

The Gallipolian

The Journal of the Gallipoli Association

No. 167 - Spring 2025



THE GALLIPOLIAN

No 167 Spring (March) 2025

The Journal of the Gallipoli Association

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

The Gallipoli Association

Registered Charity No. 1155609

www.gallipoli-association.org

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ISSN-0966-1158

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This edition’s cover:
L’Entente Cordiale 1915

Depiction of Great Britain as a spider eating a French soldier, with the German eagle sitting overhead. Uncle Sam and three other characters are ensnared by web. In Turkey, a crescent moon atop a minaret has pierced the spider’s grasping claw; a sunken ship, its mast protruding from the sea, lies off the entrance to the Dardanelles; and a German submarine patrols the Black Sea, with a figure on deck using a large pair of shears to cut strands of the web.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC, USA
[Originally in the Rehse-Archiv für Zeitgeschichte und Publizistik,
which archive was captured by US forces following World War Two].

110 YEARS

The historian Charles Bean, writing of the landing at Anzac, asked the question:

What motive sustained them?

His answer, abridged here, could be applied to all those - Allied and Ottoman - who struggled and died together, or who were shattered in body or mind, or who otherwise came on life-long pain, because they served at Gallipoli:

At the end of the second or third day of the Landing, when they had fought without sleep until the whole world seemed a dream, and they scarcely knew whether it was a world of reality or of delirium - and often, no doubt, it held something of both; when half of each battalion had been annihilated, and there seemed no prospect before any man except that of wounds or death in the most vile surroundings; when the dead lay three deep in the rifle-pits under the blue sky and the place was filled with stench and sickness, and reason had almost vanished - what was it then that carried each man on?

It lay in the mettle of the men themselves. To be the sort of man who would give way when his mates were trusting to his firmness; to be the sort of man who would fail when the line, the whole force, and the allied cause required his endurance; to have made it necessary for another unit to do his own unit's work; to live the rest of his life haunted by the knowledge that he had set his hand to a soldier's task and had lacked the grit to carry it through - that was the prospect which these men could not face.

Standing upon that alone, when help failed and hope faded, when the end loomed clear in front of them, when the whole world seemed to crumble and the heaven to fall in, they faced its ruin undismayed.

“With the last rays of the sun, I was staring through the periscope for any sign of the living among the bodies. Within a few yards of my periscope lay a tale telling how furiously both sides died. The Australian's bayonet is sticking, rusty and black, six inches out of the Turk's back. One hand is gripping the Turk's throat, while even now you can see the Turk's teeth fastened through what was the boy's wrist. The Turk's bayonet is jammed through the boy's stomach and one hand is clenched, claw-like, across the Australian's face.

I wonder will they fight if there is an after world.”

A BRAVE MAN

Private V E Smythe, 3rd Battalion AIF, wrote to Mrs. Rixon, of Bulli, NSW, concerning the death of her son:

Keith fought and died as a brave man should. The Turks had been getting a great number of our men by sniping, so Keith and some others decided to have revenge by doing some sniping on their own account.

For days Keith was at this, and he made the Turks pay dearly. Several times he left his trench and worked his way forward, in order to get better shots, and to do this It requires a man with a good nerve and without fear, for once out of the trenches one's life hangs on a thread, for the Turkish snipers are dead shots.

He got through the first four days safely. We then were relieved for a two days' rest, after which we returned to the firing line. The second day after our return Keith was, as usual, doing his best to punish the enemy, and had just fired a shot, when he was shot in the head, being killed instantly.

He was always cheerful, and light-hearted, and did not know the meaning of the word fear. You have reason to be proud of him.



Daily Telegraph (Sydney)
10 July 1915 p11

Private William Keith Rixon was born 9 Dec. 1890 in Murrurundi, New South Wales, to James Sadler and Keziah Ainsley Rixon. He was a Commonwealth public servant (telegraphist), employed by the Post-Master General's Department. He was killed in action on 6 June 1915, and buried in 'Death Trap Gully' and his identification disc sent home, but his place of burial was lost in the years between 1915 and the end of the war, so his name is inscribed on the Lone Pine Memorial to the Missing. Private Rixon had a daughter, Marjorie Jean Rixon (born 25 Apr 1912). His war medals were issued to his mother, to be held in trust for his daughter.

3/10/15	St. 3rd Bn	Killed in action	Gallipoli	1/12/15	3074 (4310)
Principal Chaplain		Buried at Death Trap Gully.	(Will attached to A.F. 32090A)		27/11/15

LETTERS FROM GALLIPOLI

Dr. John E Godrich

(Dr Godrich's name appears in the 'Last Post' of this edition, he having died earlier this year. This item previously appeared in *The Gallipolian*, Winter 2011).

I thought readers might be interested in this letter written to my father, Col. E V Godrich, in 1974 by his cousin, Lieut. Commander W T Curtis RN:

I went to Gallipoli in November 1920 when HMS Benbow anchored off the beaches and some parties landed to look around the sites of some of the trenches. Some on board had taken part in the landings so one got some first-hand stories which bore out the memories of those who 'remembered' during Thursday night's radio programme. It seems a miracle that a beachhead was established at all.

I was there again in 1921 and in a destroyer and again as a Third Hand in a Fleet tug in Autumn 1922 during the 'Chanak Crisis' [See end note]. We towed two 'X' lighters full of stores from Malta and then helped merchantmen who arrived from the UK with armaments and stores for what was a very thin red line on the ground backed by six 12-pdrs. From the Fleet, kept for ceremonial purposes and worn-out from rubbing with emery paper! Captain Unwin, who won a VC at the River Clyde landing, was the Sea Transport Officer under whose orders we came.

The tug was commanded by a Lieut. from the lower deck, assisted by another of the same breed, whose sole object in life seemed to be in winning tots of rum from the allowance on board by every subterfuge. This taught me a lot when in later years I was overseer of the way the Coxswain fiddled the Victualling accounts and 'accidents' happened to the rum issue; e.g. 'excessive evaporation due to climatic conditions' and 'loss on issue fond on opening cask'. This was always a standby as the cask had its contents carved on the head, from '8/6' (eight gallons and six pints) to about '9/3'. The casks never contained that amount.

Well there the letter ends, not very much detail but perhaps enough to whet the appetite for what the action was all about and also debate about the rum ration! My nephew discovered a broken rum flask at Suvla Bay when we visited Gallipoli together some years ago; he put it in my suitcase to bring home – it was jolly heavy, even when empty!

Note: The Chanak Crisis, often called the Chanak Affair, arose in September 1922 when Turkish troops threatened to attack British and French troops stationed around Çanakkale (Chanak) to guard the Dardanelles neutral zone. On 15 September, the British Cabinet decided that British forces should maintain their positions and the following day, in the absence of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, a communiqué was issued threatening Turkey with a declaration of war on the grounds that Turkey had violated the Treaty of Sevres. However, when Curzon returned to London on 18 September he pointed out that such action was

unlikely to attract French support and left immediately for a meeting with the French Prime Minister, Raymond Poincaré. Indeed, Poincaré had already ordered the withdrawal of the French contingent at Chanak and after several heated meetings it was agreed to negotiate an armistice with the Turks.

The Chanak affair led in October to the ending of the post war Conservative/Liberal Coalition and the resignation of Lloyd George as Prime Minister.

THE STOKER

An Unmentioned Hero

In the darkness under the world,
His roof is the coal-dust cloud overhead,
And dust is the floor beneath him spread,
And the mole in the garden sod
Knows more of the sweet sunlight than he
Who swings his shovel in bunker three,
Or tugs at the furnace rod.
Down deeper the engine purrs and swings,
On the grimy underside of things.
He leaps when the bugles blow
And great guns thunder in sudden fight;
And then, pent there in the choking night,
Shifts the coal heaps to and fro.
Small is his meed if the old flag win,
And if it lose – then a louder din,
A rent in the iron wall,
And Death swirls in through the jagged gate,
And the stoker finds In the hold his fate
And coffin and grave and all.

– H. F., in the Daily Chronicle.

(*Guyra Argus* (NSW) 13 May 1915, p6)

Dedicated to 1720/S Stoker George Watson
of HMS *Queen*, officially killed in action 30 April 1915.
Buried in Baby 700 Cemetery, as far inland as possible, Anzac.
‘What were you doing out here, at the limit of the advance?’

See photo of headstone, page 29.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

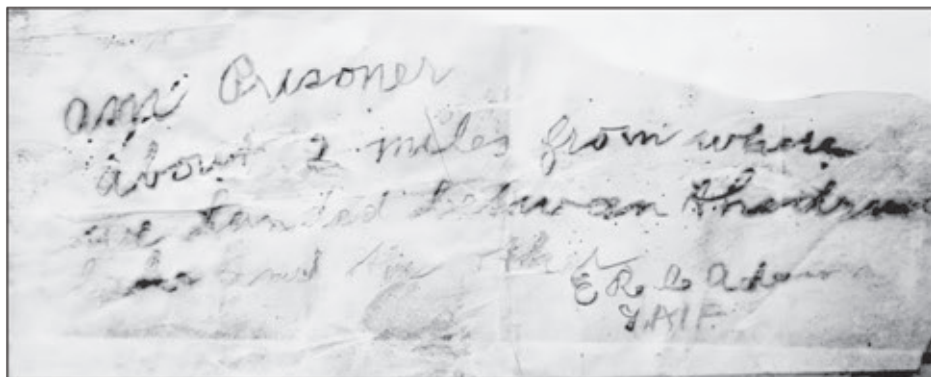
Bryn Dolan

'Died on or about 25th April, 1915'

Such were the findings of a Court of Inquiry, convened in London, recorded in Divisional Order 57/2221E of 29 July 1918, into the death of 1127 Private Edgar Robert Colbeck Adams, of the 8th Battalion, AIF.

The simple statement of fact obscures the human drama of the event, as there appears to have been little that was simple about Private Adams' death, who until that finding in mid-1918, had been officially recorded as 'Missing.'

'Rolun' Adams, as he was known to his friends, was apparently one of the very few taken prisoner at Anzac on the 25th April; a fact that came to light only because a bottle washed up at Alexandria. On 1 November 1915, six months after the Landing on Gallipoli, Private Sidney Gluth, of the 4th Light Horse Regiment, who had been wounded at Gallipoli and was convalescing at Alexandria, was walking along Montazah Beach when his companion kicked a bottle which was embedded in the sand. On examining the bottle they found it contained a message, written in indelible pencil on a piece of butter paper. The handwritten message read:



"Am prisoner about 2 miles from where we landed between the dried lake and the other
E R C Adams 8 AIF" [AWM HO2397]

No official report was ever made that Private Adams had been taken prisoner, and it was noted that:

It has been found from experience that attempts to ascertain from the Turkish government the fate of men who are supposed to have been captured, but who apparently did not reach any permanent hospital or internment camp, are fruitless. Very little information has ever been furnished by that government concerning men found dead on the field, or of men who died shortly after capture.' (from Court of Enquiry findings – pages 51 & 76 – in Pte Adam's service dossier).

Eventually, the message found its way back to Edgar's parents and was noted during a visit by a reporter for one of the local newspapers:

One sad little memory of the Koorlong drive comes from seeing at the home of Mr and Mrs Adams the original message signed 'Bob' Adams and stating that he was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks. The torn scrap of paper is framed. Bob's parents hope on and will continue to hope for his return. From one's heart one also hopes he will. (*Mildura Cultivator* (Victoria) 23 Jan 1918, p4).

The parents continued to believe that their son might yet be found in a POW camp, all the more desperate because Edgar's brother, 868 Private Frederick James Adams, also 8th Battalion, was killed in action at Anzac on 25 April.

Some time ago Mr Adams wrote to 'The Argus' requesting 'any returned soldiers who could give information of his sons' fate to write to him. In reply he received the following extract from a letter of Pte. G. A. Radnell, 14th platoon, D Coy., 8th Battalion, A.I.F. — "I suppose you know ere this how the two young Adams met their fate. Two finer

boys never left Australia. I never saw young Rob. after 4 a.m. on 25th April on the boat, but I heard he was just splendid, although a mate of mine knew for certain he was hit three times in the firing line on that Sunday; but I do not know how Fred (his only brother) died. Could his people have seen him and the way he worked, his utter disregard of rifle fire, his fine courage and grand spirit, well, I think they would be satisfied and rather rejoice to know how well he died. I liked Fred very much, and was introduced to him at Ismailia. If everyone on that peninsula was a Fred Adams, Constantinople would have fallen long ago." (*Mildura Telegraph and Darling and Lower Murray Advocate* (Victoria) 19 November 1915 p2).

Nevertheless it seems to have been accepted by their comrades that Edgar was also most likely dead. In a diary entry by Pte F H Symonds, published in the *Inglewood Advertiser* of 1 October 1915, the reality appears understood:



Private E R C Adams
14 Platoon, D Coy, 8th Battalion AIF.

20th May 1915: Heard the other day that Fred and Rolun Adams, of Mildura, whom I know well, were killed and missing respectively since the first Sunday, so looks like both dead. Terribly hard for their parents, as they are the only two boys in the family. I feel set up over it, as they were such decent chaps.

Edgar was born in 1896 at Mildura, Victoria, to Sarah Elizabeth Colbeck and James Rawson Adams. He attended Koorlong School and had private tuition, and intended to enter the field of surveying & engineering.

The mystery of his capture and subsequent fate remained long after the 1918 official finding of death.

Ron Austin noted in 1997 that:

One of the mysteries which remains unresolved to this day, is the disappearance of Private Edgar Adams. This soldier was posted missing after the initial landing, as no member of the unit could shed any light on his fate. However, on 1st November, a member of 9th Battalion found a bottle washed up on the beach near Alexandria. The message stated that Adams was held as a prisoner, but as he did not appear on any POW lists provided by the Turks, it was assumed that he had not been captured. Nonetheless, if the message was genuine, Adams was the only member of the 8th Battalion captured by the enemy during the Gallipoli campaign. (Austin, R. *Cobbers in Khaki* p64).



868 Private Frederick James Adams,
Edgar's brother,
KIA 25 April 1915

Frederick James Adams, 8th Battalion AIF, was killed in action 25 April 1915 at Anzac and was buried in Shell Green Cemetery, age 25.

Fred was born at Kimberworth, Rotherham, Yorkshire, and went to Australia with his family at the age of two. He attended Mildura Grammar School, and took up the occupation of fruit grower.

The chaos of that first day was long remembered by Bill Groves of C Company:

The shooting started and we got caught in the crossfire ...[the battalion was then given orders to dig in] I was on the shovel and a fellow named Fred Adams was on the pick. He got shot through the forehead and he died instantly. (Austin R. *Cobbers in Khaki* p50-51).

The boys had a sister; Mrs Edith Mary Rawson Streatfield, who served, while single, as a staff nurse in the AIF and survived the war.

STRETCHER BEARERS

The regulations allow of sixteen stretcher-bearers per battalion. It is not generally known to the public that these men do not belong to the R.A.M.C., but are picked from the fighting personnel of the battalion. It is an almost invariable rule that company commanders pick their best men for this work, as it needs more than the average courage to go over the top in an attack, absolutely unarmed and defenceless, and to render first aid, often within a few yards of a hand-to-hand fight. Their courage is magnificent, and their work beyond all praise. It is the privilege of the battalion medical officer to teach these men first aid, and they are always a credit to his teaching. (Sparrow, G & Ross, J N M. *On Four Fronts with the Royal Naval Division*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1918 p166).

The regimental medical officer was again the first link in the chain connecting the front line with the base. He was provided with two orderlies and sixteen stretcher-bearers (combatants), who, when an action commenced, would deposit their arms in the 'Maltese cart' (which carried the field medical and surgical panniers, 'medical companion,' surgical haversack, and water-bottle, which comprised the equipment), and would assume the brassard prescribed by the Geneva Convention. Bearer 'squads' carried to the regimental aid-post, which in turn was cleared by the ambulance bearers and waggons to the 'dressing station' of the field ambulance. (Butler, A G, Downes, R M & Maguire, F A. *Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914 - 1918. Vol. 1 Gallipoli Palestine and New Guinea*, Melbourne, Australian War Memorial, 1930 p11).



Stretcher bearers of the Otago Mounted Rifles, NZEF, at Anzac.
National Library of New Zealand PA1-0-863-01-6.

