

# CHANNEL ISLANDS GREAT WAR STUDY GROUP



Lancashire Landing (W Beach)



V Beach



Ocean Beach, sweeping around towards Suvla Point



The Sphinx



Ari Burnu (Y Beach) from Walker's Ridge



Brighton Beach and Shell Green Cemetery

## The Deadly Shores – Gallipoli Today

JOURNAL 28  
OCTOBER 2009

Please note that Copyright for any articles contained in this Journal rests with the Authors as shown. Please contact them directly if you wish to use their material.

Hello All

I must confess that for many months up to the time that I boarded my flight took off from Heathrow bound for Istanbul, and to travel from there to the Dardanelles, my feeling was one of considerable apprehension – was I wasting my money, would I learn and see much, would a troublesome knee hold out? Yet, wheezing my way up to Plugge's Plateau a few days later, that feeling had long since evaporated even though I could now fully understand why the Turkish soldiers had thought that their Australian counterparts worshipped the God "Bastard"! I learnt and saw much, my money was well spent (a common Jersey consideration!), and I made it back safely, albeit in a somewhat worn out and bedraggled state. Gallipoli was a first-rate experience, and I would recommend it and the Holts' tour company to anyone. Hopefully, I can convey that experience adequately in later pages of this Journal, but trust that I will be forgiven if I don't, as a few days after my return, my brain is still scrambled and too full of images, impressions and information from the trip to guarantee a decent article. Fortunately, if you want to skip what I have written, there is still plenty to read, thanks as ever to Liz Walton, Peter Tabb and Ian Ronayne.

### **This Month's Cover**



It should not be a surprise that Gallipoli is featured on the front cover. The sights depicted were the first, and sadly, the last seen of the Peninsula by many thousands of Australian, New Zealand, French, Indian, British and Newfoundland (surprisingly yes!) soldiers and sailors between March of 1915 and January of 1916. As can be seen, we were blessed with clear blue skies virtually throughout the trip, and the late-September weather was still hot enough to remind us visitors of the need for much of the water to be shipped from Egypt and Lemnos in 1915, thereby providing men with their solitary pint each day! As can be seen, this reminder was amply reinforced by the discovery of a corroded water bottle in the undergrowth of Hill 60! A poignant souvenir, leaving the group to ponder on its owner's fate.

### **Fromelles (Journal 26) – An Update Public arrangements for Fromelles commemorative ceremony**

The CWGC advises that on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2010, a special commemorative event will be held in the northern French village of Fromelles, to mark the completion of the archaeological excavation and re-interment of 250 British and Australian soldiers, who died at the Battle of Fromelles in July, 1916. This event will take place in Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, which is currently being built by the CWGC. Interest in attending this event is likely to be high, but because of the size of the cemetery site, space will be very limited. A small viewing area, to allow members of the public to watch the ceremony, is envisaged, but details have yet to be confirmed.

The Commission has already received notes of interest from people keen to attend this event, but at this stage we are unable to provide any assurances that all those who wish to attend the event within the Cemetery will be accommodated. We would therefore urge people not to make any definite travel arrangements in the belief that their attendance is assured. This advice also extends to people who may be under the impression that booking travel through a battlefield tour operator will guarantee attendance at the Ceremony. Any such claim by tour companies is erroneous.

Further details on the ceremony will be given on the CWGC website in due course.

### **Ours: The Jersey Pals in the First World War An Update by Ian Ronayne**

The last Journal just about coincided with the publication of my book, *“Ours: The Jersey Pals in the First World War”*. The following is by way of a quick round-up of events since then.

Prior to publication, I had contacted the four main media producers in Jersey, namely the JEP, Channel Television, BBC Radio Jersey, and BBC TV. All expressed an interest in the book and my story, with both the JEP and Channel receiving advance copies for review. As it turned out, however, only BBC Radio and TV ran anything at the time of publication, with the latter including an interview with Mary Moody whose grandfather Jimmy Scoones died while serving with the Jersey Company. At the same time, Channel 103 picked up the story through a press release, and Alasdair Crosby included a fine article in the latest edition of *The Jersey Life* magazine. All in all, it was a very busy week indeed. It all helped boost local sales, and pushed *“Ours”* to Number Four in Waterstones best-selling paperback chart.

During the following week, I had the opportunity to meet with Jersey’s Lieutenant-Governor, General Andrew Ridgeway, who had very kindly provided a foreword for the book. Over a very pleasant cup of tea, I was able to offer my thanks in person (Ed: See photograph overleaf). At the end of the week, a book-signing at Waterstones managed to sell out all their remaining stock.

The end of the Waterstones’ stock marked the start of a frustrating period in that the store struggled to get more copies of the book on their shelves. Trapped in the vagaries of a new UK-based ordering process, their order was lost in the system (Ed: Does that equate to the cheque being in the post?), with no date when the books would arrive. At a time when Jersey’s government is urging people to ‘buy local’, it seemed incongruous that a local book by a local author was not available in the island’s principle bookshop!

The arrival of more stock fortunately came just in time for the publication of an impressive article in the JEP on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. A two page spread by Deputy Editor Rob Shipley included photographs, an interview, and a very complimentary book review. The new publicity boosted sales once again, and propelled *“Ours”* to the dizzy heights of Number Two in the Waterstones’ chart! And Channel TV have promised something substantial for around 8<sup>th</sup> October, so hopefully further awareness and sales will result. In anticipation, Waterstones have asked that I do another book-signing on 10<sup>th</sup> October.



**Ian Ronayne with Jersey's Lieutenant-Governor  
(Courtesy of the L-G's brother!)**

As well as the book itself, I have been working on the supporting website at [www.thejerseypals.com](http://www.thejerseypals.com).

This contains general information on the book and author, plus Jersey in the First World War. Most importantly, however, is an individual page for each of the 326 Jersey Company members which include personal details, medals won, cemetery images where relevant, and portrait pictures where available. An intended future development is a set of downloadable travel guides for anyone wanting to visit the Jersey Company battlefields. The site came together with the fantastic support of Roger Frisby, and has had several messages of praise since launch. Most satisfying is to watch a small counter tally up the number of unique visits, a total standing at 182 by the time of writing. Another recently added counter shows where visitors are from. To date, it shows eight from Jersey, three from the UK and one from Germany – all in the last few days.

Next on the agenda is raising awareness and sales of “Ours” and the Jersey Pals website through different, perhaps smaller, and certainly more targeted opportunities, including media and channels outside of Jersey. Peter Tabb has already kindly contributed a book review that will appear in the Jersey in London Society’s Journal in the next few months. I am in contact with the Reverend at Grouville Church about some form of link to the Jersey Contingent memorial situated there. Additionally, there may be opportunities in the parish magazines. After all, if I am going to knock Dan Brown (Ed: Who is he?) off the Number One slot, every little helps!

**From the CWGC**  
**A number of soldiers of the First World War to be buried in France**

The discovery of the remains of British soldiers continues. The CWGC has advised that on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, a number of funerals will take place in France for nine First World War soldiers who have recently been discovered:

- 6 unknown British soldiers, found near Contalmaison, will be reburied at Gordon Dump Cemetery
- 2 unknown British soldiers, one found at Le Hamel and one found near Contalmaison, will be reburied at Flatiron Copse Cemetery
- 1 unknown British soldier, found at Meaulte, will be reburied at Citadel New Military Cemetery.

**Outward Bound**  
**(By an Officer who has recently fallen at Gallipoli)**  
**(From The Times, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1915)**

There's a waterfall I'm leaving  
Running down the rocks in foam,  
There's a pool for which I'm grieving  
Near the water-ouzel's home,  
And it's there that I'd be lying  
With the heather close at hand,  
And the curlews faintly crying  
'Mid the wastes of Cumberland.

While the midnight watch is winging  
Thoughts of other days arise,  
I can hear the river singing  
Like the saints in Paradise;  
I can see the water winking  
Like the merry eyes of Pan,  
And the slow half-pounder sinking  
By the bridge's granite span.

Ah, to win them back and clamber  
Braced anew with winds I love,  
From the river's stainless amber  
To the morning mist above,  
See through cloud-rifts rent asunder,  
Like a painted scroll unfurled,  
Ridge and hollow rolling under  
To the fringes of the world.

Now the weary guard are sleeping,  
Now the great propellers churn,  
Now the harbour lights are creeping  
Into emptiness astern,  
While the sentry wakes and watches  
Plunging triangles of light,  
Where the water leaps and catches  
At our escort in the night.

Great their happiness who seeing  
Still with unbenighted eyes  
Kin of theirs who gave them being,  
Sun and earth that made them wise,  
Die and feel their embers quicken  
Year by year in summer time,  
When the cotton grasses thicken  
On the hills they used to climb.

Shall we also be as they be,  
Mingled with our mother-clay,  
Or return no more it may be?  
Who has knowledge, who shall say?  
Yet we hope that from the bosom  
Of our shaggy father Pan,  
When the earth breaks into blossom  
Richer from the dust of man,

Though the high gods smite and slay us,  
Though we come not whence we go,  
As the host of Menelaus  
Came there many years ago;  
Yet the self-same wind shall bear us  
From the same departing place  
Out across the Gulf of Saros  
And the peaks of Samothrace:

We shall pass in summer weather,  
We shall come at eventide,  
Where the fells stand up together  
And all quiet things abide;  
Mixed with cloud and wind and river,  
Sun-distilled in dew and rain,  
One with Cumberland for ever,  
We shall go not forth again.

In somewhat of a roundabout fashion, I discovered the poem on the previous page when I had contacted my Archivist friend at the RWF Museum at Caernarfon who wrote back:

*"I am very envious that you are Gallipoli bound. I have just been trying to do some research on 2Lt Nowell Oxland of the Border Regiment who was killed at Suvla on the 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1915 and wrote a marvellous poem "Outward Bound" that also referred to his love of the Lake District - he was a friend of Noel Hodgson and that overshadows him quite a bit".*



While there is no known CI link to Nowell, I thought that I would share the "find" with the Journal largely because of the poet's hope for a peaceful return to his home, one that was sadly forlorn. Today, his remains lie in the Green Hill Cemetery, grave I.C.7.

### **Fit to Serve? By Liz Walton**

By pure coincidence I came across some cases that indicate that medical checks as to whether men were fit for active service may have been somewhat perfunctory at times during the war years. Earlier investigations into Yves Blaise and Ira Le Messurier had indicated that men with a serious illness (advanced tuberculosis in both cases) had been passed as fit for active service, only to be pensioned off a few weeks later. However the case of William Ruff is slightly different in that he was twice pensioned off by the Army as permanently unfit, both times because of the same illness.

William Ruff and WC Ruff both appeared on the CIGWSG website's Guernsey Roll of Honour. William Ruff's name came from the Bailiwick of Guernsey Memorial whilst there was a WC Ruff on the Roll of Honour of Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Church at Delancey, St Sampson's. Also a list of men who died as a result of the war published in the *Guernsey Weekly Press* included Private W Ruff who



was said to have served with the Wiltshire Regiment and died on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1916. However neither a William nor a WC Ruff of the Wiltshire Regiment who had a Guernsey connection and died in 1916 could be found on CWGC records.

A search of census records indicated that there was only one William Ruff of the correct age with a Channel Islands connection, so it would appear that the entries on our Roll of Honour and the Press report all refer to the same man, though this could not be definitely confirmed at this stage. The 1891 census states that he was born in St Helier, Jersey in about 1890, the son of Henry and Emily Ruff.

The family, which consisted of William and his parents plus older siblings Emily, Lilian and Henry, were living at 10, Seaton Place, St Helier. The 1901 census shows William now aged 12 living at Vale Road, St Sampson, Guernsey with parents Henry and Emily and siblings Emily, Lilian, Henry, Grace, Frederick, Edward and Ethel. He does not appear on the 1911 census, though other family members do, still living in St Sampson's.

Further confusion arose with a check of the Medal Index Cards on the *Ancestry* website. This has 25 W Ruffs, and two of them served in the Wiltshire Regiment. They joined up within a week of each other, were awarded the same medals and neither has any family details on the card. Also both were discharged as medically unfit. However 29736 Private W Ruff wasn't discharged until 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1917, a year after "our" William Ruff is supposed to have died. That left 19251 Private William Ruff of the Wiltshire Regiment, who was awarded the 1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory medal for service in France, for which he qualified on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1915.

Luckily his pension records have also survived. In fact he had two sets! Both show that he was born in St Helier (or St Helin!), Jersey but lived in St Sampson, Guernsey. On the first set, a mere four pages, his age was given as 19 years 4 months and his occupation as grower. But 9027 Private William Ruff joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Dorsetshire Regiment, not the Wiltshire Regiment, when he attested at Fort George in Guernsey in January, 1911. On 11<sup>th</sup> September, 1912 he was posted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion who were soon sent to Poona in India. This set of records states that he was sent back to Netley Hospital in Southampton in January, 1914 and discharged as no longer fit for service on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1914.

The second set of records contains 22 pages of more detailed information. William Ruff of St Sampson's, Guernsey attested on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1915, giving his age as 24 years 2 months, his occupation tram conductor and his father's name as Henry Ruff. He also stated that he had previously served in the Dorsetshire Regiment. He was immediately accepted as physically fit and this time as 19251 Private William Ruff of the Wiltshire Regiment he was sent to France on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1915, just fifteen months after he had been discharged from the Dorsetshire Regiment under King's Regulations. However he served for only 12 days before being posted back to the 1<sup>st</sup> London General Hospital where he remained until 30<sup>th</sup> July of that same year when he was discharged as being no longer physically fit for war service under paragraph 392 (XVI) of King's Regulations. He had served for a mere 133 days, but it was enough for him to qualify for his medals. The reason was TB which was: "not caused by but rendered more active by active service." His disability was said to be permanent and to totally prevent him from active service and he was awarded a quarter of a full pension.

