

# 'Twas Better to Die

The Irish Times and Gallipoli 1915 - 2015



Edited by Ronan McGreevy  
**IRISH TIMES BOOKS**



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Selected and edited by Ronan McGreevy

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BELIEVED TO BE BURIED  
IN THIS CEMETERY

LIEUTENANT  
N. J. FIGGIS

LEINSTER REGIMENT  
10 AUGUST 1915 AGE 23

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH



*Hundreds of Irishmen are buried in the cemetery overlooking V Beach where many of them fell. Photograph: Peter Murtagh*



*The Royal Munster Fusiliers were involved in the Suvla Bay landings and many died in the attempt to achieve a breakthrough. Photograph: Peter Murtagh*

## **Introduction**

*Right proudly high over Dublin Town  
they hung out the flag of war  
'Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky  
than at Sulva or Sud El Bar...*

*And from the plains of Royal Meath  
Strong men came hurrying through  
While Britannia's sons with their long-range guns  
Sailed in from the foggy dew*

*'Twas Britannia bade our Wild Geese go  
that small nations might be free  
But their lonely graves are by Sulva's waves  
or the fringe of the Great North Sea  
Oh, had they died by Pearse's side  
or fought with Cathal Brugha  
Their names we will keep where the Fenians sleep  
'neath the shroud of the foggy dew*

***-The Foggy Dew, Canon Charles O'Neill (c1919)***

It was Phil Graham, owner of the Washington Post newspaper, who popularised the phrase “Journalism is the first rough draft of history”.

One hundred years after the Gallipoli first World War campaign, from March 1915 to January 1916, what happened there is regarded as a byword for military failure.

But that was not how it appeared in the immediate aftermath of events, when the combined Allied offensive sought to force the Ottoman Empire out of the war.

*The Irish Times*, in common with mainstream opinion in Britain and Ireland, exhibited a fatal complacency in believing the Turks would not – could not – effectively defend their home soil.



In 1915, *The Irish Times* was a different newspaper to what it is today. It reflected the ruling order of the time, which was essentially unionist (with a small ‘u’) and largely Protestant in a society that was predominantly Roman Catholic but not necessarily overwhelmingly nationalist in outlook.

The newspaper and its readers would have seen themselves as both British and Irish, reflecting a sense of identity more complex and multi-layered than often acknowledged since. At the outbreak of hostilities, the newspaper was a staunch supporter of the war effort, as was most of the mainstream Irish press. *The Irish Times* believed the sacrifice of so many young men was necessary for right to prevail.

“We venture to say that even the bitterest loss in this campaign has been worth the while, worth it for the soldier himself, for his loved ones, for Ireland,” it said of the thousands of Irishmen who died at Gallipoli.

Such sentiments are alien to the modern sensibility, but were commonplace at the time, including on the Irish nationalist side. It was Padraig Pearse who said of the first World War “The old heart of the earth needed to be warmed with the red wine of the battlefields”. Most modern readers would conclude, as James Connolly did at the time, that this was the talk of a “blithering idiot”.

Yet notions of patriotism, heroism and self-sacrifice were widespread and shared by every nation, class and creed engaged in this terrible war. Why else would so many young Irish professional men leave their careers to face oblivion?

And today, the sense of sacrifice remains at the centre of loyalist identity in Northern Ireland. *The Irish Times* believed passionately that the war would unite nationalists and unionists in a common cause. After reports came back of the fighting at Suvla Bay in August 1915, the paper reflected: “The unionists and nationalists who fought at Ypres and stormed the hill at Suvla have sealed a new bond of patriotism.”

Those sentiments were deeply felt at the time, not least by John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

It has become axiomatic that the Irish who fought in the first World War were written out of Irish history and yet the presence in 1930 of half the cabinet at the funeral of Sir Bryan Mahon, the general who commanded the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division in Gallipoli, show attitudes were more ambivalent than we were later led to believe.

Subsequent Irish governments, beginning in 1932 with Éamon de Valera’s first administration, were less favourably disposed towards the memories of those fought in the Great War.

In recent years, there has been a new understanding about the Irish who fought in the first World War. Much was done by the former president Mary Robinson to reinstate the notion of non-judgmental remembrance of Irishmen who died in both world wars and by her successor, Mary McAleese, who specifically rehabilitated the memory of the Irish at Gallipoli with her visit there in 2010.

More recently David Davin-Power's excellent documentary on RTÉ Ireland's *Forgotten Heroes* and the successful play *The Pals at Gallipoli* have focused much deserved attention on a campaign which cost Ireland between 3,000 and 4,000 dead, more than what died in the Easter Rising and War of Independence combined.

Gallipoli will never have the pre-eminence in Ireland that it has in the national consciences of Australia, New Zealand and modern-day Turkey but the long national silence has been broken.

This eBook originated out of the wealth of material *The Irish Times* produced in the run up to the centenary of the Gallipoli landings in 1915.

While the newspaper has generated much to give a historic context to Gallipoli, it is contemporary reports from the time that give the most powerful testimonies of the reality of that awful campaign.

*The Irish Times* was heavily dependent on the British War Office's Press Bureau for information. It is clear from the reports that were published that the true extent of the disaster was kept from the British and Irish public.

Instead, it is the letters sent back by men fighting at the front and later published in *The Irish Times* which are worth a thousand press reports.

Who would not fail to shudder at the unnamed officer in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers rescued from the sea during the landings at V Beach in Cape Helles? "Afterwards he got a hold of my poor old gammy arm and pulled like billyo breaking it again which I needn't tell you woke me up a bit from swallowing salt water. He was shot through his arm too, and the blood from it was blinding me, yet he wouldn't give in."

Or the Munsters' officer who wrote matter-of-factly: "It has certainly been a tough job. The heaps of dead are awful and the beach where we landed was an extraordinary sight."

The most remarkable thing about Gallipoli from an Irish perspective was the hundreds of middle-class men from prosperous backgrounds who joined the war effort, the so-called "Posh pals". There was no conscription in Ireland, neither were they compelled by economic necessity to do so, yet they joined up anyway.

One of them was Poole Hickman from Co Clare, a 35-year-old barrister and rugby player who was killed on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1915, a day after he sent home a letter which made it into the pages of *The Irish Times* after his death. In it he discussed the terrible conditions which the men endured at Suvla Bay.

“I forgot to say that we discarded our packs at the landing and have never seen them again and all this time we never had even our boots off, a shave, or a wash, as even the dirtiest water was greedily drunk on the hill where the sun’s rays beat pitilessly down all day long, and where the rotting corpses of the Turks created a damnably offensive smell.”

After the Gallipoli debacle, the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division was evacuated to Salonika. A report from the Battle of Kosturino in December 1915 is included in this eBook. If the Gallipoli campaign is only now being remembered from an Irish perspective, the Salonika campaign remains almost wholly forgotten. Irishmen fought on the sides of the Serbians against the Bulgarians in the mountains of modern-day Macedonia. Such a scenario sums up the absurdity of the first World War.

**Ronan McGreevy, August 2015**

## Glossary of terms

*The British infantry was sub-divided into different units depending on their size.*

**Company:** A company usually consisted of 250 men. A British battalion usually had four companies named alphabetically A,B,C and D.

**Battalion:** A full strength battalion would consist of approximately 1,000 men divided into four companies. A battalion would be attached to a regiment. Ireland had eight regiments at the start of the war. Before the first World War most regiments would have two battalions, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. The 1<sup>st</sup> battalions of the Royal Munster, Dublin and Inniskilling Fusiliers were regular service battalions in the British Army before war broke out. Those with numbers higher than 2 were raised from either the reserve or through Kitchener's New Army.

**Brigade:** A brigade consisted of four battalions. Each division had three brigades which were numbered in consecutive order. Hence the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division consisted of the 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> brigades of the British army.

**Division:** A division consisted of 12 battalions, 12,000 men in total with support from artillery, logistics and transport, making approximately 17,000 men in total.

**Corps:** Corps consisted usually of at least three divisions and were given Roman numerals. The five divisions which landed at Suvla Bay were called IX Corps.

Hence the Posh Pals were D company of the 7<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The 7/Royal Dublin Fusiliers was part of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division which in turn was part of the IX Corps of the British army.

## Key Maps

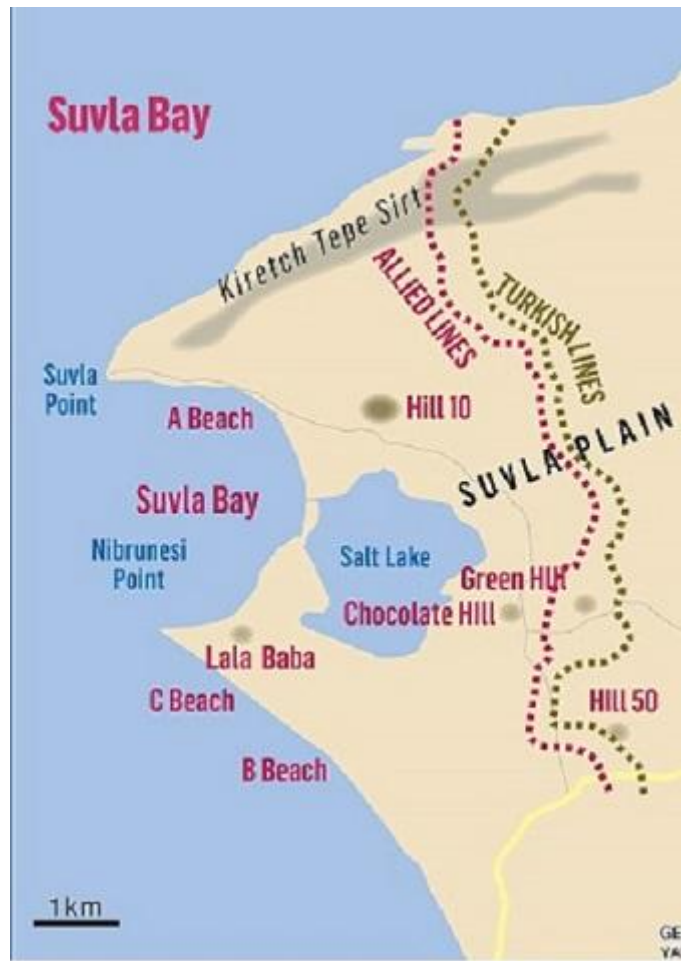












## **Austria's murdered heir**

*“One day the great European War will come out of some damned foolish thing in the Balkans” Otto von Bismarck (1888).*

*Few knew it at the time but the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1914, resulted in what was then the most destructive war in history and altered the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.*

*The first World War was the “calamity from which all other calamities sprang,” wrote the historian Fritz Stern. The rise of the Nazis, the Bolshevik Revolution, the second World War, the Cold War, the break-up of the old Yugoslavia and even today's tumult in the Middle East all have their origins in the conflict which broke out in 1914, a little over 100 years ago.*

*Ferdinand and his wife were killed by an assassin's bullet fired by a 19-year-old Bosnian Serbian nationalist named Gavrilo Princip. Serbia had won its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1877, but many Serbs lived outside its borders, principally in Bosnia-Herzegovina.*

*Nationalist dreams of a greater Serbia were thwarted when Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908. During the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 Serbia successfully drove the Ottoman Empire out of modern-day Macedonia and Kosovo, but Serbians also wanted Bosnia which had a substantial ethnic Serbian population.*

*Princip and his fellow assassins were armed and trained by elements within the Serbian military. The Austrians blamed Serbia for the assassination, setting in train a series of alliances which developed, exactly a calendar month later, into world war and the tearing apart of a continent that had been at peace for most of the previous 100 years.*

*The Irish Times report of the following day does not underplay the gravity of the assassination, but few at the time believed its consequences would lead to a global conflict.*

### **The Irish Times, June 29th, 1914**

We have to record today with profound regret and horror another tale of blood in the annals of the ill-fated House of Hapsburg.

The head of the assassin has suddenly removed from the European stage one of the most striking of its Royal personalities.

Yesterday the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, who had been attending the manoeuvres in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were shot and mortally wounded while driving through the streets of Sarajevo. Both died almost immediately.

Their murder seems to have been the result of a well-planned conspiracy, determinedly carried into execution.

Earlier in the day a bomb was thrown at them, but they escaped unscathed, though several people were seriously injured; and it is reported that a second bomb was found which was evidently intended for use if the plans of the successful murderer had miscarried.

There is no reason to doubt that the motive of this foul crime was political. The Dual Monarchy, that incongruous congeries of nations, is honeycombed with disaffection and intrigue; and there is a certain sinister significance in the murder of the Archduke in Bosnia-Herzegovina, two provinces with the annexation of which his name will always be associated.

Violence has dogged the footsteps of the members of the Royal House of Austria-Hungary. The Emperor's wife, the Empress Elizabeth, was assassinated at Geneva. His only son, the Crown Prince Rudolph was found dead in his shooting box in circumstances which furnished a mysterious problem that is still unsolved.

The death of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand settles one riddle of European politics only to call another into being. The question of what would happen when he succeeded the Emperor Francis Joseph, who is now 84 years of age, on the throne of the Dual Monarchies was one that had haunted the thoughts of the chancellories of Europe more and more urgently. It has freely prophesied that the unstable bonds of the Empire, held together only by the influence of the present Emperor would snap at his death and the succession of the Archduke Ferdinand.

We can only hope that the Emperor will be able to surmount these difficulties but the immediate outlook for his Empire is confused and dark.

## **Europe's peace shattered; Irish Home Rule delayed**

*The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand sundered the fragile peace in Europe and precipitated the first general war on the continent for a century.*

*The peace in Europe had been maintained by a series of alliances which would ultimately lead to war: Britain, France and Russia on one side, Germany and her ally, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, together with the Ottoman Empire, on another.*

*It took 37 days from the assassination to all out war in Europe. Austria-Hungary issued an ultimatum to Serbia and threatened invasion. Germany gave Austria-Hungary a "blank cheque" to do as she saw fit with Serbia. Russia had signed a treaty with its fellow Slavs promising to protect Serbia against foreign attack.*

*The Kaiser explained: "Should a war between Austria-Hungary and Russia be unavoidable, Austria-Hungary can rest assured that Germany, your old faithful ally, will stand at your side."*

*Both Austria-Hungary and Germany made a fatal miscalculation. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28<sup>th</sup>. Russia ordered a partial mobilisation in response.*

*Germany declared war on Russia on August 1<sup>st</sup>. This in turn dragged Russia's ally France into the conflict.*

*Britain did not have a formal treaty with France or Russia but when Germany invaded neutral Belgium on August 3<sup>rd</sup> in order to attack France, the British felt obliged by the terms of a 75-year-old treaty to defend Belgium. Thus, at 11pm on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1914, the United Kingdom, which included Ireland, declared war on Germany.*

*While all this was going on, the British Government was distracted by the worsening situation in Ireland.*

*The Home Rule Bill, which was passed in 1912 and aimed to give a measure of self government to the island of Ireland as a single unit, was due to come into force in 1914. In May 1914 it passed all stages of parliament in London and needed only the King's ascent, but the measure was foundering on the determination of Ulster Protestants to resist Home Rule.*

*In April, the Ulster Volunteer Force, which was determined to defend the status quo and resist Home Rule, smuggled 25,000 guns and three million rounds of ammunition into the port of Larne in Co Antrim. In July and August, the nationalist Irish Volunteers landed a cargo of weapons and ammunition, bought in Germany, at Howth in Dublin and Kilcoole in*

Wicklow. There were now two armed militias in Ireland with opposing views about the future of the country.

While the “July crisis”, as the assassination and events immediately following became known, was convulsing the capitals of Europe, Britain’s King George V called a conference at Buckingham Palace in an attempt to resolve the differences between unionists and nationalists. The talks broke up without agreement.

Feelings were still running high in Ireland following the Bachelor’s Walk massacre of July 27<sup>th</sup> when troops from the King’s Own Scottish Borderers, who had been sent to intercept the arms from Howth, fired on a crowd of civilians in Dublin killing three. The deaths provoked outrage but attention moved elsewhere as the possibility of a European war drew ever closer. On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons, made a speech there telling the British Government it may “tomorrow withdraw every one of their troops from Ireland” if it needed them elsewhere.

“I say that the coast of Ireland will be defended from foreign invasion by her armed sons,” he told MPs, “and for this purpose armed nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join arms with the armed Protestant Ulsterman in the North.”

### **The Irish Times, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1914**

The call to arms has come. At eleven o’clock last night Great Britain declared war on Germany. We are glad that the formal declaration has come from our own Government and not from the enemies who forces this quarrel upon us. This is the fitting answer to a direct challenge.

The whole nation will welcome the ending of suspense. That the breaking point was very nearly reached was evident from Mr Asquith’s grave statement in the House of Commons yesterday afternoon.

We believe that the people of these kingdoms are today more cheerful than they have been at any time since the war cloud began to gather over Europe.

The period of suspense and uncertainty is ended. In Ireland today the national feeling is not merely one of courage and confidence. Faced with terrible and urgent danger though we be, our hearts find room for thankfulness – even for exultation.

In this hour of trial, the Irish nation has “found itself” at last. Unionist and Nationalist have ranged themselves together against the invader of their common liberties.

A few weeks ago it used to be said by despairing English politicians that Ireland was two armed camps. Today she is one armed camp and its menace is directed against a foreign foe.

Mr Redmond's speech is receiving from Irish Unionists the wholehearted welcome which we claimed and predicted for it yesterday. It gives to Southern Unionists, in particular, the boon which was hitherto denied to them – the opportunity of asserting their nationality, of rendering personal service to the motherland.

The Nationalist army has hastened to endorse Mr Redmond's speech as it is not only ready, but eager, to unite with Ulster's army for purposes of self-defence.

We do not pretend that the political question of Home Rule is affected by this splendid act of union, but Sir Edward Carson and Mr Redmond have done a noble work for Ireland. They have achieved the beginning of national reconciliation; they have opened a great door.

## **Britain's army to be increased to by half a million**

*The British army was pitifully small for the war that was coming. Kaiser Wilhelm II described it as a "contemptible little army". Henceforth the British Tommies, as rank-and-file soldiers were known, veterans of the regular army, would call themselves the "Old Contemptibles".*

*The British army consisted of less than 250,000 full-time troops, most garrisoned in Britain's colonies, and some 400,000 reservists at various stages of readiness and training. By contrast France could mobilise 1.65 million men and Germany 1.85 million men at the outbreak of war. Both countries had conscription.*

*In August 5<sup>th</sup> 1914, Lord Kitchener, who was born in Ballylongford, Co Kerry, was appointed Britain's Secretary of State for War and tasked with recruiting an army of 500,000 men to fight the imminent conflict. These soldiers would become known as Kitchener's Army.*

*Part of that army would be the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, created on August 21<sup>st</sup> 1914, led by Irish-born officers and, following training throughout the winter of 1914/1915, the first division raised in Ireland to take to the battlefield when it was deployed at Gallipoli.*

*The Irish Times quoted extensively from the British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith's speech to the House of Commons announcing on behalf of Lord Kitchener a dramatic increase in the size of the army.*

*In it, Asquith refers to the self-governing Dominions who have agreed to support Britain "spontaneously and unasked". These include Australia and New Zealand who would be destined to send their men to Gallipoli.*

### **The Irish Times, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1914**

Asquith: I am asking on his behalf for the Army, power to increase the number of men of all ranks, in addition to the number already voted, by no less than 500,000.

I am certain the Committee will not refuse its sanction, for we are encouraged to ask for it not only by our own sense of the gravity and the necessities of the case, but by the knowledge that India is prepared to send us certainly two divisions, and that every one of our self-governing Dominions, spontaneously and unasked, has already tendered to the utmost limits of their possibilities, both in men and in money, every help they can afford to the Empire in a moment of need.

Sir, the Mother Country must set the example, while she responds with gratitude and affection to those filial overtures from the outlying members of her family.

## **Recruiting into the 10<sup>th</sup>**

*In 1914, the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) was an overwhelmingly Protestant-dominated sporting organisation, though it also attracted middle-class Catholics. Its president was Francis Browning, a staunch Dublin unionist and former Ireland cricket international, who saw the IRFU as a potential recruiting agent to create an officer corps for Kitchener's new army.*

*Browning was killed during Easter Week 1916 while on duty with the Georgius Rex, otherwise known as the Volunteer Training Corps, a form of the home guard. His platoon was ambushed by Volunteers Michael Malone and Seamus Grace who had taken over 25 Northumberland Road, Dublin during the Battle of Mount Street Bridge.*

*In seeking recruits, Browning turned to The Irish Times, to get word out. In due course, volunteers who responded to Browning's call formed D Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers which in turn was part of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division and were known as the Lansdowne Pals*

### **The Irish Times, August 7th, 1914.**

Sir, The committee of this union will hold a meeting on Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> to consider what steps it should take to aid the Government in the defence of the country should the necessity arise. In the meantime, I would ask the secretaries of all rugby clubs to furnish to me at this address, with as little delay as possible, information as to the number of the members willing to join in the movement and such other matter as they may consider necessary. We hope to have a meeting of secretaries in a few days.

Yours etc

F.H Browning

President,

Irish Rugby Football Union.



## Obscurities of War

*Like all newspapers at the time, The Irish Times was subject to the strictures of the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) which gave the British government extensive powers to requisition buildings and supplies in support of the war effort, create offenses by decree and other authoritarian measures, including extensive censorship. The newspaper became, like all others, heavily dependent for information on the government's War Office Press Bureau.*

*It was clear from the beginning of the war that the full story was not being told and the scale of Allied setbacks in the early weeks was being concealed from the public.*

*By the time of this dispatch in the early days of the conflict, the Allies in Belgium were in full scale retreat from a rampant German army which very nearly won the war in the 40 day timescale as envisaged in the Schlieffen Plan, a 1905 German military strategy under which France would be defeated by being attacked through Belgium.*

### **The Irish Times, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1914**

We are forced today to enter a protest against the methods of the Press Bureau. There is good reason to believe that the German advance has penetrated more deeply into France than the public has been authoritatively informed.

If there is bad news, the public ought to have it. Nothing is to be gained by subjecting people to unnecessary anxiety.

We base our complaint against the Press Bureau upon Mr Asquith's definition in the House of Commons yesterday of the principle on which that institution gives out information. The principal is that all information is given which can be given without injury to the public interest – that is without giving enlightenment to the enemy.

The enemy obviously know their own dispositions. We are content to be without news of the counter-disposition of the Allied forces but we may surely be told as much as the enemy know already.

We cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that the situation may be more serious than the Press Bureau allows us to know. While we must keep the possibility that this is the case steadily in view, it should be remembered on the other hand that we know nothing about the strategy of the Allies commanders at this stages. The Germans advance has certain obvious dangers.

Their lines of communications are steadily lengthening. The Belgian Army, to the gallantry of which Mr Asquith paid an eloquent and deserved tribute in moving the address yesterday,

is making splendid sallies out of Antwerp. Nevertheless the situation generally is a disappointing one in which the only absolutely satisfactory feature is the successful progress of the resumed French offensive in Lorraine.

## **Rugby Union Volunteers – Inspection at Lansdowne Road**

*In late August 1914 Kitchener announced the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division would be formed under the command of General Sir Bryan Mahon who was originally from Co Galway and was a veteran of the Second Boer War.*

*Within days of the declaration of war, the IRFU set up plans for a volunteer corps. By the end of August 1914, hundreds had joined up. Many of these men would become the celebrated “Posh pals” or the “Pals at Gallipoli”, mirroring similar groups in other regiments, sets of friends, or pals, based on commonality of geography or social origin.*

*Many of the Lansdowne Pals, assembled on this pitch, would be dead within a year.*

### **The Irish Times, September 1, 1914**

The Irish Rugby Union volunteer corps was inspected last evening by General Sir Bryan Mahon KCVO. Although the corps is only a week in existence, the members have made such progress under their drill instructors as to show that these sporting volunteers when fully trained will be among the smartest of their kind.

They drill each evening on the football ground at Lansdowne Road where they have often been engaged in the stern contests of peace.

About 250 of them paraded at a quarter past five last evening and were drilled for half an hour pending the arrival of the inspecting officer.

The corps was divided into four companies. These were first drilled independently and then executed their movements with precision notable for men who had been only a week under training.

When Sir Bryan Mahon came on the ground the companies went into battalion formation and the corps was inspected by him. Having completed his rounds of the lines, the General addressed to the volunteers a few words of commendation and encouragement.

He expressed his pleasure at being there and praised the work which they had done during the past week. He was afterwards heartily cheered by the volunteers. The drilling and inspection was watched by a number of friends of the sports men.

It should be noted that membership of the Rugby Union Volunteer Corps is not confined to rugby footballers. They will be glad to welcome to their ranks members of other sporting clubs who desire to take part in defending the country if the necessity should arise.

**Ireland and the new army**  
**Poor response from Midlands and South**  
**Lord Kitchener's Disappointment**

*The response to Kitchener's call for a new army was not uniform throughout Ireland. Recruitment was brisk in urban areas, particularly in Dublin and Belfast, but less so in the countryside. This was a pattern throughout the UK and Ireland in general, as those living in rural areas were reluctant to leave their farms, especially as the outbreak of the war coincided with the harvest.*

**The Irish Times, September 10th, 1914**

We understand that Lord Kitchener, an Irishman himself, is greatly disappointed with the poor response from the midlands and south of Ireland to his appeal for men to make up his new army.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Division, the only one sought from Ireland for his first 100,000 men (7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> divisions) was intended to be a purely Irish division.

It is highly probable that, if the establishment is not completed by Irishmen within the next fortnight, its strength will have to be raised to the required level by bringing recruits from England where men are still coming forward to enlist in such large numbers that the recruiting officers are overworked in dealing with applications.

Every effort is being made to secure the purely Irish institution of the 10<sup>th</sup> Division which is to be commanded by Lieutenant-General Bryan T Mahon C.B D.S.O who relieved Mafeking. The division is to be 18,000 to 20,000 strong and so far is only half filled.

## **Turkish Act of War**

### **Russian Town Bombarded**

*In the run up to the war, the Ottoman Empire was neutral. But two days before the conflict broke out, it and Germany signed a secret alliance in which the Turks undertook not to side with the Allies.*

*Germany and the Ottomans were already close: in 1913, a German military mission to Turkey sought to reorganise the Ottoman army and navy under German guidance. Germany's General Otto Liman Von Sanders became Berlin's chief military advisor to the Ottomans. This was to have serious implications for the Allies when it came to the invasion of Gallipoli, whose defences von Sanders helped organise along with a rising Ottoman army officer, Mustafa Kemal, the front line commander on the peninsula.*

*Turkish public opinion was enraged when, on the orders of Winston Churchill, Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty, two Turkish battleships in British shipyards, the Sultan Osman I and the Reshadieh, were requisitioned for the Royal Navy at the start of the war.*

*In response, the Germans offered Turkey two of their battleships, the Goeben and the Breslau. The pair had managed to outrun a superior force of pursuing British and French ships to reach Constantinople where they were renamed and reflagged.*

*The Turkish leadership believed that siding with the Germans would help their long-term strategic goal of seizing ethnic Turkish lands back from their mortal enemies, the Russians.*

*On October 29th, the Turkish finally entered the war when they bombarded Russian Black Sea ports. Three days later Russia declared war and Britain followed on November 5th. The Allies, concentrating hitherto on events on the Western Front in north-east France and Belgium, now had another front and enemy to contend with.*

#### **The Irish Times, October 30th, 1914**

A telegram from Theodosia [Crimea] announces that a Turkish cruiser with three funnels bombarded the railway station and town for an hour this morning between 9.30am and 10.30am.

The cathedral, a Greek church, the harbour sheds, and the breakwater were damaged. One soldier was wounded. The Russian Bank of Commerce was set on fire. The cruiser disappeared in a south-westerly direction at 10.30am.

The Turkish cruiser *Hamidieh* appeared off Novo Rossiisk [now Novorossiysk the main Russian port on the Black Sea] today and demanded the surrender of the town and Government property, threatening, in case of refusal, to bombard the town.

The officials of the Turkish Consulate were taken off and the cruiser then disappeared.

Turkey has begun hostilities and, in a manner, worth of her Teutonic mentor, by bombarding peaceful sea coast towns.

As soon as it became known here that Turkey had opened hostilities against Russia, demonstrations were made in front of the British and French embassies and legations of the Allies and the various representatives of these powers appeared on the balconies and made speeches to the crowds.

## **Countdown to Gallipoli**

*The entry into the war of the Ottoman Empire presented the Allies with a new opportunity. In early January 1915, the Russians requested help from France and Britain. The Turks had bottled up their ships in the Black Sea.*

*Winston Churchill believed that an attacking fleet could force its way through the Dardanelles Straits, the narrow and strategically vital waterway connecting the Mediterranean to the Sea of Marmara, and hence open a route to the Black Sea. This would allow British and French battleships through to Constantinople, as Istanbul was then known. By bombarding the Ottoman capital, Churchill believed he could force the Ottoman Empire out of the war. That in turn would open a sea route for France and Britain to supply Russia with weapons and for Russia to supply the Allies with grain.*

*On January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1915, the British took the fateful decision to try and force the Dardanelles. On either side of the straits, the western side which was the Gallipoli peninsula, and the eastern side which was then known as Asia Minor, shore batteries guarded passage, especially at the narrows, a stretch by Çanakkale, the main city on the Asia Minor side that was about only a kilometre wide.*

*The British-French fleet decided to try to knock out the batteries and began a bombardment on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915. The Irish Times report exhibited the same fatal complacency which would characterise the whole Gallipoli campaign. At the time the Ottoman Empire was known as the "sick man of Europe" because of internal dissent among its ethnically diverse people. The consensus in Europe was that it was on the verge of disintegrating.*

### **The Irish Times, February 21st, 1915**

It must be rather a shock to the German Admiralty to find that Great Britain had ships enough to spare from the Grand Fleet for the bombardment of the Dardanelles.

