



# GALLIPOLI

## THE FIRST DAY

Peter D. Condon

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*Cover design: The covers of the twelve-volume 'Official History of Australia at War of 1914-1918,' edited by Charles Bean, are described as being the colour of 'dried red blood.' The same 'dried red blood' colour is used on the cover of this book, along with a lone bright light.*



*Our soldiers were paddling ashore in small boats in the early morning darkness. There was a loud noise and a bright light and the soldiers guarding the beaches woke up and started shooting at our men in the boats. There was a lot of noise. Men were dying everywhere. Many soldiers got ashore and started fighting back. They must have won the fight because I saw some of them marching on Anzac Day when I was little.*

*That is what I knew about Gallipoli then.*

*Peter D. Condon.*

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# 1

## Introduction

Since then I have learned that the Gallipoli fight that started on 25 April, 1915, lasted a lot longer than a few days, and we did not win it. The surprise landing at Anzac Cove on Anzac Day was not the first event, but one of many skirmishes that started way back in late 1914, and which continued until the last of the Anzac soldiers were evacuated from the Gallipoli Peninsula on 20th December, 1915. The British troops finished evacuating from Cape Helles some weeks later on 9th January, 1916, ending the Gallipoli campaign. That was more than a year of fighting!

In preparation for a trip to Gallipoli I started reading a 600-page book titled '*Gallipoli*' by Les Carlyon. What a talented writer and historian. His book confirmed to me that the whole plan around the Gallipoli campaign was complex, and that the enemy was not a bunch of cowboys that many people believed they were before the campaign started.

The next book I bought was titled '*Gallipoli—A ridge too far*' edited by Ashley Ekins and produced by the Australian War Memorial in 2013. A 300-page book full of historical facts and events with some chapters on the enemy's perspective. Historians from Britain, Germany, Turkey, France, India, New Zealand and Australia all contributed to the book. Another impressive publication.

A shorter book titled '*The Spirit of Gallipoli—The birth of*

*the Anzac Legend*’ by Patrick Lindsay was also added to my Gallipoli library. Lindsay examines the conflict and uses personal accounts to give authenticity to the soldiers’ stories. He explores the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle which make up what it means to be Australian, and he sees the Anzac spirit as a key piece of the puzzle.

After reading those books, and being a military aviator, I was surprised to find that the word ‘aeroplane’ hardly got a mention; and they are credited historical publications. The British Royal Flying Corps started in April 1912 so I thought there must have been some flying going on over the Gallipoli region. I then heard about a book titled ‘*Gallipoli Air War*’ by Australian author Hugh Dolan, and again, I headed off to the book shop. Basically, ‘Hughie’s’ book confirmed that there was plenty of flying going on by both sides over the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915; reconnaissance being the primary task. Another impressive book.

Having read the four books about the Gallipoli campaign, and the reports by the official historian at the time, Charles Bean, I needed to work out how I could explain to my wife, in simple terms, what went on over there without boring her to tears. She too was going to visit the Gallipoli battlefields with me and her travel experience would be pretty boring if she had no idea what went on at the time. Knowing that she would not be interested in the tactical nitty-gritty of all the battles, I decided to sit down and try to sort out the events of the first day when Australian soldiers rowed ashore at Anzac Cove, so that I could pass on the basic happenings to her. That is the day everyone is reminded of during Anzac Day ceremonies. This book is the result of that effort.

I acknowledge that much of the text for this book is copied from Charles Bean’s work which is available on the Australian War Memorial web site at [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au). This book is my precis of the events of 25 April, 1915, described in his *Volume 1—The Story of ANZAC from the outbreak of war to the end of the first phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, 4 May, 1915* (11th edition, 1941).

*Peter D. Condon*  
5th March, 2016.

## 2

### How did the war begin?

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary by a young Serbian man in Sarajevo on 28 June, 1914, started it all. Soon after, Germany backed Austria-Hungary while Russia supported Serbia, and one month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. On 1st August Germany declared war on Russia, and the next day German forces entered Luxemburg and France, on their way to Belgium. On 4th August Germany declared war on Belgium and Britain declared war on Germany. On 5th August Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia. The end result being that Britain, France, Russia and Serbia were at war with Germany and Austria-Hungary. It was on!

Back home in Australia the population was watching developments in Europe with interest. Joseph Cook, the Prime Minister of Australia said "If there is to be a war, you and I shall be in it. We must be in it. If the old country is at war, so are we." Australia and New Zealand declared war on Germany on 5th August and offered Britain 20,000 and 8,000 men respectively; along with Australian and New Zealand naval forces. These numbers were quite significant at the time because the populations then were only about five million Australians and one million New Zealanders.

After much recruiting activity on the home front, in all states, the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the New Zea-



*A map showing the Turkish Gallipoli Peninsula and locations in the Anzac story.*

land Expeditionary Force (NZEf) were organized and sailed from Albany in Western Australia in a fleet of 38 ships on 1st November, headed for Britain; so they thought. To them, it was to be a really exciting adventure, seeing the world and returning home after a few months of fighting. To the Australians' surprise, they arrived in Cairo, Egypt, on 4th December and set up camp near the pyramids and not in Britain as they had hoped for. Piccadilly Circus would have to wait. The New Zealanders were camped nearby.

Britain declared war on Turkey the same day the Australian and New Zealanders left Albany for Britain. This declaration resulted in a change of destination for the Australian and New Zealand force; they were sent to Egypt instead, to meet the threat which Turkey posed to British interests in the Middle East and to the Suez Canal.

With Turkey now in the war it was also very important to provide allied (on our side) Russia with sea access to and from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and to achieve this aim, the Dardanelles and Bosporus straights near Constantinople (Istanbul) had to be secured. Turkey had to be defeated, and it was the Australian and New Zealand soldiers camping and training around the pyramids near Cairo for four months who were going to help the British and French forces to achieve that aim. They were the 'Australian and New Zealand Army Corps;' our ANZACs.

Six weeks before the Gallipoli landings on 25 April, 1915, British and French naval ships had attempted to force



their way through the Dardanelles, and across the Sea of Marmara, to challenge Constantinople. They hoped the Turks would surrender at the sight of the combined armada off their city, but a few ships were sunk during the attempt and the naval attack was cancelled. They were defeated by coastal artillery and a mine field laid across the narrow straight near Canakkale.

A second attempt was planned using ground forces to capture the Turkish coastal artillery, clearing the minefield, and capturing the Gallipoli Peninsula before the naval armada could again sail for Constantinople. The Anzacs were to be part of the allied ground forces charged with capturing the peninsula.

The allied ground forces first rendezvoused in Mudros Harbour on Lemnos Island, shown at the bottom left of the map on the previous page. From there most of the force moved to Imbros Island, closer to the landing beaches, just before launching their early morning attack. The distance from the eastern end of Imbros Island to Anzac Cove is about 25 kilometres. British and French ground forces were to attack Cape Helles at the tip of the peninsula at the same time as the Anzac landing near Anzac Cove. The disastrous Cape Helles landing is another story.

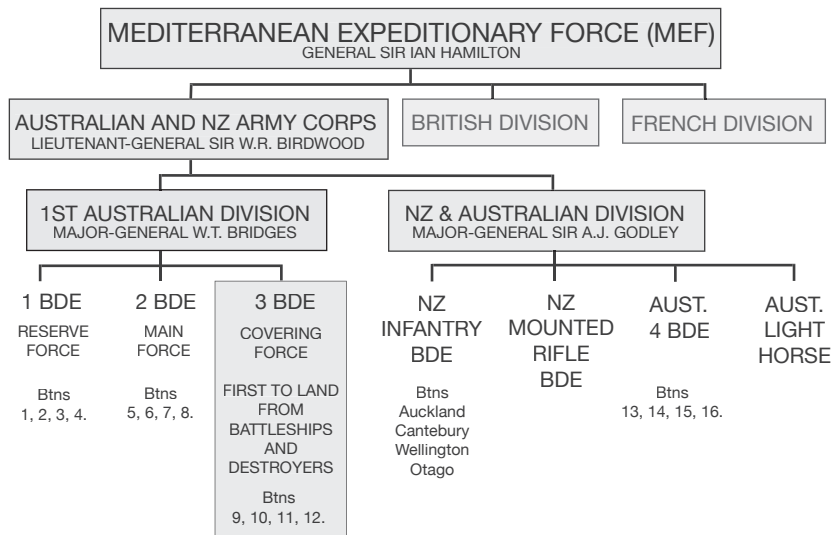
The man in charge of the whole Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) was a 62-year-old British Army officer with a distinguished career, **General Sir Ian Hamilton**. He was a brave officer who had been recommended twice for the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for bravery. In April 1915, the MEF consisted mainly of British, French, Australian, New Zealand and Indian military forces.

