



RECONNAISSANCE

Autumn 2015

The Newsletter of the Military History Society of New South Wales Incorporated

PATRON: Major General the Honourable Justice Paul Brereton AM RFD

PRESIDENT: Benjamin Howell – VICE PRESIDENT: Philip Carey

SECRETARY: John Twyford – TREASURER: Alan Kitchen – EDITOR: John Twyford

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the Autumn 2015 edition of *Reconnaissance*.

It's very much a year for anniversaries this year with April marking the Centenary of the Gallipoli Landings and in June the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo. As far as Waterloo goes, I have been working my way through a plethora of material over the past six months reviewing old and new material from both the English and French perspectives and I look forward to presenting and seeing you in July about a battle that changed the course of Europe. As a fan of Napoleon I will say in advance that both Marshall Ney and Napoleon himself scored many an own goal and brought the loss upon themselves, even before the battle of Waterloo actually commenced. More on that in July.

For those that attended the half-day session on ANZAC I'm sure you thoroughly enjoyed the deep and engaging presentations by both Dr Rhys Crawley of ANU and our own Brigadier Carey. Both gents gave very thorough overviews of both strategy and planning for the landing (Dr Crawley), and the landing themselves (Brigadier Carey). We also had a great panel discussion, which also involved Joe Crumlin, which had a tremendous amount of audience participation in engaging the panel. For those that did not have the opportunity to attend you missed a great session, however, Brigadier Carey has published a great deal of his material regarding the landings in this edition for your perusal.

If we have a suitable topic, I'd like us to have more of these half-day seminars in future with two or more speakers and an expert panel. If you can think of topics where this is suitable let me know.

Dr Crawley will be back in August to give a lecture on the August offensive.

I was to give the lecture on the bicentenary of Waterloo in June, however, I can very proudly say that I have been bumped by an Ambassador!

His Excellency Mr Ravdan Bold, Ambassador of the Republic of Mongolia, approached the Society and asked to present a lecture for us. From what I understand his Excellency is an avid military historian and sought out the Society due to its reputation and to address a likeminded audience. His subject will be the Battle of Khalkhin Gol, and I'm sure we are all looking forward to it!

As you can see in the next section we have an exciting line up of topics, and apart from those already mentioned our patron, Major General the Honourable Justice Paul Brereton AM RFD, will be presenting on behalf of the Society as our History Week contribution.

I would also like to welcome two new Councilors to the MHSNSW Council. Welcome aboard Alan Blake and Clinton Reilly. We look forward to working with you.

As always, if anyone would like to assist John Twyford with *Reconnaissance* by way of articles etc., your contribution will be most welcome and appreciated. John and Phil Carey (as well as David Twyford) have been making significant contributions to this publication as can be seen in this issue, and it would be great if we had others contribute to make this publication even better.

Until next time ...

BENJAMIN HOWELL

PROGRAM OF EVENTS – 2015

6 June	<i>Battle of Khalkhin Gol, 1939: Between the USSR and the Peoples Republic of Mongolia on the one hand and the Empire of Japan on the other</i>	His Excellency, Mr Ravdan Bold, Ambassador, of the Republic of Mongolia
11 July	<i>The Battle of Waterloo: The Bicentenary</i>	Benjamin Howell, President
15 August	<i>Gallipoli: The August Offensive 1915</i>	Dr Rhys Crawley, ANU
12 September	<i>New South Wales History Week: War, Nationalism and Identity</i>	Major General the Honourable Justice Paul Brereton AM, RFD
10 October	<i>The Charge of the Light Brigade 25 October 1854</i>	By a lecturer to be selected
14 November	Christmas Party & Quiz	N/A
December	Christmas Break	N/A

Please note that the Society meets on the second Saturday of the month at 2:00 pm, 99 York St Conference Centre, Sydney (unless informed otherwise)

ANZAC STUDY DAY – 11 APRIL 2015 EPITOME OF STUDY¹

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The principal references for this study include works by Professor Robin Prior, Mr Harvey Broadbent, Brigadier (Retd) Chris Roberts and Dr Rhys Crawley, my co-presenter.² I am indebted to them for their painstaking research and erudite writing on a subject of immense importance to Australian military history and for attempting to shine a light into areas of complex controversy. In addition, five articles in the magazine of the Australian War Memorial, "Wartime", Autumn 2015 are most relevant to the Study Day; those by Professor Robert O'Neil, Dr Rhys Crawley, Brigadier Chris Roberts, Dr Christopher Pugsley and Mr Harvey Broadbent. The Society wishes to express our gratitude for their scholarship and erudition, and to congratulate the editors on their publication. The Australian War Memorial is a Corporate Member of the Society.

INTRODUCTION³

The strategic policy, background and plans for the Dardanelles Campaign were part of Dr Crawley's brief. My brief was to review the Landing at Anzac and the action on the first day, 25 April 1915.

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

It could be pointed out that the government in London failed to develop a coherent policy that embraced logical war aims during 1914-15.⁴ Until January 1915 advice received from military and naval officials recognised the primary importance of the Western Front and considered an operation against the Ottoman Empire to be much less important than operations against the main enemy, Germany. These operations could perhaps occur in the North Sea against the Belgian or even Dutch coasts. An operation against the Gallipoli Peninsular in particular, was thought not to be feasible. Indeed, the General Staff had recommended against it in 1906.⁵

Some members of the Cabinet and War Council, notably Churchill and Lloyd George decided an alternative to the stalemate on the Western Front was essential. A large body of backbench opinion and the Press supported their views. The approach by the Russian Grand Duke was a knee jerk reaction and prompted a similar response in London. Indeed, the need for his 2 January 1915 request dissolved on 6 January, but the British hare was out of the box and the Dardanelles adventure quickly assumed a momentum of its own.