The fleet engaged is a strong one and, though the task is difficult, it has done notable work.

From early morning until the light failed the firing continued and the fight was resumed today. Seaplanes and aeroplanes are lending their aid to the attack on the Sick Man of Europe and it is possible that the news tomorrow may be very good.

It can scarcely be expected, however, that the fleet will win its way to Constantinople at once for a minefield has to be considered in addition to other lines of forts and defences.

It will nevertheless give the Turks reason to think over their position and perhaps, rouse them to rebel against the German domination.

### **The Irish Times, March 1st, 1915**

The attack by the Allied Fleet on the Dardanelles is developing successfully and more rapidly than was to be anticipated.

Very rapid progress cannot be expected in an operation of this formidable character, which demands, above all things, caution and patience.

In the first place, conditions of wind and weather have to be taken into account. It is essential to success at the long ranges at which the greater part of the bombardment is being carried out that the atmosphere should be perfectly clear.

Bad weather, moreover, interferes with the work of the seaplanes, which has much to say to the accuracy of the gunnery.

The action has already had to be suspended for the better part of a week on account of unfavourable weather conditions. In the next place, the fleet is only now beginning to get to grips with the more serious part of its undertaking. So far the attacking squadrons have had open water in which to manoeuvre.

The forcing of the channel itself cannot be other than a laborious and delicate operation, and we may be sure that Admiral [Sackville] Cardan [commander-in-chief of naval forces during the Dardanelles campaign] will take "festina lente" [make haste slowly] as his maxim when his ships enter the narrow waters.

The operations preliminary to the forcing of the Straits may now be regarded as completed. The four principal forts guarding the entrance to the Straits have all been finally reduced.

When the attack was resumed last Thursday, it was soon found that the bombardment of the previous Friday had been one of considerable effect, for the Admiralty's report tells us that the return fire was very slow and inaccurate.

One lucky shot, however, hit the *Agamemnon*, killing three men and seriously wounding five. The *Queen Elizabeth*, *Agamemnon*, *Irresistible* and *Gaulois* respectively dealt at long range with the four forts, which were left in no condition to offer effective resistance when other ships closed to complete their reduction.

Before dark the four forts were out of action and the task of sweeping the channel for mines was immediately begun.

On the next day the Straits were swept up to four miles from the entrance, and three battleships, proceeding to the limit of the swept area, began an attack on one of the inner forts. They also turned their attention again to the outer forts, which were evacuated by the Turks and afterwards demolished by landing parties.



A remarkable feature of the operations is the inclusion in Admiral Carden's squadron, which otherwise consists entirely of pre-Dreadnought ships, of the *Queen Elizabeth*. This vessel, the first of a class of five to be commissioned, is the latest addition to our battle fleet, and is in every respect the most powerful battleship afloat.

Her employment at the Dardanelles, instead of in the main strategic area, seems to require some explanation. One possible explanation is that her voyage to the Mediterranean is in the nature of a "trial trip".

A more probable explanation, we think, is to be found in the extremely long range and terribly destructive capacity of the 15-inch guns with which she is armed. We gather from the course of Friday's operations that the work of sweeping the Straits of mines, though tedious, does not promise to be of great difficulty.

But, when they approach the Narrows at a point where the Straits are less than a mile in width, the attacking ships will have to deal with forts which cannot be so easily reduced as those at the entrance.

These forts are, on the European shore, situated on high cliffs, and here, doubtless, are mounted the heaviest guns that the Turks possess. Guns of high-angle fire concealed behind the cliffs could drop heavy projectiles with deadly effect on the weakest spot of attacking ships their decks.

Against guns on such dominating heights, moreover, it would be extremely difficult for the naval guns, owing to their flat trajectory, to make good practice from inside the Straits.

It may be possible, however, for these forts to be taken in reverse across the Gallipoli Peninsula from the Gulf of Saros.

If any guns are capable of doing this, those guns are the 15-inch guns of the *Queen Elizabeth*. We may be sure, at least, that she will not be employed upon any hazardous enterprise in the Straits themselves, and that the Admiralty, in including her in Admiral Carden's command, has a very definite object in view.

It should not be forgotten that Russia has a more permanent interest in Constantinople than the other Allies, and we may be sure that she will take a hand in the measures for its seizure. Russia commands the Black Sea and has plenty of troops available at Odessa.

## **The Dardanelles**

*The early optimism that the Allies could make a breakthrough solely using naval power proved to be tragically incorrect.*

*The Turks, with the aid of the Germans, proved to be redoubtable fighters. The strain of command showed on the commander of the Allied fleet, Admiral Sir Sackville Hamilton Carden, who was born in Templemore, Co Tipperary. He had a nervous breakdown and was replaced by another Irishman, Admiral John de Robeck who was from Naas, Co Kildare.*

*The shoreline batteries, plus mines threaded across the narrows making them impassable, saw several Allied ships sunk, inflicting an actual and a psychological blow to the British and French.*

*A last attempt was made to force the straits on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1915. A combined Allied fleet of 18 battleships was assembled. The plan was for minesweepers to clear the Straits and then for the battleships to use their heavy guns to destroy shore batteries. The attack ended in disaster.*

*Unknown to the Allies, a Turkish minelayer had laid a string of mines close to the shore where Allied ships were known to manoeuvre. Three battleships were sunk and several more crippled. It proved to be the end for all attempts to force the Dardanelles Straits solely by naval power.*

*This report in The Irish Times would come as a shock to those who presumed that the operation was going well.*

### **The Irish Times, March 20th, 1915**

The Admiralty report on the Dardanelles operations which we publish today sufficiently explains the silence of the last ten days. Those ten days have been occupied with mine-sweeping work inside the Straits preparatory to a general attack by the British and French Fleets on the forts of the Narrows, which was begun on Thursday.

The mine-sweeping work has proved a somewhat costly business, and the general attack has proved still more costly. Two British battleships, the *Irresistible* and *Ocean*, and a French battleship, the *Bouvet*, have been sunk by contact with drifting mines.

These are the most serious naval losses that the Allies have yet suffered, but it was recognised that the task of forcing the Straits must become increasingly dangerous, and it would be surprising if no sacrifices had to be demanded, in view of the nature of the operations.

No fewer than sixteen heavy ships in all were engaged in the general attack. The *Queen Elizabeth*, *Inflexible*, *Agamemnon*, and *Lord Nelson* bombarded the Narrows forts with indirect fire from their former stations beyond the Gallipoli Peninsula. Meanwhile the French squadron of four ships, with the *Triumph* and *Prince George*, operated at close range inside the Straits, being relieved in the afternoon by six British battleships.

The *Irresistible* and *Ocean*, which were comprised in this relief, were struck by mines drifting with the current and sank within two hours of each other.

Both were pre-Dreadnought ships, more than ten years old, which before those operations might have been described as of little fighting value. They cannot be so described now, because they have done excellent service in the Dardanelles, and their loss is a serious matter. It is very satisfactory to learn, however, that almost the whole of the crews were rescued, under a hot fire. The *Bouvet*, to whose work with the rest of the French squadron the Admiralty pays a warm tribute, was not so fortunate.

An internal explosion followed upon the mine explosion, and she sank with almost all hands. In addition to these losses by mines, the *Gaulois* was damaged by gunfire, and the battle-cruiser *Inflexible*, hit in her fore control, also needs repairs.

We are not yet in a position to estimate whether the results achieved were commensurate with these losses. The Admiralty was evidently prepared for losses, for it tells us that the *Queen* and *Implacable* “despatched from England to replace ship’s casualties in anticipation of this operation” are due to arrive immediately, thus bringing the British Fleet up to its original strength.

The chief command of that Fleet, owing to the illness of Vice-Admiral Carden, of which we regret to learn, has passed to another Irish sailor Rear-Admiral de Robeck, who seems to be an efficient successor.

Certainly no blame attaches to him for the losses incurred for, though the danger from mines set adrift with the current after the regular minefields had been swept was foreseen, it could not be avoided. Only actual experience can afford a guide for dealing with a danger which, as the Admiralty says, “will require special treatment”.

## **The land war in Gallipoli**

*In March 1915, Lord Kitchener agreed reluctantly to a proposal to put together an expeditionary force for the Mediterranean which would be used in the event of a naval failure at the Dardanelles. Kitchener needed every soldier for the Western Front, but was forced by his political masters to acquiesce in putting together a potential invasion force.*

*When war broke out, many of the regular service battalions of the British army were scattered across the Empire. They were brought back to Britain for the duration of the conflict and three divisions were formed from them, the 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Divisions.*

*Three of the battalions in the 29<sup>th</sup> Division were Irish, the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers and the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the Inniskilling Fusiliers. In March 1915, the division left the Bristol docks at Avonmouth bound for Egypt for training in readiness for an amphibious landing in Gallipoli.*

*The 29<sup>th</sup> Division was joined by two divisions from the untested Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzacs), who had been training already in Egypt, and by a Royal Naval Division and a French colonial division – 70,000 men in total.*

*They were commanded by General Sir Ian Hamilton, a well-respected veteran soldier of the British Army.*

*Such a large amphibious landing under modern battle conditions had never before been attempted.*

### **The Irish Times, April 22nd 1915**

Mr. W. T. Massey, the Daily Telegraph correspondent in the Eastern Mediterranean writing on April 7<sup>th</sup>, says General Sir Ian Hamilton's Mediterranean Expeditionary Force is complete. How large it is and what units are with it are not matters with which the general public may concern themselves.

While there may be heavy work in front of Sir Ian Hamilton's army, the British public may be satisfied that the Allied troops are capable of great things.

Capable most assuredly they are. It may appear an exaggeration to say so, but the very finest battalions of the British army are here, highly trained units which have not yet suffered the wastage of war and full of men who, while regretting that their appearance in the war area has been so long delayed, have spent their time in the most serious endeavour to make themselves perfect soldiers. Battalions of the most famous regiments of the line, hardened by foreign service, already past masters in the art of war when hostilities began, are here.

## The first landings



*The view seen from the bridge of the SS River Clyde with V Beach and the fortress at Sedd el Bahr in the background. Many of the men lying on the deck are dead or injured.*

*The invasion of Gallipoli went ahead in the early morning of April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1915.*

*The plan was for the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division to land at Cape Helles, the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula, home to an ancient fort and village named Seddul Bahr. The Anzacs were to land on a beach west of the Cape and mid-way up the western side of the peninsula. Together the British and the Anzacs would land and overrun the peninsula, moving east across it, thereby attacking from the rear the shore batteries that overlooked the Dardanelles. Knocking them out would make for safe passage through the narrows.*

*The 29<sup>th</sup> Division landed at five beaches on the southern tip of the peninsula at Cape Helles.*

*The landings at three of the beaches, known as S, X and Y beaches, were unopposed. At W Beach the Lancashire Fusiliers fought off a determined defensive stand, but at V Beach beneath Seddul Bahr where the Irish landed, the results were a bloody catastrophe.*

*The Royal Munster Fusiliers, a company of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and a company of the Royal Hampshire Regiment, some 2,100 men in all, were on board a converted collier, the SS River Clyde. It was planned to beach the River Clyde and allow the men to exit through sally ports cut out of the side of the ship.*

*Unfortunately, the ship ran aground at one end of the beach, some 80 yards out from the shore, and a pontoon of lighters (comparatively small landing craft) had to be tied together to create a walkway, allowing troops access the beach.*

*This made the men easy targets for the Turkish gunners manning the high ground behind the beach and the cliff tops beside it as well as the ancient fort. As they landed, rifle and machinegun fire rained down on the soldiers, turning the sea white from the spattering bullets – and red from the blood of the dead and wounded, according to eyewitness accounts.*

*At the other end of the beach, three companies of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were towed close to the shore in a pinnace (a type of small steam boat) and four cutters. The men were then expected to make their way ashore by rowing the rest of the distance.*

*When they got within 20 yards of the shoreline, the Turkish gunners opened up. One Munsters' officer Captain Guy Nightingale witnessed the slaughter from the bow of the River Clyde.*

*“As she beached, two (sic) companies of the Dublins in Tows came up on the port side and were met with a terrific rifle and machine gun fire. They were literally slaughtered like rats in a trap. Many men sank owing to the weight of their equipment and were drowned. The carnage on 'V' Beach was chilling, dead and wounded lay at the water's edge tinted crimson from their blood.*

*“After being set adrift by their steam pinnaces (small steam-powered boats), the boats had to row the last few hundred yards to the shore. The Turks waited until the men tossed their oars and were within 20 yards of the shore and swept them with fire.”*

*He later wrote in his diary that in just one 15 minute long spell of landings, the Dublins lost 21 officers and 560 men killed or wounded.*

*West and north around the Cape and further up the coast, the Anzacs landed two kilometres north of their intended target. Instead of landing at the broad expanse of beach at Gaba Tepe, they drifted still further north to a small beach where they landed and which thereafter, became known as Anzac Cove. They faced a steep and deeply gullied escarpment which, silhouetted against the dawn sunlight, reminded them of sights seen in Egypt. One protrusion they named The Sphinx.*

*Elsewhere to the east of Cape Helles, the French made a successful diversionary landing at Kum Kale on the Asiatic side of the Straits and the Royal Naval Division landed unopposed at Bulair in the very northern part of the Gallipoli peninsula, but this too was a diversion.*

*At first the War Office played down the disaster of the April landings, but as the days passed the news reaching the outside world got steadily worse.*

#### **The Irish Times, April 27th, 1915**

The War Office and the Admiralty make the following announcement:

The general attack on the Dardanelles by the fleet and the army was resumed yesterday.

The disembarkation of the army, covered by the fleet, began before sunrise at various points on the Gallipoli Peninsula and in spite of serious opposition from the enemy in strong entrenchments behind barbed wire was completely successful. Before nightfall large forces were established on shore. The advance continues.

#### **The Irish Times, April 28th, 1915**

The War Office and Admiralty make the following announcement: After a day's hard fighting in difficult country, the troops landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula thoroughly making good their footing with the effective help of the navy.

The French have taken 500 prisoners. The following telegram has been officially published in Cairo. “The Allied forces, under Sir Ian Hamilton, have effected a landing on both sides of the Dardanelles under excellent conditions. Many prisoners were taken, and our forces are continuing the advance.”

### **French report (Press Association War Special)**

An official note issued tonight says: In the landing effected on April 25th by the Allied forces on both shores of the Dardanelles, the French troops, comprising infantry and artillery, were especially designated to operate at Kum Kale on the Asiatic coast. This task was accomplished with entire success.

With the support of the guns of the French fleet, and under the enemy's fire, our troops succeeded in occupying the village and, in holding their ground there, notwithstanding seven counterattacks, covered by heavy artillery, which were delivered by the enemy during the night, we took five hundred prisoners, and the enemy losses seem to be high. The general disembarkation of the Allied forces continues under excellent conditions.



## **An Irish tragedy**

*The carnage at Seddul Bahr brought the tragedy of Gallipoli directly to many homes in Ireland, in particular home in Dublin and Munster. The Irish Times was not happy with the official briefings from the War Office and early optimism has given away to a sense of foreboding.*

### **The Irish Times, May 1st, 1915**

We are left to pierce the veil of anonymity with which the Government obscures the deeds of our regiments by reference, after the event, to the casualty lists. These are beginning to come from the Dardanelles, and it is announced that our losses have been "necessarily heavy".

There have been at the Dardanelles fighting as desperate and deeds as famous as any this war has seen, but to what regiments belong the honour of success in this new campaign we are not informed.

The official report covers the period from the date when disembarkation began before sunrise last Sunday up to Thursday night. The work of disembarkation was undertaken at six different beaches, and at five of them, in spite of the vigorous resistance offered by the Turks, strongly entrenched in successive lines and powerfully supported by artillery, it was immediately successful.

Only at one, that of Sedd el-Bahr at the extremity of the Gallipoli peninsula, were our troops unable to gain an effective footing until the evening, when a fine flank attack by a nameless body of British infantry relieved the pressure on their front.

Fighting to secure the foothold gained was heavy everywhere, but seems to have been most desperate of all at this point of Sedd el Bahr.

The morning of the 26th found the Turks still holding the position, which is described as "a labyrinth of caves, ruins, trenches, pits and entanglements".

This position against which, from its nature, the artillery support of the fleet cannot have been very effective, was stormed through undamaged wire entanglements by frontal attack.

It is a thousand pities that the War Office does not realise that the publication of the name of the regiment responsible for this heroic episode would bring recruits flocking to its Colours by the hundred.

The Australian and New Zealand troops, as we have said, get no credit for their achievements, which were only a degree less notable. Their task was to secure a footing on the heights of Sari Bair, some ten miles away on the west coast of the peninsula.

After repulsing “with fine spirit and determination” strong and repeated counter-attacks, the Dominion troops were assailed by fresh Turkish forces, supported by a heavy bombardment. A pitched battle developed in which the enemy were finally defeated and the Dominion troops resumed the offensive.

On the Asiatic side at Kum Kale, the French forces were similarly subjected to repeated counterattacks, but maintained all their positions.

Vice-Admiral de Robeck reports that the fleet is “filled with intense admiration of the achievements of its military comrades” and well it may be, for a more formidable operation has never fallen to the lot of a British army.

The concert of plans between the naval and military forces must have been wonderfully exact which has by no means always been the case in our history in operations of this character.

We are informed that we shall hear nothing more about the next phase of the operations until it is completed.

The days of waiting for more news will be anxious, for we know the Turk now, if we did not know him before, for a stubborn and not ill-equipped enemy, and there is hard fighting ahead. But thus far the operations, though costly, that was always expected, have been so successful as to justify the highest hopes of victory.

## **Killed in action**

*April 1915 was a terrible month for Irish regiments. While the Irish regiments in Gallipoli were facing catastrophic losses, the ones engaged on the Western Front were also suffering. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers' second battalion suffered more than a thousand casualties during the Second Battle of Ypres.*

*One of the most high profile casualties of the Gallipoli campaign was the poet Rupert Brooke, then an officer with the Royal Naval Division. He died two days before the invasion on his way to Gallipoli after being bitten by a mosquito. He developed sepsis and was buried on the Greek island of Skyros. In this Irish Times report it states that he died at the neighbouring island of Lemnos. Brooke's patriotism, as exemplified in his most famous poem, was typical of a generation who signed up to the British war effort in the early stages of the war.*

### **The Irish Times, May 4th, 1915**

We print today a heavy list of casualties among officer, results of the fierce fighting round Ypres and of the successful invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

In the latter affair it would seem that the first Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers bore the brunt of the attack. It has lost nine officers killed and eight wounded, and the losses among non-commissioned officers and men must have been proportionately heavy.

The last exploit of the famous regiment is destined to bring mourning into many homes in Dublin. With proud and anxious interest Ireland will await the details of the engagement.

The Munster Fusiliers, also, have paid for their stern footing at the Helles Point (Cape Helles). There, too, lies the first British chaplain who has fallen in the war - a Roman Catholic and we may assume safely, an Irishman. (*It was Fr William Finn who was actually from Hull*).

Every day of war takes its awful toll on the country's best and bravest lives: young men in the first ardour of youth — a second lieutenant of 17, an only son was in yesterday's list, mature soldiers and leaders of men, who have died as they would have chosen to die, but whose loss, from the military point of view, is irreparable.

In one respect the United Kingdom has suffered less severely, up to the present, than any of her Allies or than the common enemy. The war has not yet made serious inroads into the scientific, literary and artistic resources of the national genius.

The system of universal service has sent all the professional life of the continent of Europe into the battlefield and already the world of intellectual progress has been stricken by the bullet that spares the great discoverer or inventor as little as the last recruit from the farmyard.

Fifty nine men of letters, the hope of literary France, have been killed since the beginning of the war. This number includes Charles Pégny already the founder of a new and brilliant school of poetry.

It was stated three months ago that two thousand German judges and lawyers had fallen since last August.

Hundreds of French and German scholars and men of science have been killed in action. One of the first of these was Dr Bartheim, Professor Ehrlich's colleague at Frankfurt and the greatest of recent authorities on the organic compounds of arsenic. Few such names have appeared as yet in the British casualty lists, but, if the war is prolonged, we shall not continue to enjoy that immunity. Our citizen army, now in this field or about to enter it, have recruited some of their best soldiers from our ancient and modern universities.

France weeps for many poets and artists. The whole world of British literature mourns for Rupert Brooke the most sincere and accomplished poet of his generation who has just died at Lemnos as an officer in the Royal Naval Division.

The reward on Earth of those who have fallen will be the enduring pride and gratitude of the men and women whom they died to save.

So long as Ireland lasts, oblivion will not touch the Irishmen who sleep in Flanders and Gallipoli. Rupert Brooke, who foresaw his death, wrote this:

*IF I should die, think only this of me;  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.*

May not the stricken fathers, mothers and wives in this island today find comfort in the thought that the fate which has bereaved them has enriched the land they love that, through their loss, there are corners of foreign fields that are forever Ireland.

## **Between the reports of the guns, rifles rolled and crackled in an incessant undertone. Advances to Achi Baba.**

*The 29th Division eventually gained a foothold at Cape Helles. It took huge bravery to wrestle the castle and village of Seddul Bahr from the Turkish defenders who were forced to retreat inland.*

*Over the coming weeks the little village of Krithia, six kilometres inland and in the lee of the 200 meter high hill of Achi Baba, would appear again and again in dispatches. Four attempts were made to remove the Turkish defenders from it but they fought with redoubtable courage. Sensing the importance of the village which blocked access to the Narrows, the War Office in London sent a brigade of Indian troops and a few battalions from the Royal Naval Division, all to no avail.*

*The heights of Achi Baba, a series of four steep ravines proved insuperable to Allied troops, a major obstacle blocking the seizure of territory overlooking the Narrows. The British had hoped to capture Achi Baba on the first day of operations.*

*After successive attempts failed, the Allies were faced with the same stalemate as on the Western Front and responded in like fashion: trenches were dug into the hillsides of the peninsula.*

*At Anzac Cove, the Australians and New Zealanders were similarly bogged down. Initially the Anzac troops came ashore unopposed as the Turks had simply never considered a landing at such a difficult location. The men immediately began to scale the gullies and ravines of Sari Bair, a range of small mountains some 300m high, peaking at Chunuk Bair.*

*Vital time was lost as men were left without precise instructions on how to proceed. At the same time they were faced by the 19th Turkish division led by Mustafa Kemal whose victories in Gallipoli propelled him to great fame as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated during and after the war. Kemal would become the founder of modern Turkey and become known as Atatürk, meaning The father of Turks.*

*At Gallipoli, Kemal helped define Turkish determination to defend their country. On Sari Bair as Anzac forces threatened to overwhelm Ottoman troops, opening the way to the Dardanelles, he urged his troops: "I am not ordering you to attack, I'm ordering you to die. In the time that it takes us to die, other forces and commanders can come and take our place."*

*On May 19<sup>th</sup>, Turkish forces attempted to drive the Anzacs off their narrow beachhead. The attack failed with catastrophic consequences. Some 3,000 Turks were killed and hundreds of Anzacs died too.*

*For days the bodies of the dead lay uncovered in no man's land putrefying in the early summer heat. The stench became unbearable. Eventually both the Turks and the Anzacs agreed an unofficial ceasefire to bury the dead. Despite the ghastly nature of the Gallipoli campaign, there was a surprising degree of chivalry on both sides. The British, in particular, came to have an abiding respect for the soldiers they named as Johnny Turk.*

### **The Irish Times, May 5th, 1915**

Having secured a firm foothold on the shore of the Peninsula, an operation which, according to statements of prisoners, the Germans had assured the Turks was impossible, and having driven back all the enemy's outlying forces, the Allies are now concentrating for an offensive against the fortified heights of Achi Baba, east of Krithia, which for impregnability is said to compare with Spion Kop [a reference to a 1900 battle in South Africa].

The Turks are being continually shelled by our ships both inside and outside the Straits seconded by field and siege batteries landed by us to smooth the way for the series of assaults that have begun against these tremendous positions.

The Turkish army in this part of the peninsula is now penned in there, being practically surrounded by British threatening from the west and north-west, the Australians from the north and east, and the French from the south and south-east.

We and our Allies are, of course, entrenched and the style of warfare here now bears a resemblance on a small scale to that with which we have become familiar with in the European campaign.

It is understood that our forces are continually gaining new ground, driving the enemy out of line after line of their trenches, and forcing them back upon their main position where the decisive struggle must be fought out.

Our land forces are continually being increased by fresh arrivals of troop ships from Egypt and France. The ultimate capture of the important dominating twelve-mile strip of cliff land that stretches from Kilid Bahr to Cape Helles is now looked upon as a certainty.

The last news from Tenedos is that only four ships of the Allied Fleet were visible outside the Straits, the remainder being inside or operating from the Gulf of Saros.

Kilid Bahr and Souandere are said to be the only forts on the European side still responding, and responding but feebly, to our fire, while still troublesome with their movable howitzer batteries, which are still unscotched, being shielded from observation by thick pine woods.

### **The Irish Times May 6<sup>th</sup>**

Fresh troops and guns for the Peninsula keep crowding in from overseas. The men include French, British, Algerians, Sikhs, Gurkhas, and coal-black six-foot Senegalese.

The whole coastline from well inside the Straits to Gaba Tepe in the Gulf of Saros, being now in our possession the landing of reinforcements is effected with regularity and despatch.

This was not the case during the first few days of the invasion when the work of disembarkation had to be performed under a storm of bullets from the entrenched Turks.

The attack by the Allied Fleet on the Dardanelles is developing successfully and more rapidly than was to be anticipated.

Very rapid progress cannot be expected in an operation of this formidable character, which demands, above all things, caution and patience.

In the first place, conditions of wind and weather have to be taken into account. It is essential to success at the long ranges at which the greater part of the bombardment is being carried out that the atmosphere should be perfectly clear.

Bad weather, moreover, interferes with the work of the seaplanes which has much to say to the accuracy of the gunnery.

The action has already had to be suspended for the better part of a week on account of unfavourable weather conditions. In the next place, the fleet is only now beginning to get to grips with the more serious part of its undertaking. So far the attacking squadrons have had open water in which to manoeuvre.

The forcing of the channel itself cannot be other than a laborious and delicate operation, and we may be sure that Admiral Carden (commander-in-chief of Allied naval forces in the Dardanelles) will take "*festina lente*" (*make haste slowly*) as his maxim when his ships enter the narrow waters.

The operations preliminary to the forcing of the Straits may now be regarded as completed. The four principal forts guarding the entrance to the Straits have all been finally reduced.

When the attack was resumed last Thursday, it was soon found that the bombardment of the previous Friday had been one of considerable effect, for the Admiralty's report tells us that the return fire was very slow and inaccurate.

One lucky shot, however, hit the *Agamemnon*, killing three men and seriously wounding five.



The *Queen Elizabeth*, *Agamemnon*, *Irresistible*, and *Gaulois* respectively dealt at long range with the four forts, which were left in no condition to offer effective resistance when other ships closed to complete their reduction. Before dark the four forts were out of action and the task of sweeping the channel for mines was immediately begun.

On the next day the Straits were swept up to four miles from the entrance, and three battleships, proceeding to the limit of the swept area, began an attack on one of the inner forts. They also turned their attention again to the outer forts, which were evacuated by the Turks and afterwards demolished by landing parties.

A remarkable feature of the operations is the inclusion in Admiral Carden's squadron which otherwise consists entirely of pre-Dreadnought ships of the *Queen Elizabeth*. This vessel, the first of a class of five to be commissioned, is the latest addition to our battle fleet, and is in every respect the most powerful battleship afloat.

Her employment at the Dardanelles, instead of in the main strategic area, seems to require some explanation. One possible explanation is that her voyage to the Mediterranean is in the nature of a "trial trip".

A more probable explanation, we think, is to be found in the extremely long range and terribly destructive capacity of the 15-inch guns with which she is armed. We gather from the course of Friday's operations that the work of sweeping the straits of mines, though tedious, does not promise to be of great difficulty.

But, when they approach the Narrows a point, about as far again up the channel as the distance so far swept, where the Straits are less than a mile in width the attacking ships will have to deal with forts which cannot be so easily reduced as those at the entrance.

These forts are, on the European shore, situated on high cliffs, and here, doubtless, are mounted the heaviest guns that the Turks possess. Guns of high-angle fire concealed behind the cliffs could drop heavy projectiles with deadly effect on the weakest spot of attacking ships their decks.

Against guns on such dominating heights, moreover, it would be extremely difficult for the naval guns, owing to their flat trajectory, to make good practice from inside the Straits.

It may be possible, however, for these forts to be taken in reverse across the Gallipoli Peninsula from the Gulf of Saros.

If any guns are capable of doing this, those guns are the 15-inch guns of the *Queen Elizabeth*. We may be sure, at least, that she will not be employed upon any hazardous enterprise in the Straits themselves, and that the Admiralty, in including her in Admiral Carden's command, has a very definite object in view.