Further medical boards stated that he had developed TB whilst a civilian in 1914, but there is no mention of the fact that that he served in the Army until March of that year before being discharged as unfit because of the same illness! This set of records also contains a medical report from the Military Hospital in Guernsey dated 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1915, the date of his attestation and a year after he had supposedly contracted TB, which did not note any illness or incapacity and stated that he was fit for military service. However contained in the same set of notes are reports from the time of his service in India with the Dorsetshire Regiment. These state that William Ruff was suffering from advanced tuberculosis, involving both lungs and a tubercular

abscess in the rectum and spine. His condition is said to have originated in 1913 in Poona but to be nothing to do with military service as his paternal grandmother and brother had both died of tuberculosis. It was quite widely believed in that era that tuberculosis was an inherited condition. People got this idea because they saw the disease occur so frequently in families and it continue through two or three generations. We now know why this happens. It is not because tuberculosis is inherited but because it is communicable by close long term contact such as that which occurs within the family home, especially when it is overcrowded. However similar conditions occurred in barracks, on board ship and in other institutions.

On his second enlistment Private Ruff had given the correct name, age and date and place of birth. Furthermore he had given correct information about his previous military service. It seems however that in the rush to get more men to fill the gaps caused by losses at the Front in the early battles, all this was overlooked and a man who must have by this time been patently ill was passed as fit for active service and sent to France. William Charles Ruff died on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1916, a year after he was sent to France as a supposedly fit man, at the family home in Grande Maison Road, St Sampson's, Guernsey. He was buried in St Sampson's churchyard with only a quiet family service, and lies in an unmarked grave with several other family members. He is not commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

According to Guernsey's *Weekly Press* of June, 1916:

*"Private Ruff had formerly served in the Dorsets but obtained his discharge owing to ill health. On the outbreak of war he was determined to do his bit, and offered his services in the Wiltshires. He was accepted, but shortly after his arrival at the front was "gassed" and returned here seriously ill."*



The unmarked Ruff family plot, Sampson's churchyard

Whilst looking for newspaper cuttings on Ruff I came across a second man who had been discharged as permanently unfit for military service but who re enlisted in another regiment. The *Weekly Press* of May, 1916 states that:

*"Mr William Coppin of the Bouet has received official notification of the death of his only son, Private William Coppin, age 21, who was killed in action on 21<sup>st</sup> May. Private Coppin originally joined the Dorsets in September, 1914, but was subsequently invalided out of the service through a severe cold which settled on his*



*lungs. Returning to Guernsey after a time he completely recovered, and being determined to be a soldier, enlisted again in one of the Guernsey Service contingents, and was attached to the Royal Irish Fusiliers”.*

According to his Army Pension Record 10889 Private William Coppin joined the Dorsetshire Regiment of Kitchener’s Army on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1914, attesting in Guernsey. He had previously tried to join the Guernsey Artillery and Engineers but had been rejected as his chest measurement was half an inch too small. The Dorsetshire Regiment accepted him and he passed a medical board at Dorchester a couple of days later. He was posted to the 6<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion on the 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1914. He gave his occupation as driver, and his next of kin as his mother, Mrs Nell Coppin of Holloway, North London and his father, Mr William Coppin of the Bouet, St Peter Port, Guernsey. However the next entry shows that as the result of a medical board held on 15<sup>th</sup> December of that same year he was discharged under King’s Regulations 392, iii, as: “unlikely to make an efficient soldier” because of flat feet, which mean that he was “unable to march”.



William Coppin returned to Guernsey at the end of 1914, and there are no pension records after that. However Parks<sup>1</sup> lists 21805 Private W Coppin as being with the 4<sup>th</sup> draft of the Guernsey contingent of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, having previously been with the Royal Irish Regiment, regimental number 8852. Also there is a Medal Index card for 21805 Private William Coppin of the Royal Irish Fusiliers showing that he was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory medal. His mother, Mrs Ellen Coppin of Holloway, North London applied for the 1914-15 Star on behalf of her late son but he was said to be ineligible for that.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers went to France on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1915, and six months later Private Coppin was killed in action near Loos in Northern France. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records show 21805 Private L Coppin (sic), Royal Irish Fusiliers, son of William Coppin of Guernsey and Nell Coppin of Holloway, North London as having been killed in action on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 1916, age 23 years. He is buried at St Patrick’s Cemetery, Loos along with several other men from the Guernsey contingent. The Bailiwick of Guernsey memorial and the Vale Parish memorial both carry his name.

There may well be other similar cases of men discharged as unfit for active service who nevertheless re-enlisted only to be killed or wounded in action, or to die as a result of the illness for which they were discharged. There would seem to be several factors in play here. The first is that in the early years of the war at least there was a strong feeling of patriotism, of doing one’s duty and helping protect one’s country. What is now known as the First World War was then called the Great War for Civilisation, and even a cursory reading of books and newspapers of the era show that people really believed that this was what they were fighting for. Secondly, joining the army was for many young men a chance to travel, to experience

<sup>1</sup> *Diex Aix: The Guernseymen who marched away*, Parkes, E.(1992), Guernsey Museum Service

adventure and a lifestyle very different from that at home in the Channel Islands. Coppin, for example, was the child of a broken marriage, living with elderly grandparents and a father with a poorly paid and heavy job. Ruff was one of a very large family of manual workers living in the crowded, industrialised part of the island. The other factor is that very early in the war it became obvious that there were not enough men at the Front, so health checks on enlistment may well have become more cursory. For whatever reasons these men had been pensioned off as permanently unfit to fight, but they were still accepted for active service and sent to the Front.

Newspaper pictures are courtesy of the Guernsey Press and the Priaux library, Guernsey.

### Gallipoli Diary

**General:** That the Dardanelles Campaign was a failure is a known fact, but was there a single cause? Was it the logistics? Was Hamilton's plan wrong? Were there enough resources? What of the political considerations and decisions? Each of these undoubtedly had a bearing on the outcome, but at the end of the Campaign it had come down to one lot of men fighting their way forward while being opposed by another group of men.

Much has been written, photographed, and even featured in films (albeit, as in the case of Peter Weir's *"Gallipoli"* also misrepresented), yet the best place to understand this front line or that feature drawn on a map is actually to stand on the ground that was so bitterly fought over.

**The Build Up:** My visit to Gallipoli was a new departure as it is the first battlefield visit that I had ever made using a professional tour company such as Holt's. Hitherto, I had always visited France and Flanders under my own steam or with friends. There are various reasons, the cost and convenience, the proximity, and the confidence that I could comfortably find my way around with the late Rose Coombs' *"Before Endeavours Fade"* or one of Tony and Valmai Holt's excellent little guidebooks. In retrospect, that confidence was, during my earlier trips, a little misplaced by poor planning and a lack of appreciation of the time needed.

So, the obvious issue for me in visiting Gallipoli was that I needed to be led by the nose everywhere and who better than Holts to do the pulling! Holts is, as most readers will be aware, probably at the top end of the list of specialist battlefield tour providers. However, not having travelled with other similar companies, I cannot draw comparisons, although Holts were highly regarded having asked some friends who had used them.

Looking back to 2008, I was a little slow in deciding to make a visit, and the best that could be achieved was a place on the reserve list, and obviously I failed to gain promotion to the visitors list! But, last November there was barely an hour that elapsed between the 2009 brochure landing on the doormat and a phone call being made to reserve a place. The processing of details was efficient and only needed a follow up with the medical insurance company, and the deposit to be paid (Gulp!). The trip was not cheap, but it has to be remembered that it was door-to-door in that I was to be collected from my home and dropped off at London Heathrow to catch the flight, and then dropped off at my front door on the return. Another item to be

factored in was the flight time of 10.25 hours, and living in darkest Lancashire, it meant that I had to get down to London the day before.

With booking so far in advance, the next six or so months could be best described as a period of 'silent' running, but, subsequently there was the occasional need to E-Mail or telephone Holts as queries arose or I had to amend minor details. Among the requests was the one to visit all Cemeteries or Memorials with a CI connection. Throughout, they proved very responsive which, when one is paying out a small fortune, is heartening. The small fortune, by the way, was paid up at the end of July (More gulps!)

Just under a fortnight before leaving another envelope appeared on the doormat, this time containing the final details and itinerary of the places to be visited accompanied by a number of maps and a summary of the campaign prepared by the Tour leader, Nigel Steel. There were the usual 'Dos and Don'ts', useful guidance and tips on a plethora of topics, such as airport security, visas, water, the right clothing, ATM access, local facilities and the like. I suppose that these points may seem obvious to frequent travellers, but these instructions struck me as an essential aide-memoire designed to eliminate slip ups while maximising the tour time to see the sights for everyone's benefit. After all, the visitors being catered for by Holts are not going just to flop down on the hotel's sun-loungers! Holts are to be congratulated on this disciplined approach, and it must be remembered that they often have to handle the 'infrequent traveller', while their visits for 2009 ranged from the USA and Canada to South Africa and India, in addition to the 'bog-standard' World War trips.

Summarising my pre-trip dealings with Holts, I was ready to go feeling highly impressed with their preparations, notwithstanding the small fortune that was transferred from my bank account to theirs! Was it worth it?

Before looking at the tour in detail, for me there was the need to prepare for what I hoped to gain. As may be recalled, I had read through Les Carlyon's "*Gallipoli*" some time ago, while I have just put down Harvey Broadbent's "*Gallipoli: The Fateful Shore*". Both have served to give a view of the events, the personalities and the nature of the terrain. In addition, I read through Tony and Valmai Holt's guide which, although I thought was possibly a little dated having been published in 2000, provided much useful information. I don't know what others might think, but to me it seems pointless going to somewhere such as Gallipoli not knowing something of the background, the events, the chronology and so forth.

**The Departure (25<sup>th</sup> September):** Cometh the day, cometh the hour, cometh the man with the minibus van! He was there on the dot for a 12.30 departure to load up and whisk me southwards to my overnight hotel, the Park Inn, near Heathrow. A good start methinks!

**Day 1 (26<sup>th</sup> September):** Fed and watered, another minibus van was there to collect myself and a few others who had also stayed overnight. We were efficiently helped through the check in process at Terminal 5 by two Holt's ladies and the fear that I was in possession of excess baggage quickly evaporated at the sight of 18.5 kilos being registered! A comfortable flight ensued taking us out via Dover with views of Calais, Poperinghe and Ypres unfolding. It did seem funny to see them from an altitude of 30,000 feet.

Landing at Istanbul, there were more lengthy queues to obtain a £10 visa and to clear immigration, following those experienced in clearing security in London. Having collected our baggage, a mass of bodies greeted us in the Arrivals Hall, all waving names on boards as if their very lives depended upon it. As it turned out, Koray, our Turkish guide for the week, had been very successful in making a passable impression of a large satsuma by wearing a tangerine shirt. It does help to stand out in a crowd like that!

Congregating at the pick up point, our bus for the coming week collected us and took us to our hotel (Novotel) for the overnight stay in Istanbul. Navigating a route through some 'iffy looking' back alleyways we realised that he had taken a short cut and that the hotel was very well appointed overlooking the Sea of Marmara, and not in a slum! Though most of us had briefly met others throughout our time en-route, our tour leader (Nigel Steel) and tour manager (Simon Jones, an old acquaintance from Lancaster University's Summer School) collected us for a 'Welcome Brief' before dinner. This was useful in covering any last minute detail, providing an overview of the historical context for the week ahead, distributing additional maps (I liked this!), and allowing each of us twelve travellers to explain our interest. Dinner followed.

**Day 2 (27<sup>th</sup> September):** An early reveille was guaranteed thanks to a call to prayers that boomed out stereophonically across 'our' part of Istanbul. Making sure that no baggage was left in the foyer, a lengthy 5-6 hour trip that skirted the Sea of Marmara was ahead of us. At this point, I should point out that the coach was equipped with a DVD player, a fridge and water heater, all of which were being put to good use throughout the week, the fridge, in particular, remaining well replenished with water and fruit juices, thus ensuring our daily pint of water.

For the first hour or two, Koray our guide, provided an overview of modern day Turkey, its secular nature as a state, produce, population and so forth. He also touched on the military aspects, such as conscription and the present size of the army (some 2m). One gained the impression that this aspect of his training to be an 'official guide' was required by the government, and that the political 'line had to be toed'! As an 'official guide' it was also noticeable that he could 'open doors'. Evidence of the military was frequently noticeable, and there were occasional reminders of past defensive positions in areas such as Bulair (where we were also reminded of Lieutenant-Commander Bernard Freyberg's swim), and not necessarily of Great War vintage.

Mid-morning coffee at Tekirdağ was followed by lunch at Gallipoli (Gelibolu), from which point, we boarded the ferry to cross the Dardanelles Strait for the port of Lapseki on the Asian side of Turkey. From there, our journey continued through Çanakkale and onto the first historical stop, the Dardanos Battery (or Fort No. 8). It was at this point, I was reminded of the expression: 'When you're up to your neck in alligators, it is difficult to remember that your task was to drain the swamp'!