The man in overall charge of the Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force was another British Army officer named **Lieutenant-General Sir W. R. Birdwood**. He too had an impressive record. He was responsible for planning the surprise early-morning landing near Anzac Cove, on 25 April. He was a popular and respected commander and was called 'Birdy' by the Aussie soldiers. Together, these forces formed a 'corps' which was called 'The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.' The ANZACs.

The man in charge of the '1st Australian Division,' a

large part of the Anzacs, was **Major-General W. T. Bridges**. His 3rd Brigade troops were the first to land at Gallipoli.

The man in charge of the remaining combined ‘New Zealand and Australian Division,’ was New Zealander, **Major-General Sir A. J. Godley**. This division consisted of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, the Australian 4th Brigade, the 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade, and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles.



*There were about 4,000 men in the 3rd Brigade; the first group to land on 25 April, 1915. The 2nd and 1st Brigades landed soon after.*

# 3

## The soldiers

The AIF soldiers were young men from all walks of life who were keen to help the 'motherland' defeat the Germans in the new war. Most of these young men were descendants of settlers from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and no doubt, some had ancestors who arrived in Australia as convicts more than 100 years before. They were not interested in social standing and considered themselves to be of equal status. As you can imagine, a young farm labourer from the country who probably left school before he was fourteen would not appreciate taking orders from someone only slightly older. But there they were, about to face battle, and not at all worried about the danger to themselves; nothing could harm them. Some had previous military experience gained while serving in the militia, the forerunner to the Army Reserves that we have today.

The uniform worn by these young men was designed for one purpose only and that was to be serviceable for war. It was supposed to be a khaki colour, but as the only cloth available at the time was of a pea-soup shade, with a soft felted surface, that became the distinguishing colour of the Australian uniform throughout the war. All brass buttons were oxidised to a dull black to avoid attracting attention, and an oxidised rising sun badge was worn on the collar, along with an 'Australia' badge on each shoulder-strap. The tunics were of the



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*Private George Henry Daniel in WWI uniform.*

‘Australian pattern,’ which had been devised for the Commonwealth Forces in peace time. It consisted of a Norfolk jacket with a high loose ‘roll’ collar, pleated and caught in at the waist with a cloth belt with a simple oxidised buckle. Loose fitting sleeves were buttoned at the wrists and it had four useful roomy pockets. They wore knee-breeches with strips of cloth wrapped around their lower legs in a spiral pattern, called puttees, which provided ankle support and prevented debris from entering their boots.

After their arrival in Egypt the men were given a small peaked cap; but they mainly wore the felt hat, with its wide brim looped up on the left side, which was already traditional with Australian soldiers. This slouch hat, with its badge of the rising sun on the looped side, came to be the mark of the Australian soldier throughout the world.



The New Zealanders wore their hats with a shorter brim, turned down, and with bright coloured puggarees (hat bands) that differentiated their branches of service. To those accustomed to the tight-fitting, bright-buttoned jackets worn by most ‘smart’ soldiers of the time, the loose-limbed Aussie men in their loose-fitting tunics appeared somewhat untidy, even though they were dressed to their best. Private Daniel, in the studio photo on the previous page, is a fine example. The officers wore the same uniforms.

During their four months of training near Cairo they established their reputation as being quite boisterous soldiers with a cavalier attitude to discipline; like not saluting officers or taking the general’s staff car for a drive and abandoning it in the sand. Also, one can imagine their delight at ‘hitting-

the-town' as a close-knit group after their strict and arduous training programme in the desert to the west of the pyramids. Yes, some did manage to get into trouble with the Military Police on their days off, especially in a red-light district known as the 'Wazza.' Interestingly, many of the disciplinary problems ceased when higher command sent some bad behaving soldiers back to Australia for a dishonourable discharge from the army. No one wanted to be shamed like that.

Australian war historian, Charles Bean wrote that 'the strongest bond in the Australian Imperial Force was that between a man and his mate. No matter how hardened a sinner against camp rules, how often in trouble in a Cairo bar, an Australian seemed never to fail in the purely self-imposed duty of standing by his wounded mate whenever his task in the battle permitted him to do so. When bullets seemed to be raining in sheets, on every occasion when an Australian force went into action there were men who, come what may, regardless of death or wounds, stayed by their fallen mates until they had seen them to safety.'

The qualities of independence, the ability to rise to any occasion, and loyalty to mates were noticeable characteristics of the Aussie soldier, and Bean describes an incident at Lone Pine, later in the Gallipoli campaign, which exemplifies this Aussie character.

In the last few moments before the bloody attack upon Lone Pine, when the 3rd Australian Infantry Battalion was crowded on the fire-steps of each bay of its old front-line trench waiting for the final signal to scramble over the sandbags above, a man with rifle in hand, bayonet fixed, came peering along the trench below.

"Jim here?" he asked.

"Right, Bill, here," a voice on the fire-step answered.

"Do you chaps mind shiftin' up a piece?" said the man in the trench. "Him and me are mates, an' we're goin' over together."

## 4

# The landings

The plan for the landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula by the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was rather complicated. The British forces were to land at Cape Helles, on the southern tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula, while the French were to conduct a 'dummy' invasion on the Asian side of the Dardanelles, further to the south. The Anzac attack was to be a surprise, landing in the dark just before daybreak, a few miles up the coast from the British landings, near what we now call Anzac Cove. The first Australian soldiers were to be landed from battleships and destroyers and their objective was to capture the nearby Sari Bair Range so that fresh troops following could advance to take Mal Tepe, a hill further inland, supported by Indian artillery. See the map on page 18.

The gathering place for the forces was in the crowded Mudros Harbour at Lemnos Island in the Aegean Sea, about 110 kilometres from Anzac Cove. After some delays caused by bad weather, the landing was set for the early morning of Sunday 25th April, 1915.

The action started at dawn the day before. Four transport ships full of troops sailed from Mudros Harbour and moved to the northern side of the island. Those troops would later board destroyers at sea and follow the first Anzacs in the battleships to land. They were joined by eight more transport ships later in the afternoon.



Immediately after midday in Mudros Harbour 1,500 soldiers were transferred to the three battleships to be used in the first landings; *HMS Queen*, *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS London*; 500 men into each ship. When everyone was on board, the three battleships, along with the cruiser *HMS Bacchante* and the battleships *HMS Majestic* and *HMS Triumph*, sailed from the harbour. Seven destroyers and four transports followed. This armada was for the landings at Anzac Cove. They all headed towards Imbros Island which was to be the final holding area before the early morning landings.

As they neared Imbros the soldiers in the transports had a meal and were inspected to ensure everything was in order. Each man had two empty sandbags rolled round his digging tool; 200 rounds of ammunition; water-bottles; two extra days of rations including tins of bully beef, small tins of tea and sugar, and a number of very hard biscuits. For safety reasons, their rifles were not loaded because no shots were to be fired before daylight. In the heat of battle in the dark it was too easy to hit friendly soldiers.

At 11 pm the destroyers crept up on either side of their respective transport ships anchored off Imbros to receive the 2,500 troops on board, along with empty lifeboats to later transport the men to shore. In the meantime the three battleships with the 1,500 troops on board moved closer to the peninsula, just ahead of the destroyers.