‘QUITE UNFIT FOR THEIR JOBS’

A study of Battalion Command in 53 (Welsh) Division at Suvla Bay

Richard Earl

53 (Welsh) Division

158 (North Wales) Brigade

1/5 Royal Welch Fusiliers - B E Philips

1/6 Royal Welch Fusiliers - T W Jones

1/7 Royal Welch Fusiliers - A E R Jelf-Reveley

1/1 Herefordshire - G Drage

159 (Cheshire) Brigade

1/4 Cheshire - G H Swindells

1/7 Cheshire - H Backhouse

1/4 Welsh - W Bramwell Jones

1/5 Welsh - M Morgan

160 (Welsh Border) Brigade

1/4 Sussex - W R Campion

2/4 Queens - F D Watney

2/4 Royal West Kent - A T F Simpson

2/10 Middlesex - C H Pank

Having previously examined the battalion commanders of the three ‘New Army’ divisions of Lt. Gen. Sir Frederick Stopford’s IX Corps at Suvla Bay it is now time to review the situation in the two attached Territorial Force (TF) divisions, starting with Maj. Gen. Hon. J.E. Lindley’s 53 (Welsh) Division. The 53 Division was a first line TF unit originally comprising four battalions of Royal Welch Fusiliers, four from the Cheshire Regiment, three from the Monmouthshire Regiment and the 1st Herefordshire Regiment.¹ However, the deteriorating situation on the Western Front towards the end of 1914 necessitated the transfer of six of these battalions to France and their replacement by two from the Welsh Regiment,² a first line TF battalion from the Royal Sussex and three newly formed composite battalions from the Home Counties Division.³ Towards the end of July 1915 the division set sail for the Mediterranean, arriving off Suvla Bay on the evening of 8 August.

It is generally accepted that 53 Division did not do well in the various engagements of August 1915. The division’s internal cohesion had been badly disrupted by the removal of the most efficient battalions for the Western Front, and then they were

¹ Westlake, R. & Chappell, M. *British Territorial Units 1914-18* (Osprey, London 1991) p.14.

² They did not officially become the Welsh Regiment until 1920.

³ Becke, A. F. *Order of Battle of Divisions Part 2* (Naval & Military Press, Eastbourne 2007) pp.118-122.

thrown into a confused, ill-managed offensive at Suvla Bay after a lengthy sea voyage.⁴ At least some of the blame for their performance has been placed on the battalion COs. As one subsequent divisional commander later commented,

‘As you know the 53rd Divn. did not show to great advantage; the men were quite good material but their training was very defective and the majority of the C.Os were quite unfit for their jobs; I had to get rid of a number and would have got rid of more if it had been possible then to find efficient substitutes.’⁵

This comment is indicative of the long standing regular army’s prejudice against TF officers, few of whom ever ascended to high rank.⁶ To give an example, en route to the Mediterranean a staff officer in 54 Division remarked how it was the junior, regular, officers who really ran the brigade as ‘Terrier’ COs were not taken seriously!⁸

Origins

In contrast to the three Kitchener divisions in IX Corps, the 53 Division’s COs were, as one might expect from part-time officers, slightly older and lacking in combat experience. Ten were serving with the TF on the outbreak of war, one, Thomas Jones, was a retired Colonel from the Special Reserve, while Gilbert Drage was a retired regular officer from the Royal Marines.⁹ Nearly all came from their parent regiments, with just Jones, South Wales Borderers, and Drage, Royal Marine Light Infantry, having previously served with ‘foreign’ regiments. Often they were prominent local figures, for example William Robert Campion was the Conservative MP for Lewes from 1910 to 1924, and would have been very well known to his Sussex territorials. Three, Philips, Jelf-Reveley and Morgan were commanding their units on the outbreak of war. Two others, Simpson and Watney, were retired but were brought back to raise second line units on their creation. These five had an average age of nearly 50, ranging from the elderly Morgan (60) to the youthful Jelf-Reveley (36). Another five were serving with their battalions at a more junior level and took over from COs deemed unfit or too elderly to proceed abroad.¹⁰ These tended to be slightly younger, with an average age a little over 40.¹¹ A good example is Watney, who had spent many years as a volunteer officer, and at the time he was appointed to command 4/Queens in 1903 was believed to be one of the youngest battalion COs in the volunteers. Aged 45 in 1915 he was, despite having retired, by no means superannuated.¹²

⁴ Aspinall-Oglander, C. F. *Military Operations: Gallipoli Vol. II, May 1915 to the Evacuation* (Heinemann, London 1932) pp.289-314.

⁵ Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives (LHCMA) Hamilton 8/1/42 Marshall to Hamilton 26 March 1917.

⁶ Mitchinson, K. W. *The Territorial Force at War 1914-1916* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2014) p.156.

⁷ i.e. Territorial Force.

⁸ The National Archives, Kew (TNA) CAB45/241 Dunnalley to Aspinall-Oglander 5 Feb 1931.

⁹ *London Gazette* 24 Feb 1914.

¹⁰ Swindells, Backhouse, Bramwell Jones and Pank were all majors, Campion a captain.

¹¹ I have been unable to find a date of birth for Bramwell Jones, however, as he joined his battalion in 1899 as a second lieutenant I have estimated his age in August 1915 as 40.

¹² *Surrey Mirror and County Post* 26 June 1936.



H. Backhouse, CO 1/7th Cheshires

There is every reason to believe that the five original COs who proceeded abroad had the confidence of their men. Algernon Jelf-Reveley thought that only those COs deemed to be sufficiently efficient were allowed to proceed overseas.¹³ As the TF had been raised for home service some units struggled to persuade their men to take the Imperial Service Obligation. Faced with this, Basil Edwin Philips made a 'stirring appeal' to the men of 1/5 Royal Welch Fusiliers that persuaded the majority of them to volunteer for overseas service.¹⁴ In fact, Philips had already demonstrated that he was a committed and resolute officer by instigating a vigorous programme of training right from the outbreak of war. He was well aware of the difficulties of training with inexperienced officers, reporting that it was 'almost impossible to carry out Company training as it

should be done owing to the lack of knowledge and inexperience of Officers ...Officers as a rule have no idea of discipline or enforcing it.'¹⁵ Training in the UK at this time was frequently hampered by a lack of boots and rifles, and then further impeded by the requirement to send large drafts to battalions proceeding to France, whilst at the same time releasing home service men to the second line.¹⁶

Of the five COs who were internally promoted to battalion command prior to departing the UK virtually all were saturated with experience of volunteer soldiering. For example, William Bramwell Jones, a solicitor in civilian life with 20 years experience in the TF, was appointed CO of 1/4 Welsh in January 1915 vice the previous commander who retired due to ill-health.¹⁷ He had some prior active service in the South African War where he served as an NCO with the Imperial Yeomanry.¹⁸ Similarly, Major Cecil Pank was brought back from garrison duty in Gibraltar to take command of 2/10 Middlesex a few months before they departed for the MEF.¹⁹ However, despite their age and lengthy service, none of the other COs appear to have seen any significant combat prior to August 1915.

Combat Performance

To state that the men of 53 Division's introduction to combat was chaotic is something of an understatement. Following on the heels of 10 (Irish) and 11 (Northern) Divisions they were met with almost total confusion and no clear idea of

¹³ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/7 Royal Welch Fusiliers, Jelf-Reveley to Aspinall-Oglander 22 Feb 1931.

¹⁴ Maldwyn Davies, *H. A. Flintshire Territorial at War 1914-18* (Bridge Books, Worthenbury 2016) p.16.

¹⁵ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/5 Royal Welch Fusiliers.

¹⁶ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/7 Royal Welch Fusiliers; K. W. Mitchinson *The Territorial Force at War 1914-1916* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2014) p.62; Lt. Col. W. A. V. Churton *The War Record of the 1/5th (Earl of Chester's) Battalion The Cheshire Regiment* (Phillipson & Golder, Chester 1920) p.7.

the location of the enemy; this was compounded by a complete lack of maps of the area, the intense summer heat and a paucity of water. To make matters worse one battalion was detailed to remain on the beach and the entire 160 Brigade was taken away almost immediately to support 11 Division.²⁰ Those battalions which did attack met heavy resistance from machine guns, snipers and artillery fire. Some units were particularly affected by this and there were reports of hasty retreats and occasional panic.²¹ It is not surprising that under this challenging baptism of fire some of the more elderly COs struggled to effectively lead their battalions.

The oldest battalion CO, Morgan Morgan of 1/5 Welsh, had a particularly difficult experience after landing at Suvla. Inexplicably half his battalion was detached almost immediately, and he then lost touch with the other half. Detailed to defend a cluster of buildings with about 25 men, he promptly lost a third of them to accurate Turkish rifle fire, before leading the survivors to a safer location. On 10 August, after just two days on active service, he succumbed to dysentery, exhaustion and shock, and was evacuated from the peninsula.²² Yet in his short spell of active service Morgan had shown himself equal to the task. In a letter to the *Aberdare Leader* a junior NCO from the battalion's signal section wrote.

'The Col. showed what he was made of. He was right in front of the leading Company, and gave his orders to be passed back in sharp clear tones without any hesitation. It did us good to hear a man well over 60 give orders in a calm unperturbed voice ...he set a fine example...by the unflinching bravery he showed. Alas he was not to lead us for long, for having been unable to eat anything from the 8th of August he fell from sheer exhaustion in the front line of fire.'²³

Physical courage was not an attribute that the TF COs were lacking. During an attack by 1/4 Welsh William Bramwell Jones led his men from the front. 'On and on he went, never looking back, until he had accomplished his task. His triumph was complete'. It was leadership like this that evoked 'great love' for Jones from his men.²⁴ During the 10 August assault both Basil Philips and Thomas Jones of the Royal Welch Fusiliers were well up with the leading lines, and in fact drew some criticism from a junior officer for being unable to properly issue orders and command effectively from such an advanced position.²⁵ Such was the confusion of this attack that the two colonels, unsure of where the Turkish positions lay, determined to charge forward with what men they had in hand. On reaching a ridge Philips raised himself up to observe the enemy positions and was instantly shot and killed.²⁶ Apparently his last words were 'Come on you fighting Welsh, and show them what you can do'.²⁷ One of his

¹⁷ *Llanelly Star* 30 January 1915. ¹⁸ *Macclesfield Times* 14 Jan 1916.

¹⁹ Wyrall, W. *The Die Hards in the Great War* (Harrison & Sons Ltd, London 1926) p.152.

²⁰ TNA CAB19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission, Evidence of Lindley 31 Jan 1917.

²¹ TNA CAB45/241 Crookenden to Aspinall-Oglander 28 Jan 1931.

²² Anthony, R. 'Morgan Morgan's Short War' *Hanes: Newsletter of the Cynon History Society* 80, August 2017 https://cvhs.org.uk/hanesarchive/2017_Hanes_80.pdf accessed 13:45 12/9/24; TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/5 Welsh Regiment.

²³ Cpl W. Williams 'How the Gallant Colonel Led his Men' *Aberdare Leader* 25 December 1915.

²⁴ *Carmarthen Journal* 3 September 1915.

²⁵ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/6 Royal Welch Fusiliers Letter Mills to Aspinall-Oglander 5/2/30.

subordinates thought Philips decision to charge was a particularly brave one under the circumstances due to the lack of artillery support.²⁸ Philips' divisional commander also had a high opinion of him, telling the Dardanelles Commission that he was well known within the division and 'his men would have done anything in the world for him. He was a magnificent head of a regiment, a fine character and a splendid fellow altogether.'²⁹

Backhouse was the other CO who lost his life during the campaign. Towards the end of the campaign he was evacuated, suffering from rheumatism, to a rest camp Malta but then later drowned en route to rejoin his battalion in Egypt when the former P & O line SS *Persia* was controversially sunk by a German U Boat on 30 December 1915. A number of others were wounded. Gilbert Drage was one of the first to be hit, wounded by shrapnel on 9 August he was evacuated the following morning. Evidently his wound was not a serious one as he was back in command by the end of the month where he remained for the rest of the campaign.³⁰ The following day another CO, Geoffrey Hillier Swindells, 1/4 Cheshire, was wounded in the thigh and evacuated. Fortunately he too recovered and returned to his battalion that October.³¹ Alfred Simpson was wounded on the morning of 15 August whilst going round the front line and had to be evacuated.³² A young soldier from his battalion witnessed his wounding. 'At dawn the Adjutant and Colonel came walking along behind us, but in a few minutes the Col. was hit, and retired quickly.'³³ Fortunately the wound was not serious and he returned to his battalion in December.³⁴ His departure was described as a 'very severe loss' in the regimental journal.³⁵

In spite of their inexperience some COs did make sound decisions under tremendous stress. Cecil Pank's 2/10 Middlesex was tasked with supporting a major attack by 158 Brigade. When the battalion advanced in support of the three Royal Welch Fusilier battalions he sensibly deployed his Londoners in extended order, in contrast to the leading battalions who were in platoon columns of fours. As a result Pank's men suffered fewer casualties from shellfire during the advance.³⁶ On being briefed to then make a further attack Cecil Pank complained that the designated zero hour did not allow him sufficient time to rejoin his battalion and lead the assault. He asked for a delay of 60 minutes, which was granted, but unfortunately when he did return he discovered that an unknown staff officer had already sent half his unit in a fruitless and costly attack.³⁷

In common with many other units, the officers of 1/4 Royal Sussex not only lacked maps of Suvla Bay, but were given wholly inadequate, and vague, orders to simply

²⁶ Maldwyn Davies op. cit. p.44. ²⁷ *Flintshire Observer and News* 14 October 1915.

²⁸ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/5 Royal Welch Fusiliers, Davies - Aspinall-Oglander, n.d. but Feb 1931.

²⁹ TNA CAB19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission, Evidence of Lindley 31 Jan 1917.

³⁰ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/1 Herefords. ³¹ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/4 Cheshire.

³² Atkinson, C. T. *The Queen's Own Royal West Kent 1914-1919* (Simpkin, Hamilton, Marshall, Kent & Co., London 1924) p.143.

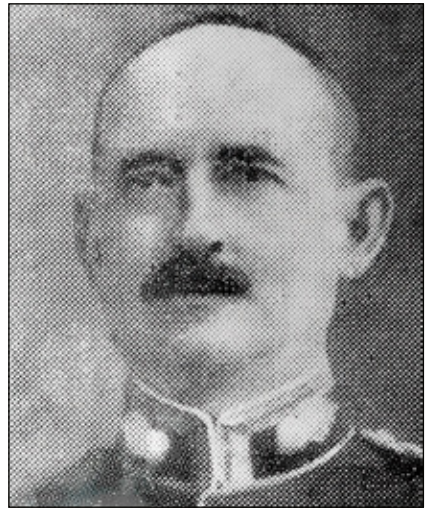
³³ May, A. G. 'My Experience of Suvla Bay' *The Gallipolian* 34 (Winter 1980) pp.18-19.

³⁴ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 160 Brigade.

³⁵ 'The Queens Own Gazette' Vol XXXIV, No. 9, September 1915.

³⁶ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 2/10 Middlesex.

advance into the smoke until they bumped into friendly units. Leading his men in a deep formation William Campion was fortunate enough to bump into the extreme flank of 2/4 Queens, whom he found sat in a ditch. Extending his own men to the left, but with his flank still in the air, Campion consolidated the position and sent out patrols.³⁸ Frank Watney's 2/4 Queens had made a single unsuccessful attack shortly after landing, but then spent most of the succeeding days consolidating the line they held.³⁹ Poorly planned operations like this gave little opportunity for battalion COs to demonstrate their talents. Alfred Simpson appears to have adopted a humane attitude towards the inexperienced, and often under-age, soldiers in his battalion. Many years after the war the then 16 year old Private Thomas Edmed recalled how he was caught drunkenly sleeping on duty. Colonel Simpson was told that Edmed was otherwise an exemplary signaller they couldn't do without, and he was let off without recourse to a formal court martial.⁴⁰



B E Philip, CO 1/5 Royal Welch Fusiliers

The appalling conditions on the Gallipoli peninsula caused the invaliding of several COs. It should probably be pointed out here that although there was much genuine sickness on Gallipoli, 'invaliding'- in particular when applied to senior officers- could be a euphemism for a sacking.⁴¹ As stated, an early failure was Morgan Morgan of 1/5 Welsh, who lasted until only 11 August before being evacuated to the base suffering from 'physical exhaustion and shock'.⁴² Aged 60 the task of leading his battalion in the difficult conditions on Gallipoli proved too much. The fact that he only lasted two days at the front indicates that he probably should have been replaced prior to departing England. William Bramwell Jones had been extolled by fellow officers for his bravery in leading 1/4 Welsh, but had to be evacuated home with dysentery just over a month after landing.⁴³ Apparently he wanted to return to the front but was physically unable to do so.⁴⁴ The elderly Thomas Jones was relieved in mid September and the brigade war diary comments rather pointedly how matters improved under his replacement.⁴⁵

Similarly, Frank Watney was invalided on 27 September, a day after his second in command was also evacuated, though he was able to return in December to resume

³⁷ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 2/10 Middlesex.

³⁸ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/4 Royal Sussex.