Nigel Steel stressed that the original strategic objective (i.e. my analogy of 'draining the swamp') had been to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war through the presence of the British fleet sitting off Istanbul. Originally a naval operation only, the Navy had failed to knock out the forts and batteries that defended the Straits, and had then lost a number of ships to an unsuspected minefield. The subsequent landings were meant to help knock out those forts and batteries allowing mine clearance to resume unhindered. With the failure of the Navy at this juncture,

Ottoman morale improved, and would continue to do so throughout the campaign. For the defenders, looking out from the commanding Dardanos Battery position in 1915, the battleships that were mined would be clearly visible in Erenkeui Bay to the south-west, and as we looked out across the waters it was clear that control of the Straits were vital to Turkey's survival then, and also with Koray's earlier talk ringing in our ears, and now.

Looking at the Dardanos Battery site today, it is clear that it is not well-looked after as a Turkish memorial site, and in any case is little more than the a collection of the walled-in remains of some representative guns. But, it is the importance of the location that we considered and not just the hardware.



Çanakkale again beckoned, as we moved on to our hotel (Hotel Kolin) in the southern outskirts for the next six nights, and where we could at last unpack our bags and spread out.

**Day 3 (28<sup>th</sup> September):** A day that can best be described as one for: 'All aboard the Skylark.'

This required a departure at 08.00 for the dockside at Çanakkale where we boarded a cruise boat with somewhat primitive facilities that shall not merit further mention. Weaving between the tankers and container ships plying their way in either direction, the objective of our nautical interlude was to view the Peninsula from the seaward side ranging down from the Kilitbahir Fort and town lying across from Çanakkale. Further down the steep slopes of the Kilitbahir Plateau, on which Achi Baba is sat, came into view before we rounded the southern landing sites of 'S', 'V' and 'W' Beaches in that order. It was noticeable that the land gradually sloped downwards from north to south, and a landing on those beaches would, at first glance, allow for a steady advance with a gradual climb to the 718 foot high Achi Baba some six miles distant.

While the weather was fine, the wind was blowing onshore from the west, and about to round Tekke Burnu, we turned back to disembark at Camber Beach, next to Seddulbahir where our faithful coach driver awaited. Our boat would continue on to the harbour at Gaba Tepe, and we would again board it later. From the Camber Beach, we headed up to Alcitepe (formerly Krithia) for a cup of tea and then onto Achi Baba itself. The view southwards from Achi Baba looks in the area over which General Hamilton had hoped the 29<sup>th</sup> Division would have advanced on that first day, and would have provided a good observation point for Turkish artillery spotters.

Our next port of call while on terra firma was the Turkish Memorial at the Eski Hisarlik Point. It is clearly the focal point for the Turks to commemorate their dead

(or martyrs) from the campaign as evidenced by a large parade area and temporary stands in place, and the monument is imposing from both the sea and land. A number of statues are in the vicinity while a representative cemetery has been constructed. However, as far as is known, there are no Turks buried there. A picnic lunch under the pine trees in the adjacent car park, and we again boarded the coach.

Re-embarking at Gaba Tepe, we now cruised up the ANZAC area of the campaign, passing Brighton Beach, Hell Spit, Anzac Cove, Ari Burnu and North Beach in that order. The ground at these locations very soon rises into a complex network of ridges, which I would probably best describe as being part of the Sari Bair Ridge. The Sphinx is clearly visible even though there has been some erosion, while the terrain still looks daunting today, given the fine weather and the complete lack of fire from the crests!



I should mention here, that while we were cruising, Nigel Steel was not idling his time, sitting there enjoying the sea air. Rather that he was going around the group covering various topics.

Returning to Gaba Tepe, we headed finally to the Helles Memorial that is maintained by the CWGC. For these and other similar types of visits, Holts arranges for a brief act of remembrance to be carried out. One member of the group read the exhortation from "*For the Fallen*" while another laid a wreath, this being followed by two minutes of silence.



Following that individuals were able to undertake their own commemoration, and in my case, I hope that I was not too presumptuous in placing a cross of remembrance on behalf of the CIGWSG for those we commemorate on our Rolls of Honour.

Back on the coach once more, we headed off to Eceabat and the ferry by which we would criss-cross the Dardanelles Straits for the remainder of our stay. These ferries are very similar to those which ply the Solent between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

**Day 4 (29<sup>th</sup> September):** Looking at the overall Dardanelles Campaign and, by association, the maps, for today's historian there is a convenient division between Helles and Krithia, Anzac, and the subsequent Suvla landings. Thus, this day would focus on the landings at Helles and the later Battles of Krithia.

The first stop was at 'W' Beach or Lancashire Landing, and we descended to the shoreline where it was clear that the beach area was a natural amphitheatre, a view

reinforced when I climbed up to former Turkish positions that were later taken by the British (see the top left photograph on the front cover) when a flanking movement by men of the Worcestershire Regiment and the Royal Fusiliers swept through the Turks. Later cleared of the defences such as barbed wire 'W' Beach would become a landing area for stores and men, and four jetties would be constructed.

The situation at 'V' Beach was little different (see the top right photograph on the front cover) in that it was a natural amphitheatre also. Here the Royal Dublin Fusiliers suffered when landing in their boats while men trying to attack from the *River Clyde* which had been beached were mercilessly picked off as they attempted to leave the ship down the ramps and across the lighters onto shore. Many of those who survived in the first wave owed that fact to a small rise in the land. 'V' Beach, like its neighbour on the left and Morto Bay on the right, was seen as an essential area for landing the artillery, their horses and other stores as the troops, hopefully, pressed forward. Sadly, stout defending by the Turks on that first day prevented the six mile advance along the width of the peninsula to Achi Baba, one that would have enjoyed secured flanks.

After lunch, we briefly visited the only CWGC cemetery on the Peninsula, if not probably in the world (?), with a solitary grave, namely that of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Doughty-Wylie VC, CB and CMG. Armed with only his walking cane, he led a bayonet charge and this helped to ensure that the 'V' Beach landing would be secure before being killed and buried where he had fallen.



This was followed by a visit to the French Cemetery at Morto Bay, a reminder that the French had been involved with a diversionary landing at Kum Kale on the coast of Asian Turkey before being brought across the Straits to take up position on the right of the British forces. The French were heavily criticised, but the terrain on their front was particularly difficult, a factor that is often ignored in modern day accounts.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent looking at the Battles of Krithia, with Achi Baba never reached by the British dominating the flatter ground. Did I say flatter ground? There were major gullies that were well used by the Turks; not least Gully Ravine where the 14<sup>th</sup> Sikhs would suffer heavy casualties during Third Krithia as they tried to advance straddled across the Ravine, two companies on either side. One feature visited was Backhouse Post, a dug out now home to a small bat colony.

Throughout this, and the following two days, the group visited a number of CWGC cemeteries which given the campaign divisions referred to earlier, were closely

clustered, to take photographs and discuss particular individuals. During Day 4 we visited the following cemeteries: Lancashire Landing, 'V' Beach, Twelve Tree Copse, Redoubt, Pink Farm and of course Doughty-Wylie at Seddulbahir.

**Day 5 (30<sup>th</sup> September):** Today's theme was Anzac! But, before we reached that area of the campaign, we stopped at a new Visitors' Centre adjacent to Kilye Bay where Nigel Steel made use of a large relief map to outline the events at Anzac, before heading off again. The Anzac landings did not go to plan, in part because of one boat drifting too much to the left causing boats to land out of sequence with the resulting mix up of battalions, but also in part because the Navy was heading to a spot further north than the one that the Army had sought. Nigel put forward the interesting theory that the two services may have been working with different miles, the Navy in nautical, the Army in Imperial! An interesting thought!



**Razor Ridge**

Anzac Cove in itself is not remarkable, but the gullies and climbs only seen from our cruise boat a few days earlier came into much starker relief and the climb via Shrapnel Valley up to Plugge's Plateau could only hint at the problems the troops would have encountered. Thankful for having a good pair of walking shoes, we took about 25 minutes to reach the Plateau, and were greeted by a sight (see photograph above) of Razor Ridge that lead up to Russell's Top. I hope that this better conveys the conditions that those men must have encountered. Returning to sea level, a welcome lunch was next on the programme before heading up Second Ridge for Lone Pine and The Nek.

As is listed below, a number of cemeteries would be visited on the high ground at Lone Pine and The Nek, and it is because those cemeteries lie on top or between



the lines held by Turk and Anzac. This part of the campaign saw a great deal of tunnelling and mining by the two sides, and some of those tunnels exist today.



**Tunnel near Johnston's Jolly**

Lone Pine was the scene of bitter fighting in early-August, 1915, as the attack there and elsewhere was designed to divert Turks from the major Anzac effort at Chunuk Bair. Much of this hand to hand fighting was done in the dim light of tree trunk covered trenches with bomb and bayonets the preferred tools of the killing trade in this area. The Australian Light Horse's charge at The Nek (wilfully misrepresented in Peter Weir' *"Gallipoli"* as being undertaken while the British who landed at Suvla Bay stopped for tea) was also a diversionary assault, linked to Chunuk Bair; the gap between the two lines of trench is little more than 50 yards. The proximity of the two lines would see a bomb making three journeys back and forth before its inevitable detonation.

During Day 5 we visited the following cemeteries: Beach, Ari Burnu, Shrapnel Valley, Plugge's Plateau, Lone Pine, Johnston's Jolly, Lone Pine (with the Memorial), Quinn's Post, Courtney and Steel's Post, Walker's Ridge and The Nek.

**Day 6 (1<sup>st</sup> October):** From higher ground such as Walker's Ridge it is impossible to miss the sweep of Ocean Beach northwards and to see Suvla Bay, its point and salt lakes, Lali Baba, Chocolate and Green Hills and the hills that ring the plain. So, in some respects Day 6 saw us paying a visit to already familiar territory when we headed off to Suvla.

Before reaching there, however, we stopped at Embarkation Pier Cemetery, a convenient point to look up eastwards towards Chunuk Bair. The aim of this was to

consider the August 1915 assault from the approximate starting points. The ridges and the valleys look daunting in the clear light of day, even for men who are reasonably fit, while the navigation was undoubtedly difficult. But, many of these men were not fit, even though they had been reinforced by an additional fresh division. The effects of lack of water, monotonous diet and dysentery were debilitating and the troops' fighting efficiency would have been considerably impaired. And, moreover, dysentery was no respecter of rank!

Moving onto Suvla, the British landings went well, but Lieutenant General Stopford, the Corps Commander was much criticised for not pushing to the high ground and his desire to push forward to the Anafarta Ridge some 5 miles on from 'A' Beach seemed to be lacking. The point was made however, whether there had been sufficient clarity as to what the 'high ground' was in the orders given him. We might want to look at General Hamilton's Chief of Staff, Major-General Braithwaite as failing to ensure that there was no ambiguity. But, by now, the stress of campaigning must have increased for Hamilton's team, while Stopford was the wrong man in the job and would be replaced. En-route to the Suvla Plain and the 'high ground' of Chocolate and Green Hills we paused at Hill 60, a height much fought over to establish a continuous line between Anzac and Suvla. The line at Suvla, and elsewhere, was turning into another set of complex trenches that mirrored the Western Front, and all the while the Anafarta Ridge providing Turk's with a good view of British positions, and further excellent artillery targets!



**The remains of a Lighter near Suvla Point**

The case of the 'Sandringham' Company was discussed, because of the alleged mystery of how they vanished, and the Martian spaceship theory was soon

dismissed. Like all these things in the 'fog of war' they became separated, and in the ensuing battle were annihilated.

Visiting Suvla Point, the eventual evacuation from there (and Anzac, and later Helles) was mentioned, but in retrospect we did not discuss it as much as it merits. It was highly successful thanks to some good planning. However, the Turks were not very active at this stage, remaining in shelter as much as possible given the poor weather that had been experienced. In late November men on both sides had been dying as a result of exposure to unseasonable floods, frost and snow.

Evidence of British presence here exists in the shape of a Lighter's remains.

During Day 6 we visited the following cemeteries: Embarkation Pier, 7<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, Hill 60 (with the New Zealand Memorial), Green Hill, Hill 10 and Azmak.

**Day 7 (2<sup>nd</sup> October):** What was happening on the other of the hill? Our final day was given over to looking at the campaign on Sari Bair Ridge from the Turkish standpoint. To help us in this we were joined by Doctor Kenan Çelik who was formerly at the University of Çanakkale. Though a former lecturer in English and other languages, he is considered an expert on the Turkish part of the campaign.

Our first stop was Bigali where would see the house in which Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) had been billeted before the campaign began. It is understandable that Kemal, who is rightfully regarded as the 'father of modern Turkey', appears to enjoy a 'super-hero' cult status from the Gallipoli campaign with his face on appearing on walls, statues of him and so forth. Doctor Çelik tempers this with a more balanced (and politically incorrect?) view doubting, for example, whether he was where the Australians claimed he was at particular times during the campaign.

Kemal was a highly competent military leader as indeed were many of his fellow Turkish commanders, serving alongside or under senior German officers such as Liman von Sanders and Kannengeiser. He is acknowledged for recognising the importance of the high ground of the Sari Bair Ridge at the campaign's outset and for moving a whole Regiment (three Battalions) there early on. But, given his knowledge of the terrain and having seen its dominating position, I would contend that any commander worth his salt would have also recognised it. After all, the Anzacs were supposed to get there on the first day!