At 1 am all the battleships stopped at sea between Imbros and the peninsula and lifeboats, launches and pinnaces from the three empty battleships were transferred to the troop-carrying battleships. All the small boats were then made up into tows of three, with each tow being pulled to shore by a small steamboat. There were two tows on each side of each battleship, and the troops on board climbed down rope ladders into the boats. In all, there were twelve tows with 36 small boats, all loaded with about 40 troops in each, along with five sailors to row and guide the boats to shore when they were released from the steamboat tugs when close to the beach. When the rowing boats were full they dropped back behind the battleships. All this activity was conducted in a partial moonlight. There were seven destroyers, six battleships and numerous transport ships, along with the strings of landing boats, all



hovering in close proximity to each other. It would have been a ship watch-keeper's nightmare.

At 3 am the moon sank and the night became very dark. The battleships were probably about six miles (10 km) from shore at this time, and they headed towards the shoreline. Thirty minutes later, they stopped about 2½ miles from land and the twelve small steamboats were cast off and formed in line-abreast formation and headed for the beach, each towing their three small boats. The naval officer in charge of the starboard (right side) or southernmost tow was responsible for the navigation to shore, and the other tows kept abreast of him with about 150 yards (137 metres) spacing between each of the tows.

While these small boats from the battleships were making their way to shore, the destroyers with their troops were creeping closer to shore too, and were close behind. The destroyers had moved past the stationary battleships in the darkness and the soldiers on board were preparing to climb down the ship's sides to board the small boats which would be rowed ashore. The destroyers were planning to get as close as possible to the shore as they safely could without grounding.

The instructions to General Birdwood from General Hamilton's headquarters were to land between Gaba Tepe and Fisherman's Hut, a stretch of about 5,000 yards. Birdwood refined this landing zone to between a spot one mile north of Gaba Tepe and just south of a headland called Ari Burnu. The others were to land in between these spots, a total distance of about 3,000 yards.

Approaching the shore in total darkness was a difficult task because the small boat crews could not see each other properly and the leader in the right-side steamer could not see the land ahead. He steered the group by holding a compass heading. Also, the current was flowing from right to left complicating the navigation; but they were forewarned of this drift problem by the navy staff. It was a risk they had to take if they wanted to make a surprise landing in the dark.

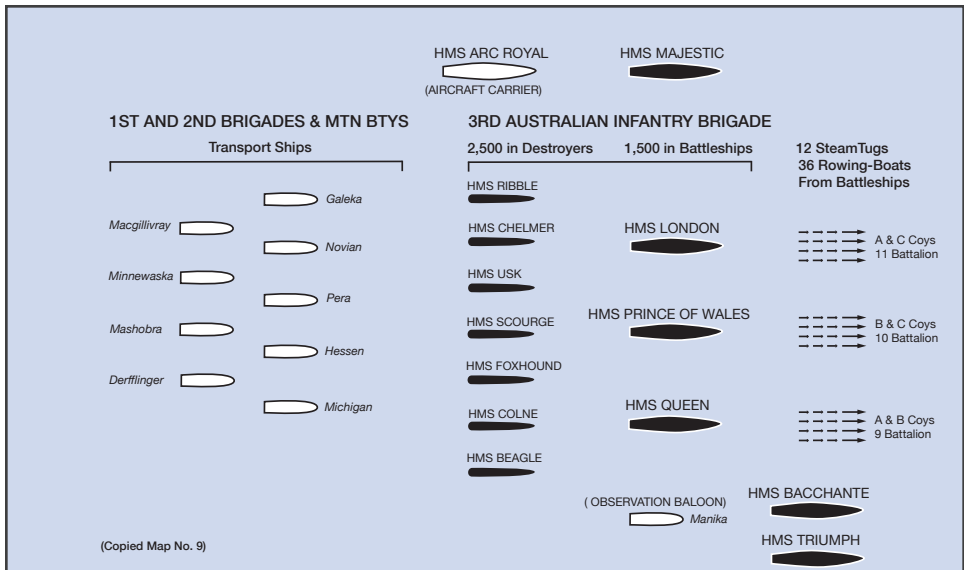
The soldiers were in good spirits as they approached the beach. At least they knew they were about to get into some action after more than five months since they left Albany. The sea was smooth and all was quiet except for the chugging of



*'Their objective was to capture the nearby Sari Bair range so that fresh troops following could advance to take Mal Tepe, a hill further inland.'*

the steamboats towing them eastwards. To them, the noise of the engines sounded quite loud and they wondered why the enemy defenders had not been alerted by the racket (noise). They were packed into the boats like sardines with their packs on their backs and their rifles between their knees with the muzzles pointing skywards.

Thirty minutes after they had left the battleships, it was still too dark for the tow crews to easily see each other and keep in good formation, even though they were only 150 yards apart. The formation started to get a bit ragged. The right side, southern tow was tracking eastwards towards its planned landing spot, but those on its left, except for his immediate neighbour, began to diverge to the north. The naval officer in charge of the right-hand tow, the 'navigator,' began to worry that he and the tow next to him would be isolated alone on the beach about one mile north of Gaba Tepe, his intended landing spot. He was also concerned that a knoll he

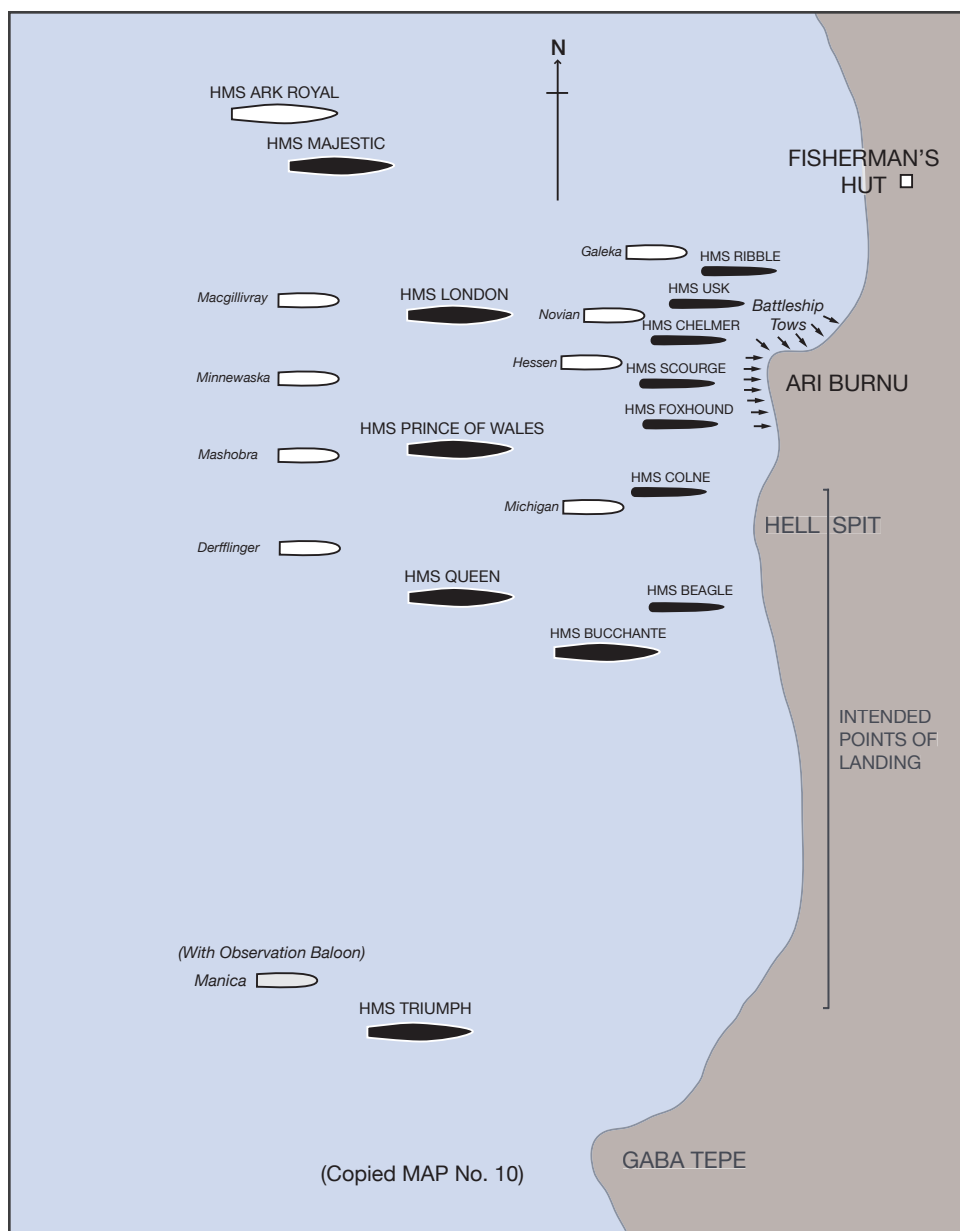


*1st Australian Division ship formation approaching the Gallipoli Peninsula.*

could see ahead was Gaba Tepe, meaning he was way too far south. Accordingly, he swung his steamboat to the left, crossing the bows of the other tows near him. One after the other, the other tows picked up this diversion to the left and did the same, holding the new northerly course for several hundred yards before resuming the easterly heading again. Unfortunately, this quick diversion upset the formation of the tows and changed the planned disposition of the units on reaching the beach.