It should not be forgotten that Russia has a more permanent interest in Constantinople than the other Allies, and we may be sure that she will take a hand in the measures for its seizure. Russia commands the Black Sea and has plenty of troops available at Odessa.

‘Judge us by our deeds’

THE IRISH TIMES: SATURDAY: MAY 1: 1915.

<p>RT ES. TIVE S. RITISH RATOR.) r, 8 P.M. for Canada n to the from the ving with  in which part, can- precision de possible s, and the lucid and event, is considered s to-day who have ould have considera- consolation ment, the ost bring; da will be the which</p>	<p><b>ALLIED TROOPS LAND IN THE DARDANELLES.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>SIX BEACHES FORCED UNDER FLEET'S GUNS.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>FINE WORK OF AUSTRALIANS AND NEW ZEALANDERS.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>QUEEN ELIZABETH SINKS A TURKISH TRANSPORT.</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM THE KING.</b></p> <hr/> <p>PRESS BUREAU, FRIDAY, 8.45 P.M.   The operation of landing the army in face of</p>	<p>WES  ART AB FRJ MAKE GERMA Bl PRESS B The Fie forces in I 1. The sit unchan The ar lun be tivity have b the Bu 2. On our countri artiller progre 3. Yesterd</p>
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## DEPARTURE OF ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS.

### ENTHUSIASTIC SCENES.

#### COLONEL DOWNING'S FAREWELL MESSAGE.

#### "WE WILL DO OUR BEST. JUDGE US BY OUR DEEDS."

The departure of the 7th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers from their headquarters, Royal Barracks, Dublin, for completion of training was the occasion of a great public demonstration yesterday. The formation of the battalion has aroused much interest, as it was generally known as "The Pals' Battalion." From all classes of the community men came forward readily in defence of the Empire and from all quarters of the city, from the fashionable centres and from the slums of the city, able-bodied citizens flocked to the Colours, and the scenes of enthusiasm that were witnessed yesterday proved that the city pulsates with ardent enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies. The fact that in the battalion was included the famous D Company, mainly comprised of footballers, lent additional interest to the departure. The company includes within its ranks barristers, solicitors, and other representatives of the professions, in addition to civil servants and bank officials, and it is naturally regarded as being typical of the spirit that animates the country as a whole. Its composition is symbolical of the part that sport plays in war. Men who were prominent in the football field, and whose prowess was admired every Saturday at Lansdowne road and other football centres, have thrown aside their interest in sport and devoted themselves purely to the affairs of war in order that Ireland and other parts of the Empire may be kept free from the horrors of War. Crowds lined the route yesterday, and the departure of the troops was accompanied by continuous cheering by dense lines of spectators.

#### COLONEL DOWNING'S MESSAGE.

The departure of the battalion from the Royal Barracks was timed at 3.30 p.m., and shortly before that hour the men were drawn up in parade on the square. Lieutenant-Colonel G. Downing, in command of the battalion, having inspected the lines, addressed the men, and complimented them on their ex-

cellent behaviour during their stay in Dublin. They were specially chosen to come to Dublin because they were considered to be the best regiment to send to the city. He mentioned that the 1st and 2nd Battalions had already distinguished themselves at the front, and he felt sure that the men under his command would acquit themselves in a manner befitting the record of the "Dublins." The Germans had a song, "Deutschland Ueber Alles," but their war cry was "Dublin Over All." "Gott Strafe England" was the motto of the enemy, but the Dublin Fusiliers would simply try to act up to their regimental motto, "Spectamus Agenda."

Asked by a representative of the *Irish Times* whether he had a message to send to the citizens of Dublin, Colonel Downing said: "We will do our best. Judge us by our deeds."

Relatives and friends crowded the square and bade farewell of those near and dear to them who were leaving all that was precious in life to face the attacks of the oppressor. Ladies of rank and women of humble degree moved through the lines, and gave parting gifts to their dear ones. A touching incident took place just before the battalion got into marching order. A man, who had evidently fallen into ill-health, and who had served with the battalion until he was discharged, approached Colonel Downing and wished him and the battalion God-speed. He hoped that they would come safely back, and he was sorry that circumstances prevented him from taking his place in the battalion. Headed by the band of the 12th Lancers and the pipes of the Officers' Training Corps, Trinity College, the battalion moved out of barracks. As they emerged through the main entrance they were cordially cheered, and the cheers were taken up all along the route. They looked exceedingly fit, and presented a fine military bearing. As they marched by in perfect order and in swinging, rhythmic step, everyone felt that they were worthy of the city and of a country noted for its soldiers. The men were in great spirit, and laughed and joked along the way. The Union Jack and the Irish flag were carried on the spikes of the bayonets, and wherever they were noticed cheers were raised. In addition to their heavy packs, some of the men carried melodeons strapped to their kit-bags. As they passed down the quays the crowd on the pavement and the occupants of windows lustily cheered, and the men, recognising friends along the route, returned their farewell greetings with hearty cheers. In front of the Four Courts a large crowd of barristers, solicitors, and officials gave a cordial send-off to the men. Amongst the crowd were judges whose sittings had concluded for the day, and they cheered as spontaneously as the others as the men passed. In the ranks were members of the Bar, who had forsaken excellent prospects to keep the old flag flying, and as they were recognised they were cordially cheered. In Dame street

*The Pals who signed up at Lansdowne Road became part of the 7<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Like all battalions in the British army, it was divided into four companies, A,B,C and D. D became the celebrated “pal’s battalion” which included many of the rugby players who had answered Francis Browning’s call in September 1914. Sometimes, the Pals were referred to as “the toffs among the toughs”.*

*After six months training at Royal Barracks in Dublin, known today as Collins Barracks and home to the National Museum of Ireland (decorative arts and history section), they were sent to Gallipoli, marching out of the barracks on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1915. Their departure through the streets of Dublin was witnessed by cheering crowds and was one of the last hurrahs for Empire in the capital.*

*Exactly a year to the day later, the streets of Dublin through which the men marched were smouldering ruins following the Easter Rising. It should also be noted that, on the same page as this report in The Irish Times, the newspaper published also a wholly disingenuous, not to say untruthful, dispatch from the Press Bureau about the initial landings at Cape Helles. It concluded with a message from King George V sending his “hearty congratulations on this splendid achievement”.*

### **The Irish Times, Saturday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915**

The departure of the 7th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers from their headquarters, Royal Barracks, Dublin for completion of training was the occasion of a great public demonstration yesterday.

The formation of the battalion has aroused much interest as it was generally known as The Pals’ Battalion.

From all classes of the community men came forward readily in defence of the Empire and from all quarters of the city, from the fashionable centres and from the slums of the city, able-bodied citizens flocked to the Colours, and the scenes of enthusiasm that were witnessed yesterday proved that the city pulsates with ardent enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies.

The fact that in the battalion was included the famous D Company, mainly comprised of footballers, lent additional interest, to the departure. The company includes within its ranks barristers, solicitors and other representatives of the professions in addition to civil servants and bank officials and it is naturally regarded as being typical of the spirit that animates the country as a whole.

Its composition is symbolical of the part that sport plays in war. Men who were prominent in the football field, and whose prowess was admired every Saturday at Lansdowne Road and

other football centres have thrown aside their interest in sport and devoted themselves purely to the affairs of war in order that Ireland and other parts of the Empire may be kept free from the horrors of war.

Crowds lined the route yesterday and the departure of the troops was accompanied by continuous cheering by dense lines of spectators. The departure of the battalion from the Royal Barracks was timed at 3.30pm and shortly before that hour the men were drawn up in parade on the square.

Lieutenant-Colonel Geoffrey Downing, in command of the battalion, having inspected the lines, addressed the men, and complimented them on their excellent behaviour during their stay in Dublin.

They were specially chosen to come to Dublin because they were considered to be the best regiment to send to the city. He mentioned that the 1st and 2nd Battalions had already distinguished themselves at the front and he felt sure that the men under his command would acquit themselves in a manner befitting the record of the "Dublins". The Germans had a song "Deutschland Uber Alles" but their war cry was "Dublin Over All". "Gotte Strafe England" was the motto of the enemy, but the Dublin Fusiliers would simply try to act up to their regimental motto "Specatamur Agendo" (*let us be judged by our acts*). Asked by a representative of the Irish Times whether he had a message to send to the citizens of Dublin, Colonel Downing said: "We will do our best. Judge us by our deeds".

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In front of the Four Courts a large crowd of barristers, solicitors, and officials gave a cordial send-off to the men. Amongst the crowd were judges whose sittings had concluded for the day, and they cheered as spontaneously as the others at the men passed.

In the ranks were members of the Bar who had forsaken excellent prospects to keep the old flag flying, and as they were recognised they were cordially cheered.

In Dame Street and College Green, where flags were profusely displayed, crowds of spectators lined the thoroughfare, and gave vent to their feelings in frequent outbursts of enthusiasm.

At O'Connell Bridge the crowd was particularly dense, and hats and handkerchiefs were waved on all sides. As the last stages of the march were reached the lines of spectators became more dense, and many touching scenes were witnessed.

The significance of the occasion became more marked at this stage than heretofore. Fashionably-dressed ladies walked beside their brothers and relatives.

Immediately behind walked women in shawls, keeping step with their husbands, brothers and sons. The contrast was marked, but it served to show the spirit that animates the people.

With such spirit dominating the ranks of the Dublin Fusiliers, victory is assured. Men going to the front in a few weeks under such conditions, with their minds set on one purpose, can be depended upon to act up to the glorious records of their regiment. Tokens of appreciation were frequently offered along the route, and cigarettes were distributed by the students of the Royal College of Surgeons. Amid a popular demonstration the 7th Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers left Dublin. Along the route thousands of young men physically fit cheered their fellow countrymen on their way. Will these men now step into the rank?

## **Mr Churchill's speech**

*The initial disaster at Gallipoli and a shortage of shells on the Western Front saw a change of government in the UK. The Liberal Government was replaced by a national government involving the Liberal and Tory parties and the Irish barrister and unionist politician, Dublin-born while Sir Edward Carson became its attorney general.*

*The 40-year-old First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill was fired because of the Gallipoli debacle. This caused the Tories to develop at that time a great distrust of Churchill, who was then a member of the Liberal Party. It was later that Churchill would join the Conservative Party and write a different history for himself.*

*For now, however, his prosecution of the war in Gallipoli would be held against him, and for some years to come. "Remember the Dardanelles" was the common retort from critics whenever he spoke in the House of Commons.*

*Had the second World War not happened, and had Churchill not been Britain's great wartime leader, it is likely that he would have been remembered most in history for the Gallipoli debacle. Churchill, though, always defended the campaign there, blaming military commanders on the ground for its failures. At the time, Churchill had little time for the hostile press reports that emerged from the battlefields.*

### **The Irish Times, June 7th, 1915**

Mr. Churchill's speech at Dundee on Saturday is of excellent promise for the future of the National Government.

He is the second minister who has addressed the country since the reconstruction of the cabinet and his message is the same as that of Mr. Lloyd George.

But by him it is delivered with an especial force and weight. The country will be peculiarly responsive to his call to personal sacrifice for the common good, for his own personal sacrifice has been great and cheerful.

There can have been no man in the late Government who has accepted a minor office, or holds no office, in the present ministry to have felt the resignation of his post more bitterly than Mr. Churchill felt his resignation of the office of First Lord of the Admiralty. But he has made his surrender with a fine spirit that is an inspiration to us all. "In war time a man must do his duty as he sees it, and take his luck as it comes or goes."

Although Mr Churchill's luck has removed him from the Admiralty, the country will feel that he was right in giving it some account of his stewardship in that department. He made the



interesting revelation that he was sent to the Admiralty in 1911, when the Agadir crisis had nearly brought us into war, with the express duty laid upon him by the Prime Minister to put the Fleet in a state of instant and constant readiness for war in case we were attacked by Germany.

We have been attacked by Germany and Mr Churchill's faithful discharge of that duty has been revealed by the supreme test of action. Memories are short in these days, and reputations fickle, but the country will be slow to forget what it owes to him for the preparation and vigilance of the last four years.

Mr. Churchill's references to the Dardanelles are valuable at a moment when Sir Ian Hamilton's latest report, recording an advance of five hundred yards on a front of three miles as a result of a combined general assault, reminds us again of the very formidable nature of the Allies' undertaking.

The military operations, Mr. Churchill warns us, will be costly, and we must expect further losses at sea as well. But the prize is worth the sacrifice. "There was never a great subsidiary operation of war in which a more complete harmony of strategic and political and economic advantages was combined, or which stood in broader relation to the main decision in the central theatre."

It is the function of the press, in Mr. Churchill's view, to sustain public confidence and spirit. It is emphatically not its function to spread doubt and want of confidence, and we welcome Mr. Churchill's hint that under the new Government the excessive licence of newspaper criticism will not be permitted to continue. Upon one point we are all agreed. In this hour of our supreme need the rights of the State are not in dispute; they are absolute.

## **Courage and loss. . . and truth the first casualty**

*News of the Gallipoli landings took a long time to filter back to Britain and Ireland. Official press accounts were effectively a whitewash.*

*However, many of the newspapers, including The Irish Times, circumvented the restrictions by publishing accounts from officers at the front. These were invaluable first-hand descriptions of the fighting, more vivid and authentic than those coming through official channels.*

*This came from an anonymous Munsters' officer and is a gripping account of the landing and their aftermath. He also makes reference to the losses suffered by both the Munsters and Leinsters and how they were amalgamated into one battalion, the Dubsters.*

### **The Irish Times, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1915**

The following is an extract from a letter from an officer in the 1st battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers May 1st, 1915: This is the first opportunity I have had of writing to you since we left the boat.

You will have seen in the papers by now that we have forced a landing, but ourselves and the Dublins got most awfully badly mauled in doing so.

We left Lemnos for Tenedos one day, and from there we got into a collier called the River Clyde, which had been fitted up for the purpose of beaching.

We anchored at midnight about two miles from the mouth of the Dardanelles and at dawn the whole fleet began a bombardment of the end of the peninsula where we were going to land.

At 7.30am the Dublins set off in open boats to their landing place which was the same as ours. As each boat got near the shore, snipers shot down the oarsmen, the boats then began to drift, and machine gun fire was turned on to them.

You could see the men dropping everywhere, and of the first boat load of 40 men, only three reached the shore, all wounded.

At the same time we ran our old collier on to the shore, but the water was shallower than we thought, and she stuck about eighty yards out. Some lighters were put to connect with the shore, and we began running along them to get down to the beach.

I cannot tell you how many were killed and drowned, but the place was a regular death trap. I ran down to the lighters, but was sent back as there was no room on them.

Then the wounded began crawling back, the Turks sniping at them the whole time. The men who had managed to reach the shore were all crouching under a bank about ten feet high. At

2pm the colonel told me to go down on to the barge, collect as many men I could, and join the force on shore. We jumped into the sea and got ashore somehow with a rain of bullets all around us.

I found a lot of men, but very few not hit. We waited till dusk, then crept up into a sort of position, a few yards up. We took up an outpost and I had just put out my sentry groups, and came up to have a look, when he was shot through the throat by my side.

He died very soon and that left most of the senior officer on shore. We had an awful night soaked to the skin, bitterly cold and wet and sniped at all night. At dawn the fleet began another heavy bombardment, and by that time all the troops from our collier had come ashore.

We were told to storm an old ruined castle which was held by the enemy so what remained of us and a company of the Dublins and two companies of the Hants charged the place. We turned them out, but got hung up under a nasty fire from a village which we did not succeed in occupying till two in the afternoon.

We then formed up, and, together with the rest of the Dublins, stormed the hill with a redoubt on the top which commanded the whole place.

We drove 2,000 Turks off the top, and finally dug ourselves in across the peninsula, holding about half a mile at the end of the peninsula.

We lost an awful lot and had only eight officers left. The Dublins had only three. That night we were attacked at intervals all through, but held our own till a thousand French reinforced us. The next day we were moved up and dug ourselves in again while two other brigades advanced a mile. The next morning we were told to move up to the advanced line, and act in reserve, but by the time we got up to it, the firing line was so hard pressed that we had to go straight up into it.

We had a very heavy day's fighting being under fire continuously from 8am till dark. We had to fall back half a mile in the evening, owing to heavy reinforcements to the Turks. We spent another very bad night, very wet, and cold, and no coats or food! The next morning we advanced about 100 yards, and the whole division dug itself in a long line across the peninsula from sea to sea.

We get shelled all day and sniped at and attacked all night; but we are very cheery. We have plenty of food now and water and have dug ourselves into the ground, like in France.

The Dublins and ourselves have now been formed into one regiment. We both left England 1,000 strong and now, together, we are eight officers and 700 men. I am in command of 200 Dublins. We are waiting reinforcements from Egypt. We are very fit indeed.

The German officers whom we have taken prisoners say it is absolutely beyond them how we ever effected a landing at all. If there was one place in the whole world that was impregnable, it was this peninsula and they say no army in the world except ours could have seen half its numbers mown down and still come and make a good landing It has certainly been a tough job. The heaps of dead are awful and the beach where we landed was an extraordinary sight. I have had some extraordinary escapes but have not been touched yet. Our padre and doctor are both splendid fellows, and have been with us in the thick of it all. Both the padre and the doctor of the Dublins were killed.

## **The debacle at V Beach**

*The 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers suffered a double calamity during the landings at V Beach. Not only were many of its number slaughtered trying to exit the River Clyde, but the men who tried to come ashore on row boats suffered scarcely believable casualties in an operation which was as risky as it was ill-advised.*

*There have been many accounts of the fate of the Dublins that day, but few match this one from this anonymous officer who nearly drowned and was evacuated to Malta to recuperate.*

### **The Irish Times, May 19th, 1915**

Malta, Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1915: A gentleman in Dublin sends us the subjoined account of the landing at Sedd el Bahr, which he has received from his son, an officer in the 1st Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

“On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> at 5am we found ourselves at the Dardanelles, amongst the Fleet, which started bombarding at that hour to cover our landing. At 5am on reaching the Dardanelles, we got into small boats which were drawn by pinnaces. There were six boats in each tow.

“We had about three miles to go to land and all this time the battleships were pouring shells into the fronts which were replying. About one and a half miles from shore, the enemy’s shells started to burst around our boats doing a lot of damage. As we got closer bullets started to whizz around us killing several men in our boats.

“The ships’ shells were simply ripping up the ground and with my field glasses I could see many of the Turks running for their lives. I thought then that we would have no difficulty in landing.

“Up to this there were six killed and a few wounded in my boat out of about 30 men. I had my right arm scorched in two places by bullets, but I was one of the lucky ones. Then the pinnace let us go, and our boats rushed like mad on to the shore being assisted by oars.

“A boat came on our left and rushed into us, pushing our oars forward and throwing everyone back into the boat. I came with my head on the seat.

“Then machine guns galore were played on us from a trench unseen at the bottom of the cliff not 100 yards from us. A shrapnel shell burst above our heads at the same time and before I knew where I was, I was covered with dead men. Not knowing they were dead, I was roaring at them to let me up, for I was drowning a wounded man under me (there was half a boat full of water then, the boat having been pierced with bullets).

The machine guns still played on us until we were towed back to a minesweeper. I was simply saturated all over with blood and I could feel the hot blood all over me all the way across. When they pulled these poor fellows off me they were all dead, and the poor fellow under me was dead. The boat was awful to look at, full of blood and water.

We got the dead and wounded off on to the minesweeper and gathered another three boatloads of men to take ashore and face the same thing again.

Going across this time, I was looking through my glasses until we got fairly close to shore when I felt a terrible knock on my haversack which I had strapped on top of my pack with two days' rations in it. I then saw the poor fellow next to me with the top of his head taken off by the same piece of shrapnel.

It decorated fellows with bully beef from the rations. I then thought it time to put away my glasses which I left hanging in front of me and turned my pack towards the enemy to stop bullets coming towards my head, and bent low. We could do nothing but wait. Then our boats struck the shore and were again showered by machine guns. The four men in the fore part of our boat got off but were shot down at once and as they jumped they pushed our boat away from the little grip we had, and it was being taken out by the current.

However, I was not going to stop in the boat as a standing target so I made a jump for it with two others. My equipment, weighing 90lbs, soon brought my head down and, with my eyes open underwater, I could see the other two go right down. I thought I was going down too, but this was through the current rushing past me.

I groped out everywhere but could not grip anything. Then I became aware of being held up by something which I discovered was the strap of my glasses. I knew that if I pulled at the strap, it would break, so I kept the toe of my boat well under the rope on the side of the boat.

I don't know how long I was like that, but it seemed ages, and I was just gone when I thought I was gripped by someone. That someone was a sailor who was pulling at my feet.

Afterwards he got a hold of my poor old gammy arm and pulled like billyo breaking it again which I needn't tell you woke me up a bit from swallowing salt water. He was shot through his arm too, and the blood from it was blinding me, yet he wouldn't give in.

I shouted to him as best I could to let the arm go, for I felt the twist he gave it and knew it had gone straighter than it was used to.

However, he got me up after a long while and still where I was the bullets were hitting the boat. I even had splinters of the boat rammed deep into my fingers and I wasn't hit.

I suppose you have seen the casualty list. There must be very few of our battalion left now. We were first to land and, with the Munsters, we lost very heavily. Almost all of the officers

were killed or wounded, I believe. I never wish to see such a bloody sight again. I don't mind fighting, but to be in an open boat and powerless is another thing.

## **Fighting on the peninsula**

**The Irish Times, May 14th, 1915**

Since the landing of the British force on the 25th of April there has been up to the present one day of hard fighting, on April 28th, when the British and French troops at the western end of the Gallipoli Peninsula advanced from the positions then occupied.

We pushed back the enemy a considerable distance in the centre, but little advance could be made on the left flank owing to the nature of the ground and the enemy's superiority in numbers.

A few of our men succeeded in reaching the village of Krithia but could not remain in it. The main result of the day was an important advance of our centre. The enemy made a counter-attack on the evening against the French end of the line, which was subjected to a heavy bombardment with shrapnel.

The attack was beaten off. Since then the enemy has confined himself to night attacks and long range gunfire.

The first night affair was on April 25<sup>th</sup> when the Turks made a desperate attempt to drive our small and sorely tried force on the plateau above Cape Helles with a rush into the sea, but they were themselves beaten back by the fire of the *Implacable*'s guns.

The second was on the night of May 1<sup>st</sup> when the enemy made an attack which began about 10.30pm and lasted till dawn. Seen from the ship, the attack presented a perfect picture of war in its most romantic aspect.

It was a wonderful starry night and the moon was at the full. The darkness seaward was lit up by the lights of the transports.

Clusters of lights to right and left marked the position of the Helles and the Sedd el Bahr beaches. Ashore the field guns and howitzers, British, French, and Turks flashed and boomed all night.

Between the reports of the guns, rifles rolled and crackled in an incessant undertone.

movable howitzer batteries, which are still unscotched, being shielded from observation by thick pine woods.



## Suvla Bay

*Soon the 29<sup>th</sup> Division were doing what they hoped never to have to do. They dug trenches in Gallipoli as their brothers-in-arms had done on the Western Front.*

*The Anzacs, having scaled the gullies and ravines of Sari Bair and reached the lip of the range, began to dig in. In places, their trenches faced those of the Turks just a few feet across a new no man's land.*

*In the ensuing stalemate, the battlefield atrophied into a dustier, hotter and drier version of the Western Front. The chances of a quick breakthrough were in retrospect an exercise in military wishful thinking. Those chances diminished by the day.*

*The initial failures of the April landings and the stalemate that developed quickly in the days that followed left the Allies with a terrible dilemma: stick or twist? Was it time to quit, acknowledge that the peninsula could not be taken and cut losses?*

*Alternatively, could fresh troops be procured? Could one protracted, major further heave finally drive the Turks off the peninsula?*

*The new British cabinet pondered its options. It was politically unpalatable to quit at that stage. Reluctantly, the British decided to commit an entire army corps, the IXth, comprising of five new divisions to the fight.*

*These were the 10th, 11th and 13th Divisions from Kitchener's first 100,000 men augmented by the 53rd and 54th Territorial Divisions. On paper this was a further 70,000 men. In reality these divisions were untested in combat and badly led.*

*A new site was chosen for the landings: Suvla Bay, a place further up the western coast of the peninsula from Anzac Cove but within sight of it. Behind the long, sweeping sandy beach is a salt lake, often dry in summer, and a broad, fertile plain. Behind the plain are the Anafartha Hills; to the left on landing, is a ridge named Kiretch Tepe Sirt; to the right in the distance, Sari Bair.*

*Between the beach and the Anafartha Hills lay several hillocks: Lala Baba, Hill 10, Chocolate Hill, Green Hill and Scimitar Hill. These, together with Kiretch Tepe Sirt and the Anafartha Plain, became the killing grounds on which thousands of soldiers, Allied and Turk, died in August 1915.*

*The plan was simple enough: take the hills from the Turkish defender, turn south and link with the Anzac forces, launching a pincer assault on Sari Bair, the heights which blocked access to the Narrows.*

*But the Turks had reinforced Sari Bair and massed troops on Kiretch Tepe Sirt and in the Anafartha Hills – 10 divisions had been drafted into the peninsula. While landing at Suvla would be simple by comparison to Seddul Bahr or Anzac Cove, progressing inland more than a few kilometres would be more taxing.*

*The man chosen to lead Britain's IXth Corps was Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Stopford, a semi-retired 63-year-old soldier who was then the governor of the Tower of London. Stopford was selected, not because of his prowess in battle or his experience, but simply because he was, in the rigid army hierarchy of the time, the most senior general available for the task. Where the situation demanded a leader with ruthlessness and drive, the man appointed was elderly and indecisive – and worse: he was incompetent.*

*The landings at Suvla Bay were the first time the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division saw combat.*

*What was to be the largest fighting force ever to leave Ireland to that date, some 17,000 men in total, departed the country in April 1915, a truly non-sectarian division that attracted Catholics and Protestants, middle-class, working class and farmers' sons in equal measure.*

*The plan for Suvla Bay was complex. The 10<sup>th</sup> Division would land and one brigade would move towards Kiretch Tepe Sirt. Other troops would head south to link up with the Anzacs.*

*During the landings, the Australians were to launch a fierce diversionary attack at Lone Pine, a spot on Sari Bair that in due course became hallowed ground for Australians because of the grit and determination shown there by their soldiers.*

*The 10th (Irish) Division and 11th Division, mostly from Manchester, were the first divisions into battle. Their goal was to take the semi-circle of hills overlooking the beach. The 10<sup>th</sup> Division would follow the 11<sup>th</sup> ashore. Unknown to the allies, the otherwise meticulous Von Sanders had not expected a landing at Suvla Bay and had only allocated 1,500 men to the defence of that sector. Had they known, the allies could have made the decisive breakthrough, but they delayed fatally after the immediacy of their landings at Suvla.*

*The initial landings in the night of August 6th were almost unopposed. Men from the 11th Division scaled Chocolate Hill, the lowest of a series of hills around the peninsula. The 10th Division landed the following morning but they were already weakened. One brigade was sent to aid the 11th Division.*

*Stopford, who watched the battle from a ship offshore, made a number of fatal errors. Having assembled his force on the morning of August 7th, he inexplicably did not press the assault until that evening. Neither did he order his forces to attack the Kiretch Tepe Sirt ridge until his artillery was in place.*

*All this gave the Turks time to mass their defences.*

*Alarmed at Stopford's lethargic approach to the landings, Sir Ian Hamilton, the commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, took personal charge and ordered the attacks to begin against Kiretch Tepe Sirt immediately. But it was already too late.*

*On August 9th the assault began. Not only did it fail when confronted by Turkish resistance, but the gunfire set the parched scrub alight. Many casualties stranded on slopes in no man's land burned to death.*

*The hapless Stopford was replaced on August 14<sup>th</sup> but by then, thousands had already died. Kitchener cabled Hamilton: "This is a young man's war and we must have commanding officers that will take advantage of opportunities which occur, but seldom".*

*Kitchener put Major General Beauvoir de Lisle, commander of the 29th Division at Helles, in temporary charge while Stopford's replacement, Lieutenant-General Julian Lyng, travelled out from France.*

*The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division commander Mahon was incensed and refused to serve under de Lisle who was his junior in the ranks. Was this a fit of petulance in the midst of a life or death struggle or the principled actions of a competent general who had enough of the mismanagement of the campaign?*

*The first comprehensive account of the campaign was published in The Irish Times, a fortnight after the landing.*

### **The Irish Times, August 25th, 1915**

The progress of the great flanking movement from Suvla Bay and Anzac Beach is described by a special correspondent in the Dardanelles. In this operation the Irish troops are engaged. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August the Turkish trenches were stormed and captured by the Irish, Australians, New Zealanders and Indians.

*Press Association special, Alexandria August 12<sup>th</sup>.*

I have returned from a visit to our new position on Suvla Bay where the army, after five days' strenuous fighting, is halting for a moment and gathering its energies again for a further advance.

We hold there a broad sweep of fertile plain, girt practically all the way round by an amphitheatre which on the extreme right, south of the bay, merge into a wall of sheer cliff from the Biyuk-Kemibli headland, forming the northern extremity of the bay.

The ground rises as it runs inland, until about 5,000 yards from Biyuk-Kemibli it looks down on the plain from a height of 650 feet.

Our troops are astride of the ridge at this front, the remainder being held by the enemy. On the slopes of the lower ridges as the hills turn southwards to Kuchuk, or Little Anafarta, a picturesquely situated village with a shining white minaret.

