near Lancashire Landing, and when the blaze was well alight every gun on the British side was to fire several rounds at the enemy front line, the idea being that Johnny Turk would be caught with goggling eyes and open mouth looking over the parapet. A rocket was to be fired immediately before the guns commenced to fire to warn our own people to keep their heads down, as, the two lines being so close together, it was impossible to guarantee that shrapnel aimed at enemy trenches would not to some extent enter our own. On the cessation of gunfire our infantry in the line were to fire rapid over the parapet. This programme was duly carried out. After our infantry had ceased fire the Turk returned the musketry fire with interest, and did not seem much the worse for our 'ruse of war'.

After just over a week in theatre the regiment had begun to experience the enormous amount of 'fatigue' or 'working party' work which was required of units on the Peninsula. In addition to mining work in the line, which involved carrying out sandbags of earth displaced by the miners and dumping them outside the trenches, parties were regularly required to go down to the beaches to unload lighters.

The result was that on most nights during a period out of the line all available men were working six hours in the line or at the beaches, and this continual round of heavy work at night in so-called rest periods was extremely trying. The units at Cape Helles found it almost impossible to find any form of recreation for men during rest periods, for the whole area from the front line to the sea was under observation and within range of guns. During the day the flies made it most difficult to sleep or rest.

Although the regiment had suffered its share of cases of enteritis, to date it had lost no men to enemy fire. This changed on 19 October when 3559 Regimental Sergeant Major John William Graham was hit by a bullet while sitting in his bivouac in the regiment's rest area. He died the same day and was the first member of the regiment to give his life for his country. He was buried in Gully Ravine. Having also been a member of 'C' Squadron he would have been known to Percy Baker. RSM Graham was 46 years of age and was one of the regular army NCOs attached to the Sussex Yeomanry because of his experience - 21 years with the Royal Scots Greys. According to a contemporary newspaper report Percy Baker and 341 Sergeant Major Horace Brown were sitting with RSM Graham at the moment he was killed.



Private Henry Morton in the uniform of the Grenadier Guards.

Pte Morton is wearing (l-r) - QSA & 6 clasps, KSA & 2 clasps, LSGC medal.

de Ruvigny Vol 1 p 261.

On 20 October Percy and 'C' Squadron were ordered up to the left of the line, near Fusilier Bluff, and found the Turks had the upper hand in the matter of bombing. Consequently the squadron's tour of duty was a lively one. One member of the squadron was wounded this day, my research revealing that this was 1011 Corporal Cuthbert Sugden Fowler, a notice to this effect appearing in the *Mid-Sussex Times* on 21 December 1915. The Regiment appears to have still been in the line on 29 October as the War Diary mentions 2½ Squadrons and 2 machine guns in the trenches and one soldier, currently unidentified, wounded on 28 October.

After a few days 'rest' the regiment was again in the line, relieving the West Kent Yeomanry on 5 November. Westlake identifies this as being at Border Barricade, and Powell-Edwards confirms this:

On 5th November the Regiment took over the sector of the line about Border Barricade, and it was expected the rest of the Brigade would come

up into that sector a couple of days later. A change was made, however, and at the last moment the Brigade was ordered to take over the extreme left of the line at 'Fusilier Bluff.'

The War Diary supports this, stating: 'Suddenly ordered to take over left subsection'. They were aided in this action by three companies of the 4th East Lancs Regiment. One member of the Sussex Yeomanry, whom I have identified as 2602 Private Samuel Herbert Hall, aged 32 years, of Brighton, was killed on 7 November. Another, 1534 Lance-Corporal Cyril James Howard, was lost on 8 November, at which time, according to Lieutenant C C Brown, three or four others belonging to the East Kent Yeomanry were also killed.

The regiment, after doing two days in the line at Border Barricade, then moved down into brigade reserve, the East Kents and West Kents being in the line at Fusilier Bluff. Another, as yet unidentified, private from the regiment was wounded on 9 November. It is not clear if this took place at Border Barricade or whilst on 'fatigues' duty at Fusilier Bluff. The regiment remained in brigade reserve till the end of its tour in the line on 14 November. Heavy demands were made on the men for mining fatigues every night at Fusilier Bluff, and it was whilst so engaged that the regiment lost 1790 Private Henry Morton, killed on 13 November. Morton was born in Wicklow on 15 December 1867, and had previously served with the Grenadier Guards during the South African War, earning the Long Service and Good Conduct medal, as well as the Queen's and King's South Africa medals (see photo next page). He was 47 years of age and was buried initially at Anglesea Gully.⁴ He had been a long-time servant to Captain Weller-Poley of the Sussex Yeomanry.

⁴ de Ruvigny, The Marquis. *The Roll of Honour. A Biographical Record of All Members of HM Naval and Military Forces Who Have Fallen in the War* Vol 1, London, Standard Art Book Co., 1916 p261.

The weather during November had a significant effect on the men's welfare. The War Diary reports heavy rain and sandstorms on the 11th and on the 17th a heavy thunderstorm rolled in off the Aegean, causing significant damage to the pier at Lancashire Landing and a lighter to break loose during the night. On 18 November, 1996 Private Frank Edward Lock was severely wounded by gunshot in the left leg, fracturing the tibia and fibula, suffering permanent disablement. As far as the weather was concerned, worse was to come later in the month for a cold front brought with it biting winds, snow and ice. On 28 November the SEMB Field Ambulance reported 'First blizzard and snowstorm. Night temperature 29 degrees Fahrenheit' (about -1.6° C). Given that the men were equipped only with summer uniforms and had little shelter or means of keeping warm, scores of casualties occurred due to frostbite and trench foot. 1 December recorded a first case of gangrene due to frostbite, a regimental stretcher-bearer of the Sussex Yeomanry. Also, by this time the regiment has suffered three further wounded, two on 18 November and one on the 20th.