As they moved closer to the shore they could not see any signs of enemy activity, which was a good start. When they were only about fifty yards from the beach, the steamboats started casting off their tows and the navy sailors took over and rowed the small boats towards the beach. The officer in charge of the northern tow realized that the whole formation was much farther north than they had planned for and tried to 'nudge' those on his right to move further south. But it was too late because they were now too close to the shore to effectively change direction. It was still dark.

While the steamboats from the battleships were casting off their small boats a huge flame flared out of the funnel of one of the northern steamboats. The bright flame and sparks



*The destroyers, only 500 yards from the beach, stretched from north of Ari Burnu to south of Hell Spit, providing a much better landing spread than what the battleship tows achieved. The transport ships were close behind, ready to unload the remaining soldiers of the 1st Australian Division while the battleships remained further out to sea, having despatched their loads. The 'Pera' is not shown.*

*Ships off Ari Burnu at 4.30 am on 25 April, 1915 (Map No.10).*

lasted for nearly thirty seconds, long enough to alert the enemy to the landings. That is the event I remembered about Gallipoli when I was a child. There was deathly silence for a moment. Then Captain Leane, who was in one of the northern boats said, "Look at that!"

The figure of a man could be seen on the skyline just above them as the first boats touched the beach at Ari Burnu. A voice called from the land. No one answered. From the top of the Ari Burnu knoll a rifle flashed. A bullet whizzed overhead and plunged into the sea. There was a second or two of silence before another four or five bullets whizzed by. Another pause—then scattered, irregular rifle fire—growing fast. They had been discovered.

The remaining naval steamboats continued to cast off their tows and the sailors paddled the last few yards to the beach. The smaller lifeboats and cutters ran in until they touched the bottom and the men stepped out into the shallow water and ran for the protection of a low sand bank lining the shore. The men in the larger 'launches' and 'pinnaces' which grounded further from the beach ended up in chest-deep water, making their scramble to shelter more difficult. The first Australian to step onto the beach was Lieutenant Duncan Chapman of the 9th Battalion. He touched only seconds before the first shots were fired. He was later killed fighting in Pozières, France on 6th August, 1916.



*Lieutenant Duncan Chapman was the first Australian soldier to set foot on the beach at Gallipoli on 25th April, 1915; only seconds before the enemy started shooting. Others who claimed the honour stepped ashore seconds after the first shots were fired. Photo: Clarke Collection.*



## **SATURDAY APRIL 24, 1915**

5.00 am	1st Bde in four transport ships sailed from Mudros Harbour, Lemnos.
12.30 pm	2nd Bde and Indian Mountain Btlys in five ships sailed from Mudros. Sailed to northern side of Lemnos and waited until night. 1,500 3rd Bde troops transferred to three battleships in Mudros.
2.00 pm	Five battleships (three with 3rd Bde) sailed from Mudros for Imbros. Seven Destroyers (empty) sailed from Mudros for Imbros. Four 3rd Bde transport ships, Devanha, Malda, Ionian and Suffolk, with 2,500 men sailed from Mudros for Imbros.
11.00 pm	3rd Bde troops transferred to destroyers which moved alongside transport ships Devanha, Malda, Ionian and Suffolk.
11.55 pm	Destroyers with 2,500 troops, towing transport ships' empty rowing- boats, move eastwards towards the Gallipoli Peninsula.

## **SUNDAY APRIL 25, 1915**

1.00 am	Destroyers stopped, waiting for moon to sink; behind the battleships.
1.30 am	Three 'covering' ships, Triumph, Majestic and Bacchante transfer their small boats to the three 3rd Bde battleships Queen, Prince of Wales and London. 12 rowing-boats now alongside each of the three 3rd Bde battleships. 3rd Bde troops climb from battleships into the rowing-boats. 1,500 men. 12 ship's steamboats each tow three rowing-boats. 36 total.
2.35 am	The full rowing-boats dropped back in strings behind the battleships.
2.53 am	All ships, with tows, move slowly forward towards the peninsula.
3.00 am	The moon sank and the night became intensely dark.
3.30 am	The battleships stopped 2½ miles from the shore and the order given for the battleship steamboats to take their tows to land.
4.00 am	Destroyers ordered to follow the battleship steamboat tows and they pass the battleships. Nine 1st and 2nd Bde transports follow.
4.30 am	Battleship rowing-boats reach the shore. First landings. First enemy shots fired on the landing boats. Destroyers close to 500 yards from the shore and start to unload troops into rowing boats. Now under heavy enemy fire.
4.45 am	Large Turkish guns at Gaba Tepe fire shrapnel rounds onto the beach and 3rd Bde troops already climbing hills above the beach, near 'Shrapnel Gully.' First destroyer tows land on the shore.
5.00 am	First transport ship Galeka begins unloading 2nd Bde near Fisher- man's Hut against extreme enemy machine-gun fire.
5.10 am	Gaba Tepe guns sighted other transport ships and fire on them.
5.30 am	Other 1st and 2nd Bde transport ships began to unload from their anchorage, helped by destroyers and the small steamboats.

*Sequence of events during the approach to the landings.*

It was at 4.30 am on Sunday, 25th April, when the first Australians landed at Ari Burnu. They raced across the stony beach, with bullets striking sparks at their feet, and flung themselves down in the shelter of the sand bank. Many were fixing their bayonets as they ran. When safe under the cover, they were ordered to drop their packs, load their magazines with five or ten rounds of ammunition, close the rifle's magazine cut-off, and to engage the safety catch. Again, they were reminded that no shots were to be fired until daylight.

The last rowing-boat in each tow had been placed in the charge of young Royal Navy midshipmen. To the naval folk these youngsters were officers, but to the Australian soldier they were children. Amidst all this heavy firing, when boatload after boatload moved in huddled and helpless, unable to return fire, officers and men saw these brave boys sitting, sometimes standing, high in the stern beside the tiller. The midshipman in the second tow from the left was a small red-headed boy. As the boat's nose grated on the shore he pulled out a heavy revolver and clambered over the backs of the men, waving the pistol and shouting in his young treble, "Come on, my lads! Come on, my lads!"

After running across the beach he pulled himself up as he realised that his duty was to get his boat back for another load of troops.

The men sheltering under the sand bank around Ari Burnu were being fired upon by rifles and a machine-gun from some fold in the dark above them; another was on the knoll itself or on the edge of the plateau above and behind it. While this early action was taking place on the beach the men in the destroyers were climbing into rowing-boats hauled alongside, only 500 yards from the shore. The Turks were shooting at them too. A steamboat returning from the battleship tows picked up some of *HMS Ribble's* boats. Four men in *HMS Ribble* had been hit while they waited; one of these fell forward into the water and his heavy equipment drowned him, despite all the efforts of one of the seamen. As a steamboat came alongside with a big barge a naval sub-lieutenant leaning over the side cried "Good-bye and good luck!" As he spoke, he fell, shot through the head.

