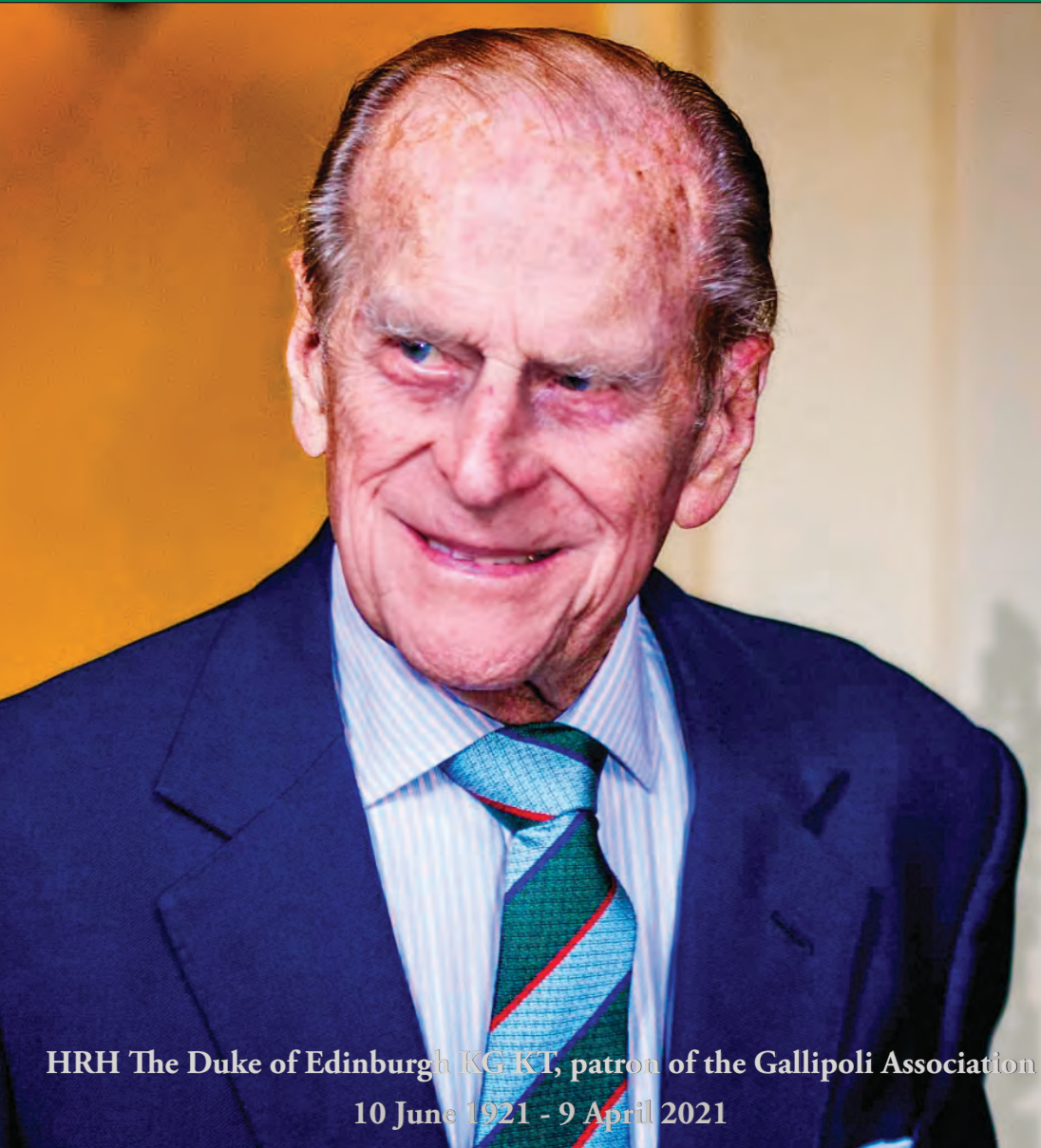


The Gallipolian

The Journal of the Gallipoli Association

No. 156 - Memorial edition - Autumn 2021



HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG KT, patron of the Gallipoli Association

10 June 1921 - 9 April 2021

THE GALLIPOLIAN

No 156, Autumn (August) 2021

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

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This edition's cover

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, wearing his Gallipoli Association tie.



The 1975 (60th anniversary) speech by our late patron is reproduced in this edition.

The Winter 2005 edition of *The Gallipolitan* (no 109) contains an article by our president (then chairman), Captain Fagan, and 16 colour photographs of HRH Prince Philip meeting with members of the Gallipoli Association during a reception to mark the 90th anniversary of the campaign at St James's Palace, 7 June 2005.

AN APPRECIATION OF OUR PATRON

His Royal Highness The Prince Philip KG KT

Captain C T F Fagan MBE DL, President of the Gallipoli Association

The history of the His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh's interest in the Gallipoli Campaign stretches back a long way to the time he accompanied Her Majesty The Queen on a state visit to Turkey, together with HRH The Princess Royal in October 1971, during which they visited the Gallipoli battlefields. Her Majesty sent a telegram from Gallipoli to our then chairman and founder, Major Edgar Banner, from which it was clear how deeply moved they all were by their visit.

A few years later the trustees of The Gallipoli Memorial Trust, a well-respected organisation which wound up many years ago, invited His Royal Highness to give their annual Memorial Lecture which used to take place in Holy Trinity Church, Eltham where there is a Gallipoli Memorial Chapel. These lectures were on a high academic plane and were given by such people as General Sir Hugh Beach, John Grigg (Lord Altrincham), Enoch Powell and others. It is clear that the 1971 visit inspired Prince Philip to learn more and it is a measure of his high intellectual ability that he personally wrote and delivered such a first class lecture.

HRH attended the Gallipoli Association Annual Dinner in 1975 as the guest of honour at which he gave an immensely thoughtful and powerful speech before proposing the health of the Association. I strongly recommend everybody read that speech which was produced in the Winter edition of *The Gallipolian* (No. 19, 1975). The speech opened with the following words: "The future generation, I am afraid, will only know of Gallipoli from the history books, and there, I am afraid, it will suffer the same fate as so many other great battles of the past. It will be entered simply as 'Gallipoli, 1915', just like Agincourt 1415, or perhaps Balaclava, 1854."

These sentiments must have been in his mind when he told me some years later that he was so pleased that The Gallipoli Association had decided to allow Associate Membership, opening the doors to others who had not served in the campaign, and was highly critical of another campaign-orientated WWII association which had refused to do so thus ensuring its ultimate demise. He strongly felt the importance of maintaining interest in a campaign so historically significant as Gallipoli, with all the multitude of lessons, at once political, strategical, tactical and examples of courage and human endeavour that it still offers today.

In 1982 possibly the most significant event in the history of The Gallipoli Association occurred when His Royal Highness agreed to become our Patron. The benefits of his patronage cannot be underestimated. It was not just the fact that we now had Royal endorsement, but also the enduring interest which our Patron took in our activities and our future.

1995 brought the 80th Anniversary of the campaign and it was decided that, as there

was no memorial anywhere to the campaign as a whole, the Association should endeavour to have one erected in a suitably prominent place. The Registrar and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral were extremely helpful and welcomed the idea of having the memorial in the cathedral. Accordingly our patron was approached for his help. This was generously forthcoming and he wrote a foreword to the appeal brochure. His patronage undoubtedly contributed hugely to the success of the appeal which raised not only enough to pay for the memorial but left us with a sum significant enough for the Association to start the idea of giving bursaries to enable people to visit Gallipoli and learn about the campaign. He kindly agreed to unveil the memorial at St. Paul's Cathedral on 28th November after which he insisted on walking from the cathedral to the reception at Stationers' Hall much to the astonishment of members of the public as they went about their business. Prince Philip was amazing the way he went round talking to everybody present at the reception and he gave so much pleasure to every single person there.

To mark the 90th anniversary in 2005 Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness agreed to lay wreaths at the Sandringham War Memorial after morning service at the church on Sunday 16th January. This was attended by quite a crowd and The Queen and HRH talked to a large number after the wreaths were laid which made it such a memorable occasion for so many. They were most intrigued to be shown the pocket watch in the possession of the Beck family. This had been presented to Major Frank Beck, who was the Sandringham Estate agent and commander of the ill-fated company of the 5th Norfolks, by Queen Alexandra before he took the company to Gallipoli where it famously disappeared into the smoke, never to be seen again. The watch was later found to be in the possession of a Turkish officer who was ordered to return it to the family by Kemal Ataturk.

On Gallipoli Day, 25th April 2005, His Royal Highness came to St. Paul's Cathedral and laid a wreath at the Gallipoli Memorial, and then, together with Her Majesty, went on to lay wreaths at the Cenotaph and attended the service at Westminster Abbey.

In addition, to mark the 90th anniversary still further, Prince Philip arranged for us to be given permission to hold a reception at St. James's Palace on 7th June 2005, for which Royal approval and attendance is required. This was yet another memorable and happy occasion which he attended and spent just over an hour going round and speaking to virtually every one of the 200 people there. He always took particular interest in people who had had a family connection with the campaign, and there were many jokes as can be seen from the large number of photographs taken at the time.

Five years later, to mark the 95th anniversary, Prince Philip attended our Autumn Lunch at the Naval Club and yet again took time to talk before lunch to as many people as possible. I seem to remember that he was attending no fewer than five different engagements that day.

And then came 2015, the centenary of the campaign. By this time the Association

had been granted charitable status. His Royal Highness very kindly, once again, agreed to support our 100th Anniversary Memorial appeal by writing his own foreword and sending it to us together with a photograph which we had requested of himself in Naval uniform. This gave us the impetus to be able to raise over £75,000 from many sources which is being used to educate the public in many different ways about the Gallipoli Campaign. At the same time a grant of £100,000 was made to the Association by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Prince Philip then attended the Autumn Lunch at the Cavalry & Guards Club on 27th October. Before lunch he made his way round the 80 people present in his usual jovial way and, at the end of lunch, he proposed the loyal toast to Her Majesty, and listened to the speech that followed by Sir Hew Strachan.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the final withdrawal from the peninsula Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness graciously agreed to lay wreaths at the Sandringham War Memorial after morning prayer in the church. This was the finale of the Centenary commemorations and was also attended by The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Her Majesty and His Royal Highness were able to talk to many members of the Association and public who attended. They were shown Major Beck's watch once again.

Mention must be made of the fact that at the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, Prince Philip always made a point of coming to the Association plot even if he had to cross over from plots on the other side of the path. When one thinks of the number of organisations and plots that he must have had a connection with, it is a mark of his extraordinary ability to remember where they were, and the interest he always showed in them.

When I was Chairman he would summon me to have an audience with him at Buckingham Palace where he would expect to be brought up to date with the affairs of the Association. He would ask pertinent questions which showed great knowledge of the subject and would always encourage and make helpful suggestions. He was very supportive and enthusiastic about the idea of making the Association a registered charity and realised that this would help to ensure that the Association would endure for many years to come, which he felt was so important from a historical and educational perspective. He greatly applauded all the activities that we were pursuing including educational visits to Gallipoli for old and young alike, and those who wished to further a military career.

Brigadier James Stopford and myself were very honoured to be summoned for an audience with His Royal Highness at Buckingham Palace to mark my handover of the Chairmanship to James.

There is no doubt that the fact that Prince Philip agreed to become our patron, has given the Association a recognition that it could not otherwise have had. This might have been enough in itself, but he made so much more of it by his obvious encouragement and interest in the Association, the Gallipoli Campaign itself, and

his foresight in seeing how important it is to ensure that the campaign should not be just “known from the history books” and “suffer the same fate as so many other great battles of the past” and “entered simply as Gallipoli 1915.”

And so, Sir, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you have done for us. Our loss is immeasurable and we will miss you, your interest, wisdom, encouragement, and certainly your humour, more than we can ever express.

I know that I speak for all members of the Association in sending our profound condolences to Her Majesty The Queen, and all the Royal Family.

Footnote.

People will have seen that that the public have been asked to refrain from leaving flowers as their mark of respect, but rather to send a donation to a charity of which he was Patron. If, therefore, you would like to make a donation to the Gallipoli Association it will be most gratefully received. When making a donation please ensure you put your name or membership number as a reference. Thank you.

Editor's note

The 1975 speech by our late Patron is reproduced in this edition, pages 57 - 59.



Royal Mail have announced four new stamps featuring the late Duke of Edinburgh, The image in this, the fourth in the series, is by photographer Terry O'Neill

GALLIPOLI'S GREY DAWN

Serpil and Bill Sellars

“All the other ships joined in, until the noise and the flashes were terrific. Before everything had been so still... It seemed impossible that anything could live in such an inferno: wire entanglements, parts of houses, clods of earth and everything else being blown sky high. It was an extraordinary sight. Above all this away inland a glorious red sun rose and I was quite appalled to see the terrific destruction.”

So wrote Herbert Williams, a midshipman on the pre-dreadnought HMS *Agamemnon*, of the bombardment of V Beach ahead of the landing on 25 April, 1915.

One hundred and six years later, there was no destruction and indeed no glorious sun at V Beach or elsewhere on the Gallipoli Peninsula, though under a Covid-mandated lockdown, everything remained still.

Low cloud rather than dust and smoke blanketed the peninsula and muted the dawn, while rain and chill winds were more a reminder of the conditions at the campaign's end than its opening.

For the second year in a row, public ceremonies to mark the Allied landings on the peninsula were banned. However, this year there were small commemorative events at both Cape Helles and Anzac, with many of the countries whose men and women had served in the campaign represented by members of their respective diplomatic missions.

As has become accepted practice, commemoration of the campaign was spread over two days, with services at the Turkish, French and Commonwealth memorials held on April 24, a second round of events at Anzac on April 25 taking in the traditional Dawn Service, followed by services at the Lone Pine and New Zealand memorials.

It is perhaps a mark of the greater interest in the campaign, and the acknowledgment of the role played by states that made up the empires that took part in it, that the service of countries such as Austria, Hungary, Canada, Sri Lanka and Germany were also marked by wreaths laid at memorial sites, along with the more widely recognised sacrifice of the United Kingdom, Turkey, France, India, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

With public access to the official ceremonies forbidden, some locals saw in the dawn at V Beach, including a two-minute silence at 6:20 am. This was the approximate time of the grounding of the collier *River Clyde*, carrying some 2000 men of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, the Hampshire Regiment, a company of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and men of other units, and of the beaching of the first open boats carrying the balance of the Dublins.

Two minutes stretched into ten as the locked-down village of Seddulbahr stayed indoors during its Covid curfew and grey morn, the silence finally broken by the siren of a freighter sounding as it left the Dardanelles. Under a grey sky there was

little to serve as a reminder of the events of 25 April 1915 but for the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery at the western end of the beach and the spit of rock where the *River Clyde* grounded 106 years ago.

“Gone were the picturesque troops – the British in khaki shorts, the blue-clad French, the turbaned Indians, the giant Senegalese, and all the rest of them; gone the seething activity in the hot sun and rising dust-clouds. Gone, too, was the River Clyde which was fast in the shallows from the first day of the landing until long after the campaign had ended.

“Despite this and other changes, V Beach impressed those who knew it as less altered than other parts of the Gallipoli fronts. This beach will grip the imagination of tourists long after all direct personal interest in Gallipoli has faded. For here, “the impossible was achieved”...

(Stanton Hope in his account of the 1934 pilgrimage to the peninsula aboard the *Duchess of Richmond*, Gallipoli Revisited). See photographs page 30.

ANZAC DAY 2021 IN JERUSALEM

Michael D Robson

After 2020's cancellation due to Covid-19, this year's service at Jerusalem was a great advance, however we are still not yet back to normal. Nevertheless, the Australian embassy to Israel pulled out all the stops and did an excellent job within the limits of the local health regulations. Their Commemorative Service, held on Anzac Day morning at the CWGC cemetery on Mount Scopus, was a private ceremony, with the public invited to join in via a live broadcast on *Zoom*.