³⁹ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 2/4 Queens.

⁴⁰ Imperial War Museum Sound Archive (IWMSA) Acc. 8849 Thomas Edmed, 1985.

⁴¹ TNA CAB19/33 Proceedings of the Dardanelles Commission, Evidence of Lindley 31 Jan 1917.

⁴² TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/5 Welsh. ⁴³ *The Cambria Daily Leader* 24 September 1915.

⁴⁴ *Llanelli Star* 25 September 1915. ⁴⁵ Maldwyn Davies op. cit. p.49.

command.⁴⁶ For his service he was twice mentioned in dispatches.⁴⁷ Jelf-Reveley lasted longer, remaining in command of 1/7 Royal Welch Fusiliers until the end of December 1915 before being admitted to hospital.⁴⁸ It is perhaps surprising he lasted this long as his battalion had not performed particularly well that August, one observer from the Manchester Regiment witnessed them coming back in some disorder from an attack.⁴⁹

Of all the battalion COs in 53 Division, those in 160 Brigade seem to have been especially competent. Brig. Gen. Hume later wrote a lengthy report on his brigade's operations on Gallipoli in which he gave an interesting summary of the abilities of all four of his battalion COs.

'I consider Colonel Watney ...an exceptionally good CO. He has carried and holds the respect and esteem of all his officers. He is firm and just but popular with all ranks and has carried out the duties of his command both at training and on active service to my entire satisfaction. Lt Colonel Campion...is a good CO also... He commands a very fine battalion and has an exceptionally good lot of officers under him who assist and back him up loyally. Colonel Simpson...is a very good stamp of Territorial CO, he has great personal influence over his officers and men and is a man of some personality- commanding the respect and confidence of all under his command ...he was wounded and the battalion has in consequence suffered greatly in every way. He was the right man in the right place- his successor...is not. Colonel Pank...is also a good CO, not afraid of responsibility- cool...he has done his work to my entire satisfaction and has the makings of a good battalion under his command.'⁵⁰

After Gallipoli

Although none of the battalion COs reached high command, several made a valuable contribution to eventual victory in 1918. Four (Drage, Swindells, Backhouse and Watney) were briefly promoted to acting brigade command. However, none of these appointments endured, the longest being the three weeks that Watney commanded 160 Brigade in September 1915.⁵¹ Cecil Pank recovered from his wounds and was subsequently appointed CO of 1/8 Middlesex in August 1917. This battalion was serving on the Western Front as part of the highly regarded 56 (London) Division. During the German counter attack at Cambrai on 30 November 1917 Pank's battalion headquarters came under attack. He was able to escape from his dugout by one exit as bombs were falling through the other. Rallying men from his battalion and others, Pank successfully counter-attacked and threw the advancing Germans back before being wounded again.⁵² Pank was later appointed to the DSO in early 1918 for his '*great personal courage, coolness and*

⁴⁶ Wylly, H. C. *History of the Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment in the Great War* (Gale & Polden, London 1923) p.151. TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 160 Brigade.

⁴⁷ Quarterly Army List 1918.

⁴⁸ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/7 Royal Welch Fusiliers.

⁴⁹ TNA CAB45/257 Diary of Captain Lotheby, 11/Manchester.

⁵⁰ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 160 Brigade, Hume to GOC 53 Div 14 Sept 1915.

⁵¹ Becke op. cit. p.118.

⁵² Miles, W. *Military Operations France and Belgium 1917 Vol. III* (HMSO, London 1948) p.220; Wyrall *The Die Hards in the Great War* p.411.

resourceful determination' during this action.⁵³ He remained in command of 1/8 Middlesex until 1919 and received a CMG after the war.⁵⁴

Campion too was considered to be sufficiently competent to command again. After recovering from sickness he took charge of a Royal Sussex garrison battalion before becoming CO of 6/Bedfordshire on the Western Front. In 1918 he was re-appointed CO of 1/4 Royal Sussex on their arrival in France to join 34 Division who he commanded ably until the Armistice, being appointed to the DSO.⁵⁵ Swindells also led 1/4 Cheshire to the Western Front, where he was killed on 1 August 1918 attacking the village of le Mont Jour during the Second Battle of the Marne.⁵⁶ A keen cricketer, Swindells was described as '*every inch a soldier*' by those who knew him, and his death seems to have been particularly regretted.⁵⁷ Simpson took the very junior 3/4 RWK to France in June 1917 to join 9 (Scottish) Division near Arras.⁵⁸ However, he lasted only a few weeks before being invalided back to the UK where he later retired.⁵⁹ After the war he was very active with regimental reunions.⁶⁰ Watney briefly commanded 2/21 (Queen's) London in Palestine before returning to the UK and retiring.

After the War

Most of the COs evacuated as unfit from Gallipoli saw out the war in the UK. William Bramwell Jones took command of the reserve 4/Welsh based at Milford Haven.⁶¹ Thomas Jones relinquished command of 1/6 Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1916 and retired from the army, as did Algernon Jelf-Reveley and Morgan Morgan.

Gilbert Drage lasted longer; was appointed to the DSO, mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Order of the Nile (Third Class).⁶² He remained in command of 1/1 Herefords well into 1918 before being replaced. Watney too was well rewarded for his service, receiving the Order of the Nile (Third Class), a CBE and three mentions in dispatches.⁶³

Perhaps the most varied post-war career was that of William Campion who, in 1924, was appointed the 21st Governor of Western Australia. There he carefully managed the state's position in the Australian Commonwealth, whilst promoting links with Sussex, and encouraged emigration to the dominion. Throughout the inter-war period he supported many veterans associations and reunions, attending reunion dinners to once again 'take command'.⁶⁴ Watney too was highly active

⁵³ *London Gazette* 4 Feb 1918; Sir O'Moore Creagh & Humphris, E. M. (ed.) *The V.C. and D.S.O Vol. III* (Standard Art Book Co. Ltd., London 1924) p.100.

⁵⁴ Dudley Ward, C. H. *The Fifty Sixth Division 1914-1918* (London 1921) p.323.

⁵⁵ TNA WO95/2458 War Diary 4/Royal Sussex.

⁵⁶ Shakespear, J. *The Thirty-Fourth Division 1915-1919: The Story of its Career from Ripon to the Rhine* (H.F. & G. Witherby, London 1921) p.264.

⁵⁷ *The Macclesfield Courier and Herald* 17 August 1918.

⁵⁸ Earl, R. 'You Have Done Splendidly' The Third Line Territorial Battalions on the Western Front' Stand To! 114 Feb 2019 pp.9-15.

⁵⁹ Atkinson op. cit. p.274. ⁶⁰ 'The Queens Own Gazette' *passim*.

⁶¹ Marden, T. O. *The History of the Welch Regiment 1914-1918* (Western Mail, Cardiff 1932) p.280.

⁶² *London Gazette* 9 Nov 1918.

⁶³ *Surrey Mirror and County Post* 26 June 1936; *London Gazette* 26 Nov 1919.

⁶⁴ Grieves, K. 'Remembering an ill-fated venture: The Fourth Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment at Suvla Bay and its Legacy, 1915-1939' Macleod, J. (ed.) *Gallipoli: Making History* (Frank Cass, London 2004) pp.110-124.

with post-war reunions. At the grand age of 91 he attended a dinner in honour of the men 2/4 Queens, 126 of whom were in attendance, held at Grants Restaurant, Croydon in the summer of 1961. Still in good health, Watney made a short speech extolling the performance of his men in battle.⁶⁵

It was generally considered that 53 Division had performed poorly at Suvla Bay. Ian Hamilton wrote to Lindley at the end of August 1915 that his division '*not only would not attempt to stand up to the enemy; not only ran back giving up a considerable extent of ground, but were actually reported as being incapable of defending themselves.*'⁶⁶ Both 53 and 54 Divisions received some further criticism after the war for their combat performance. In the interwar period the official historian, Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, wrote to many officers requesting comments on his draft chapters for the official history of the Gallipoli campaign. At least one former CO was sufficiently annoyed to respond with a strongly worded letter defending the conduct of his battalion which was apparently noted '*very carefully*', and caused Aspinall-Oglander to respond that he would '*try still harder to give a really true picture of what happened.*'⁶⁷ Yet under new leadership the 53 Division's performance improved as the war went on, the division serving with distinction in Egypt and Palestine from 1916 onwards. In Spring 1918 five battalions (2/4 Queens, 1/4 Sussex, 1/4 & 1/7 Cheshire and 1/1 Hereford) were transferred to the Western Front to assist in the reconstitution of 34 Division; four 1/5 & 1/6 RWF, 1/4 & 1/5 Welsh were amalgamated; two were disbanded completely (2/4 RWK and 2/10 Middlesex). Only 1/7 RWF remained intact, albeit transferred to 160 Brigade.⁶⁸ Their places were taken by Indian units.

Far from being 'quite unfit for their jobs' it can be seen that the twelve battalion COs who landed at Suvla Bay with 53 Division were, for the most part, efficient leaders and courageous men. The fact that several of them were deemed suitable to command battalions until the final years of the war, four on the Western Front, is testament to this. They were frequently to be found at the point of greatest danger. Philips and Backhouse made the supreme sacrifice during the Gallipoli campaign, and Swindells was killed on the Western Front. Nevertheless, compared with the Kitchener divisions in IX Corps the 53 Division COs had far less combat experience and, although the average age (46) was comparable, a small number were considerably older. It was these aged officers who were swiftly replaced or invalided, and should probably never have been allowed overseas but instead retained in the UK where they could have performed a useful training or administrative role.

⁶⁵ *Times and County Mail* 5 May 1961.

⁶⁶ LHCMA Hamilton 7/2/36 Hamilton to Lindley 25 Aug 1915.

⁶⁷ TNA WO95/4323 War Diary 1/7 RWF Aspinall-Oglander to Jelf-Reveley 23 Feb 1931 & Jelf-Reveley to Aspinall-Oglander 22 Feb 1931.

⁶⁸ Becke op. cit. pp.120-121.

THOUGHTS OF AN ANZAC IN FRANCE.

Yearnings for the Homeland, Memories of Gallipoli

We had taken up a position during the night amongst the broken ruins of what had once been a large stone house, standing in its garden some little way back from the road.

I was the corporal in charge of a machine gun and crew of six men, posted in the spot to protect a party of men working in the neighbourhood.

The tired fellows on watch were leaning against the broken masonry which sheltered the gun, looking out into the unknown country ahead, whilst I lay wrapped in my coat, listening to the sounds of the night, and conscious of the coming dawn.

Very slowly the sky began to lighten in the east. Faint lines of colour grew and spread until the trees stood out black and clear against a sea of Conor, crimson and gold, and every shade between.

High in the air, dark against the glory of it all, a little bird went soaring. While he flew his song of joy came tumbling down to us in notes of liquid gold, until the air was full of song. The joy of living was in every note which trembled down.

A little wind stirred the heavy grass and the faint, elusive scene which had haunted me during the night grew real. I walked along the ruined wall, and came to the garden. And what a garden!

Two years of war had passed lightly here. the air was heavy with scent. There, at the foot of that old moss-grown bank of stones, the wallflowers stood. Clustering thickly, so that only a gleam of white showed the overthrown statue, were the most glorious crimson peony roses I had ever seen. The ground was clothed in blue, for the forget-me-nots covered it in a soft carpet of Conor. Mingling through it all was the scent of mignonette. Slowly I walked over the blue forget-me-nots, while the sweet scent tugged at memory's chains to set it free.

Again I was standing, watching the angry sunset from the barren hills of Gallipoli. The rugged peaks of Imbros stood darkly against the stormy sky, and beneath the sea was livid and sullen. Great streaks of crimson and gold grew in the west, and seemed to fight against the banking clouds, which promised us that soon we would go hungry and cold. (When it was raining no food could be landed on Anzac.) Fresh in the wind the scent of the wild thyme came and went.

Then memory wings one home. The bush is gay, and the sun shines warmly down, sucking the scent from scrub, leaf and flower. Again I am slowly riding through the bush. Far ahead is the silvery gleam of 'Sheet of Water.' The blue peaks of the Serra are round me like a wall. I give Miladi her head, and off we rush, the shrieking parrots flashing like flaming jewels from the gnarled limbs of the gums. The bush: the bush names — Breakneck Gully and Far Creek, Cigarette Hill, Starvation Swamp, Wild Bull Crossing, the Big Plain! How they come to the mind again!

I am roused from my thoughts, so bitter sweet, by one of the men, who comes to tell me breakfast is ready. I went back to the gun. A little fire had been made in a sheltered corner of the ruins, and a thin pencil of smoke wavered out, to melt away in the breeze. All around, along the lines of the trenches, and throughout the ruins similar columns of smoke told of the fragrant tea being brewed; showed where some soldier of the Outer Empire made his morning meal.

Memories of Gallipoli

Time beats out all things with his iron flail,
 Things great, Things small;
 With strong, sure strokes which never fail,
 With long slow strokes of his iron flail,
 Time beats out all.

It is wrong, after all; it is too emphatic. Time softens and heals, but does not 'beat out all.'

Watch any of the men who were on Anzac when a glorious sunset is in being, and you will have one thing certain, if nothing else in all the world is certain. These men have not, and never will, forget Anzac.

Perhaps if our venture had been successful we might, in times of ease and peace, have forgotten; but now, every time something, the shape of a hill, the scent of the wild thyme or, most of all, a sunset, brings to us a memory that time does not beat out.

The lonely graves we left behind on the wild and barren hills still tug at our hearts. How often at the close of day, when the sun is slowly going down, something reminds us of those other endless days when we sat on the scrubby hill sides and watched the sunset over Imbros; then we feel the queer pain, as if the unseen hands were tugging at our hearts.

Some lonely corner in the hills comes unbidden to the mind, and again we see a broken rifle marking out the grave of someone's son.

The wild thyme scents the breeze that wanders o'er the hills. The purple sea laps softly at the shore. The clouds at Imbros slowly turn from grey to deepest gold, and the hill tops sharp are bathed in crimson light.

The flails of time may beat from age to age with the heavy strokes of war and death; but the worst that time has still in store for us will never make us forget Our Anzac Days.

— *Age* (Melbourne) 11 August 1917 p16.

Where did they bury my darling boy.
 Does anyone know or care?

1918 – Parents' 'In Memoriam' notice for 178 Sapper Albert Edward Renshaw,
 2 Field Coy Engineers AIF. Died of wounds on an unknown ship,
 26 April 1915, aged 27.

NO ROSEMARY, BUT THYME

Bryn Dolan

Many online sources inform us that a sprig of rosemary is worn on Anzac / Gallipoli Day because 'wild rosemary grew at Gallipoli.' Some websites make the claim repeatedly and emphatically, and one asserts that the 'original Gallipoli strain' of rosemary which is – according to the site – what is used in Australia on Anzac Day, derives from a single bush brought back and planted in the hospital grounds by an unnamed wounded soldier. Despite the claim that 'rosemary grew wild', there seem to be no contemporary, first-hand sources that confirm this.

The *Australasian* newspaper's 'Queen Bee' stated:

In a letter from Anzac the soldier writer mentions that large quantities of rosemary grow along the shores of the Mediterranean.¹

We are not able to examine the letter, as it is referred to only in this article, and its anonymous author did not specify the shores of Gallipoli itself. While rosemary is reported by soldiers on their way to Gallipoli as growing on the islands of Skyros and Lemnos, it is rare to find it mentioned otherwise. A search in contemporary accounts of the campaign reveals no reference to it growing wild at Anzac, Helles or Suvla in 1915.

That is not to imply that there is not *now* rosemary at Gallipoli. The cemeteries were constructed in their present form in the early 1920s. Rosemary hedges were planted by the Imperial War Graves Commission, as noted by Lieutenant Mann RNVR, during the 1934 pilgrimage to Gallipoli:

Amid the unkempt growth of a landscape seared with sudden crevasses and storm-washed ravines, one comes upon these oases of peace, watered and tended as an English garden, of which indeed they are redolent, with their hedges of rosemary and wild thyme, their blowing roses, iris blooms and shapely shrubs.²

Note that the *thyme* is labelled 'wild'; the rosemary is not. Many contemporary sources (including the previous article in this edition), mention the presence of wild thyme at Gallipoli. The correspondent of New Zealand's *Evening Post* wrote:

Col. Bauchop ...was writing only a week or two ago in his usual bright spirits, revelling equally in the war and in the botanical interest of the surroundings at Anzac. Scarlet poppies had gone, he said, but the flora was marvellously bright and gaudy, with strange mauve tones, and an all-pervading scent from the wild thyme, which crushed beneath the feet at every step.³

'These are the last moments of many precious lives', wrote then Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Aspinall, of the hours before the Second Battle of Krithia:

¹'Rosemary For Remembrance'. *Australasian* (Melbourne) 15 January 1916, p35.