The tows reaching the beach to the north of Ari Burnu



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*Troops of the 2nd Brigade landing at Anzac Beach, Gallipoli on the morning of 25 April, 1915 after the battleship and destroyer tow landings. The cruiser HMS Bacchante can be seen in the distance and a small steamboat tug is just visible on the right edge.*

were hit harder; especially the boats from the destroyer tows which were approaching the beach a few minutes after the first shots were fired at Ari Burnu. The sky was now a little lighter, and the Turks defending the place were wide awake. The men could do nothing against the hail of bullets striking them as they rowed to shore. Every now and then a man slid to the bottom of a boat with a moan or low gurgling cry. The troops and the seamen crouched as close and as low as they could, with their backs hunched. A saying was current at the time, based on the statement of a sergeant, that bullets made a noise like small birds passing overhead. At this crisis Private 'Combo' Smith, a stockman from Bendigo, set one whole boat laughing by looking at the sky and remarking to Lieutenant 'Snowy' Howe from Broome, "Just like little birds, ain't they, Snow?"

Most of the first wave of men made it to shore, but the place was clearly the wrong one. Anyone who depended upon a set plan for the next move was completely bewildered. It had been hoped that the halt under the sand bank would be just



long enough to allow all the companies from the destroyer tows to land, form with those from the battleship tows, and carry out an organised attack across the open ground against the first ridge. But there was no open ground. A high rugged slope pressed down onto the beach and fierce rifle-fire swept over them from above. They were lying in little parties out of site of most of their mates, their clothes water-logged and their rifles clogged with sand. As a result of the swing of the southern tows while heading towards the shore, the units were now all mixed up too. All mixed up and on the wrong beach.

The troops who landed on the southern side of Ari Burnu point were protected from enemy rifle-fire coming from the plateau above the knoll because they were out of sight of the shooters. However, they were easy targets for the Turks on the lower knoll. A machine-gun in the foothills 500 yards to the north of the men who landed on the northern side of Ari Burnu was shooting into them from behind, and the small sand bank offered them no protection. They had to keep moving forward.

“What are we to do next, sir?” somebody asked a senior officer.

“I don’t know, I’m sure,” was the reply. “Everything is in a terrible muddle.”

## 5

### The climb to 'Plugge's Plateau'

Every authority, from Sir Ian Hamilton and General Birdwood down, had emphasized to the troops that they must go forward, whatever the opposition.

There were some men and officers laying under the sandy bank who were keen to keep moving forward. They dropped their packs and went straight into the scrub and up the steepening slopes, chasing the enemy. From the left-hand edge of the plateau above they could see the flashes of a machine-gun. They headed up the hill towards it. Others crouching on the beach saw these men advancing in the dark and set off with them. The result was that a few minutes after the landing, a rough line about six companies strong (say about 700 men) began the difficult climb to the plateau.

They soon reached the top of the Ari Burnu knoll where a small square machine-gun post had been dug. Some Turks bolted (ran away) from the post via a trench which ran back inland from the post, connecting the knoll with the side of the plateau behind it. A wounded Turk lay in the trench and Captain Graham Butler, the medical officer of the 9th Battalion, stopped to attend to him as the line was scrambling up the hill ahead.

Leaving the Ari Burnu knoll behind and below them, they all converged on to the sheer side of the plateau. The Turks could see this line of men climbing towards them in the

dim light and some started to bolt. The flashes of the machine-gun on the top had ceased, but in the darkness a 'necklace' of rifle flashes still fringed the lower crest to the right.

The scrub was composed of small prickly bushes and shrubs with naked orange stems and leaves, making it difficult for the men, burdened with their heavy kit and rifle, to climb through it. They grasped the shrub roots and hauled themselves up, sometimes digging footholds in the ground with their bayonets. As they climbed higher towards the plateau, the sides became steeper, making the climb even more difficult.

Some Turks could still be seen moving around on the skyline above them. The men had been warned that the Turks mutilated men whom they captured or found wounded, and in these early days the Australians had a strong suspicion and hatred of the enemy. Whenever a Turk was confronted during these early hours of the fight, he was chased with shouts of "Imshi-yalla (get out), you bastard!" and other tags of Arabic which were then part of the Australian speech. A Turk jumped up from a trench ahead of the men and tried to escape. The nearest Aussie could not shoot to stop him because his rifle was full of sand so he bayoneted the Turk through his haversack and captured him.

"Prisoner here!" he shouted.

"Shoot the bastard!" was all he heard from his Aussie mates passing up the hill. But, as in every battle he fought, the Australian soldier was more humane in his deeds than in his words. The Turk was escorted down to the beach by a wounded man. However, it must be admitted that other Turks captured in the gully below the plateau, who were seen killing Aussies in the boats as they landed in the destroyer tows, did not receive the same sympathetic treatment.

As the first Australians clambered out on to the small plateau after their exhausting climb a few Turks ran back from a trench near the plateau rim. The Aussies flung themselves down behind a small mound of earth heaped up along the seaward side of the trench as fierce fire from the other side of the plateau, and from the dimly-seen ridge beyond, swept over them. They refrained from jumping into the trench for protection because they thought the enemy might have booby-trapped it before running off. Captain Annear was hit through the head and lay there, the first Australian officer to be killed at Gallipoli.



*Looking up at Plugge's Plateau and the knoll from where some of the first boats landed. The soldiers raced forward to take shelter behind the low sandbank, and soon after, clambered up the hill chasing the enemy.*

*Below, looking down on Ari Burnu (point) from Plugge's Plateau. The knoll is in the foreground. The boats were landing around the point when the first shots were fired from these positions. These photos were taken on 23rd April, 2015 prior to the 100th anniversary services. The photo above was taken from the spot marked 'photo spot' near where two people are standing. From the knoll, the Aussies would have been easy targets, even in the early morning darkness.*







*Looking north to Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula, showing how steeply the hills rose from the beach. The first enemy shots were fired from the knoll as the first boats were landing on the point. The road and wall were not there in 1915.*

*Below. Looking south from Ari Burnu. Hell Spit is at the southern end of Anzac Cove and Gaba Tepe (hill), the southern limit for the landing, can be seen in the distance.*





*The routes taken from the beaches to the Sari Bair Range via Plugge's Plateau, Reserve Gully, Rest Gully, Walker's Ridge, Russell's Top, The Nek, Shrapnel Gully, and Monash Valley .*

Within a few minutes, as other men reached the plateau, the Turkish fire from its farther side began to ease. Two Turks jumped up from a trench and fired down at the approaching Aussies, and a few men who just reached the summit chased them across the small plateau. One was bayoneted in the shoulder by an Aussie who stepped from behind a bush as he passed; and the other was shot on the far edge of the summit, where he rolled down a steep crevice and hung dead in the gravel. Three more Turks sprang up and made for Major Brockman as he reached the top. An Irishman, an old soldier of the British Dragoon Guards, killed all three. There was certainly some close combat going on only a few minutes after the landings.

Two smaller communication trenches ran back from the main trench near the plateau rim to the far edge of the plateau. Later in the day, when these trenches were occupied by New Zealanders and others in reserve, Colonel Plugge of



the Auckland Battalion had his headquarters there. The hill-top was accordingly named 'Plugge's (pronounced Pluggie's) Plateau.'

The troops who followed the bolting Turks across the plateau found themselves facing a deep valley which ran below them. To the north of them the valley side, called the 'Razor Edge,' was so sheer they could not cross it to get to the next higher ground, but further south, where the slope was more gentle, a zigzag path led down into a gully, later named Shrapnel Gully. This path is shown on the map on the previous page. The Turks knew this path well and quickly dropped down into it while the Australians hesitated at the cliff. The Turks ran down through the bushes and up a track on the other side of the valley. The Aussies stood on the edge of the plateau firing at them, while somewhere on the heights across the valley, the enemy returned their fire. Finally, a few of the leading men jumped straight down into the gravel precipice and continued the chase.