Powell-Edwards notes:

That night there was an extremely heavy storm of wind and rain. The whole Regiment was flooded out, and the equipment, rifles, and clothing absolutely soaked and buried in mud. For some hours the whole unit was more or less incapacitated as a fighting force owing to the storm water which poured all over the bivouacs on the cliff face and down to the sea.

The weather had become much colder, and high winds much more prevalent; the search for any form of headcover against weather was as unproductive as ever, and this example of what the weather could do made one wonder what was to be done for cover in the rapidly approaching winter.

The regiment took over the line at Fusilier Bluff on 26 November. This part of the British sector was on the extreme left of the front; according to Powell-Edwards, a slightly fortunate coincidence given 'the ferocity of the snowstorms that would soon engulf all'. A Brigade disposition table, under Operational Order No. 8 dated 26 November, gives the following information regarding firing line frontage allocated to the Sussex Yeomanry. It states: 'From Communication Trench between FORWARD INCH and INNISKILLING INCH to a point in the firing line 78 yards north of WESTERN BIRDCAGE'. 120 men were required in the firing line and 80 men allocated as first support. They were to reach their destination in the firing line via WESTERN MULE TRENCH. The Order also requires that the Sussex Yeomanry headquarters be located in ESSEX RAVINE. This latter location is an important detail as I now believe it was where Percy Baker would be mortally wounded just a few days later.

Powell-Edwards recounts something of the intensely cold conditions:

During this tour in the trenches we experienced our share of the famous blizzard which at Suvla drowned men in scores in the trenches and froze their corpses solid in the ice. Fortunately for us the site of our lines on Fusilier Bluff allowed the water to run eastward into the Gully or westward into the sea. Consequently, when the frost supervened, our trenches were comparatively dry.

The cold was intense, and a cutting wind made it far more so. A thoughtful staff sent correspondence urging the necessity of taking precautions against 'trench feet' and frost bite. We were solemnly notified in print that no man should be kept in a wet front line trench for more than twelve hours - we were there for fourteen days - that he should on coming out of the line be given a hot bath, clean underclothing, dry socks and a thorough rest. None of these things were to be had at any price on the Peninsula for men in any numbers. It was felt that closer personal contact with the personnel in the line would have prevented this and similarly absurd pronouncements.

We heard a rumour that trench stoves or braziers would be forthcoming, and, on the coldest night of all, squadrons in the line received orders to send down to H.Q. for stoves. The order put new warmth into a cold and shuddering squadron, but the warmth was dissipated by the arrival in the fire trench of a stove of the form known as 'Beatrice', an excellent article on which to boil your morning tea, but as a producer of warmth in the open a poor thing.

The SEMB War Diary of 28 November records 'Very cold indeed, snowstorm and frost', and on the 29th, 'colder still, but little snow'; similar conditions prevailing on 30 November. The next couple of days are recorded as being fine and sunny, but cold. There seems to have been little activity from the Turks until 4 December, 'a fine and hot day', when, during the afternoon, the Turkish positions were heavily bombarded with high explosive from Gully Ravine to the sea at Fusilier Bluff, some of the fire being sent in by His Majesty's Navy. This seems to have irked the Turks as they responded with a heavy bombardment of their own which caused little damage, and no casualties.

As far as I can ascertain, the fateful day for Percy Baker occurred on Monday 6 December. The SEMB War Diary relates:

Still mild and fine. Enemy's artillery rather more active than usual, shelling ESSEX RAVINE heavily and wounding several men of the Sussex Yeomanry.

The author of those words did not, perhaps, at that moment know that the casualty situation was far worse than he described. In fact, there is some conflict between the Headquarters' account of what took place on the 6 December and that of the SEMB Field Ambulance, which, although confirming that heavy bombardment exchanges took place on the 4 December, killing three rank and file and wounding three others, makes no mention whatsoever of any shelling activity resulting in casualties on the 6 December.

Powell-Edwards:

The weather after the blizzard had continued fine, and life in the line in consequence became more comfortable. But there was no doubt that the Turkish shell fire was increasing in volume. It had been directed particularly at cookhouses and Headquarters which were in a ravine on the west slope leading to the sea, and several casualties had occurred here among cooks, mess orderlies and others.

It would appear that Captain Kekewich had called a number of his men to the headquarters in Essex Ravine for the purpose of giving orders to be followed in his

absence as Kekewich was about to go up to the firing line. As he spoke, a Turkish artillery shell landed close by, causing a number of casualties. I have been able to identify four of those involved in this tragic moment, by referencing a number of different records, including the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, records held by National Archives and contemporary newspaper reports.

The SEMB Field Ambulance War Diary states that there were six casualties. I believe these men to have included the following:

439	SQMS Percy John BAKER	Died of wounds 7 December 1915
1676	Sgt Maynard COOPER	Severely wounded in right hand
1736	Pte Frederick Leslie PORTER	Killed; squadron cook
1874	Pte Cyril Herbert SPRINGETT	Wounded

This leaves two others present on the day yet to be identified. Whilst there is disparity with the SEMB Field Ambulance report that clearly states three killed and three wounded, I have found no other evidence to suggest that the action of 6 December was not the one in which Percy was wounded.

Following Percy's death, Hanbury Kekewich, by now acting major, wrote to Ada Baker, Percy's mother, giving some details about her son's final moments. It is a very poignant account, one of many written during those years. His letter was published in the Bognor Regis *Observer* on 9 February 1916:

GLOWING TRIBUTE FROM HIS CAPTAIN.