²Mann, F H. 'Gallipoli After Nineteen Years: Some Notes on the Cruise to Gallipoli April - May 1934' in *R.N.D.* No 18. Sept 2001 p1708.

³Unnamed correspondent. 'New Zealanders at the Front'. *Evening Post* (Wellington) 9 Oct 1915 p9.

The scene that unfolded itself from the forward slopes of Hill 114 still lives in many memories. The grassy slopes that crown the cliffs are carpeted with flowers. The azure sky is cloudless; the air is fragrant with the scent of wild thyme.⁴

Lieut. Hartley Williams, 9th Light Horse Regiment AIF, wrote home that:

The country is rough and hilly. In parts it is very pretty, and down in the gullies and on the flats in the distance wild flowers are growing — wild poppies and different kinds of wild thyme and wild sage.⁵

An unidentified 'Birmingham officer' noted in his diary:

June 27. - Impressions. Our shells tear the air; shrapnel like lashing of scorpions' tails. Aeroplanes buzz all day. Bombs like a demon's shout. Wild thyme round my dug-out. Goldfinches very pretty.⁶

Lieutenant-Colonel (later General) Sir John Monash sent home to his wife from Gallipoli 'a little twig and flower of broom, which grows wild in great profusion on the slopes of all the hills,'⁷ but never writes of rosemary, and John Masefield mentions thyme three times in his *Gallipoli*, including that:

The space between the Australian and Turk lines was fairly level hill-top, covered with thyme and short scrub.⁸

Rosemary is not mentioned in his book, nor in most others', yet it is a fragrant and conspicuous evergreen herb that can grow to a metre. It would have been instantly recognisable to soldiers on the peninsula, yet is scarcely mentioned by any. Thyme and rosemary are members of the mint family, but it is thyme that is mentioned in descriptions of cooking. Private Robert Ryder, 16th Battalion, AIF, gave a long and detailed exposition on the culinary feats that could be achieved at Anzac:

At Anzac there is wild thyme growing. This came in very handy in our cooking efforts. Now, about cooking, it is simply wonderful what can be done with a tin of 'dog,' [defined earlier in the letter as 'meat'; probably bully beef - ed.] and a bit of skill. Stew is very easily got together. ...Boil in half mess-tin of water till about three parts cooked, then shove in some 'dog' to taste. Add some thyme, cook a bit more until the vegetables are all done ...Get a spud and onion, chop these up very small. Mix these with the 'flour,' add some 'dog' and thyme, mix this altogether with some freshly strained water. Great care must be taken that no mud or flies get mixed, as they might upset the tone of it.⁹

Private Ryder, obviously a true gourmand, mentions thyme three times, but never rosemary, while a 'local Tommy' based at Helles, contributed a similar recipe:

"Rissoles a la Sedd-ul-Bahr."

Chop a tin of bully (the bully, not the tin) with some biscuits and some bread crumbs (by the way, Gallipoli bread, is "some bread"). Mix it into the

⁴Aspinall-Oglander, C F. *History of the Great War, Military Operations, Gallipoli. Volume 1*, London, Heinemann, 1932 p343.

⁵'Flowers on Gallipoli'. *Border Watch* (Mount Gambier) 24 July 1915 p4.

⁶Dundee *Evening Telegraph and Post* 11 August 1915 p4.

⁷Monash, J. Fifth instalment of his letters to his wife. *Newcastle Sun* (NSW) 20 November 1934 p11.

⁸Masefield, J. *Gallipoli*, London, Heinemann, 1926 p159.

⁹*Daily News* (Perth, WA) 29 February 1916 p6.

consistency of a thick paste. Flavour with some wild thyme (plenty of it grows on the Peninsula), and after rolling it into balls fry them in a canteen lid with pieces of bacon fat, saved from breakfast (if it hasn't been used more than twice for greasing boots), over a bright fire. ...If eaten, the effect is remarkable if not instantaneous death: one knows they have discovered someone with the digestion of an ostrich. – "Peninsula Cooking Recipes."¹⁰

Private Ted Luders, 1st Battalion AIF, described a similar rissole, also including thyme,¹¹ and Archie Barwick, of the same unit, noted in his journal that:

There are some very lovely wild flowers growing on the peninsular in the Spring time, & there is plenty of wild thyme & margery grows on the ridges. [W]e used to use the last 2 for seasoning our bully beef rissoles, & they were very nice when fried the only difficulty was getting firewood ...¹²

Lieut-Col. Dr. Joseph Beeston never mentions rosemary, but does state that:

Blackberries, olives, and wild thyme grew on the place, and also a kind of small melon. We did not eat any; ...we were running enough risks already; but the cooks used the thyme to flavour the bovril, and it was a nice addition.¹³

The 4th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment, landed at C Beach, Suvla, in the early morning of 9 August 1915. At a reunion in 1949 it was reported that:

One reminder from Capt. R. Jebb brought nods of agreement and muttering from all of them. "D'you remember," he said, "the smell of the wild thyme?" And even after 34 years, the smell which had greeted the battalion on its landing at Suvla Bay, brought back vivid memories of their landing and the incidents which followed.¹⁴

One writer, while remembering Gallipoli during the 1933 British Legion parade at Redcar, described 'kindly crawling wild thyme, nature's sweet disinfectant'.¹⁵

Not all associations with the smell of thyme, though, were pleasant ones.

Charles Bean noted of the first day at Anzac that:

The strain on the men lying out upon the forward slope was becoming almost unbearable. ...Most of the men of the 3rd Brigade who had fought there were dead or wounded. ...The blue sky and the bright sunlight on the sleeping hills, the fresh mountain air which they had drawn into their lungs after that first onrush, still surrounded them as with the evil treachery of a beautiful mirage. The sweet smell of the crushed thyme was never remembered in after days except with a shudder.¹⁶

This mingling of the scent of wild thyme with blood and death is mentioned more than once. Eighteen years after the Landing, Lieut.-Col. C E Hughes, AIF, then

¹⁰ 'Rissoles a La Sedd-ul-Bahr.' *Glossop-dale Chronicle and North Derbyshire Reporter* 18 Feb 1916 p5.

¹¹ 'Bully Beef Rissoles'. *Tamworth Daily Observer* (NSW) 24 September 1915 p3.

¹² Barwick, Archibald A. Private, 1st Battalion AIF. *Diaries*. Mitchell Library, NSW.

¹³ Beeston, J L. *Five Months At Anzac. A Narrative of Personal Experiences of the Officer Commanding the 4th Field Ambulance, Australian Imperial Force*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1916 p58.

¹⁴ 'Smell of Wild Thyme Brought Memories'. *West Sussex County Times* 4 Nov 1949 p6.

¹⁵ Pargeter, E W. 'North Riding Legionnaires'. *Middlesbrough Standard* 30 September 1933 p3.

¹⁶ Bean, C E W. *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume 1: The Story of Anzac: The First Phase*, Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1939 p298.

Chief Administrative Officer of the Imperial War Graves Commission in the East, spoke of the commemoration of Anzac Day at Gallipoli:

It was a sunny day ... just as it was in 1915 ... I crushed wild thyme as I walked through the scrub. Its smell recalled the early fighting, when many Diggers shuddered involuntarily because it was associated so much with death.¹⁷

Clearly Hughes had Bean's description in mind when describing the effect of the thyme – Volume 1 of the *Official History* had been published in 1921 – but similar associations are noted in other reports.

In his depiction of the Royal Marine Light Infantry's assault up Dead Man's Ridge at Anzac, Major Fred Waite of the New Zealand Engineers wrote:

The sorely tried Colonials could not but admit the bravery of the Royal Marine officers as they led their men up those scrub-covered slopes ... the Turkish machine gunners from the trenches opposite our right flank opened fire, and caught the entire line of men in the back of the head. As fast as the men fell, others pressed forward to take their places. The officers suffered excessively as they encouraged their men. ... The troops ... a little to the right were fascinated by the scene — the red and yellow of the hillside, the brave men steadily climbing up to the fatal crest, the burst of machine-gun fire as it caught the soldiers on the ridge; then the awful tumble down the slope until the maimed body came to rest at the foot of the gully among the sweet wild thyme.¹⁸

Major Waite also helped to bury 'Old Harry' Pearce of the Auckland Battalion, who was killed on North Beach by shrapnel to the chest:

Two of us hopped up out into the open with pick and shovel to commence cutting the shallow grave. We cut out the top sods all covered with crimson poppies of Gallipoli and placed them carefully on one side. The scent of the crushed thyme pervaded the air — the scent of crushed thyme mingled with that of freshly upturned earth.¹⁹

Captain Aubrey Herbert (Irish Guards, attached ANZAC staff as liaison officer and interpreter), had journeyed out along North Beach to No 2 Outpost a month before Harry Pearce was killed, presumably past where men of the stranded 7th Battalion and those who were killed going to their aid had been buried:

There was a scent of thyme, and also the other smell from the graves on the beach, which are very shallow.²⁰

He then wrote of accompanying Turkish officers during the 24 May Armistice:

We walked from the sea and passed immediately up the hill, through a field of tall corn filled with poppies, then another cornfield; then the fearful smell of death began as we came upon scattered bodies. We mounted over a plateau and down through gullies filled with thyme, where there lay about 4,000 Turkish dead. It was indescribable.²¹

¹⁷ Hughes quoted, Waters, J. C. 'The Dawn To-Day at Anzac Cove'. *The Sun* (Sydney) 25 Apr 1933 p7.

¹⁸ Waite, F. *Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War. Vol 1: The New Zealanders at Gallipoli*, Auckland, Whitcombe & Tombs, 1919 pp108, 110.

¹⁹ Waite, F. 'The Spirit of Anzac'. *Otago Daily Times* 24 April 1922 p4.

²⁰ Herbert, A. *Mons, Anzac & Kut*, London, Edward Arnold, 1919 p107. ²¹ Ibid. p 115.

Compton Mackenzie was also present during the armistice at Anzac where, he recalls, he accidentally put his foot through a decaying Turkish soldier's head. His horror at not being able to be rid of the smell *implies* the presence of rosemary, but is not explicit:

There was no herb so aromatic but it reeked of carrion, not thyme nor lavender, nor even rosemary.²²

Margaret Northcroft's son was killed on Walker's Ridge,²³ and in June 1927 she made a pilgrimage to his grave:

I went ashore expecting to be deeply interested by all I should hear and see; but I was quite unprepared for the indefinable charm of the Peninsula itself. The ravines, a mass of tamarisk and wild thyme; run steeply down to a sea of indescribable blue.²⁴

Lieutenant F H Mann again noted during the 1934 pilgrimage to Gallipoli that:

Time has dealt healingly with the once scarred and devastated land, and the stony waste of the Helles sector is now clothed again with heather and wild thyme, and stunted oaks and firs, most abundant in the shallow ravines, afford occasional shade.²⁵

The presence of rosemary *at* Gallipoli is almost always noted only after the war. Two years after Mrs Northcroft visited her son's grave another writer recorded:

The cemeteries are little gardens in a wilderness. Pines and cypress are growing up round them. Rosemary shrubs, neatly clipped, are dotted through the lines of headstones. ... I had another tour of Anzac with Colonel Hughes and Area Superintendent Millington. Scrubby oak, wild oats, thyme, hollyhocks, and other shrubs have grown again over hills and valleys till everything is much the same as in the early days of the campaign.²⁶

The writer acknowledges rosemary's presence as 'neatly clipped' and planted between rows of headstones, but does not include it in the list of plants that made the landscape 'much the same' as in 1915.

Col. Hughes mentions rosemary in his 1933 response to a question about the pine that had been planted at Lone Pine cemetery:

It's flourishing, I can see it now, waving in the breeze among the rosemary bushes, the irises, the poppies, and the anemones that *we have planted* around and between rows of 650 Diggers buried there.²⁷ [my emphasis added].

As Bean notes, and is reiterated by Compton Mackenzie and Aubrey Herbert, the connection with thyme might not have been a welcome one to soldiers who had had to lie in it under fire, or who otherwise associated it with the smell of blood, and fear and death.

²² Mackenzie, C. *Gallipoli Memories*, Garden City, New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1930 p81.

²³ 13/110 Lance Corporal Harry Cuthbert Northcroft, Auckland Mounted Rifles NZEF. Killed in action 19 May 1915, aged 25, buried in Walker's Ridge Cemetery.

²⁴ *New Zealand Herald* (Auckland) 30 December 1927 p11. ²⁵ Mann, F H *op. cit.* p1705.

²⁶ Special Correspondent (unnamed). 'Wattle From Australia Placed on Gallipoli Graves'. *The Herald* (Melbourne) 19 July 1929 p1.

²⁷ Hughes quoted by Waters, J C. *op. cit.* p7.

Rosemary, though, was already a traditional symbol for remembrance, and had been recognised and utilised as such since at least the time of the Romans.

In her madness, Shakespeare's Ophelia expresses her passion by distributing flowers, saying:

Here's rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray you love, remember.²⁸

British horticulturist Ernest Thomas Cook wrote that:

Two faithful virtues, constancy to the living and remembrance of the lost, have always been close entwined about the rosemary branch ...²⁹

Despite the claim, it is thyme – not rosemary – that 'grew wild at Anzac.' The presence of wild rosemary is a modern invention – peculiar, it seems, to websites, but the claim's origin is unclear, and apparently has no basis in fact.

Rosemary appears to have been adopted for Anzac / Gallipoli Day simply because it was already the traditionally-recognised symbol for remembrance.

There is, however, another contender. Poppies also grow wild at Gallipoli. There is a 'Poppy Valley' at the southern end of the Anzac sector, a 'Poppy Patch' in the north near No 2 Outpost, and poppies are mentioned at Gallipoli in 1915 much more often than rosemary is – there are three occurrences in the quotes in this article alone. Poppies are also mentioned often in the books 'Remembrance' and 'Sacred Places',³⁰ while neither thyme nor rosemary makes an appearance.

Grimly-guarded Dardanelles
Wild thyme swept by screeching shells,
Poppies bloom more crimson still
By Achi-Baba's bloody hill.³¹

Through the years following 1915 both poppies and rosemary served as symbols of Gallipoli, as well as of 11 November 1918, though poppies are now more commonly associated with the latter, at least in Australia. Thyme is mentioned at Gallipoli more often than poppies, and far more often than rosemary, yet it is the only one of the three that has never been adopted as an emblem of remembrance.

²⁸ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*. Act IV Scene 5.

²⁹ Cook, E T. *Gardens of England*. A & C Black, London 1911, p24.

³⁰ Hocking, G; Millowick, J; Atkins, C. *Remembrance: 100 Years. 100 Memorials. 100 Australian Stories*, Scoresby, Victoria, Five Mile Press, 2014; and Inglis, K S. *Sacred Places. War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1998.

³¹ 'The Dardanelles'. By a Manchester soldier wounded at Gallipoli on 4 June 1915 *Manchester Evening News*. 2 Aug 1915 p4.



LETTER FROM MY GRANDFATHER

Nick Yool

Major (later Lieut. Colonel, DSO) George Alexander Yool, 7th Battalion South
Staffordshire Regiment.

11th August 1915

This I am afraid is a very sad letter – nearly everyone hit – but you will know all about it from the papers long before you get this.

To begin at the end, we marched out to attack a ridge through very thick scrub country, and long before we got near the ridge, just after extending in fact, we came right on to them and as far as I can gather practically all our officers got hit at once.

I was on a little hill (Burnt Hill) to put the line on its right direction, when a bullet hit my haversack, which turned it through the fleshy part of my big behind, and made a fair sized hole, instead of probably giving me a really nasty wound. Well it was unpleasant on that hill, very, and it was some hours before I got off it with a shrapnel bullet through my upper arm, which now scarcely troubles me.

Tell E.A.M. [his father-in-law,] I was poached 3 days before the 12th. [the start of the grouse shooting season]

Well, I really saw nothing of it, but hear the men were all right but inclined to wander about looking for an officer to tell them what to do.

Poor old Brigade is badly knocked about. Saw Major Murray on hospital ship hit in neck – not very serious I believe – I got back somehow, but had to leave nearly everything behind. However I slipped my field glass into my pocket also my writing pad which had nice letters in it. Shan't want [to] leave nice letters about.

Am now on the way to Lemnos and may very likely stay there as I expect to be back in a very short time fit again – now for the beginning – our landing was unopposed and in the right place and we made good between Salt Lake and the sea, only meeting a small patrol – next day we dug in and had a few hit at long range – on the 8th moved forward a bit and were well fired at but lost few. It was about 6am. on the 9th that you ought to have had dreams if you ever do dream about me at all – can't write much about it, better not to listen. Will stop now in case I stay at Lemnos and this goes on –

Ever your very loving own G.