While these first parties were starting to follow the Turks inland, the other men of the battleship tows now reaching the plateau were accompanied by some senior officers who were able to give direction, even though the plans were now completely confused. Many soldiers thought their work as a covering force was finished when they reached this first plateau. After the acute tension in the boats, they arrived on the plateau in bursting spirits. The excitement and surprise at being there, and alive, having more than half completed the formidable task which had hung over them for six weeks, drowned all other feelings. It was now getting lighter and they could see Turks running across the lower ridge which formed the southern continuation of the plateau (MacLagan's Ridge), and with a laugh and a shout, the men blazed at them. These targets were the Turks running from the Aussies who were now landing on the beach at Anzac Cove below them. Many on the plateau thought the battle was more than half finished, and they naturally waited for new directions. They were soon to be disappointed.

It was now 4.45 am when the boats from the destroyers were landing on the shore around Ari Burnu and the enemy artillery at Gaba Tepe opened fire on the beach. There was a flash of a gun on the inland neck of Gaba Tepe about two

miles south of them, and a shrapnel shell, timed to burst in the air and scatter deadly steel pellets upon the ground below, burst over the beach.

The planners knew it was important to silence the three gun batteries in the area around the planned landing spots. One was located behind the neck of land connecting Gaba Tepe with the main ridge to its north-east. The landing plan called for some of the first troops who were to land nearest Gaba Tepe to make a surprise attack, with bayonets, on that gun battery immediately after reaching the beach. However, the troops briefed for the task were in the small boats that landed around Ari Burnu, way to the north, after getting mixed up during the run-in to the beach. Consequently, the guns continued to harass everyone on the beach and in the valleys all day long. An important consequence of the landing error.

The destroyers, like the battleships, landed their men north of the intended beach too. They did however, set them ashore in the proper order and those landing parties were far more widely distributed than the battleship tows. The southernmost destroyer (*HMS Beagle*) was three-quarters of a mile south of Ari Burnu, and the northernmost (*HMS Ribble*) was about 300 yards north of where the northern battleship tows landed, north of Ari Burnu. The majority came in at points where the battleship tows had not landed. One group of boats struck the beach half-way between two knolls (Anzac Cove) where Turks on the beach, and in the scrub immediately above it, fired at point-blank range as they landed. Three men were killed in one boat. After the landing, the Turks escaped by running up through the scrub before the Australians could load their rifles or fix their bayonets. Those running Turks were the enemy seen and fired upon by the men up on Plugge's Plateau who thought their war was over.

Plugge's Plateau just happened to be a staging post for the men on their way to the higher ground of the Sari Bair Range. From there, they had to climb to 'Russell's Top,' the next level above Plugge's Plateau, or move along 'Monash Valley' to its head (top end) where an important rounded hill called 'Baby 700' was located. Climbing direct to Russell's top was not possible because the Razor Edge route was impass-





*The Plugge's Plateau Memorial — "Their name liveth for evermore."*

able, but they were not aware of that until they arrived there. Those who landed to the north of Ari Burnu found two routes to the higher ground; one up onto Russell's Top via Reserve Valley and another a bit further to the north, via 'Walker's Ridge.'

## 6

### The climb to ‘Russell’s Top’

The men from the destroyers *HMS Ribble* and *HMS Usk*, who landed about 300 yards north of where the battleship tows landed, were confronted by bare yellow precipices rising just inland from the beach. The steep slope of Plugge’s Plateau and Razor Edge was on the right, and a rugged spur (afterwards known as Walker’s Ridge) was on the left, making a semicircle of cliffs around a tall weather-beaten spur that resembled a Sphinx, with wings spread around each side. To the Australians, from that day on, it was called the ‘Sphinx,’ and it now forms the backdrop for the Gallipoli Anzac Day Dawn Service at North Beach.

Being about fifteen minutes after the first battleship tows landed, the Turks on this northern flank were now wide awake and alert in their trenches. Before the small boats even left the destroyers, bullets were rattling against the high bows of the warships hovering close to the land. The rowing-boats were under heavy fire all the way to the beaches, and as the first of them reached the shore, the first Turkish shrapnel shells came flying over from Gaba Tepe while a Turkish machine-gun was causing havoc from somewhere in the distance on their left.

Bullet after bullet hit the men in the crowded boats. Shots were striking the water all around them. A man scrambled out over the stern of a boat, found the water too deep,



*Looking down at the landing points around Ari Burnu from the edge of Russell's Top and Walker's Ridge. The terrain in Reserve Gully, on the other side of the Sphinx from here, is similar to this rugged gully.*

tried to hang on to the boat, but dropped off. Gone! In one boat, six men were hit before reaching the shore, and two more as they clambered from the boat. Other men rushed across the beach and lay under the low bank where a small creek runs down from the slopes west of the Sphinx.

A platoon from the *HMS Ribble* tows was despatched to the north along the beach to find and silence the machine-gun. Another platoon from the *HMS London* tows which had landed earlier was also moving north, but just inland of the beach, to combat the same enemy fire.

These platoons moved north towards Fisherman's Hut, a long stone hut used by local fishermen for shelter. They were under heavy enemy fire all the way, particularly from trenches on a knoll to their right, later named 'No.1 Post.' As the morning light improved, they could see Turks in trenches on a small knoll above Fisherman's Hut, 300 yards further north. They then noticed four white boats full of men rowing

directly towards Fisherman's Hut so they moved forward aiming to help them with their landing. These were the first boats from the transport ship *Galeka* which had anchored offshore only fifteen minutes after the first landings.

While moving forward over an open area twenty men of one platoon were hit and twelve were killed before they could reach decent cover. From a position just south of where the boats had landed they saw that the boats had reached the shore, but lying down on the stony beach in front of the boats were many motionless bodies. Four men could be seen sheltering behind one boat.

While the four boats were approaching Fisherman's Hut, five of the six rowers in one boat were shot. Others took the oars and kept rowing. Of the 140 men in those four boats only 38 were unhurt or only slightly wounded. The rest lay in the boats or on the beach dead, dying, or grievously wounded. Only eighteen made it back to North Beach by the time it was dark and many of the wounded remained in or near the beached boats all night. It was a massacre; the Fisherman's Hut massacre!

In the afternoon, a New Zealander on the lower slope of Walker's Ridge was watching the boats through a telescopic range-finder. He saw about 30 men still in the boats and he assumed they were all dead. One dead man sat with an arm over the gunwale and another, a sailor, was lying with his chin on his hand and gazing up at him on Walker's Ridge.

At about 3 pm the next day the same New Zealander looked at the boats again and noticed that the sailor had changed his position, and as he watched, another 'body' got up and started to hobble along the beach. After a few yards a Turkish sniper hit him and he fell, but managed to crawl to cover under a low bank. He was later rescued by the same New Zealander and three of his mates. The last nine men were removed from the boats on the evening of the second day having survived about 36 hours in the boats. That is what it was like at Fisherman's Hut.

Now back to the advance up to Russell's Top. The destroyer *HMS Usk* landed her tows near the foot of Walker's Ridge. A machine-gun on higher ground beyond the ridge was firing on them as they moved along a goat track through the



scrub to where the ridge narrowed and became steeper and more bare. Shots from the scrub-covered gullies on their left whizzed past them. They continued climbing, dodging from one side of the ridge to the other, until they reached a small steep knob further up the spur, beyond which the spur dipped for twenty feet and then rose again. To cross this dip every man had to run fifteen yards, completely exposed to fire from Turkish rifles on the higher spurs to their left. After a fight of some sort, the men made their way out onto a plateau above the Sphinx, later called Russell's Top. Here they met more Australians from the *HMS Ribble* tows who had earlier climbed up to Russell's Top via Reserve Gully on the southern side of the Sphinx.

The Reserve Gully route to Russell's Top via the south side of the Sphinx was a very difficult climb and the heavily laden soldiers had to haul themselves up on hands and knees over the craggy hillside. The terrain was similar to that shown in the photograph on page 35. As the party scrambled to the level of the Top they came across a trench full of Turks who soon scrambled over the back of their trench and fled. There were about thirty of them in brown khaki uniforms with their shins muffled in heavy wrappings. Two or three of the Turks were shot as they ran and the rest made it into scrub about 1,000 yards away on Baby 700. They had run from near the Sphinx, across Russell's Top and then over a narrow neck of land between valleys on either side, later called 'The Nek,' to the seaward side of Baby 700. The Aussies moved forward and rested at The Nek for a while before returning to a hollow on Russell's Top where they joined with the men who had reached the Top via Walker's Ridge. There, according to the rules learnt again and again while training in Egypt, they re-organized. It was about 7 am and down Monash Valley on their right they could see men digging furiously along the opposite crest.