Attendees were welcomed at the gate with a sprig of rosemary (*for remembrance*) and then directed to well-spaced seating, facing the Stone of Remembrance and the entrance to the chapel. Col. Brandon Wood, the Australian Defence Attaché opened the ceremony, before Rabbi Dr. Raymond Apple AO, RFD, made the call to worship. Psalm 23 was read by the Hon. Consul-General of New Zealand, and then '*In Flanders Fields*' was recited by Lt.-Col. Jim Priest of the UK. The *Anzac Day Address* was delivered by the Australian Ambassador, HE Mr Paul Griffiths, following which wreaths were laid, including one on behalf of the Gallipoli Association. Col. Wood then led the gathering through words from Binyon's ode, before the Last Post, the Silence and the Rouse. The national anthems of Australia, New Zealand and Israel were then played, before the closing blessing was given by the Rev. Angeleena Keiser, of St. Andrew's Church, Jerusalem.

The embassy had provided everyone with drinking water on what was a hot spring day in this shadeless cemetery, and after the ceremony, guests were invited to each enjoy a snack box before commencing their journey home.

My thanks to the Australian embassy in Tel Aviv for their invitation and for their thoughtful hospitality (see photograph page 31).

OBITUARY: GUNDULA HOLBROOK

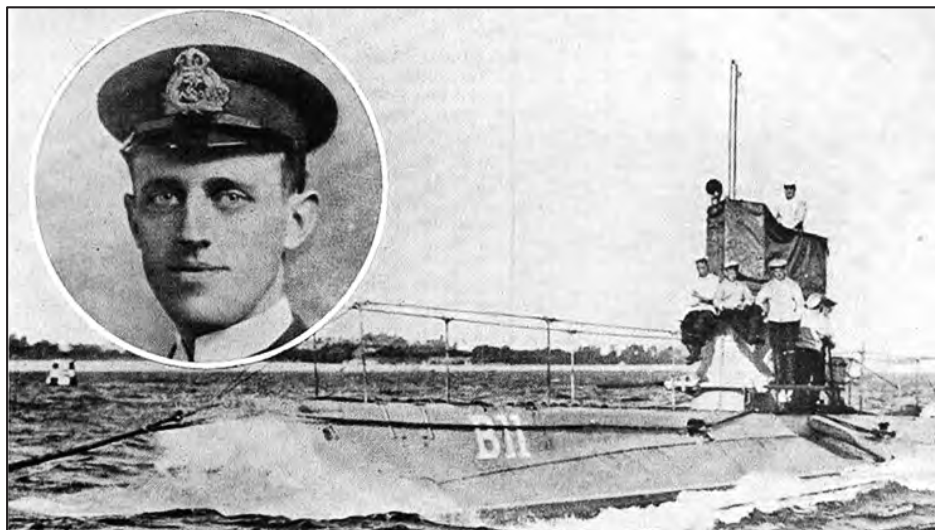
Nurtured the legacy of her husband, a hero of the Great War

Gundula Holbrook, who has died aged 106, was a last link with stirring events of the First World War. On the ski slopes in 1952, when the Austrian Gundula Bleichart met Norman Holbrook, she was fascinated to hear that, in the year of her birth, Holbrook had won the VC.

She learnt that on the morning of December 13 1914, Lieutenant Holbrook - who was then 26 - commanded the submarine B11, when, despite treacherous currents, he dived under five rows of mines to enter the Dardanelles. There, in Sari Siglar Bay, he torpedoed and sank the Ottoman navy's ironclad Mesudiye, which was guarding the minefield.

In spite of shallow water - where he bumped along the bottom, scraping mine mooring wires, was fired on from the shore and attacked by patrol boats - Holbrook got B11 back to the safety of the Aegean Sea. After a last, nine-hour, submersion, B11 was filled with stale air and was so low on battery power that Holbrook had to rely on the outgoing freshwater current to carry him into open waters.

Holbrook's was the first naval VC to be gazetted in the First World War. The following year, 1915, amid a wave of anti-German feeling, the name of the New South Wales town of Germanton, once known as Ten Mile Creek, was changed to Holbrook.



A dozen other names of politicians, senior admirals and generals, including Asquith, Jellicoe and Kitchener, were considered, but the residents decided that Holbrook was more in keeping with the young nation whose soldiers were

now fighting on the shores of the Dardanelles. In September the shire clerk wrote to Norman Holbrook informing him of the honour: it became and remains the only town to be named after a VC winner.



Gundula Helene Feldner was born on November 1 1914, daughter of an Innsbruck lawyer, Alois Feldner, and Gretel, nee Kofler, whose family still own the Grand Hotel in Kitzbuhel, in the Austrian Tyrol. Educated privately in Switzerland, Gundula married an Austrian doctor, Raoul Bleichart, in 1939, but by 1941 the marriage had fallen apart under wartime conditions.

Postwar she travelled widely, and married Norman Holbrook in 1952; in 1956 they visited the town of Holbrook for the first time, and there followed intermittent visits, while the town, which was nowhere near the sea, became known as the 'submarine town.'

In 1971 a model of B11 was installed in a park there, and after Norman died in Stedham, West Sussex, in 1976, Gundula retired to Austria, donating to the town of Holbrook her husband's medals, including his VC and his midshipman's chest, which was filled with personal artefacts.

On Anzac Day, April 25 1986, the freedom of the town was given to the Royal Australian Navy's submarine squadron. In 1988 a bronze statue of Gundula's husband was erected at Germanton Park in Holbrook, and in 1994, when the Oberon-class submarine HMAS *Otway* was decommissioned, the boat was broken up and transported in sections by road to Holbrook, where it was intended to be rebuilt as a submarine memorial.

When Gundula Holbrook learned that the scheme had stalled, she wrote a personal cheque which galvanised the community into completing the project. In 1997 she paid her last visit, and was made an honorary citizen. "I think this is the most

important thing that has ever happened to me,” she said. “I don’t feel like a visitor anymore, now I am a resident.”

She had also helped to turn the town from a stopover on the day-long drive between Sydney and Melbourne, into a place of destination which receives some 200,000 visitors each year. There, where she is remembered as being down to earth, articulate, possessed of a sharp mind and a nice smile; her hologram in the museum narrates her husband’s story.

Gundula Holbrook, born November 1 1914, died December 31 2020.

Source: *The Daily Telegraph* 3 March 2021. My thanks to David Saunders MBE, former *Gallipolian* editor, for supplying the above article.

See photographs pages 32 - 33.

CORRECTION AND INFORMATION

Many thanks to Dale Hjort (member no 1179), who wrote to correct what appears to be a mistake in optical character recognition in Dr Kenyon’s article in the last edition, and at the same time add interesting detail on a ship that served at Gallipoli:

I suggest that the destroyer which carried Captain Kenyon away from Helles [*The Gallipolian* 155 p16] was not “Amo” but HMS *Arno*, a ship with an extraordinary history.

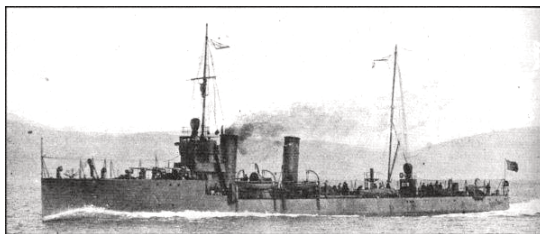
She was built in an Italian yard for the Portuguese navy but purchased for the Royal Navy in March 1915, before fitting out, and so became probably the only RN warship of foreign design and build at that time.

HMS *Arno* carried a party of senior military to survey the Suvla coast before the August landings. On 8 August she was at Hamilton’s disposal but when he called for immediate passage to Suvla she was unable to respond because of boiler problems.

She evacuated Birdwood and de Robeck from Anzac, and Birdwood again from Helles.

On 23 March 1918 she sank after collision with HMS *Acorn* in the Dardanelles.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software commonly sees the letter combination of ‘rn’ as ‘m’ and appears to have done so in this case, mistaking ‘Arno’ for ‘Amo’. My apologies for not picking it up during proof-reading - Editor



GALLIPOLI GRAVES, POPE BENEDICT XV, AND THE EMPTY ENVELOPE

John Howell

The soldiers evacuated from the Gallipoli Peninsula in December 1915 and January 1916 had very mixed feelings. They were glad to end a tough campaign under the gaze of the enemy, and they had stayed too long in trenches that had been Dusty, muddy, and sprinkled with snow. They had lived with clouds of flies and little water. On the other hand, there was greater regret that they had to leave behind the graves of so many comrades. Just what would happen to their friends buried around the edges of the peninsula, and what of those left unburied in no-mans-land?

The men left behind in those graves were also in the minds of their relatives and their governments. The war continued on many fronts, but an armistice wasn't needed before people took what actions they could. Gardeners were already being employed to tend graves in Egypt before the Gallipoli evacuations, and in March 1917 there were 959 small pots of gum trees shipped to Egypt on the *SS Star of England*. They were despatched by the Woods and Forests department of South Australia with the instruction that they be somehow forwarded to Lemnos and Gallipoli for the graveyards.

On the European front, the Red Cross and their Office of Wounded and Missing were also growing in size and involvement everywhere due to the natural flood of enquiries from loved ones. Their good work enabled thousands of burial locations to be recorded, at a time when army authorities had better things to do. They started to put crosses on graves, and even to exhume unmarked burials to verify the occupants. This was quickly stopped and the War Office recorded in September 1916 that:

'The Army Council would be glad if Lady Munro Ferguson might be informed that, so far from the Red Cross exhuming bodies in France and Flanders for the purpose of identification, all exhumation is strictly forbidden during the progress of hostilities by both the French and British Commanders-in- Chief.'

Lady Helen Munro Ferguson was the wife of the Governor General of Australia. She had founded the Australian Red Cross when the war broke out, but Red Cross involvement was now overstepping the mark. Moves were afoot for what became the Imperial War Graves Commission, but the real work would have to wait until the war was ended.

Thoughts were naturally still on Allied graves on enemy territory, with Gallipoli at the forefront. The embassy of still-neutral America was a friendly ear in Constantinople, and they were able to make representations to The Sublime Porte (the Ottoman government). In February 1916 the Australian Defence Department filed their copy of an American request to the Ottoman Imperial Ministry of

Foreign Affairs. It said:

‘The Embassy of the United States of America has the honour to transmit herewith to the Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs a copy of a note addressed to the American Ambassador in Paris by the French Government, requesting the good offices of this Embassy in arranging with the Imperial Ottoman Government for the protection against profanation of the burial places of French soldiers on the Gallipoli Peninsula. A communication has also been received from the [U.S.] Department of State, transmitting a request from the British Government that steps be taken to protect the graves of British officers and men, who were buried on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and also that search be made there for uninterred bodies, with a view to their burial. In informing the Imperial Ministry of the wishes of the French and British Governments in this matter, this Embassy has the honour to bespeak the humanitarian interest of the Imperial Government, and to request prompt compliance with the very natural wishes of the two Governments. It would request also to be informed as early as possible of the steps taken to protect the graves of the British and French dead, and to discover and inter those who have been left unburied on the Gallipoli Peninsula.’

In April 1916 an Ottoman reply (in French, but with an English translation) was filed. It quite specifically dealt with all issues of the American correspondence:

‘The Minister of Foreign Affairs has had the honour to receive with its enclosure, the Note Verbale No. 1203 which the ambassador for the United States was good enough to address to him on the 13th of February last, relative to the protection of the graves of English and French officers and soldiers on the Peninsula of Gallipoli. The Vice Commandant of the Imperial Army to whom this information was communicated, advised in reply, that all those who remained unburied on the battlefield of the Peninsula have been buried beyond the lines of defence. The graves which happen to be within the zone of Military operations should in the interests of defence and the safety of the troops be transferred to a more distant point. As to the graves situated in parts not being used for military purposes the English and French governments may be assured that the Imperial Authorities will look to their preservation.’

A final paragraph (below) raised an interesting point. If Allied graves on the peninsula were damaged already or in future jeopardy, then it was not anything the Ottomans had done. It was solely due to ‘friendly fire’ from Allied warships:

‘In the meanwhile it is noted that these graves have been destroyed in part by the fire of the enemy ships directed against the Ottoman troops during the evacuation of the Peninsula. They continue to be destroyed by the aimless fire which the said ships continue to direct at intervals upon the coast.’

The reply seemed comprehensive and polite, but certainly had some untrue claims. Unburied men (of either side) were never buried “beyond the lines of defence.” When Charles Bean and his party went to the Peninsula in 1919 they found traces of the burials done during the ceasefire of May 24. In his ‘Gallipoli Mission’ he then wrote of the days beyond the ceasefire burials: “Those men of both sides who fell in

No-man's-land during the rest of the campaign still lay in No-man's-land in 1919, very thickly in some parts, especially in front of Quinn's and Pope's Posts, and at the Nek." As to the Ottoman assurance regarding the graves that "the Imperial Authorities will look to their preservation," few traces of Allied grave markings remained when Cyril Hughes came to the Peninsula after the war for the IWGC. His first task was establishing just where burials were, and in this he acted perhaps as a pioneer of battlefield archaeology in seeking and re-marking burials that had ceased to show any obvious markings.

Archives have a later document from the American embassy in Constantinople to their London embassy that is 5 months later. It is dated September 15, 1916 and shows that further requests had been made to the Ottomans. This note also shows that further requests were only going to produce further Ottoman refusals.

American observers were never going to be given access to the Peninsula. In short it says:

'the American Embassy in Constantinople has the honour to state that in answer to the representations it has twice made to the Sublime Porte since the latter's note of April 4th, last it has been refused on military grounds permission to send a representative to visit those graves. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has assured the Charge d'Affaires that the graves are being carefully protected and that they have not been in any way molested.'

Now the whole topic of inspection of the graves takes an interesting twist. It seems that while people in London and Paris tried to negotiate via the American embassy, someone in Australia had another idea – an approach via The Vatican.

I have not traced the initial Australian request, but Prime Minister W.M. 'Billy' Hughes received a letter of reply dated February 8, 1917. It came from Bonaventura Ceretti, the Archbishop of Corinth. He was a member of the Apostolic Delegation Australasia, and was in Sydney. He had interesting information for Hughes and the Australian people. Pope Benedict XV had made approaches to the Ottomans. The letter said:

'His Holiness the Pope, as you, no doubt, are well aware, has taken a paternal



Pope Benedict XV

and deep interest in the burial places of Anzac soldiers fallen in Gallipoli. He has succeeded in obtaining from the Turkish Government the guarantees necessary for the sacred safeguarding of each and all of the tombs. He has been able to obtain photographs of the tombs, and has caused them to be forwarded to the Imperial Government in England. His Holiness, wishing at the same time to give you personally, and the Australian people a token of his sympathy, respect and goodwill, has forwarded to me copies of the photographs, with instructions that I forward them to you. This I have great pleasure in now doing.'

TOMBS OF FALLEN ANZACS.

The Pope's Interest.

Following is a copy of a letter received by the Prime Minister from Archbishop Ceretti, Apostolic Delegate, Sydney, dated February 8:—

"His Holiness the Pope, as you no doubt are well aware, has taken a paternal and deep interest in the burial places of Anzac soldiers fallen in Gallipoli. He has succeeded in obtaining from the Turkish Government the guarantees necessary for the sacred safe-guarding of each and all of the tombs. He has been able to obtain photographs of the tombs, and has caused them to be forwarded to the Imperial Government in England. His Holiness, wishing at the same time to give you personally, and the Australian people, a token of his sympathy, respect, and goodwill, has forwarded to me copies of the photographs, with instructions that I forward them to you. This I have great pleasure in now doing.

"I have been directed also to inform you that the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Gasparri, has given instructions to the Apostolic Delegate at Constantinople to have taken, if possible, a photograph of each portion of the cemeteries, so that each tomb may be easily identified. Should this prove successful, I shall have pleasure in sending them to you also.

"Desiring to give a further expression of his benevolence towards the Australian people, His Holiness has commanded his Secretary of State to notify me that if any relatives or friends of soldiers fallen desire to have detailed information as to any particular tomb, they may obtain it, as far as possible, on application through me to the Holy See.

"You are at liberty, for the information of the Australian people, to make this letter public."