WHITTINGTON OFFICER WOUNDED.

Major George Alexander Yool, the 7th Service Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, who has been wounded at the Dardanelles, was born October 15, 1876, and is therefore nearly 39 years of age. He joined the 2nd Battalion South Staffordshires from the Volunteers on May 5, 1900, and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant June 24, 1902, and captain April 22, 1909. For a considerable time he was attached to the depot of his regiment at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, and resided at Ellfield House, Lichfield. He was attached to the 7th Service Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment upon its formation, and a few months ago was promoted to the rank of major. (*Tamworth Herald* 18 September 1915 p4).

Biography

George Alexander Yool was born 15 Oct. 1876 in Weybridge, Surrey, the only son of Henry and Mary Jane Yool, and educated at Radley College and at Trinity College, Cambridge.

He was appointed a 2nd lieutenant in the South Staffordshire Regiment on 5th May 1900; promoted lieutenant in 1902, and served in India from then until 1907. In 1908 he married Marjorie Miller in Kinfauns, Scotland. He was the father of Henry Yool (Furley Cottage, Membury 1975 - 1986), and grandfather of Nicholas Alexander Yool (Forge Farm, Membury 1981-).

From 1908 - 1910 George was serving in South Africa. He was promoted captain 22nd April 1909 and major, 29th October 1914. He landed with his regiment on 'B' Beach, Suvla, on 7th August and was wounded and evacuated, as per his letter, on the 9th. He served in France from 1916 - 1918, being promoted temp. lieutenant-colonel in 1918. He commanded the 1/4 Lincolnshire Regiment during the assault on Pommiers Trench / Redoubt, east of Mametz, and is mentioned six times in the unit history.¹ He was wounded twice, mentioned in despatches twice, and on 4 September 1918 was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Lieut-Col. Yool died at Shiplake, Oxfordshire, on 10th December 1934, and is buried in Weybridge Cemetery, Surrey.

Thanks to Nick Yool for providing this copy of
his grandfather's letter from Gallipoli.

YOOL, G. A. Major, S. Staffs. Regt.; Lieut.-Col., Lincolnshire Regt.(T.F.) (W 2.) D.S.O. M 2.	1895
--	-------------

¹ Simpson, C R. *The History of the Lincolnshire Regiment 1914-1918*. London, The Medici Society, 1931, available as a pdf document online.



See page 5

Headstone, Stoker George Watson, HMS *Queen*, Baby 700 Cemetery, Anzac.

Born 6 June 1889 in Darlington, Co. Durham.

Service record states 'killed in action 30.4.15 (Duty ashore at Gaba Tepe)'

Baby 700 was beyond the Anzac front line from 25th April; only bodies recovered from no man's land after the war are buried there. So how did a ship's stoker end up beyond the Anzac front line?

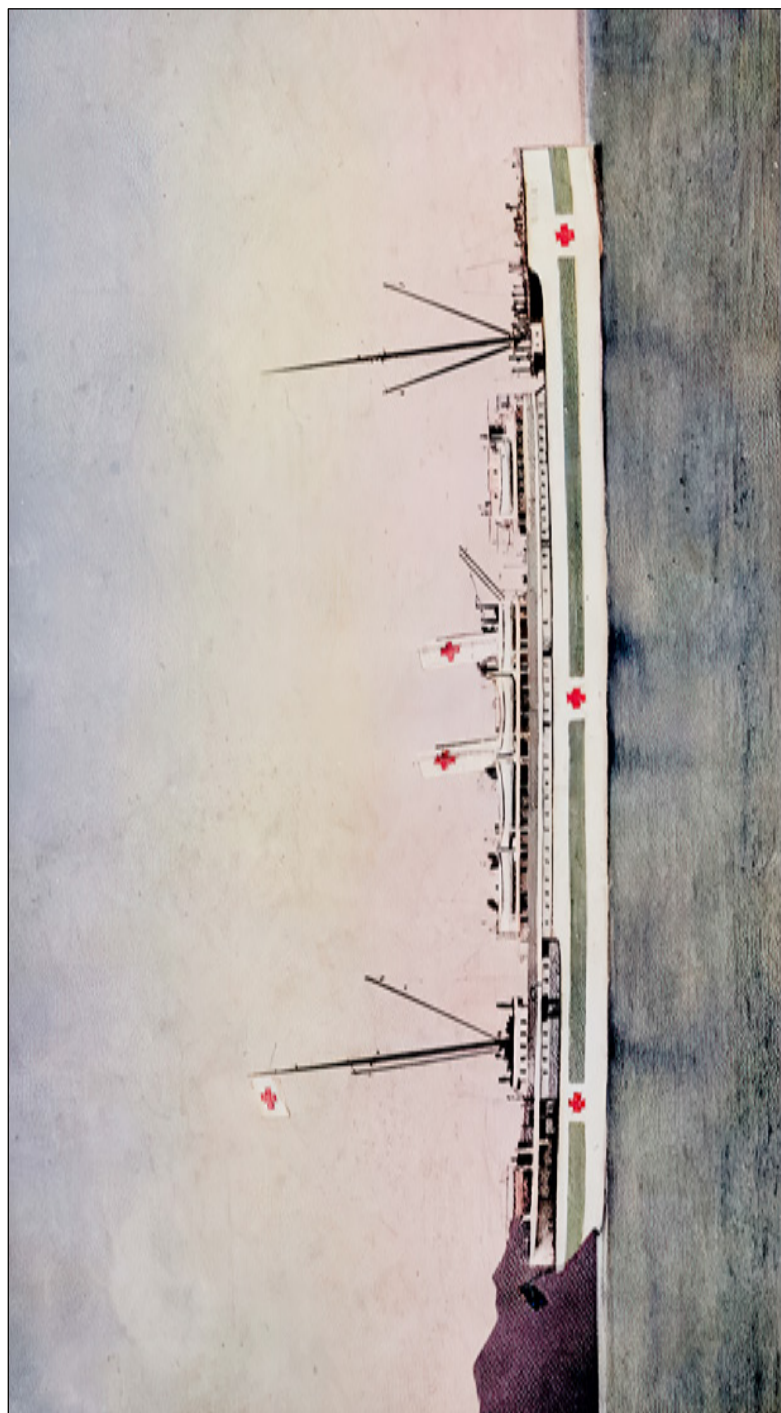


Does any reader recognise who this is? No information on rear of postcard except:
'Otto Keil Constantinople Series 1.'



Pat Garipey, The Nek, Anzac, 2001.

See pages 42 - 51.



NEW ZEALAND HOSPITAL SHIP "MAHENO," 5282 tons.
Length, 400ft. Breadth, 50ft. 2in.
Captain, D. McLean.
One Operating Room, 20ft. x 15ft.; Preparation Room, 14ft. x 10ft.; Cot Lifts; Isolation
Wards, Dispensaries, Steriliser for Surgical Dressings, Mortuary, Officers' Quarters, etc.



HSS/079 – ‘Stone Bridge’ from the north east in September 2024. Marks on the bridge elevation are due to plant growth. The olive grove in the background was the site of the local Ottoman commander’s headquarters on 25 April 1915. Photos this page see pages 52 - 57.



HSS/082C – One of a group of enclosed dug-outs at site HSS/082



HSS/o81 - 37-metre-long section of the 'Coast Road' retaining wall taken from the north east.
Photos this page see pages 52 - 57.



HSS/o87- Bakery Beach in the centre of the photograph - viewed from the north.



Above: Stephen Chambers takes up residence in a dug-out close to No. 2 Outpost.
Photos this page see pages 52 - 57.

Below: Fire-ravaged forest near 'The Apex' – The team found the detritus of war lying all around, and in some places human remains. Following protocols, we carefully covered any human remains with stones, and in this case placed a memorial cross at the head of the cairn.

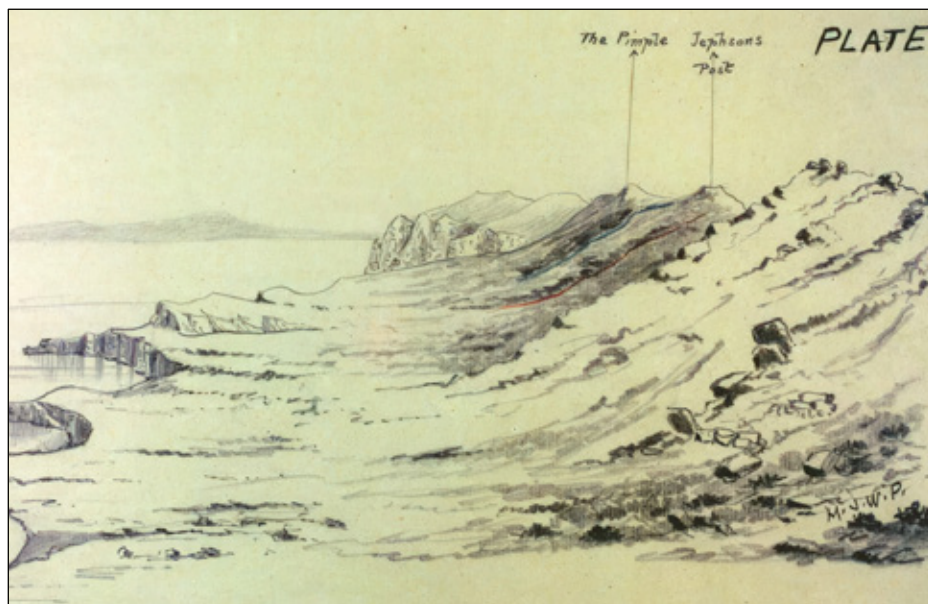




Kirech Tepe Ridge (Kireçtepe Sirt), northern Suvla.

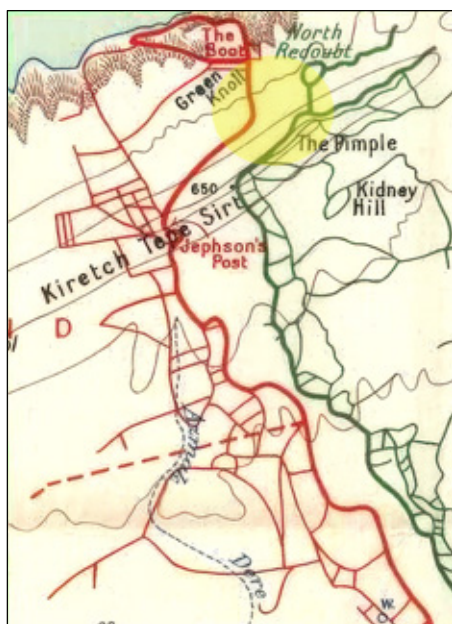
The 32nd Field Ambulance RAMC was operating along the seaward side of the ridge, between approximately The Pimple and close to the sea on the night that 13 of them disappeared.

See pages 42-50.





Pat Gariepy (left) and Bryn Dolan on Kireçtepe Sirt, Suvla, 2001.
 Photograph by the late John Meyers. See pages 42-50.



Approximate area in which 32nd Field
 Ambulance was operating shaded in yellow.
 See pages 42-50.



Sister Nellie Alfreda Pike, AANS.,
 became GA member 728 in 1979.
 Photo courtesy of the Laffin family.

THE ASSOCIATION'S FIRST WOMAN MEMBER

Paul Simadas, RFD

In 1979, ten years after the founding of the Gallipoli Association, Nellie Laffin became its first woman member (see photograph, opposite page). 'Nel's' service in the Australian Army Nursing Service had included Lemnos in 1915. Her son, the author and historian Lieutenant-Colonel Dr. John Laffin MC, was a member from 1979 until his death in 2000.

John was born on 21 September 1922 at Mosman, Sydney, the eldest of three children of Charles George Edward John and Nellie Alfreda Laffin, née Pike.

The following note appears in *The Gallipolian* issue 33 of Autumn 1980:

ANZAC MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Quite recently we have 'enlisted' five A M [Associate Members], commencing with number 718 AM John Laffin, who put forward his mother's name as our first Woman Member. She is Sister Pike (728), now of course Mrs Laffin, living in Australia.

The wording is ambiguous. Was Nellie admitted as an associate, or as a full member?

John joined the Association in 1979, primarily to honour and research his mother's service on Lemnos, and to acquire material for his books on military history. Full membership was then restricted to veterans of the campaign, and John was therefore accepted as an associate member (indicated by the letters 'AM' following his allocated number).

It was unclear from passages in *The Gallipolian* at the time whether nurses who served in support of the campaign – for example on hospital ships off Gallipoli, on Lemnos or Malta, or in Egypt – were categorised as 'veterans'. Major E W H Banner, founder of the Association, soon after clarified:

I did not envisage any women members, largely because Gallipoli was isolated from the base at Alexandria by sea and submarines.

However, I made no specific reference to the point and only now, at the end of our first decade has the matter come up.

A recent Associate Member, Lt-Col Dr John Laffin (718) is a war historian and a note by him is given on page 17 of this issue. He has introduced his Mother, a former Nursing Sister with the Anzacs at Lemnos and she is now number 723. She was Sister N A Pike and lives in Australia. (*The Gallipolian* No. 29, Spring 1979 p4).



John Laffin photographed in the 1970s, member 718 AM of the Gallipoli Association from 1979. Credit: Public Domain, no copyright.

John and his wife Hazel Laffin were living in England at the time, which is probably how he knew of the Association. Nellie was living in Australia, as she had been ever since arriving home from overseas service in 1919. She passed away, aged 92, in June 1980, very shortly after her membership was approved.



The Gallipolian No. 31 (Christmas 1979) p39.

The family still retains Nellie's personal copy of the 1980 GA Constitution, a treasured possession kept in honour of her life of service.

Another report, in Issue 33 of *The Gallipolian*, confirms that Nellie joined as a member. The wording remained ambiguous, however, and it was not clear whether she had been granted full or associate membership (AM) by 1980. Her status was, however, clarified the following year:

(1) An Australian nursing sister who served with a field hospital at Mudros, Sister N A Pike, who was also Mrs Laffin. She was introduced by her son, which is unique. She was thus a member, not an A M. (*The Gallipolian* No 37, Christmas 1981 p20).

Nellie was therefore the first woman member of the Association, with her service in the 3rd Australian General Hospital on Lemnos qualifying her for full 'veteran' membership. Her story, told below, is typical of the many Australian nurses of the

Great War who volunteered for service with the AANS: a story of service, sacrifice, travel and love in wartime. For many of these women, these experiences would prove to be the most exciting and dangerous times of their lives.

Nellie Pike was born in Wellington, in outback New South Wales in 1888. She enlisted as a qualified civilian nurse on 3 July 1915 and embarked from Sydney as a Staff Nurse on RMS *Orontes* on 31 July 1915. She served on Lemnos with 3rd Australian General Hospital (3AGH) during the Gallipoli Campaign, and then at the Bulkley Rest Home in Abassia, Egypt. On 5 October 1916 she arrived in England with 3AGH and served at the Kitchener War Hospital in Brighton.

On 23 March 1917 she was detached for duty at the No 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield, then on 9 September 1917 to duty at the Australian Nurses Home in St Albans, Hertfordshire. She was discharged in England as a consequence of her marriage on 6 October 1917 to 4454 Corporal George Charles Laffin, also serving at 3AGH, at St. Albans.



The marriage of Nellie Pike to Corporal George Laffin at St. Albans, Hertfordshire in 1917.
Australian War Memorial P07678.002.

Nellie was a fifth-generation Australian as a descendent of early settlers Hannah Laycock, Quartermaster Laycock and Mary Matcham Pitt.

The circumstances of 'Sister Pike's' membership of the Gallipoli Association, and indeed that of her son and distinguished historian John Laffin, in 1979 is a remarkable story deserving of attention and further study. I am indebted to the assistance of her two descendants, Craig Laffin and Sue Tongue for providing me

with information and pictures, and to fellow Gallipoli Association members Bernard de Broglio and Bryn Dolan (editor of *The Gallipolian*) for their original research into the GA archives that has permitted me to tell this story to our members. Thank you.

The Gallipoli Association has a new chapter in Australia, one of the first 'overseas', established in 2024. It represents members resident in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and further afield for those who are interested. All Australian members, Anzac in name (as was reported in 1980), are encouraged to contact the author and NSW/ACT chair at the email address below and share their own story of membership.

Paul Simadas, RFD

Chair, The NSW/ACT chapter in Australia of the Gallipoli Association

Email: ga-nswchair@gallipoli-association.org

WITH THE WOUNDED: A NURSE'S STORY



Nurse Leontine Sara (Muriel) Wakeford.