## 7

### The move along 'Monash Valley'

While the men from the destroyer tows were making their way up to Russell's Top via Walker's Ridge and Reserve Gully near the Sphinx, most of the battleship tow men, who had climbed to the top of Plugge's Plateau a little earlier, were now moving down into Shrapnel Gully and making their way towards positions on the eastern crest of Monash Valley and Baby 700 at the head of that valley. Getting to Monash Valley was relatively easy compared to the task of reaching Baby 700 via the spur running north from Plugge's Plateau. The first obstacle was the sharp Razor Edge on the far side of Plugges which led to Russell's Top only 200 yards away. It was a yellow sandy ridge too sharp to walk across. Consequently, the troops had to climb down into Rest Gully or Shrapnel Gully before being able to proceed towards Baby 700, the hill at the northern end of Monash Valley. The aim was to capture Baby 700 and the larger hill behind it called 'Battleship Hill' before moving further up the ridge to Chunuk Bair.

Only twenty minutes after landing, the troops were descending into the gullies from Plugges by the steep zigzag path which started where the Razor Edge joined the plateau, when they heard a sharp whine in the sky. On looking up they saw a flash and heard a shell exploding and shrapnel fragments slamming into the side of the Razor Edge just above them. It was the first Turkish shrapnel shell that these men had



*Looking down Monash Valley from Quinn's Post cemetery. The bend to the right, leading to Shrapnel Gully in the sunlight, can be seen in the distance. Monash Valley, in shade, continues off the right edge of the photo.*

seen and for the next ten minutes they were all fascinated by the new experience. The shell was fired from Gaba Tepe, and as other guns came up elsewhere during the day, salvoes of shrapnel began to burst continually in the valleys inland from Plugges. That's how Shrapnel Gully got its name.

Following the Monash Valley creek to its head at Baby 700 was a hard climb, made even more difficult by the enemy fire, but climbing the steep eastern side of the valley to occupy the crest to secure the ridge top was another matter. There were no easy routes to take nor paths to climb. In the end the troops climbed up a couple of weathered gullies which provided something to cling to. Men were sent from Plugge's Plateau along Monash Valley to climb these gullies and the places later became known as Courtney's Post and Steele's Post. The enemy fire at these posts was devastating, and as following troops were moving along Monash Valley making their way towards Baby 700 to help to capture that important feature,



officers above them on their right at Steele's Post called for them to climb up the gullies to help with their own defence. They did so because in many cases they were lost and did not know where their officers were after the terrifying shrapnel shells caused them all to scatter for cover in all directions. While down in the valley, they too were under constant enemy fire from the right side of Monash Valley and from Baby 700 which looked directly down into the valley towards them. Nowhere was safe.

A little later in the morning, troops who had assembled below Plugge's Plateau in the relative safety of Rest Gully made their way directly up onto Russell's Top before advancing towards The Nek and Baby 700.

The first New Zealanders came ashore at around 9 am and started making their way up onto Russell's Top via Walker's Ridge. However, at about 11 am, after General Walker was appointed commander of the NZ Infantry Brigade, he inspected the narrow route and decided it was too dangerous for his men to enter the battle from 'single-file' and ordered all future NZ arrivals to proceed to the head of Monash Valley and Baby 700 via Plugge's Plateau. The men already half-way up Walker's Ridge had to retreat and make their way back to Plugge's Plateau. Because of the severe enemy fire when crossing over the plateau, the route was again changed to via the entrance to Shrapnel Gully near the beach. As a result of all the extra trekking, the NZ soldiers did not enter the battle around Baby 700 and Battleship Hill until the early afternoon. From that time onwards, the Australians and New Zealanders (Anzacs) fought bravely together trying to hold the high ground of the Sari Bair Range.

## 8

### The fight for 'Baby 700'

**I**t was still early morning and troops were moving towards the high ground along the Sari Bair Range, which included Baby 700, Battleship Hill and Chunuk Bair, using all routes available. Some had moved via Walker's Ridge to Russell's Top; some had taken the difficult Reserve Gully route near the Sphinx up onto the high ground; some had climbed direct from Rest Gully up onto Russell's Top; and some had moved along Shrapnel Gully and Monash Valley to the head of that valley where Baby 700 was located. The Nek was also at the head of Monash Valley, just to the seaward side of Baby 700, and a little further west of it was the edge of Russell's Top. This is where many of the soldiers gathered during the morning. Realizing that Russell's Top and The Nek area was tactically important, defensive trenches were dug and some units remained there to defend the place.

Although the Turkish troops had ran off when the first group of Australians arrived on Russell's Top, they had not gone far. They settled into the scrub on the seaward side of Baby 700. The first Aussies to reach The Nek kept advancing through the scrub, past the inland side of Baby 700, heading for Battleship Hill and higher. Initially, all was rather quiet but when they reached the next ridge about sixty Turks opened fire on them. Under heavy fire, they crept forward in stages until they reached the south-eastern shoulder of Battleship

Hill, the furthest point on the Sari Bair Range reached on the first day. They fought at this point for about thirty minutes, with heavy losses, before retreating to near Baby 700 after suspecting the Turks were about to cut them off.

While the fight was going on near Battleship Hill there was plenty of action going on back at Baby 700 too. It was 8.30 am when the first advance on Baby 700 from The Nek area was ordered. The men moved quickly over the top of the hill but soon encountered heavy enemy fire. Not long after, more enemy soldiers were seen moving down the ridge from Battleship Hill towards them, and after some heavy defensive fighting, the Aussies retired back to the south side of The Nek.

When more reserves arrived from the beach another attempt was made to capture Baby 700. The fighting was hard and casualties were high. Private Donkin had two bullets in his left leg; a third pierced the top of his hat and cut his hair; the fourth ripped his left sleeve; the fifth hit his ammunition pouch and exploded his bullets; and the sixth struck his digging tool. These hits were only considered as 'close shaves,' and so he fought on with his mates. Many officers were killed while fighting around The Nek and Baby 700 because they tended to be more exposed to the enemy fire as they offered their men, when either kneeling or standing, advice and directions.

The fight for Baby 700 continued all day. The Aussies moved forward over the summit of Baby 700 five times and the Turks pushed them back to The Nek each time. The last Turk attack at Baby 700 was at about 4.30 pm and the Australian and New Zealand soldiers were forced to retreat to just south of The Nek to Russell's Top where the Top joins Walker's Ridge. Some escaped into Monash Valley near Pope's Hill. Although a New Zealand trench at the top of Walker's Ridge was reinforced with about 200 men during the afternoon, no reinforcements made it up to Russell's Top and The Nek that night.

As darkness fell, the Turks crossed The Nek and attempted to capture Russell's Top. The men could hear them coming, shouting "Allah! Mohammed!" They let them get close and opened fire, driving them back. A short time later more Turks attacked from the side and they too were forced back.

However, the Turks were making some ground so the Anzacs moved back to join other friendly forces they thought were also on Russell's Top. When they had moved about 200 yards the Turks attacked them again. They fought them off again and continued down along the inland edge of Russell's Top to the top of Rest Gully near Plugge's Plateau; back near where some of them had started from in the early morning! The Turks followed them again and the fighting continued all night.



*Looking north-east, this is 'The Nek' Memorial on the Sari Bair Range near 'Baby 700' hill, which is a few hundred metres away behind the trees. This area was critical on the first day; and later. The lawn area is where many of our soldiers were cut down a few months later in August during the infamous charges against the enemy machine guns, as depicted in the movie 'Gallipoli.'*

## 9

### ‘400 Plateau’

Half a mile to the right front, across the valley from Plugge’s Plateau, was the high ground of the 400 Plateau (400 feet above sea-level), a large heart-shaped level-topped hill which should have been the centre for the landing. Of the first landings, the middle battalion was to move across this plateau to capture the Turkish batteries and trenches on the next ridge; and the southern battalion was to move quickly against the gun battery at Gaba Tepe. However, the northerly landing error upset this plan.