The underlining (above) is mine; the letter went on to say that the Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople was also trying to obtain more detailed photographs that would enable every grave to be identified, and that the Pope had further commanded that:

'if any relatives or friends of soldiers fallen desire to have detailed information as to any particular tomb, they may obtain it – as far as possible – on application through me to the Holy See. You are at liberty, for the information of the Australian people, to make this letter public.'

So the obvious question remains: Where are these photos of Gallipoli graves taken in 1916? Searching led me eventually to National Archives Australia here in Melbourne, and I asked that a promising file be brought from storage. File AIF 125/5/58 carries the title 'Registration and Care of Soldiers Graves.' It is a large file and goes beyond its title to include most of the correspondence mentioned here earlier. With great excitement I also found a large envelope in the

file. It was just the thing to contain the mysterious photographs, and was addressed to The Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs. It was the Secretary who wrote to Cardinal Ceretti on February 12, 1917 and who thanked him for the Gallipoli photographs! With disappointment that far outweighed my excitement I then read the brief note pencilled across the typed address:

Recd. 22 photos (to be returned) Geo. H. Vaughan Sydney Evening News 27/2/17

The envelope was empty because George Vaughan had 'borrowed' them only a fortnight after they had been received by the Prime Minister!

Soon I worked out that Mr. Vaughan was from the *Evening News* in Sydney. It had been founded in the 1800s and fell victim to the Great Depression when it folded in 1931. Why else (I thought) would he take the photos other than to print them in the *Evening News*? At the next opportunity I was in the State Library of Victoria, wearing white gloves and inspecting large bound copies of that Sydney newspaper. In the months following, none of the photographs were ever printed. In fact the paper at the time was a broadsheet with vast amounts of small type, and had almost no photos of any kind. The 'Evening News' was never going to have pages devoted to 22 photographs. Did they print them as a separate magazine (like the *Illustrated War News*) or did George get run over by a cable tram? I wish I knew.

I put some feelers out to the Imperial War Museum, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and some other such authorities, but nothing came to light. If any member of the Gallipoli Association can shed some light on the whereabouts of any of these photographs I would be pleased to read a follow-up story.

Notes:

Pope Benedict XV held the office of Pope from Sep 1914 until his death in 1922. During the war he tried to organise peace talks, but the Germans weren't interested, and he seemed to be unable to please the French. He settled for some smaller initiatives.

The newspaper clipping (opposite page) is Archbishop Ceretti's full letter as it appeared in the *Argus* of 16 Feb 1917. It must have been more an order than a request to the Australian press. A quick search on the National Library's *Trove* shows it was printed in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, and Perth, as well in as a host of large and small regional newspapers.

SERGEANT WILLIAM EDWIN LIQUORISH

Sergt. Fred. Axcell, 1st Essex Regt., writing from the Dardanelles to his brother and sister at 63 St. Anne's Road, Southend, says Sergt. Liquorish was cheering his men on, and fighting for all he was worth, when a Turkish bullet caught him in the stomach, and he died. (*Essex Newsman* (Chelmsford) 7 August 1915 p2).

Sergeant William Edwin Liquorish, 6667, 1st Bn. Essex Regiment, killed in action 6 June 1915. No known grave. Commemorated on the Helles memorial.

FROM NEWPORT AND BRUNSWICK TO LEMNOS

The Anzac Voyage of the Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train's Alec Holland

Jim Claven



Young Alec Holland from Brunswick in Melbourne – a 23 year old former apprentice at Melbourne's Newport railway yards – was one of Australia's soldiers who came to Lemnos during the Gallipoli campaign. He recorded his experiences in a collection of personal diaries, photographs, drawings and memorabilia, which have been treasured by his family ever since. Recently Alec's granddaughter Ann showed me Alec's images and writings. As I sat in her living room in suburban Melbourne another link between Lemnos and Australia began to unfold before my eyes. This is the story of Alec Holland's Lemnos, drawn from his personal writings and photographs.

Alec was sent as a reinforcement to a unit in which experienced tradesmen like himself were

especially valued. An engineering support unit, the 1st Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train (1st RANBT) was raised in Melbourne and would comprise 300 officers and men. They would serve on the Suvla front at Gallipoli for five months until the end of the campaign, the first contingent sailed from Egypt via Lemnos and Imbros, arriving on 7th August. Alec's rank was Able Bodied Driver.

Alec's first vision of Lemnos was from his transport – the *Nile* - as they sailed into Mudros Bay at on the morning of 20 August, on their way to Gallipoli. Like all who arrived here during the campaign, he was amazed at the Allied shipping in the bay

"A glorious sight harbour full of ships of all descriptions. Battleships, cruisers, submarines, destroyers, hospital ships (6) etc. Two troopships left here."

His stay was brief, leaving Mudros Bay to join his unit at Gallipoli three days later. Here Alec now joined in the brave work of his comrades, undertaking vital

engineering works, erecting and maintaining piers, unloading stores and ensuring the supply of fresh water to the troops – often under enemy shelling and fire. As soon as they landed they constructed a 120-yard pier in twenty minutes, all under continual shrapnel fire, with the pier operational five minutes later. During their service at Gallipoli two were killed in action and over thirty wounded. One of those casualties was Newport-born Chief Petty Officer Edward Perkins, a former furrier from Essendon, who was killed when an enemy shell made a direct hit on his dug-out. After its service on Gallipoli the RANBT, the last Australian troops to leave Gallipoli, returned to Lemnos. They would stay on Lemnos for nearly a month, resting and recovering.

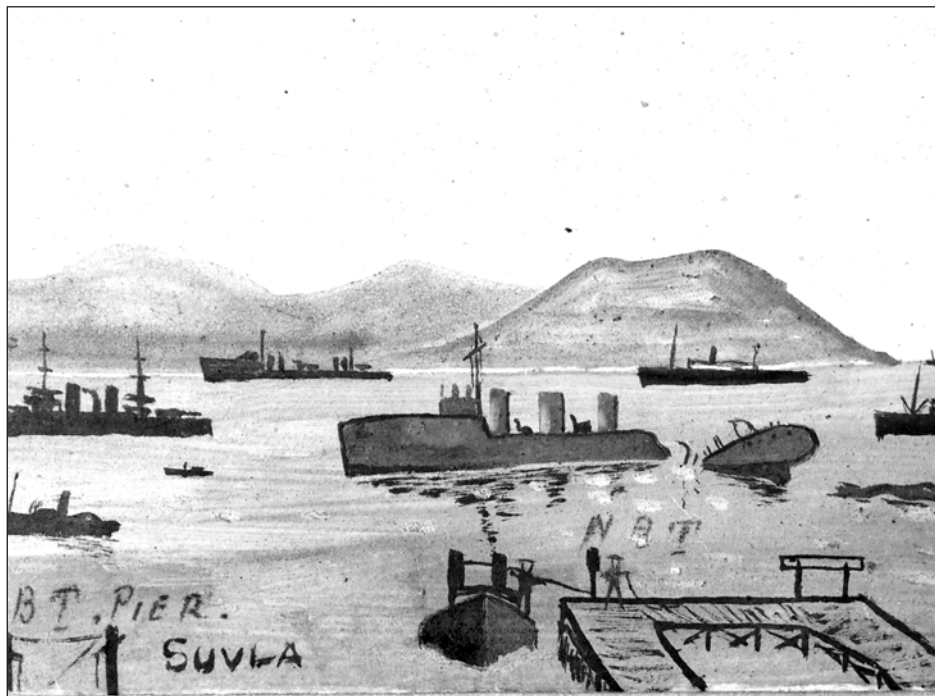
Alec was part of the first contingent of the unit to return to Lemnos, the rest returning over subsequent days. As they entered Mudros Bay on the morning of 17 December, Alec wrote that it was “full of ships a fine sight.” They weren’t able to disembark until 1.30pm. He probably landed at the Turks Head Peninsula’s north pier, from where he would have marched the five miles with all equipment to “camp”, taking four-and-a-half hours to arrive there. This was most probably the Anzac rest camp at Sarpi, which lay about this distance from the north pier. Once at the camp, Alec writes that after pitching his tent – which accommodated seventeen soldiers - he “had a good sleep.”

Life in the camp was punctuated by various military duties, such as periods of standing guard, route marches, attending medical lectures as well as afternoon rifle and squad drills. As experienced field engineers, the unit was attached to the military Director of Works on the Turks Head Peninsula, the unit relocating its camp to the Royal Engineers park located there. Alec writes of how the relocation took place on 21 December, despite its raining heavily, with “mud up to knees” and their having to pitch their tents in the dark. At this location Alec witnessed “Turkish prisoners working and playing Crown and Anchor.”

Alec wrote of attending a number of concerts in late December and January. Along with events put on by various army units, two of these appeared to have involved nurses. Alec wrote of one concert held on 22 December that it was “splendid (nurses).” Another on 10 January was held at the 1st Canadian Stationary Hospital. Yet his attempts at social contact could be tempered by sadness. The day after Christmas Day - 26th December – Alec wrote of catching up with Australian soldiers with whom they had sailed from Australia – “Demosthenes Lot” – but noting that there were “few left”, referring to the high rate of casualties suffered by those at Gallipoli.

On Christmas Eve Alec spent the evening visiting the Australian and Canadian hospitals also located on the Turks Head Peninsula, as many other soldiers based on Lemnos did. The hospitals became a site of social interaction between the returning soldiers and the medical staff, including the novel experience of meeting up with Australian nurses. Alec went on to describe the Australian experience of Christmas on Lemnos, with church services and attending the “Anzac sports in afternoon.” His

experience of Christmas dinner was less than optimal, the meal comprising the usual tinned bully beef and rice. He noted that many of the Christmas billy cans from Australia distributed to his unit were damaged. There was somewhat of an



'NBT Pier Suvla'

improvement the following day – Sunday 26th December – when the unit had plum pudding for dinner, following their church service.

For those on the island, the new year's eve celebrations provided an opportunity to relax and enjoy the occasion. Alec records attending a "voluntary concert" in the evening but his having left by 9.30pm due to it being "spoilt by drunks ... nearly every all drunk." As the clock struck 12 midnight Alec writes of the Allied ships in the bay setting off their whistles, with troops joining in with the rattling of tins and drums. Other accounts record fireworks being set off to see out the old year to the shouts of the Allied soldiers from their camps around Mudros Bay. The food on New Year's Day left a lot to be desired as far as Alec was concerned, writing that "the food here was the worst we have had in a long time, nothing but arguing all the while."

Despite his limited time on Lemnos, Alec wasted no time in setting off to visit the locals and their villages. The day after he arrived he writes of going to a "Greek village" (probably the nearby village of either Sarpi or Portianos) and the following day – 19 December - made off on the 25-mile return journey to Castro (modern day

Myrina). He did so without gaining the required military pass, noting of his having been “arrested by picket but got out of it.” He was escorted out of the capital by the pickets and made his way back to camp. On 2 January 1916 Alec wrote of visiting Sarpi village.

He records the final days of the Australian presence on Lemnos, noting the departure of the patients from the Australian hospitals there on 10th January and the hospitals being dismantled. Alec records that he and unit finally struck camp on Monday 17th January and in the afternoon boarded the paddle steamer *Sir Joseph Pease* which took them out to the transport *Empress of Britain* anchored in Mudros Bay. It would not be until 8am the next day that Alec sailed out of Mudros Bay, making his final departure from Lemnos and ending his experience there.

As they departed Lemnos, one of their number was left behind in one of the island’s military cemeteries. 32-year-old French-speaking Petty Officer Philip Le Seuer was a Channel Islander who was a professional seaman who had also served nine years with the Royal Navy before coming to Australia. He died on 16th August aboard a hospital ship taking him to Lemnos, having contracted one of the deadly gastric diseases that plagued the troops at Gallipoli. He had survived just nine days on the peninsula. His body was brought ashore at Lemnos for burial in East Mudros Military Cemetery. Phillip was buried in the same cemetery as two of Alec’s fellow former Victorian Railways employees; Driver John Charles Douglas and Private Henry Albert Withers.



How interesting that Alec's former workplace would become the employer for many Greek migrants who came to Melbourne after the Second World War – many no doubt also living in Alec's Brunswick. Little did they know that they were walking in the footsteps of this young apprentice who had come to their homeland more than 30 or more years before. Another part of the Hellenic connection to Anzac.

To honour the service of Alec and the other members of the Royal Australian Navy who came to Lemnos in 1915-16, the Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee, in conjunction with the local authorities, will soon install a new memorial plaque on Lemnos' Turks Head Peninsula as yet another part of Greece's emerging Anzac trail. It was a great pleasure of mine to have presented Ann with a copy of my book *Lemnos & Gallipoli Revealed* on behalf of the committee in recognition of her dedication in preserving her grandfather's archive, including his connection to Lemnos.

Jim Claven is a trained historian, freelance writer and has been Secretary of the Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee since its establishment in 2011. He has researched the Hellenic link to Anzac across both world wars for many years and is the author of *Lemnos and Gallipoli Revealed: A Pictorial History of the Anzacs in the Aegean 1915-16* as well as the forthcoming *Grecian Adventure: Anzac Trail Stories & Photographs – Greece 1941*. Jim thanks Ann Holland for her assistance with this article. To order a copy of either book, please contact Jim at jimclaven@yahoo.com.au.

DAILY TELEGRAPH 'IN MEMORIAM' NOTICES

David Saunders, past editor, *The Gallipolian*

Since the centenary of the end of the First World War the number of *In Memoriam* notices in The Daily Telegraph has greatly declined, indeed there now many fewer relating to the Second World War as well.

However on 29 May there was one to a Gallipoli casualty (below) - though alas the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's web site does not add any more details.

In memoriam their name liveth for evermore

WILDE.—In memory of LCpl Harry
John Robert Wilde, D Coy 1/7th
Manchesters, killed on 29th May 1915,
Krithia Road.

Online ref: A249927

A GALLIPOLI LOCK-DOWN PROJECT.

Ian Binnie, Gallipoli Association Education Coordinator

Introduction.

Many of you will know that I am Education Coordinator of the Gallipoli Association. My brief is to promote knowledge and understanding of the campaign amongst both young people and adults. Due to the pandemic my work with school and college students has been severely curtailed. Much of the work with adults has been on-line. One of the projects I initiated was an on-line booklet honouring some of those that fought and possibly died in the campaign. Clearly the choice of who to include in the booklet is enormous. However, I first wanted to include relatives of some of the people I had come across as part of my work with local communities. I am not a professional nor published historian. I am much more into what the Americans call “public history”, that is, engaging with the public, young and old, to help them explore the history of their family and/or community within the context of the Gallipoli campaign.

Following are details of three who served.

David Wilkinson: researched by Neville Langrick.

Neville has researched his relative David Wilkinson, who was born on 12th October 1886 in the Yorkshire village of Netherthong. By 1914 he was living in the adjacent hamlet of Deanhouse with his sister Lilly and family. He worked in Deanhouse Woollen mill and was a member of the local Gardeners Friendly Society, football team and working mens' club.

David answered Kitchener's call, joining the 8th Bn. Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment (14391 Y Company) The battalion trained at Witley Camp, Godalming, as part of the 32nd Brigade, 11th Northern Division and on the 28th June 1915 embarked on the SS *Aquitania*, the largest vessel afloat at the time. *En route* they were attacked by a submarine in the Mediterranean and the fourth torpedo is reputed to have missed them by eight feet.

Neville has transcribed this letter which David sent home four days before he was wounded;

"It is fifty times worse here than in France. We had to charge them straightaway as soon as we got out of the boat, so you will have an idea what a hell it is. We have got into trenches at last and it is a lot better than open country fighting. They are trenches we have taken from the Turks and I'll bet they have taken six or seven months to dig out; they are real ones and they will never fetch us out of them. I have been in three bayonet charges by now and they are awful but you don't think about them at the time. It is about nine days since I had a wash and a fortnight since I shaved".

He also has this letter written to David's sister (Neville's Grandmother) from hospital;

"You will have heard of Charlie Woodhead and myself by the time you get this. We were both done on the 21st. It was awful but I can't talk about it as I am in a lot of pain. I have lost everything, even my pay book. I was shot fifty hours before I was picked up and my clothes were sodden with blood. Hoping you are all well at home."