A glowing tribute to the late Sergeant-Major Percy Baker, of the Sussex Yeomanry, whose death in Gallipoli was first announced by the 'Observer', has been received by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. Baker, of Barnham Mill, in a letter from Captain Hanbury L. Kekewich. The letter is appended; —

"I am writing you a line of sympathy on the loss of your son, my Squadron-Quartermaster-Sergeant. I cannot tell you how grieved I personally am, and I know all the Squadron, too, are at his death. We have spent so many hours together since I came to the Squadron last January, and I practically had the training of him in his last post. I cannot tell you what an extraordinary nice fellow he has been to work with. Old Baker, as I think he was usually called, was always cheery, always pleasant, never upset by anything, and the most hard-working and conscientious worker I ever came across. He has been, except for an occasional headache, extremely well out here. The open air life and plenty of exercise seemed to suit him. He had the feeding of us all largely in his hands, as regards seeing that things reached the men, etc, and no trouble was too great for him to take to ensure their comfort. It is rather a hard irony of fate that only four days before his death I was expecting to go over the parapet myself, and sent for him, as he did not belong to the firing line, in

order to square up accounts, etc., with him. One shell knocked out, besides him, our best Squadron cook, Porter, wounded badly Sergeant Cooper in the hand, and three more besides. I went to see him in hospital the morning after he was hit. I don't think he was in very much pain, but was hit through his left lung, and found breathing very difficult. In addition, he had his shoulder knocked about. However, he was quite conscious, and chatted cheerily with me, saying he hoped to be with us again soon. We buried him with the other members of the regiment on the Southern Slopes Y Ravine, and are having a nice cross made for him. I miss him much, and when I get back to the old country will come and talk to you of him. I feel I should like to see his parents, as he was the branch of a tree that is getting much too scarce these fast moving days. I trust this will find you well. Please accept my greatest sympathy in your trouble. The only condolence, if any, can be to us that he is happier far now than ever before."

After the war Percy's remains were exhumed from 'Y' Ravine and re-interred in Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery. According to the Imperial War Graves Commission records the officiating chaplain was a Reverend Robertson. Percy's remains lie at Plot XI. A. 5 but unfortunately, the precise date of his reburial is not given.



CAPTAIN JAMES WADDELL, 11 OCT 1873 – 18 FEB 1954

Michael D Robson, a frequent contributor to *The Gallipolian*, wrote to advise that he had further information regarding Captain Waddell, of the French Foreign Legion, who was mentioned in a quote from the New Zealand newspaper *The Southland Times* in Issue 167 (page 63).

Michael advises that he is in possession of a small booklet written by he preacher Enoch Coppin (1894 - 1975, giving an account of the last days and burial of Lieut-Colonel James Waddell, entitled:

Victory Forever

subtitled

“Waddell of Gallipoli”

Amazing True Story of New Zealand-Born Hero of the Foreign Legion.

The front and back inside covers list the citations this officer was awarded relating for his service on Gallipoli and later on the Western Front, plus a list of his other decorations. Space permitting, more information on Lieutenant-Colonel Waddell will appear in the next issue of *The Gallipolian*.

FIRE OVER THE PENINSULA 2024

Andrew Dunlop

In August 2024 I took three of my sons on a week-long excursion around the Gallipoli Peninsula to impart to them the knowledge and interest I have gained over my 40 years of studying the campaign as an untrained observer. The trigger to my interest was my grandfather, Clement York Varley, who landed on the afternoon of 25 April 1915.

Born 23 September 1892, he passed the Newcastle (NSW) Senior Cadets Sergeant's exam in 1910, and enlisted for the war the day after being baptised, 19 August 1914 with the rank of driver in the 2nd Company of the Army Service Corps (ASC). He sailed aboard transport A19 *Afric* (which included Archie Barwick of "In Great Spirits" fame) with the first contingent, departing Australian waters early in November 1914. 22,000 soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force, 8,000 of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and 12,000 horses were aboard the almost 50 transports. This means that for every man in the first Australian Division, there was 0.4 of a horse, and these horses served three brigades of light horse, three brigades of field artillery, four companies of the ASC's Divisional Train, four field ambulances, three field companies of engineers, the Heavy Artillery Brigade and its ammunition column, as well as officers of the three infantry brigades. A driver in the Divisional train was responsible for two horses and with another man, also with two horses, hooked up to and powered the four-wheel drays known as General Service Wagons that transported all the war material required to keep the army fed and supplied. The structure of ASC companies is shown in the table on the following page.

The AIF trained in Egypt initially in small units, before training in brigade-sized units, brigade groups and eventually full divisional-sized exercises. On 1 March he was transferred to No. 3 Coy ASC and 4 days later joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. His unit sailed for Lemnos 7 March aboard His Majesty's Transport (HMT) *Mashobra* where further training took place especially in disembarkation and cross decking in preparation for the amphibious landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Exact details are scarce,



Private Clement York Varley, 2 Coy. ASC taken before departure from Australia in 1914. (Dunlop family collection) Note the leather leggings, riding crop and leather bandolier typical of men who rode and worked with horses.

however, it is believed his unit landed on the southern end of what became known as Anzac Cove in the afternoon of 25 April and set up supply bases on the beach. The General Service Wagons which were used to transport all manner of war materials were not landed on Gallipoli so everything had to be man handled although mules were used in particular for ammunition and water haulage.

Australian Army Service Corps Company Structure 1914			
Captain or honorary major	1	Trumpeter	1
Lieutenant	1	Farrier	1
2nd lieutenant	2	Shoemaker	4
Company sergeant major	1	Saddler	4
Coy quartermaster sergeant	1	Wheeler	2
Warrant officer	1	Private	14
Staff sergeant	3	Driver	89
Sergeant	2	General Service Wagons	22
Corporal	9	Lance corporal	2
Officers and NCOs	23	Other Ranks	115

Source: Embarkation lists 1st Divisional Train 1914

On 14 May he was evacuated sick and admitted to 15th General Hospital in Alexandria, returning to the Peninsula on light duties as batman to Captain Milner 3 Coy ASC, 3 July, then evacuated sick (enteric) 23 July and via Mudros and Malta was admitted to London General Hospital, diagnosed with typhoid fever 23 September 1915, cause 'Active Service Dardanelles'.