Doctor Çelik highlight that there was a degree of friction between the German and Turkish view of troop dispositions. Von Sanders saw the need to defend possible landing areas lightly while retaining the bulk of the force at Bulair. Turkish commanders thought otherwise. Who knows, had the latter view prevailed, the landings would have been stopped at the beaches at the very outset, with serious damage to the Allies' morale?

The coach took us from Bigali to the Sari Bair Ridge which is effectively topped by three hills, Chunuk Bair, Hill Q and Hill 971 running SW to NE. We did not stop at Chunuk Bair first, instead heading up the track (I would not call it a road) to Hill 971. A few heart-stopping moments were experienced as the coach teetered left and right by some 10-15 degrees, enabling us to look unhappily at the deep ravines between the ridges before we could reach the comparative safety of the plateau on top. The

hill's dominance I have already referred to, and the desire of both sides to occupy its slopes was justifiable.

Returning the mile or so to Chunuk Bair by the same 'hairy' track (there was no other scenic route!) we discussed the fighting on the top which variously involved the New Zealanders, Australians, British and Ghurkhas. The New Zealanders had taken one part of the Turkish lines but would be forced back through enfilading fire along the captured trenches, while Kemal's tactics consisted solely of sending wave after wave of Turkish soldiers forward. They eventually succeeded, but at the cost of some 5,000 plus dead and injured.



**Preserved Trench Lines at Chunuk Bair**

Chunuk Bair is today dominated by the New Zealand Memorial (see pictures below), and a large statue of Mustafa Kemal, yet the trenches' proximity, further tunnels as that at the Apex at the top of Rhododendron Ridge, and the odd item of battlefield debris such as the shard of a rum jar or a rusted Mauser ammunition clip are more sober reminders of the events of those days.

The last stop was Scrubby Knoll, the most easterly point reached by the Australians, and one that if there had been sufficient numbers, a 'left wheel and forward' might have been enough to take Sari Bair Ridge on the 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1915. But suggesting such is just using up another 'What If! The Turks were able to hold this ridge, and in due course, would range their artillery (some 55 pieces Doctor Çelik advised) and bring down fire upon Anzac. However, Turkish commanders did delay the artillery's arrival that would have otherwise wreaked more damage on the landings at Anzac.

As a general point, it does appear that the mobility of the Turkish troops advancing on foot was a key factor in holding up the Allied troops on the early days, and their 'logistic chain' was clearly much shorter given that they could get material across the Narrows during the night, with little or no observation.



**From the uttermost ends of the earth!**

During Day 7 we visited the following cemeteries: Chunuk Bair (with the NZ Memorial)

**Homeward Bound (3<sup>rd</sup> October):** After one very hectic and an exceptionally rewarding week, and all the while looking forward to more temperate climates, our departure was a bit of an anticlimax. The coach made its way back to Istanbul. No doubt many of the group were thinking of their return to work or cat-napping as I did, but all had derived a great deal from the tour. Spread throughout the aircraft, the herd instinct took over as the aircraft docked at Terminal 5, and we surged out through Immigration Control, Customs and onwards to the baggage carousel. A flurry of hurried goodbyes to those still there and out to the Holts' reception team and another man with the minivan. Five hours after touchdown I was home.

**Some General Points:** As members will have recalled, one of my aims (see Journal 27) had been to photograph as many of the 50 Channel Islanders that are commemorated as having died during the Dardanelles campaign as is possible. It was clearly going to be impossible to photo the four Jerseymen at East Mudros, but I felt that there was a good chance with many of the other 47 (the list grew by one following the last Journal), with some thanks due to Nigel Steel. And so it proved in that I managed all but two names, the exceptions being Sapper Leonard Marks at Haidar Pasha which is in Asian Istanbul, and Private Herbert Walden in Shrapnel Valley. However, further help was at hand in the shape of another group touring the Peninsula who planned to visit Shrapnel Valley. An exchange of notes, E-Mail addresses, and a few days after getting home, some photos of Herbert's headstone and the cemetery arrived on my PC! In all, 46/47 is not a bad score, but now, I am

working on a cunning plan for Leonard.....! I would point out that there were also CI naval casualties, but these are commemorated on the Naval Memorial in Portsmouth.



**Hill 10 Cemetery**

The CWGC cemeteries tend to follow a single design concept. This is unsurprising given that most were the work of Sir John Burnet. There are noticeable differences to cemeteries on the Western Front. The Cross of Sacrifice is not free-standing, rather that it is cut into stone. Headstones are low oblong blocks with a diagonal face bearing the man's name, etc., and although regimental badges are not engraved, religious symbols such as the Cross or the Star of David are.



**Signage – CWGC (left), Gallipoli Peace Park (right)**

While unknown men are buried in those cemeteries, they do not have headstones, engraved 'Known Unto God', another departure from Western Front practices. Each cemetery is enclosed by a deep drainage channel to deal with heavy rain. Given the arid nature of the land, all are impeccably maintained by the local CWGC staff, though there are the obvious erosion problems on the vertical faces of the Helles Memorial, positioned as it is exposed to the elements.

My impression of the campaign area is one of mild neglect. Obviously it is of limited access to Britons when compared with France and Flanders, there is no evidence of British presence save for the cemeteries. There is no equivalent 'battlefield tourism', so tea and souvenir shops like the Ulster Tower, Avril Williams 'Ocean Villas' or the Sanctuary Wood Café are practically non-existent.



The group that I was with were a very charming set of people, but, it did seem that some saw the Holts tours as a means of further education as opposed to an extension of research into the Great War as I did. However, one lady had a Masters in Military History. But overall, it was undoubtedly a blessing in disguise that they were not Great War 'anoraks' like me!

**At Scrubby Knoll – Our Group**



**Lest we forget, I'm sure Bill Baker's family remembered!**

**In Conclusion:** There are three points that stand out following my trip to the Dardanelles:

First, from start to finish the quality of the service that Holts provided can only be described outstanding. That applies to the people in the UK, Nigel Steel and Simon Jones, and of course the Turkish company, Peten, who provided coach, driver and guide, as well as doing much of the in-country leg-work on behalf of Holts. I do not have a benchmark of other tours with which to draw comparisons, nevertheless, I would unreservedly recommend Holts to anyone who has read this.

Second, while knowing the basics of the Gallipoli campaign, I came away with so much more knowledge, probably reaching a point where information overload has set in. This was the benefit of having knowledgeable individuals such as Nigel, Simon and Doctor Kenan Çelik accompanying us. Of course, for me, the ability to relate the actual ground to a set of maps is also vital in more fully appreciating the difficulties that can only be hinted at in books.

Lastly, I have started to gain a better and more rounded understanding of what occurred, the political and strategic decisions that were made, the level of resourcing, the commanders' abilities, the plans, the communications, the available technology, the logistics and so forth. Both sides of the line fought outstandingly well, and mistakes were made by both sides, but when the term 'the fortunes of war' is used, that can imply that one side might be more fortunate than the other! Perhaps for the Turks, they were more fortunate as they were 'playing at home', they knew the territory, and their resources were closer to hand. More than 90 years on,

'what-if' analyses will not change the outcome of 1915. Yet, what might we conclude from that campaign today that can be applied elsewhere?

### Faces Remembered

The first face to be remembered in the Journal is Captain Geoffrey de Gruchy Barkas who was born in Richmond on Thames on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1896. With a middle name such as de Gruchy, it is no surprise to find a CI link, and his parents were Albert Atkin Barkas who was born on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1861 in Roseville Street, St Helier and Anna Julia de Gruchy who was born in St Helier in 1865. I had "discovered" Geoffrey via the Great War Forum which had carried a query from a great nephew, who provided the image. But, while my research into him is a case of "Work in Progress", there is already much of interest. He won the MC during the later stages of the Somme battle, leading his men in the defence of a trench for some 32 hours, when serving with the London Regiment. Now, I am a little confused in that his Medal Card indicates the 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, and they were not on the Somme.



However, it appears that the 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were at Gallipoli, and it may be that Geoffrey served there. What now becomes particularly fascinating is the nature of his post-war career, for he worked in the cinema industry in the early 'talkies' period, and seems to have won an 'Oscar' in 1936 as Director of a Short Film 'Wings Over Everest'. He worked with film notables such as Michael Powell and Prime Minister Herbert Asquith's son, Anthony. It was as Co-Director with Anthony Asquith that the film 'Tell England' was produced in 1931 from Ernest Raymond's book, and featured young men leaving public school, getting commissioned and then heading straight to war, in this case, Gallipoli. Having seen it in the last few weeks, the film is realistic in showing the landings and the battle scenes and I could not but learn how 'cricket ball' bombs were ignited with a striker.

'Tell England' is doubly interesting, in that the film also features Sir Ian Hamilton! But, Geoffrey's film skills were needed in the Second World War, as can be seen from the following book review:

*"The Camouflage Story: From Aintree to Alamein: The story of the British use of camouflage to deceive Rommel's intelligence during England's retreat from Libya to El Alamein. By Geoffrey Barkas.*



*This deception enabled the British to minimize their casualties, hide their weak spots, and build-up their forces for their counterattack during the second battle of El Alamein. This book tells, for the first time, the story behind Churchill's words in the House of Commons when announcing the victory of the Battle of Alamein he said, "By a marvellous system of camouflage complete tactical surprise was achieved in the desert." This narrative presents the Middle East campaigns of 1941-42 through the eyes of the author and his companions as it describes how this remarkable feat of deception was accomplished. The story covers the exhilarating onrush to Benghazi with Wavell's Army of the Nile, Rommel's first break-through, the siege and relief of Tobruk, our headlong retreat to Alamein and, finally, Alamein itself. No one could write on this theme with more authority than Lieutenant Colonel Barkas, OBE, MC. As Director of Middle East forces he created and led the camouflage organisation in that theatre from beginning to end."*

Geoffrey Barkas was certainly an interesting character, and I suspect that further research will turn up further gems of information.



### **Foxed No Longer!**

Having discovered the erroneous September, 1915 report of Ernest Fox's death in the Guernsey Press, and then the evidence to refute it with research and, subsequently, by input from his family in Lytham St Annes, I received the accompanying photograph from them in late-August. Looking very much alive in his officer's uniform, his MC and DCM and Bar can be clearly seen.

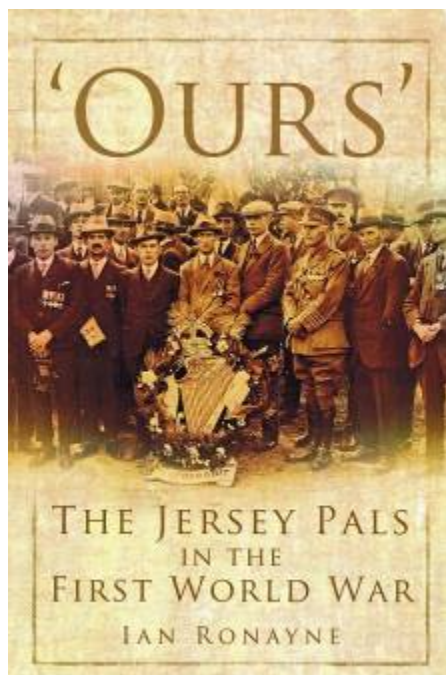
### **A New Puzzle**

The photograph below is reputedly of Charles W Haskell (or Haskill, or even Haskle) received from a gentleman in Jersey by the name of Alan Nicolle.

Although we know of his family (his parents were Charles Haskell and Francoise Marie Courcoux (a family link of mine?)), of his service we know absolutely nothing except the picture dates him as serving between 1904 and 1910 thanks to the Broderick cap. We cannot be sure about the cap badge which looks like it is of the East Lancashire Regiment. Alan writes: "All I know is that my grandmother told me that after being posted to the 'Front' the family received a telegram a week or so later informing them that he was missing in action and presumed killed. She further told me that as he was the only bread winner in the family the then Connétable of St. Brelade attempted to have his call up papers set aside but to no avail". Nothing can be found in the usual sources, so any help will be very welcome!



## Book Reviews



**OURS:**

**The Jersey Pals in the First World War**  
**By Ian Ronayne (The History Press - 2009)**  
**Review by Peter Tabb**

Some years ago a close relative who was also a good friend asked me to read the draft he had prepared of his adventures since volunteering from Jersey for the British Army in 1939. He had been at Dunkirk, St Malo, the Western Desert, Sicily, Italy, including Monte Cassino, and Burma and had campaign medals right across his chest. Despite being in the thick of almost all the major theatres of war except D-Day what he had written was boring, boring. I tried to put my critique nicely but in the end it would have been unfair not to have been honest. The manuscript remained just that – a collection of school exercise books – and I lost a friend but kept a relative.

Thus it was that I approached Ian Ronayne's newly published book with some trepidation. Not because I feared for Ian's writing style – I had already had a preview of a chapter and knew his words would flow easily. I am a fan of Richard Holmes and Bruce Catton, historians who invoke in their writing the techniques of thriller writers whose skill is to hold your and keep you wanting to turn the pages. But while history is often thrilling, unlike the conventional thriller, we know the ending before we read the first page. The true skill of the history writer is to keep us enthralled along a road where we already know the destination. This Ian achieves with the apparent ease of someone already well-practised.

In the published histories of the Great War, the role of the Channel Islands is not writ large. Even in the Islands themselves, despite the ubiquitous war memorials commemorating the 'glorious dead', the unique experience of the Second World War, when the enemy was not so much at the door as in the front parlour, is overwhelming. However, along with the rest of the British Empire, the impact on Island families from the loss of a loved husband, son, brother or lover, was far greater in the first global conflict than the second. That Jerseymen (and the book that records the role of Jerseywomen has yet to be written) flocked to the colours when they need not have done has now been meticulously and often movingly recorded.