Some 4,000 yards south-east is Biyuk, or Big Anafarta, the cottages of which are hidden behind a noble grove of cypresses.

The Turkish road inland passes between the two villages. Beyond Big Anafarta the great hills again approach the shore, ending in a cliff wall behind which there is a jumble of mountains where the Australians and New Zealanders, with a British division, are fighting their way.

The plain, along which is a charming family country, dotted about with great trees, is held for a considerable distance inland by our troops, their main front facing Little Anafarta and the great ridge on the left.

A very powerful army is assembling for the advance of which some of the divisions have already seen severe fighting. On the right centre, about 3,000 yards inland, is a hill 170 feet high which was stormed in gallant style by a Fusilier regiment supported by Irish troops on the landing day. The position was strongly held by the Turks but the Irishmen, instead of attacking from the front, marched across the salt lake, wheeled into the plain, and then came back at the hill, which was ultimately taken with relatively few casualties.

A short distance beyond this hill, which has been christened Chocolate Hill by the soldiers, is a smaller height, which is still held by the enemy. The firing line at present runs between the two hills and across the plain on either side.

Between Chocolate Hill and the sea is a so called salt lake which is now a perfectly flat expanse of dried mud, covered with a glistening white crust of salt. In winter it is a shallow sea water lagoon.

The main difference between the Suvla Bay and the Cape Helles position is that the enemy is not entrenched or rather not protected by semi-permanent earthworks as he is in front of Achi Baba. His line is indefinite. He keeps behind cover and moves to any point which we may happen to threaten.

The following account of the advance of the Australians, New Zealanders and the British troops acting with them from the Anzac zone in conjunction with the new landings is supplied to me by my colleague who accompanies this army.

After anticipating an attack by the Turks along with the Australian and New Zealand positions since the close of Ramadam, the Dominion troops have themselves attacked all along their line, the movement forming a preliminary engagement to the great action which has been raging for four days. One thing has been accomplished and is certain. The

Australians, along the right centre, at a point where the trenches run almost north and south, have captured and now hold 400 yards of Turkish trenches while the New Zealand infantry have stormed the western slopes of the main ridges.

In addition the Australian infantry form with British divisions part of a great flanking movement. On the days preceding August, the Australian infantry captured a section of Turkish trenches. The trenches were rushed.

## **‘A magnificent performance’**

*D Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the so-called Toffs in the Troughs, suffered terribly during an assault on the main Turkish positions on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1915.*

*An ill-advised bayonet charge led to the deaths of three commanding officers and 54 men.*

*In just seven weeks of fighting on the Gallipoli peninsula, the 239 men who had marched through the streets of Dublin in April 1915 to cheering crowds were reduced to a cadre of just 79.*

*Among those killed on August 15<sup>th</sup> was the commanding officer of D Company Captain Poole Hickman. A barrister, Hickman was chairman of the Munster court circuit and played rugby with Wanderers club in Dublin.*

### **The Irish Times, August 31st, 1915**

The following account of the operations of the 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the Dardanelles between the 6th and 14th August has been received in Dublin. It was written by Captain Poole H. Hickman who commanded the D Company, and was killed on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

We left Mitylene [on the Greek island of Lesbos] at 3 pm on Friday, August 6th and arrived here at 4am on Saturday morning.

We carried our rations with us—a sandwich for the voyage, and two days' iron rations, consisting (each day's ration) of a tin of bully beef, tea, sugar, biscuits and Oxo tablets.

From two o'clock in the morning on we could see the flashing of big guns and hear the rattle of musketry, the first indication to us that we were within the war zone.

Our first two boats, consisting of A and C Companies, started landing at 5.50am but did not get ashore without mishap, as shrapnel struck the boat, killing one man and wounding eleven.

Amongst the wounded was one of our officers Second Lieutenant Harvey. We landed a short time later, but escaped without being hit and then about 8am we commenced a general advance.

It was allotted to us, and to another Irish regiment, to take a certain hill which was exactly three and a half miles from where we landed.

We had not advanced 100 yards when we were greeted with a perfect hail of shrapnel. And shrapnel is not a pleasant thing. You hear a whistle through the air, then a burst, and everything within a space of 200 yards by 100 yards from where shrapnel burst is liable to be hit. The wounds inflicted are dreadful - deep, big irregular gashes, faces battered out of recognition, limbs torn away.

We got some protection under cover of a hill and steadily continued our advance in line parallel to the enemy's position. We had to change direction and advance in a direct line on position at a small neck of land, and the crossing of this neck was awe-inspiring, but ghastly. The enemy guns had got the range to a yard and a tornado of high explosives and shrapnel swept the place. Your only chance was to start immediately after a burst and run as fast as you could across this place as there was some cover at the other side. We lost heavily at this particular place and from then on commenced the serious business.

The enemy were strongly entrenched on a line of hills about two miles from the neck of land. The right of the attack had to go over a bare sandy sweep, but there was some cover, such as it was, for the left.

The heat was intense and the going very heavy. We advanced in long lines with two paces between each man and about eight such lines altogether at the start.

Of course, by the time we got to the hill the supports and reserves had closed up with the firing line. Meanwhile we presented an open target to the enemy, but though we advanced through a regular hail of bullets and shrapnel, our casualties were not heavy.

Major Harrison was in command of the first line and was marvellously good. About three o'clock in the afternoon we were within 600 yards of the hill which was fairly high - a network of trenches and sides covered with furze and thorny scrub, which afforded cover from view.

When we got to the foot of the hill, A and D Companies, led by Major Harrison, were in first line about a platoon of each with some Inniskillings and a few stragglers. They took the hill at the point, of the bayonet, the Turks fleeing in all directions. It was a magnificent performance and we have been personally congratulated on it. We called the hill Fort Dublin.

Our casualties were over 100 including Major Tippett, shot dead and Lieutenant Julian who has, I hear, since died. D Company lost 22 altogether, but only one killed outright though I am afraid some of the others will not recover.

It was just dusk when the hill fell and then we had to go and get water for men who were parched with the thirst.

This was a long job as we had to go some miles back to a well. Meanwhile, we had established ourselves in the trenches on the hill and at 1.30 on Sunday morning I eat a biscuit which was my first food since breakfast the previous morning. The enemy counterattacked during the night but were easily driven off.

All Sunday morning and afternoon a furious fight was going on on the ridge to our right where our forces had the advantage. Meanwhile all day shrapnel and high explosives were spoiling our day's rest and the place was full of snipers.

These snipers are the very devil. If you put your head up at all, bullets whizz past you. They are up trees, in furze and every conceivable hiding place, and it is very hard to spot them.

On Monday there was a tremendous fight for the hill on our left by an English division. The brigade on the right ran out of ammunition and D Company was called upon to supply them. I sent 40 men under Captain Tobin to bring up 20,000 rounds to the support, and took 80 men myself with 40,000 rounds which were further away to the same place, but with orders from the Colonel to come back immediately as our side of the hill was very weakly held.

When I got up I found that Tobin and 12 of his party had gone on further as the ammunition was very urgently needed. I dumped down our ammunition with the supports and came back to the hill as ordered. Meanwhile Tobin and his party got into the firing line and one of my best sergeants, Edward Millar, was killed. He died gallantly and his name has been sent forward for recognition.

The next few days were uneventful save that we got no sleep as we had to stand to arms about six times each night and the incessant din of howitzers and heavy guns allowed no rest whatsoever.

Finally on Thursday night or rather Friday morning, at 1.30am we were relieved and were not sorry to leave the hill which none of us will forget and the taking of which was an achievement which will add lustre to the records of even the Dublin Fusiliers.

Our Company's casualties amounted to 40 out of 188 men landed on Saturday morning. I forgot to say that we discarded our packs at the landing and have never seen them again and all this time we never had even our boots off, a shave, or a wash, as even the dirtiest water was greedily drunk on the hill where the sun's rays beat pitilessly down all day long, and where the rotting corpses of the Turks created a damnably offensive smell. That is one of the worst features here unburied bodies and flies but the details are more gruesome than my pen could depict.

Well, we marched out at 1.30 on Friday morning, a bedraggled and want-of-sleep tired body, and marched seven miles back to a rest camp.

Several of the men walked back part of the way in their sleep and when we arrived at 4.30 on Friday morning everyone threw himself down where he was and fell asleep. But our hopes of a rest were short lived, as we were ordered out again at four the next day, and here we are now on the side of a hill waiting for the word to go forward again and attack.



Meanwhile it is soothing for us to know that we have achieved something which has got us the praise of all the staff and big men here, but I daresay you will hear all about it in despatches from the front.

### **The Irish Times, August 27th, 1915**

The announcement of the death of Captain Poole Henry Hickman in the Dardanelles has been received with feelings of deep regret by his colleagues at the Irish Bar. On the outbreak of war Poole Hickman was one of the very first of the ranks of the Bar to volunteer. In his student days he was prominent as a rugby football player, captaining the Wanderers club and he remained prominent in the rugby field in the early years of his professional career.

He was called to the Bar and, being a County Clare man, son of Francis W Hickman DL of Kilmore, Knock, joined the Munster Circuit.

His short professional career was full of promise. Before he joined the Colours, he was secretary to the Munster Bar and enjoyed to an exceptional degree the esteem and affection of his colleagues.

Captain Hickman was possessed of a fine physique and his rapid promotion from lieutenant to captain was the result of soldierly efficiency rapidly attained. His corps was with the 7<sup>th</sup> Dublin Fusiliers whose roll contains many members of the Irish Bar as well as a great number of prominent rugby footballers.

## **Wounded in Action**

*Some men were lucky to survive the initial assaults. Here Private Frank Laird speaks of his good fortune in only being shot. "If this is all the trouble there is in being shot, it is not much after all," he writes in this letter home. Laird was typical of the middle-class men who joined D company. Though a university education entitled to him to be commissioned as an officer, he opted to become a private in D company.*

*In this account, he also recalls the death of Paddy Tobin. Captain Tobin was the son of a surgeon at St Vincent's Hospital and lived in an upmarket address in St Stephen's Green. He was just 21 when he died on August 15<sup>th</sup> during the ill-fated assault on the Turkish positions. Tobin is one of the three real-life characters who features in the Anu Production play *The Pals at Gallipoli*.*

### **The Irish Times, Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1915**

The following letter has been received in Dublin from Private Frank M Laird 'D Company', 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Here is the long-promised yarn of my brief campaign. After about four weeks aboard ship, we popped off one day rather suddenly in a trawler in which we sailed all night. It was a Saturday morning when we went ashore in steam barges with a gangway in front.

They just ran up against the beach and dropped the gangway and we walked ashore like a picnic party. After a short delay to get the others in line we started off.

Our company was in support of another company in an attack on a hill some way off to which our battalion and some others were making. Our way lay along the seashore at first, and then across country, and it took us till dusk to get our hill.

The performance was exactly like one of our attacks in the sham fights that, I believe, I once described to you.

We went along at first in single file in sections of a dozen or so each and then, when we came more under fire, we spread into line. As soon as we started we met the procession of chaps coming back wounded, either walking or on stretchers.

You would think that it should discourage one, but one of the most curious things I found under fire was the detached way one looked at everything as if it was just a show in which one only took a half-hearted kind of interest. Well, we had not got far along the shore till stray shrapnel shells began to drop not far from us.

However, we did not worry much about them. There was one hot spot which we had to double over, and then take shelter beyond.

The shrapnel was dropping pretty smartly there, and I saw Colonel Dowling, with a stick in his hand, standing up as cool as a cucumber, while everyone else, of course, was rubbing his respective nose on the ground and making himself as small as possible.

Well, we moved off from that, and as we got further on there was more rifle fire and less shrapnel. The naval guns did a lot to put down the latter. We spread into line and spent the rest of the afternoon and evening moving from one ditch to another, and finally at nightfall got to the base of the hill to find that the attack had carried it, so that we did not fire a shot.

Ball and I had agreed to keep together, and managed it pretty well though it was not very easy. That night we slept in an enemy's trench at the bottom of the hill, a mixed crowd of us.

Everything gets rather mixed in an attack like that and you find yourself with chaps from other sections and other regiments. We did nothing on Sunday, which was a fine day and quite pleasant, but on Monday morning we got orders to be ready and were moved up the hill into other trenches with the rest of our company, and firing, which had been going on in other parts, off and on all Sunday, began again with us.

We sat there pretty, well crowded up for a good while, and heard we were to hold the hill. The next proceeding, however, was that a party of us were called out and sent off under Paddy Tobin with boxes of ammunition to a place where they said our men were getting pushed back by a strong counter-attack, and were short of ammunition.

Well, we could not find where it was wanted, though we paddled around under a hot fire till we were pretty well deadbeat. At length we opened the boxes and strewed the stuff along where the men could pick it up if they retired.

Then we had a rest. I lost Tobin and most of the others when we moved again, but came across two other D Company men I knew, and it was when moving up with them and some men of another regiment towards the firing line that I was shot. I was walking alone behind a ditch when I got what felt like a blow in the back, and over I toppled. My first thought was, "The beggars have got me at last" and the second "If this is all the trouble there is in being shot, it is not much after all."

Then I heard the other chaps asking me where I was hit. I told them and a couple of them dragged me under the hedge and tied me up.

There were two Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) men there, but it was too lively a fire then, they said, to carry me down. They fixed me up in pretty good cover, and there I lay till

next morning. It was a lovely night, and I did not have any pain so I just meditated on things in general and whenever anyone went by directed them to send up a stretcher forthwith.

By daylight a decent couple of chaps came along put me on their stretcher and carted me off to the first dressing-station where I had something to drink and passed along to the second and third and finally to the edge of the sea where I met McNut who had not long come ashore, looking as bright and smiling as ever.

I asked him to drop you a line which he assured me, he would with pleasure. We had a longish wait there in the sun, but final we were trotted off in barges on our stretchers to a cruiser and hauled aboard it by a crane and laid in rows along the deck.

It sounds funny, but it was really quite a comfortable way of going aboard, and the Jack Tars treated us like gentlemen and so we arrived here and were transferred by motor ambulance to this hosp where I have been since living like a lord.

I have not much more to say except that, though I expected to be badly scared, I was not at all. Everything seemed to come as a matter of course straightaway. There was even a kind of exhilaration in the performance on the first day, though I fancy one gets tired of it after a while.

**‘He stood in the centre of the bullet-swept zone quietly twirling his stick.’**

*By the time the autumn came the true extent of Irish losses at Gallipoli had become known to the public. The pals battalion, the 7<sup>th</sup> Dublins, were effectively wiped out during a futile attack on August 15<sup>th</sup>. They had been commanded by Lt-Col Colonel Geoffrey Downing, mentioned by Laird in the previous article, a former captain of Monkstown rugby club who was instrumental in the establishment of the unit.*

*He was regarded as quite fearless, earning this memorable description from a comrade: “He stood in the centre of the bullet-swept zone quietly twirling his stick. As an old soldier he knew there were times when an officer must be prepared to run what are unnecessary risk.”*

*This Irish Times account details how so many of the officers attached to the 7<sup>th</sup> battalion were killed, including perhaps the best known of them all, Lieutenant Ernest Julian, then Reid Professor of Law at Trinity College Dublin.*

#### **The Irish Times, October 16th, 1915**

The introduction of the 6th and 7th Dublin Fusiliers to the realities of war in a foreign clime came about with the suddenness of a young dog thrown into a pond, but with the difference that the Dublins only asked to be flung into the melée at Suvla Bay, and found their feet with the same celerity with which the young dog discovers his ability to swim.

Their voyage to the Aegean Sea in a comfortable Cunarder [commanded by Captain Rostrum who helped to save some of the Titanic's passengers] had hardly come to an end before the men found themselves traversing the beach with shrapnel taking its toll of life.

Colonel Downing, who commands the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers, was good enough to tell an Irish Times representative something of their daring and achievements.

He is now at his home in Greystones recovering from the attentions of a Turkish sniper who put two bullets through his right foot.

Colonel Downing made it clear that, though only the exploits of his own battalion came under his immediate notice, the other units constituting the 10th (Irish) Division acquitted themselves no less gallantly.

At the very beginning of the landing at Suvla Bay they came under shrapnel fire, which wounded Lieutenant Harvey, late of the Provincial Bank, and ten men and killed two, as A and C Companies were landing under the direction of Major Lonsdale, second in command.

The motor barge, with the dead and wounded, returned to the steamer and took off B and D Company under Colonel Downing who joined the other companies.

The landings of B and D Companies were fortunately completed without casualties. Orders were received for an attack on Chocolate Hill known for a time as Dublin Hill. Casualties occurred as the men traversed a narrow sand pit of which the Turks had the exact range, but the regiment was fortunate compared with some others at this point.

With the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers on one flank and the Royal Irish Fusiliers on the other, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers formed up for the attack. For a time casualties were few, but the regiments then came under a heavy shrapnel fire from their left and the advance had to be continued by short and rapid rushes. It was during one of these rushes that Lieutenant (Ernest) Julian, a well-known Dublin man, was mortally wounded and many other casualties were sustained.

“It was wonderful the way the men stood it,” said Colonel Downing. “They might have been old and seasoned troops, and they continued their advance as though they were on the drill ground. After that we came under heavy musketry fire which really seemed a relief after the shrapnel although casualties continued to occur.”

The advance continued over scrub, ditches and ploughed fields, and a message was received to the effect that it was imperative that Chocolate Hill should be taken before dark.

The 7th Dublins pressed forward in the centre. The actual attacking line was commanded A Company by Major Harrison closely supported by Captain Tobin with D Company, while the other companies were close up in reserve.

Before the crowning assault the naval guns shelled the top of the hill until the last possible moment. As the crest was surmounted the Turks broke and fled and did not wait to resist the bayonets of the Irish.

The hill was captured at 7.30pm in the evening of August 9th and it was seen to be very strongly fortified. There were tiers of trenches and dug outs, and every available form of defence had been employed. Rifles, shell and rifle ammunition, accoutrements, and stores were found in the fort and the men obtained as souvenirs some curiously coloured waistcoats abandoned by the enemy.

Casualties were comparatively few, a fact which Colonel Downing attributes to the men holding their fire till they were aiming at some well-defined object and pushing on vigorously, so that the enemy had little opportunity to “get the range properly”.

The men were in the greatest fettle after the attack and very pleased with themselves as they had reason to be. For four days, until transferred to another point the Dublins held the fort. There was practically no sleep owing to sniping and shrapnel.

Snipers were all around, and shot several men through the head. Colonel Downing pointed out two holes in his sun helmet, pierced by a shrapnel bullet which missed his head by the barest chance.

“My helmet was knocked over to one side,” said Colonel Downing, “and my cup of tea was spilt. It annoyed me very much. There was not much relief for after a night march the men found themselves allotted to take part in an attack on August 15th.

Meanwhile, however, they had received their first batch of correspondence – a very welcome event. The attack commenced at two o'clock on the Sunday afternoon, and at about 6pm a hill had been captured in the face of the most strenuous opposition.

At the finish there was stiff bayonet work and the Turks were started on the run with big losses. Every inch of the ground was hotly contested. As the men surmounted the crest they gave a cheer which was taken up by the reserves, and echoed from the gunboat down below.

It was while Colonel Downing was bringing up the reserves that a sniper, left behind, and concealed in a bush emptied his magazine at him.

“I could feel the bullets whizz past my ears,” said Colonel Downing, “and then he got me twice in the foot. It felt as though an elephant had stamped on it and I was never so wild in my life. I emptied my revolver into the bush, and I think I got him.

“Major Harrison and Captain Poole Hickman, Captain Tobin and Lieutenant Fitzgibbon led bayonet charges that day, and the night which followed was the hottest the regiment ever had, for the Turks counter-attacked in great force. During the period eight officers were killed and many wounded.”

Major Harrison, Captain Hickman, Captain Tobin, Captain Leschallis, Lieutenant Fitzgibbon, Lieutenant Crichton, Lieutenant Weatherill and Lieutenant Russell gave their lives.

In spite of all the enemy could do, the regiment held the position throughout the night, without giving an inch, and at nine o'clock on the Monday morning were relieved. The night was described by Major Lonsdale and the adjutant as the limit of frightfulness.

“They went to their deaths singing,” said Colonel Downing of his regiment, “and they refused to yield an inch of ground, though the dead and wounded lay thick around”.

A finer set of men than the 1st Dublins, whom I commanded for four years in India, and whose great landing at V beach is so well known, I have never seen, but I can honestly say I saw no difference between them and the 7th, which I had the honour to command at Suvla.

“We don't want the lives of those who have fallen to be thrown away. I hope that all men of military age will now put aside the comforts of home, and fill up the ranks with the same

bravery and patriotism. The sacrifice of those who marched through Dublin on that last day of April must not be rendered in vain.”



## **Could shared sacrifice unify?**

*By early September 1915, news was filtering back to Ireland about what had happened at Suvla Bay. It prompted this lengthy editorial in The Irish Times.*

*The paper once again reiterated its hope that the shared sacrifices in Gallipoli would help to end the “internecine strife” between unionists and nationalist in Ireland once the war ended.*

*The newspaper took particular pride in the sacrifices of the 10th (Irish) Division and concluded the men who died had not died in vain.*

*Such sentiments were common at the time and helped the public to cope with the terrible news seeping back from the various theatres of war.*

### **The Irish Times, September 4<sup>th</sup> 1915**

From the official despatches, messages from war correspondents and private letters we can now piece together some part of the story of the recent fighting in Gallipoli. When the 10th (Irish) Division landed at Suvla Bay the Australian and New Zealand Corps on their right were engaged in a terrific struggle for the heights of Sari Bair.

On the 9th August some of the Colonials reached the summit of the ridge, but their position, swept by Turkish shellfire, was untenable. The attack, as a whole, failed. Between August 7th and August 15th occurred the successful landing and advance towards Anafarta in which the Irish Division played such a splendid part.

The advance of August 21st, as we learn today from the Press Association’s correspondent was only partially successful.

Burnt Hill, which lies on the Dardanelles side of Chocolate Hill, was stormed, but could not be held. On the extreme right, however, our forces secured a sensible advantage and were able to establish contact with the Colonial contingents.

A further success, as Sir Ian Hamilton has reported, was gained by the new Divisions on the 27th and 23th August, when they captured ground commanding the Anafarta Valley; the Colonials also were able to extend the line of their advance.

Here the story ends for the present. The result of the operations between August 7th and August 28th is that a firm connection has been established between the Suvla Bay forces and the Colonial Corps, that we now hold the whole coastline from the Salt Lake to Gaba Tepe; that we have secured positions which dominate the valley that leads to the only road from Constantinople to Achi Baba.

We are well on the way to Biyuk Anafarta, which is only three and a half miles from the Constantinople road a distance easily within gun range. If we can get to the road we shall be able to cut off all supplies from the Turkish troops at Achi Baba, and their position must soon become untenable.

Tremendous obstacles still confront our forces - natural difficulties and a strong and gallant foe. But .if we win, the back of our great task will have been broken, and the first real decision of the war will be in sight.

The fighting in the Dardanelles will be a landmark in the history of the Irish people. Our men have fought grandly in Flanders: there the Irish Guards received their baptism of fire and such regiments as the Dublins, Munsters, Royal Irish and Royal Irish Rifles amplified and ennobled our great military traditions.

But there has been a more striking concentration of Irish effort in Gallipoli; more than once it has been possible to regard the army of Gallipoli as an Irish army.

The chief glory of the landing at Sedd el Bahr, one of the most splendid military exploits in the war fell to the first battalions of the Dublin, Munster, and Inniskilling Fusiliers. These fine professional soldiers proved themselves to be not inferior to the best men who have fought for England since Cressy and Agincourt.

But there is another and an entirely new element in our Irish interest in the Gallipoli campaign, an element that gives a poignant intensity to our pride, our hopes, and our anxieties. The professional army, as it was before the war, enticed certain classes of the Irish people; the new army embraces all. Our young men have answered the call from the university, the office, and the workshop.

The personal fears and hopes of warfare have been brought into households that never knew them before. The heartstrings of the mothers of thousands of Irish boys who had been destined for safe and peaceful careers have been drawn after the Tenth Division to the Dardanelles.

How would they fare—these lads equipped only with the hasty training of a few months; these officers fresh from the desk, on whose young shoulders such a heavy burden of responsibility is now imposed? Would they uphold the credit of the great names that they carried on their shoulder scraps?

We have not yet received any detailed account of their work in Gallipoli, but the brief reports and the private letters which we have published during the past week, furnish a sufficient answer to our question.

The 10th Division has fulfilled our highest hopes. The Irishmen who stormed Seddul Bahr may be proud of the Irishmen who landed at Suvla Bay. The 7th Dublins are worthy of the 1st Dublins.

The new battalions of the Munsters, Connaughts, Leinsters, Inniskillings, Royal Irish Rifles and Royal Irish Fusiliers have established their comradeship in arms with the war-worn veterans of those great regiments.

We know the casualty lists tell us from day to day at what cost these Irishmen have proved their manhood.

We remember the laughing lady who marched along the Dublin quays, and we think of the hands that we shall never clasp again.

Every one of us knows some Irish mother or wife bereaved, some Irish household darkened, as the price of the landing at Suvla Bay.

Sometimes we may be tempted to ask: was it worth the while? Was it really necessary that this only son of his mother should fall to a Turkish bullet, that the career of that brilliant young barrister should end in a scuffle on a foreign sand hill?

We venture to say that even the bitterest loss in this campaign has been worth the while, worth it for the soldier himself, for his loved ones, for Ireland. The soldier has died the finest of all deaths in the finest of all causes.

In his short life he has done a greater thing than any who survive him at home will ever do. He has left to his family the consolation of a proud and tender memory. His death is a message of hope to his country.

Mr. Ashmead Bartlett [a journalist covering the campaign] relates that on the height of Sari Bair he saw lying dead, side by side, a Colonial, an Englishman, a Maori and a Gurkha - surely a solemn and wonderful illustration of Imperial unity.

Is the spectacle of Irish Unionists and Nationalists fighting side by side in Flanders and Gallipoli, true comrades and brothers, less wonderful and inspiring?

A little more than a year ago they were preparing to kill one another. Today many of them have died for one another. When this war is ended we shall resume our political controversies in a new Ireland.

The unionists and nationalists who fought at Ypres and stormed the hill at Suvla have sealed a new bond of patriotism. The spirits of our dead Irish soldiers will cry trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of internecine strife in Ireland. Shall we dare to think that the Irish soldier who has died for the liberties of the world, and for the future progress and happiness of Ireland, has died in vain? Our memories of that storied peninsula where so much

Irish blood has been shed will be proud as well as sad. Our sons and brothers there have made a new chapter in Irish history. Of those who will never come home we can truly say, as the Spartans said of their dead at Thermopylae, that their tombs are altars, their lot glorious and beautiful.

## **Retirement of the Tenth (Irish) Division. Gallantry of Dublins, Munsters, Connaughts and Inniskillings. Eight guns Abandoned – 1,500 casualties**

*Part of the rationale for the Gallipoli campaign was to convince wavering Balkan powers who were neutral to support the Allies in the war. But the campaign had the opposite effect. After the failure at Gallipoli, and German successes against Russia, Bulgaria decided to throw in its lot with the Central Powers (as Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans were known) giving the then Allied powers (the British Empire, France, and Russia – the United States did not join the war until 1917) a new enemy with which to contend.*

*In September 1915 the Allies judged that, though Greece was technically neutral, the Greek port of Salonika (now Thessaloniki) could fall to the Bulgarians. In late September, the 30<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division was sent across the Aegean Sea to Salonika followed by the rest of the division. At that stage some 90 per cent of the division were dead, wounded or ill, mostly from dysentery. The division was decimated and needed to be filled up by infantry drafts “from all the regiments of the army”.*

*The major Irish engagement in Salonika was the Battle of Kosturino in which the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division fought a rearguard action against overwhelming force in the mountain snows of the Balkans. Conditions were appalling.*

*The attack happened in the middle of December 1915 in Kosturino which is now in modern-day Macedonia. Just 18 months after the assassination in Sarajevo, an Irish Division found itself in Serbia defending the Serbs against the Bulgarians. The Great War had truly become a global conflict in which the unlikeliest of foes were pitted against each other.*

*The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division retreated in good order having held out for days against a numerically superior force. The battle cost the division 302 dead, but its stand prompted a letter of appreciation from King George V.*

### **The Irish Times, December 18, 1915**

The War Office issued the following on Sunday night – fighting north of Salonika. After sustaining violent attacks delivered by the enemy in overwhelming numbers, the 10th Division succeeded, with the help of reinforcements in retiring to a strong position from Lake Doiran westwards towards the valley of the Tardar in conjunction with our Allies.

The Division is reported to have fought well against very heavy odds and this was largely due to the gallantry of the troops, and especially of the Minister Fusiliers, the Dublin Fusiliers and the Connaught Rangers, that the withdrawal was successfully accomplished.

Owing to the mountainous nature of the country it was necessary to place eight field guns for purposes of defence in positions from which it was impossible to withdraw them when the retirement took place.

No British report was issued on Monday night regarding the position at Salonika but telegrams from unofficial sources agreed in stating that the Franco-British troops were now concentrated on Greek territory and that the withdrawal had been effected without further serious fighting.

The Bulgarians were stated to be a few miles and it was rumoured that, in order to avoid complications with Greece, they would not cross the frontier. The task of dealing with the Allied troops is to be left to the Germans and Austrians.