The War Council and Cabinet were beset by procrastination and humbug. Kitchener, overwhelmed by Asquith's vacillation, Churchill's rhetoric and Lloyd George's duplicity, could offer little resistance and grudgingly gave way.

The behaviour of Churchill and Fisher was infantile and Kitchener's failure to use a general staff was a cause of many problems. Asquith's leadership failure was quite understandable though disappointing.⁶

There could be little objection to the idea of finding an alternative, if a sound one could be found, but the degree of strategic thought put into the campaign was facile. It should have been called off after the failure of the naval attack on 18 March. It seems certain, even by the standards of the time, the strategic conception was illusory and accordingly seriously flawed in a number of ways.⁷

One should note here in accordance with Sir Michael Howard's principles,⁸ there is a risk when judging military actions of the past, to base criticism or judgements on modern, i.e. late twentieth century, battle procedure and tactical doctrine c. 1975 onwards. To that extent, they are retrospective judgements. It is important not to judge the past by the standards of the present.

A general point to be made about the Dardanelles campaign of 1915 is that there had been no experience on that scale before. Indeed the Americans overlooked many of the lessons from that campaign when they embarked on the fight back against the Japanese in 1943, Tarawa being the significant example.

Earlier British amphibious operations had included, except for the Walcheren Expedition of 1809, some creditable achievements of British Arms, eg. In the Seven Years War at Quebec in 1759 and in the Revolutionary/Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815. Neither the Army nor Royal Navy had any significant large-scale experience after that.

Furthermore, development of fighting doctrine had atrophied in the years between 1815 and 1855. Only after the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny in 1857 was any serious attempt made to review the way in which the Army made war.

Commanders and staffs were trained to follow the Field Service Regulations (FSR) and the various training manuals, e.g. Infantry Training 1905, authorised by the War Office. By 1915, these guidance documents were, at best, obsolescent and experience in France was already inspiring thoughtful officers to amend their approach to tactics. That did not occur at the Dardanelles. They were still mired in old ways of thinking. Only with the experience of war were changes brought about. This process is often called the British Army's great Learning Curve that led to the victories of 1918.⁹

In addition to the FSR and its derivatives, the British had produced a Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations in 1913. It had not been properly tested and was rarely used in training. It was far too general to be of much use at Gallipoli. It was more of a historical review than an instructional manual and was couched in the same verbose language as the FSR.¹⁰

We will do well to remember this with particular reference to Gallipoli. The situation as regards military operational concepts on the Peninsular and the situation on the Western Front were not very different.

The British Armies in both locations were trying to adjust to a different style of warfare where static defence rather than manoeuvre and the cult of the offensive prevailed. They were trying to adapt to a twentieth century form of warfare from a nineteenth century one. Indeed the situation on the Eastern Front was probably worse, where adaptation from an eighteenth century style was even more difficult.

The long trail of myths about Gallipoli begins in the preparatory stage, and one of the most notorious myths is the belief that information by way of intelligence provided to Sir Ian Hamilton commanding the Middle East Expeditionary Force, was meagre at best. Dr Crawley showed decisively in his lecture that this myth is not only unfounded but stems from a downright deliberate lie. General Hamilton himself perpetrated the lie.¹¹

THE JOB TO BE DONE

After the failure of the naval attack on 18 March, the Allied commanders, Vice Admiral John De Robeck, Flag Officer Eastern Mediterranean and General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, decided to introduce ground forces into the operation with a view to:

*... assist the fleet to force the Dardanelles by capturing the Kilid Bahr plateau, and dominating the forts at the Narrows.*¹²

The plan reflected in these orders had been worked out by the staff of GHQ and had been approved by Hamilton on the grounds that it conformed to his concept of operations. That concept provided for a main attack to be mounted at the foot of the peninsular at Cape Helles by the 29th (British) Division, a formation of the Regular Army, made up of units recently returned from colonial garrison duties and to be joined later by a French division.

A secondary attack was to be made by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), north of Kaba Tepe on the west coast of the peninsular. Two deception operations were to be carried out. One at Kum Kale on the Asiatic shore opposite Cape Helles by the French and one to the north of Kaba Tepe in the Gulf of Saros by the Royal Naval Division to simulate an attack on the Lines of Bulair, an old defensive line constructed across the peninsular in 1854 during the Crimean War.

It is crucial to understand that the job of the Army was to assist the Navy to force the Dardanelles. Those who planned subsequent operations, not least Hamilton and his staff often forgot this aim during the next eight months. We will here consider only the ANZAC attack north of Kaba Tepe.

THE TASKS OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND ARMY CORPS¹³

The tasks given in the Force Order to the ANZAC were:

1. To land between Kaba Tepe and the Fisherman's Hut with a view to seizing the ridge running south from the Sari Bair Range to Mal Tepe.
2. In so doing sever the north-south road communications on the peninsular.
3. ANZAC might also be able to threaten, even cut, the line of retreat of the Ottoman forces on the Kilid Bahr Plateau and possibly, by its preliminary operations prevent the Plateau being reinforced during the attack by 29th Division at Cape Helles.
4. It was stipulated that a brigade sized covering force should first establish itself on the Sari Bair Range to protect the landing of the remainder of the Corps.

General Hamilton also provided further instructions to the Corps commander:

1. Chunuk Bair and the ridges running from it to the north west and south west (The Third Ridge) offered a strong covering position.
2. The capture of Hill 971 (Koja Chemen Tepe) was left to the Corps Commander's discretion.
3. After seizing the required position on the Sari Bair Range the Corps was to leave the covering force in position and the rest of the Corps was to advance and attempt to seize Mal Tepe.