Neville has also done a lot of research on the battalion. He writes that the full complement of 20 officers and 928 other ranks arrived at Mudros Harbour, Lemnos on the 10th July 1915 and on 23rd July sailed on HMS *Rowan* (described as an Armed Boarding Vessel) to the Island of Imbros.

The battalion embarked for Suvla Bay on the 6th August, on the destroyers *Mosquito* and *Renard*. They were transferred to a lighter, known as a 'beetle' for the landing on 'B' Beach at about midnight. They came under sporadic rifle fire and the landing was made more difficult as the water had been laid with barbed wire and was deeper than had been anticipated. Once landed the men formed up in line abreast with fixed bayonets and advanced to support the lead battalions on Lala Baba. They suffered heavy casualties throughout the night.

On 7th August two companies were ordered to move across the Spit and the Cut of the Salt Lake to support 34th Brigade in their advance on Hill 10. Two days later the battalion advanced on Tekke Tepe but suffered heavy casualties. The CO, Lt Col Johnson, was killed. The survivors were forced to withdraw and dig in. On 10th August they were ordered to fix bayonets and advance again to fill a gap in the line held by the Welsh Division. The next 10 days were quieter, with the battalion resting or holding the line and reserves arrived from Lemnos.

On 21st August they took part in the last offensive of the campaign. After an artillery barrage which was largely ineffective the battalion advanced from a position south of Chocolate Hill towards the final objective of the W Hills (Ismail Oglu Tepe). Very heavy losses were taken and their advance was stopped by enfilade fire and continuous shelling. Throughout the following day they withdrew but continued to be hampered by enfilade fire.

Sgt E Miles (Y Co) wrote in his personal diary that a roll call was taken that morning with roughly 250 left of the original battalion. They remained in the peninsula until they were evacuated on 19th December 1915.

David Wilkinson was one of the wounded but was not picked up by stretcher bearer Alan Brown until fifty hours after he was hit and in a letter home Alan said that "He would have made it if he had been found sooner." He was evacuated to Alexandria and admitted to the Bombay Presidency Hospital in the suburb of San Stefano. He died of his wounds there on the 9th September 1915 and was buried in plot H22 of Chatby Military Cemetery. A letter home from an Australian nurse in the hospital said, "I am in charge of a ward of English patients who have a view over the Mediterranean from their beds."

Finally, Neville writes, "I was privileged to be able to visit in 2019 and probably the first family visitor to this distant spot. I was surprised to see that there was no

personal message at the foot of his headstone. I understand that initially a maximum of 66 letters were allowed and a charge of 3.5 pence per letter was made, about £130 today, a cost that his family could have afforded as his sister was the beneficiary of his estate in a soldier's will as defined by the War Office in a letter home. I suspect that she resented this in her mourning, similarly not returning the receipt for his Victory Medal in 1921."

Ten local men died at Gallipoli as it was not uncommon for men recruited from the same area to be in the same battalions. Six were from the same village, three from the same street; David Wilkinson, his close friend Charlie Woodhead and Abel Schofield."

Neville adds that his wife's relation Pte Edwin Spencer, also of the 8th Bn Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, was also mortally wounded on 21st August. He died on HMHS *Salta* and was buried at sea. Edwin is remembered on the Roll of Honour in St Mary's Church in the adjacent village of Wilshaw.

David is named on the Netherthong War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour in All Saints Church, Netherthong.

Percy John Baker: researched by Roger Billings

Percy John Baker was born at Barnham, Sussex, on the 22nd May 1884, the son of John and Ada Baker of Barnham Mill, Sussex. In civil life he worked alongside his father from a young age and was to take over the running of the mill in time. His younger brother, Leonard, who at 14 was a bricklayer, took his place. He inherited the mill, cottages and outbuildings in 1934, on the death of their father.

Percy served with 'C' Squadron, Sussex Yeomanry, based at Bognor Regis. His enlistment date is unknown but his regimental service number, 439, suggests several years' service prior to 1914 (for example 416, Ebenezer Dancy, enlisted 24th February 1902). By the outbreak of the war Percy had been promoted to Squadron Quartermaster Sergeant and was a recipient of the Territorial Force Efficiency Medal.

'C' Squadron left Chichester for Canterbury on 8th August 1914, as reported in the Chichester *Observer*. They joined the



SQMS Percy John Baker

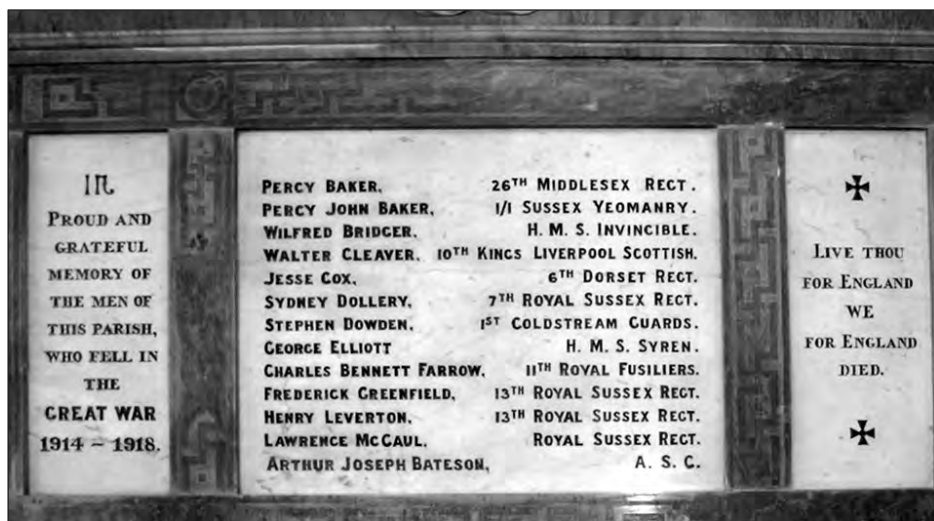
South Eastern Mounted Brigade at Canterbury until their departure for Gallipoli. The 1/1st Sussex Yeomanry, sailed from Liverpool aboard the RMS *Olympic*, arriving in Mudros Harbour on 1st October 1915, transferring to the SS *Sarnia* and reaching Cape Helles on 8th October.

Sometime between 4th and 6th December Percy was severely wounded by a shell fragment in the left side of his chest and shoulder. He died of wounds on the 7th. His death was recorded in the Chichester, Bognor and Littlehampton *Observer* newspapers on 15th December. A tribute by Captain Kekewich appeared in the Chichester *Observer* 9th February

Percy was initially buried on the southern slopes of 'Y' Ravine (according to Kekewich) but was later reinterred in the Geoghegan's Bluff section of Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery, Helles.

His name appears alongside others on a stone memorial plaque inside the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Barnham, Sussex, and on a painting to be found in the Eastergate parish hall.

There is a dedicated stone plaque in Barnham parish church which is inscribed



IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR SON PERCY JOHN BAKER SQMS 1/1 SUSSEX YEOMANRY KILLED IN ACTION CAPE HELLES, GALLIPOLI DEC 7th 1915 AGED 31 YEARS THAT HIS NAME BE NOT FORGOTTEN

Roger has provided photographs of Percy in uniform, his Territorial Efficiency Medal and the memorial in the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Barnham, Sussex.

John Costello: researched by Alan Costello.

Alan has researched his relative, John Costello, 3278, 9th Bn, Lancashire Fusiliers who died on 21 August 1915, aged 27. He was born in Manchester on 2nd April 1888, the son of Michael and Catherine Costello. He married Sarah Wilson in 1907. However, when he joined the army, he was a widower and had only one dependant. He has little other information about John but has provided a photograph of a family grave at St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery, Manchester.

The 9th (Service) Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers was formed from volunteers in 1914, in Bury, as part of the First New Army (K1). They then moved to Belton Park, Grantham to join the 34th Brigade of the 11th (Northern) Division. In April 1915 they moved to Witley, Godalming. In July 1915 they were mobilised for war and embarked for Egypt from Devonport. They travelled via Alexandria and Imbros to Gallipoli where they landed at Suvla Bay on 6th August 1915.

The battalion took part in various actions including the attack on Scimitar Hill on 21st August 1915, suffering heavy casualties. On 18th December 1915 it was evacuated to Mudros, after suffering further casualties from combat, disease and harsh weather.

I aim to write further articles using the information I have already being sent. Once I have done this I will be asking for more from members. Watch this space!



DISCLAIMER

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

SHOT AT DAWN MEMORIAL

The Gallipoli Three

Rosemary Clarke

Those visiting the Gallipoli Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum might take a few minutes to visit another memorial which includes three of those who served on the Gallipoli peninsula: The Shot at Dawn Memorial. Sited at the eastern end of the Arboretum, the Memorial is dedicated to the 306 British, Irish and Empire servicemen who were executed by the British Army during the First World War. Each having been charged under the British Army Act, with offences which included cowardice, desertion, disobedience and casting away of arms. [40 more men were executed for other offences; 37 for murder and three for mutiny, and these are not commemorated on the memorial - editor].

The Memorial comprises Andrew Decomyn's statue of a blindfold Private Herbert Burden who was one of at least three under-aged boy soldiers executed and is flanked by 306 wooden posts, each bearing the name of one of those victims; volunteers, regular soldiers and conscripts. Although most of the executions took place on the Western Front, a number took place in other theatres, including the three in Gallipoli. The environmental and physical conditions endured by those serving in this area will be well-known to readers of *The Gallipolian* and illness played a part in the fate of two of those executed.

Private Thomas Davis, of 1st Royal Munster Fusiliers, went missing for three hours whilst on sentry duty at his unit headquarters on 21 June. At a time when illness was rife amongst the troops, Davis told his court martial that a stomach complaint had forced him to the latrine. Unconvinced, his superiors found him guilty of leaving his post and he was executed on Gully Beach at 0500 on 2 July, aged 21. [No known grave - commemorated on the Helles memorial - Editor].

Twenty-four-year-old Private Harry Salter, serving with 6th Battalion East Lancashire Regiment, met a similar fate on 11 December. A volunteer from Bridgewater, Somerset, Salter had been court-martialled and found guilty of desertion, his execution taking place a week before the battalion was evacuated from Gallipoli. [Green Hill cemetery, Suvla - editor].

The third case bore similarities to the other two. Sergeant John Robins of 5th Battalion Wiltshire Regiment was a regular with a virtually clean record and had served in India. He was charged with disobedience; having twice refused to go on reconnaissance when ordered. Like Private Davis, Robins claimed illness prevented his following orders:

"On the night in question I was not well enough to go out. I was eight and a half years in India where I suffered a good deal from fever and ague and I still get fits of this. I had been suffering from this for several days off and on, and the wet weather had greatly affected me. I have been out here for nearly five months and this is the

first trouble I have ever been in. I have always done my duty. This would not have happened if I had been quite well. At the time I did not realise the seriousness of what I did”

A brief medical statement was used against him at court martial and comments from senior officers did little to assist his case. Robins was condemned to death - and reduced to the rank of private. Unusually precise details were given for the location of the execution, to be carried out:

‘at a point on the beach 400 yards north of the mouth of the Gully Ravine’

Robins was told of his fate on New Year's Day 1916 and shot at 0800 on 2 January. The battalion left the peninsula a week after the execution. [Twelve Tree Copse cemetery - editor].

A further Gallipoli connection with those executed is that of Private Albert Rickman from Hampshire who served with 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Gallipoli. Wounded, he was returned home and following recovery, was sent to the Western Front. Badly affected by an exploding shell during the early days of the Somme, he was taken to hospital from where he was discharged without supervision. Still a sick and confused man, Rickman was discovered hiding under a dormitory hut and arrested. Records show he had proven himself to be a worthy soldier but he was found guilty of desertion and faced a firing-squad on 15 September 1916. [Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery, Belgium - editor].

Although remembered in the country in which they fell, few of those executed were included on war memorials and rolls of honour in their own country. The Shot at Dawn Memorial has addressed that exclusion and it has become a place of comfort to the relatives of these men and a focal point of public remembrance. The memorial is one of the most- visited at the Arboretum - a moving tribute to those who fell at the hands of their own side.

Sources:

Julian Putkowski and Julian Sykes - *Shot at Dawn*

Paula Perry, volunteer, at the Museum of Berkshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Regiments, Salisbury, Wiltshire.

Public Record Office WO 71/442 - Court martial file of Sergeant John Robins

Editor's note:

This article originally appeared in the Autumn 2005 edition of *The Gallipolian*.

In 2006 the government pardoned the 306 shot at dawn.

Ssee photograph page 35.

BATH OFFICER KILLED IN THE DARDANELLES

Intimation was received on Sunday by Mrs. Ernest Hiscock, of 1 Malvern Terrace, Bath, that her only child, Second-Lieut. Leonard E. Hiscock, of the 9th Bn. Worcestershire Regiment, was killed in action last Tuesday.



The message read as follows: "Deeply regret to tell you that Second-Lieut. L. E. Hiscock, 9th Worcesters, was killed in action on 10th August. Lord Kitchener expresses his sympathy. Secretary War Office."

Mr. Hiscock was away from Bath on a holiday when the telegram was received, but was at once advised by his wife of the sad news. The deceased officer was educated at King Edward's School, Bath, and went to Canada to engage in farming.

On the outbreak of war he returned to England, and having been a proficient member of the Grammar School O.T.C., applied for a temporary commission, but he was so keen that he

at once enlisted in the North Somerset Yeomanry, and was in that regiment when appointed an officer of the 9th Worcesters.

He was only 19 years of age last May. His cousin, Lieut. E. H. Hiscock, is in the same regiment. They had been in the Dardanelles only a few weeks.

(*Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* 21 Aug 1915 p3).

Killed in action 10th August 1915 aged 19 years.

One of only seven identified of a total 652 burials in
The Farm Cemetery, below Chunuk Bair, Gallipoli.

Epitaph:

My Peace I Give Unto You



(Above)

Field of Remembrance, 2016: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh greets Captain C T F Fagan MBE DL
Photograph by Frances Speakman

(Below)

Her Majesty The Queen, HRH Prince Philip and Captain Fagan, Sandringham 2016. Photograph by Gary Evans





Above: V Beach, 6.20 am, 25 April 2021
Below: The Sphinx, above North Beach, Anzac



Photographs courtesy Bill and Serpil Sellars. See pages 6-7.



HE Mr Paul Griffiths, Australian Ambassador to Israel, and Colonel Brandon Wood Anzac Day 2021 in Jerusalem. Photograph by Michael D Robson. See page 7.



St Paul's Cathedral ceremony 2021. Photograph by Vicki Genrich.