Against the vast backcloth of the Western Front and the emotions evoked by the fate of many 'Pals' battalions, the Jersey 'Pals' have earned, so far, little recognition. Unlike their Guernsey counterparts, there was no Royal Jersey Light Infantry, and the fates of the Jerseymen were very much linked with that of the Royal Irish Rifles. Ian answers a question so often asked. Why the Royal Irish Rifles? What special link was there between this island and that Ireland? The answer is very prosaic. The Royal Irish Rifles were short of men and would have taken them from anywhere.

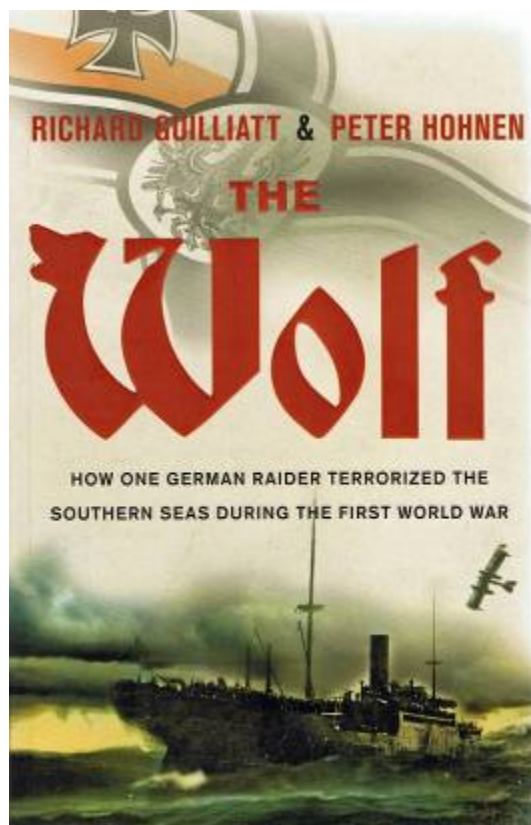
Ian fills in a lot of detail and in particular explores the relationship between the Island and its men at the Front. What he paints is a much more complex picture than has

hitherto been the case. What we learn is that there was much more to a group of volunteers going happily to war singing that it was a long way to Tipperary. The Island's attitude towards its potential heroes was at best ambivalent, and at worst, very much a case of out of sight, out of mind. Why this should have been so is explored in considerable detail.

Much of the book is written in a distinctly 'novel-ish' style. I was particularly impressed with the prologue in which Ian displays techniques that would certainly grace the opening pages of a novel and I suspect that behind the historian is a novelist waiting to show himself. Ultimately most war histories are stories of tragedies and this is one of them. It is also the story of a group of young men (and in the case of their Commanding Officer, not so young) who deserve the recognition that Ian's work has now finally afforded them.

Altogether more than twelve thousand men from these Islands fought in the Great War, many with considerable distinction. Indeed the proportion of men who rallied to the colours (and, more tragically, their losses) was greater from the Islands than from any other community in Britain. This is often overlooked. While Ian's book does not address this particular wider aspect, it does give its reader a much greater insight into why this might have been. The Jersey Pals, whose story 'Ours' is, were a relatively small cog in that larger wheel.

In his Foreword His Excellency Lieutenant-General Andrew Ridgway writes that this book will ensure that the memory of the Jersey Company in the Great War and the bravery and devotion of this loyal band of 'Jersey Pals' will live on forever. While, in his introduction Ian suggests that he had not expected to have to write the book because it had surely been written already. I am glad that he did and his work deserves a wider readership than it is likely to get.



**THE WOLF**  
**By Richard Guillatt & Peter Hohnen**  
**(Bantam Press - 2009)**  
**Review by Peter Tabb**

If there is one aspect of the wars that I am particularly interested in – the American Civil War, the Great War and World War II – it is the role of the commerce raider. I have long been fascinated by nautical things (perhaps that comes from being descended from the same family as Sir Francis Drake) but even when I was researching like mad for my chosen subject on Mastermind in 1977 – the life of General Robert E Lee – I kept being diverted by the fascinating stories of the 'grey ghosts of the Confederacy' – the commerce raiders that were sent out to sink the shipping of the United States. Sadly, since General Lee was very much a land animal, I was not asked a single question about the Confederate Navy!

Notwithstanding I was fascinated by the exploits of the Birkenhead-built CSS *Alabama* whose two and a half year world cruise caused sixty-six US ships to be burned and sunk and without a single loss of life. *Alabama* was defeated in a ship-to-ship duel with USS *Kearsarge* a little more than three miles off Cherbourg. Her largely British crew and her American officers were evacuated by British sympathisers who had sailed from Britain to watch the battle.

*Alabama* laid down the rules for commerce raiding – a protocol as to how a commerce raider (from above or below the sea) should behave towards a commercial vessel it was about to destroy. These rules – the *Alabama* Rules – were instigated after the American Civil War following the payment of massive compensation by the British government to the United States since the vessel, despite being a unit of the Confederate States Navy was British-built and largely British manned.

Despite a near comparability between Britain's Grand Fleet and Germany's High Seas Fleet, the oceans of the world were dominated by the merchant fleets of Great Britain and, all around the world, the ever-present Royal Navy. The navies of the two great powers had a similar role – use dominance of the seas to starve the other power out of the game. Within weeks of August, 1914 the red, white and black ensign had virtually vanished from the seas – German merchantmen were either bottled up in neutral ports or had been rounded up and taken into custody. For the Germans the imperative was different – they had to destroy Britain's merchant shipping and for that they used the U-boat and, much further afield, the commerce raider. Early commerce raiders were regular units of the German navy, the most notable being SMS *Emden*, a swift cruiser armed with ten 4.1 inch guns which recorded some early successes not the least of which was bombarding the port of Madras. *Emden* was caught by HMAS *Sydney* and battered to death on the Cocos Keeling Islands. It is ironic that *Sydney's* successor was sunk (with all hands) by a disguised German commerce raider, the *Kormoran*, off the coast of Western Australia in World War II.

On 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1916, an apparently ordinary freighter left Kiel. She would not touch land again for fifteen months. It was the beginning of a voyage that would take the ship around the world leaving a trail of destruction and devastation in her wake. For this was no ordinary freighter – this was the *Wolf*.

She started life as an ordinary merchantman but by the time the German Navy had completed her conversion, *Wolf* was the most technologically advanced fighting ship of her generation. She was a masterpiece of deception with seven 5.9 inch guns concealed behind hydraulically operated panels. She was fitted with torpedo tubes and her hold she carried 100 mines and a spotter plane, *Wolfschen*, to seek out her prey on the high seas. She also had the most powerful radio receivers in existence so that she could remain in contact with Germany and also monitor messages to and from other ships all over the world. Yet, cleverly camouflaged, she could pass for a common-or-garden freighter.

'The Wolf' is the story of this ship's epic voyage. Under the command of the charismatic *Kapitan-zur-See* Karl Nerger she destroyed more than thirty Allied vessels across three oceans and captured more than 400 men, women and children. She survived on fuel and food plundered from captured ships and sailed back to Germany fifteen undamaged fifteen months later on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1918.

'The Wolf' reads like a novel and is a fascinating study of men (and women) in a very unusual war. The authors have meticulously researched their subject even to the extent of uncovering a photograph of a group prisoners on the back of which one of the female prisoners describes another – an attractive younger woman – as 'a beast of the lowest order'. I'm afraid you will have to read the book to find out why!

Captain, later *Bundesadmiral*, Bernhard Rogge of the *Atlantis*, Germany's most successful disguised commerce raider of World War II, in his autobiography 'Under Tan Flags' describes Captain Neger as his mentor and inspiration. Like Neger, like Raphael Semmes of the *Alabama*, Rogge achieved his success with a minimal loss of life. Although, like Semmes, Rogge had his ship shot from under him, like Semmes and Neger he avoided capture and returned home with the bulk of his crew to continue his war.

HARVEY BROADBENT  
*Gallipoli*  
the fatal shore



**Gallipoli: The Fatal Shore**  
**By Harvey Broadbent**  
**(Viking Press/Penguin Books 2005)**  
**Review by Barrie Bertram**

Having read (and reviewed) Les Carlyon's book on the Gallipoli campaign along with the Holt's Guide, I had seen this book by Harvey Broadbent, an acknowledged authority, as the third leg of a 'stool of knowledge' to help me better understand that campaign. Some 287 pages of text, and very well illustrated, one is tempted to see this as a book that designed for the coffee table and not a serious read!

Don't be fooled! The author has packed more information on Gallipoli than one could expect, and I took more than twice as long to read it than I would have reasonably anticipated at the outset. Why? First, there was the need to make sure that what was stated was understood. The second is that the book was written from both the Turkish and the Allied perspectives, and so there is a need to look at the line on the map from both sides. Occasionally, the fact that the accounts reflect either side's name for a feature, such that the Turks' Koca Çimen Tepe is called Hill 971 by the British. There is a bit of 'flip-flopping' required to remember where one is!

Having said that the book is well illustrated, maps are a little short on the ground at five, and almost seem to be afterthoughts rather than an important part of the narrative. This is somewhat strange when he makes the comment (page 268) that: 'The Allies' difficulties were compounded by inaccurate maps...!' To that one might add insufficient!

The chronology of events is followed and that must be a given for the campaign, but, Hamilton's briefing by Kitchener is barely referred to. Yet it was a non-event in any case. More debate is given to prior military studies at forcing the Dardanelles and affecting a landing on the peninsula, all of these along with naval recommendations that these were not something that should have been done. Britain's cack-handed diplomacy in keeping the two 'paid for' newly built Turkish battleships at the outset of the war triggered Turkish alignment with the Germans. From then onwards it seemed to be a case of 'something has to be done', in part to help the Russians, in

part to maintain British interests in the Near East and in part to get the Bulgarians on the Allied side, and so Gallipoli resulted without any real strategic forethought.

The author reflects the above point in that the inadequacy of plans in London continued into Hamilton's planning, and it is clear that, with some 75,000 men provided for the landings, the number was a quarter to a third of what was required to deal with an opposition of around 70,000. A combination of Kitchener's arrogance and Hamilton's diffidence was not a recipe for success, nor was a lack of regard of the fighting qualities of the Turk.

Having written pages on my trip to Gallipoli, I shall not say much more as I will confuse all and sundry, however two items caught my notice. The first is a quote of General Birdwood describing Guernseyman and GOC, 29<sup>th</sup> Division, Major-General Beauvoir de Lisle:

*'...everybody hates him as he is a brute, with no thoughts for others, rude to everyone and has no principles, but I believe him to be the right man in the right place, and by his brutality I hope he will see things through.'*

I am resisting the urge to make Guernseyman jokes, but perhaps Birdwood's view was right, and a few more like de Lisle would have helped. The second is a reference to Lance Corporal Philip Robin getting to Scrubby Knoll on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1915 with few others, including Arthur Blackburn, later an Australian VC winner at Pozières, this being the most easterly point reached by Australian Forces, and from where the Narrows could be seen to the east. A few months ago, I chanced to look at his personal file on the Australian Archive site, for I discovered his middle name was 'de Quetteville'. Surmising a Channel Island link, I have, as yet been unable to verify this, so further research is required. However, the file contains a sad chain of events. Three days later, he was killed (and is commemorated on Panel 32 at Lone Pine). The file tells us that his widow was awarded a pension in July, but this is stopped in November of that year, the reason being that she was dead. The CWGC record makes no reference, and we can only wonder at whatever occurred.

Overall, the book is worth reading as a 'primer' for the Gallipoli campaign, but as part of a wider range of books.

### **Channel Islands Family History Society Exhibition The CI Great War Study Group Make Their Stand**

An E-mail from the Secretary of the Société Jersiaise History Section announced the impending Channel Islands Family History Society (CIFHS) exhibition, with a note to say all were welcome. Would that welcome extend to a fellow historical interest group, I wondered, albeit it one with far fewer years under the belt. A subsequent flurry of E-mails and phone calls made it clear that yes, the CIFHS would be pleased to host a CI Great War Study Group stand at their exhibition.

The CIFHS formed in 1978 by a group interested in researching the family histories of Channel Islanders. Today, they have a membership of more than 600, many of whom live outside of the Channel Islands in locations across the world. The exhibition at Trinity Parish Hall on the weekend of 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> August was one of their biggest public events yet staged.

With the offer of a CI Great War Study Group stand accepted, I checked with the Parish Hall whether internet access was available. But it transpired that the web was in the office, but not in the hall. It seemed important that visitors could access the Study Group website given the amount of information contained, and so I was fortunate that Jersey Telecom agreed to provide a 'Mobile Broadband' connection. Not only did this turn out to be an excellent way of connecting to the internet, but it also meant the Study Group stand had the only live web connection in the hall. Who accused us of living in the past? So, with stand set up and connection made, we were ready to go. (Editor: Is there no Wi-Fi in Parish Halls? If not, why not?)