THE TERRAIN

Before going any further into the operations we should first examine the terrain, or as the Army calls it, ground, over which the operation was to be conducted, noting in particular this advice from a notable military historian:

*Ground is the raw material of the soldier, as weapons are his tools. Ground is the factor which more than any other eventually controls the shape of a battle. Like pigment to the artist and clay to the potter ground is the material which the soldier must study, cherish, understand and adapt to his purposes. This is the basis of all military tactics.*¹⁴

Dominating what became known as the Anzac Battle Area is the Sari Bair Range. Hills rather than mountains, the range is nevertheless rugged and forbidding with steep cliffs, deep gulleys and craggy hilltops covered with thick scrub. The ground underfoot can be treacherous and sandy. It runs generally northeast from the sea and dominates the Anafarta Plain to its north and crucially, the Maidos Plain to its south.

Both of these provide for relatively easy crossing of the peninsular (see Figure 1).¹⁵

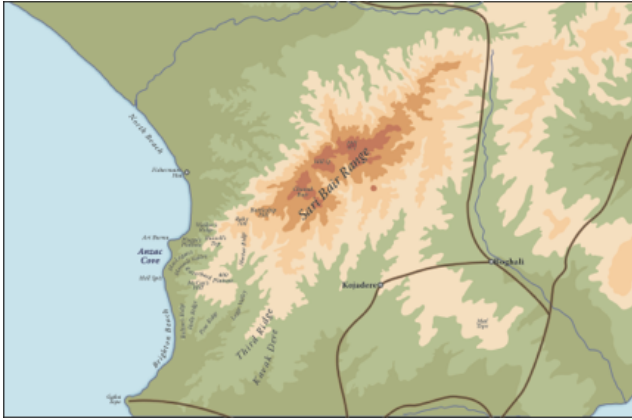


Figure 1. The Sari Bair Range

(Map sourced from Chris Roberts, *The Landing at Anzac, 1915*. Reproduced by kind permission Australian Army History Unit)

It may be more useful to consider the ground from this simpler sketch of the ridges and hills (see Figure 2).¹⁶ The area south of the range is particularly significant because major fire fights developed there as well as on top of the range itself.

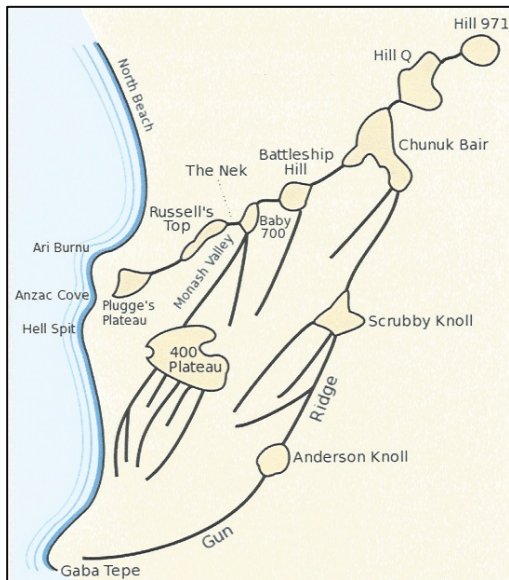


Figure 2. Sari Bair Diagram of Ridges and Valleys

Note that there are three main ridges that lead south from the main range. From west to east:

- The first ridge rises directly above Anzac Cove and is topped by Plugge's Plateau.
- It is joined to the spine of the range by a narrow causeway called the Razor's Edge.
- The spine continues northeast as Russell's Top which is connected to Baby 700 by a narrow saddle known as The Nek.
- South from Baby 700 runs the Second Ridge; its northern most section is narrow and contains MacLaurin's Hill and the three crucial defensive posts known as Quinn's, Courtney's and Steele's, which saw heavy fighting on the afternoon of 25 April and through the following day. Indeed, they were in perpetual contact with the enemy.

- The lower southern end of the Second Ridge broadens into a wide plateau called the 400 Plateau, shaped Bean says, rather like a heart. The northern lobe is Johnston's Jolly, separated from the southern lobe, Lone Pine, by Owen's Gully.
- Note in particular that Baby 700 dominates the Second Ridge and continues to Battleship Hill (or Big 700) which also dominates the Second Ridge as well as a further minor spur known as Mortar Ridge.
- The spine of the range continues to the crucial massif of Chunuk Bair. This is the most important height of the range for the Anzacs because it dominates the Third Ridge which was the object of the Covering Force (3rd Australian Infantry Brigade), the key to the whole operation.
- The spine of the range continues to Hill Q (there are two hills, Hill Q North and Hill Q South) and then to the highest point, Hill 971 or Koja Chemen Tepe.

I doubt that Koja Chemen Tepe was quite so important to 3rd Brigade on the morning of 25 April. But it was to 2nd Brigade, to the Divisional HQ and to HQ ANZAC. However, the whole line of the range from Plugge's Plateau to and including Chunuk Bair was critical to the Covering Force. It was the Vital Ground. Vital Ground can be defined as that ground which, if lost to the enemy, seriously compromises the ability to achieve the aim.

Accordingly, even considering the vagaries of contemporary doctrine contained in the Field Service Regulations and the Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations,

UNLESS THE 3RD AUSTRALIAN BRIGADE COULD CAPTURE AND SECURE THE SARI BAIR RANGE FROM PLUGGE'S PLATEAU TO AND INCLUDING CHUNUK BAIR AND THE THIRD RIDGE, THEREBY ESTABLISHING A SOUND COVERING POSITION TO ENBLE THE CORPS TO ADVANCE TO MAL TEPE, THE OPERATION WOULD FAIL.

THE TURKISH REACTION

Following the aborted naval attempt to force the Dardanelles by ships alone, The Ottoman Government created a new army, the 5th, appointing a German general, Otto Liman von Sanders to command it. That Army was tasked with defending the Straits and the approaches to the capital, Constantinople, from the Gallipoli Peninsular.