Further details of the fighting at Dorian show that another Irish regiment, the Inniskilling Fusiliers, greatly distinguished itself, losing the best part of two companies in a successful rearguard action.

The arrangements with Greece are taking shape. The Greek troops northeast of Salonika are retiring to Serres (a city in Macedonia) and portion of the Salonika Custom House has been handed over to the Allied commanders.

British troops and supplies are being landed daily, and there is every indication that the decision to hold the Salonika position is being backed up in the most determined manner.

The gallant Tenth Division – Dublins, Munsters and Connaughts.

Few things are more unsatisfactory in warfare than fighting without a special object, and there are few besides the British who can rise superior to such depressing influences.

The British soldier has shown time and again that, whatever the circumstances may be, he can always give a good account of himself. Here, as in France and Gallipoli, he has proved himself a desperate fighter against odds.

Last week, when I visited Hill 516, before me extended a panorama, embracing the main British lines, whose front extended for more than ten miles.

The hill itself marked the point of junction of the British and French positions, the former occupying a position, entirely to the right of the main road from Doiran to Strumica.

It is the only motor road in this region, the rest of the ground, apart from some goat tracks, being rough and hilly and covered with thick scrub, making all movement difficult.

Some idea of the difficulties of the position can be gained from the fact that it took a couple of hours to reach men only a mile away from the track.

To this has to be added the bitter cold has set in prematurely before proper provision could be made for the supply of winter equipment. The men have been suddenly flung into this bleak wilderness fresh from the almost torrid heat of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

In the course of these engagements the fighting often became very close owing to the mists but the gallant Connaughts, Munsters, and Dublins proved themselves better men than the Bulgars, even with the latter's own favourite weapon - the bayonet.

Possibly the cold made them appreciate as a luxury this form of exercise, but certain it is that time and again the enemy was driven off in a series of hand-to-hand encounters, in which he suffered heavy loss.

But the enemy's superiority of numbers, and especially their mountain guns, could not fail to predominate in the long run, we being entirely unprovided with these useful and indispensable weapons, and we retired to the second line, the French having meanwhile abandoned the bridgehead of Gradetz and Hill 516.

The importance of our stand in these positions is difficult to exaggerate, Because had the Bulgarians succeeded in pushing through, as, doubtless, they hoped and intended to do, they would have cut off the retreat of the main body of the French as well as the British, and this would possibly have led to a grave reverse.

The splendid tenacity of the Irish Division, however, defeated the enemy's hopes, and gave the French Command, as well as our own, ample time to proceed with the withdrawal in a methodical and orderly manner. Since Tuesday the pressure of the Bulgarian offensive has relaxed, and our new positions are of great strength.

## **Gallipoli abandoned**

*Sir Ian Hamilton was replaced as commander-in-chief of the Gallipoli campaign in October 1915. His replacement was Sir Charles Munroe who was shocked by what he saw. In November 1915, Lord Kitchener decided to visit in the peninsula. He too was dismayed by what he saw and realised the situation was hopeless.*

*The ensuing evacuation was the only success of the campaign. Under the noses of the Turks, the Allies managed to leave without a single casualty. If the campaign had been conducted with the thoroughness of the evacuation, the outcome might have been different.*

*The casualties on all sides were catastrophic. An estimated 56,000 Allied soldiers and a similar number of soldiers from the Ottoman Empire died in a fruitless struggle that was, nonetheless, a major victory for the Turks defending their homeland.*

*Among the dead were almost 12,000 Australians and New Zealanders whose deaths became the anvil on which antipodean national consciousness was forged.*

*Ireland suffered disproportionately at Gallipoli. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 4,000 Irishmen died there, mainly at Seddul Bahr and Suvla Bay. The writer Katherine Tynan wrote: "Dublin was full of mourning, and in the faces one met there was a hard brightness of pain as though the people's hearts burnt in the fire and were not consumed."*

*Gallipoli turned many Irish people against the war effort. Exactly a year after the initial landings, and after the 10th Irish Division were cheered through the streets of Dublin on their way to fight, the Easter Rising erupted and all was changed utterly.*

### **The Irish Times, January 10th, 1916**

We do not propose to make the announcement of the complete and successful evacuation of the Gallipoli peninsula an occasion for re-opening controversy on the initiation and conduct of the ill-fated enterprise which has not been wholly abandoned.

There remain many matters in connection both with the origins and the handling of these operations which neither the statements of ministers nor Sir Ian Hamilton's despatches have satisfactorily explained.

Into these matter there must some day by the most searching investigation; but there will be in the future more suitable occasions than the present for such an inquiry.

The vital lessons, which this costly and unprofitable campaign has taught, that anything short of the most perfect attainable co-ordination of effort among the Allies invites failure, that great operations divergent from the main theatre ought not to be undertaken at all unless there



are available men enough and material enough to provide a margin sufficient to carry them through errors and mistakes successfully; that the selection of commanding officers must be governed solely by consideration of their proved fitness for the task in hand.

Those vital lessons, we believe, have been learned at a terrible cost by our own and the Allied governments.

We prefer today to congratulate our present commanders on the successful conduct of an operation which, in some respects, must have been even more difficult than the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac last month.

Since those positions were abandoned, it must have been clear to the Turks that there was at least a strong probability that a similar operation would be effected at the end of the peninsula where the original landing was made.

We must suppose, in those circumstances, that the enemy were vigilant for any hint of withdrawal. The factor of surprise, which was of such value both in the landing and at the evacuation of Suvla, must consequently have been absent in this re-embarkation of the British and French forces at the end of the peninsula.

Yet here, as at Suvla and Anzac, the evacuation has been effected without any loss of life whatever – a circumstance which is also the redeeming feature in the sinking of the *King Edward VII*, the fine battleship whose loss through striking a mine we have to record today. The casualties in the evacuation of our last holding in Gallipoli amount to one British soldier wounded; there were no casualties among the French troops.

Worthy foes as the Turks in Gallipoli have proved themselves to be, we cannot congratulate their commanders and their intelligence service on permitting us to repeat at the end of the peninsula the unprecedented achievement of the withdrawal from Suvla and Anzac:

General Sir Charles Monroe, who has apparently deferred taking over his new command of the First Army in Flanders until he has completed his work in the east, his subordinate commanders and Admiral de Robeck, whose task of the naval side of the operation was of peculiar difficulty, deserve the warmest thanks of the nation for this distinguished achievement.

Competent opinion, we think, will approve the decision which carries to its logical conclusion the policy begun by the evacuation of Suvla and Anzac.

That operation implied a recognition that the attempt to open the Dardanelles had failed. There remained, therefore, no convincing reason why the British and French troops should continue to hold the end of the peninsula.

Their presence doubtless had the effect of keeping a certain number of Turkish forces immobilised to confront them and to guard against a fresh attempt elsewhere which our continued holding of a part of Gallipoli might seem to threaten.

But these advantages, as the evacuation shows, are regarded as being outweighed by the advantage of having the considerable Allied forces which remained in the peninsula available for active operations elsewhere.

The facility of making surprise descents on any part of the long Turkish coastline in the Aegean which our sea-command confers on us must continue, even now that Gallipoli is wholly abandoned to keep a large proportion of the Turkish forces from being utilised for offensive action against Egypt or elsewhere.

So fortunately, for nothing in our Gallipoli adventure has been like the leaving of it, there ends one of the most tragic chapters, but a glorious and imperishable chapter in our military history.

It is our consolation that, if the Irish people have borne their share of the tragedy and the sacrifice of Gallipoli, we have borne our full share also in its immortal splendour.

Not yet we can reckon how much our dead of the Dublins, the Munsters and the Inniskillings at Seddulbar, our dead of the 10<sup>th</sup> Division at Suvla, and those who under the bitterness of failure, now leave these hallowed graves behind them, have done for Ireland. This only we know, that, though all the hopes of victory, with which they landed are buried with them in Gallipoli, in the final reckoning it will not be found that our deathless dead laid down their lives in vain.

## **The 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers in Gallipoli – thrilling records, splendid deeds**

*For many years, the most enduring legacy of the Gallipoli landings in Ireland was in that bastion of Irish nationalism Croke Park. After the landings at Suvla Bay, Hill 16 was known as Hill 60 named after the hill in Gallipoli stormed by the Connaught Rangers in August 1915.*

*It was common at the time to name sporting terraces after hills fought over by the British army in different conflicts. Liverpool's Kop is named after Spion Kop from the Second Boer War.*

*It was only in 1931 that Hill 60 became Hill 16 following an intervention from Dan McCarthy, a former president of the GAA, who objected to a feature of Croke Park being named after an action involving Irish soldiers who fought for the British army.*

*The 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers was part of the 29<sup>th</sup> battalion of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. Instead of fighting with their Irish brothers-in-arms, the 29<sup>th</sup> battalion was dispatched to fight with the Anzacs who were attempting a breakout from Anzac Cove.*

*The Connaught Rangers were known as The Devil's Own. The regiment had developed a reputation over the years for aggression and dash in battle.*

*The Rangers' sojourn in Suvla Bay would be short and bloody. They won renown for seizing some desperately needed water wells from the Turks but many of them perished in the ill-fated attempt to take Hill 60 between August 27<sup>th</sup> and August 29<sup>th</sup>.*

*The taking of Hill 60 was seen as critical to link up the Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove beachheads.*

*The battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Jourdain and arrived at Suvla Bay with a combined strength of 975 officers and men. Seven weeks later they departed Gallipoli with more than two-thirds of the men, 684 in total, as casualties and some 220 dead.*

### **The Irish Times, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1915**

The following fine record of the deeds of the 5th Battalion Connaught Rangers in Gallipoli has been sent to the Irish Times by an officer in the battalion.

Gallipoli, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1915: To Australia and New Zealand belong the first honour of the Anzac landing, the maintenance of the foothold then gained and the gradual advance among the foothills of the Sari Bair.

Against unparalleled difficulties, in the teeth of fierce and sustained resistance, the present British line has been established. Theirs was the lion's share of work; theirs justly will be the greater fame.

This brief account, written while Turkish artillery still searches the foreshore of Anzac, deals with the part played by one Irish regiment in the recent fighting there - a part not unworthy of a proud tradition.

At dawn on the 6th of August the 5th Connaught Rangers landed at Anzac in support of the Australian line. Two days later they were detached from their brigade and moved to the extreme right.

Throughout most of the time that they have spent in the front line they have been employed independently of the brigade and the story of the larger command is not theirs. There is no period of probation for new arrivals on the peninsula.

On the afternoon of the 6<sup>th</sup>, the bivouacs of the 29<sup>th</sup> Brigade had been heavily shelled, and from that time until the 10th the Rangers had little remission from the rough handling of the Turkish guns.

For several hundreds of them shell fire was no new sensation. They had learned its lessons in South Africa and bore it with cheerful patience while the younger recruits gave their first evidence of the stalwart courage that they have shown throughout.

The 10th was a day of fierce fighting on the slopes of Chanuk Bair in which the other battalions of the brigade were involved. Support was called for urgently, and in the blazing heat of mid-day the battalion was marched at utmost speed along the whole extent of the line arriving on the scene of action some hours before they were expected.

They found the evidence of an unsuccessful attack and a costly withdrawal and that it was for them to move forward and hold the position until large numbers of wounded and some scattered details could be brought in.

There was no time for rest. A and B Companies were sent forward at once mounting to their objective by almost precipitous slopes and under continuous sniping and machine gun fire.

Shortly afterwards C Company followed them and eventually, in the late afternoon D Company, which had been at work all the previous night, was moved forward.

By dogged perseverance in the face of galling fire the task was accomplished.

All the afternoon and evening the wounded were carried back and detached parties were collected. At dark the leading companies were withdrawn for rest behind a new line which was to be entrenched during the night by the remainder of the battalion. Morning found that line sufficiently strong to withstand any attack that the enemy might direct against it. On this

sector of the front the Rangers remained for ten days. During the time of their occupation they laboured night and day in strengthening and improving the defences never for an instant free from searching fire; every approach and communication swept from the dominant ridge of the Chanuk Bair. So far they had never had the opportunity of hand-to-hand encounters with the enemy. Many had fallen, few had been avenged. But their opportunity was to come.

An advance was planned to take place on the 21st of August against the Turkish trenches at Kaiajik Aghala.

On the sandy plain, beyond the low hills on which our line rested, were the wells of Kabak Kuyu, strongly guarded by Turkish entrenchments. To the Rangers was allotted the task of capturing these wells.

The moment chosen for the attack was shortly before four in the afternoon. A concentrated bombardment from sea and land preceded it. Scarcely had the fumes and dust of the last salvo dispersed, when C Company, in thinly extended lines, moved forward at the double across the open ground.

They were met by a burst of fire. They replied with the Irish yell and rushed the trenches. D Company was close on their heels. It was swift, fierce work with the bayonet.

Second Lieutenant T. W. G. Johnston, entering the Turkish trench, bayoneted six and shot two Turks with his own hand. He has since been awarded the Military Cross. The men were quick to follow his example. A platoon was bombing and barricading the communication trench.

D Company was moving out across the open ground. A and B Companies were up. The objective was attained, the wells and their defences in our hands and the Rangers, their blood up, were pushing on to the support of the attack on their right. "Congratulate the Connaught Rangers on their fine assault," wired General Sir A. G. Godley (General Sir Alexander Godley, whose family seat is in Killegar, Co Leitrim).

What was won that day was held. Until dark the Turkish guns swept the captured position with storm-drift of shrapnel. Cover was inadequate, and the battalion suffered severely, but digging was begun and after a night of unremitting work the new line was consolidated and secure. By the unhesitating impulse of their charge, by the unwavering steadfastness of their defence, the regiment had advanced the line to the point that was desired. The task was accomplished. The battle of the 21st was not complete in its results at every point.

A hillock on the outskirts of the Sari Bair, known as Hill 60, remained in occupation of the enemy who were strongly entrenched there.

It was of great tactical importance that this point should be gained and once more the Rangers were chosen to form the left of an assault upon it.

“Showing brilliant dash in attack,” says the official account, two hundred and fifty bayonets, nearly the whole of the battalion that had survived the 21<sup>st</sup>, assaulted the Turkish position. With bomb and bayonet over great piles of Turkish dead, they fought their way until, as before, the objective was gained.

It was a magnificent performance. On the field Sir A. Godley sent a message to Colonel Jourdain and the regiment. “Heartiest congratulations from the New Zealand and Australian Division on your brilliant achievement this evening, which is a fitting sequel to the capture of Kabak Kuyu well and will go down to history among the finest feats of your distinguished regiment.

“Personally, as an Irishman who has served in two Irish regiments, it gives me the greatest pride and pleasure that the regiment should have performed such gallant deeds under my command. Stick to what you have got and consolidate.”

During the evening the Turkish bombers attacked again and again. Our line was attenuated dangerously. The captured trench was susceptible of approaches which no reconnaissance had been able to detect. But the men stuck to what they had got and it was not until all those in the further parts of the captured trenches invaded and cut off, had fallen at their posts, the Turks regained the greater portion of what had been so dearly won.

Subsequent efforts during the night to retake the trenches, with the assistance of a party of fresh Australians who had come up, failed partly because the dead so choked the trenches that progress along them was impossible.

On the morning of the 28th the remnants of the 5th Connaught Rangers marched back to their bivouac and the roll was called.

In Galway, in Mayo, in Sligo it will cause no wonder that the men they sent to fight in Gallipoli showed the courage of their race and ancient tradition.

They fought like the heroes of their own folklore following their officers into battle with their rosaries round their necks and the old yell of the Connaught charge.

## **The Irish Regiments**

*The Irish losses in the Dardanelles shook the faith of even those who heartily supported the British war effort.*

*The casualties, published assiduously in *The Irish Times*, grew longer and longer prompting the novelist Katherine Tynan to write: "So many of our friends had gone out in the 10th (Irish) Division to perish at Suvla. For the first time came bitterness, for we felt that their lives had been thrown away and that their heroism had gone unrecognised."*

*Sir Ian Hamilton was replaced as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) in October 1915. Not only had he shown himself to be an inept commander, but he had a tin ear for the machinations of Irish politics.*

*The leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party John Redmond turned out to be his *bête noir*. Redmond was under increasing pressure to justify the huge sacrifices made by Irishmen in the war while the promises of Home Rule remained unfulfilled and the possibility of conscription was exercising nationalist Ireland.*

*In December 1915 he demanded that Hamilton publish his dispatch about the Suvla Bay landings immediately. Redmond also wanted a public inquiry into the whole military debacle of the Gallipoli campaign. Neither had been forthcoming. The British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith turned down an inquiry as so many officers involved were away at the front.*

*In January 1916 Hamilton finally published his dispatch. Despite its length, it only carried perfunctory mentions of the exploits of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. Redmond was enraged as many of those from a nationalist disposition who supported the war. It was bad enough that so many Irishmen had been killed, but to be written out of official dispatches was doubly wounding.*

*Under political pressure, Hamilton amended his dispatch in March, but the damage had been done.*

### **The Irish Times, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1916**

The War Office has anticipated Mr Redmond's question in the House of Commons today by the issue, as a supplement to last night's London Gazette, of a second despatch from General Sir Ian Hamilton.

The first despatch was published on the 7th of January. It was a long and thrilling account of the great attacks at Anzac and Suvla Bay. The Irish public read it with profound emotion, but also with profound disappointment.

The despatch showed that the 10th (Irish) Division had taken part in both engagements. The evidence that it fought with magnificent dash and gallantry is abundant and convincing.

The testimony of English, Scottish, and Colonial eyewitnesses, and of the war correspondents, proves that the 10th Division's work was one of the outstanding features of the operations at Suvla Bay.

The fact was not to be gathered from Sir Ian Hamilton's long despatch. The exploits of English and Scottish regiments were freely (and rightly) praised. Apart from one reference to the 6th Dublin Fusiliers and another to a fine charge by a handful of the 5<sup>th</sup> Connaught Rangers, no individual Irish regiment was marked out for praise.

The despatch was utterly silent about the distinguished bravery of the 7th Dublin Fusiliers at Chocolate Hill.

Ireland felt that she had not received her due. It is satisfactory to learn that Sir Ian Hamilton has now come to see that he was not quite fair to his Irish soldiers.

The brief despatch which we publish today is an act of reparation to the 10th (Irish) Division. Sir Ian Hamilton explains that the loss of so many senior officers made it difficult for him to get authenticated facts relating to the actions and identities of some of the units which had borne the brunt of the fighting in the Suvla Bay area.

Since last December, however, fresh light has been thrown upon several episodes hitherto obscure.

It happens that nearly the whole of this fresh light gilds the bayonets of battalions of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division.

Special mention is accorded at last to the 5th Royal Irish Fusiliers and the 7<sup>th</sup> Dublin Fusiliers for the energy and boldness of their attack at Chocolate Hill. In the attack on Hill 70, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, the 6th Royal Irish Fusiliers and the 6th Dublin Fusiliers "rendered distinguished service."

Tardy justice is done to the individual services of officers and men in two battalions of the Irish Division—the 6th Royal Irish Rifles and the 10th Hampshire.

We welcome Sir Ian Hamilton's postscript. It tells Ireland nothing new. It does not, because it cannot, increase her pride in her sons of the 10th Division, but it amplifies and corrects the official record of one of the most glorious chapters in Irish history. We hope that as a result



of this despatch, there will be some additions to the Gallipoli honours list. The 10<sup>th</sup> Division, now at Salonika, is in constant communication with its friends in Ireland.

We are betraying no secret when we say that their scanty share of the Gallipoli honours has greatly grieved the officers and men of the Division. Many officers who did work of vital importance were overlooked altogether; many splendid deeds by men of the rank and file remain unrecognised.

We know that officers feel that in too many cases a serious injustice has been done to their non-commissioned officers and men. During the last three months Sir Ian Hamilton has received fresh light on “episodes hitherto obscure”. A supplementary honours list for the 10th Division seems to be, therefore, a necessary sequel to this supplementary despatch. Certainly there will be no excuse for repetition of the Gallipoli mistake in connection with the gallant work of the 10th Division in Serbia. The despatches and honours list for this brief, but momentous, campaign have not yet been published.

We know, however, that, if our little force had been overwhelmed at Doiran, the neighbouring French force might have been involved in our calamity, and the whole course of events, so fortunate, as the result showed, might have been changed. We know, too, that our safe retreat was largely due to the gallantry of Connaughts, Munsters, and Inniskillings and that the 6th Dublin Fusiliers held a critical point at a critical moment with the utmost bravery and coolness.

We must hope - we shall assume - that the despatches and honours list will do full justice to the brilliant service of these Irish battalions. One such “afterthought” as we publish today is enough for a whole war, even for the greatest of all wars.

The Irish regiments ask only for their due, and it is unfortunate that a series of accidents should have created the impression that they do not always get it. We have urged many times that the appointment of a special recorder of the deeds of our soldiers in France would give a valuable stimulus to recruiting in this country.

Some months ago we said that Rifleman Patrick MacGill should be asked to act as an Irish eyewitness. The thrilling qualities of his new book, written in the trenches, *The Red Horizon*, confirm the value of our suggestion.

**Death of Sir Bryan Mahon, a great military record.**



*Sir Bryan Mahon died in 1930. Contrary to the established wisdom nowadays, the new Irish Free State Government was not completely hostile to returning British soldiers. Indeed, William T Cosgrave, the first leader of the new State, appointed several former British generals to the new senate, Mahon being one of them.*

*It is interesting in this Irish Times report that those attending the funeral included Cosgrave and several prominent ministers of the Free State. Two were veterans of the Easter Rising and War of Independence - Richard Mulcahy and Desmond Fitzgerald.*

### **The Weekly Irish Times, October 4, 1930.**

We deeply regret to announce the death of Senator Sir Bryan Mahon, KCB, DSO, which took place on September 24 at Earlsfort Mansions, Dublin where he had been living for some months.

Sir Bryan had been in indifferent health for more than a year notwithstanding which he attended to his duties in the Senate up to its adjournment in July.

Sir Bryan Mahon had won distinction as a soldier before he began a career of useful public life in his native country. After some years of active service in Egyptian and Sudan campaigns, he came suddenly into prominence through his leadership of the force which relieved Mafeking in 1900.

At the opening of the Great War he was a Divisional Commander in India and when the new divisions of Kitchener's Army were formed he was appointed to the command of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division and in due course took the division to the Balkan theatre of war.

Invalided home, he returned in time to succeed Sir John Maxwell in the Irish Command after the insurrection of 1916. Retiring in 1921, he settled down as a country gentleman taking Mullaboden, Co Kildare as his permanent home.

After the Treaty settlement, he threw in his lot with the new State and accepted President Cosgrave's invitation to become one of the first members of the Senate then constituted.

He took no prominent part in politics, but had an important influence on the fortunes of the Irish Free State through his activity in restoring the amenities of life in Southern Ireland through the revival of sport and his example, as a member of the gentry class, in helping to rebuild the social structure of the country.

Bryan Thomas Mahon was born at Belleville, County Galway on the 2nd April 1862, the eldest son of Henry Blake Mahon and Matilda, daughter of Colonel Seymour of Ballymore Castle, County Galway.

He was educated at Dr Wall School Portarlinton. Intended for a military career, he was gazetted to the 8th Hussars in 1883, and was afterwards posted to India.

He was awarded the D.S.O. for his work in the Dongola expedition, promoted Lieutenant-Colonel for his work in the Khartoum expedition and for further brilliant service was promoted Brevet Colonel and awarded numerous decorations including the Sudan and Egyptian war medals with eight clasps. When Lord Kitchener left the Sudan for South Africa, Sir Bryan Mahon was one of the officers who accompanied him.

After the close of the South African campaign he returned to Egypt and afterwards to the Indian Army and was in the command of the Eighth (Lucknow) Division in 1909.

In 1912 he was knighted as K.C.V.O. Sir Bryan Mahon had returned home needing some relief. After the rigours of the Serbian operations in 1916, and was available after Sir John Maxwell was considered to have crushed the Easter Week insurrection. It was desired to restore a more sympathetic handling of Irish affairs and his appointment then as General Officer Commanding in Ireland was remarkably fortunate giving the Irish public a sense of relief after a time of stress.

Sir Bryan Mahon was sworn a member of the Privy Council and as military chief in the country in war time played an important part in administration at that period.

His term in the Command ended in 1918 and he was not identified with the drastic military measures that were taken in Ireland between that date and the Truce.

Sir Bryan married in 1920, the widow of Sir John Milbanke VC. She died in 1927 and a short time afterwards Sir Bryan was received into the Roman Catholic Church by the Rev. TV Nolan SJ. The death of Sir Bryan Mahon creates a vacancy in the Irish Free State.

The funeral of the Right Honourable General Sir Bryan Thomas Mahon took place on 26th September after Requiem Mass, from the University Church, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin to Mullaboden Cemetery, Co. Kildare.

Amongst those present were Mr. William T Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council, Irish Free State; Mr P. McGilligan, Minister for Industry and Commerce and External Affairs; Mr. R. Mulcahy, Minister for Local Government and Public Health, Mr. D. Fitzgerald, Minister for Defence, Mr.- James FitzGerald-Kenney, Minister for Justice ; Professor Michael Hayes, Speaker of the Dáil.

# The day the sea turned red at Gallipoli

THE IRISH TIMES, THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1985

TODAY

## The day the sea turned red at Gallipoli

It was said that black crepe hung from every door in the Coombe. Seventy years ago today the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and other British regiments in the British Army suffered appalling casualties while landing at Sedd El Bahr on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey.

THEIR task was to be the first of getting the first battalions of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers ashore at "D Beach", at the mouth of the Gallipoli peninsula on a bright Sunday morning in 1915. The task was to be a deadly one. The British Army was to be the first to be killed on the Gallipoli peninsula.

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An Ottoman sailor's depiction of the "Silver Cyclops" landing at Cape Helles.

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**Emerging soldiers tipped in the pools of blood that covered the gangplanks.**

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*Gradually the memories of Gallipoli faded as did memories of the hundreds of thousand of Irishmen who fought in the first World War. A state of national amnesia, according to the historian FX Martin set into the new State which had acquired a new set of heroes, the men and women of the revolutionary generation.*

*One Irish Times journalist made it a personal crusade to recover the memories of these forgotten men. Kevin Myers regularly wrote about the war in his Irishman's Diary.*

*In this extraordinary account published to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli, he recalls how the military disaster affected even those who survived the horrors of that dreadful campaign.*

**The Irish Times, April 25, 1985.**

**Kevin Myers**

It was said that black crepe hung from every door in the Coombe. Seventy years ago today the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and other Irish regiments in the British Army suffered appalling casualties while landing at Sedd El Bahr on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey.

There were to be two methods of getting the first battalions of the Munster and Dublin Fusiliers ashore at "V beach" at the south of the Gallipoli peninsula on a bright Sunday morning 70 years ago today.

Each was to prove highly efficacious in bringing disaster to the attacking troops; and for a generation in Ireland the name of Sedd El Bahr was synonymous to many with slaughter.

Small steamers were to tow large lighters within rowing range of the beach, and then sailors would row the men about half the First battalion of the Dublin Fusiliers ashore. Simultaneously, the old collier, the River Clyde was to be beached and the 2,000 men inside - Munsters, Dublins and units of the Hampshire Regiment and the naval Anson battalion were to exit through holes cut in the sides of the River Clyde and pass over specially constructed gangways onto 'V beach.

That beach was in fact a defender's dream. Three hundred yards long and crescent shaped, on its left was a fort and on its right an old castle and the village of Sedd El Bahr.

It was networked with trenchworks and virtually impenetrable barbed wire. And the beach was covered by high ground along its complete length rising sharply on the left it would have taken a massive and prolonged bombardment to reduce the def enders of such a position.

Instead, the HMS Queen Elizabeth fired a few broadsides into the beach, the fort and the village and the Dublin Fusiliers and the River Clyde went in.

The Turkish defenders waited until the flimsy wooden rowing boats containing about 40 men each came close to the shore. And then they opened fire. The effects were catastrophic. Machinegun fire and explosive incendiary pom-pom rounds cut into the attackers.

On the first boat to reach the beach, only three men, all wounded, were alive out of a complement of 40.

Lieutenant Maffet of the Dublin Fusiliers reported: "Just before we grounded the boat was hit with incendiary shells and began to go on fire. She was half full of water. "Several of the men who were wounded fell to the bottom of the boat and were drowned there or suffocated by other men falling on top of them; many, to add to their death agonies were burnt as well.

"The Turkish snipers were very wisely shooting the naval oarsmen and the incoming boats began to float broadside on, the desperate Fusiliers inside inexpertly trying to work the oars, Major David French of the Dublin Fusiliers later said: "I realised that having practically wiped out those in the three boats ahead, they were concentrating their fire on us.

"I jumped out at once into the sea up to my chest, yelling for the men to make a rush for it. But the poor devils, packed like sardines in a tin and carrying this damnable weight on their backs, could scarcely clamber over the sides of the boat and only two reached the shore unhit.

"Sergeant Colgan was another survivor. Only six of us got away alive out of a boatload of 32. One fellow's brains were shot into my mouth as I was shouting for them to jump for it. I dived into the sea. Most men who tried that did not live long for the 88lbs back pack including great coat, 300 rounds of ammunition and three days rations simply sank them.

Sergeant Colgan cut his load free with a knife and swam ashore. One feature of the beach , and one feature alone ensured that the slaughter was not 100 per cent complete. A few feet in the sand shelved upwards; the few survivors, the very, very few survivors were able to huddle in the lee of this slight embankment.