The person most ready to go was Ned Malet De Carteret, who stoutly held the stand through the Saturday morning and lunchtime rush. After this, I took over and dealt with the Saturday afternoon and Sunday crowds. And there were crowds. The exhibition attracted a constant stream of visitors, including a surprisingly high number from overseas. While most were there in connection with some specific family history research, many took the time to stop and ask for information on a World War One related ancestor. By accessing the Study Group website, many gained information there and then – and most left duly impressed by what was available. Some picked up leaflet on the Group that included the website address and planned to follow-up at their leisure. Others left a contact name and research details for a follow-up from a member of the Group. Most satisfactory for me were a number of visitors with connections to the Jersey Company, including a relative of Sergeant Charles Laugeard, a man who features strongly in both the prologue and the epilogue of my book. But whatever the reason for visiting the stand, and the response gained, all seemed pleased by what they had seen or heard.



**We have the technology!**

The CIFHS organisers were also pleased with our contribution. Subsequently, they have asked for an article on the Study Group for inclusion in their next newsletter, and for a talk on the subject of Jersey in the First World War at one of the meetings next year. They have also added a Study Group link to their website. It will be interesting to see what all this can generate.

### **Channel Island Fighting Families: The Bihet Family** **By Ian Ronayne**

Following the recent Jersey Evening Post article on the publication of my book, I received a telephone call from someone whose father had served in World War One. Not only that, Peter Bihet announced, he was from a Channel Islands family that contributed no less than eight brothers and sisters to serve king and country. Intrigued, I met Peter to find out more.

The Bihet family originally came to Jersey from France in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Pierre Bihet and his future wife Marie apparently fled to escape a law preventing marriages between Catholics and Protestants. In 1891, they were living in Jersey, but ten years later, in 1901, had moved with their nine children to St Annes in Alderney. In between, for a brief while at least, they must have also lived in Guernsey because one child was born there in 1897. By 1914, when war broke out, the family, or at least some of the children, may have returned to Guernsey.

During the course of the war, eight of the Bihet children served in one capacity or another. After enlisting in March, 1915, Constant, John (or Jean) and Arthur joined the Guernsey-raised 9<sup>th</sup> Divisional Ammunition Column, serving as drivers. John, who later joined a Trench Mortar Battery, lost his life in May, 1917 reportedly due to a misfiring mortar tube.<sup>2</sup> Another brother, Marcel, also served in the Royal Field Artillery, although apparently in a different unit to his three siblings. The final brother, Ernest, was the father of Peter Bihet. Having served in the Royal Navy for several years prior to the war, illness appears to have forced him to leave in 1915. Three Bihet sisters also served their country. Ada worked in the munitions industry while Justine and Louise were nurses, the former with the Red Cross and the latter with the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service. Two of these also had husbands that served in the Army.

Time and other projects preclude a more detailed research of this remarkable family. But it must be something to come back to. Eight members of one family, plus two in-laws all serving together, and with links to Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney - could it be a record? (Editor: Please see Page 38 below for pictures of the Bihets)

#### **A Logo for the CIGWSG**

After some debate amongst a small *ad hoc* committee, following Ian Ronayne's initiative, we've come up with a logo for the Group as can be seen. Over the next few months we will look to work it into any material that we generate. Feel free to incorporate it into presentations, etc.



<sup>2</sup> Diex Aix incorrectly shows A Bihet as DOW instead of J Bihet



## Jersey's Belgian War Grave By Liz Walton



The list of official war graves in Jersey includes that of Jean-Baptiste Verdoodt, a soldier in the Belgian Army who died on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1918 and is buried in plot I.7.D at Almorah Cemetery, St Helier. So how did a Belgian soldier come to be buried with military honours on the island? And why is he commemorated by the Belgian Government as having died as a result of the war?

Jean (or Jan) Baptiste Verdoodt (or Verdood - records differ as to the spelling of his name) was born in the small town of Perk which is to the north east of Brussels in Belgium on 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1891. On the outbreak of war he joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Carabiniers (3/III/2 C) on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1914. This was an infantry regiment which formed part of the Belgian Army Chasseurs and it saw service against the German Army in August, 1914 still dressed in its green 19<sup>th</sup> Century uniform complete with a form of top hat (see postcard,

left, which, incidentally was sold in aid of Belgian wounded soldiers in London). Verdoodt was wounded at Stuyvekenskerke near the Yser Canal on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1914 and was evacuated to a military hospital in Calais on the same day.

Records of the battle show that towards the end of the night of the 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> October under cover of darkness the Germans had gained possession of a temporary bridge across the Yser near Tervaete, and got across to the left bank. An account<sup>3</sup> of the battle in which Verdoodt was wounded states that:

*“A series of counter-attacks carried out in the afternoon by the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Regiments of the Line, belonging to the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, and by the 8<sup>th</sup> Line Regiment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, supported by the Grenadiers and the Carabineers (Carabiniers), failed to drive them back. A Battalion of Grenadiers succeeded in reaching the Yser dyke, but being insufficiently supported, had to retire during the following night. These offensive actions were very costly in lives”.*

On 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1914 Verdoodt was transferred to a hospital at Lichfield in Staffordshire, England, one of a very small number who were placed there. Non military refugees were accommodated in Gaia Lane, Lichfield in a property fully furnished and with low rental. On 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1915, he was discharged from the hospital and was then attached to a ‘compagnie des subsistants’ of the Belgian Army in London. This was a company consisting of men from various Belgian units who had ended up in England for a variety of reasons. The authorities in England

<sup>3</sup> “THE WAR OF 1914, Military Operations of Belgium in defence of that country said to uphold her Neutrality”. Report compiled by the Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army, for the period July 31st to December 31st, 1914.

had set up a scheme for dealing with wounded Belgian soldiers coming into the country as refugees, as numbers rose rapidly in the course of 1914. By November of that year, the time at which Verdoodt was transferred, records held at the Imperial War Museum in London show that there were an estimated 20,000 wounded Belgian soldiers "either in War Office hospitals, in other hospitals under arrangements made by the Wounded Allies' Relief committee or in other Institutions (Earl's Court, etc.), or in receipt of private hospitality." Meetings were held between representatives of the War Office, the Local Government Board and the Belgian Government to formalize procedures for dealing with them. It was decided that convalescents who would be likely to recover enough to be fit for military service would on release from hospital be sent to specialist convalescent homes around the country ready to be sent back to France via Folkestone when they recovered. These homes or depots were to be under the control of and paid for by the Belgian Military authorities.

The 'reformés', men who were considered to be either incurable or unfit for further service were not to be kept together, but rather treated as 'ordinary refugees'. On 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1915, before he could be posted back to the Front Jean Baptiste Verdoodt joined this group by being pronounced unfit for active service and dismissed from the army a mere eight months after joining up. This followed an examination by a Belgian Military Board in London. The Belgian Military Authority was then required to pay him his ordinary soldier's allowance until the end of the war. According to a document dated November, 1914, all reformés were to be dealt with by the Local Government Board, which had the overall responsibility for housing all destitute refugees arriving in the country. The reformés were to be either given a place in one of the Local Government Board institutions or were placed out in private homes. However this was soon to change. A report on a meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1915 stated that the Belgian authorities now wanted the reformés to be collected together in large centres under military control where they would receive industrial training, or to be sent to France. In fact many of them ended up working in munitions factories or assisting the war effort in other ways. The exception to this was men who were "properly looked after" in private houses.

Verdoodt appears to have gone to Jersey at about this time. Newspaper reports from the time of his death state that prior to joining the Army he had worked as an indoor servant to a M. and Mme Jooris in Belgium. M. Jooris was an officer in the Belgian Army, and some time in 1914, following the invasion of Belgium and some "trying experiences", Mme Jooris, described as a lady of "social rank and position" went to Jersey as one of a small number of refugees offered hospitality there. Jersey's pre-1920 Register of Aliens, held at the Jersey Archive, lists eight people by the name of Jooris - Albert, André, Etienne, Lucie, Madelaine, Paul, Raymond and René so it would appear that Madame Jooris fled Belgium with her family. Newspaper reports also note that she had lost her son and her mother during her stay in Jersey.

It may have been because of connections with the family that Verdoodt also ended up in Jersey. He worked initially as a chauffeur for Major Arthur C Stamberg, an English born doctor who practiced at Windsor Crescent in St Helier before the war. When war broke out Dr Stamberg had enlisted as a Colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and served in Northern France where he was present at the retreat from Mons. His wife Susan, née Blampied, a Jersey woman, was said to have looked after Belgian refugees in a couple of houses in Midvale Road, St Helier. However in 1916 Colonel Stamberg was posted first to Gallipoli then to Guernsey

where he took up the post of Medical Officer at Fort George. Verdoodt then worked as a servant for Mme Jooris at 33 Midvale Road, having by this time married one of the other servants in the household, Jeanne de Jaegers.



In October, 1918 Verdoodt caught double pneumonia at about the same time as his employer died of it, though she had been ill for some time. He died on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1918, one week after his employer, at the age of 27 and was buried at Almorah. It is likely that both deaths resulted from the Spanish Flu epidemic. A small granite headstone marks his final resting place.

Thanks to Ian Ronayne for the original information, for taking the photo and for searching the Jersey newspapers.

### **Website Workings By Roger Frisby**

In early September we were faced with a minor crisis in that the CWGC completely changed the means of public web access to their database, rendering several thousand links from our website completely useless! Fortunately, following many complaints from many hundreds of other website groups, as well as us, they have now restored the original system because of "*technical difficulties*". I won't repeat here what I said at the time but there was one positive result for me from this episode.

Reading through many online discussions about the changes I came across Geoff's 1914-1921 Search Engine (<http://www.hut-six.co.uk/cgi-bin/search14-21.php>). Geoff Sullivan has developed search scripts to interrogate the CWGC database using many more search terms than those made available by the Commission.

Using his facilities I have been able to add 46 more names to our Guernsey Roll of Honour – men from Alderney, Sark and Guernsey. One man we had surprisingly missed was Lieutenant Dudley John Beaumont, the husband of the redoubtable Dame Sybil Hathaway, the late Seigneur of Sark and the grandfather of John Michael Beaumont, the present Seigneur. By using "Guernsey" as a search term, Lieutenant Beaumont was shown to have a Guernsey born wife – one Sybil Collings. Making the connections was then straightforward.

Earlier this year I was able to add a large number of headstone photographs from the Somme and am currently adding many for Gallipoli.

The totals for the two Rolls of Honour now number about 2900 and are still growing.

The Jersey Roll of Service has also been updated with some 60 plus new names. It is like the repainting of the Forth Bridge, in that details are also amended as information emerges about medals awarded, wounding, gassings and so forth.

Since Ian's website about the [Jersey Pals](#) went live in August, links on our site concerning the Jersey Contingent have been pointed to this. Ian is keeping the new site up to date.

### **Out and About**

Elizabeth Morey has recently visited Gallipoli. Unfortunately our respective tour dates saw us miss each other at Chunuk Bair by six days so sadly, she could not tell me more about those brave men "from the uttermost ends of the earth"!

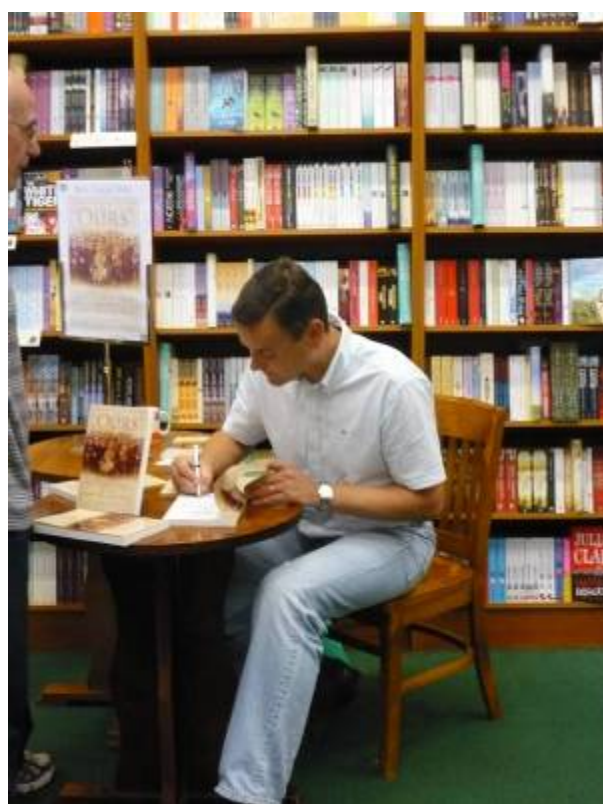
Ian Ronayne's talk in Jersey is on 21<sup>st</sup> November at the Jersey Archive, while looking a little further ahead, I will be giving one on Coutart de Butts Taylor to the North Wales WFA in September, 2010, possibly at Caernarfon Castle.

Liz Walton will be giving another talk at the Guernsey Museum in the New Year. More details to follow.

My next battlefield trip is to Ypres, Poperinghe and the Somme from 14<sup>th</sup> October until 1<sup>st</sup> November. Hopefully I can get to Kew in late November, but am unlikely to be able to 'field' requests, because I will not be spending the full day there.

### **Odds and Ends**

#### **An Update on Ours: The Book-signing at Waterstones on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2009**



Would anyone turn up? It had been two months since my book was launched after all, and there had been one signing event already. Sales to family and friends were mostly complete as far as I was aware, and Waterstones were reporting good general sales already. So would anyone turn up?

Fortunately, they did! Advance publicity on CTV, Channel 103 and BBC Radio Jersey, together with a round of emails and reminders seemed to get the message across. A gaggle of people clutching my book as I walked through the door of Waterstones at eleven o'clock boded well. After that there was a constant queue of four or five people for the next hour, and a steady number in the one that followed. In fact the interest never really let up for the whole event.