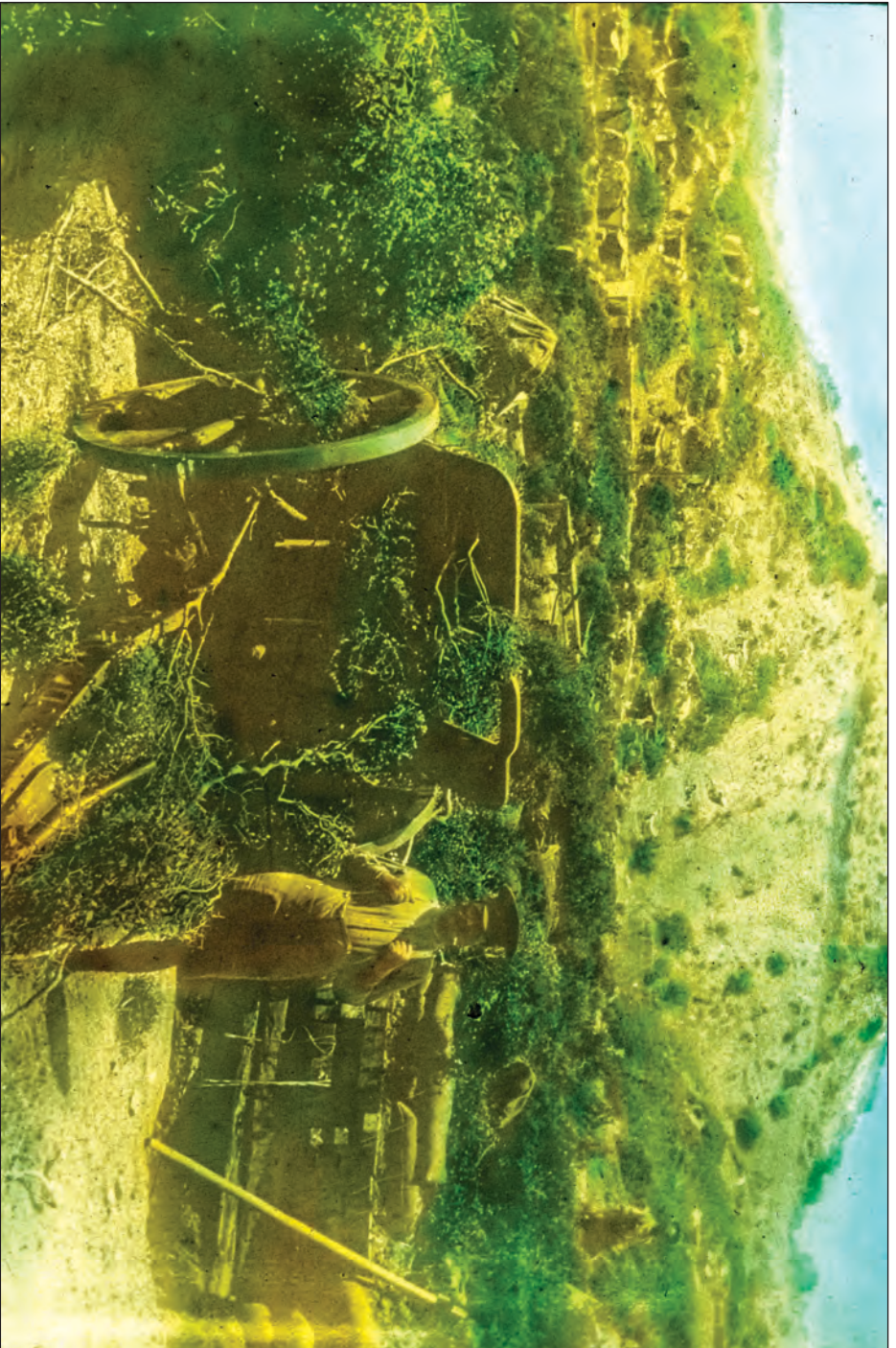


Gundula Holbrook, 1 Nov 1914 - 31 Dec 2020. See pages 8-10





Commander Norman Douglas Holbrook VC
9 July 1888 - 3 July 1976



Bennett, T P photographer. Soldier standing beside cannon, Anzac. glass lantern slide, hand coloured
State Library of Victoria H83.103/300



Shot at Dawn Memorial, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire
See pages 26 - 27



Bennett, T P. Photos: *Burial of soldier, Gallipoli* and *Gunpost after snowfall, Gallipoli*
Glass lantern slides, hand coloured; H83.103/310 and 1787761, State Library of Victoria



A HIGHLAND PRIVATE AT GALLIPOLI

The Diary of Private Thomson, 1/5th Argylls

Mike Morrison

The late Commander Ian Hamilton, my friend and fellow researcher, was in the habit of giving me various objects of historical value. One of these treasures was a notebook of many pages (70, it turned out) of handwritten notations in a neat hand. At that time, Ian and I were heavily involved in piecing together the many first-hand accounts we had accumulated of the actions of the 4th Highland (Mountain) Brigade at Gallipoli, Egypt and Salonika, a task made more difficult by what had been written in the Official History. Some of that work was published in this journal. Noting that the content appeared to be other than what we were researching at the time, I put it aside.

Fast forward to 2021. I have since retired, my friend Commander Hamilton is sadly gone and I ran across this old notebook in a plastic bag in a box which I opened, vaguely remembering what it is and started to read it. As I read, I saw that it had historical interest and needed transcription, which I proceeded to do, even though I thought that this would be a tedious job. (No more excuses – I’m retired!) As I got involved in the task, I found I couldn’t stop. It was far from boring as you will see. Its historical significance was clear. It’s in a clear hand which only gets slightly more cramped and difficult to read as the situation gets more difficult and deadly.

The book is the diary of a Private’s time with the 1/5th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in the First World War. After mobilisation on 5th August, 1914, the 5th Battalion, Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, “The Renfrewshire Battalion”, while detailed to various Clydeside defensive missions, reorganized and prepared rapidly for war. A Territorial Force battalion, they were eventually assigned to the 157th Brigade of the 52nd Lowland Division. They were soon to be shipped by train to Devonport where, on 1st June, 1915, just 10 months after mobilisation, those who had signed the Imperial Service Obligation (which the diarist had executed on 14 September 1914) shipped out en route for parts unknown, but what would eventually turn out to be the Mediterranean. After a sea voyage that was a new experience for most of the boys, they arrived in Alexandria, Egypt on the 12th of June to new and exotic sights. It wasn’t an easy go after arriving at Alexandria. After some misadventures of which you will read first hand accounts in the diary, they shipped first to Mudros and then to Gallipoli, landing at Cape Helles on 2nd July for their first foray with the harsh realities of combat and Gallipoli.

What follows is one private’s account of that experience. While there is no signature or claim of authorship, there are a very few clues in the diary as to the identity of the writer, the clearest of which is this from 21 Aug:

“Feel better so return to the Battn. detail camp situated behind the trenches & after reporting to the O. in C. pat myself on the back on hearing him say – Thomson! You will remain here for a day or so until the Battn. comes out of the “line”.

After some searching about and consultation, I will go out on a limb and declare that the writer of this diary is David Thomson of Greenock, whose identification numbers were 1714 and (1917 onwards) 200319. He was born 22 Feb 1895 to Dugald and Janet (Purdie) Thomson of 29 Bank Street, Greenock. Before the war, David was a 19-year-old clerk and, who, it was noted on his medical forms, had defective vision. His vision was corrected by glasses which allowed for his acceptance for active service. He started the war as a Private in F Company, 1/5th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (TF), a unit that was re-designated C Company, 1/5th Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders (TF) and that was to be his home.

We know from reading his diary that he had two brothers in his company. Again, consultation and detective work found that David had a younger brother Robert #1679 and #200395, and an older brother John, #1212 and #253970. Robert contracted enteric fever (typhoid) while at Gallipoli and was evacuated back to the UK, not to rejoin the battalion until they were in France. John also served at Gallipoli where he made Sergeant according to the diary and ended the war a Company Sergeant Major in the 6th Battalion of the Argyll's. When David Thomson was discharged, he had been promoted to Sergeant, having served with distinction. Sgt. David Thomson earned one of the battalion's 7 Distinguished Conduct Medals and one of the battalion's 2 Meritorious Service Medals.

Here's the diarist's story in his own words: {Transcriber's additions, corrections, etc. are italicised within brackets}

Summary of Operations with 1/5th A&S Hg. – 1914 – 1919

Mobilised 0800 5/8/14

F Coy. Proceed to Fort Matilda Greenock & take over Fort Defences from S. Rifles. After 3 weeks duty there remove to "Block Houses" on beach near Gourrock - On guard duty on beach and at Torpedo Factory, also employed digging trenches on and the environs of Lyle Hill – one month.

Volunteer for Active Service abroad. (9/14)

E. F. & H. Coys. Removed to Old Prison in Nelson St. to undergo training (one month) (2 men in each cell). Engaged in Physical Drill, Musketry Drill, & Route Marching.

E. F. & H. Coys. Move to Glasgow & take over defensive duties in shipbuilding yard at Clydebank, Dalmuir, & Yoker. F. Coy. At Clydebank.

Aug. to April 1915

Guard duty at night & Route Marching during day - Feeling somewhat like soldiers - Xmas & N. Year {scratched out} found us not enjoying the fruits of same, but on continuous "sentry go" – workmen on holidays, so we are left to guard the {scratched out} ships & benches – at Clydebank 5 months. Move back to Greenock & assume our duties at Lyle Hill & Gourrock Pier. Billeted in "Drums Farm"

Good News' – Battalion is formed into 4 coys. Instead of 8 – E. & F. Coy forming

“C” Coy. – Battn. Under orders to move – Leave Greenock & the excited people on bright day in the beginning of May 1915 and entrain for Dundee – Billeted in Poorhouse Dundee for one week – Thence to Dunfermline & join the 157 Infy. Bde.

May 1915

52nd Lowland Division – Intensive Training for 4 weeks & after inspection by General Egerton leave Dunfermline on 31st May, one of the finest battalions in Blighty. Everyone in fit condition & eager for the fray. Entrain for unknown destination.

After journey of 20 hours at Plymouth - embark right away on board H.M.T. Andania, built at Greenock.

Leave Plymouth 2/6/15 & pass a line of Battleships the crews of which gave us a hearty cheer – night fell with “The Andania” under full steam in the Channel – Enemy submarines reported to be on our trail, but we escape.

Enter Bay of Biscay – very stormy, many chaps sea-sick – Band plays {scratched out} on deck each evening.

June 1915

Far out from land – parade each day for Physical & Boat Drill – Khaki Helmets issued – our destination probably Egypt – Get our hair shaved off – 200 miles out from land,

5/6/15 – enter Straits of Gibraltar. N.W. Africa & S.W. Spain on each side. Weather Warm

Arrive at Gibraltar. Boat stops – only to deliver mails to Pinnance {sic} which comes alongside.

Enter Mediterranean Sea, which is beautifully calm & of the brightest blue – whales & sharks seen at intervals.

Pass Sicily Island 3 am **7/6/15** – In afternoon sight Malta & ship makes for Grand Harbour at Valetta & anchors there – A beautiful city but we are not allowed ashore.

Scores of “bum boats” came alongside occupied by Maltese selling cigs. Cigars, etc. etc. – other small boats were occupied by young Maltese willing to dive into the water for coins thrown from the ship – Some excitement. We have a swim from the ship.

8/6/15 – British Transports arrive with wounded from Gallipoli, also Italian Transports laden with mobilized Italians.

We give the boys a cheer which is heartily returned.

9/6/15 – Take on board 200 Australians, N. Zealand, Irish and Scottish Troops who were wounded at Gallipoli now returning to their bases in Egypt. Hear many a yarn.

Leave Malta & again going full steam ahead in mid ocean.

African Coast sighted early on morning of **12/6/15** – Enter Alexandria Harbour 7

am **12/6/15** after an exciting escape from enemy submarine.

Prepare to go ashore - but order cancelled – Coal ship & leave Alexandria for Lemnos Island (in Greek Archp. Situated about 30 miles from Gallipoli) at 6 am on **14/6/15**. – our kit bags were put ashore at Alexandria, being the Base – Excitement at high level – we are going to Gallipoli.

Troop Ship Transylvania with 5, 6, 7th H.LI. on board left on night of 13th for same destination.

Orders issued to keep our life belts on night & day – ship in very dangerous zone – Periodical alarms were given to man the boats – Each man had his boat position to fill – It was good for reaching our boat stations – good system

Wireless message received to alter course of ship – enemy submarines in vicinity – Ships continually altering course – Later discover that we are sailing for Port we left.

Arrive back in Alexandria Harbour at 9 am.

15/6/15 - Transylvania also back –

Very hot weather - Disembark and entrain for Aboukir, 10 miles from Alexandria

Pass numerous sugar plantations & orchards – Heat Terrific

Detrain at Aboukir & fix up tents on sand. Desert country - Good job we are near the sea - just at the spot where the remains of the old forts, battered during the Napoleonic wars are situated - Bathing all day - except for a little musketry practice.

Drinking water not too plentiful, & everyone “windy” to avoid the poisonous scorpions & mosquitos.

Visit Alexandria **23/6/15** – wonderful sights. Meet soldiers representing practically all our allied powers. Also colonials from Australia & N. Zealand who had been at Gallipoli landing in April

Leave Aboukir camp **28/6/15** – embark on H.M.S. Alnwick Castle at Alexandria.

Took a supply of heavy shells on board.

An old tramp ship converted into a Trooper – no sleeping accommodations. Our kits were hung above our mess tables & we slept on the decks or anywhere about the ship decks.

The 2nd night at sea was very rough & the ship rocked about like an old barrel, the high waves dashing over the decks. It was a sickening sight.

We were on our way to Gallipoli.

About 2 am on **30/6/15** a terrific noise was heard below decks & thinking a submarine had found its mark a great rush was made for the “companion ways”, but the cause of the noise was explained & all was quiet again, except for the noise of the angry waves & the heavy snores of the men – The noise was caused by cooking utensils etc. having fallen into the {foremost?} hold of the ship. Such a time!

Arrive at Lemnos & enter Grand Harbour 1/7/15 – Bathing off ship.

Heavy firing can be heard coming from direction of Dardanelles.

Lemnos Island was formerly a Greek possession, but when war commenced between Turkey & Britain – T. laid claim to the island which was lately took from the Turks. The Greeks are still on the island, but is used by us as a Base – Mail left ship 2/7/15.

July 1915

Have rain for first time since leaving Blighty – which was very welcome (Although at times I did not welcome it in Greenock.)

Unexpected news, to prepare to board small ships, which came alongside the liner, one three of which included a were torpedo boats – Our coy. board a steamer named “Fauvette” at 6 pm 2/7/15. The other coys. get on to “lighters” & torpedo boats! – Take ammo on board also. Such a bustle!

The boys are jolly! – 8 pm finds us steaming out of the Harbour on our way to Gallipoli – Seemingly the Turks are making a stubborn resistance at Achi Baba Hill so we are called to the fray – little did we know what a few days would bring.

The men still keep cheery & sing all night long – Darkness comes down quickly & here & there in the distance can be heard the “sing-song” of the merry lads echoing across from ship to ship

150 rd. SAA issued out to each man also Iron Rations – our little ship just missed an enemy mine field – She was warned in time to move – Had an interrupted sleep on the deck until daylight appeared – Then we were all found eagerly scanning the horizon. Pass {Dly?} lights about 5 am – The firing at the Dardanelles can be distinctly heard – land in sight – Gallipoli – Our ship goes close up to the shore & anchors – What a sight! – Something new to us – The remains of the old fort at Sedul Bhar {sic} & the shells bursting around the shore caused keen interest – The high cliffs helped to screen the Turks view from the work taking place at the beaches but he knew what was going on & all day long ranged his shells on the beach which landed on good targets – Shells were continually falling quite near our ship, so we lifted anchor and moved to another part of the anchorage. The Turks continued to fire at us but we were safely out of his range. The keel of the H.M.S. Majestic could be seen above water opposite Sedul Bhar {sic}, where she had been torpedoed & sunk by enemy submarine.

Prepare to go ashore – Leave ship 5 pm 3/7/15 on little barges – no jetties were built so we had to go along the old “River Clyde” (the ship which ran aground at the Gallipoli Landing) & jump into the water – Get ashore in single file & “right away” get into extended order & prepare to move over the cliffs towards the trenches.

Shells were now bursting amongst us & a few of the lads laid low – still we continued to move forward – past numerous dugouts with the lads peering out bidding us “Good Cheer” & right glad to see new troops – Halt about 3 miles from

the front line & get into “reserve trenches”.

Just settled when a shower of shells come our way, but we are well & under cover & our heads “well down”.

Get off our “packs” & commence to consolidate our positions more securely – Some Home! This was our first spell of “real” active service – About 3 am **4/7/15** heavy rain came on & of course we were drenched to the skin. Such a mess! – but we didn’t care – we were on A.S. {Active Service}

The forenoon was much brighter & the hot sun appeared – dried our clothes nicely, but the mud still remained – It was great fun getting our tea made & dodging the shells. It was 9 am & we rather enjoyed the hastily made tea & biscuits. Had ate nothing since 3 pm **3/7/15**.