Most of the battalions which landed in the battleship tows ended up on or near Ari Burnu and entered their war by climbing up onto Plugge’s Plateau where they could see their objectives. Well, almost. The high ground to the north to Baby 700 was visible and the far side of Monash Valley was visible but what was beyond them was not. Gaba Tepe where the gun battery was located was two miles away to the south and not 1,000 yards away as planned for.

Those heading for the inland gun battery moved from Plugges down into Shrapnel Gully and followed the gully for a while before climbing up onto the 400 Plateau. Some went more direct from the beaches. This plateau was about 600 yards square and covered in the same prickly gorse as seen all over the other hills. The plateau was heart shaped with a gully (Owen’s Gully) cutting into it from the east and dividing it into





*400 Plateau was a heart-shaped area of flat ground which was 400 feet above sea level; hence its name. The centre of the landings should have been around Brighton Beach which would have enabled our troops to rapidly cross the plateau towards the Third Ridge. Who knows what the Gallipoli outcome would have been if they had reached the Third Ridge two hours earlier!*

two segments; 'Johnston's Jolly' on the north side and 'Lone Pine' on the south side. Johnston's Jolly got its name from Colonel Johnston's field-guns which later used to 'jolly up' the Turks whenever they fired. On the southern lobe there was a solitary stunted pine tree, and so it was later called Lone Pine.

The men from the destroyer tows had now joined the first men on the plateau from the battleship tows because they had less distance to cover to get there. They made their way straight up onto the plateau from the beach. Only a few hundred yards away on the Lone Pine lobe of the plateau, near Owen's Gully, was a Turkish gun battery. The Turks who were preparing to move the guns when the Aussies climbed onto the plateau disappeared into Owen's Gully and escaped. They were found later on the southern edge of Owen's Gully in



a spoon-shaped depression which was later called 'The Cup,' and after a gun battle, the Turkish gunners were killed.

As more troops made it up onto the plateau an order was received to dig in and reorganize where they were. Their objective was the Third Ridge further to the east but there was a good chance of being cut off if they moved there too early. Also, the critical battle for Baby 700 on the high ridge to their left was now more important. There were now about 200 men on the eastern side of the plateau with more men from the transport ships arriving on the right side. However, there were some men of the advanced parties who were way ahead of the others and they did not receive the order to dig in. They just knew that they had to advance as fast as they could and to keep going at all costs. And they did.

While the rather disorganized force was digging in on the top of the plateau, Lieutenant Loutit and his team worked their way down Owen's Gully into Legge Valley, heading for the Third Ridge. There were about 30 of them. When they reached the base of the ridge at about 8 am everything was rather quiet. Just a few long-range shots here and there and no enemy in sight. They started to climb the ridge and when they reached the top of a second hill they could see the backbone of the Third Ridge and there were plenty of Turks on it. They were not far from Scrubby Knoll. They opened fire upon the Turks who responded with heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. The Aussies were forced to retreat, hotly pursued by the Turks, and only eleven made it back to the northern edge of 400 Plateau at about 11 am. They had reached the most easterly point of the peninsula attained by any of the Anzacs at Gallipoli.

While the advanced parties were earlier making their way towards Scrubby Knoll, other troops continued to arrive in small groups on the 400 Plateau and moved to forward positions all around the perimeter, albeit spread out, and prepared for a Turkish counter attack. The Turks could be seen moving up the Third Ridge in large numbers from the direction of Gaba Tepe. When that counter attack started, a whirlwind of machine-gun fire descended upon the Aussies and they scattered for cover, thus making control even more difficult.

Fighting on 400 Plateau continued all day with small disorganized groups doing their best to hold their ground. They could see the Turks moving up the Third Ridge towards Baby 700, and leaving that ridge just short of Baby 700 to attack the Aussies who were establishing themselves near Courtney's Post and Steele's Post. They could also see them advancing towards themselves on the plateau. The Turkish artillery fire was never ending and lethal as the men on the plateau were perfect targets. The Turkish observers could see every move the men were making, and when any group made a move forward, or indeed just stood up, the Turkish guns responded with deadly shrapnel fire.

The last reinforcements arrived on the southern side of the plateau just after 5 pm. Shortly afterwards the enemy began to creep up to the eastern edge of the plateau, gradually developing an attack which was maintained, on and off, throughout the late afternoon. By dusk most of the Aussies had withdrawn to the western edge of the plateau, or behind it. A few who were not aware of the withdrawal to the edge of the plateau held their positions, and these men, along with the dead and dying, lay open to an attack by the Turks.

The Turks started moving in large numbers against the Aussies remaining on the southern side of 400 Plateau, at Pine Ridge and Bolton's Ridge, and many men there were never heard from again. The Turks ended up being the winners at 400 Plateau on that first day. In fact, they ended up being the winners on all fronts on that day.

Later that evening General Birdwood wrote to Sir Ian Hamilton seeking permission to evacuate his forces from the peninsula. The Turks had forced his men back almost to the beaches and he felt his troops could not withstand another day of intense fighting, without reinforcements. Hamilton replied early the next morning telling him to dig in and stick it out.

## 10

### The Anzac dawn service

The Anzacs did dig in and stick it out, and they did so for the next eight months until their evacuation in December. There were several attempts to break the stalemate, but in the end, the Anzac positions on the Gallipoli Peninsula were about where they were at the end of the first day.

There were about 2,000 'lost' on the first day of fighting and by the end of the campaign Australia had lost 8,709 killed and 19,441 wounded. New Zealand lost 2,721 killed and 4,752 wounded.

As you stand waiting for your local dawn service to start, you can reflect on what went on at Gallipoli in the early hours of 25th April, 1915. You can imagine the confusion on the beaches as those first shots were fired in the dark at 4.30 am. Only fifteen minutes later, in the improving light, you can see the enemy bullets thudding into the human cargo of the destroyer tows. Soon after you see the enemy shrapnel scattering steel pellets everywhere along the beach, and by 5 am you can just make out hundreds of our men scrambling up onto Plugge's Plateau. Shortly after, a little further to the north, you recall the massacre at Fisherman's Hut. By 6 am the men are well on their way down into Shrapnel Gully and Monash Valley, and by 7 am some had reached The Nek. By 9 am some of the forward parties had reached their most easterly positions for the war, and by mid-afternoon of that

first day they had all been forced back to defensive positions they had crossed at about 7 am. Unfortunately, that is about where they were when they were evacuated from the Gallipoli Peninsula on 20th December, 1915.



*The Australian Lone Pine Anzac service on Anzac Day, 2015.*



*One traditional recitation on Anzac Day is the Ode, the fourth stanza of the poem 'For the fallen' by Laurence Binyon (1869–1943).*

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them."

Laurence Binyon, 1914

*'For the fallen' was first published in the London Times in 1914. It was selected in 1919 to accompany the unveiling of the London Cenotaph and, like so many memorial traditions, passed into common use across the Commonwealth. Binyon's poem was also read at the laying of the Inauguration Stone at the Australian War Memorial in 1929.*



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# The Back Cover

This book describes what went on around Anzac Cove on 25 April, 1915; from before the early morning landings until the close of action on that first night.

It covers the reason why Australia was involved, how our soldiers arrived at Anzac Cove, and how they climbed the trails to higher ground after the landings. It finishes with a summary of what our Anzacs achieved on the first day.

I have kept it short so that readers can read it from start to finish in one session. There are no battalion numbers to remember nor names to note. As you stand in silence waiting for your local Anzac Day dawn service to begin you will be able to 'picture' what our troops were going through at the same time of the morning on the same day about 100 years ago.

*Peter D. Condon*



*Peter Condon at the Lone Pine Cemetery on 25 April, 2015.*

*Peter served as a pilot in the RAAF for 23 years. He was a Forward Air Controller (FAC) with the United States Air Force in Vietnam flying small, slow O-1 'Bird Dog' and OV-10 'Bronco' aircraft in 1969, and he was the commanding officer of No 75 Squadron in Darwin in 1983-85 flying Mirage III fighter aircraft.*