Some people bought multiples copies - three, four, or in one case five. Some were returning for a signature in books they had already bought. Most gratifying were a few who having read my book came in just to say how much they enjoyed it. Quite a few had photos or mementos of their relatives who served in the Jersey Company,

or elsewhere in the British Army. Some of these, including the grandson of RSM Jack Le Breton, left contact details and agreed to follow-up. For a lot of the general enquires I passed on the Study Group website address, so hopefully this should generate interest.

One o'clock brought the event to a close. Waterstones were delighted with the volume of interest and sales. So much so in fact, they have asked me to do a third signing event, sometime around Remembrance Sunday. On checking later, they informed me that 73 copies were sold on the day, beating Jeremy Clarkson and almost certainly propelling 'Ours' to the Number One spot in their weekly charts. Phew!

(Editor's Note: I had mentioned the CTV item being shown on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but unfortunately because of the aftermath of a major international drugs' case, the item was slipped a day to the 9<sup>th</sup> October. It is however visible on their website: [www.channelfv.co.uk](http://www.channelfv.co.uk) until around the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> November, at least for UK viewers).

**CWGC Debt of Honour Database Changes:** Roger Frisby, in 'Website Workings' has referred to the changes that the CWGC had introduced and then withdrawn. This attracted quite a bit of concern amongst the 'amateur research community' and some angry comments were directed at CWGC by some individuals, and in return their IT Director as quite hostile. Some of this was unfortunate, but the CWGC are now looking to work with the 'amateur research community' to understand issues, not least the contribution made by the latter (like us) in commemorating individuals using the CWGC's own data. At this stage, it has gone very quiet, I suspect while they assess what they have been told by 'amateur research community' members.

**Finally Gallipoli:** At this stage I am probably becoming boring about Gallipoli, but I've attached some maps on pages 39-46, courtesy the CWGC and Nigel Steel, to go with my article. Hopefully they will give you a feel, but there is nothing like visiting if you can manage it!

### Enfin

Well, another Journal is closed. This is a perennial plea of mine for some new blood, and indeed old blood to generate more articles, book reviews, pictures and what have you. However, do enjoy this one!

Regards  
Barrie H Bertram  
15<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

### Journal Issue Dates For 2009

The planned Issue date for the final Journal of 2009 is as shown below.

Issue	Month	Articles To BB	Posted Web/Mail
24	February 2009	10 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
25	April 2009	10 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>
26	June 2009	10 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
27	August 2009	10 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
28	October 2009	10 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>
29	December 2009	10 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>

## A FIGHTING FAMILY.



**DRIVER MARCEL BIHET,**  
R.F.A., is a son of Mrs. P. Bihet, of the Gange, Vale, formerly of Alderney. Driver Bihet is now in India.



**DRIVER CONSTANT BIHET,**  
another son of Mrs. Bihet, joined the first Alderney contingent.



**MISS ADA BIHET,**  
a daughter, is a munition worker, employed in making cordite.



**GUNNER JOHN BIHET,**  
also a son of Mrs. Bihet, was attached to a Trench Mortar Battery "Somewhere in France."



**DRIVER ARTHUR BIHET,**  
R.F.A., a son of Mrs. Bihet, joined the Alderney Contingent, and was transferred to the R.F.A.

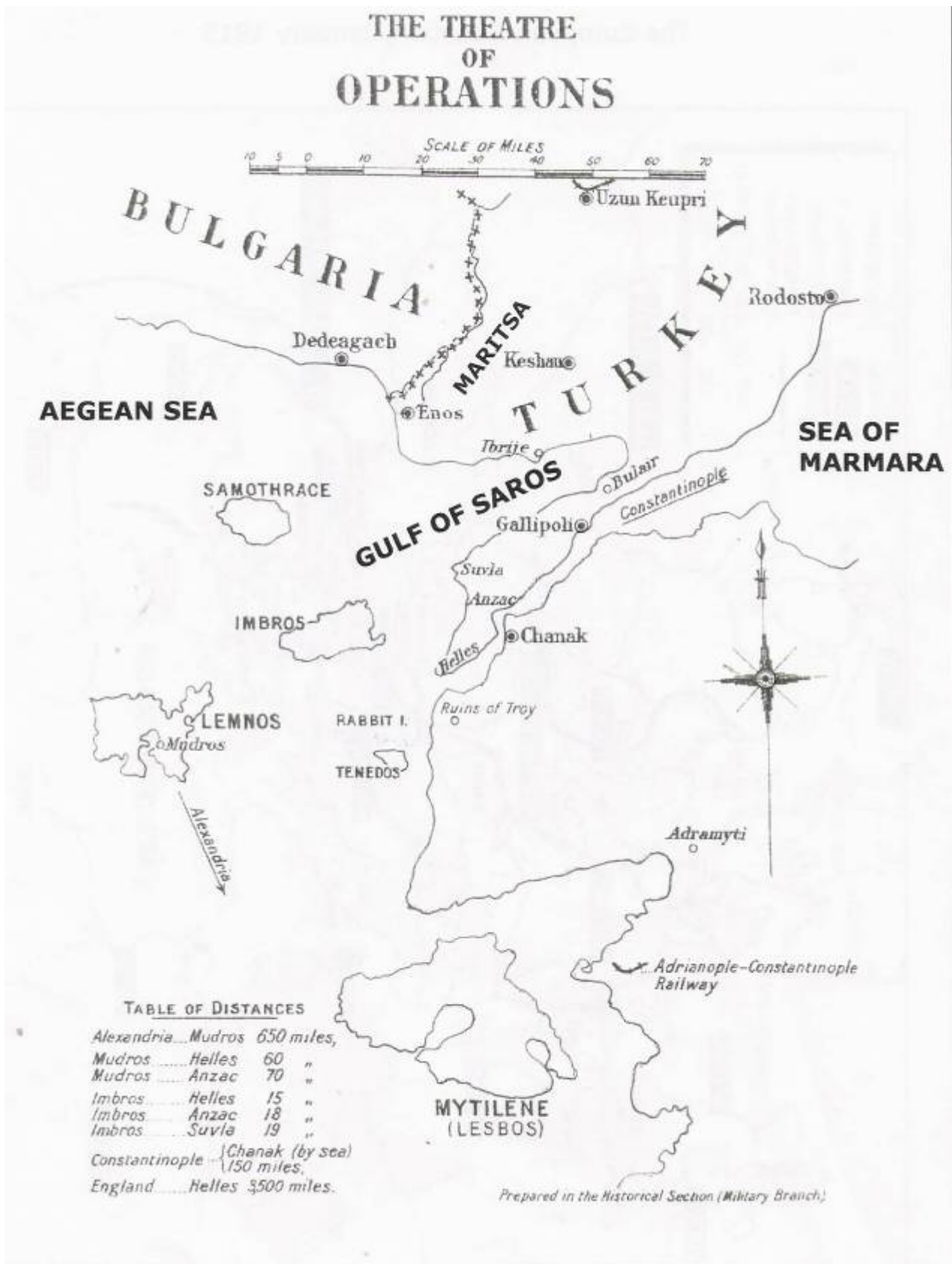


**BOMBARDIER HARRY THOMAS,**  
a son-in-law of Mrs. Bihet, formerly of the R.G.A. and E., Alderney, has been transferred to a Trench Mortar Battery. He was awarded the Military Medal on November 15, 1916.



**LEADING STOKER ERNEST BIHET,**  
another son of Mrs. P. Bihet, was recently invalided out of the Royal Navy. He had served on H.M.S. Empress of India and H.M.S. Warrior.