5/7/15 – 4 am heavy bombardment commences - The shells were whizzing over our heads. “good -o” – Half the battn. was under orders to move to the beach for fatigue work, but owing to the heavy bombs – the order was cancelled,

“Stood to” at 6 am in case of emergency,

The Turks were getting more than they expected. We could see the our heavy shells bursting on Achi Baba – some of our lads were wounded by enemy shell fire –

6 pm – under orders to move forward each man was issued with an additional 50 rd. of S.A.A. & a gas respirator – which consisted of a little gauze filled with cotton wool saturated with gas preventative chemicals. – Hard Lines - we move from our trenches in the dark in single file, towards the firing line

It was some march & every moment we expected a burst of shells amongst us

12 midnight – **5/7/15** – Lay down on the ground in extended order & rested – not a sound except the whizz- whizz of bullets flying over our heads – we were near the firing line – “Get ready to move” – remember “no speaking”

Pass quietly into a large valley known as the “Dead Man’s Gully” – wind up!

Three chaps were wounded –

After a rotten & tiresome march – for 7 hours – arrive in the support trenches & relieve another battalion, For the first time we suffered the monotony of the trenches under rifle fire – It was awful. “Dead beat” – our backs were sore from the effects of the heavy pack & kit & when we managed to get a place in the trenches – well! We practically fell down in heaps – but – no! we could not do that – we were on A.S. & in a support trench.

The condition of these trenches was more than I can explain – The stench of the dead & the bodies of Turks & our own fellows which lay on the parapet & paradoss since the last battle of 28/6/15 turned us sick at heart –

6/7/15 6 am Ordered to move out – made our way through communication trenches, half dug & got into a gully which led towards the beach on the left side of the Peninsula – Passed Ghurkas {sic} at work – pleasant fellows & liked us well.

– Glad to get into open air again = “Dug in” on the slopes of the gully & made ourselves as comfortable as possible under the circs. – What a thirst I had & the worst part of the business was -we couldn’t get enough water to satisfy same. – One has to be very careful with the drinking water. The doctor was there to examine same & make his report as to its state for drinking purposes – our true friends were – rifle & good drinking water –

Being close to the sea was a good advantage & we bathed frequently.

All day & all night could be heard the annoying bullets flying over the gully – Same got on one’s nerves. But in good time we get used to same,

All we ate were these infernal hard biscuits & bully – but quite enjoyable with a little tea. The Ghurkas were camped near us – so we made visits to them “bumming” tea, sugar, etc.

Our casualties to date were- 1 killed & 9 wounded,

7/7/15 Left beach 3 am & made for a valley near the firing line to erect a barricade against Turkish snipers who were continually firing into our lines. Some narrow hits!

We are the first kilted battalion to arrive on Gallipoli so we are looked at with wonder – especially from the Indian troops. Met some of the 29th Divn.

Pack up & move to trenches with the bullets & shells flying in all directions.

8/7/15 “Stand To” at 3 am – In each traverse 2 men keep on the lookout while the other snatches a sleep. So on in reliefs – Made some tea & had a good feed of biscuits & jam

The heat & smell was awful – flies in millions – As darkness fell, we left these trenches & met the remainder of Battn. in Gully - marching off “two deep” towards our old trenches which we left – settling down to a good sleep.

9/7/15 – 2 pm – More trouble – off again for the trenches – we went towards the centre this time, right in front of the “Hill” & relieved the HLI boys. In the firing line at last – some experience as I mounted on the firing step & fired my first shot toward the Turkish lines which lay about 200 yds off – No sleep while in the firing line, we kept on the alert –

10/7/15 Ping! Ping! Ping! All day long snipers dodging around so we keep on the alert & watch for them – Half of one coy. leave firing line for the “supports” owing to heavy bombardment which was being directed against the Turkish lines – I was in the firing line with the remaining half. What a noise! Our first baptism of fire. I’ll never forget! Our shells were landing just out in front & the Turkish positions were hidden in smoke,

Our hearts seemed to be at our mouths with excitements – The Bombd. ceased, then we lay over the parapit {sic} firing good o’ at the Turkish line.

Towards night the Turks commenced a rapid fire on our trenches & gave one long

shout as to get our head above the parapet. But we had loop-holes & knew what their game was.

Getting next to no meat – Biscuits, Jam & tea. The tea was made by the cooks in the large Nullah & brought to us in the firing line.

11/7/15 Things looking worse. Big bombardment commenced on the Turkish lines & we had to clear from the firing line. What a sight – It was awful. Our casualty list was now increasing. The bombardment lasted 9 hours & then word was passed along to the effect that we were to storm the Turkish positions next day – No sleep – all thought!

12/7/15 What I suffered I cannot explain – my head was reeling, we had no food nor water

About 3 pm we filed into our respective places in the firing line, very much fatigued & feeling the effects of the strong sun & want of food – Things worked like “clockwork” – The lads were cheery – C Coy. was first – Off went our superfluous kit – we stood there with our jackets off & only our skeleton equipment, rifle, bayonet & 2 bombs each – There was no time to waste – The bombardment was still going on & we were ready – I thought a tremendous lot of things & I prayed for safety – Our traverse was hit by an ugly big shell killing two of my chums & knocking me dizzy – I saw stars! – “came to” again & waited the signal – A shout was heard from the right, we took it up – got quite plucky - & jumped onto the parapet – such a sight I’ll never forget – words cannot explain – we rushed forward in extended order, or rather “some kind of order” shells were whizzing bursting quite near, I looked ahead & there saw such a sight, really worth seeing - through the dense smoke I could see black figures running for their lives – the kilties frightened them – we were mad! Absolutely mad – chums were falling – I did not fall – I went straight ahead repeating the order - “Jump two trenches & enter the third” – We reached the first trench - I saw a Turk – fired – he was no more – we jumped the first trench & carried on – The bombardment was at its height, I could see nothing ahead but thick smoke & the shells bursting – whiz – went past my ear but I was all right – the M.G. fire from the Turks was terrific, but we didn’t falter. On we went like madmen – I lost my mind completely, but remember falling into the third line of trenches captured from the Turk – picked myself up – I had lost my helmet. The heat was at its height - The sweating was running out of me - No time to lose – preparations were immediately commenced with to consolidate our positions– we were a mixed lot I was amongst HLI & our own boys – there stood the old Colonel as fresh as a cucumber – giving Instructions – He was the only officer in our trench – Whiz Whiz Whiz – round our ears, the Turks had stopped retiring & had the “wind up” – Such a sight! – The groans from the wounded annoyed us – we did our best for them – Our casualties were severe – I escaped with only a little piece of shrapnel in my chin – Thank God! – The thought of my brothers ran swiftly through my mind – We stuck it fine until next morning 13.7.15 – (such a night I never wish to pass through again) – The Turks commenced to throw

over a very rapid rifle & M.G. fire – we replied – on our right was seen a large body of Turks advancing towards the right battalion – thought to be K.O.S.B. A cry pierced the air – word ran along the trench that we were to retire – unfortunate – the wounded would be left to the mercy of the Turks – a smoke cloud enveloped us as we jumped the parapets, but the truth came to us. Our colonel shouted – no retire – Advance! – We plucked up courage & prepared to meet the onslaught – we shouted as only Scots can shout & moved forward. Chasing the Turks, taking another trench which was well consolidated – there I met my brother – all was well. Weakness seemed to overcome me & I lay down in a little sap nearby & slept – the first wink since 8/7/15 – it did not last long – work had to be done – Some of us volunteered as stretcher bearers – so my time was occupied in seeking out the wounded & carrying same to the aid station.

Our casualty list in the Batt. must have reached 500 – but the Turks had a tremendous casualty list – we took about 3,000 prisoners.

14/7/15 – Reported myself back to Major Stewart who was acting C.O. Col. Darroch having been wounded – we were in “supports” – the roll call was answered by about 150 all told – of course numerous men were on other duties & some no doubt strayed – The Turks were now commencing to put up a counter-attack which ended fruitless – Help must come – we were all dead beat-

Gladness appeared in our withered faces when fresh troops arrived on the scene & got into touch with Johnnie Turk. The Turks only possess other 6 trenches in front of the “Hill” so I think the next advance will see our boys on the top of Achi Baba – The remains of the Battalion were now gathered together & - my word! Such a sight – we looked bad right enough. My clothes & boots have been on now for over a week & still little signs of coming off – Food & water must come – night falls & we “stand to” all night. Pleased to see daylight appear.

15/7/15 – Make some tea which relieved me greatly.

About 7 pm we gather goods & shackles together & move along the trench about 3 miles – settle down about 1 am.

16/7/15 & have a nap in the dirt – my bones ache & I feel as weak as a kid. – Thought went out to my poor pals who fell & how thankful I was to God for his care over my brothers & self – To think that we three escaped & our casualties were over half of the 980 O’Ranks who faced the foe. – I must have slept for about 3 hours – daylight had appeared, but, oh the smell from the dead bodies was awful – We had to wear our “respirators”.

Through all this I made tea & right glad to get a piece of bread & ham – the best feed I have had for weeks – Parties were now being told off for sapping & burial work – I managed on the sapping party. – Heat & flies pestered the life out of us.

Toward sunset we got over into “no man’s land” & commenced digging a sap towards the Turks, Hard work! Every now & then we had to lie down flat – owing

to flares shooting up & bullets flying around – Return to supports in early morning **17/6/15** {sic} & have nap – Leave trenches about 5 miles behind

Greeted with heavy enemy rifle & M.G. fire while on the move, so require to keep dodging about – arrive camp 7 pm & just cast ourselves down in the little trenches for the remaining part of the night

18/7/15 Waken about 10 am after the most enjoyable sleep for 12 days – We are meantime A. I. & pass the spare moments watching the shells landing – In afternoon go to beach for dip in the sea & afterwards manage to obtain clean shirt & socks – enjoying the much needed rest – Met W. McLean of 6 HLI – 6 Batt & ourselves are very much united owing to the enormous losses in each Battn.

19/7/15 & 20th & 21st at Rest Trenches. Kept busy digging trenches etc., hard work in the heated atmosphere.

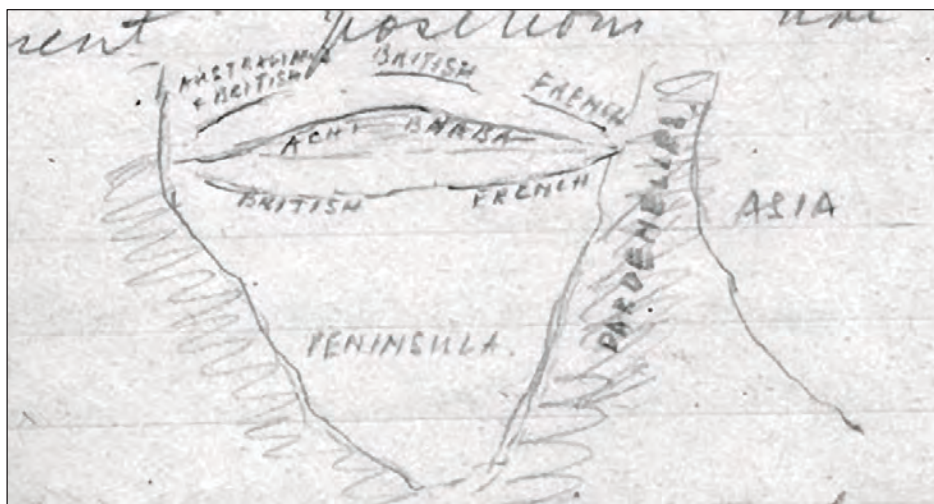
22/7/15 - Inoculated against cholera, which has broken out amongst the Turks.

24th to 27th At Rest Trenches digging.

28th Duty with Q.M. – loading & unloading stores.

29th Parcel from home – wrote letter in reply. Two Taubes come over camp – drop bombs. No casualties – Our planes chase the Taubes before any damage occurs.

30th Visit from C. Kilgour R.A.M.C. also J. Hunter attd 52 D.H.Q.



Editor's note

Part 2 of Sergeant Thompson's diary will appear in the next edition of
The Gallipolian

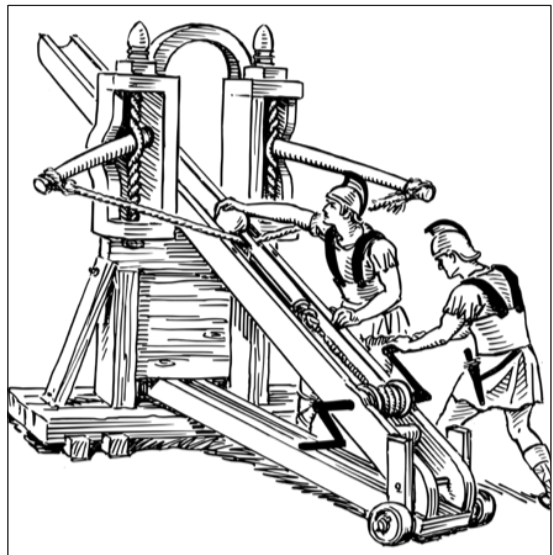
TRENCH CATAPULTS

Stephen Chambers

Trench warfare created new problems in providing fire support to suppress enemy fire or simply harass them in their opposing trenches. Whilst general rifle fire and snipers were employed to some effect, howitzer and mortars were rare luxuries in Gallipoli. A lightweight weapon was sought that could launch an explosive projectile into an opposing trench, and be silent and create no flash to warn of its firing or betray its exact position. The trench catapult was introduced in 1915.

The catapult was not a new weapon of war, and would be familiar to Romans as it would be to Greeks. Believed to be a Greek invention in the fourth century BC, torsion-powered artillery was also widely used by the Romans from the times of the

Punic Wars 264-241 BC. There were commonly two types: a version that fired arrows, not dissimilar to a crossbow in a straight trajectory; and those that propelled stones in a vertical arc. The Roman ballista for example could fire a 27kg stone forward that was capable of hitting a wall up to 500 metres away, and with the stone reaching speeds of 115 mph, it could easily kill or at least seriously injury someone. I am sure there are many readers who remember making catapults from Y-shaped twigs and elastic bands as school children. A design that has endured throughout the ages.



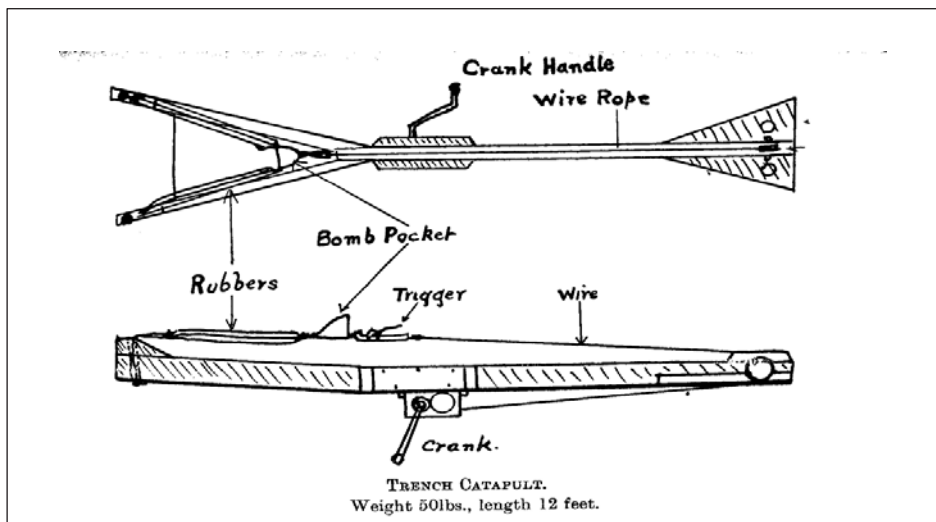
A ballista. Archives of Pearson Scott Foresman (Wikimedia)

Let's go forward a couple of millennium to the trenches of Gallipoli and the comeback of this simple, yet effective weapon. Hand grenades, although in short supply, were good weapons but they did not have the range when thrown by hand. The No.15 ball grenade or 'Cricket Ball' bomb that was produced from July 1915 was a crude spherical shape that weighed nearly a kilogram and could hold 150 grams of ammonal explosives. Variants of these were made in Malta for the British and Anzac forces in Gallipoli. The ball grenade had a few problems, one was the explosive charge was too large, which created smaller-than-expected fragmentation when the grenade exploded. In wet weather, the timed friction fuse was difficult to light, although in Gallipoli the wet was rarely a problem. In addition, it was considered too large because of its 3-inch (8cm) circumference. They were supplemented by

“jam-tins”, literally an improvised explosive device made from ration tins, filled with pieces of metal, stones and a small charge of explosives, using the same friction fuse to the ball grenade. There was an official version of the “jam tin” made which has the nomenclature of the Double Cylinder, No.8 and No.9, but few reached Gallipoli. By the end of 1915 larger quantities of the No.5 “Mills bomb” were reaching the Peninsula, which quickly became one of the most effective hand grenades of the war. However, at the time, they were all hand-thrown and whilst effective in trench fighting, they could not be used to bombard enemy trenches that were generally outside of grenade throwing range. So, enter the trench catapult.