In 1916 he rejoined his unit in France after long periods in hospitals, rehabilitation and rest camps until early 1918 when the 4-year men were offered leave to return to Australia, or leave to join the branch of service of their choice. Clem, rather than return to Australia, applied to the join the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) where he undertook armaments training at Duxford and military aeronautics training at Oxford, graduating pilot mid-1918 and being commissioned as 2nd lieutenant in the 1st AIF. He was then appointed instructor and promoted to lieutenant in the 8th Squadron AFC based at Leighterton UK, training cadets until departure in May 1919. He returned to Australia aboard the *Kaiser I Hind* in June 1919, never to speak to any of his relatives or descendants about his almost 5 years in the service.

In WW2, he volunteered again and was appointed to the honorary rank of squadron leader of an Air Cadet Training Corps which was part of the Empire Air Training Scheme before they were sent overseas (usually to Canada) for further training. He served in this role for some five years.

On our first day on the Peninsula, we visited V Beach and surrounding areas in the Helles sector. The following day the French sector around Morto Bay before walking from Gully Beach up Gully Ravine to Krithia. The next day was our 'ANZAC Day' where we walked along Anzac Cove, up Plugge's Plateau, down into Monash Valley, up past Pope's Hill to Walker's Ridge and The Nek, and along the road past the posts to Lone Pine. Our plan was to visit the New Zealand sector next day and walk down Rhododendron Ridge to North Beach, but we arrived at Chunuk Bair only to be told of an approaching bushfire and ordered by emergency services to evacuate. There was fear that the fire, apart from anything else, would set off 110 year old munitions.

We left Chunuk Bair and travelled into Bigali which had been Mustafa Kemal's headquarters at the time. Walking to the edge of town, we came across two concerned local residents watching the progress of the fire ([see photo, page 35](#)). Bigali had lost power but the local café owners whipped up some gözleme for our lunch with a gas cooker. They were wonderful hosts. He had lived in Bigali all his life and she was from Romania and spoke excellent English. On returning to Çanakkale, we could see the pall of smoke from the fires over the peninsula.

In May 2025, I joined the Gallipoli Association / Battle Honours walking tour and was able to see the extent of the fires from the previous August. Most of 'old' Anzac was unharmed, but the areas north from Chunuk Bair down to Embarkation Pier Cemetery had been burnt out. On walking down the track towards the Farm Cemetery, below Chunuk Bair, we could see the extent of the devastation ([see photo, page 35](#)). Teams were logging the burnt pine timbers and removing them and as we got down to the Farm, we could see that the trees' foliage had caught alight from the top and burnt down to ground level. It seemed the lawn within the cemetery itself had not been affected, and workers had cut down and removed the remainder of the trees.

It was pleasing to see that despite the devastation, regrowth was already appearing from the burnt tree trunks, promising a recovery over the next few years.

The Turkish authorities have done a marvellous job over recent years improving access with a new expressway from Istanbul right through to a new 'Golden Gate'-like suspension bridge over the Dardanelles. In addition, much of the battlefield area has dedicated walking tracks with improved signage, and steps up slopes to improve access and safety. New descriptive picture panels have been installed at key locations, further enhancing the experience of sightseers and amateur historians like myself.

The author, Andrew Dunlop, is a member of the Gallipoli Association's NSW Chapter.



Lieutenant Varley AFC in 1918.
(Dunlop family collection)

IN DEFENCE OF GENERAL STREET

Edward Green



In the article *6 August 1915: A Helles Legend Examined* (*The Gallipolian* 166), I suggested that C F Aspinall must have changed his mind about the disastrous Helles attack that opened the August Offensive: none of the excuses he had compiled at the time, as Sir Ian Hamilton's staff major, appeared in his *Official History* seventeen years later. In their place was a new explanation – the rashness of one General Street.

So great, indeed, was the confidence at corps headquarters that the intentions of the Commander in Chief with regard to the limited role of the VIII Corps were apparently overlooked, and on the morning of 6 August a special corps order referred to the early capture of Krithia and Achi Baba... These were rash words. In point of fact, the amount of high-explosive shells at Helles was entirely inadequate for the first day's

task. Here it should be noticed that since the invaliding of General Hunter-Weston... an unusual amount of authority was wielded by the senior staff officer of the corps, Br.-General H.E. Street, who had been General Hunter-Weston's right-hand man... This very capable officer had one blind spot: he could not bring himself to admit the increasing difficulties that confronted the troops at [Helles].¹

In other words, as Les Carlyon puts it, 'Street was a dangerous optimist and not really a very capable officer at all'.² A century later, Aspinall's summary prompted Wikipedia – now the main source for most casual researchers – to characterise Street in fairly disparaging terms:

It was originally intended... to divert attention from the imminent launch of the August Offensive, but instead, the British commander, Brigadier General H.E. Street, mounted a futile and bloody series of attacks...³

In fact Street was no commander; as a staff officer, his job was to advise his chief. 'For this reason a staff officer's opinion is often more care-free than that of a commander' observed Aspinall, implying that after Hunter-Weston fell ill Street's optimism went unchallenged. Aspinall's first-hand experience gives his opinion weight – but it also gives him an interest in the question of blame. So who was Street, and was he really responsible for the fiasco at Helles?

¹ Aspinall-Oglander, *Military Operations Gallipoli, Vol.II* (1932), p.169

² Carlyon, *Gallipoli* (2001), p.434 ³ [wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Krithia_Vineyard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Krithia_Vineyard)

The Rise of General Street

Major & Brevet Lt-Colonel (temp. Brigadier-General) Harold Street, as his full rank implies, had not been a general long. Wounded at Ypres as a major, he had joined Hunter-Weston's 29th Division as GSO2 (general staff officer, second grade), becoming its GSO1 when his superior was reassigned during the April landings. A month later Hunter-Weston was promoted to head VIII Corps, and he took Street with him to be Corps GSO1. This unexpectedly rapid rise to become one of the key men at Helles tied Street's fortunes to the failing campaign, taking a mental toll that was evident to the writer Compton Mackenzie as early as June.