Had the Turks levelled it in advance thought Major French, there would have been no survivors.

Lieutenant Maffet was hit on the head as he struggled ashore and went underwater. One of his men grabbed him and dragged him out of the water. "Looking back I saw the remnants of my platoon trying to get to shore, but they were shot down one after another and their bodies either drifted out to sea or lay immersed a few feet out from the shore.

The sea turned red for hundreds of yards out. Apart from one company of Dublins in the River Clyde and the few who had made it ashore and were huddled behind the bank , the extinction of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the rowing boats was almost total.

In the 'River Clyde meanwhile no one had slept overnight because of the bitter cold and the overcrowding in the holds. But a staff officer noted in his diary as the boat cruised towards V beach: "We shall be unopposed".

And for the River Clyde too, things went wrong from the start. The ship beached all right, but went too far out.

The Munster Fusiliers poured out onto the gangways under intense machine-gun and pom-pomfire and began to fall from the start. Those who did not, charged into water from the gangways intending to wade ashore. They were never seen again. Once again the weight of the soldiers' loads had triumphed.

Lighters were manoeuvred to serve as pontoons connecting the gangways with the beach and held in position by hand by sailors in the water.

The landings resumed but the Munsters were learning. Private Timothy Buckley of Macroom was one of 200 volunteers in one dash.

"We got ready inside and opened the buckles of our equipment so that every man might have a chance of saving himself if he fell in the water. (The captain) gave the order to fix bayonets when we should get ashore.

"He led the way but fell immediately at the foot of the gangway. The next man charged over him and kept going until he fell on the pontoon bridge. Altogether 149 men were killed outright and 30 wounded."

Emerging soldiers slipped on the pools of blood that covered the gangways and those who made it to the lighters huddled there rather than continue the ghastly journey to the beach where those few who had landed were huddling beneath the same small embankment which gave sanctuary to the Dublins.

Inside the Clyde, reported Captain Gillet of the Dublins, "the row of the Turkish bullets hitting the sides was simply deafening". The men wailed horror stricken, with machine-gun fire drumming against the Clyde while word came back of the certain death outside.

Lieutenant Guy Nightingale, an English officer with the Munsters, at one point went ashore to see the situation and then showing bravery past belief returned with a message that no more men should leave the ship. Guy Nightingale was to exhibit such courage consistently during the Gallipoli shambles.

It was now 8.30am in the morning; the attackers had the sun in their faces and hundreds of Irishmen were already dead.

The Fusiliers on the beach were pinned down. Captain A. Molony of the Dublins, one of the few (then) unwounded men ashore from the River Clyde observed: "The men on shore had



attempted to advance, but any movement was impossible for as soon as a man showed himself he was bowled over.

“By this time the beach was a harrowing sight; bodies were lying all over it; in some places in little clumps, in others half in and half out of the water. Wounded men were all over the place and it was impossible in most cases to give them aid.

“Both Dublins and Munsters had lost their colonels; Brigadier General Hare lay wounded on the beach. General Napier and Brigade Major Costello left the Clyde to urge the men cowering in the pontoon lighters and blocking all egress from the ship to go forward; but the sailors holding the lighters in place lost their grip; the lighters swung broadside on again and both the general and brigade major were killed by a fresh wave of gunfire.

By mid-morning, there were virtually no officers of any kind left. Father Finn, the chaplain to the Dublins had against urgent advice, left the Clyde at the height of the battle. “My place is with my men,” he said and walked onto the gangway.

He was hit instantly and went down. He staggered to his feet and instead of turning back into the safety of the hold, made his way to the beach. He crawled about the water 's edge giving extreme unction to the dead and dying, holding his broken right arm with his left in order to give his blessing. He was wounded again, but continued ministering to his beloved Dublins; and in that ministry died.

Inside the Clyde, Lieutenant Henry Desmond O'Hara of Ballincolig, an officer with the Dublin Fusiliers was feeling some gratitude that Nightingale had brought back the instruction to stop the landings. The one effort he had made to get ashore with his platoon had been driven back with heavy loss of life. This travesty could not continue. Reinforcements offshore, waiting to secure the beach after the initial landings, were sent to the neighbouring W beach where the Lancashire Fusiliers were landing and the forces on W beach were asked to break through to clear the Turkish positions holding V beach. This did not happen, but then nor were the Munsters and Dublins and men of the Hampshires driven from their precarious positions on the beach as was feared

Apart from- a few rushes out of the holds later in the day, there were to be no more attempts to get men ashore before nightfall.

Josiah Wedgewood, the Liberal MP and a machine gunner on the Clyde, reported: “The wounded cried out all day in every boat, lighter and hopper and along the shore. It was horrible and all within 200yards of us.”

And Midshipman Drury, a teenager who had been in the water securing the lighters, remarked: “I never knew blood smelt so strong before. Nightfall brought no end to this

Golgotha. Whereas the men had been parched during the day, night brought fresh miseries. "We had an awful night," wrote Lieutenant Nightingale to his family. "Soaked through to the skin, bitterly cold and wet and sniped at all night. But at least nightfall enabled the rest of the men in the Clyde to leave and also permitted the retrieval of the British wounded. In the makeshift operating theatre in the Clyde, Surgeon Peter Kelly, an Irish naval officer who had himself been wounded tending to casualties on the gangways and since then in constant agony, was to treat 750 soldiers over the next two days.

On the beach, Guy Nightingale and Henry O'Hara were the only officers of the Munsters and Dublins respectively alive and unwounded. The bodies of 430 men were later recovered from the beach and shallows and buried and the tides cleared the vast cloud of blood that made the sea seem red to Commander Samson, the naval flier. The sea water returned to its brilliant lucidity and incoming troops in future weeks could stare down at the preserved and uniformed bodies of the Dublins and the Munsters who had drowned in waters too deep for their retrieval.

Of this Calvary, The Times was moved to reflect a year later: "In all the records of the navy and the army, there is no like tale of slaughter so instant and complete under such conditions. Few names have been associated with this epic exploit."

Indeed, Sir Ian Hamilton the overall military commander, later made scant mention of the heroic endeavours of the two Irish battalions and his attitude was illuminated by the gallantry awards for the landing. Two naval officers involved in the V beach landing received the VC; no gallantry awards went to officers of the Irish battalions for the landing (though the Lancashire Fusilier landing in the extremely trying, but nonetheless easier W beach shared six VCs).

All attempts to secure honour for Father Finn were in vain. Hamilton, who must bear much of the blame for the disaster on V beach, noted dryly: "The actual course of events did not correspond with the intentions of the commander."

And yet the military careers of these two battalions did not end on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1915. The next morning, O'Hara and Nightingale led their respective units into an attack on the strongly held village of Sedd El Bahr and under the leadership of two English staff officers, and with the assistance of naval gunfire, drove the Turks out.

It was an astonishing achievement for which the two English staff officers were awarded posthumous VCs; Corporal William Cosgrave of the Munsters, who had broken through the thickets of barbed wire which were obstructing the Irish battalions' advance by pulling up the

deeply embedded stanchions holding the wire in place — he was a man of huge physique — also was awarded the VC.

Emerging soldiers slipped in the pools of blood that covered the gangplanks. At the end of this operation, the combined strength of the two battalions, which at dawn the day before had been 1,000 each was 770 men. The two battalions were amalgamated and renamed The Dubsters.

And still the ordeal continued. “We have been in the firing line continuously,” wrote an increasingly weary Guy Nightingale “and are all very exhausted. We never get any sleep at night (since) they crept up in the dark and were in our trenches bayonetting our men before we knew the attack had begun.

“Five Munsters were sentenced to death for (not surprisingly) behaving in such a manner as to show cowardice before the enemy. In recognition of the gallantry of the battalion, Wilson commuted the sentences.

And that first terrible day in Gallipoli was followed by 259 days of varying terribleness during which the allies failed to break out of the beachheads and there was no respite even “away from the front.

Days of dysentery and flies and raging thirsts and unspeakable horror. “When it was light,” wrote Guy Nightingale, “I found I had dug in next to the remains of an officer in the KOSBs whom I had last seen at the opera at Malta.”

In a later letter he wrote: “I’ve never seen fellows getting old so quickly. This morning I saw a fellow called O’Hara in the Dublins whom I hadn’t seen for a fortnight and I hardly recognised him.

“The men could neither hear nor speak but stared about them like bewildered bullocks.”

Henry O’Hara DSO did not get much older for long. This brave young officer, an only son, died of wounds in August.

But Guy Nightingale led a charmed life. Three successive batmen of his were killed in action. Replacement officers were dying almost as quickly as they could be sent. “One was hit last night during dinner and fell into the soup, upsetting the whole table and bled into the teapot making a mess of everything.”

A summer of soldiers dying of thirst was followed by a Famine-type winter with icy downpours and gales and floods in November. “The water swept down the ravine bearing with it stores and equipment, mule carts and mules and the drowning bodies of Turks and Britons . . . (elsewhere) the men stood up to their waists in water,” wrote one observer.

Immediately after this came blizzards and then a bitter frost. The men died in the trenches their greatcoats frozen stiff. “The men could neither hear nor speak but stared about them like bewildered bullocks.”

And Nightingale survived all this though the reconstituted Munster battalion after the winter storms was down to a few officers and 68 men. The allies withdrew from the Gallipoli debacle in January, and Nightengale survived service on the Western Front too. Lucky? Perhaps. After the war, he went to live by himself in a cottage, an alcoholic recluse. In 1935, 20 years after the landings in which so many of his friends and colleagues died, he put his old service revolver to his head and killed himself. Perhaps Henry O'Hara had been the lucky one after all.

## **An Irishman's Diary**

**Kevin Myers**

**The Irish Times, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005,**

With a spellbinding optimism, Eneclann, the Trinity publishers, planned to have the launch of the CD-ROM publication of Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-18 in the open air at the Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge. In Ireland in January.

So, with a gale dumping the Bermuda Triangle on our heads, the launch was rushed to the bottom of the park, to the Trinity Boat Club, home to rowers for the best part of 150 years.

The hallway of the club is lined with team photographs of oarsmen back to the latter decades of the 19th century. I searched out the picture of the rowers of 1905, a century ago. The team captain back then was E. Julian. Ah yes. This was a name I knew.

Ernest Julian subsequently became Reid Professor of Law at Trinity, a post held in later years by both Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese, who did so much to further commemoration of Ireland's dead from the Great War - and poignantly so. For their distant predecessor went on to become one of the first soldiers of the 10th Irish Division to be killed in action in Gallipoli, in August 1915, having abandoned the safety of academia to do his duty as he saw it. And but for the optimism of Eneclann, and the weather outside, I would not now have been looking at his face.

In the cosmos, cogs click: synchronous waves ripple through dark matter; events jostle to arrive at the same place at the same time. There are 49,400 men listed in Ireland's Memorial Records. The Eneclann press release, written long before our retreat to the boat club, chose to cite the stories of three of them as samples of the real men whom the volumes commemorate. One was Ernest Julian.

What changes Ernest's earnest face has witnessed since it first arrived on those walls 100 years ago. From being a mere rower he went on to become captain and coach, and then, with so many of his class and caste, in August 1914 this young professor marched to Lansdowne Road and enlisted in D Company of the 7th battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He was mortally wounded in Gallipoli during the advance on Chocolate Hill just a year later. Within a further year, the Easter Rising unleashed new forces on Irish life, creating new historical perspectives which were owned by those who were either ignorant of, or actively hostile to, the cause which Prof Julian had served.

So though the new State in time did permit the construction of a memorial park to those who had perished on the Allied side in the Great War, it did not permit its schools to teach a

rounded history of that dark time, from 1914 to 1922. One single narrative emerged, which rigorously excluded more than 200,000 Irishmen who followed the call of their elected leaders and their churchmen and enlisted in British or Allied colours.

As Taoiseach, De Valera refused the park a formal opening, and over the coming decades, from his celluloid vantage-point in the hall of the Dublin University boating pavilion, Ernest Julian could observe that the fate of Islandbridge symbolised the eradication of his generation of soldiers from the popular memory. Officially under the State's care, the gardens were, with a brutal neglect, allowed to fall into a shameful desuetude. By 1985, they were a scandal: Lutyens's ornamental triumph had become a vast, rat-infested rubbish dump, his cupola walls mere granite-pages for graffiti, and wild horses grazed where dead men should have been honoured.

Julian could not then have believed that then, galvanised by the splendid and now departed Campbell Heather, the State would finally intervene and rescue the gardens. The tens of thousands of dead Irishmen, and a good few Irishwomen, were thus almost overnight rescued from the dustbin of amnesia, and now there is hardly a soul who adheres to the single-thread version of Irish history.

The memorial records now available on CD-ROM are by no means comprehensive nor entirely correct: some of the Irish dead (and presumably British also) seem to have been overlooked as the official bureaucracy of death failed to match the ruthless efficiency of the machinery of killing. The records were therefore created from imperfect sources - how imperfect, only further research will tell. Moreover, many non-Irishmen who served in Irish regiments are wrongly counted as Irish. The true Irish death toll for the war was about 35,000.

That aside, the records - assembled just after the war by Eva Barnard, daughter of the Church of Ireland archbishop of Dublin, and sumptuously decorated by the artistic genius of Harry Clarke - constitute a massive historical and genealogical resource, now for the first time computer-accessible through this magnificent CD. Every college and secondary school in the country, and indeed anyone interested in our history, should have a copy: it costs only €94.90 (see [www.eneclann.ie](http://www.eneclann.ie)).

The Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue, gave a generous speech at the launch, observing - and fairly - that across the way in Kilmainham Jail, another tradition, dear to his heart, was also commemorated.

Quite so. And without wishing to fetishise the dead, is it not right for this State finally to assemble an official list of the IRA/Free State dead of 1916 to 1922? Only bigots benefit from ignorance, and those men and women of that time also did their duty as they saw it. They deserve better than an anonymity which the men of Islandbridge, and Ernest Julian, oarsman, Reid Professor of Law, and 1st Lieutenant, Royal Dublin Fusiliers in particular, know about, all too well.

## **President to visit Gallipoli as part of five day visit**

**Mary Fitzgerald**

**The Irish Times, March 22nd, 2010**

President Mary McAleese is due to arrive in Turkey later today for a five-day official visit, during which she will travel to the first World War battlefield of Gallipoli to commemorate the Irish soldiers who lost their lives there.

Mrs McAleese is also scheduled to meet Turkey's president Abdullah Gul and prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan during her trip, which is the first such high-level visit between the two countries.

"We are very much pleased to host the Irish president and we will be honoured by her visit to Turkey," Mr Gul told *The Irish Times*.

After her arrival in Istanbul this evening, Mrs McAleese will travel to the Turkish capital Ankara. Tomorrow, she will participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at Anit Kabir, the tomb of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder and first president of the republic of Turkey.

Later that day she will meet president Gul and prime minister Erdogan. She is also due to meet Mehmet Ali Sahin, speaker of the Turkish parliament.

On Wednesday morning, Mrs McAleese will arrive at the Gallipoli peninsula, where she will lay a wreath at the main Turkish memorial, the monument of the martyrs, before travelling to the Helles memorial, the V-Beach cemetery and Anzac cove. The president will then attend a commemoration at Green Hill cemetery. She will also unveil a memorial plaque to the Irish soldiers who fought and died in the 1915 Gallipoli campaign.

Nearly 4,000 Irishmen were killed. The dead included those serving in the 10th (Irish) Division as well as in the Anzac forces from Australia and New Zealand.

Mrs McAleese will then return to Istanbul. She will visit Aghia Sofia, Topkapi Palace and the Blue Mosque and is also due to meet the Greek Orthodox patriarch.



## **President calls for 1914-1918 war ceremonies:**

**Mary Fitzgerald**

**The Irish Times, March 25th, 2010**

President Mary McAleese has called for Ireland to hold a “shared commemoration” to mark the centenary of the beginning of the first World War in 2014.

Mrs McAleese was speaking as she visited the Gallipoli peninsula to commemorate the thousands of Irishmen who perished during the ill-fated 1915 campaign.

Asked by *The Irish Times* how she hopes Ireland will mark the centenary of the 1914-1918 war, the President replied: “By restoring to memory a generation who, of their time and in their circumstances, made sacrifices that they believed to be important . . . [restoring] in such a way that those memories no longer divide us in the way that they have done historically but allow us a shared commemoration.

“I think a shared commemoration would be a very important thing, and in many ways we have already gone down that road, with the 90th anniversary commemoration of the Somme. That was a very special event and I have no doubt that something similar will occur on the 100th anniversary.”

Such commemorations, Mrs McAleese said, constitute a rite of passage.

“That couldn’t happen for the 80th or 70th or any of the other preceding anniversaries but for the 90th it was possible, and the direction we are going in now with the peace process, with the restoration of good neighbourliness North and South, and really very warm relationships east and west, I think we have a lot to look forward to for the 100th anniversary.”

In a later address to those gathered at Green Hill cemetery for the unveiling of a plaque to the almost 4,000 Irishmen who died at Gallipoli, Mrs McAleese said she wanted to honour “our Irish dead – those who fought in British uniforms, those who fought in Anzac uniforms, and those whom they fought, the young Turkish men who defended their homeland”. The sacrifice of the Irishmen at Gallipoli had suffered a “deficit of remembrance” due to the vagaries of history, she said.

“The Irish who fought for the British Empire here were not only destined to be overwhelmed by those who opposed them but to have their memory doubly overwhelmed, for they fought in a campaign that was lost and so long overlooked . . . Those fortunate enough few who returned alive from Gallipoli returned to considerable ambivalence, even hostility about their role and their sacrifice.”

The distance of time and a changing historical context now allowed for an attempt to address this and, in doing so, to contribute to “the much-needed healing of memory on our own divided island”, the President said.

Each individual story from the horror of Gallipoli, with its 500,000 casualties drawn from both sides, was, she continued, a challenge to the world’s citizens to “find ways other than war to resolve our problems”.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the Irish Defence Forces, including acting chief of staff Maj Gen David Ashe, members of the Somme Association and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, and a representative of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The President laid a laurel wreath wrapped in the colours of the Tricolour. Jonathan Craig, a Northern Ireland Assembly member standing in for First Minister Peter Robinson, laid a poppy wreath.

Mrs McAleese praised Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the man who led the Turkish forces at Gallipoli and later became the founding father of the Turkish Republic, for his “generosity of spirit” in remembering all those who died there.

She quoted from Ataturk: “There is no difference between the Johnnys and the Mehmetts where they lie side by side here in this country of ours . . . You the mothers, who sent their sons from far-away countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. Having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well.”

## **Remembering Gallipoli troops who faced 'a death trap - they hadn't a hope'**

**Mary Fitzgerald**

**The Irish Times, March 25th, 2010.**

The story of how almost 4,000 Irishmen lost their lives has been blotted out of Irish history annals

Dotted Among the rolling hills of this rugged peninsula are more than 30 cemeteries where simple headstones help summon the story of why the name of Gallipoli will forever be associated with one of the most disastrous campaigns in military history.

At the Green Hill cemetery, where President Mary McAleese yesterday unveiled a plaque commemorating the thousands of Irishmen who fought and died at Gallipoli, the epitaph on several graves offers a rebuke to those who would prefer to forget the ignominious defeat of Allied forces at the hands of the Turks. "Their glory shall not be blotted out," it reads.

As Mrs McAleese reminded those in attendance, the story of how almost 4,000 Irishmen lost their lives in this corner of what was then the dying Ottoman Empire has, up to now, suffered something of a blotting out in the annals of Irish history.

But their memory lived on in yesterday's sombre ceremony, whether through the reading out of poignant letters home – dispatches that conveyed some measure of the horror of those long months in 1915-16; or through the presence of the mourners who had gathered on blustery Green Hill to honour relatives they had never known.

Irish soldier and poet Francis Ledwidge fought at Gallipoli and died in France in 1917.

As the wind whistled through the surrounding pines, a commanding officer from the Royal Irish Regiment recited Ledwidge's poem *The Irish in Gallipoli*: "Let Ireland weep but not for sorrow. . . and angels once again/ Come back like exile birds to guard their sleep."

The Gallipoli campaign was launched with several objectives: to seize Istanbul and open another front; to force the Ottomans out of the war; and to secure a sea supply route to Russia.

The British, French and Anzac forces that took part soon became mired in one of the bloodiest episodes of the war as Turkish troops under the command of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk successfully repelled their attack. Two incidents are lodged in the Irish memory of Gallipoli: the landing at V-Beach on April 25th, 1915, during which the 1st Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was decimated; and the Suvla Bay landings later that year when the 6th and 7th "Dublins" suffered huge losses.

As Tom Burke, chairman of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, told Mrs McAleese yesterday as he showed her the graves of some of those who had perished at V-Beach: “It was a complete death trap . . . They hadn’t a hope.”

At Green Hill, Dr Ian Adamson, chairman of the Somme Association, spoke of the gargantuan losses sustained by both Allied and Turkish forces on the shores and hills of Gallipoli. Each side suffered casualties that numbered 250,000. The events at Gallipoli had “resounded profoundly” throughout the world, he said, and it proved a defining moment for both Ireland and Turkey in terms of their national fortunes.

The Rev Canon Geoffrey Evans recalled the “courage and endurance of both friend and foe” 95 years after the beginning of the ill-fated campaign.

Maj Gen David The O’Morchoe, president of the Royal British Legion, recited the Act of Remembrance. A bugler from the Irish Defence Forces sounded The Reveille soon after a Royal Irish Regiment bugler had sounded The Last Post.

But the wreaths left behind at the Green Hill monument after all the attendees had filed out of the cemetery told their own story. One laurel wreath wrapped in the colours of the Tricolour leaned against the white stone of the memorial surrounded by several poppy wreaths. A lesson in shared sacrifice and remembrance.

## **The Irish at Gallipoli**

*This Irish Times editorial reflects on the meaning of President McAleese's visit and the Irish at Gallipoli*

**The Irish Times, March 25th, 2010.**

*'Tis not for lust of glory, no new throne/  
This thunder and this lightning of our power/  
Wakens up frantic echoes .../  
.... We but war when war /  
Serves Liberty and Keeps a world at peace.*

Francis Ledwidge's poem "*The Irish in Gallipoli*" articulated the conflicted emotions that drove so many young men like him, many idealistic nationalists, others, unionists, to fight and die for what they saw as the cause of small nations. It was a cause which for generations would have them written out of our history. "I joined the British Army because she stood between Ireland and an enemy common to our civilisation," he would write, "and I would not have her say that she defended us while we did nothing." He survived Gallipoli but would die in Flanders – "In you, our dead enigma", Seamus Heaney would reflect on the poet.

The tribute paid yesterday by President McAleese to the Irish dead at Gallipoli was moving, important and overdue. Of the quarter million Allied soldiers killed, wounded or missing in that bloody, incompetent campaign in 1915, 3,411 were from the 10th (Irish) Division, 569 from the Dublin Fusiliers. Others, from the 29th Division, Dublins, Munsters and Inniskillings, and Irishmen serving with the ANZAC forces also died in their hundreds. Turkish losses were on a similar scale.

It was a heavy price, and for what? A misconceived diversionary operation, dreamed up by Winston Churchill, with two ends, both failed: to relieve pressure on the stalemated Western Front and to link up with Russian allies seizing the strategic sea route to Constantinople through the Dardanelle straits. Ill-prepared and equipped they were mowed down as they landed on the beaches and in the hills around Suvla Bay.

There are extraordinary tales of courage and comradeship. Many of the young soldiers were friends who signed up together and died together – famously the Dublin "Pals of Suvla Bay", many of them rugby mates who joined up at a rally at Lansdowne Road. They elected the

popular Ernest Julian, 36-year-old predecessor of Mrs McAleese as Reid Professor of Law at Trinity, to go for a commission while the rest would serve in the ranks. He did not survive the dreadful August days. And, Private Wilkins, also a Pal, who was in a trench catching grenades and throwing them back at the Turks. He caught five, the sixth blew him to pieces. It is right now that we should recognise their sacrifice and honour them as Irishmen who died not for Ireland but for an honourable if disputed cause. And we should honour the generosity with which the Turks also remember those who came to attack their land. The words of modern Turkey's founding father, Kemal Ataturk, are engraved in a memorial at Gallipoli: "To those heroes who shed their blood and lost their lives, you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore, rest in peace. ... Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. Having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well."

## **Gallipoli, the final resting place...**

**Peter Murtagh**

**The Irish Times, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014**

There's a sign on a hill flanking the Turkish coastal city of Canakkale which one really only notices by looking back as the ferry crosses the Dardanelles to Kilitbahir on the Gallipoli peninsula. In loud white letters on a red background, the sign reads: "18 Mart 1915".

The journey over the Dardanelles is at the narrowest part of the strait between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Marmara and, ultimately, the Black Sea. It takes about 15 minutes. And as the ferry nears Kilitbahir, another sign gradually hoves into view.

This one is much more detailed and shows the silhouette figure of a soldier, rifle in one hand, leaning forward, advancing in battle, his other arm seeming to gesture to his comrades behind to "come on!"

A large slogan has been planted on the hillside beside the soldier.

"Any idea what that says?" I ask Gizem, a 22-year-old food science undergraduate from Ankara who is leaning on the ferry rail beside me.

"Mmmm," she begins, searching for the words. "It says 'Passenger, stop here and walk this place and understand'. Something like that."

I ask her what that means.

"This is where it all ended and where it all began," she says, without explaining what "it" is. "It's very important for us [Turks]."

Gallipoli is seared into the Turkish consciousness just as much, if not more, as it is into the minds of Australians and New Zealanders. March 18th, 1915, was the date on which Turkish forces stymied the combined might of the British and French navies, preventing them, by mines in the sea and bombardment by shoreline batteries, from rushing the narrow stretch of sea between Canakkale and Kilitbahir.

What happened in Gallipoli was a nation-forging victory for modern Turkey as the Ottoman Empire staggered towards dissolution in 1923-1924. For Australia and New Zealand, a generation of whose young men were blooded to no useful effect, Gallipoli was likewise a defining moment, one that gave them a sense of nationhood and separateness from Britain not crystallised until the tragedy engulfed their nations.

For the British and the French, Gallipoli was but a moment in a much larger saga – a defeat on the way to ultimate victory, an outcome which ensured the war in Turkey never assumed in their collective memory the significance it did in others.

And what of the Irish? The small cemetery that backs onto what the British christened V Beach at Seddülbahir at Cape Helles, the southmost tip of the peninsula, tells part of their story.



There are 696 bodies interred here, only 216 of whom have been identified for sure. Most died on April 25th, or a day or two after, when soldiers with the British 29th Division scrambled on to the 250-metre beach at about 6.30am following softening up bombardment by the Royal Navy.

From the beginning, the landings were confused and chaotic. The beach and area behind it were eerily silent after the bombardment. As they approached, some of the lighters ran aground, forcing men to jump out early, some of them to sink under the weight of their kit and drown.

Invading soldiers who got to the beach were met with unrelenting fire from Turks who had four Maxim machine guns, each capable of firing about 300 bullets a minute. Soldiers landing on the beach were cut down in droves. Contemporary accounts describe the sea turning bright red.

The same scene unfolded simultaneously up the coast at AnzacCove, witnessed by the renowned British war reporter Ellis Ashmead-Bertlett.

“We steamed in close to the shore,” he wrote of his landing with Anzac troops, “under what appeared to be a kind of hailstorm caused by bullets striking the sea . . . The beach was piled with ammunition and stores, hastily dumped from the lighters [landing craft], among which lay the dead and wounded . . . it was impossible to distinguish between the living and the dead in the darkness.”



Stepping from the pebbles and sand through a squeaky wooden gate into V Beach Cemetery, there are four neat rows of memorial tablets nearest to the sea. Further up the rectangular plot as it stretches back from the beach, there are several more rows, plus some other tablets placed seemingly at random, and a large expanse of grass rolling up to the impressive but simple altar-like Stone of Remembrance with cross behind, the white, oolitic limestone gleaming bright in the sun when I was there last August.

“Their Name Liveth For Evermore”, it says. It was a memorial sentiment offered by the poet Rudyard Kipling who borrowed it from *Ecclesiasticus* 44:14: “Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.”

The first three memorial tablets I notice through the gate have an Irish connection – Private William Holtom, Lance Corp Edmund David Hook and Pte Michael Howard, are all from the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Pte Holtom died on April 25th. He was from Coventry. Lance Corp Hook was from Chatham in Surrey and was aged 23. He died on the 27th, the same day as 26-year-old Michael Howard, the son of James and Margaret Howard of Whitefriar Street in Dublin.

Walking further through the cemetery, one notices many of the graves have a further line from *Ecclesiasticus* 44, from line 13: “and their glory shall not be blotted out”.

But more than that, one notices that almost all the stone memorial tablets, some 90 per cent by my reckoning, are to members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers or the Royal Munster Fusiliers. I count only 29 that are not Irish or of an Irish regiment.

Separated by shrubs of sage, rosemary and thyme, familiarity jumps off the face of almost every memorial stone: Aitkin, Barry, Dillon, Doolin, Branagan, Butler, and Byrne; Callaghan, Collins, Coulter, Danagher, Deegan, Dempsey, Doyle, Duffy, and Dunne . . . on down through the alphabet, all the way down to Redmond, Reilly, Richards, Ryan, Scanlon, Scully, Sullivan, Thompson, Webb and Wilson.