Von Liman (as I understand he should properly be called) immediately changed the defensive dispositions on the Peninsular. Instead of holding the ground around the beaches, he deployed a light screen at various beaches and held strong reserves further back so that they might be rushed forward to any particular threatened point once an invader's main attack had been identified. Many Ottoman officers disliked Liman's deployment, but they had to conform to the commander's plan. Many commentators have also criticised Liman's tactics saying that the invaders should be stopped at the beaches. I disagree. Liman was following a well-tried and very effective Prussian tradition.¹⁷

Liman allocated defence of the south of the Peninsular to the Ottoman 9th Division under Colonel Halil Sami Bey who in turn allocated defence of the coast between Fisherman's hut in the north to south of Kaba Tepe to his 27th Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Mehmet Sefik Aker. The dispositions of 27th Regiment are as shown in Figure 3. It is obvious that an officer of considerable experience and skill, who adhered closely to Liman's concept of deep defence, determined the disposition.



Figure 3. Dispositions of the Ottoman 27th Regiment at Gallipoli

(Map sourced from Chris Roberts, *The Landing at Anzac, 1915*. Reproduced by kind permission Australian Army History Unit)

MEF OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

I have never been impressed with Hamilton's concept of operations. In fact, I doubt that he and his staff would ever have understood the term. I think they simply referred to their "intention". Professor Travers says there is certain vagueness about the plans for 25 April.¹⁸ I see it reflected in the orders of all commanders especially as regards the landing at Anzac Cove. Hamilton clearly had hopes for it, saying that this particular landing could eventually turn out to be the major offensive, but his plans were obtuse and his orders needed amplification by additional instructions.¹⁹

My main objection to Hamilton's plan is that it contravened a number of the Principles of War; Selection and Maintenance of the Aim, Concentration of Force, Economy of Effort, just to name a few. He must have known about the Principles; they developed in some form well before 1915. I wonder if he was really as experienced as they say. He was intelligent, but perhaps not in a military way. His chief of staff was quite dangerous.

Be that as it may, the performance of GHQ demonstrates how the Army had deteriorated at command level since Waterloo. There were not too many conceptual thinkers.

Perhaps the crucial failure of the planning was a massive underestimation of the Ottoman Army's capability. Added to this was the intelligence failure to realise that the area of Mal Tepe and Boghali was the location of a full Ottoman division, the 19th under the command of Mustafa Kemal.

It should have implied that a corps attack would have been required to capture Mal Tepe. That task for the ANZAC would have been very difficult because the corps was well below strength anyway. If they had been required to fight their way across the Peninsular as well as capture Mal Tepe, it would have been folly to even try.²⁰

THE ANZAC TACTICAL SITUATION

The Anzac attack at Ari Burnu (or Gaba Tepe) failed to capture the Vital Ground of the Sari Bair heights on 25 April 1915.²¹ Henceforth the Corps was confined to a war of attrition of a kind with the Western Front. The failure to capture the heights was not so much a failure of planning or even the deficiencies in the orders, though those certainly had their flaws. It was a failure of command. That failure occurred at senior levels. The seeds of that failure began with the deployment of the covering force. The most detailed account we have from the Australian point of view is from Bean.²²

In summary, the 1st Australian Division was to spearhead the attack. A covering force, the 3rd Brigade, was to be deployed in two waves,

- The first wave comprised two companies each from the 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions, transported in three battleships, HM Ships Queen, Prince of Wales and London. They were to be towed ashore in 36 ships' boats by 12 small naval steamboats once the battleships reached a pre-determined point offshore.
- The second wave, comprising the remaining companies of those battalions, together with the whole 12th Battalion as reserve, and the 3rd Field Ambulance was transported in seven destroyers. The 12th Battalion's companies were scattered between four different ships across the entire frontage of the attack, about 1500 yards. All were to transfer to rowing boats for the final trip to the shore.

The main body consisting of the 2nd Brigade and supporting arms, the divisional and corps headquarters was carried in transports and was to land on command. So too was the divisional reserve, the 1st Brigade.

The first thing that strikes one is that this is a very large operation and that the task of putting this force ashore is not only large it is complex. Control of the operation would therefore require considerable organisational skill and the likelihood of delays occurring in debarkation was high.

A deeper problem lies in the disposition of the covering force. It is split and will be landed in two phases. The split is not made on organisational lines but across them. Half each of three battalions will land simultaneously, followed later by the other half of each battalion plus a fourth battalion spread across 1500 yards that will constitute the reserve of the whole covering force. The potential for disorganisation is profound, and the possibility of disintegration real.

A serious error of principle has occurred. Three military forces with different objectives will be operating in the same battle space with no overall commander.

Obviously, this configuration was prompted by Birdwood's intention to advance on a broad front. Perhaps also the vagueness of the plan noted by Tim Travers led to a confused deployment.

Or perhaps the influence of the attack doctrine laid down in FSR was the real root of the problem. Perhaps too, the troops were raw, inexperienced and inadequately trained.

Furthermore, the method of towing the ships boats by the little steam picket boats was very inefficient, meaning that it was difficult for the steamboats to steer a steady course. Keeping a distance of 150 yards apart in the dark as laid down in orders, would be almost impossible.²³ We know too that navigational errors occurred on the way in.

In any event, I suggest:

1. That Colonel MacLagan could easily lose control of the covering force before he left the ship.
2. The fact that most of the battleship tows landed around the point of Ari Burnu over a distance of about 400 yards from the point is hardly surprising.
3. The further fact that the tows were mixed together is also unsurprising.
4. Confusion on the beach was inevitable.