He conveyed... an impression of profound inward fatigue as if in spite of all his effort he could not hide the strain of the past two months... He stopped a man on some fatigue duty to ask a question, which was answered casually and without a salute. Street at once turned on him in a rage... I comprehended that he had not really lost his temper with an individual but had used him to vent all his rage against the whole sorry scheme of things, all his grief and disappointment over what might have been out here.⁴

It did not help that Hunter-Weston concentrated power at Corps HQ, increasing the role of Street and his staff at the expense of the divisional commanders. 'You are sent long lists of "suggestions" for orders, but if you do not incorporate every one of these, then your orders come back not approved' complained Major-General Egerton, GOC 52nd Division, later concluding 'I don't like his General Staff officer, Street RA, much'.⁵ Unsurprisingly, staff officers tended to get on better with other staff officers: 'I work with [Street] in the kind of intimate co-operation which is a real pleasure'⁶ wrote Aspinall's GHQ colleague Captain Dawnay.

After Hunter-Weston's departure on 17 July, Street had two stand-in chiefs in quick succession: first Lieutenant-General Stopford, a recent arrival marking time until IX Corps arrived, and then Major-General Douglas, who had commanded the 42nd Division at Helles since May. Stopford badly needed Gallipoli experience and was happy to take advice; Douglas was notoriously irritable and tended to micro-manage. He had been appointed on seniority, ahead of the more dynamic Major-General de Lisle, GOC 29th Division, who was full of confidence after masterminding an advance on 28 June and was probably the only divisional commander able to push back against Corps HQ. Any of these officers could have acted as a brake on Street; clearly Aspinall felt that they had failed to do so.

Hunter-Weston: the new attack

By mid-July VIII Corps was running out of options. Each step forward had come with heavy losses, and the British line at Helles was wearing perilously thin. Hunter-Weston's assessment of what he needed for a real advance reads more like a letter to Father Christmas: 64 guns, 7,500 shells, an RFC squadron, and another 38,000 men, and even then he promised no more than 'such progress as to ensure reaching at least Achi Baba within one month'.⁷ In the meantime, refusing to be passive, he would try to advance with what he had left – most obviously the 29th and 42nd

⁴ Mackenzie, *Gallipoli Memories* (1930), p.154

⁵ Raw, *The Egerton Diaries and Papers* (2020), p.110

⁶ Dawnay Papers, IWM, Documents.10403

Divisions, whose positions faced a Turkish salient centred on Krithia Nullah. Aware that they would soon be called upon, Douglas' staff at 42nd Division HQ drew up a plan for 'the next advance whenever it is ordered' under which two brigades would capture a Turkish redoubt formed by the G trenches in the Nullah fork, extending their line from H11 to F13.⁸ Before the plan could be submitted for approval, however, an unwise request from Hunter-Weston to make yet another attack with the battered and fragile Royal Naval Division unnerved GHQ so much that on 17 July all new attacks were banned.⁹ When Stopford replaced the ill Hunter-Weston that night, he inherited both Douglas' plan and the order effectively forbidding it.

Stopford: the counter-attack

Despite the ban, on 20 July VIII Corps HQ (probably Street himself, given how new Stopford was) asked 29th Division HQ to plan an attack on the H trenches west of Krithia Nullah, ambitiously suggesting an advance to H15. De Lisle replied two days later with an even bolder proposal – for the fall of Krithia in a day – which is summarised below.¹⁰

1. A brigade from another division would take H12 and H13.
2. Four hours later, one brigade of the 29th Division would take H14.
3. 30 minutes later, a second brigade would take H15.
4. 30 minutes later, the third brigade would advance to Hill 145, north of Krithia.

At first it seems absurd that De Lisle could have been so oblivious to every lesson of the campaign so far; Aspinall spared his blushes by crediting this plan merely to 'one divisional commander'. Nevertheless there was context to HQ's request and De Lisle's reply: the British had convinced themselves that the Turks were about to make a serious mistake. A few days earlier, GHQ had announced that 100,000 Turks were readying a 'final decisive attack' to drive the Allies into the sea, framing it as an opportunity – 'Sir Ian Hamilton need hardly point out what a chance this would be to confirm the ascendancy over the enemy which you have gained'.¹¹ This assumption was so widespread that on 20 July Street told VIII Corps Artillery not to worry about the attack, focusing instead on exploiting the inevitable rout.

As soon as it has been successfully repulsed, a counter attack of a large scale will be made [which] would probably take the form of the capture of the 'G' group of trenches, plans for which have already been made, or the attack on the trenches... up to and including H15. For this latter operations, the G.O.C., 29th Division, has been directed to prepare plans...¹²

Street clearly interpreted GHQ's embargo not to forbid counter-attacks – and since any attack could be termed a 'counter-attack' if it followed a Turkish one, both Douglas' and De Lisle's plans were on the table. On 21 July Stopford held a senior officers' conference on the subject; it may have been there that it was suggested that De Lisle's attack could go beyond H15 to Krithia itself. The idea of an advance was so tempting to the assembled officers that even the precondition of a Turkish attack

⁷ Letter dated 15 July 1915, Hunter Weston files, British Library

⁸ VIII Corps HQ diary, TNA, WO 95/4273

⁹ Aspinall-Oglander, letters and notes, IoW Record Office, OG/AO/G/25

¹⁰ VIII Corps HQ diary, TNA, WO 95/4273 ¹¹ Hamilton papers, Liddell Hart Centre

¹² VIII Corps Artillery HQ diary, TNA, WO 95/4275

began to diminish: should the Turks target Anzac instead, VIII Corps might attack at Helles anyway, stretching the term ‘counter-attack’ to its limit.¹³

Writing to GHQ afterwards, Stopford played down his corps’ intentions, implying that the Krithia Nullah area had been selected for the counter-attack because it was a likely site for the repulse of the Turks – a claim which sat uncomfortably alongside an admission that Douglas’ plan had already been prepared.¹⁴ He then tested the waters, floating the idea of a push on Krithia should the opportunity ‘present itself in such a form that it would be unwise not to take advantage’. Since Stopford was only at Helles to gain experience it is hard not to see Street’s influence in this apparent attempt to get tacit approval for an offensive. Hamilton’s staff appear to have reached a similar conclusion: a wire arrived the same day reminding VIII Corps not to make a general counter-attack without GHQ’s permission.