This small cemetery, below which today children play and splash about in the water, is in effect an Irish graveyard in a faraway place. \* \* \* Most of the western and southern end of the Gallipoli peninsula where the fighting occurred 99 years ago is today a huge national park, a place where military triumph, defeat and tragedy are memorialised. Because little has changed here since the end of the Gallipoli campaign in January 1916, nature has blossomed in what in many respects is a preserved battlefield, a peaceful sylvan setting of pine trees, wild shrubs, herbs and bird song.

Walking along what the British and Anzac forces christened Brighton Beach, the pines run down almost to the water’s edge. Turkish families holiday in tents and caravans parked

among the trees. Along the narrow beach, a few toppled-over concrete gun emplacements are all that suggest what once went on here.

Back from the beach, the land rises steeply through a series of angular, rocky ravines and gullies, somewhat more overgrown today than they were during the war, when thorny shrubs and herbs – mostly sage, thyme and rosemary – predominated. The steep gravelly slope becomes the Sari Bair mountain range, peaking at about 300m above the sea.

On April 25th, 1915, when 16,000 troops landed at Anzac Cove, the next along from Brighton Beach, there were only about 160 Turkish soldiers in the mountains above, but they were reinforced speedily by about 8,000 more. The Anzacs fought their way up through ravines and gullies, to which they gave names such as Shrapnel Valley, Malone's Gully, Walker's Ridge and Rhododendron Spur, until they came to the lip of a ridge, a mountain spine running roughly north/south and close to a strategically advantageous Turkish position at Chunuk Bair, one of three high points in the Sari Bair range.

The Allied assault was checked but at a heavy price. Both sides lost about 2,000 men in the initial fighting which became a stalemate within days, lasting until a renewed Allied offensive in early August.

A well-surfaced road rides the ridge today. At the start of the incline, a sign tells passers-by: "You are now entering the area which is reserved forever as a resting place for soldiers who fell in the first World War." The entire mountain ridge is regarded, seemingly, as a vast graveyard.

The road threads its way through the middle of what used to be No Man's Land, Anzac soldiers dug in on the side facing the sea, the Turks on the land side – peering at each other across a divide at times not much more than 15m or 20m in width. You can walk among the pines and shrubs, and will frequently come across trench systems, still pretty much as they were in 1915.

The main Anzac cemetery is further up the ridge at a spot the soldiers christened Lone Pine. The single tree that stood there in 1915 was blown to smithereens in the battle but two Australian soldiers retrieved cones and today, at least 5,000 trees descended from them are found across Australia.

The single tree standing at Lone Pine today is not directly descended from the original but was planted in 1920s as a memorial to the thousands of Anzacs who died there. The cemetery contains the bodies of 1,167 soldiers, of whom 504 are unidentified. On a wall outside a squat limestone obelisk memorial, there are the names of 3,268 Australian soldiers and 456 New

Zealanders who have no known grave, and the 900 Australians and 252 New Zealanders who were buried at sea.

The Anzac relatives who come to this place throughout the year (not just on Anzac Day, April 25th) fall into two broad categories – retirees and the young – and for most, the visit appears to be a profound experience. Inside the obelisk, there are ledgers in which visitors can write their thoughts, many of them variations of the simple “Thank you for all you did for Australia”, mixed with expressions of sadness and hopes for peace.

Some are deeper, more lyrical, however. Jane, a woman probably in her 20s who was inside when I visited, wrote this: “Run dear son, for evil lies here. But if you cannot run, let in the light, the love.”

Further along the ridge, there is a substantial bell-tower-style memorial to the Turks who fell. At a crucial moment in the Anzac assault, they heard their commander, Lieut Col Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey, tell them: “I don’t order you to fight, I order you to die! In the time it takes us to die, other troops and commanders can come and take our places.”

And fight and die they did, in their thousands, just like the British and Anzac forces.

At the top of the ridge stands Chunuk Bair. In early August 1915, after four months of trench-bound stalemate and skirmishing, the British and Anzac forces launched a determined effort to push forward. In the ensuing battle, some 12,000 died on either side, though precise and agreed numbers are impossible to obtain.

On Chunuk Bair there is an obelisk memorial to the New Zealand forces that held it for two days from August 8th, 1915, before being driven off by a ferocious counter attack. Beside the obelisk stands a monumental statue of Atatürk which tells the story of how his fob watch was struck by shrapnel, saving his life, and how he gave it as a present to the German officer assisting him, Lieut-Gen Otto Liman von Sanders.

Atatürk and the German well understood the critical importance of holding the ridge: taking it would have allowed the Allied invaders flood across the rest of the peninsula, knocking out the batteries on one whole side of the Dardanelles, and opening the straits, leading to the almost certain fall of Canakkale and the bombardment of Istanbul.

Chunuk Bair was also crucial in that from it, the Turks had an uninterrupted view of most of the western coast of Gallipoli, from Anzac Cove to Suvla Bay where on August 6th British forces, including the 10th (Irish) Division, landed and opened a third front of attack, simultaneous to the assault on the ridge – and with disastrous consequences for them.

From Churuk Bair on a hot August day in 2014, one looks down on Suvla Bay and its salt lake, on the fertile plain behind it, patchwork fields of grain and sunflowers, and on across to the 150m ridge, Kiretch Tepe Sirt. \* \* \* Today, the sandy scrublands behind Suvla beach are alive with tortoises and hoopees. A gentle onshore breeze dulls the intense mid-summer heat.

A century ago, British and Irish troops, many in the 10th (Irish) Division, which included regiments such as the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Regiment, the Munsters and Dublins, the Leinster Regiment and the Connaught Rangers, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Rifles, brought war here when they landed on C Beach, just south of Sulva Bay and Nibrunesi Point, and at the north end of A Beach on the shore of the bay itself.

They captured some raised ground – Lala Baba hill, Hill 10, Chocolate Hill and the lower slopes of Kiretch Tepe Sirt – in the first few days of assault, but little after.

Walking the beaches, the fields and hills in the searing heat of August 2014, the contemporary 1915 descriptions of chaos – of machine guns and snipers and grenades, of lethal shrapnel bombs exploding overhead, of the groaning of the wounded, waiting, hoping a stretcher-bearer would rescue them, of flies feasting on rotting corpses, of survivors crushing fists-full of wild thyme to smother the stench of the dead, and of the squaddies parched for want of water – all the descriptions on the pages of long forgotten letters and dusty memoirs become real and vivid.

But for all that, almost 100 years on, it really is impossible to imagine truly the carnage that unfolded in this seaside, agricultural setting from August 6th until stalemate about nine days later.

Many of the wounded died in bush fires. The reporter Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, from a vantage point on the hill of Lala Baba, described such a scene: “I watched the flames approaching and the crawling figures disappear amidst dense clouds of black smoke. When the fire passed on, little mounds of scorched khaki alone marked the spot where another mismanaged soldier of the King had returned to mother earth

The Allied forces, mostly British and Irish, never got more than a kilometre or two inland, such was the tenacity of the defending Turks. The elderly, incompetent and inexperienced commander of the British forces, Lieut Gen Sir Frederick Stopford, was completely outsmarted by Atatürk and was relieved of his command on August 15th. But by then it was too late; all was lost from the Allied point of view. Stalemate ensued and, with no significant improvement in the position of the Allied forces at Cape Helles, Sari Bair ridge or at Suvla Bay, from August on, a complete withdrawal from Gallipoli took place between December and January 1916.

There were no Allied fatalities during the withdrawal – the only wholly successful manoeuvre of the ill-fated campaign.

A Turkish memorial claims that 19,850 British soldiers died at Sulva (what the Turks call the Battle of Anafartala, after the name of the plain behind the beach) and that 8,155 Turks died as well.

Other sources suggest the British lost 18,000 at Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove combined and that the Turks lost 38,000 between the two places.

Overall, agreed definitive numbers are unavailable, it appears that both sides – British, French and Anzacs on one side, Turks on the other – lost about 100,000 men each and at least double that number were wounded on each side. Many died of dysentery or succumbed elsewhere, Alexandria in Egypt for instance, of wounds sustained at Gallipoli.

In 1934, Atatürk displayed considerable magnanimity, not to say humanity, in written comments directed at the relatives of dead Anzac soldiers. His words are inscribed on a large monument standing beside one of the prettiest cemeteries on the peninsula, Ari Burnu, a small grassy place bathed in dappled sunlight with the waters of Anzac Cove lapping against it.

Referring to those who attacked his country as heroes, he wrote to still grieving Australian and New Zealand mothers, saying their sons would rest in peace.

“There is no difference between the Johnnies and Mehmeds to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours,” he wrote. “You, the mothers, who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.”

To see Peter Murtagh’s video from Gallipoli, please click [here](#).

## **‘The end of the Turkish menace’**

**Peter Murtagh**

**The Irish Times, October 22nd, 2014**

This time 100 years ago, Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty (in effect, the political boss of Britain’s Royal Navy), had an idea. In October 1914, the Ottoman Empire, allied to Germany, had closed the Dardanelles to British and French shipping, and to ships of any other countries supporting them in the first World War.

“A good army of 50,000 men and sea power – that is the end of the Turkish menace,” Churchill pronounced with the sort of certitude that served him well in later life, but not so on this occasion. Holding to his assertion over the following year cost the lives of about 100,000 men (estimates vary), plus about a quarter of a million wounded.

Churchill’s plan was simple: push the Royal Navy through the Dardanelles and into the Sea of Marmara. From there, the fleet could approach Istanbul and bombard it into submission thereby (a) knocking Turkey out of the war; (b) opening a safe supply route to Britain’s ally, Russia; and (c) allowing for the opening of a southern front in the war with Germany, thus stretching Berlin’s efforts at the Western Front in France and Belgium.

Despite being advised in January 1915 that ships alone could not force the Dardanelles, Churchill pressed ahead.

Following a February naval bombardment of Turkish shoreline batteries, which failed to knock out mobile guns, Carden told Churchill he could be in Istanbul in 14 days and the order was given to rush the strait.

And so, on March 18th, 1915, phase one of the Gallipoli campaign began when a joint British-French naval task force tried to force its way through the narrow gap between Canakkale on the coast of Asia Minor and Kilitbahir, immediately opposite on the southern coast of the Gallipoli peninsula. But 11 rows of mines lay in their way and at least 16 shoreline batteries had not been silenced by the February bombardment.

In the ensuing mêlée, 19 Allied ships were sunk, including major vessels such as HMS Irresistible, HMS Ocean, and the French battleship Bouvet; along with eight Allied submarines. A total of 700 Allied crew were killed.

Defeated, the British and French fled, thus ending phase one of the Dardanelles Campaign.

They retired to the Greek islands of Limnos and Lesbos from where they began preparing for a land invasion of Gallipoli, still with the aim of capturing the peninsula and Canakkale opposite, thereby securing safe passage through the narrows.

Phase two began on April 25th, 1915, with simultaneous landings by British forces on V Beach (Seddülbahir) at Cape Helles, the extreme south-eastern tip of the peninsula; while French forces landed at Morto Bay, just east of the cape; and a joint Australia-New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) force landed at Ari Burnu, just around the corner from the cape, up the northern coast of the peninsula, a place forever after known as Anzac Cove.

Phase three began on August 6th, 1915, with British landings at Suvla Bay, north of Anzac Cove, and simultaneous pushes aimed at expanding territory held at Cape Helles, and inland from Anzac Cove, since the April landings at both locations.

All three phases failed ultimately, from the Allied point of view. From a Turkish perspective, however, they were stunning, nation-building victories still celebrated to this day.

Phase four – the retreat – is the only phase that can reasonably be described as an Allied success. On December 19th and 20th, Allied troops were evacuated from Anzac and Suvla. On January 8th and 9th, the same occurred at Cape Helles.

In both operations, there was no loss of Allied life. Admiral Sir Sackville Hamilton Carden, commander of the British squadron operating in the Mediterranean 1914, cable reply to Churchill, January 5th, 1915 From kin, David – A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East; Henry Holt and Co, New York, 1989

## **Rare photographs of Gallipoli in Collins Barracks exhibition**

**Ronan McGreevy**

**The Irish Times, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Photographs of the Gallipoli campaign which have never been made public have gone on display at the National Museum of Ireland in Collins Barracks.

The photographs were taken by Andrew Horne, a doctor from Ballinasloe, Co Galway, who served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the first World War.

His album shows shells exploding on the beaches of Gallipoli and a rare photograph of the river Clyde, with a converted coaler which effectively became a coffin ship for the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers during the Gallipoli landings on April 25th, 1915.

There are also photographs of captured Turkish soldiers, crashed planes and the evacuation of Gallipoli in January 1916, the only successful operation in a military disaster that cost the Allies 80,000 fatalities without achieving anything.

The album was donated to the National Museum of Ireland by Dr Horne's two daughters, Patricia and Margaret.

Taking personal photographs was technically difficult and also illegal except if they were taken by officers. As a doctor, Dr Horne was sufficiently far behind the front lines to get a better view.

He landed at 'W' Beach at Cape Helles on the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula on April 25th, 1915, as part of the 29th Division. The landings at W Beach and V Beach, where hundreds of Irishmen were killed, were disasters. The Gallipoli campaign is considered a military failure. "Nobody can believe we had such a time and came through it alive, but here we are," Dr Horne wrote later.

He was one of the five officers who were the last to leave Gallipoli on January 9th, 1916. He went on to serve in the Mesopotamia campaign and survived the war.

Lar Joye, who is curator of Irish military history at the National Museum of Ireland, described the 99-page album as a "hugely important piece" which will attract international attention with the centenary of the Gallipoli landings occurring in April.

Dr Horne's life is one of 21 lives of Irish men and women in the war featured in *Recovered Voices: The Stories of the Irish at War, 1914-15*.

The exhibition will be opened this evening by Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphreys. There will also be a first public performance of *Pals at Gallipoli*, a play



which tells the story of the middle class Dubliners “the Posh Pals”, who signed up to the 7th battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1915.

Among those to feature in the exhibition is well-known poet, nationalist and former MP Thomas Kettle, who was killed at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. His medals are on display, along with a framed copy of his famous poem *To My Daughter Betty*.

The often overlooked role of women in the first World War is covered in the story of two sisters. The Burrows sisters, Eleanor and Rosamund (“Poppy”), volunteered to work as nurses, serving at a military hospital in northern France.

Also featured in the exhibition is Clarisa Maud Crawford Smith, an Englishwoman living in Ireland with her engineer husband. Head of a 60-person Red Cross unit in Dublin, she turned her home at Ailesbury Park into an emergency hospital during the 1916 Rising.

To see video from the National Museum of Ireland collection, please click [here](#).

## **The Dublin Pals who set off for Gallipoli's killing fields**

**Arminta Wallace**

**The Irish Times, February 9th, 2015**

These days the Gelibolu peninsula on Turkey's Aegean coast is a quiet place, all gentle hills and pine forests alive with birdsong. It is fertile farming country, but to be a farmer in this area is to get up close and personal with history. Come ploughing season, the turned-over earth reveals hunks of rusting military equipment and fragments of shrapnel – even, occasionally, human bones. For in the spring of 1915, these were the killing fields we call Gallipoli.

In Ireland we have shown a marked reluctance to get up close and personal with – or even listen to – the stories of Irish soldiers who fought in the first World War. A new, immersive theatre project by the company Anu at the National Museum of Ireland in Collins Barracks aims to help change that. *Pals: The Irish at Gallipoli* tells the story of a group of young Irishmen who found themselves on that unforgiving battlefield in the spring of 1915.

“Pals units were a concept that the British army came up with in 1914,” says Lar Joye, curator of Irish Military History at the National Museum of Ireland Collins Barracks. “Armies rely on innocent under-25-year-olds rushing off to war because the generals don't do the fighting. So you need young, enthusiastic men to do your fighting for you. The idea was that people from the same clubs or associations would all join up as one unit.”

In Dublin, a largely unionist city in 1915, the president of the Irish Rugby Football Union, FH Browning, appealed for recruits. Some 220 athletic young Irishmen signed up at Lansdowne Road and became “D” Company, 7th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. “The people who went into ‘D’ Company were from the better private schools from the southside of Dublin and all over the country,” says Joye.

The members of “D” Company came from all over Ireland and from all religious denominations. Some had been educated at Clongowes, some at Blackrock College. Many were students in Trinity. John Boyd, born in Cavan, worked as a clerk in the Department of Agriculture and played rugby for Clontarf. William Boyd (no relation) was a commercial traveller who lived in Rathmines and played for Bective Rangers. “Their parents were bankers, solicitors, doctors,” says Joye. “Be they Catholic or Protestant, these boys were being groomed as future leaders of the country.”

The unit was based at the Royal Barracks in Dublin (now Collins Barracks). Joye first encountered their stories when, some years ago, he came across a book published in 1917 called *The Pals of Suvla Bay*.

“The families and the men who survived came together to tell their story,” he says. “At the back is an appendix with a photograph of every single one of those soldiers, and a little biography, a pen picture – which is unique because when you get into 1917 and 1918, the numbers of dead are colossal. There isn’t time to document it.”

The book provides a hugely evocative basis from which to start working on a theatre piece. The actors chose three soldiers –Ernest Hamilton, Jasper Brett and Richard Patrick Tobin – to embody the fate of the whole company. As so often with Anu productions, the building itself plays a major role in the drama, with much of the action taking place on the square where “D” Company actually did its training.

“The training they received was very, very amateurish,” says Lar Joye. “The books and manuals that they would have been using were written in the late 19th century. There was a lot of marching around the square. They also loved going on route marches. They’d get up at 6am, leave the barracks at seven and march up to the Wicklow mountains and back.”

As preparation for the fighting at Gallipoli, it was to prove desperately inadequate. “The reality was that five guys with a machine gun could stop 700. That was the horror of the new warfare. In the 21st century we’ve all read the books and seen the movies. We realise that war is brutal. But coming out of the Edwardian period, this generation thought they stood a chance going up against the modern war machine. They were very naive. In 1915 they really did think, I’ll stick a bayonet on my rifle and I’ll charge 50 yards across open land and see what happens.”

What happened was a catastrophe. Within three weeks, “D” Company had suffered a 70 per cent casualty rate. Besides those who were shot, many were burned in bush fires. Dysentery was also a major killer. “That’s one thing that comes out of the letters written by the men at the time,” says Joye. “They were desperate for water. The Turkish army had poisoned the wells, and some wells were also contaminated from the large number of dead bodies which were there. These guys are fighting for their lives – and they can see water all around them because they’re on a peninsula looking down into the Mediterranean. But they can’t drink that water either.”

In another of the many ironies that make this story so poignant, many of the young soldiers were to be buried at sea. Back at home, a wave of silence closed over their sacrifice, regarded by many people as a “west Brit” business that had no place in proper Irish history books.

“After independence the simple story for a lot of people in Ireland was, ‘Let’s talk about 1916’,” says Lar Joye. “World war one is complicated: 200,000 Irishmen serving in the British army. The war of independence is a dirty war: both sides carry out atrocities. And no one wants to talk about the civil war. So the easy narrative for everyone is, ‘Let’s just focus on this rebellion, which was a heroic failure’. And the complexities were largely ignored.”

The situation has changed in recent decades, with many historical books and articles exploring Irish involvement in the war. At Collins Barracks, a programme of school workshops and an exhibition of photographs taken by a young Irish doctor at Gallipoli will run alongside the Anu production. In this centenary year, art may help heal some of the fractures as lectures, workshops and exhibitions around the country add more pieces to this complex historical jigsaw.

### **‘We Will Do Our Best’: Marching Off To War**

On May 1st, 1915, as part of its regular war coverage, this newspaper ran a piece about the departure of “D” Company for the Mediterranean. Spread across three columns at the bottom of page eight, it describes the scene at Collins Barracks as the men set off, full of energy and optimism: “from the fashionable centre and from the slums of the city, able-bodied citizens flooded to the Colours”.

Despite the fact that many of the young soldiers would never see their families again, the mood was upbeat in a way that’s hard for a modern reader to get their head around. A band played and free cigarettes were handed out “by the students of the Royal College of Surgeons”. Just one line casts – at least in retrospect – the shadow of what’s to come. When the reporter asked the unit’s commander, Col Dowling, if he had a message for the people of Dublin, he replied: “We will do our best. Judge us by our deeds.”

## Theatre review: Pals – The Irish at Gallipoli

Peter Crawley

The Irish Times, 12th, 2015

“Do you think Ireland is proud of us?” a young soldier asks his friend, somewhere amid the carnage of Gallipoli, in a voice hollow and shocked. The question goes unanswered in Anu Productions’ latest, profoundly disarming evocation of our hidden histories. But it would take a particular naivety to say yes. That may be the most keenly understood tragedy of this supple performance, which vividly unearths lives that have been doubly disavowed, by national politics and by time.

Based on the testimony and letters of young Irish men who enlisted in the 7th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, *Pals* is not an exhibition, an excavation nor even recreation. It’s something rarer; an imaginative and sensitive summoning.

It begins, within the generous acoustics of the National Museum’s courtyard in Collins Barracks, with something like a guided tour, an explanation of the various motivations behind the so-called “Pals” brigades, rugby teams who enlisted for king and country, or home rule, or who were persuaded with shillings. Men who wanted to belong. That the tour is interrupted by ghosts, or memories incarnate, isn’t surprising. But when an abandoned woman calls her soldier husband a “coward”, the emphasis is unexpected.

It leads us into another barracks, Owen Boss’s impressionistic recreation of the cots of the first World War given a more unsettling aura by Sarah Jane Shiels’s evocative lights and against Carl Kennedy’s affecting soundscape. It’s always jarring when a promenade performance comes to rest, but here anecdotes, letters and horrors can pulse and breathe again.

We meet Ernest Hamilton (John Cronin), court-marshalled for drunkenness, who will later flirt with a nurse (the haunting Laura Murray) with the words, “I’m a hero: I was cut down by enemy fire.” In war, heroes are cut down. Cowards run away. Several hundred Irish “cowards” were executed by the British army, and their stories, misaligned with the new narrative of the Rising, went largely unmourned. When Shane Thomas Whisker, as Richard Patrick Tobin, narrates his letters home, you wonder, from our own distance, to which version of history we listen.

The iconography of war is disturbingly unchanging. A striking and frenetic dance sequence, in which a rugby ruck distorts into lobbed grenades and piled bodies, or a drift of letters for

the dead, resembles similar scenes in *Black Watch*. But the capacity to transform and honour events, making an audience more than a witness, is director Louise Lowe's singular talent.

You might find yourself counting off traumas, from shell-shock to suicide, wondering if the points have already been made. You might see the actor Thomas Reilly seek an audience member to help fasten his uniform before shipping out, and ask her, hopefully, "Do I look like a soldier?" You might fall apart.

## **Powerful drama tells story of Irish soldiers at Gallipoli**

**Diarmaid Ferriter,**

**The Irish Times, February 22nd, 2015**

As a variety of individuals and organisations continue with their plans to commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Rising next year, a remarkably powerful commemorative drama is being played out at the National Museum of Ireland in Collins Barracks in Dublin to remember the Irish soldiers in the British army who were engaged in a very different kind of battle from the 1916 rebels. Timed to mark the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, *Pals: The Irish at Gallipoli*, based on the documented experiences of some of the young men – friends from sports clubs who volunteered for “pals” brigades – who enlisted in the 7th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, is a new offering from Anu Productions. It does more in 50 minutes to engage the audience in an understanding of the reality of the tortured events of 100 years ago than most academic tomes.

*Pals* achieves so much because it manages not just to underline the importance of doing justice to historical narratives so long submerged, but to anchor those stories in the voices of the participants. This is an exercise in history from below and is a reminder of what can be achieved by being creative and imaginative with archival material to give meaning to what is a relatively new approach to the history of this era; giving a sense, not just of what happened, but what it felt like for those involved. The placing of the cast and audience in the actual building where the men did their training gives this production an added authenticity and atmosphere.

This is a play about smashed bodies and minds; mental and physical trauma on a harrowing scale. For some of those “fortunate” enough to survive the horrors of warfare, another challenge remained, articulated by a former rugby-playing soldier in this play who cannot cope with post-war life and the memories that haunt him: “I cannot unremember”. The scene of his death was to be the railway track at the Dalkey tunnel where he placed himself to be decapitated by a train.

Contrast that with the excitement, sense of adventure and optimistic camaraderie that was so palpable prior to their departure; the audience watches their glee, knowing what the soldiers do not yet know about what awaits them. The result is arresting and unsettling, just as it should be, given the consequences of the journey that took them, not to France as they expected, but to Gallipoli. This was part of the military strategy to counteract the stalemate of France and Flanders by attempting to take the Turks out of the war. Ripped to shreds by

machine gun and artillery fire, the Allied soldiers were swimming – and if they got to shore, sitting – ducks, and later many were shot to pieces on mountain ridges. Sunstroke, dysentery and thirst also faced those who participated in what was a disastrously organised campaign that eventually saw 140,000 allied soldiers and 250,000 Turks killed. In the words of historian Philip Orr, “today the graveyards in this part of Turkey are filled with tombstones that read like entries from an Irish street directory”.

*Pals* is not about celebrating or eulogising or playing politics, but amounts to an accurate and moving portrayal of the reality of war and underlines how some British historians were correct last year to challenge a jingoistic reading of the first World War being promoted by some British politicians, including the education secretary Michael Gove. In criticising historian Richard Evans, Gove asked: “Why does the Left insist on belittling true British heroes?” Evans had taken Gove to task for insisting it was a “just war” and a “noble cause”. Gove’s stance disingenuously camouflaged the documented reality by trumpeting a simplistic narrative of glorious sacrifice. As Evans put it, “defaming historians and others who think and write critically about Britain’s role in the first World War by accusing them of seeking to denigrate virtues such as patriotism, honour, and courage is no way to conduct the debate”.

Similar passions and conflicting interpretations are frequently evident in this country about 1916. What *Pals* does is to remind us of the broader context and the complex tapestry of propaganda, allegiances, motivations, sufferings, courage, fear, notions of duty, personal honour, outrage and sense of “manliness” that were a part of the Irish experience of war 100 years ago and how selective the narratives became in the aftermath.

Stephen Gwynn, the Galway nationalist MP and serving British officer, pointed out that the Irish volunteers in the British army “could only do what other regiments were doing; their deeds were obscured in the chaos of war”, in contrast to the 1916 rebels: “Pearse and his associates offered to Irishmen a stage for themselves”. *Pals* succeeds admirably in now offering the Irish at Gallipoli “a stage for themselves” and is a thoughtful and necessary addition to the canon of meditations on the Irish and conflict 100 years ago.



## **An Irishman's Diary on the Gallipoli truce**

**Frank McNally**

**The Irish Times, March 20, 2015**

After the impromptu Christmas football match of 1914, the next most famous truce of the first World War was during the spring of 1915, in Gallipoli.

It too was short-lived – only eight hours. But it has been immortalised in literature and song, most notably by Eric Bogle's great ballad: "And the band played Waltzing Matilda/When we stopped to bury our slain/We buried ours and the Turks buried theirs/And it started all over again."

As the lyrics suggest, the circumstances were much grimmer than the ones that produced the football. During a month of unrelenting slaughter in late April and early May, neither side had been able to bury their dead, while the Turkish sun added horror to horror.

So at the initiative of an aristocratic British officer called Aubrey Herbert, they stopped fighting long enough to do the decent thing by the dead and make conditions slightly less awful for the living. Yet as Charles Keen, writing about the truce in the April issue of the *Oldie* magazine says, there was an element of the football rulebook even in this.

First of all, to ensure no loss of honour on either side, Herbert had to organise things so that both could believe the ceasefire request came from the others.

That done, the Turks submitted to his command for the operation – his evident suitability described in semi-fictional form by Louis de Bernière's 2004 novel *Birds Without Wings*, wherein the narrator – a Turk – praises the "Honourable Herbert" for being able to speak both Turkish and Arabic and for "[giving] us receipts for money and other things that were found on the dead".

Begun at 7.30 am, the work was completed by 4pm, at which time Herbert had the white-flag bearers on both sides shake hands. Then he went over to the Turks to say his farewells, which were warmly received. And after that, sounding like "a referee", as Keen puts it, he declared that neither side was to fire again "for 25 minutes after they had got into their trenches", at which point the insanity could resume.

Well might Aubrey Herbert have sounded like a referee because, in the classic manner, his preparations for war had started around the playing fields of Eton, if not on them.

Poor eyesight made sport difficult, never mind combat. In fact, like Rudyard Kipling's son John, he made it into the army only via friends in the Irish Guards.

That was one of many entanglements that created a very intimate relationship between Herbert and this country. Like Winston Churchill – the architect of the Gallipoli disaster – he had spent childhood years in Dublin’s Phoenix Park, where his father was lord lieutenant. He later married Mary Vesey, of the Abbeyleix De Vescis, who was renowned not just for her beauty but for political leanings that, as an obituary in this newspaper put it, were broadly “fenian”. From these various influences, Herbert was more sympathetic to Ireland’s cause than normal among the British aristocracy, or indeed the Conservative Party with which he was an MP from 1911 onwards.

But then again, he was a genuine believer in the rights of small nations, and one in particular, Albania. Such was his identification with that country, he was twice offered its post-independence throne. And even his views of Irish politics could be filtered through it.