In late 1914 a gentleman named Claude Pemberton Leach (1858-1951), a well-known architect from South Kensington, took a prototype of his catapult design to Gamage’s ‘Cycling, Sports and General Outfitters’ department store in London. He was not the first to revisit the ballista idea and history is filled with stories of amateur solutions that were often more dangerous to the operator than the enemy!

Leach and Gamage, through trial and error, were able to adapt the design to throw a kilogram projectile in a high trajectory up to 200 metres. They applied for a patent in May 1915 which was granted as No.7710/15, and successfully approached the War Department with their design. Gamage’s central London factory quickly turned out the catapult for use overseas at a cost of £6 17s 6d each, which is about £400 in today’s money. Over 3,000 Leach-Gamage catapults were supplied to the British Army which is evident from numerous photographs of the catapult in use in Gallipoli and the Western Front.



The simplicity of this apparatus makes it difficult to describe, but reference to the above drawing will show how primitive and simple the whole arrangement is.

The final version used strong unvulcanised rubber cords, fitted to a wooden 'Y' shape, which were pulled back using a small rack-and-pinion winch and cable to the required amount of pull to reach the target. A canvas pouch was attached with a loop at the end that attached to a tensioning wire that extended to a winding gearbox. The pouch would contain a grenade, which would have its fuse lit before launching. The weapon would be propped up against the trench wall at an angle of about 42 degrees and aligned with the target. To fire, a simple trigger was struck with an open hand or an entrenching tool helve. This would release the hook from the loop, thus releasing the pouch with the grenade. It was reported that the catapult was able to propel a grenade up to 100 metres, and the more aerodynamic No. 15 ball grenade accurately up to 180 metres. A catapult-fired grenade took just over 4 seconds to travel about 60 metres of its flight, so about right for a 5-second time fuse. Grenades like the No.15 and jam tins could also be fitted with a 9-second fuse for longer distances. The disadvantage was 5 or 9 seconds was plenty of time for the enemy to observe the grenade's flight and take cover. The one advantage the catapult did have over the trench mortar, though, was that it was silent.

The Cyclist Company of the Royal Naval Division (RND), originally formed after the Antwerp expedition in late 1914 from RMLI volunteers, was originally intended to provide communications and despatch carrying as their primary function. During May and June 1915, the Cyclist Company was used to reinforce the Royal Marine battalions in the firing line at Cape Helles, but were later converted into the 'Divisional Bombers', trained in the use of grenades, catapults, and trench mortars.

Whilst the trench catapults proved effective, they were not without their problems. The rubber bands rapidly deteriorated in the climate if used at full stretch or kept under tension for too long. Any sudden failure of one or more bands would cause a very erratic flight, or the bomb to fall from the catapult. If the bomb is not gripped by the pouch properly, as the catapult is let off, the bomb could slip down in the pouch, and probably hit the body of the catapult, it would either get terrific backspin, and a much shortened range, or bounce back onto the crew, or go where it wants to, which if shot from a support trench was reported to "cause an annoyance." Even if the catapult fires the bomb successfully, it may hit an obstruction like the top of the trench, again most of the above was reported to have happened. Because the catapult suffers from recoil, it may have moved since the last shot, and this could go unnoticed by the crew. One Gallipoli veteran recalled his experience of the trench catapult.

At one part of our line the Turkish trenches were out of hand-bombing range, so a catapult gun was sent up. It made its home in the trench running parallel to and about twenty yards behind the front line. This strange instrument consisted of a smooth platform on the far end of which were tied many bands of elastic rubber, and these were joined to a sling in which was placed a bomb. There was a windlass to stretch the rubbers and a catch to hold the sling. To adjust the distance the bomb had to go, the platform had to be raised or lowered, and the windlass wound accordingly. Having made a guess at the



Whilst the Leach-Gamage reached Gallipoli in small numbers, they were supplemented by those made locally by the RND's 2nd Field Company. The photograph shows two RMLI officers, the one on left holds a SMLE rifle with pendulum sight and a No.20 rifle grenade. Rifle grenades had a similar range to the catapult and became their natural replacement. A Garland trench mortar and SMLE periscope rifle are also on display.

elevation required, and wound up the windless, the next thing was to send the bomb to its destination. In theory all the gunner had to do was to light the fuse, place it in the sling, release the catch, and the bomb would go sailing happily to its objective. In actual practice the bombs frequently dropped out of the sling or hit the parapet and fell down, causing the man to run for his life behind the next traverse and blowing up the gun. However, if the bomb did succeed in clearing the parapet it usually landed just in front of, or just behind, our own front line, causing much commotion and swearing amongst the occupants thereof. Sometimes it varied the performance by throwing the bomb at right angles to itself. This was most unpleasant and was really against the rules of the game. There was generally unfeigned joy and mutual congratulation when the gun blew itself up – as it often did. But there seemed to be an unlimited supply of these weapons and we were never long without one.

It was also reported that poorly made jam tin bombs which may have not been packed symmetrically, could wobble or deviate in flight, or have a shorter range than the last shot, if not up to weight. Crews reported that half the fun was watching the trajectory of the bomb from their end of the catapult which flight could be clearly seen, by both crew and the enemy who then had a few seconds to seek cover. Second Lieutenant Malcolm Hancock, upon first seeing the catapult, wrote:

It was a wooden contraption meant to work on the principle of a catapult. There was a hollow cylinder on a framework, which on either side had a strong elastic tape. You primed and cocked the thing by winding handle. You pulled back the cylinder until there was a pretty good tension on the rubber and then fixed a catch. You got the bomb, lit the end of it, dropped it in the cylinder and then released the catch, and up she went. Well, it was literally cock-shy because there was now question of seeing where it went, you just guessed at what angle you set the thing, high or low and you had to work out the tension of the rubber, so it didn't go too far. It was a very hit or miss affair. It was quite fun really.

- Second Lieutenant Malcolm Hancock, 162 Brigade Bombing Officer, 54th Division.

Second Lieutenant Eric Wolton remembered the danger, and humour, when things went wrong:

The operators were Brigade people and as soon as we heard they were coming everybody would say: "Those bastards have come, take cover!" They'd set themselves up and start firing. Not scientific – so amateur – the bombs would go anywhere, to the right, to the left, you never knew where it was going. Instead of facing the enemy everybody in the front line and supports would be looking backwards to see the bomb wasn't going near them. When you saw a bomb going right smack in the middle of another company. Laugh!!! They'd run left and right to get out of the way of this awful bomb. Sometimes it would fall out of the sling and burst in the trench. Arrgh!!! If you weren't concerned it made you laugh.

- Second Lieutenant Eric Wolton, 1/5th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment, 153 Brigade, 54th Division.



Men from the 2/4th Battalion, London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers), RND, with a trench catapult. The soldier on the left holds a "cricket ball" grenade; the other holds an entrenching tool helve, ready to launch the grenade.

Able Seaman Daniel Dunn wrote a letter home describing how “I fought the Turks with a catapult”.

About August 1915 ... our Division Engineers made a catapult about six feet high, with a leather cup to hold the grenade and this we wound up with a handle. There was a ratchet to hold the elastic when pulled taut. You put the grenade in the cup and lit the fuse with a match, then, having given it a few seconds to burn, brought your hand down smartly onto the release lever freeing the hook that held the cup and shooting the grenade forward.

A Petty Officer and myself carrying the catapult, went up and down the front line stopping now and again to let fly a grenade. One of them hit the parapet of the Turkish trench exposing a big Turk standing there with his shirt in his hand while he deloused it. The rifles of our men who were watching started to crack. I like to think that one got away.

I feel sure that this catapult was unique to the Naval Division. It was the only one I ever heard of and the Petty Officer (who was later killed) and myself were the only ones able to use it, having both been through a Bombing Course at Divisional Headquarters. Shortly after this the Mills Hand Grenade was invented and our simple but effective catapult was soon forgotten.

- Able Seaman Daniel Dunn, TZ/89, Nelson Battalion, RND.

Whilst the RND most probably had the first locally made catapult, these were replicated by other divisions. Supplemented by the Leach-Gamage about October 1915 they were used not only at Helles, but also Suvla and Anzac. They were put to good use, particularly around Quinn's and Pope's Posts. The rubberised bands, due to their fragility, not helped by the climate and their constant use, soon ran short. A field message written at Pope's Post in December 1915 reads:

O.C. Ordnance

Can you possibly manage to supply me with the following for the Trench Catapult.

16 New Rubber Springs with Cords for Same

1 Pocket for Catapult

These items are urgently needed or the Catapult will be out of use.

One catapult victim was 17 year old Australian, Private Horace Gray, 19th Battalion AIF, who was killed on 9 November 1915. Horace, who had convinced the recruiting officers that he was 19, landed in Gallipoli on 21 August during the final stages of the August offensive. By November, the battalion was holding the precarious position of Pope's Hill at Anzac. The 9th November was a regular day of manning the defences at Pope's, and it was this day that Horace's luck ran out. The Turks directed machine-gun fire at sandbags protecting a newly constructed sap that the Australians had been driving towards the Turkish lines. A grenade battle soon ensued. With Turkish grenades raining down on the Australian positions, both catapult bombs and Garland mortars were fired back in retaliation. It was during this foray that Horace was killed. He is buried in Shrapnel Valley Cemetery, Anzac.

On the other side of the wire, there is an interesting account from November 1915 by Gefreiter Adolf Horaczek, a German pioneer corporal serving with the Ottoman Fifth Army. He wrote:

British hand grenades on the right wing had a devastating effect. Four, five or six of them were always in the air at the same time. Turkish casualties increased dramatically. It soon became clear to me that the hand grenades were not being thrown by hand, but by a machine, because each throw from the same location followed one after another so quickly that even the most skilful thrower could not develop anything like this speed, especially as the trajectories were very precise.

A few days later, my suspicion was fully confirmed. The Turks had captured a British trench and here I found such a throwing machine. Two sturdy rubber bands were attached to a thick wooden plank, with a leather sack attached to one end. The hand grenades were placed in these. The rubber bands were then tensioned with a crank. The fuses of the hand grenades were attached to a ring with a thin cord. A triggering device then launched the hand grenades up to a distance of one hundred metres into the Turkish positions. The ring-pull fuses were activated during the launch. It goes without saying that copies of this launching device were made and distributed to the Turkish trenches as quickly as possible, in order to have an equally devastating effect on their originators.

- Gefreiter Adolf Horaczek, Pioneer Detachment, Ottoman Fifth Army.



Ottoman soldiers with a captured Leach-Gamage trench catapult.



Royal Scots in the trenches with a catapult.

With Gallipoli fully evacuated in January 1916, the Leach-Gamage continued to be used on the Western Front until it was replaced with the smaller and more portable French “Sauterelle” or “Grasshopper” catapult in March 1916. This French crossbow-style launcher was developed by artillery officer Elie André Broca in 1915. Whilst it had a reduced range of 130 metres, the weight and portability trade-off was accepted. Trench catapults were phased out of service in July 1916, when the War Office dropped them from their equipment inventory. For the British and Anzacs 1916 saw the introduction of the more efficient 2" toffee-apple mortar and the 3" Stokes mortar. Improved rifle grenades also became readily available, all of which negated the need for the trench catapult which was relegated back into history.

Sources:

Weapons of the Trench War 1914-1918, Anthony Saunders, Sutton Publishing, 2000.

Spring Guns and Catapults, from Australian WWI Manual on Grenades and Their Uses published ‘By Authority’ Alfred J Mullett, Government Printer, Melbourne, Chapter 12: Trench Catapult, as used in 1915. <http://www.vlib.us/wwi/resources/springguncatapult.html>

LAST POST

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

Peter Ross - Member No 1835. Mr Ross’s father was Corporal William Gordon Ross, No 802, 10th Battalion AIF, who landed at Anzacs landed 25 April 1915.

Eric Hudson - Member No 7003. Mr Hudson’s grandfather died of wounds in July 1915.

James Ockendon - Member No 1687. Passed away on 17 February 2021, aged 98. Mr Ockendon’s father, James Ockendon VC MM, Royal Munster Fusiliers, landed from the *River Clyde* at V Beach, and was wounded by a bullet in the forehead on 25 April 1915. Awarded the Victoria Cross: On 4 October 1917 east of Langemarck, Belgium, Sergeant Ockendon was acting as company sergeant-major. Seeing the platoon on the right held up by an enemy machine-gun, he immediately rushed the gun and captured it, killing the crew. He then led a section to the attack on a farm, where under very heavy fire he rushed forward and called on the garrison to surrender. As the enemy continued to fire on him he opened fire, killing four, whereupon the remaining 16 surrendered. He died on 29 August 1966 in Southsea, Hampshire. He was cremated on 1 September 1966 and his ashes scattered in the Garden of Remembrance at Porchester Crematorium. Portsmouth City Council named Ockendon Close in his honour.

HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S SPEECH 1975

[Originally appeared in *The Gallipolian*, No. 19, Christmas 1975]

Mr President, Gentlemen,

The future generation, I am afraid, will only know of Gallipoli from the history books, and there, I am afraid, it will suffer the same fate as so many other great battles of the past. It will be entered simply as 'Gallipoli, 1915', just like Agincourt 1415, or perhaps Balaclava, 1854.

So, Sir, that is why I am so particularly grateful to this Association for your invitation to join you for this 60th Anniversary Dinner - this 60th anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli.

For the rest of my life I shall be able to say that I sat down to dinner with the men who fought at Gallipoli and to me this has transformed the campaign from an event in history, however dramatic, into something far more vivid and personal and nothing can give me more pleasure than to pay my tribute on this anniversary to everyone who took part in it.

I think that as I am proposing a toast at the moment to this Association, I think that I would like to congratulate all those who have been responsible for starting this Association and for the opportunity it gives to so many of you to keep old friendships alive.

I suppose that I knew as much about Gallipoli as most people of my generation - well, perhaps a little bit more, if only because when I was in the Navy I served at different times with both a Nasmith and an Unwin - as well, as it turned out, with the two distinguished Vice Admirals who are sitting at this table, but of course I did not realise that they had been at Gallipoli at the time I was serving with them.

Unlike so many other campaigns, there is no way of telling by looking at people's medals, whether they were at Gallipoli or not, unless you can read the fine print very carefully, and even then it is not very easy. But my direct introduction to the Gallipoli campaign was as a consequence of one of those duties which the Queen performs as head of state, because in 1971 the Queen and I paid a state visit to Turkey, and after two days in the capital of Ankara we flew to Izmir and embarked in the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, and the next morning, on the 22nd October, we landed at Kilit Bahr and there followed visits to the Turkish, French, British, Australian and New Zealand Memorials, and at each place the Queen laid a wreath. Well, now, that is how the official record runs, but it hardly describes the sense of amazement and fascination as the incredible events of those desperate days were recalled for us, and I think one of the most moving moments was when a senior Turkish officer gave us a short explanation from the vantage point of Mustapha Kemal's command post and in the peace and serenity of a Mediterranean afternoon he concluded with these words, and I am quoting from the English translation

which was obviously written by a Turk, and which was then printed in the official programme, and he ended up like this: "Your Majesty, here on this very ground, your subjects and ancestors, and our grandfathers and fathers, gave their lives for the honour of their countries and nations, and so they became the historical men for laying the ground and creating the friendship of today. I am sure they are happy of this result, too, and no doubt they will always be remembered with honour."