Photo from <https://awayfromthewesternfront.org/research/women-away-western-front/muriel-wakeford/>

Nurse Wakeford, of Wollongong, who went to Egypt with Colonel Owen's battalion, and who has since had a varied experience in the Dardanelles, writes to her parents from Alexandria, under date May 7 :

"We have just returned with another 500 patients after being away one week. The fighting at — was terrific, and we were in the midst of it, so close that shells from the enemy splintered a piece of the deck, so the captain promptly moved away a short distance, and we had just got away when a shell fell where we had been.

We arrived last Sunday at about 5 p.m., and at 7 p.m. a terrific bombardment commenced. Seven or eight battleships, firing practically together, made a terrifying din, I can assure you. The rifle fire was continuous, and as soon as darkness set in the flames were visible. I could scarce have believed that we

could be so close and feel absolutely no fear; there is just a feeling of intense excitement.

At 3.30 a.m. patients started to come on board, and we were working from then on continuously till now, with just enough time off to get a few hours sleep. So many more doctors and nurses are wanted; I cannot understand why more do not come from Australia. The men were in a much worse condition this week than our first lot, and many more deaths occurred. Quite a number of men I knew have been killed. Young Oyston of Dapto, was on the boat last trip, but not seriously wounded. I can quite imagine what a sad Australia it will be when the casualty lists come out, and the roll of honor will be a very long one. People will begin to realise that this is war in earnest. The poor men in the trenches are living for a week at a time without sleep or a wash, and very little food, and eventually getting these terrific wounds. It makes one wonder if it is worth the cost.

The Australians are spoken of highly in every quarter; they are called the 'Die-hard Australians,' and I tell you they are, too. There should not be one person in Australia not doing his or her part to save the burden of these men, for no one knows, except those who see it, how hard it is. The problem our men have been set is a tougher one than we think, but we cannot think of anything other than a successful issue.

I hope Red Cross work is going strong in Wollongong and in Australia, and what is more, that the work done is being forwarded to our own men. It will not do so much good in England, so it behoves the authorities to occasionally enquire where it is going. Up till now the men have benefited, but we find ourselves wishing often for a lot of the things on the ship that we know have been sent.

We are very busy getting ready for the next lot as soon as the ship is free of patients. Last time we even washed some of the singlets and things the men left behind, and they proved very comforting to a few this time.

I would use a dum-dum bullet on every German and Turk I could get a shot at. It is time Britain gave up fighting 'like gentlemen' and paid Germany back in some of her own coin. Fresh evidence of their 'kultur' comes to light daily. On our last trip we had a wounded Turk on board; he was a mild devil, but I believe they are huge men and very game. General Bridges was on our ship [HMHS *Gascon* - see photo page 65]. You will know about him. Sir Ian Hamilton visited us a few days ago, shook hands and was very nice. There is a lot of sadness, but the patients are all wonderfully good and most cheerful."

Leontine Sara ('Muriel') Wakeford was born at home in Bathurst-street, Sunny Corner, New South Wales, on 14 June 1887 to George Henry Wakeford and Ellen Daly. During the Gallipoli Campaign she served aboard the *Sicilia* and *Gascon*, including *Gascon's* third trip to the peninsula, when it took on board General Bridges, who was wounded on 15 May, evacuated immediately to the ship, and died at 5.45 on the morning of 18 May. Sister Wakeford married Raymond Gustave Sargeant in Poplar, London, in June 1916 and at that time left the AANS. She died in Worthing, Sussex, in 1965.

“THOSE MEN WENT OUT OF OUR LIVES COMPLETELY”

Patrick Gariepy

On 17 August 1915, 17 members of the 32nd Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps, disappeared while collecting casualties. This was the single largest loss of medical personal to take place during the entire 8½ month-long campaign. The disappearance was all the more tragic because four of the men were brothers. Apparently this loss was never reported in the press and to this day nobody knows what actually happened to thirteen of these men. The only thing that is known for sure is that they were never heard from again and their bodies were never found. This is the story of that day's tragic occurrence.

The opening of the Suvla sector coincided with a major effort by the Australians and New Zealanders, along with Indian and British troops secretly landed in the area, to break out of the Anzac sector and link up with the troops at Suvla. Among the units that landed at Suvla was the 32nd Field Ambulance of the Royal Army Medical Corps, formed in Limerick in September 1914 and attached to the 10th (Irish) Division.

The unit, 134 strong, landed on 'A' Beach at Suvla from SS *Partridge*, and almost immediately the stretcher bearers of the 32nd went about their duties of collecting and treating men wounded in the initial assaults. Unlike the combat medic of modern times, the job of a stretcher-bearer in 1915 was to provide initial first aid for a wounded or injured man, then transport him to a medical facility by stretcher.

During the first day 29 casualties were collected by the 32nd for the loss of one man killed. No doubt more casualties could have been picked up – certainly there were enough lying about – but the ground was so rough and rocky that it was extremely difficult for men to carry a loaded stretcher. The ground was so rough, in fact, that orders were issued to both the 31st and 32nd Field Ambulances on the day of landing stating that no casualties were to be collected at night.

The stretcher-bearers of the 32nd operated along the Kiretch Tepe Sirt (referred to by them as Kapanja Sirt), a rocky ridge that bounds the Suvla sector to its north (see *photos page 35, 36*). On 15 August, troops from the 10th (Irish) Division carried out assaults in this area, reaching a line that ran from 'The Pimple' down to the Gulf of Saros, forward of 'Green Knoll'. Strong Turkish counter-attacks and a lack of reinforcements, however, forced the Irishmen to retreat on the night of the 16th. In doing so they had to leave most of their casualties behind. The 32nd Field Ambulance was not notified that this withdrawal had taken place.

At midnight on 16 August Lieutenant¹ Alfred Percy Smith, of Birmingham, called for volunteers to search for casualties left behind on the ridge. The party would depart the following morning and would consist of himself, his orderly, a sergeant, a corporal, and 40 stretcher-bearers. The party would carry ten stretchers, each stretcher being carried by 4 men.

¹Percy Smith is always referred to in contemporary accounts as a lieutenant, but was by this time in fact a captain.

While there was no shortage of volunteers, there was some concern about Lieut. Smith leading the party. He had been left behind in hospital at Mudros before the unit landed at Gallipoli, and had only arrived at Suvla that morning, still visibly ill. There were several hospitals on Lemnos, 60 miles away, and the men of the 32nd were under the impression that he should still have been lying in one of them.

The party left its camp early the following morning and moved to a well, where the men lay down and rested until dawn. They then proceeded to an advanced position where they met a machine gun crew. The men of the crew warned Lieut. Smith not to advance, as to do so would mean certain death for him and his men. This was the first notice he had that a withdrawal had taken place.

Unfortunately Lieut. Smith disregarded the warning and led his men into no man's land in search of wounded. The stretchers moved in single file, Lieut. Smith accompanying the last stretcher. When those in front found a wounded man, the men provided initial treatment then carried him to a dressing station in the rear.

Before long the party was spotted by the Turks, who may have mistaken the stretcher-bearers for infantry. This is questionable, however, because each man, with the possible exception of Lieut. Smith, would have been wearing a Red Cross brassard, and their stretchers and instrument cases would certainly have identified them as medics. At first the shots came from one place, and then rifles and machine guns opened up from several positions. The British troops manning the front lines then opened fire in retaliation, pinning the medics from front and back. When the first shots rang out either Lieut. Smith or the sergeant, nobody seems to have known for sure, shouted for the stretcher-bearers to make a run for it and to get back as best they could. Only a handful of men made it.

Only one written account from a survivor of this massacre is known to exist; that of Private Robert Long of Dublin. Long, along with Private Valentine Flood of Waterford, and Privates Irvine and Lacey, were carrying the rear stretcher, the one accompanied by Lieut. Smith and his orderly.

Just before the firing began Long's party located a man suffering from a bullet wound near the heart. His tunic had been removed and his wound dressed by another infantryman who had since left. As they were loading him onto the stretcher the firing started and somebody yelled for the men to scatter. A bullet tore through the heel of Long's boot but he was uninjured and the men tried



Percy Alfred Smith
King Edward's School, Edgbaston.
Bisley Rifle Team, 1908.
Courtesy King Edward's School.



From Hargrave, 'At Suvla Bay' page 102

desperately to load their casualty and return. The fire proved too heavy for the men's nerves and Lieut. Smith, his orderly, Flood, Irvine and Lacey all ran. Long remained with the wounded man and did his best to keep him calm, but the man was restless and kept asking for water.

Shortly after the Turkish troops opened fire a British warship began shelling what it thought were Turkish positions. During the firing another member of the party, Private George Cyril Jutsum, aged 20, of Sheffield, was crawling towards Long when a bullet hit him in the buttock and apparently entered his stomach, killing him within a few seconds. The firing was so heavy that Long wrote two letters to his family

describing the circumstances of his impending death, and he filled out the page for his will in the back of his paybook. He did not expect to survive the ordeal. At one point a Turkish soldier appeared suddenly above Long and the wounded man, aiming and firing at soldiers below. Every time he saw one he would cry, "Engelish, Engelish." Long ducked and the wounded man remained quiet, and the Turk did not see them.

As the firing died down, Long reported hearing Turks shouting and at one point heard a man scream; he looked down to see a British soldier who had just been bayoneted and was dying. After that there was apparent calm.

Eventually Long's friend, Valentine (Val) Flood, rejoined him and the two considered crawling back to the British lines after dark. Not wanting to leave the wounded man behind, they decided to stay where they were. The men hoped that their troops would make another advance that night and rescue them.

At about 4pm the wounded man became restless and began frantically waving his arms. The motion attracted the attention of a Turkish soldier, who moved towards the party and took them captive. Long was quite surprised by this turn of events. He had never even considered the possibility of capture, because the stories he had heard about the Turks mutilating the dead and wounded made the thought of surrendering an unwelcome option. When he heard the Turk approach he said a prayer and prepared to die.

When the Turk arrived he gestured for the wounded man to get up, but the man pointed to the bandage on his chest and indicated that he could not. The Turk then left for a few minutes and returned with a big smile on his face, much to Long's surprise. He gave Long a drink from his water bottle, gestured for him to

give the wounded man a drink, then sent Long and Flood away to the rear unharmed. The fate of the wounded man is unknown. Private Long never recorded his name, and it will never be known whether he was taken captive or whether the smiling Turk put him out of his misery.

It is not known how many members of the party were able to return to the British lines, as their names were apparently never recorded. Some of the stretchers had picked up wounded and moved to the rear before the firing started, but it is not known how many. None of the others returned to camp that day. Only two other members of the group, Private Alexander Cecil James and Private George Keeping, were captured.

The effect of this tragedy on the other members of the 32nd Field Ambulance was pronounced and the men were very anxious about their comrades. The 134-man unit had lost only a few men to death and wounds before 17th August, but on that date most members of the 44-man party failed to return to camp.

Before the news was officially made known to the unit rumours began to spread rapidly that the entire party had disappeared and that nobody knew what had happened to it. It was reported that Lieut. Smith had led his men into no man's land against the orders of troops manning the front line and that firing was heard shortly after. It was also reported that somebody had heard that the party's sergeant, Duncan Alexander ('Daisy') Bell, of Blackpool, had been seen riddled with bullets. Nobody knew anything more, though, and the men talked of nothing else for days.

About two days later two of the lost men returned, "trembling like aspen leaves." These may have been Lacey and Irvine, as neither man was killed, and they had not returned on the 17th. They were dehydrated, hungry and badly shaken, and spoke incoherently about the horrors they had seen. They reported that they had run when the order to do so had been given and that everyone had been killed. The two had hidden by day and sucked on grass to produce saliva, and were extremely nervous for some time to come. John Hargrave of the 32nd noted that when the men returned, "their eyes were hollow and sunken, and glittered and roamed unmeaningly with the glare of insanity."⁷² Clearly these men had seen and experienced something truly awful. One wonders how these horrors affected them later in life.



From Hargrave, 'At Suvla Bay' page 111.

There is no record of any other member of the party returning, though Sergeant Charles Midwinter of the 32nd did record in his memoirs that four men were wounded. Thirteen men were missing and believed killed, among them the brothers Privates Teddy and Harry Jewell of Taunton, and Privates George (who was actually captured) and Horace Keeping of Brighton. Four members of the party were captured. Robert Long survived captivity and felt no animosity toward his captors. After the war he emigrated to New Zealand where he opened 'The Dardanella Marble Bar' in Wairoa, an establishment which sold ice cream, soda drinks and confectionery. His friend, Valentine Flood, died in captivity in Anatolia on 21 December 1916. Of the other two, Private George Keeping of Brighton, who was wounded on 17th August, died of his wounds in hospital in Constantinople on 7 November 1915, and is buried in Haidar Pasha cemetery, and Private Alexander Cecil James of Hampstead died of illness in captivity on 29 January 1917, and is buried in Baghdad (North Gate) cemetery.

While the loss of these men was quite painful and disturbing to their comrades in the 32nd Field Ambulance, it apparently went unnoticed outside the unit. The Acting Director of Medical Services of the 10th (Irish) Division noted in his official war diary only: "Lieutenant Smith missing. Daily casualties 32 Field Ambce – nil." Unfortunately the portion of the 32nd Field Ambulance's official war diary covering 17 August 1915 has been lost, so we may never know what that unit's official reaction to the loss was.

With the exception of Private Long, this group of men seems to have been totally lost to history. Their story was not only ignored outside their immediate unit, it was never told at home. The only printed references to their passing appeared in two obscure memoirs, one of which was apparently only printed in the United States. Even their own corps, the RAMC, holds no record of the circumstances under which these men were lost. No other medical personnel were captured at Gallipoli and in no other instance were so many medical personnel lost. It is a cliché in military historical writings to label units or actions as 'forgotten'. Yet these men, whose job it was to save the lives of others, deserve that appellation. It is sad to think that so many men should have passed unnoticed, even by their contemporaries. This small tribute will, hopefully, honour the sacrifice made by these brave soldiers.

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² Hargrave p113.

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Diary of Private Robert Long, 32nd Field Ambulance, RAMC (courtesy of Arthur Gratton Long of Devonport, New Zealand).

Letter from Captain J H Beverland to Private Long's family (courtesy A G Long).

War Diary, ADMS, 10th (Irish) Division, Royal Army Medical Corps (WO 95/4294)

Photos of Private Robert Long and the 32nd Field Ambulance courtesy of A G Long.³

Photos of the Jewell brothers courtesy of the Liddle Collection, Leeds University.

³ The photos referred to were not with Pat's article.

Patrick Gariepy, of Eugene, Oregon, was a member of the Gallipoli Association.

In 2001 John Meyers and I joined Pat as he roamed over Kireçtepe Ridge, Suvla (see photograph page 36), as at that time he was in the early stages of investigating the incidents on which he based this article.

The article was lost for many years but I am pleased to be able to include it here, in the tenth anniversary year of Pat's death - editor.

Pat died on 11 August 2015, aged 49.

See pages 30 and 51.

SEE YOUR ARTICLE IN PRINT!

Contributions for The Gallipolian

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

Addendum - Editor

The Roll - 'Missing', 17 August 1915

'A' Section, 32nd Field Ambulance RAMC

Duncan Alexander (Daisy) **BELL** Sergeant 32913. Born Bayswater, Middlesex 1873. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged about 41.

Tom **COULSON** Private 35651. Born Metherringham, Lincolnshire, 1885. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged about 30.

Valentine Michael **FLOOD** Private 46780. Born Howth, Co. Dublin 27th September 1888. Died as POW at Bilemedik, 21 December 1916 aged 28.

William Alexander **GRIFFETT** Private 34631. Born Poplar, London, 16 August 1890. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 25.

Levi Pugh **GRIFFITHS** Private 34025. Born Llanycrwys, Carmarthenshire, 1889. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 26.

Alexander Cecil **JAMES** Pte 32234. Born Hampstead, Middlesex. Died of wounds as POW 29 Jan 1917, buried Iraq - Bagdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, aged 20.

Henry John **JEWELL** Pte 39796. Born Galmington, Somerset. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 21.

Edward **JEWELL** Pte 39795. Born Galmington, Somerset. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 20.

George Cyril **JUTSUM** Pte 32235. Born Sheffield, Yorkshire. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 20.

George **KEEPING** Pte 34058. Born West Norwood, Surrey, 1887. Died of wounds as POW 07/11/1915, buried Haidar Pasha Cemetery, Istanbul aged about 28.

Horace **KEEPING** Pte 39798. Born West Norwood, Surrey. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 25.

Jack Percival **McGLADE** Pte 32847. Born Battersea, Middlesex, 2 Jan 1894. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 21.

Thomas **MELLOR** Corporal 33970. Born Liverpool, Lancashire. Killed in action 17 August 1915 age unknown.

William **MOORE** Pte 35007. Born Langley Milles, Derbyshire. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 32.