Poor communication to the soldiers was subsequently a major cause of what happened on the beach and afterwards. The FSR stated:

Until the troops reach the position of assembly, no more should be made known to them than is absolutely necessary.²⁴

This ensured that briefing of the troops prior to landing was at best sketchy. Their inexperience and over enthusiasm took over in the absence of precise instructions and led to further confusion.

THE OTTOMAN TACTICAL SITUATION

Lieutenant Colonel Sefik, commanding the 27th Regiment deployed his 2nd Battalion to provide a screen of the beaches from Fisherman's Hut to the Azmak Dere just south of Kaba Tepe. Importantly, Sefik kept his other two battalions in reserve in the olive groves west of Maidos but deployed a mountain gun battery to Lone Pine (Turkish, Kanli Sirt or Bloody Ridge)

Major Ismet, commanding the 2nd Battalion, deployed his No. 8 Company to cover the beach from Fisherman's Hut to what became Anzac Cove and No. 7 Company to cover Brighton beach from Bolton's Ridge to Kaba Tepe. No. 6 Company was located further south still and No. 5 Company in reserve two and half kilometres east of Kaba Tepe. It was a sound deployment for a screen expecting an amphibious landing.²⁵

Captain Faik commanding No. 8 Company, deployed his three platoons judiciously across his long beach. He placed one platoon in the vicinity of the Fisherman's Hut, another on Plugge's Plateau with outposts on Ari Burnu and Hell Spit and the third in reserve on the Second Ridge near where Quinn's Post would later be established.

A second important factor in the Ottoman defence was the deployment of artillery. Sefik deployed a battery of four Krupp 75mm mountain guns under the command of Captain Sadik of 3/9th Artillery Regiment.

They were located on the Second ridge in the vicinity of Lone Pine and targeted the beach north of Kaba Tepe and the Maidos Plain to the south. At Kaba Tepe itself were two older 150mm Mantelli howitzers and two 1-inch Nordenfeld guns. South from Kaba Tepe on the Palamutluk Ridge were four more heavy howitzers and south east from Kaba Tepe in olive groves of Peren Ovasi were two more batteries of heavy 150mm guns, all capable of targeting the Kaba Tepe/Ari Burnu area. 3/9th Regiment's second battery was held at Maidos under Sefik's direct control.²⁶

Accordingly, Liman's third defensive priority, the beaches of Kaba Tepe, was quite well covered.

TO BE CONTINUED

In the next instalment I shall review the Landing itself with reference to both sides. I shall consider the whole of that first day, when the Anzac Legend began. In the beginning, the Ottoman No. 8 Company opposed the Anzac Landing. With some assistance from No. 7 Company, little more than 300 men held up the advance of the ANZAC for three and a half crucial hours before reinforcements arrived. The odds were striking – nearly 16:1.

REFERENCES

1. The word epitome is use here as a rather poor joke. It is a word used (correctly) to describe the orders of naval commanders during the Dardanelles Campaign. Cf Official History of The Great War based on Official Documents: Military Operations Gallipoli Vol I Appendices, Epitome of Orders issued by Vice-Admiral de Robeck, p 21.
2. Robin Prior, Gallipoli: The End of the Myth, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009; Harvey Broadbent, Defending Gallipoli: The Turkish Story, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2015; Chris Roberts, The Landing at Anzac 1915, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2013.
3. I congratulate Dr Rhys Crawley of ANU, on his brilliant account of the strategic considerations and the detailed intelligence background to the opening of the ill-fated Dardanelles Campaign. I have tried to present a synopsis of his lecture.
4. David Stevenson, 1914-1918: A History of the First World War, Allen Lane, London, 2004, pp 48 and 145-147; Gordon Corrigan, Mud, Blood and Poppycock, Cassell, London, 2003, p 39; Tim Travers, Gallipoli 1915, Tempus, Stroud, 2001, p 35.