On 22 July De Lisle submitted his plan, outlined above. As his was the strongest and most experienced division, the plan had apparently become a battleground for competing projects, some of which he began by disowning – notably the idea that it could be used for ‘a counter attack following an unsuccessful attack on our line’:

To deal with [this] case is not possible as it depends on what part of our line the Turkish attack takes place, and where a counter attack can be launched with the best hopes of success.

He may have been covering himself, knowing the plan would be used in a counter-attack anyway, because it was instantly incorporated into Army Corps Order 14, which Street issued later that day: once the Turkish attack had met with disaster, the 42nd Division would take the Nullah trenches on the line proposed by Douglas, the 13th Division would take H12 and H13, and then the 29th Division would push through ‘to secure the ridge commanding Krithia’, as in De Lisle’s plan.¹⁵ Mindful of GHQ’s warning, ACO 14 was officially non-committal, merely directing GOCs to show how they would carry it out if ordered, but it was so obviously a combination of the two existing plans that Douglas declined to prepare anything new at all. With the attack expected on 23 July, Street issued an optimistic notice to the troops:

The enemy have once more declared their intention of driving us into the sea... The time they have chosen, which is apparently any time after sunset tonight, is an unfortunate one for them... The Lieut.-General Commanding looks to all ranks to give such account of themselves as will, this time finally, break the power of the Turks opposed to us and open the way to victory.¹⁶

Unfortunately the Turks did not oblige: 23 July came and went. Street reassured his keyed-up colleagues that ‘the Turkish general attack will take place in the next two or three days’,¹⁷ but as time passed the subject was quietly dropped.

Douglas: the holding attack

Hamilton’s own plan was now ready: an attack at Anzac and a landing at Suvla, ‘holding as many of the enemy as possible’ at Helles.¹⁸ On 24 July Stopford left for IX Corps and Douglas came over from the 42nd Division to arrange the holding attack. The existing ACO 14 plan was the obvious starting point, and though

¹³ 13 Div HQ diary, TNA, WO 95/4300 ¹⁴ VIII Corps Artillery HQ diary, op. cit.

¹⁵ VIII Corps HQ diary op. cit. ¹⁶ *ibid.* ¹⁷ *ibid.* ¹⁸ MEF HQ diary, TNA, WO 4264

precedents existed for other options (Anzac had made a successful feint on 28 June without committing to a full attack) GHQ had always envisaged a genuine push from Helles, and was happy to take up the idea of an advance in front of Krithia. On 24 July, while Douglas was still getting established at VIII Corps HQ, Hamilton informed the French General Bailloud:

The 8th Corps will be required to push its left wing forward towards Krithia, and (when the Turks have weakened their line in order to meet my main attack) to advance still further towards the Achi Baba position.¹⁹

ACO 14 had had the initial advance paving the way for De Lisle's thrust at Krithia, but that had been on the assumption that the Turks were collapsing. Hamilton was more cautious: the overriding aim was to hold the enemy in place and distract their reserves, and anything more must await the success of the main offensive. As Aspinall later explained, this was pragmatism at its most brutal.

It was vitally important to do everything possible to assist the Suvla-Anzac offensive... 4,000 rifles was held to represent the number of battle casualties which VIII Corps could afford to lose... The problem now resolved itself into a crude calculation as to the best value that could be obtained for a battle-expenditure of not more than 4,000 men.²⁰

On 27 July Douglas informed GHQ that he would capture a line from F13 to H12 – in other words, the first stage of ACO 14. The 13th Division had left for Anzac, so the 29th Division would attack H12 and H13, with the 42nd Division going for G13 and F13.²¹ Unfortunately, since the attacks had originally been planned separately, it was only now realised that the artillery could not support both at once. Rather than cut down the attack, Douglas split it up, acting as if it had been the plan all along: 'The minute handed to you personally did not enter sufficiently into detail to show that the attack... must, on account of artillery considerations, be spread over two days'.²² At 3.50pm on 6 August the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division would attack the H trenches; at 9.40am on 7 August the 125th and 127th Brigades of the 42nd Division would attack the G and F trenches. [See map on page 34.](#)

The Battle of the Krithia Vineyard

But it was no longer mid-July, when Douglas had first earmarked those two under-strength brigades and De Lisle had treated taking H12 as a formality. VIII Corps' caginess about submitting its plans to GHQ meant that they had never been impartially examined; parcelling them up as a counter-attack further obscured the risks under the comforting assumption of a Turkish rout. When Douglas did submit them as the 'holding attack', Hamilton was no longer looking for flaws; his motive in restraining Hunter-Weston and Stopford had been to preserve VIII Corps so it could afford to take casualties in this action. The removal of De Lisle's immediate push to Krithia, moreover, gave a false sense of security – if on 22 July it had been feasible to take three or more trench lines, surely taking just one was still feasible in August? But the plans had been unrealistic enough when drafted; by August, improvements to the Turkish positions had made them impossible. On 6 August the 88th Brigade ran into a deadly crossfire that the artillery could not subdue.