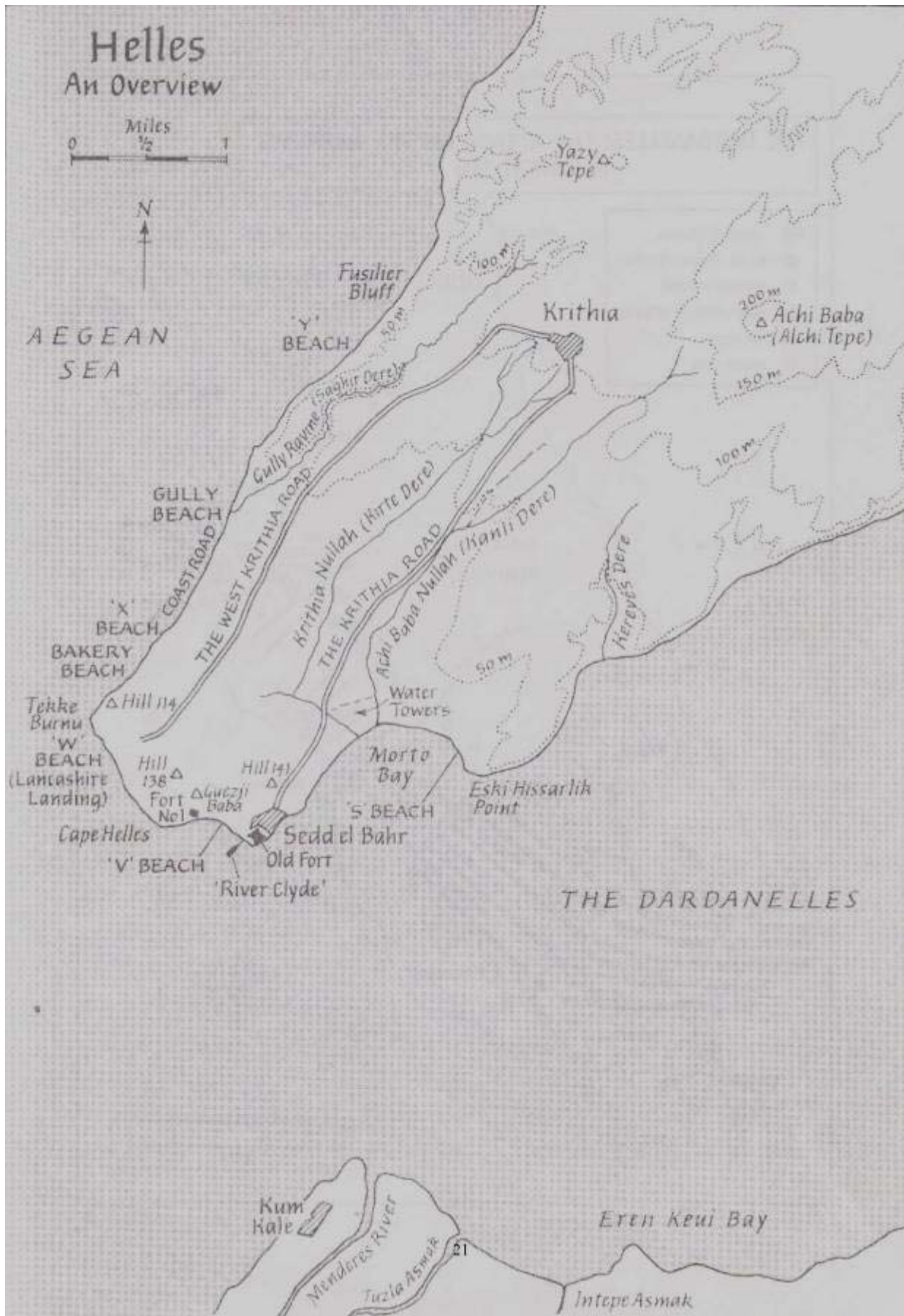
# Gallipoli – An Overview



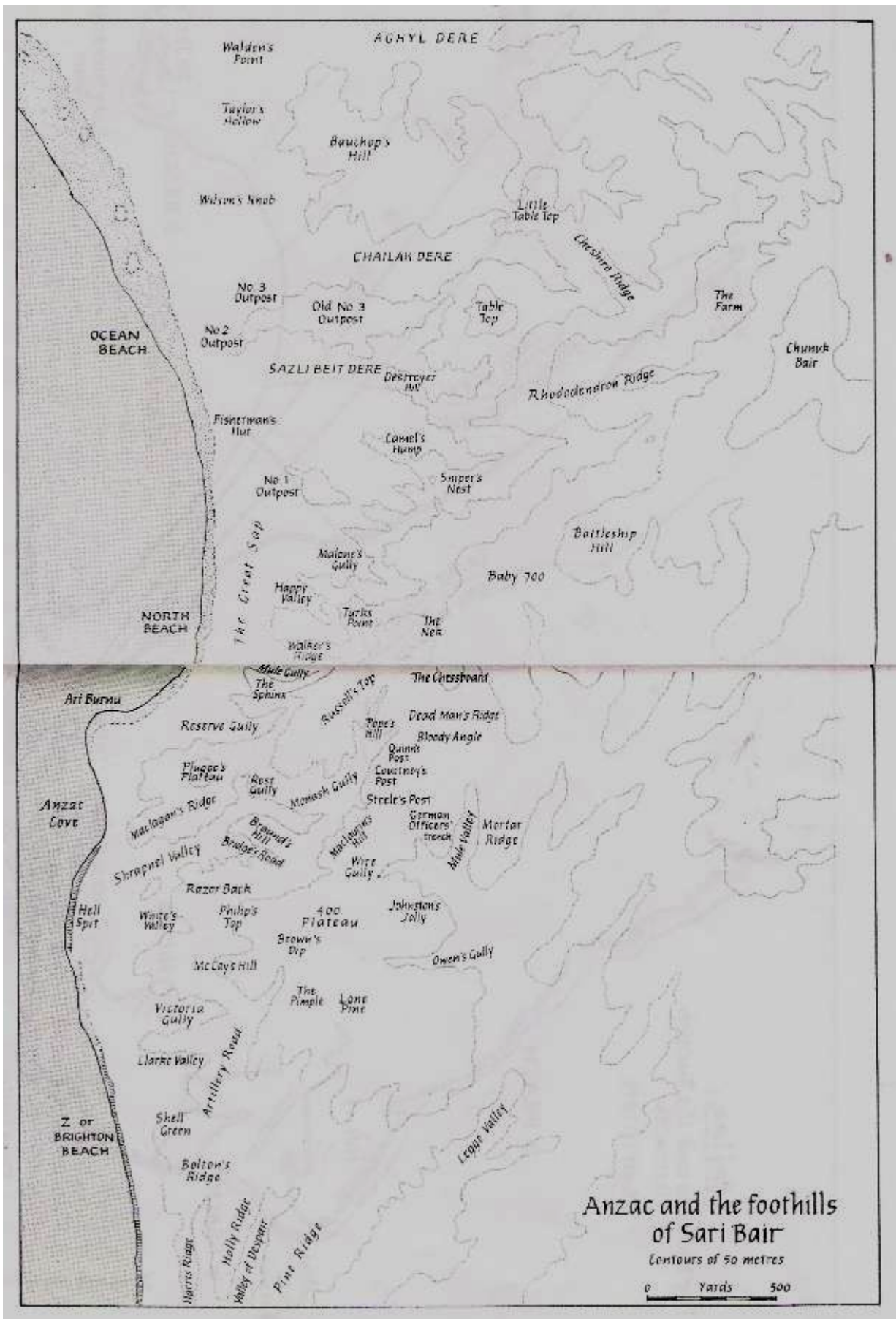




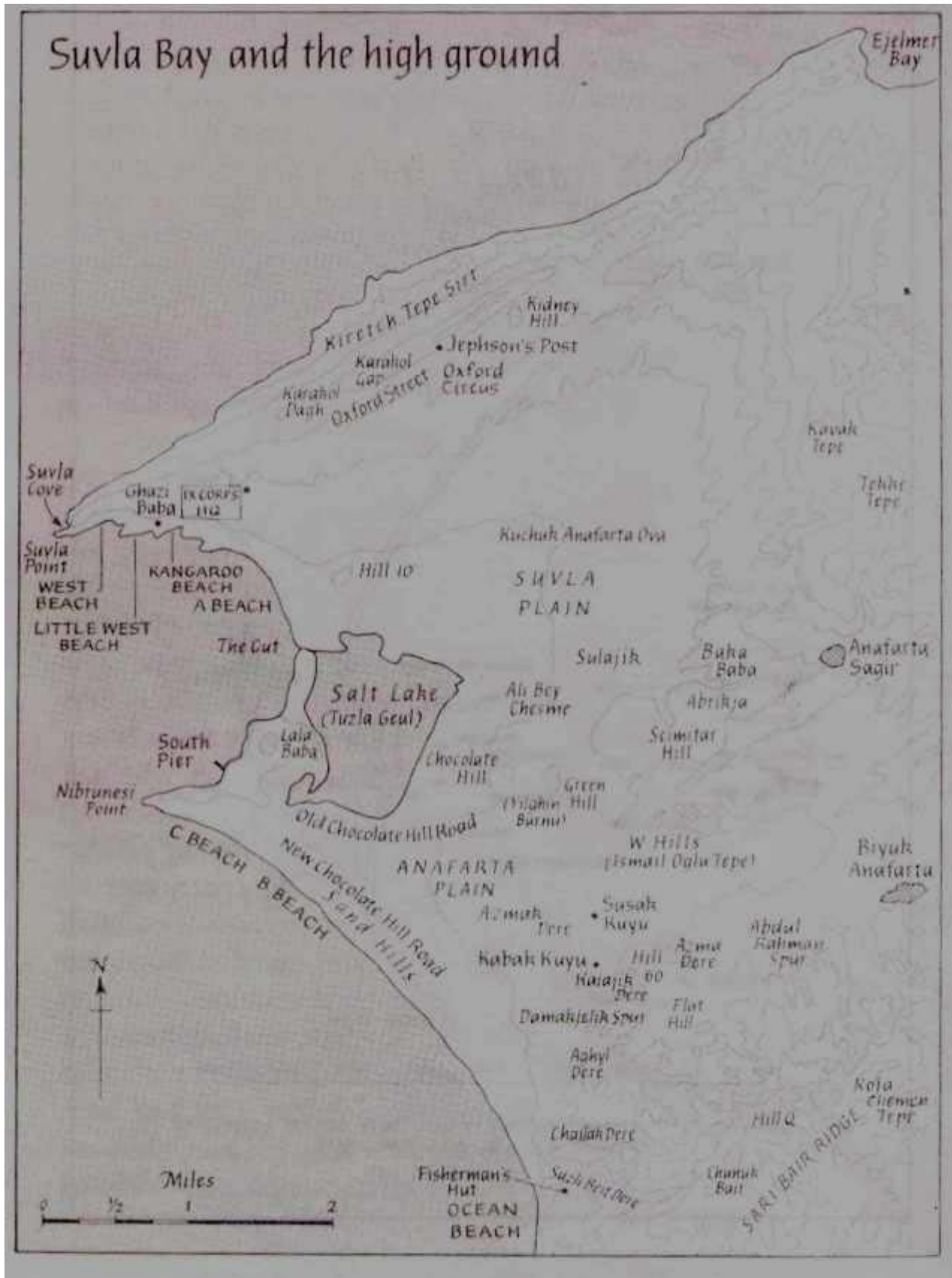
# Gallipoli – Helles



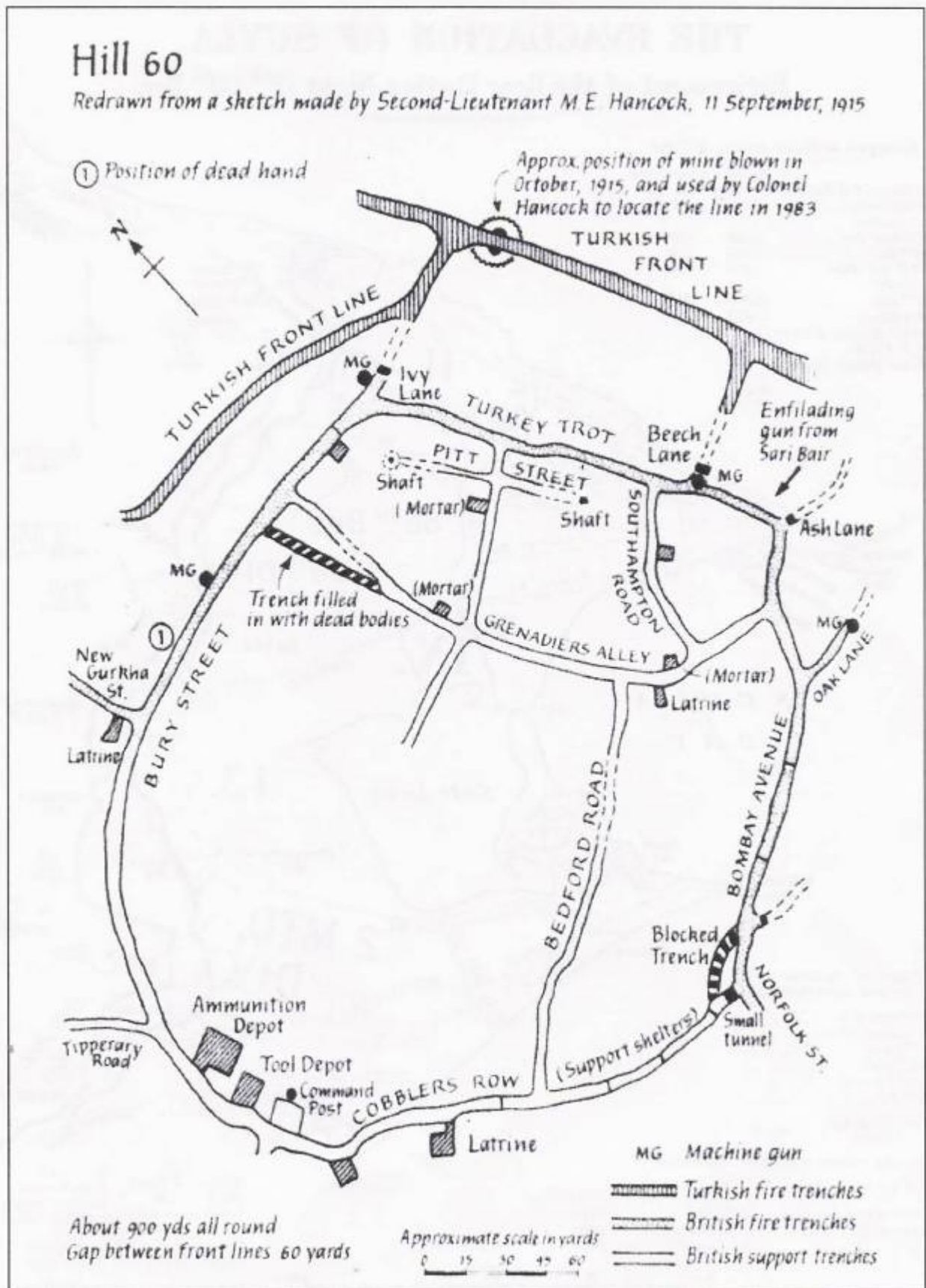
# Gallipoli – Anzac



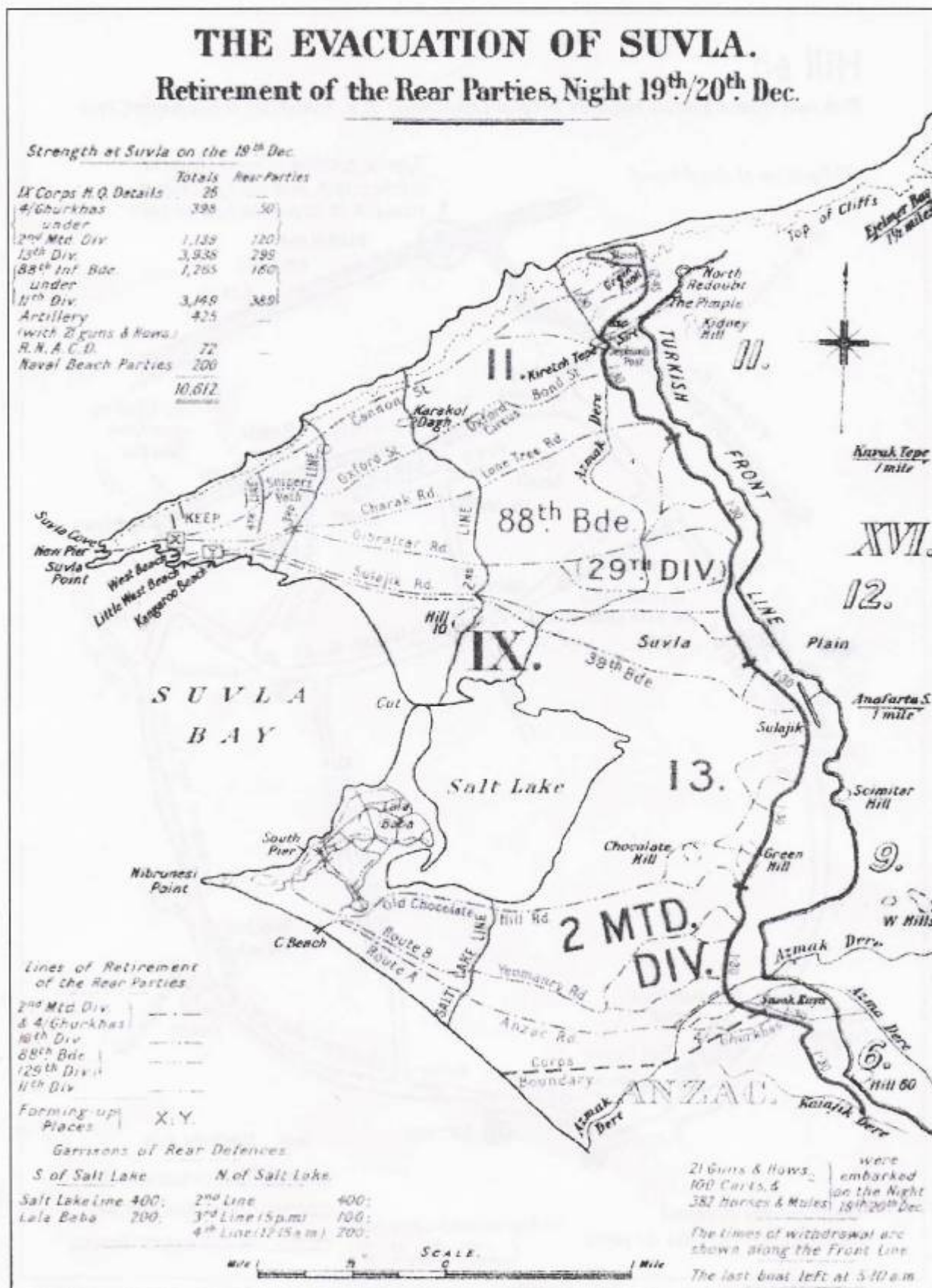
Gallipoli – Suvla



# Gallipoli – Hill 60



Gallipoli – Evacuation from Suvla



# Gallipoli – Location of CWGC Cemeteries