5. Report of the Dardanelles Commission Part II, 4 December 1917, The Stationery Office, London, reprinted in Uncovered Edition, 2000, pp 8 and 9.
6. The tortuous process of deciding on the Campaign in the Cabinet and War Committee has been the subject of numerous books and Kitchener often shares the blame for the failure with Churchill. To a fair observer it would seem that Churchill and Lloyd George pressured K heavily. Similarly, there are many accounts of the interpersonal relations between Churchill and Fisher. The Cabinet deliberations are well covered by Tim Travers, op cit pp 17 to 36. The best accounts of the Churchill/Fisher relationship are given in Roy Jenkins, Churchill, Macmillan, London, 2001, Ch 14; and Stephen Roskill, Churchill and the Admirals, Pen & Sword Books, London, 2004 reprint, Ch 3.
7. A sound analysis is in Stevenson, op cit pp 117-121.
8. Michael Howard, The Lessons of History, Yale University press, London, 1991, pp 6-20.
9. Cf Gary Sheffield, Forgotten Victory: The First World War Myths and Realities, Headline London, 2001, p 79 for the relevance of Gallipoli to 'The British Army's Learning Curve'.
10. Russell Parkin, A Capability of First Resort: Amphibious Operations and Australian Defence Policy 1901 – 2001, Australian Army Land Warfare Studies Centre Working Paper No. 117, May 2002, pp 7-9
11. Rhys Crawley, Most Secret, op cit p 20.
12. GHQ MEF Force Order No. 1 of 13 April 1915, Official History of the Great War, Military Operations Gallipoli, Vol 1, Appendix 3.
13. Official History of the Great War, Military Operations Gallipoli, Vol 1, op cit, Appendices 3, 5. and 14.
14. Fred Majdalany, CASSINO: Portrait of a Battle, Cassel, London, 1999, p 118.
15. Unless otherwise stated all maps are taken from Chris Roberts excellent analysis The Landing at Anzac 1915, op cit.
16. A diagram from Wikipedia entry on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landing_at_Anzac_Cove. Sourced from Bean, Story of Anzac Vol 1, op cit.
17. Devised by Helmuth von Moltke (the Elder) which was intended to effect the sichelschnitt or sickle cut made famous by von Manstein in the next War. It is a very effective way of defending against invasion in strength and could well be used in any future invasion of Northern Australia should that ever occur. Liman's first priority was to protect the Lines of Bulair, the most dangerous place for an invasion. His second priority was to defend the toe of the Peninsular where the British had indicated a preference to attack. He was thirdly anticipating the possibility on a landing on the beaches south of Kaba Tepe, thinking that the terrain around Ari Burnu was too rugged for a landing. Hamilton chose Brighton Beach, not very far from Kaba Tepe and therefore well within Liman's third contingency and quite well covered by the deployment of 27th Regiment.
18. Travers, op cit, p 66.
19. Cf, Official History of the Great War, Military Operations Gallipoli, Vol 1, Appendix 5.
20. As Dr Crawley explained, HQ MEF had a substantial quantity of information about Turkish dispositions. Clearly, that had not been distilled as intelligence or it had been ignored. By 20 April 1915 intelligence of enemy dispositions and strengths was available to Australian commanders from aerial reconnaissance by Major Villiers-Stuart, GSO2 Intelligence at HQ Anzac, Dennis Winter, 25 April 1915: The Inevitable Tragedy, UQP, St Lucia, 1994, p 133 and sketch map pp 142-143.
21. Vital Ground is defined as that ground which if lost to the enemy would seriously interfere with one's ability to achieve the aim. This term is often used at formation level and above, whereas the term 'Ground of Tactical Importance' is used at unit level and below. I identified the Sari Bair heights as the Vital Ground for 1st Australian Division and the Mal Tepe ridge for the corps. The latter is debatable and is the rather spurious objective presented by Hamilton.
22. Bean, The Story of Anzac Vol I, op. cit. Ch 12, pp 245-280.
23. I acknowledge my friend Captain Joe Crumlin, Master Mariner extraordinaire, for his knowledge and skill as a navigator and experienced Tug Master for providing extremely detailed advice on the method of towing boats to Anzac Cove on that fateful day in 1915.
24. Field Service Pocket Book 1914 (Carried by all officers), Ch 3, paragraph 25, based on FSR Part 1 Operations, Sections 8 to 20.
25. Broadbent, Defending Gallipoli. Op cit pp 16-18.
26. Ibid, p 18.

PHILIP CAREY

HĒRŌS

The centenary of the Great War has meant that we have heard the word 'hero' often enough to excite our curiosity about the nature of heroism. What makes a man a hero? What do heroes look like? Are we all capable of performing heroic deeds? For the author of this essay facing a determined enemy without running away would be enough! Even so, the question warrants some investigation out of respect for one's relatives and acquaintances who fought in the Great War. The English word derives from the Greek word hērōs bringing to mind the Homeric characters. A search of the anthologies gives us a wide choice. Again, a good starting point is the Greeks:

[T]herefore the courageous man endures the terrors and dares the deeds that manifest courage, for the sake of that which is noble.¹

In a more prosaic vein:

When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic.²

Finally, and perhaps the most poignant comes from a tennis player:

True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve all others at whatever cost.³

I believe I have known two people whose actions in the Great War might assist us to come to a conclusion.

I first met Tommy Lowrey (he was always known by the diminutive form of his Christian name) when we worked together in December 1955. He did not tell me much about himself although we worked side by side for three months. Now from that treasure, the National Archives of Australia, I am able to rehearse some of the details of his service in the Great War. He applied to join the AIF at Inverell on 6th March 1916 at the age of 21 years. His height is given as 5 foot 4 and one half inches and his occupation stated as a law clerk. He served on the Western Front with the 36th Battalion AIF. The members of the Battalion were awarded 34 Military Medals and 13 Mentioned in Dispatches. The record shows he was accorded the following honours:

London Gazette 25th December 1917

MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES

The following is a continuation of Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch of 7th November, submitting names deserving of special mention, published in the supplement to the "London Gazette" of Friday 28th December, 1917:-

No. 1671 Private T. LOWREY.⁴

London Gazette 12th April 1918, relating to conspicuous services rendered

DECORATION MILITAIRE

*Conferred by His Majesty The King Of The Belgians
No. 1671 Private THOMAS LOWREY.⁵*

The citation for his award of the Military Medal

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during operations near Bray 22/23rd. Aug. 1918. Pte. Lowrey acted as a Company Runner, He carried important messages to Battalion H.Q. and to all companies through very heavy shelling and machine gun fire. It was impossible to maintain telephonic communication and it was largely through this man's splendid courage and untiring energy that Battalion H.Q. were kept continually informed of the situation.

He had to work over very exposed country, but he carried out his duties courageously, Cheerfully and speedily.

*Signed. John Gellibrand Major-General.
Comman C.C.C. 3rd. Australian Division.⁶*



In 1961 the law firm where I was employed had a policy of employing retired magistrates whose experience suited part of their practice. One such magistrate was Cecil Blackmore and he and I shared a room for more than a year. Cecil and I became good friends. He applied to join the AIF at Dubbo on 21st September 1915. At the time he was aged 20 years and required his parents' consent. His height was recorded as 5 foot 3 and one half inches. He was employed as a clerk in the Petty Sessions branch of the Department of Justice. As a member of the 56th Battalion of the AIF he was sent at first to Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt and later to France to join the British Expeditionary Force. On the 18th April 1918 he was wounded in action by gas and repatriated to England for two months. He was awarded one of the 20 Distinguished Conduct Medals won by the Battalion.

AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

No. 3468 Private (Lance-Corporal) C B BLACKMORE, DCM

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. During the movements preparatory to an attack the signals section suffered heavy casualties, among whom were the signal officer and sergeant. Corporal Blackmore then a private took charge of the section

and after the attack established communication between Battalion Headquarters and the Companies in the line. The energetic work and devotion to duty of Corporal Blackmore maintained communication in a most satisfactory manner. At a later date, when the section was further reduced by casualties, he was continually at work as an operator, with practically no rest for four days, and was frequently under heavy shell fire repairing the lines.⁷



Before drawing any conclusions it may be helpful to glance at the post war careers of these gentlemen. Time was not kind to Tommy Lowrey. On his application to join the army in 1916 he stated his occupation to be a law clerk. On his application to rejoin the army in 1941 his occupation is shown as a lorry driver. I recollect being told that his pre-1916 employment was with a law firm. In those days many legal documents were hand written on parchment. This required a person with copperplate handwriting. The advent of the typewriter and Torrens system conveyancing ultimately obviated the need for these skills thereby denying him the opportunity to become a managing clerk and perhaps entry into the legal profession.

When I met him in 1955 he was working as a bench hand in the sawmill where I worked during the university Christmas vacation. His job was to saw timber into lengths suitable for assembling into packing cases for apple growers. My job was to assist him by tying these boards into bundles with packing wire. He was a dapper man wearing a shirt buttoned at the wrists, long trousers and polished workman's boots. Most of the rest of us worked in singlets and shorts. He seemed very reserved and did not talk much. From his body language I got the impression he could be easily upset – probably at me when I did not keep up with him.

By contrast Cecil Blackmore was a gregarious person who delighted in conversation. He and I often frittered away our employer's time chatting about the law, his experiences on the bench and life in general. He was a retired Stipendiary Magistrate and I think came to work with us to maintain his interest in the law. As a magistrate he was highly respected and I recollect the High Court of Australia upheld one or two of his decisions.

His gas injuries were still with him and he could not identify people beyond the middle distance. We did chat a little about the war. He told me he would never eat apricot jam again!

On a more serious note he said one of his officers in France advised the men to report sick as the 'stunt' on the following day would have a high casualty rate. I remember he used the word 'stunt,' a euphemism for 'attack' found in the writing of early initiates to war on the Western Front. It seems he did not take that advice!

Do these recollections tell us anything about the question posed at the beginning of this work? In stature both were men was diminutive. Both had an interest in the law. During the many hours I spent in the company of Tommy Lowrey (I doubt that I ever addressed him as other than Mr Lowrey) or Cecil neither ever mentioned the fact that they had received decorations in the war. There the similarities ended.

Coincidentally, the circumstances where the Military Medal and Distinguished Conduct Medal were awarded were related to the signaling function of Battalions.

The restoration of communications was essential to the safety and survival of the soldiers engaged in combat. This suggests one of the characteristics of heroism, that is, the concern for others at the possible cost of one's own life. The situations both men were faced with arose suddenly and required considerable initiative to resolve. Accordingly, it might be said heroism involves an ever-present readiness to act immediately without hesitation. A further characteristic seems a great reluctance to later recount the events to others, almost as if embarrassed. Finally, acts of extreme courage seem not to have any bearing on the person's later progress in life.

The conclusion is that heroism is all of the things Aristotle, George Orwell and Arthur Ashe described.

REFERENCES

1. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, III. vii 6.
2. George Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill,' 1941, The Collected Essays Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell, vol. 2, 1968.
3. Arthur Ashe, 'Points to Ponder' Readers Digest, August 1984. Ashe won three Grand Slam events and died after contracting HIV during heart bypass surgery.
4. National Archives of Aust, s.v. Thomas Lowrey, p 31.
5. *ibid.* at p 29.
6. *ibid.* at p 47.
7. National Archives of Aust, s.v. Cecil Hargreaves Blackmore, p 39.

JOHN TWYFORD

BOOK REVIEW

ANZAC'S LONG SHADOW

THE COST OF OUR NATIONAL OBSESSION

By James Brown

Published by Black Inc. Redback, 184pp, RRP \$19.99 incl. GST (paperback)

It seems my reviewing fate lies with books that have little circulation and are difficult to find. That is certainly the case with this little book, which I have only seen in very few newsagents buried with the newspapers and magazines.

Written by a former modern day Australian Army officer who served with the cavalry in Afghanistan, this book will undoubtedly ruffle some feathers and these are feathers that in my opinion have needed ruffling for a long time.

The book basically examines the gulf between the readiness to wallow in the past while not planning for the future direction of our military and its standing in Australian society

The book consists of nine clearly labeled chapters, each a small story in its own right. The first chapter 'Selling Remembrance' sets the tone for the book. In it he makes the telling point that this year the government is spending at least 30 million more on commemorating soldiers who fought in Europe long ago than the mental wounds of soldiers returning from Afghanistan today.

He talks of being so wary of civilians asking stupid questions about the military such as 'Do we have a full-time Army?' that he assumes a false identity, telling people that he is the biscuit engineer who designed the iced Vo-Vo. That struck a chord with me; some years ago I met a top RAAF fighter pilot that told people he was a hairdresser.

His figures on the cost of 2015 are staggering. Australia will outspend the UK on WWI remembrance by 200 per cent and will cost taxpayers 325 million. All this while there is bipartisan agreement that the actual defence force is underfunded by 25 per cent.

Brown describes how modern day politicians have gradually eased themselves into the Anzac Legend and we now see this in the cheap spectacle of our political masters elbowing their way into the funeral of every soldier who dies overseas.

I am amazed at the tolerance of close relatives allowing this to happen when their dearest wish must be to be left alone in their grief. He then makes the point that 'too often there has been a remarkable gap between political ceremony and the attention given to actual defence'.