¹⁹ Aspinall-Oglander, letters and notes ²⁰ *Military Operations Gallipoli*, p.142

²¹ VIII Corps HQ diary, op. cit. ²² *ibid.*

2,000 of the maximum 4,000 casualties were incurred within a few hours. This catastrophe prompted the question: should the 42nd Division still attack in the morning? Aspinall was keen to dissociate GHQ from the answer.

The first report to reach GHQ of the utter failure of the Helles attack was a message from VIII Corps received at 6.35am on the 7th. The news was a bitter disappointment; but the message added that the second half of the attack, by the 42nd Division, had not been cancelled. This was taken to mean that there was no cause for anxiety, and Sir Ian Hamilton did not intervene.

A grim message from the 29th Division at 3.20am – ‘regret attack has failed cannot at present state cause’²³ – had left a sleepless Douglas and Street little time to decide whether to cancel. Douglas, however, was never likely to take such a step – the 42nd Division was his division, and to cancel their attack was to cancel his own plan. Moreover, his term at VIII Corps would end when this battle was over; if the offensive succeeded he might expect a permanent corps command one day, regaining ground on his younger staff college classmate Douglas Haig. He may have suspected – with good reason – that holding back would allow Hamilton to blame every setback further north on a lack of support at Helles. Above all, however, his orders were to assist the main offensive, and the attack went ahead. The 127th Brigade was mown down in the nullah; the 125th Brigade clung on to a vineyard trench after days of vicious fighting – a tiny gain that allowed the battle to be claimed as a British advance. Meanwhile the untroubled Turks were able to spare reserves to fight the British offensive in the north.

In defence of General Street

So far this article has hardly justified its title. Staff work in VIII Corps, for which Street was responsible, was marked by complacency and a lack of original thinking. He was grossly optimistic: from April, when he claimed that one more brigade could have taken Achi Baba, all the way through to December, when he encouraged the Navy to propose a final attack, Street always believed that victory was just one more push away. He never accepted that Helles had become a sideshow, and he was surely behind the idea of a counter-attacking breakthrough in late July. Yet as a staff officer, even an influential one, Street did not deserve to be singled out. Douglas had been part of VIII Corps’ strategic planning even before taking over, he knew the Krithia Nullah sector and the capabilities of his division, and if he had disagreed with the plan he had a fortnight in charge to do something about it. He personally approved De Lisle’s attack orders for 6 August, and after that attack failed he allowed the 42nd Division’s attack to go ahead; his ADC, Captain Cawley MP, explicitly held him responsible for the 127th Brigade’s destruction.

He does not understand the lie of the land on his own front... The result last time was that the best Manchester battalions were sent to an impossible place which every colonel and adjutant regarded as only to be taken after some other commanding trenches had been cleared.²⁴

De Lisle too must accept some blame. He later claimed he had seen the defeat coming (‘The Turks here had been reinforced and their defences much improved, so I feared we should not gain much advantage’) but it was his 22 July plan that had

²³ VIII Corps HQ diary, op. cit.

²⁴ Cawley papers, Liddell Hart Centre

fixed the gaze of VIII Corps on Krithia, instead of focusing it on more realistic options. He was optimistic until the afternoon of 6 August, writing afterwards that it was only when the artillery opened up that he realised a terrible mistake had been made.²⁵ If neither commander responsible for the attacks considered it necessary to change or cancel them until it was too late, why blame Street?

Aspinall made much of Street's corps order on 6 August that 'referred to the early capture of Krithia and Achi Baba'. It is worth reading the order in full, however.

The attack today is the first stage of operations which will, it is hoped, at last carry us onto the position for which all ranks have so hardly fought since the landing... It is hoped that the advance of the 8th Corps will be the turning point, and the capture of Krithia and Achi Baba the first steps towards the final victory of ourselves and our allies over all our enemies.

Street was clearly aware that the day's attack was just the first step, and while his last sentence was open to misinterpretation he was hardly going to tell the men that they were risking their lives for a sideshow. Perhaps it was rash to mention Krithia and Achi Baba, but his hopes in that respect hardly differed from those of Hamilton, who had expected an 'advance still further towards the Achi Baba position' in his letter to the French on 24 July, or those of his chief of staff General Braithwaite, who was described as 'very hopeful of taking Achi Baba as part of the next push'.²⁶ Far from being a misguided attempt to break through, the 6 August attack had strict limits: De Lisle was under orders not to go beyond the first trench line without permission, and VIII Corps could not give that permission without approval from GHQ. It was not ambition that doomed the attack, but a collective failure to see how risky even an unambitious plan could be.

The war correspondent Ashmead-Bartlett was in no doubt that the blame for all the failures of the August Offensive 'must primarily rest with Sir Ian Hamilton and his Staff. They were responsible for the adoption of plans, even if the latter were first suggested or approved by the corps commanders'.²⁷ 'Ian Hamilton and his Staff' of course included Aspinall himself, who was deeply implicated in the offensive and had failed to appreciate the scale of the challenge he and the rest of GHQ had set themselves. According to his colleague Dawnay, Aspinall was the greatest optimist of all, since it was not till 21 August, long after almost everyone else, that he acknowledged that their gamble had failed.²⁸

There are doubtless many reasons why Aspinall felt able to blame Street for the setback at Helles. Having taken on an immense job as one of the planners of the August Offensive, he had entrusted the smallest part of it to the more senior Street at VIII Corps – only for VIII Corps to fail utterly, imperilling its own position without assisting the offensive in any way. As he travelled around the peninsula after 6 August, desperately trying to get his offensive back on track, Aspinall had time to consider who was at fault – especially since, like most of his GHQ colleagues, he was convinced that their work had been excellent. ('The crushing thing is that all staff arrangements – which were very difficult – worked, and one

²⁵ *My Narrative of the Great German War*, De Lisle papers, Liddell Hart Centre

²⁶ Hankey, *Memorandum to the Committee of Imperial Defence*, 30 August 1915, p.4

²⁷ Ashmead-Bartlett, *The Uncensored Dardanelles* (1920), p.218 ²⁸ Dawnay Papers op. cit.

wonders if anything more could have been done' lamented Dawnay unironically (Dawnay Papers). Ultimately, however, the main reason that Aspinall could disparage Street so directly may be found in the war diary of the 106th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, for 25 August 1917:

Col. H. E. Street CMG killed in action 9.50am outside Group HQ

Street had faded back into obscurity once his temporary generalship expired; he was still a colonel when a German shell ended his life. He was never able to put his case to Aspinall as the history was being written, as De Lisle and others did; he never had the chance to justify his failures. The purpose of this article was to give him that opportunity. I come to bury Street, not to praise him.