Alfred Percy **SMITH**, Captain. Born Birmingham, Warwickshire, 27 August 1890. Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 24.

Eric **WATKINS** Pte 34265. Born Worthing, Sussex Killed in action 17 August 1915 aged 28.



32857 Sergeant C Midwinter, 32 Field Ambulance, wrote:

‘On the 17th Lt. Smith, whom we had left behind sick, rejoined the unit only that morning. He was immediately sent out in charge of a party of stretcher-bearers, about 24 strong. Not knowing of the withdrawal on the left flank and thinking the ground was still held by us, he landed the squads between the opposing trenches. Lt. Smith was killed ...’

In his book *At Suvla Bay*, John Hargrave wrote:

Then came the disappearance of a certain section of our ambulance and the loss of an officer. This particular young lieutenant was left on Lemnos sick. He really was very sick indeed. He recovered to some extent of the fever, and joined us one day at Suvla. This was in the Old Dry Water-course period, when Hawk and I lived in the bush-grown ditch. Officers, N.C.O.'s, and men were tired out with overwork. This young officer came up to the Kapanja Sirt to take over the next spell of duty. I remember him now, pale and sickly, with the fever still hanging on him, and dark, sunken eyes. He spoke in a dull, lifeless way. ‘Do you think you’ll be all right?’ asked the adjutant. ‘Yes, I think so,’ he answered. ‘Well, just stick here and send down the wounded as you find them. Don’t go any farther along; it’s too dangerous up there - you understand?’ ‘All right, sir.’ It was only a stroke of luck that I didn’t stay with him and his stretcher squads... Next day the news spread in that mysterious way which has always puzzled me. It spread as news does spread in the wild and desolate regions of the earth. ‘...lost...all the lot...’ ‘Who is?’ ‘Up there.. Lieutenant S--- and the squads..’ The cook and an orderly man remained, and we heard from them the details of the mystery. Early that morning they had formed up, and gone off under Lieutenant S--- along the mule track overlooking the Gulf of Saros. That was all. There was still hope, of course.. but there wasn’t a sign of them to be seen. The machine gun section had seen them pass right along. Some officers had warned them not to go up, but they went and they never came back... We supposed that the young officer, coming fresh to the place, did not know where the British lines ended and the Turks’ began, and he marched his squads into that bit of No Man’s Land beyond the machine-gun near ‘Jefferson’s Post,’ and was either shot or taken prisoner.

Alfred Percy Smith was born in 1890. He attended King Edward School in Birmingham and was living at Kingston Lodge, Middleton Hall Road, Kings Norton at the time of his enrolment at the University of Birmingham to study medicine. His student record card indicates that he matriculated in September 1908 and was initially studying on a combined Science and Medicine course. He was an external candidate for the 1908-1908 academic session, studying physics, chemistry and biology as well as anatomy, dissections and physiology in the Medical Faculty. He continued studying courses in botany in the Science Faculty during later years of his medical degree, but was also studying anthropology, pathology, materia medica and pharmacy, surgery, medicine, public health, forensic medicine, midwifery, therapeutic, mental diseases, infectious diseases, diseases of women, operative surgery and ophthalmology. He took his final MB

ChB examination in September 1914. During his time at University he was successful in the annual sports day, gaining first place in high jump in 1912 and 1913. He was awarded MB ChB in 1915 and a BSc in 1916.

(Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham:

<https://calmview.bham.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=Catalog&id=XU557>)

Captain, 10th Division, Royal Army Medical Corps

Alfred Percy Smith, born on 27th August 1890, was admitted to King Edward's School in September 1902, winning a Foundation Scholarship in 1907. He was the eldest of three children, living with his father, William, a commercial traveller in the flour trade, his mother, Frances, and his siblings at 'Kingston Lodge', Middleton Hall Road, Kings Norton.

Alfred was a strong academic throughout his time at School, performing especially well in 1907 when he was placed 1st in his class for chemistry. As a result, he was awarded a Foundation Scholarship for the remainder of his time at the school. He featured regularly in the School Chronicles as a member of the Officer Training Corps, the Bisley shooting team and as a competitive high jumper. He was described as "a very fine high jumper, showing good style", and was regularly placed 1st in the discipline. He continued to compete in the high jump at university level with similar success, placing 1st across the University of Birmingham in 1912 and 1913. Alfred came 1st in House shooting in July 1908, and was noted in the Birmingham Weekly Post as "a fine shot".

After leaving School, Alfred studied Medicine at the University of Birmingham, taking his final exams in September 1914. The following month, Alfred obtained his commission as a Lieutenant with the 10th Division, Royal Army Medical Corps, serving with the 32nd Field Ambulance in France. He was promoted to Captain in April 1915, and was reported missing, presumed killed, at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli on 17th August 1915. His body was never recovered but he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli. Alfred left his estate of £158 to his father.

NB AP Smith's sporting medals are in the Foundation Archive (KES, Medals box) (King Edward's School, Birmingham)

†SMITH, A. P. (1902-9, r)
Oct. 1914 Lt., R.A.M.C., 32 Fd. Amb., 10 Div. France. Apr.
1915 Capt. Missing, presumed killed, 1915, in Gallipoli.

Old Edwardians Roll of Service, King Edwards School, Edgbaston, Birmingham



Pat Gariepy, Walker's Ridge Cemetery, Anzac, 2001.

Pat had proved the location of Sergeant Hamilton's burial, which had previously been recorded as 'No Known Grave'.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission added the memorial to the cemetery in 1997.

Photo from
Otago Witness
(Dunedin)
16 June 1915, p43



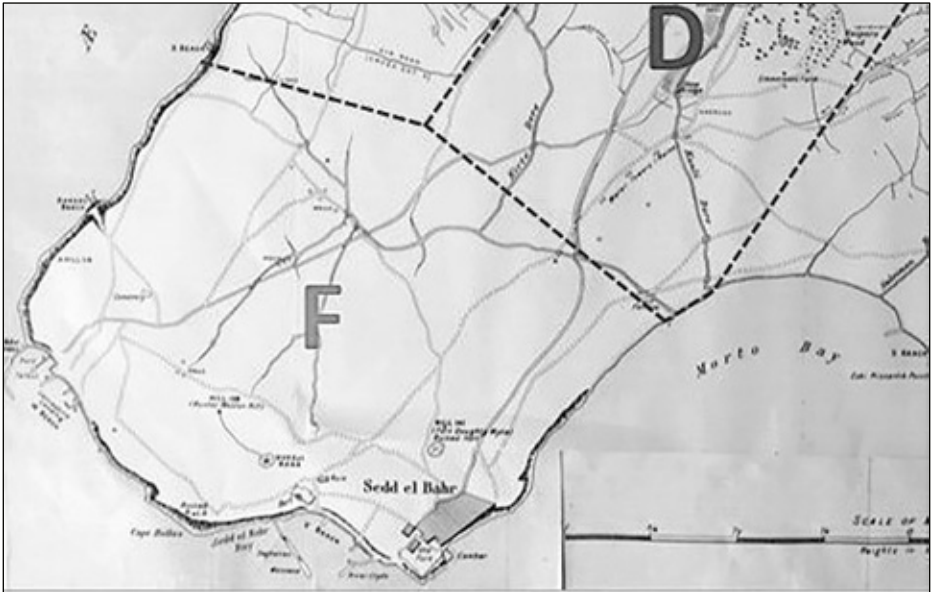
6/467 Lance Sergeant
William Alexander
HAMILTON, of the
2nd (South Canterbury)
Company, Canterbury
Battalion, New Zealand
Expeditionary Force.

Killed in action on
Walker's Ridge, Anzac,
25 April 1915, aged 21.

HELLES BATTLEFIELD STUDY PROJECT

September 2024 Field Trip

Mike Crane



Southern Section of the Helles Battlefield Project Study – Area Plan

The focus of the 2024 field trip was to carry out a systematic search of Zone 'F', an area which covers the southern tip of the peninsular, south of a line running from just below 'X' Beach on the west, to where the Kirte Dere runs into Morto Bay on the east. The team was joined by a new volunteer, Dr John Winterburn, a conflict/landscape archaeologist with expertise in Ottoman defensive systems. John's expert advice before, during, and after our trip has led to qualitative improvements in the team's recording and collating site data.

What follows is a snapshot of aspects of the work we undertook, and the discoveries the team made during our field trip. A comprehensive report will follow. This will be available on the HBSP page of the members section in the next few months.

This year's trip proved that there is still much to be discovered on the Helles Battlefield, with the team finding over 40 new sites. Among them: the remains of winter shelters on the cliffs between Bakery Beach and 'W' Beach; a 400-metre-long, well-preserved communication trench; the burial site of an RND officer¹,

¹ See article: 'The Greatest Day of My Life – Story of Lieutenant the Honourable Arthur George Coke' by Stephen Chambers in the next *Gallipolian*.



Going inside HSS/o81B. This dug-out measured over 4.8 metres front to back, 3.6 metres side to side, and was in places 1.2 metres high.

Prior to this field trip only ten other enclosed dug-outs were known to exist at Helles.

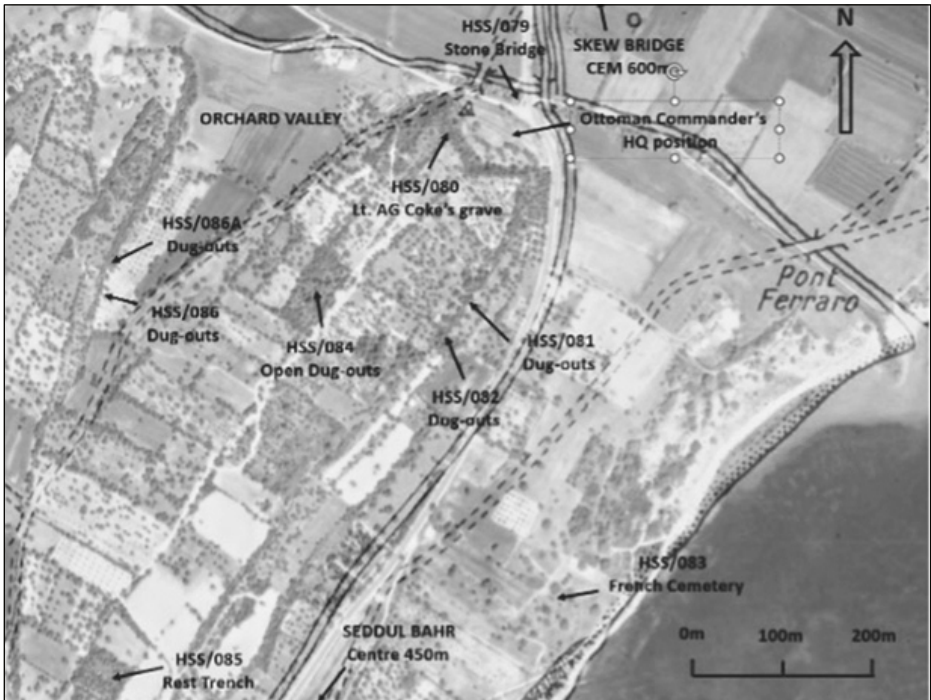
and numerous other relics of the campaign. However, it was the discovery of five large enclosed dug-outs, and the remains of about dozen others that set this field trip apart. These are located at four separate sites, on two spurs of land running on either side of a small valley known during the campaign as Orchard Valley. This area was the main RND bivouac, with Orchard Valley occupied for much of the campaign by the 3rd Field Ambulance, RND.

This corner of Zone 'F is largely overlooked by visitors, but contains many significant sites. These include; the local Ottoman commander's headquarters² (on the day of the landings) a campaign landmark known as 'Stone Bridge,' the sites of two French Cemeteries³, and the pre-evacuation rendezvous area for the 52nd (Lowland) Division.



² Major Mahmut Sabri, photograph above. Born 1874. Wounded in action May 1915, he retired from the Ottoman/Turkish Army in 1923.

³ See article: 'French Commemoration at Gallipoli' by Bernard de Broglio in *The Gallipolian* No.163-Winter 2023.



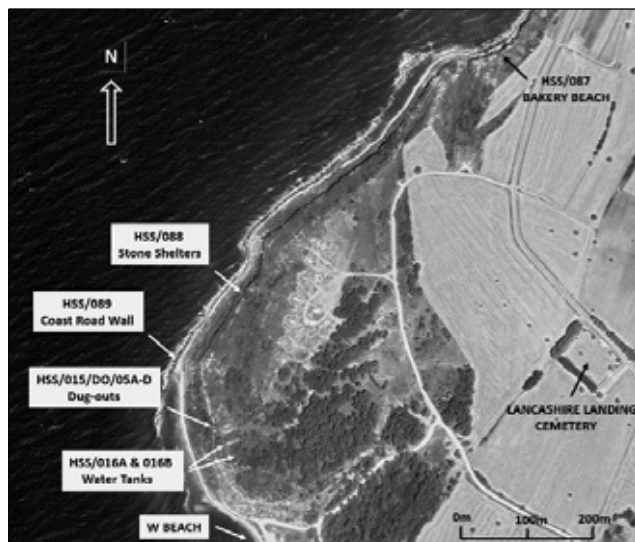
Map 1: 'Helles Opposing Trenches, January 1916,' from *Official History*, overlaid on Google Earth.



HSS/079 - 'Stone Bridge,' from the south east, taken either during the campaign or in the post-war occupation period. See modern day photo of 'Stone Bridge' in the colour section.

The old low arched bridge known as ‘Stone Bridge.’ is hidden in the overgrown verge on the west side of the modern bridge (that carries the road to Seddul Bahr over the Kirte Dere) on the northern boundary of Zone ‘F’

During the campaign it provided an important crossing for wheeled transport, and lent its name to the large bivouac area to its north which was used by the 42nd Division in early May 1915, and both the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, and the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade, in the days following the Second Battle of Krithia.



Google Earth Imagery of the western coastline of Zone ‘F’
between Bakery Beach and ‘W’ Beach.

Our search also took in the western coastline between Bakery Beach, and ‘W’ Beach. We found little evidence of the campaign at Bakery Beach, but had more luck about 500 metres further south. There we found the remains of several stone structures dispersed along the steep slope.

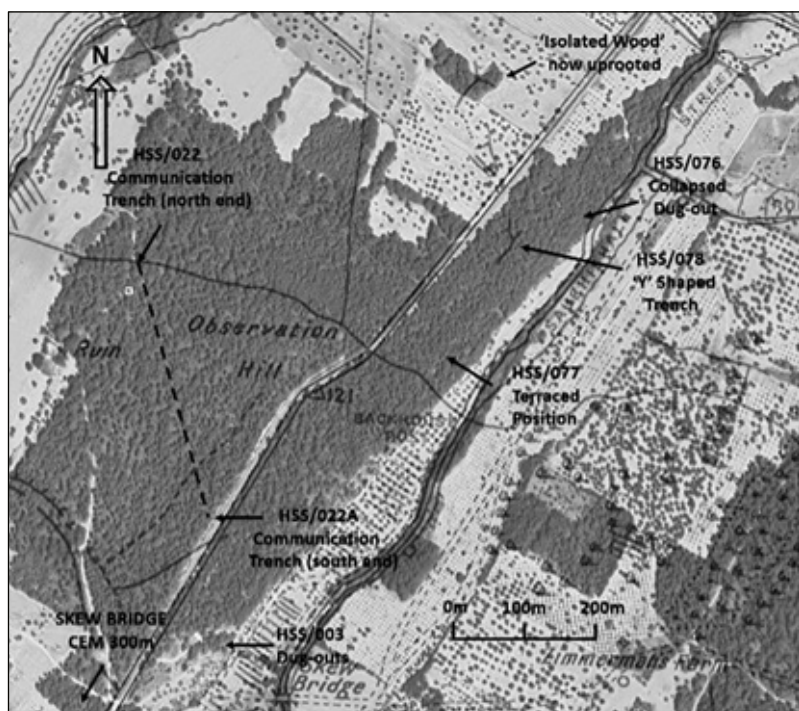
Given their exposed location, it seems likely that these are the remains of semi-permanent shelters built during the campaign, like those at other similar locations.

Some 200 metres further south, the team stopped to measure and photograph a 37-metre-long section of the ‘Coast Road’ retaining wall. A close examination of the well preserved remains shows the wall was constructed using a combination of concrete filled sandbags and large stone blocks (see photo in the colour section).

The team also completed unfinished business in Zone ‘D,’ on the Observation Hill ridge (see Map 2). This included recording the course of a well-preserved communication trench. Starting at site HSS/022 (in the rear of the 27 April to 6 May 1915 firing-line - HSS/020 to 20A) it continues through woodland for more than 400 metres south to the Krithia Road (HSS-022A).