Well, now, that visit and then your invitation to this dinner, and, of course, the copies of the Association's journal, started me off on a bit of research into the whole story - aided by Captain Bush's excellent book, and I can only say that it left me with a strong impression that of all the wars and battles in Europe, there has never been anything quite like the Gallipoli campaign, and with any luck there will never be anything quite like it again, and the story of those tragic eleven months reads more like one of the old Norse sagas than anything one could imagine might have taken place within living memory.

Conceived, as I understand it, to take the pressure off our Russian allies in the Caucasus, and to close the Balkans to the Central Powers; planned on the assumption that the British fleet in Constantinople would break the Turkish alliance with Germany and force Turkey out of the war; executed against the well established principle that ships cannot defeat forts; and when that failed, a military landing against all the disadvantages of difficult country, lack of surprise, faulty planning, and uncertain control, and I can tell you one thing I know enough about boat work to appreciate the appalling difficulty of putting an army on to open and defended beaches and keeping it supplied in all weathers with boats and equipment never intended for such a purpose.

So, in reading on with a growing sense of apprehension, it becomes apparent that when finally the landings were made, there was more individual and mass heroism, greater endurance, and wilder confusion, more bitter fighting with less animosity, more incompetence and greater initiative, more glory with less achievement, than in any other campaign in European history, and to cap it all, the only unqualified success was the withdrawal of some 120,000 men from close contact with an alert enemy without a single casualty. Now, of course, it is not unusual in our history where our withdrawals are more successful than some of our campaigns. But if there is one thing that stands out in this whole amazing story, it is the almost superhuman courage and endurance of every man of a strangely assorted force. As John Masefield put it - "these men had come from all parts of the British world; from Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and remote islands of the sea. They had said goodbye to home that they might offer their lives in the cause we stand for", and he might have added one other group which went under the remarkable description, I discovered as the 'Assyrian Jewish Refugee Mule Corps.' It turns out that it was not the mules which were the refugees but the Assyrian Jews. They were better known as the Zionists, I understand, and consisted chiefly of Russian Jewish refugees from Syria and Palestine, who of all things had sought safety in Egypt. One suspects they might possibly have been safer to remain in Syria and Palestine, judging by what happened

in Gallipoli. If Masefield had included all the races fighting on the Turkish side as well the list would have been twice as long.

By the time the whole story is concluded you cannot help feeling that the actions on the Peninsula were so much greater than the purpose or the consequences of the whole campaign.

In the preface to his book *The Dardanelles Campaign*, published in 1918, H W Nevinson wrote,

Already in 1918 the Dardanelles expedition has passed into history and may be counted among the ghosts which history tries in vain to summon up. It is an episode in a vanished past; a tragic episode, but marked by every attribute of a noble tragedy." Whether we consider the grandeur of the theme and personality or the sympathy aroused by the spectacle of heroic figures struggling against the unconscious adversity of fate. And then Churchill's comment on the enterprise for which he was so largely responsible is typically very much to the point - 'Divided councils, half-hearted measures, grudged resources, makeshift plans, no real control or guidance.'

Well, the ifs and buts and 'might have beens' of the whole fantastic Gallipoli story will be discussed and argued about as long as men are inspired by the stories of gallantry and study the history of warfare. Whether it was doomed to failure from the start or whether the supposed fruits of success would have been as great as promised will never be known, but there is no doubt at all that it was a supreme display of human courage.

Well, hundreds of books and literally thousands of words have already been written but in the end I think it was one of the ancient Greeks who had the right words for it and in his funeral oration for the men who died in the Peloponnesian war, Pericles began with these words,

It is hard to speak properly upon a subject where it is even difficult to convince your heroes that you are speaking the truth. On the one hand the friend who is familiar with every fact of the story may think that some point has not been set forth with that fulness which he wishes and knows it to deserve. On the other hand, he who is a stranger to the matter may be led by envy to suspect exaggeration if he hears anything about his own nature.

And then he goes on like this -

For this offering of their lives made in common by them, all they, each of them, individually receive that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulchre not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrouds wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story call for its commemoration, for heroes have the whole earth for their tomb. It is not only inscriptions on tablets in their own country which chronicle their fame but rather even in distant lands, unwritten memorials living forever, not upon visible monuments but in the hearts of mankind.

So, Gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a toast to 'The Gallipoli Association'.

FATEFUL LANDING ON GALLIPOLI

LONDON, Nov. 17. — “Our school books told us that the bloodiest battle in history was that between the Confederates and Federals at Sharpsburg during the American civil war, when one-third of the men engaged were left on the field. But Sharpsburg was a joy ride compared with Seddul Bahr.”

Thus begins an account of the Gallipoli venture by Lieutenant Commander Josiah Wedgewood, the Liberal member of parliament who has made the house of commons ring with criticism of the Dardanelles campaign since he returned with special mention for bravery and the coveted striped ribbon of the D.S.O. at his breast.

He pays a splendid tribute to the Turk. “The Turks are the finest fighters in the world, save only the Canadians and Australians.” And again: “The Turks could easily have killed all those who went to the wounded. They did not fire on them sometimes for ten minutes, and then a burst of fire would come. Then and afterwards I found them extraordinarily merciful, as compared with the enemy in Flanders.”

Once only in his story does he mention battlefield atrocities, and then, he says, the deeds were blamed not on the Turks, but on two foreign officers who were with them. “The two officers,” he remarks, “were captured and killed. These fiends, it appears, had instigated the things done to those dying Irishmen, and we never afterwards found similar Turkish atrocities.”

Lieutenant Commander Wedgewood’s first view of the fighting in the Dardanelles zone was at the so-called V-beach, where the now famous steamship *River Clyde* was run aground to furnish cover for the attempted landing.

The Fateful Landing

“This old “Wooden Horse of Troy,” narrates Mr. Wedgewood, “was run ashore on a flawless Sunday morning, 400 yards from the medieval castle of Seddul Bahr. I never noticed the grounding, for the horror in the water, on the beach. Five tows of five boats each, loaded with men, were going ashore alongside of us. One moment it had been early morning in a peaceful country, with thoughts or smells of cows and hay anti milk; and the next, while the boats were just twenty yards from shore, the blue sea around each boat was turning red. Is there anything more horrible than to see men wading through water waist high under a heavy fire? You see where each bullet hits the water, which, like a nightmare, holds back the man for the next shot, which will not miss. Of all those brave men two-thirds died; hardly a dozen reached unwounded the shelter of the five-foot sand dune.

“About 9 o’clock a dash across the row of lighters from the “Wooden Horse’ was led by General Napier and his brigade major. Would they ever get to the end of the

lighters and jump into the sheltering water? No. Side by side they sat down on the engine coaming. For one moment one thought they might be taking cover, then their legs slid out and they rolled over.

Gallant Deeds

“It was the Munsters that charged first, with a sprig of shamrock on their cape; then the Dublins, the Worcesters, the Hampshires. Lying on the beach, on the rocks, on the lighters, they cried on the Mother of God. Ever when I looked ashore I saw five Munsters. They at some moment had gotten ashore; they had been told off to cut the wire entanglements; they had left the shelter of the bank, charged fifteen yards to the wire, and there they lay in a row at two yards’ interval. One could hardly believe them dead. All the time great shells kept hitting the shivering ship and doing slaughter in the packed holds. These shells were fired from Asia, but it was the Maxims and pompoms in Seddul Bahr and on the amphitheater that kept our heads down below the bulwarks and boiler plate. There, now, was Midshipman Drury swimming to the lighter which had broken loose, with a line in his mouth and a wound in his head. If ever a boy deserved his V.C. that lad did. And there was the captain of the River Clyde, now no longer a ship to be stuck to, but a part forever of Gallipoli, along with a boat by the spit of rock, trying to lift in the wounded under fire.

“All these things I saw as a dream as I moved from casemate to casemate, watching to see Turks, wearing an ‘election smile,’ and trying to pretend in an even voice to men who had never seen death that this was the best of all possible worlds. Columns of smoke rose from the castle and town of Seddul Bahr as the great shells from the fleet passed over our heads and burst; and in every lull we heard the wounded.

Terrible Ordeal

“I looked at the commander on the spit of rocks trying to lift in the wounded, and every splash by his side meant a bullet. The colonel, the second in command, was shot through the head on the bridge. One of my men came to me and said, ‘May I go over and help get in those wounded?’ ‘Why?’ I said, and I remembered the story of Stephen Crane’s of the man who went across the shell-swept field to get a drink because he was ‘dared to’ by his companions. ‘I can’t stand hearing them crying.’

“At 12 I had given up all hope; one gun on the ridge, and we should be smashed to pieces. At 1 o’clock I got 20,000 more rounds from the fleet, and the Lancashires were appearing over the ridge to the left from Lancashire landing. We saw fifteen men in a window in the castle on the right by the water. They signalled that they were all that remained of the Dublins, who had landed at the Camber at Seddul Bahr. At 3 o’clock we got 150 men alive to shore, and great chunks were flying out of the old castle as the ‘15’ shells from the Elizabeth plastered the ten-foot walls. We watched our men working to the right and up into the castle ruins — at each corner the officer crouching in front with revolver at rest. One watched them through the fire zone and held one’s breath and pressed the button of the Maxim.

Fight in the Dark

“Then night came, but a house in Seddul Bahr was burning brightly and there was a full moon. We disembarked men at once. All around the wounded cried for help and shelter against the bullets, but there was no room on boats or gangway for anything but the man to come ashore. For three hours I stood at the end of the rocks, up to my waist in water, my legs jammed between dead men, and helped men from the last boat to the rocks. Every man who (landed that night jumped onto the backs of dead men, to the most horrible accompaniment in the world. It was then that I first learned the shout of ‘Allah,’ for the Turks charged. All night long the battle raged. On shore everyone was firing at they knew not what. Our men went up the hill through the Turks, and the Turks came down through ours to the beach. Over and past each other they went, sometimes not seeing, sometimes glad to pass on in the darkness. One party of our men were found by day light at the top of the gully on the left, in touch with the Lancashires. It is not necessary to burn your boats to insure the courage of desperation; it is as good to have your ship firmly aground. The paladins of that night’s fighting knew this, and knew what was their position.

Final Rush

“You must remember that for two nights no one had slept; and then another day dawned. We were firmly ashore at Lancashire landing, and at De Tott’s battery to the northeast; and the Australians were dug in at Anzac. An end had to be made of V-beach. The whole fleet collected and all morning blew the ridge and castle and town to pieces. And all the time that wonderful infantry went forward up the hill and through the ruined town. The troops that went in that attack had already lost half their strength; the officers that led up those narrow streets, dodging first through gate ways, across the openings, and beckoning when safe for men to come on, were nearly all killed. Dead beat, at 1 o’clock, before the final rush they hesitated. Then our last colonel, a staff man, Colonel Doughty Wylie, ran ashore with a cane, ran right up the hill, ran through the last handful of men sheltering under the crest, took them with that rush into the trench, and fell with a bullet through his heart. But the Turks ran and the ridge was ours.”

Editor’s note:

Originally ‘Graphic Account of Fateful Landing On Gallipoli’ from the *Iditarod Pioneer*, (Iditarod, Alaska, USA) 15 January 1916.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gallipoli: the Egerton diaries and papers

Author: David Raw

Publisher: Helion & Company (2020), 143 pages, 8 photographs & 2 maps

Price: £19.95 (paperback)

ISBN: 9781912390847

This is a study of Major-General Granville Egerton, commander of the Territorial 52nd (Lowland) Division during the Gallipoli campaign. Largely based on Egerton's diaries and private papers, it is a fascinating insight into a Gallipoli general, especially one that was highly critical of higher command, its decisions and tactics, and the mistreatment of his division in this ill-fated campaign. You could understand his anger and frustrations that followed his landing in Gallipoli in June 1915. Landing with an already weakened division of 10,900 men, and within three weeks his division had lost 4,800 killed and wounded, and about 1,000 sick.

Egerton's health was already poor by the time he landed in Gallipoli, this not helped by the local conditions. The author is probably correct in stating that Egerton shouldn't have been sent to the Dardanelles in the first place due to his health. His division had also suffered. Long before they had left for Gallipoli several of its units had been transferred to other divisions, and just prior to its sailing in May 1915 disaster had struck when the 7th Royal Scots were involved in the dreadful Quintinshill railway disaster where they lost over 430 officers and men killed or wounded. Depleted in number, both in men and artillery, when they finally arrived in Gallipoli the division was fed piecemeal into battle. For the opening of the Battle of Gully Ravine 156 Brigade was nearly destroyed. Barely two weeks later 155 and 157 Brigades were used in the Battle of Achi Baba Nullah where casualties again proved heavy. Egerton struggled with command, and despite his best efforts his failing health impacted his effectiveness as a commander. He was eventually removed from command by Lord Kitchener in September 1915.

The book begins with an essay on Egerton's role and performance, the division's training, embarkation, battle and its eventual evacuation. The main part of the book is then structured with transcripts of Egerton's diaries and papers, including later correspondence with Aspinall-Oglander, the Gallipoli campaign's official historian. His papers make interesting reading and are a gold mine of information for anyone with an interest in Gallipoli, Great War generalship and the 52nd (Lowland) Division. To quote Egerton's own words "it is possible that the historian of the future, if he comes across this story, may pick up some facts that may be of interest", well, we are fortunate that he did write his story as it is truly interesting. Recommended.

The Gallipoli Evacuation

Author: Peter Hart

Publisher: Australia and UK by Living History (2020)

312 pages, 3 maps, b/w photographs

Price: £18.00 / AUD\$35.99 (paperback and ebook)

ISBN: 9780648922605

Gallipoli remains a campaign that fascinates many, and never a year goes by without another book on the subject. Peter Hart's *The Gallipoli Evacuation* is the only single volume book that I can recall that concentrates solely on the evacuation, and a good one it is too. Many members will be familiar with Peter Hart, a prolific writer on First World War history who has a passion for the study of Gallipoli. Hart is a former oral historian at the Imperial War Museum, a contributor to numerous TV documentaries, a producer of his own podcast series, and a lecturer who has spoken for the Gallipoli Association at several conferences. Published by Mat McLachlan's Living History, this book has a clear and engaging narrative, supported by veteran testimony, clear maps and a selection of black and white photographs.

The evacuation period takes place after the failures of the allied offensives, and against the backdrop of a coming winter, the terrible November storms and an ever-strengthening Ottoman defence, reinforced by heavier guns from Austria-Hungary. Hart takes the reader through the intricate planning to its tense but successful execution, not only once for the Anzac / Suvla beachhead, but twice to include the final withdraw from Helles.

Withdrawal of an army in the face of the enemy, with its subsequent evacuation by sea, is a complex and dangerous military operation. It can be said that the Gallipoli evacuation ranks among the most impressive, imaginative and audacious operational successes of the entire war. The event makes a fascinating study and reveals many of the essential ingredients of amphibious warfare: unity of command, close joint coordination, detailed planning, clear objectives, tactical ingenuity, constant, flexible supervision, operational security and good luck. Whilst many of these qualities were noticeably absent during the eight month campaign, the evacuation was executed with no lives lost and no man left behind. Hart writes about this miracle of planning and engineering that extracted some 135,000 men, nearly 400 guns and 15,000 horses under the very noses of the Ottoman defenders. Whilst we can learn much from the Allied failures on Gallipoli, there is equally much to be learned from the brilliant success of its evacuation.

As with all Hart books you get a good selection of first-hand accounts that helps to bring alive the narrative, all adding a gripping drama to the unfolding story. Whilst a few of these accounts I have come across before, many are new and fresh to Gallipoli writings. Hart fills a gap in many Gallipoli bookshelves with this must-read for anyone interested in the campaign. Highly recommended.



12 December 1915. A rare photo of two Austrian gunners, members of the heavy mortar unit that arrived late in the campaign, with four Ottoman soldiers and a French bulldog. Bill and Serpil Sellars collection.



OBJECTIVES

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



The River Clyde at V Beach, 25 April 1915 by Charles Dixon

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.

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