BOOK REVIEW

Warren Smith

Inside GHQ: The Gallipoli Diary of Captain Orlo Williams

Rhys Crawley, Stephen Chambers & Ashleigh Brown

Little Gully Publishing

This eagerly-anticipated book released by Little Gully Publishing had barely touched the hallway carpet before I grabbed it and tore it out of its packaging, within a few pages I was delighted to see that I was not going to be disappointed.

Orlo Williams was appointed as the cipher officer for GHQ during the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign, and his diary is a real gem; it gives us a real insight into what was happening behind closed doors. From sensitive exchanges with Kitchener and the War Office to the day to day workings of headquarters, Williams recorded much of it, sometimes word for word and the sheer risk of documenting such confidential information makes his account even more fascinating.

But this book is not just about politics and strategy. Williams had strong opinions about other members of GHQ around him, and he doesn't hold back. Some officers earned his respect, while others do not look so good. These blunt observations add great personality to the diary, making it feel less like a historical record and more like a vivid, behind-the-scenes account of military leadership in action.

Beyond the official messages and political manoeuvring, there's something very human about this book. Williams wasn't just a cipher officer, he was someone caught within the chaos, watching decisions unfold that would shape the course of the war itself. His insights give us a rare window into the turmoil of Gallipoli, making this a compelling read for history buffs, military scholars, and anyone curious about the inner workings of command during one of history's most infamous campaigns.

At over 400 pages this is a detailed book supported very well by editor notes which fill the reader in on the campaign each month, its very well done as these notes often cherry pick defining moments written by Williams and provides an angle for the reader. There are decent maps to the back of the book but probably best of all are

the fantastic photos taken by Williams which have been collected from various sources.

Credit must go to the editors who persisted with this book, dealing with a diary written in an almost unreadable scrawl – I for one am very grateful as I truly is a ‘must have’ book for any Gallipoli campaign nerd.

GALLIPOLI PILGRIMS

Want Anzac Day Renamed.

The Salonika correspondent of the ‘Daily Mail’ says that the Gallipoli pilgrims have arrived. After visiting the Dardanelles Beach, and other landing places, ex-officers met, and advocated the substituting of the name ‘Gallipoli Day’ for ‘Anzac Day,’ in order to more clearly commemorate the landing of the 29th Division, and the British share in the brunt of the expedition.

(*Daily Standard* (Brisbane, Qld) 4 September 1926 p5).



German General disguised as a Turkish Sergeant looking over the Defences of the Dardanelles.

Source:

The Tenedos Times. A monthly journal of the Mediterranean destroyer flotilla during the early part of the war.
Vol V page 106.

GALLIPOLI SCAMS

A correspondent writes from Wyong: 'I have three sons at the front, and eight or ten weeks ago I received a cable supposed to have come from one of my sons, asking me to send £5 at once to the Anglo-Egyptian Bank, Cairo, and marked 'Urgent.'

But I did not send the money as I regarded the message as fraudulent. Since then, I have received two or three letters from this particular son and the question of money has never even been mentioned in them.

To-day I received another cable asking me to send £10. I consider this cable also a fraudulent one.'

This game is being played for all it's worth lately, cables even coming from Port Said, Colombo, and other places in the name of wounded soldiers. It is safe to ignore cabled requests for money. (*Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser* 11 January 1916 p3).

Interesting to note that long-distance scams involving 'relatives seeking cash' are not solely a 21st-Century problem. - ed.

DISCLAIMER

Readers are reminded that the observations and opinions expressed in articles and letters published in *The Gallipolian* are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of either the Editor, or of the Association

LAST POST

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

Anthony Deal - Member 0966. Died early April 2025 at the age of 102. Served with The New Zealand Shipping Company (Merchant Navy) at the beginning of WW2.

Lionel Fynn - Member 1156, died 17 January 2025, aged 84.

Simon McIntosh - Member 7205.





OBJECTIVES

To advance education for the public benefit by raising public awareness of the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915 and by encouraging and facilitating the study in the legacy and lessons of that campaign.

To keep alive the memory of the campaign and to ensure that all who fought or served in it, and those who gave their lives, are not forgotten by applying such means as the Trustees deem fit.



The Landing from the River Clyde - V Beach, 25 April 1915, Hignett's Cigarette Card

The Gallipoli campaign is characterised by countless deeds of heroism and endurance.

It took place in an area smaller than Southampton amid appalling conditions - heat, flies, lack of water, equipment and proper sanitation. Rain and a freak spell of sub-zero temperatures had to be endured, to say nothing of the desperate close-quarter fighting throughout the campaign.

Some 559,000 Allied personnel were committed, of whom 420,000 were British and Empire troops, including 50,000 Australians and 9,000 New Zealanders, and 80,000 French. The cost in human terms was terrible. The Allies had 250,000 casualties, of whom approximately 58,000 were killed, with only 11,000 having known graves. Ottoman forces, with some Germans, numbered between 300,000 and 400,000 and of these some 87,000 were killed.

The evacuations in December 1915 and early January 1916 were masterly operations – one of the great feats of military history.

www.gallipoli-association.org