Other targets in the area comprised: an undercut dug-out (HSS/076) a possible headquarters position comprising several stone structures on a terrace halfway up the eastern slope (HSS/077) an 80-metre-long, isolated 'Y' shaped trench which may been used as a machine-gun position or an observation post (HSS/078) and a visit to the post-evacuation Turkish Redoubt HSS/007⁴ to allow John, our expert on Ottoman defences, to evaluate the site.

One of our intended targets was another 'Y' shaped trench work located inside a small wood in the field to the north of Observation Hill, which was indicated on both the Official History (OH) map and the Sevki Pasha map. However, on arriving at the site, we were shocked to find the entire wood had been uprooted, and the ground levelled. The battlefield archaeology had been obliterated. This destruction reinforces the urgency of our work.



Map 2: 'Helles Opposing Trenches, January 1916,' from the *Official History*, overlaid on Google Earth.

On the last day of our trip, we made time to visit the northern Anzac area, where recent fires had laid bare the normally dense forest and undergrowth. Seeing the battlefield devoid of vegetation was a rare, once in a generation experience. This will be the subject of a future article. Two photographs in the colour section give an indication of what we were able to see and record.

⁴ For more details see the 2022 Report to Trustees on the HBSP page in the Members Section, and the Spring 2023 edition of *The Gallipolian*.



HSS/o88 – One of several similar structures found above the western coastline of Zone ‘F.’



HSS/076 – A dug-out undercut into the rock strata on the north east slope of Observation Ridge.

ASHTON MEN'S CHARGE AT SUVLA BAY

Many Men Killed in the Boats

‘All Bayonet Work.’

A vivid account of the landing of the 11th Battalion, Manchester Regiment, at Suvla Bay, in the middle of August, has been sent to Ashton-under-Lyne by a sergeant-major of the battalion. The 11th Battalion was the first of Kitchener's Army to be raised at the Ashton-under-Lyne barracks, the depot of the Manchester Regiment. The Sergeant-major writes :

Our division made a new landing. We came in the night, and as soon as we ran the lighters into the shore they gave us hell, many men being killed and wounded on the boats. We stuck on a sandbank, and the bullets rained upon us from all around. The Colonel said, “Tallest men first.” I dashed down the slope and dropped into the sea, overhead, and half waded and half swam ashore, about 200 yards, with the Adjutant and Major Sillery.

I was first man ashore with a rifle. We laid down on the beach and then started to collect the men together as they straggled ashore, and formed them up. After a bit, under a heavy fire, we started to get some formation and fixed bayonets. We moved off, and still the bullets whizzed and the shells boomed and burst all around us. Slowly we advanced, wondering how long we could last.

After about a mile we got to work, and then the boys proceeded to get their own back, clearing the trenches of Turks with the bayonet. Orders had been given that no shots were to be fired, all bayonet work, and very grim and grizzly it was, too. We fought on all next day, and until night things looked very black, our officers and men fought like heroes.

Poor Major Bates (brother of the Chief Constable of Stalybridge) was wounded in two places, and still fought on until killed at last. He worked like a horse. The colonel was shot through the arm, but still held on for two days until compelled to go into hospital. At last we were relieved by the other regiments, and retired sadly depleted in numbers, with mouths swollen with thirst, and thoroughly exhausted and hungry, but unable to eat.

We got to the beach again, and then came the saddest business of all, the roll call. There were twelve officers gone, and about 300 non-commissioned officers and men killed and wounded and missing. The General praised and thanked us for the good work we had done.

For three days & nights we lived in absolute hell, men going down in all directions. But we held on and the men were splendid. The corn was fired, but we fought fire and Turks at the same time until other brigades were reorganised. At last we were relieved and went back to the reserve trenches, about three hundred yards back. We are having a day's rest in trenches near the beach, but the Turks obliged with a few shells before we were settled, and knocked six over. Now we are like a lot of rabbits in holes, and the warships are shelling over our heads. As soon as the sun goes down we are going to bathe in the sea and never mind the shells and the Turks.

I hope and pray that I may get through this lot, as it is terrible. If the men at home could only realise what it is like every one would enlist in ten minutes, so that they could help their comrades.

(*Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 7 Sep 1915 p5).



Major Harry Cecil Bates

Killed in action 7th August 1915 aged 39 years.

No known grave. Commemorated on the Helles Memorial.

Following is a transcript of the Battalion War Diary – paragraph breaks added:

About 11pm, 6th August, Suvla Bay:

The Battalion having embarked with the 9th Lancashire Fusiliers at Imbros on 3 lighters towed by 3 destroyers. These destroyers contained the remainders of the 34th Brigade, i.e. 8th Northumberland Fusilier and 5th Dorsets. On reaching a point about one mile from the shore of Suvla Bay, the lighters were cast adrift by the destroyers and moved under their own power for the beach.

The lighters ran around about 200 to 300 yards north of Lala Baba and fortified post held by the Turks at the south of the bay. The landing was difficult as one of the lighters which contained the headquarters and one company, signallers, machine guns etc and the same of the Lanc. Fus. grounded in about 6ft of water and every man had to be got ashore by means of a rope between two officers, one on the lighter and the other on the water. This was a long process and the landing

of material was almost impossible, only one machine gun was brought through by Sgt Pickles, the other gun and signalling gear did not reach the beach.

Major Sillery landed first in order to collect the men when they got ashore and the other officers were sent off at intervals. This was done under the heavy rifle fire from Lala Baba and shrapnel from further inland. The distance from the lighter to the beaches was about 70[?] yards. The lighter containing the other two companies got ashore rather quicker as the water they had to cross was not quite so deep. When these companies were collected Major Bates attacked Lala Baba in order to lessen the fire on the headquarters lighter and eased the situation considerably.

During this attack the 32nd Brigade arrived on the scene and as Lala Baba was the objective allotted to them, Major Bates withdrew to the Battalion rendezvous on the beach. At length we had disembarked and when the CO got ashore he found the battalion lying quietly on the beach with bayonets fixed and ready to move against the ridges on the north of the Bay i.e. Karakol Dag and Kiretch Tepe Siri. The first company to advance was 'Q' under captain Oliver, with the chances of Ghazi Baba and a Signal post on the sea at at Biyuk Kemikli as its objective.

Major Bates with 'R' Co. moved against trenches north and east of Ghazi Baba, a third company followed close up and the CO with the fourth followed in reserve. Having moved across the gap where the Salt Lake runs into the sea the Battalion moved along the beach on which were many mines, but fortunately exploded none. The trenches were reached without serious opposition and were then taken with the bayonet, the Turks retiring onto Karakol Dag followed by the battalion.

The ground passed over was very rough and difficult and several men, including the medical officer and stretcher bearers, got lost and were killed or fell into the enemy's hands. When day broke the Battalion was astride the ridge and half a mile inland faced by the Turks in fair numbers which increased during the day. The machine gun and about 300 rifles were out of action for several hours owing to being clogged with sand and salt water. The attack was then commenced and was strenuously opposed by the enemy but the Battalion succeeded in taking the ridge for about 3 miles inland and was then brought to a standstill owing to heavy opposition in front and to being enfiladed on both sides.

There was no means of communicating with the Brigade Headquarters and no other unit was to hand but about midday a message was sent by flag signal to a destroyer and shortly before dark the Battalion was reinforced by 2 Battalions 10th Division but even this support did not enable a further advance to be made and after dark the force, as well as possible, prepared sangars to enable them to hang on during the night. About 2am 8th Aug 1915 the battalion which had suffered heavily from fire, heat and lack of water was relieved and sent back into reserve. On Sunday 8th Aug the Battalion remained in reserve and on the morning of 9th August moved up, in reserve to the attack of Anafarta Sagir.

The War Diary notes that Major John Jocelyn Doyne Sillery was the first officer ashore.

Born at the Military Barracks in Hobart, Tasmania, on 5 November 1866, he was the second son of Captain (later Major-General) Charles Jocelyn Cecil Sillery (1836-1898), 12th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment, and his wife, Christina Smith (1835-1881).

The family left Australia near the end of 1866, bound for his father bound for New Zealand, where his father would serve in the 3rd Maori War. They then moved to England where John later became a Gentleman Cadet at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. Commissioned into The Princess of Wales' Own (Yorkshire Regiment) as a 2nd Lieutenant on 5 Feb 1887, he was seconded into the Bombay Staff Corps in 1888, posted to the 23rd Bombay Infantry and later served in the 76th Punjabis.

His mother died in Faizabad, India in 1891, and his father in Guernsey, of pneumonia, in 1898. His younger brother, Trooper Alfred Cyril Walter Sillery, 1st Battalion, Imperial Light Horse, was killed in action at the battle of Elandslaagte during the 2nd Anglo-Boer War on 21 Oct 1899. His father had remarried in 1895, but his widow was drowned, along with her daughter, when the SS *Waratah* sank off the South African coast on 27/28 July 1909.

John was promoted to lieutenant on 27 Feb 1888, to captain on 5 Feb 1898 and to major 5 Feb 1905. He retired from the Indian Army on 5 Feb 1912.

On the outbreak of war he joined the 11th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment, which in 1915 was part of the 34th Infantry Brigade. On 6 Aug 1915 it embarked from Imbros on lighters and landed in Suvla Bay. At dawn on 7 Aug 1915 the battalion was three miles inland and facing strong Turkish opposition. Major Sillery was mentioned in despatches (*The London Gazette*, 28 January 1916), but he disappears from the record at about this time; his body was never found and his name is inscribed on the Helles Memorial to the missing.

He is also commemorated on the Scalby War Memorial at St Laurence's Church, Church Hill, Scalby, Yorkshire, on a stained glass window and memorial plaque, as well as on the Indian Army WW1 Memorial at RMA Sandhurst.

His older brother, Lieut-Colonel Charles Cecil Archibald Sillery, was killed in action commanding the 20th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers (1st Tyneside Scottish) at Albert, France, on 1 July 1916.



Mjr J J D Sillery, 76 Punjabis, Indian Army.
11th Battalion, Manchester Regiment.
Killed in action, Suvla, 7 August 1915
Aged 48

KILLED USING PERISCOPE RIFLE

Mr L. Dasler, of Tokarahi, has received the following note from the officer in charge of the platoon of which his late son was a member :—

“Anzac Cove. June 25, 1915.

Dear Mr Dasler, — Long before you receive this note you will have had official notification of your son James’ death. At about 7.30 this morning Jim was on the look-out in the firing trench at Courtney’s Post.

I didn’t see exactly how the casualty occurred, but was told by the sergeant in charge of the section that your boy was firing over the parapet with a periscope rifle, and by some mischance got his head too high above the cover. The next thing that the sergeant knew was that the boy was shot through the head, evidently from the nearest fire trench of the Turks.

The bullet entered somewhere about the jaw and came out at the back of the head. Death was instantaneous, so he suffered practically no pain. I haven’t been very long in charge of the platoon, but have known your boy long enough to regard him as a personal friend. He was a splendid worker, always carrying out thoroughly and cheerfully any task that was given him. His case was made sadder to me by the fact that it was our last hour in the trenches, having been in reserve and firing line for the last two weeks. I, as platoon commander, and his comrades extend to you our most heartfelt sympathy in your sad bereavement. — Geo. E. Waite, Lieutenant, No. 9 Platoon, 10th Regimental Company, Otago Battalion.”

(*Evening Star* (Dunedin) 17 August 1915 p6).

8/1447 Private James Dasler,
10th (North Otago) Coy.,
Otago Battalion NZEF.

Killed in action at
Courtney’s Post, Anzac
25 June 1915, aged 25.

Buried
Shrapnel Valley Cemetery.



Photograph
from *Free Lance*
(Wellington)
20 August 1915, p8.

THE FOREIGN LEGION LANDING AT BULAIR

‘Landing Repulsed’

Foreign Legion’s Feat Explains Enemy’s Report

(From Captain C. E. W. Bean, Official Press Representative With the Australian Imperial Forces at the Front.— Copyright by Crown.)

Gallipoli; Oct. 4

Newspapers which arrived by today’s mail show that the Turks claim in an official statement, which was copied in the British papers, to have repulsed a landing of our Colonial troops at Karachale, in the Gulf of Saros, opposite Bulair, on the night of August 6 and 7.

This refers to the landing made by about 380 men of the French Foreign Legion, who came ashore on the same night as the Suvla Bay landing, but about four hours earlier.

Just after dark the order was Issued to give the Turks the idea that this was the serious landing, and to attract troops in that direction, even if only for a few hours. The force met with very slight opposition on the beach. It rushed over three miles inland, by which time the Turks began to pour down quite a formidable body of troops and artillery.

The invaders cut the telephone, and managed successfully to retire, although the Turks nearly cut them off in a wood, and were re-embarked with the loss of about 60. (*Herald* (Melbourne) 13 October 1915 p5).

CAPTAIN WADDELL

The oldest of three brothers, Captain James Waddell, holds a commission in the French Foreign Legion (1st Regiment) Etranger Corps Expeditionaire d’Orient, and is also fighting at the Dardanelles. He graduated in military life in New Zealand, and was one of the first officers from this dominion to gain a commission in the British Army. He went as a Lieutenant to South Africa during the Boer War with the 2nd West Riding Regiment. He subsequently saw active service with the same regiment in India. Some time after his return to England, he accepted a commission as captain in the Foreign Legion of France, and took part with that famous body in the recent fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula — and as recent cables have intimated, distinguished itself by heroic conduct. Shortly before proceeding to the Dardanelles, Captain Waddell was created a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, one of the highest military decorations in the French service. Captain Waddell and Trooper Waddell were both pupils at Otago Boys’ High School, and the former continued his higher education at Canterbury College, where he specialised as a French and German linguist. The Waddell brothers are sons of the late Mr and Mrs Thos. Waddell, of Cromwell, pioneer settlers at Central Otago. (*Southland Times* (Invercargill) 21 August 1915 p9).

BOOK REVIEW

Stephen Chambers

Hell and Confusion: Gallipoli Day by Day – Volume 1

Publisher: Little Gully Publishing (18 Aug. 2024)

- Author: Jim Grundy
- Paperback: 675 pages
- ISBN: 978-1-7636268-1-2
- Price: £23.99 (Paperback) Also available in eBook format (£9.99)

Sometimes, size does matter – and this certainly holds true for *Hell and Confusion: Gallipoli Day by Day*, the latest release from Little Gully Publishing. With 675 pages, four maps, and a wealth of photographs, this hefty volume can be classified as a substantial tome, and it's only the first of a planned trilogy. The inaugural volume, titled *Alive with Death: August 1914-April 1915*, is the beginning of a narrative that will span three books, taking the story all the way to January 1916 and the peninsula's final evacuation.

While Gallipoli has been extensively written about, author Jim Grundy demonstrates that there is still room for more exploration. What sets this work apart is the carefully curated collection of personal accounts that breathe life into the story. The voices of key figures such as Asquith, Churchill, Kitchener, Fisher, and Hamilton, as well as those of lesser-known individuals who fought at the sharp end of the conflict, create a vivid, human-centred narrative. Grundy deserves credit for uncovering a rich array of sources, that include contemporary memoirs, local newspapers, and archival material. These are seamlessly woven together in a day-by-day format that recounts the Gallipoli campaign from its beginnings to its climactic moments.

This book is an essential read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the campaign, told from a deeply human perspective. While this volume is filled with compelling personal accounts that takes the story to the end of the battle of the beaches, one account in particular stands out. Major-General Sir Charles Callwell's reflection on the failure of the Gallipoli operation offers a striking analysis: "*The plan chosen failed for all practical purposes, was not so much the consequence of topographical conditions nor of the disposition of the enemy forces nor of bad luck, as it was the upshot of a factor that had not been sufficiently taken in account. This factor was the rare fighting qualities that the Osmanli soldier was to display in the campaign.*" Callwell also highlights the overconfidence and the "happy-go-lucky mood" and hope that the enemy would simply collapse, which was a significant reason for the campaign's ultimate failure.

A remarkable and insightful book, *Hell and Confusion* is a must-read, and I cannot recommend it highly enough.

LAST POST

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

David Earle - Member 6369 died 2024. David's father, Maurice, had been a marine on HMS *Ark Royal*.

John Kerr - member 7444, died 21 August 2024.

Dr John Godrich - Member 2441, died 21 Feb 2025 in Musgrove Park Hospital, aged 94. See a reprint of John's 2011 contribution to *The Gallipolian* on pages 4-5.



See 'With the Wounded: A Nurse's Story', pages 40-41.

Members' Contact Details

Members occasionally change email addresses without notifying the membership secretary. As a result notices and information do not reach the intended member. If your email address changes please notify the membership secretary (contact details opposite page).

DISCLAIMER

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



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, Signed 'C J Smith RMLI'
National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, PAH5181

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

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