He explains how early in the Middle Eastern wars our casualty rate was extremely low and how this had corrupted some of the thinking about death in war within the military. The death of Private Kovko in Iraq and the misplacement of his body showed just how little preparation there had been for the

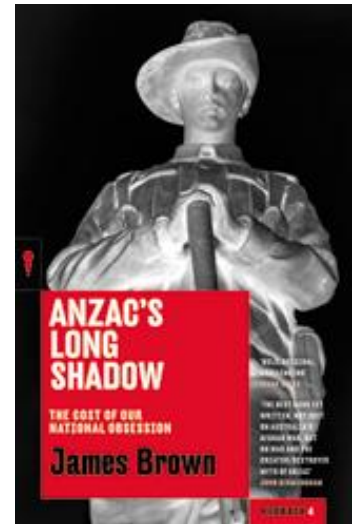
eventuality of death in war. Sadly, it took an increase in our casualties to improve this situation. One casualty is too many but service personnel understand that death is the bottom line of their contract with the military.

There is so much clear valuable information that to do proper justice to it a review would have to be as long as the book. Suffice to say that it is excellent and in my view should be required reading in all Australian halls of learning. Reading of the obfuscation and opposition by politicians I doubt that this will happen; the people who realize what is going on are the ex and still serving military. This book is not a 'get square' effort by a disgruntled ex-officer but rather a plea for improvement from a man proud of his uniform and his service.

There are only a couple of very minor disagreements I have with the book. I prefer the realistic type of war artistry such as that of Ivor Hele to the more modern day style depicted here. This is probably just a generational whinge. The author seems against the issue of the Australian Defence Medal to all who complete a proper enlistment. Some say we are getting too much like the Americans; they have issued their National Defence Medal for decades and I believe they are better at recognizing the efforts of their service members than we are.

To realize the importance of the future development and buildup of our defence forces all one has to do is look at our near north and the antics of our 'best friend' in Asia.

Finally, a word about remembrance. He states that it is fitting and proper to commemorate our military campaigns yet we have chosen not to commemorate them with respectful silence and quiet reflection. We all have people we want to remember and what better way to do so than to stand alone in the silence of the War Memorial in Sydney's Hyde Park and be guided by the inscribed decree 'Let silent contemplation be your offering'. It surely is better than turning the sacred graveyard of Gallipoli into a rock concert.



DAVID TWYFORD

BOOK REVIEW

ZERO NIGHT

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR'S MOST DARING GREAT ESCAPE

By Mark Felton

Published by Icon Books Ltd, 299pp, RRP \$38.99 incl. GST

Oflag VI-B was a prisoner of war camp located at the small north German town of Warburg 225 kilometres west of the Netherlands frontier and 160 kilometres north of Frankfurt. The camp was situated in the middle of flat agricultural land. Incarcerated there were 4,000 officer prisoners many of whom were captured as the rearguard at Dunkirk, others from the Greece campaign, a large number of Australians captured at Crete and shot-down RAF pilots.

Since the end of World War II there have been so many escape books written that they almost constitute a genre in their own right. This book follows very much the pattern of its predecessors save that it is an account of the first mass breakout. Previously in Oflag VI-B there had been many failed attempts to tunnel out and it was said that there were myriads of tunnels heading toward the outer perimeter. All of this was under the control of the Camp Escape Committee – the Committee maintained almost absolute authority over attempts to escape relying on military discipline to do so.

This work recounts many of the incidents of life in a prisoner of war camp. The Germans worried about escapes as, if more than 20 escaped; it triggered an investigation by the central authorities and trouble for the camp commander. The threat of transfer to the Russian Front parodied in Hogan's Heroes was real.

The resourcefulness of inmates in making escape clothes, forged documents, and other artifacts needed to aid escapes was impressive. One such artifact was a wooden mauser rifle used in an attempt to march through the main gates of the camp disguised as a work party under the control of a guard. One of the dramatis personae of escape stories made a cameo appearance. Douglas Bader upbraided a German officer of lower rank for failing to salute him. The camp commandant forced the German officer to apologize.

Because of the failure of tunneling attempts the concept of bridging wire fence with ladders was developed. Four ladders were constructed with stolen timber and concealed until the time for the planned escape. The text states that the ladders were constructed by skilled carpenters drawn from 'other rank' orderlies. This is a curious sidelight on the English class system carrying the inference that ex-carpenters did not become officers!

It was discovered that perimeter floodlights and search lights could be put out by a short circuit in the wiring in the cobbler's workshop situated within the camp enclosure. Since it was necessary for the lights to be out during the escape the engineer prisoners arranged a demonstration blackout and blacked the lights out during the escape.

Those who were designated to escape were provided with food, civilian clothes, maps and improvised compasses. On the night one of four ladders failed. Even so, 32 escaped and six were recaptured soon after. The remainder of the book deals with the travails of the 26 who succeeded and their attempt to reach sanctuary. This is the exciting part and I will leave it to the readers to see for themselves.

An aspect of the work that readers might be ambivalent about is that it is serious history written in story form. One always wonders if the author crosses the line into fiction especially in the inclusion of dialogue. Here the author says in a note at the beginning that most of this material came from diaries, interviews and other written sources. I found the work highly readable and finished it on a flight to Singapore. Normally a reviewer would be hesitant to characterize a book as a 'ripping yarn' but here the publishers do so in the blurb on the back cover and I agree.

JOHN TWYFORD

FROM THE EDITOR

In this edition of *Reconnaissance* I think I've said enough; however, what we have to say here is important as it introduces our discussion of the significance of the Great War.

As the President notes above, I would also encourage you to make your personal contribution to this publication.

Members are reminded that the May issue of Dr Kevin Smith's *Sandakan* newsletter is now available and may be obtained by contacting Dr Smith at: kevin.robert6@bigpond.com

JOHN TWYFORD