Trying (and failing) to empathise with Edward Carson, the Dublin-born unionist who became a reluctant founder of Northern Ireland, he once wrote: “I wonder if I should have a different feeling for Carson if he dressed like the Albanians and just propounded their gospel of the village. They don’t care a tinker’s curse about anything else. It’s just the rocks they know and the miserable houses where they were born that they are after keeping.”

As for the other side of the Irish argument, he was sufficiently sympathetic to write, in May 1916: “I wish they would stop the executions now.”

Herbert had survived Gallipoli, as he would the rest of the war. But he died a few years later, at the age of 43, and in a manner almost as senseless. His poor eyesight having deteriorated to blindness by then, he was persuaded that an operation to remove all his teeth might reverse the process. The operation went fatally wrong. He had recently been in Egypt and his death was popularly attributed to the “Curse of Tutenkhamun”, then presumed rampant. Officially, at least, the cause was blood-poisoning.

## **Russell Crowe: ‘I respect the gods of film’**

**Donald Clarke**

**The Irish Times, April 2nd, 2015,**

Today will end up being a good day for the Russell Crowe brand. Later in the evening, by following a stratospherically weird Ryan O’Neal on to the *Late Late Show*, the super-manly Australian will come across as an avatar of blokish normality.

All this despite the fact that he does not have a reputation for being the most easy-going of fellows. Russell is one of the few actors to have his own “altercations and controversies” section on Wikipedia. He threw a phone at that woman in that hotel. He had that altercation with that Bafta producer who cut out his tribute to Richard Harris. You know the score.

A fug of unfiltered masculinity greets me as I enter the posh Dublin hotel suite. Wearing a puffy jacket decorated with the logo of the rugby league team he co-owns, smoking Benson and Hedges with proud defiance, Russell crouches ready to spring. He didn’t stop for a pint in Drumcondra this time?

“It’s such a long day I have told everyone that there’s no time for that,” he rumbles. “And as this is the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival somebody will be flogging me their wares at some point. Ha ha.”

I can’t cope. There’s just too much chap in the room. I don’t feel like a man any more. I feel like a teenage girl. I feel like the sort of teenage girl who likes princesses and finds *SpongeBob* too scary.

Let’s talk about Australia. That’s a safe subject. Then again, Crowe is as much a Kiwi as he is an Aussie. Born in Wellington nearly 51 years ago, he moved with his family to Australia when he was six and then moved back again eight years later. Is there a war going on within him? I know he supports the All Blacks. Listen to me, talking about “rugby” like a normal man.

“That never goes away,” he says of the All Blacks. “But the deeper I have got into my adulthood the more comfortable I am being Australian. Thirty-eight of my 50 years have been spent there. But they changed the laws on me, during the busiest period of my life – between 2001 and 2003 – so I haven’t got citizenship.”

But he’s Russell Crowe. How can he not be Australian? That’s like hearing that Foghorn Leghorn isn’t really a rooster.

“I have won the Federation Medal. I am a national treasure of Australia,” he says with what I choose to regard as a whisper of irony. He’s been on a stamp. Hasn’t he?

“That’s right I have been on a stamp. Apparently that’s illegal. But I’m stuck in this grey area. I regularly do things on behalf of the Australian government. They’re totally comfortable with me flogging things.”

We’re laughing about the bastards who won’t give him an Australian passport. This is great. I can feel a beard coming in. If this goes on, we might go out and shoot a wild animal together. Before then, let’s talk a little about his first film as director. *The Water Diviner* is a thumping yarn – loosely based on fact – concerning an Australian man who, in the aftermath of the Gallipoli catastrophe, sets out to recover the remains of his three sons from the battlefield.

We are about to reach the 100th anniversary of that awful slaughter. Why does it continue to occupy such a prominent place in the Australian psyche?

“It was the point at which the young nations of Australia and New Zealand were truly formed,” he says. “They’d sent troops abroad before – to the Boer War for example – but they’d been an extension of the British army.

“The Anzac corps was formed in 1914. By 1915, you have the volunteers on their way and it’s the first time Australian and New Zealand troops have gone to war under their own flag.”

A thief in the right Crowe freely admits that, when embarking on the project, he was happy to steal from the many talented directors he has worked under: Ridley Scott, Michael Mann, Ron Howard.

It’s been a busy career. Crowe won an Oscar for Scott’s *Gladiator* in 2001. He was terrific as big-tobacco whistleblower in Mann’s *The Insider*. Recently, he helped Darren Aronofsky’s *Noah* become an unexpected hit. Yet one gets the sense that, had things gone differently, he would have been as happy being a musician. He does still warble a bit.

“I’ve had a funny attitude to acting in my life,” he says. “The music stuff is a lot tougher. I remember six of us touring in a Toyota Hiace van. Three in the front and three in the back. I’d do a little bit of acting to help finance the tour.”

A spell touring in *The Rocky Horror Show* finally edged Crowe to commit to the stage.

“But the music is always in me. I’ll play you a few songs from my new album later if you like.”

Crowe had been at the acting lark for some time before he became properly famous. He did good work in *Proof* and *Romper Stomper* during the early 1990s, but it was not until *LA Confidential*, in 1997, that the wider world began to take notice. He was then 33.

“I made a deal with myself: if hadn’t achieved anything significant by 30 then I would give it up,” he says. “By then, in 1994, I had two Australian Academy Awards. I had won awards at

the Seattle International Film Festival. I had been to Cannes. I'd worked in Canada So, by my 30th birthday, I could say that I've done well enough."

Even great, great pals of Russell Crowe (people like me for example) would find it hard to argue that he is entirely unencumbered by ego. In the midst of a story about Michael Mann, he makes only the mildest apology before clarifying quite how brilliant that director thought the Australian.

"I am not blowing smoke up my own here, but Michael Mann put it in a very complimentary way. He said: when you wake up in the morning and you realise you have a Ferrari in the garage, you drive the Ferrari."

(He's the Ferrari, you understand. Other lesser actors are, I suppose, Ford Fiestas and Vauxhall hatchbacks.)

Oh well. The sparkling world of movies needs all sorts. It would be a less colourful place if every actor was as self-effacing as Bill Nighy or as shy as Ralph Fiennes.

Indeed, it is quite invigorating to hear Crowe gobbling up his own personal mythologies. He is a very persuasive salesman for himself. "I respect the gods of film," he says. "I can read 50 scripts and not get a connection, no matter what the pedigree, no matter what the cheque."

So he can't be bought?

"I just can't be bought. Have you seen me do any fucking commercials?" Well, if he had we probably wouldn't have seen them. He would have done them in Japan as so many other movie stars do. Right?

"You're being a bit abusive there," he says as a froideur falls across our hitherto deep friendship. "I don't do endorsements. If you hear me say: 'I like Yorkshire Tea' then that's the truth. Nobody's paying me."

On my notes, I have written the phrase: "Fighting Round the World?" I wasn't quite sure if – given his reputation for prickliness – he would appreciate being reminded of the hilarious *South Park* parody devised when he was at his most brawly. A line is now drawn through that question and the notebook is being turned over.

We're chums again. Soon we're exchanging horror stories about passing our half-centuries. We chat about the undoubted advantages of accessing music digitally before putting on sad faces and reminiscing about the great days of the 12-inch record album.

"It's funny. Being 47 was fine," he says. "Then 48 came along and it felt lumpy. I remember coming back with my wife Danny – we're now separated – from a premiere and she said: 'It must be so hard to watch yourself age on screen.' To that point, it had never crossed my mind."

The PR lady is dragging me out, but Crowe won't let me go. He promised to play me a new song and he insists on being good to his word. So, for five long minutes, I sit nodding to a rumbling ballad – dedicated to his son – hoping desperately that my face betrays no sign of rising social discomfort.

You can do that sort of thing if you're Russell Crowe.

To see a video of Russell Crowe speaking to The Irish Times about Gallipoli please click [here](#).

## **Men's Shed constructs scale model of Gallipoli beach landing**

**Ronan McGreevy**

**The Irish Times, April 20th, 2015**

Last year, Boyle Men's Shed in Co Roscommon resolved to build a diorama to mark each year of the centenary of the first World War.

When it came to 1915, there was only one event which could be considered – the disastrous landings at V Beach in Gallipoli on April 25th, 1915, that cost the lives of hundreds of Irishmen. They have sought to represent V Beach as accurately as possible from photographs and recent visits to the site.

The replica has been a labour of love since Christmas for four members of the group. "I've spent 80 hours over the last month making the boats, the barbed wire and the scenery," said Derek Winter. "We're immensely proud of it because it is a bit of forgotten history."

The display was commissioned by the Connaught Rangers Association and will be officially unveiled at 2pm on Friday in King House, Boyle.

A video of the diorama is available to view [here](#).

## **President Michael D Higgins to attend Gallipoli ceremonies**

**Peter Murtagh**

**The Irish Times, April 20, 2015**

President Michael D Higgins is to embark on a week-long visit to Turkey and Lebanon to represent Ireland during 100th anniversary commemorations of the Gallipoli landings and will afterwards visit Irish troops serving with Unifil.

The President will be accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan; the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, Lieut-Gen Conor O'Boyle; two service personnel from each of the three branches of the Defence Forces, the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service, and a piper, Sgt Joe Meade, from 7 Infantry Battalion.

It is the first time the Defence Forces will participate in such strength at the Gallipoli commemorations. The main Allied memorial ceremony, which will take place on Friday at the Helles Memorial, has been titled the Commonwealth and Ireland Service.

The President will participate in separate Turkish and French commemorations and at the Anzac memorial service, at dawn on April 25th, Anzac Day. He will attend services at Lone Pine cemetery, the Australian cemetery on the Gallipoli peninsula, and at Chunuk Bair mountain, site of the New Zealand memorial.

Some 3,000 Irishmen died during the land campaign which ran from April 24th until the end of 1915 and included the disastrous August landings at Suvla Bay.

The President said he would be contemplating "the enormous tragedy of war" as he remembered the Irish dead and all other victims of the campaign. Describing the first World War as linked to "the outrageous aspirations of empire", he said the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East were still trapped by the "detritus of empire".

Visiting the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil), he said he wanted to thank the soldiers, and their families "for continuing to enhance the reputation of Ireland, themselves and the armed forces, as they do".

Mr Higgins referenced The Irish Times series, The Mission, and the report that included Lieut Col Mark Prendergast's address to the 48th Infantry Group, currently deployed on the Golan Heights, at the start of their training.

The address, he said, was exemplary of the quality of leadership across the Defence Forces. "Their professionalism is just so impressive," he said. The President's visit to Turkey is an official one at the invitation of the Turkish government, not a State visit.



## **Labour junior minister: ‘My family has a relative lying in Gallipoli’**

**Ronan McGreevy**

**The Irish Times April 20, 2015**

On the wall of his office in Leinster House, Labour junior minister Aodhán Ó Ríordáin has a yellowed and torn copy of the *Weekly Irish Times* from 1916 with its headline “The Sinn Féin Rebellion”.

The paper was found in the personal effects of his maternal grandmother Eileen Sheridan who married well-known republican Andrew Lynch.

Eileen Sheridan’s uncle, Private James Sheridan from Finea, Granard, Co Longford, was with the 1st battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers when it came ashore at V Beach, Gallipoli, on The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists his date of death as April 30th, 1915, five days after the landings. He was 40.

James Sheridan is one of 800 Royal Dublin Fusiliers buried in Turkey. Some 3,000 Irishmen died in the Gallipoli campaign, from April to December 1915. The combined losses of the regiment and of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, who also came ashore at V Beach, numbered almost 1,100 men in the first five days.

The campaign cut a swathe of grief through the whole of Ireland, and particularly Dublin where working-class communities were devastated, yet hardly registers in Irish folk memory.

Untold stories

Mr Ó Ríordáin grew up on stories of his grandfather’s involvement in the War of Independence. He was incarcerated during the Civil War and went on hunger strike. He became a customs officer after the war. Less well-known and less talked about was his great-uncle.

Mr Ó Ríordáin, who includes the decade of commemorations in his portfolio of ministerial interests, laments the national silence that meant families like his did not talk about those who died in British uniforms during the first World War.

“There has been a massive lost opportunity in certain families to investigate what happened,” he said. “My family has a relative lying in the Somme and a family member who is lying in . . . Gallipoli.

“It’s all very recent to us. I only became aware of it around the time my grandmother passed away in 2005. It came to the fore in family discussions around that time. We would have been aware of the republican side of the family but not this.

“My grandmother was a very republican woman and she would have been given a very one-sided view of Irish history, and it would not have been in her interest to give us the other side of the story.”

His great-grandfather on his father’s side was a tailor in the British army. He added the “O” to the name Riordan. His son Michael O’Riordan was involved in the Easter Rising on the rebel side. Another O’Riordan, Henry, died at the Somme.

Waste of life

Aodhán Ó Ríordáin said his abiding feeling about the first World War was the waste of life that occurred when there was a total breakdown in the international order.

“For those involved in it, there must have been a great sense of the pointlessness of the whole exercise. It is one thing to be involved in a struggle for national freedom, and you can clearly identify the successes and failure of that. The first World War doesn’t seem to have achieved anything at all.”

## **An Irishman's Diary on John Sandes and the Anzacs at Gallipoli**

**Bryan McMahon**

**The Irish Times, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015**

*At the reaping and the shearing,  
At the sawmill and the mine,  
In the stockyard and the clearing,  
At the pressing of the vine,  
By the camp-fire of the drover,  
By the fence with slip-rail drawn,  
Men will tell the story over  
Of that landing in the dawn."*

These lines from a poem called *Landing in the Dawn* were written by John Sandes (1863-1938) for the first anniversary of the attack at Gallipoli on April 25th, 1915.

Sandes was an Irishman who became a journalist, poet and novelist in Australia and his writings made a significant contribution to the "Anzac legend" of Australia and New Zealand. The term Anzac refers to the combined troops of the two countries and the word also denotes a place at Gallipoli. This poem contributed to the Anzac legend with lines such as these: "Lo, Australasia, roused from her deep dreaming/Turned in her sleep and sobbed and woke – a Nation."

The "Anzac spirit" refers to the distinctive qualities of courage, integrity, manliness and intrepidity which characterised the Australian and New Zealand soldier. It was the historian Charles Bean who ensured that the word Anzac was integrated into the history books. He defined it as follows: "Anzac stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat." Some writers now cast a more critical eye on the concept of the "Anzac spirit" and its militaristic connotations and refer instead to the "Anzac myth".

April 25th was officially named Anzac Day as early as 1916 and was marked by marches and commemorations. Gradually through the 1920s, the Anzac legend became very important to the identity of the two young nations of Australia and New Zealand and the rituals of the day became established. The first official dawn ceremony began in Australia in 1927 and was widespread in New Zealand by 1939. Originally a simple ritual mainly for veterans, the dawn vigil is now attended by large numbers and may include prayers, readings, wreath-laying, silent reflection, rifle volleys and the playing of the *Last Post*. Anzac Day has been marked in

Ireland since 2006. This year, the centenary of the Gallipoli landings is of special significance and commemorations are being held in Gallipoli itself on April 25th, in co-operation with the government of Turkey.

John Sandes was the son of Samuel Dickson Sandes, Church of Ireland rector in Whitechurch, Co Cork, from 1855 to 1872. Samuel's father Stephen was a Trinity academic and later archbishop of Cashel. He is commemorated in a plaque at the entrance to the chapel of Trinity College Dublin. John was nine years old when the family moved to England in 1872. He was educated at schools in London and Stratford-on-Avon and obtained a BA from Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1885. He emigrated to Australia in 1887. Flora Sandes, youngest sister of John, was a famous soldier in the first World War and was awarded Serbia's highest military honour.

John Sandes was primarily a journalist and he had a regular column in the *Melbourne Argus* from 1891 to 1903 under the name "Oriël". He wrote 10 popular novels, six of them under the pseudonym Don Delaney.

These were popular celebrations of the rugged outback spirit, tales of adventure on themes such as bushranging, gold rushes and sporting exploits. His journalism covered a wide range of topics including naval and military history, foreign policy, Australian identity and social issues.

In 1919, Sandes became the London representative of the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* and reported from the Versailles Peace Conference. He returned to Australia accompanying the party of the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, on his seven-month colonial tour in 1920. Sandes represented the Australian Press Association. This was a prestigious and much-coveted position, and during it, Sandes had the pleasure of meeting his famous sister Flora and introducing her to the prince of Wales. She had travelled to Australia on a fund-raising tour on behalf the postwar government of Serbia, and through her brother's influence, she was introduced to the prince at a ball in his honour.

John Sandes died of cancer in November 1938. His passing was marked by Quidnunc in this very column on January 21st, 1939: "Few followers of the 'Inky Way' – as they call the profession of journalism in Australia – were more beloved than 'Johnny' Sandes who died in Australia a few weeks ago. He was known to journalists all over the island continent and was recognised as a giant of his profession. "

## **Gallipoli: Churchill's folly must be remembered 100 years on**

**David Davin-Power**

**The Irish Times, April 20th, 2015**

By any standards, Gallipoli was a cynical military and political enterprise. Winston Churchill, then first Lord of the Admiralty, wanted "an alternative to chewing barbed wire in Flanders", but one cannot help but wonder if what he wanted was in reality a military victory he could claim for himself.

He helped to pitch Turkey into the arms of the Kaiser by seizing two of their dreadnoughts before they could be delivered from the British shipyards that built them.

Many in Turkey today feel the Allies wanted the crumbling Ottoman Empire vanquished so they could distribute their territory as the spoils of war.

But that was of little interest to the Irishmen who embarked on what they variously described as an "adventure" or an "enterprise".

The first wave were largely professional soldiers, but their training was no protection from the well prepared Turkish forces dug in on the beaches of Cape Helles.

This was where "the sea ran red with blood" according to one Royal Air Corps pilot overhead, and where four days saw more than a thousand Irish casualties.

Later, in August, it would be turn of the so called "Pals" amateur soldiers drawn from the ranks of the professions to form the short-lived 10th Irish Division, the first such unit of the British Army to be drawn exclusively from this island.

They were to perish around Suvla Bay - badly led, badly trained, and if truth be told, badly exposed by their own lack of experience.

Their losses were to cut a swathe through the Irish professional classes at home.

If April saw many doorways around the Liberties draped in black crepe, the autumn saw the telegrams dropping on the doormats of Kingstown and Foxrock.

Those telegrams brought devastation to prosperous families like the Lees, who were to lose one son - John Bagenal Lee, and to have another return deeply traumatised by his experiences.

There were Irish casualties in Australian regiments too, like Tipperary emigrant Philip Brennan. Unlike Lee, he at least has a memorial in a Gallipoli cemetery.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission could only begin its work years after the conflict. Its staff raked the peninsula for the piles of bones that were all that was left of the fallen, and in the days well before DNA analysis could only identify a handful.

And there was Irish heroism too. In his native Whitegate in Cork, William Cosgrove and the VC he won for his part in clearing barbed wire defences from a Cape Helles beach are still remembered.

As the year turned, the inevitable evacuation got under way, an operation that was the only successful element of the campaign.

One of the last officers off the peninsula was Dublin medic Andrew Horne, whose letters and photographs have been given to the National Museum by his delightful and doughty twin daughters, both very much to the good a hundred years on.

We have chronicled some of their stories in our documentary, Gallipoli - Ireland's Forgotten Heroes.

RTÉ was very lucky to have as a co-director Mike Lee, a grandnephew of those Lees that fought there.

My own grandfather was also there in a supporting role as a sergeant major in the Army Service Corps.

Why is it important to remember Gallipoli 100 years on?

Well, first of all to confound those who brushed what was a military disaster under the carpet a century ago.

Then to commemorate the notion that even in failure there can be nobility.

Perhaps most of all, to vindicate the notion that history does not belong to those who sought to hand down a monochrome version for so many years, and to illustrate for a new generation that that amazing decade from 1913 to 1923 was so confusing and many-stranded that it is in many ways a miracle that the nation it spawned survives in such a healthy state in 2015.

## **Higgins notes ‘silence’ that hung over Gallipoli dead**

**Ruadhán Mac Cormaic**

**The Irish Times, April 24, 2015**

On a stone memorial at Anzac Cove in Gallipoli, where world leaders will gather today to mark the 100th anniversary of one of the bloodiest campaigns of the first World War, are inscribed the words of modern Turkey’s founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

“You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries,” he said in 1934, “wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace, after having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.”

In Istanbul on the eve of the commemorations, President Michael D Higgins invoked Atatürk’s inclusive vision in recalling the “silences” that for much of the past century hung over memories of the 3,500 Irish men who died on the peninsula in western Turkey.

“It’s easy to look back now, and how are we to judge, but I think clouded versions of what true Irishness was stopped people’s agony being appreciated, stopped the separations being appreciated, the loss of life,” the President said of the Irish who fought in the assault on the Dardanelles Straits.

“In a way, Atatürk’s statement about every mother’s son being cared for in the same soil is one that we would have benefited from if it had been in the Irish consciousness.”

Veterans

He recalled his own experiences of meeting veterans of the war in Co Clare; many of them, he said, “never really recovered from the war”.

By the time they returned, a struggle for independence was under way at home.

“Many of those who had served with the British army were marginalised, and a rift was opened between those who may have had poverty as their shared background.”

Speaking to members of Turkey’s Irish community, the President said the story of Gallipoli, like that of the catastrophic war itself, was one of “immense human loss and suffering, and great social cost”. It was also a story of military calculation gone wrong, causing 3,500 Irish men to lose their lives. “They may have had different motivations for fighting but few could have realised what lay in store for them or the enormous price they would pay,” he said.

“We must also acknowledge that these men were directed to inflict death and suffering as part of an ill-conceived and ill-fated invading force: Turkish soldiers fell in their tens of thousands defending their homeland, their losses heavily outnumbering the losses on the allied side.”

The President, accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan and the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, Lieut-Gen Conor O'Boyle, will attend the main Allied memorial today alongside heads of state and government from about 21 countries, including Australia, New Zealand and Britain.

Mr Higgins will participate in separate Turkish and French commemorations and at the Anzac memorial service at dawn on April 25th, Anzac Day.

“Today,” Mr Higgins said in Istanbul, “we pay our respects to the memory of all those men whose potential and promise were lost in Gallipoli a century ago. We do so with a new, more inclusive insight and understanding of the circumstances of the time.”

#### Dignitaries

Mr Higgins joined other dignitaries last night at a dinner hosted by Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan. He also attended an academic conference to mark the Gallipoli centenary.

Turks mark what they call the Canakkale war on March 18 – the day in 1915 that saw the start of the main Allied naval assault on the Dardanelles Straits. Some 130,000 soldiers perished during the campaign – 87,000 of them from the Ottoman side – before the Turks finally repulsed an Allied campaign.

But it would prove to be one of the Turks' few successes in the war. In November 1918, the Allied fleet sailed through the Dardanelles and took Istanbul without a single casualty.

Mr Higgins's visit to Turkey is also being used to promote trade between the two countries. Irish exports to Turkey were worth €445 million last year, and Mr Flanagan met business figures from both countries at a lunch hosted by Enterprise Ireland, which opened an office in Turkey last year.



## Remembering all who died at Gallipoli

**The Irish Times, April 25, 2015**

There are in the oft-cited words of the Gallipoli message sent by Kemal Ataturk to Anzac veterans in 1934 a poignancy and generosity that have down the years provided enormous comfort to former enemies. They now grace memorials on three continents, including at Anzac Cove, Gallipoli, and have been repeatedly cited by Australian prime ministers and others, including our own Presidents McAleese and Higgins, in remembering the dead of that disastrous campaign which opened 100 years ago on this day.

“Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives,” Ataturk allegedly wrote (words attributed now plausibly by some to his interior minister Sukru Kaya) . “You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours. You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.”

Would that we could truly say the same ourselves of the 4,000 or so Irishmen, who died at Gallipoli alongside 11,000 Australians and New Zealanders. Among the 58,000 Allied and 100,000 Turkish dead. Our sons, yes, but until recent years all-but written out of our history, of our traditional national narrative of unswerving commitment to throwing off the British yoke. As Lord Dunsany, Francis Ledwidge’s great mentor, wrote in tribute to Ireland’s neglected dead of the Great War, *“Sleep on, forgot a few more years, and then/ The ages, that I prophesy, shall see/ Due honours paid to you by juster men ...”*

Not so with the Anzacs, whose Gallipoli story is central to their nations’ proud history. And is told without any sense that the Great War was somehow a noble cause, or that its generals, not least in the Dardanelles, were not donkeys leading lions. Commemorated, not celebrated. And now we too are learning how we can remember and honour the Munsters’ landing at V beach, only 60 men unscathed from the first assault of 400. And the 10th Irish division at Suvla Bay, and the survivors of the attrition of months in the trenches on body and mind, and the “Pals” from Lansdowne Road, decimated.

This was a disastrously costly attempt to begin a second front against the Ottoman Empire, ultimately futile, and whose only redeeming military feature was the impeccable retreat. The British Empire at its incompetent, destructive worst. But there is little point, or satisfaction, for nationalists now to continue to play a game of historical, retrospective “I told you so”

about those, our grandfathers, great uncles, and cousins, who paid the price, many with extraordinary courage, for succumbing to Redmond's terrible delusion. Now we should give "due honour".

## **Culture Shock: Please, no more heroes. Let's not turn the obscenities of Gallipoli and the Great War into glory**

**Fintan O'Toole,**

**The Irish Times, April 25th, 2015**

What's heroic about being mown down as you wade towards a beach before you've even had the chance to fire a shot? What could ever be heroic about the racist folly of that Dardanelles campaign anyway? Could we perhaps declare a cultural moratorium for the rest of the decade of centenaries? A moratorium, that is, on the use of a word and its variations: hero, heroes, heroic.

There it was this week again, disfiguring David Davin-Power's otherwise fine RTÉ documentary on the slaughter at Gallipoli: *Ireland's Forgotten Heroes*. It is a word with no real place in the novels, memoirs and plays through which Irish artists remembered or engaged with the Great War. That is an absence we should insist on maintaining.

Much of the discussion of Irish participation in the war in recent years has assumed that the worst response to a historical trauma is amnesia. The word "forgotten" is almost as loaded as the word "heroes". Amnesia is indeed a bad thing, but there is something far worse: the distortion of obscenity into glory. There can be an honour in moving on and letting the dead bury their dead. There is no honour in shaping those deaths into a big lie. Irish artists have a noble tradition of resistance to that lie.

The momentous changes in Ireland after 1916 may have made it all too convenient for the Irish nationalist mainstream to forget those who suffered and died in the far greater global conflict. But at least they spared us the rhetoric of glory. The myth of blood sacrifice was transferred to Easter 1916 from the Somme and Gallipoli; in the words of *The Foggy Dew*, "'Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky / Than at Suvla or Sud el Bar.'" The notion that the first World War was heroic gained little purchase.

But this was not just a political convenience: it was how most Irish artists responded to the war. It's hard to find much in the way of heroic rhetoric from those writers who fought in the war. How could there be? Gallipoli itself is a stark case in point: what's heroic about being mown down as you wade towards a beach before you've even had the chance to fire a shot? What could ever be heroic about the racist folly of that Dardanelles campaign anyway, based as it was on the belief that "Johnny Turk", being a lesser breed, would never stand up to real Europeans?

What so often strikes Irish writers at the front is precisely the mocking absence of military glory. Liam O'Flaherty, in his 1929 novel *Return of the Brute*, is typical: "There was no excitement, no haste, no grandeur, no drums, no banners, no gleaming weapons, no plumes, no terrifying devices, no shouting of war-maddened warriors; just little crowds of dirty, stooping men, with ugly steel hats, gas masks, bags of bombs." Even the most romantically inclined of Irish writers, CS Lewis, who would return to chivalric warfare in Narnia, was struck, when he was on the Western Front, by the absence of all the mythological paraphernalia he had in his head: "Where are the magic swords / That elves of long ago / Smithied beneath the snow / For heroes' rich rewards?" (*Exercise*, 1917).

To be properly called heroic, deaths and injuries in the Great War would have to fulfil two criteria. One is that the soldier joined up for an altruistic purpose, to protect little Belgium, say, or to win Home Rule. But there is very little of this in Irish literature about the war. First-hand writing very seldom talks about joining up for patriotic or ideological reasons. Later versions tend to show the motivations as economic need (*Strumpet City*) or male pride: Harry Heegan, in Seán O'Casey's *The Silver Tassie*, "has gone to the trenches as unthinkingly as he would go to the polling booth". Even in Frank McGuinness's *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*, where the soldiers do have a sense of collective political purpose (to keep Ulster out of Home Rule), Piper, the central character, has much more personal motivations. "Patriotism, in the trenches," writes Robert Graves in *Goodbye to All That*, "was too remote a sentiment, and at once rejected as fit only for civilians, or prisoners." The other criterion for the heroic is that death or injury is personal and meaningful. But this is exactly what is not available in the industrial slaughter of the war. The typical experience of the major Irish writers who died or were injured is not heroic hand-to-hand combat. It is being hit by a shell fired from miles away. That's what killed the poet Francis Ledwidge. It's what wounded and shocked Lewis, Graves and O'Flaherty. Friends standing next to them were killed by the same shells. O'Flaherty wrote that "You have to go through life with that shell bursting in your head", and what kept bursting was not just the physical damage but also the psychological trauma inflicted by the sheer randomness of death or survival.

These insights are hard won. Paul Fussell writes in his classic *The Great War and Modern Memory* that July 1st, 1916, the catastrophic first day of the Battle of the Somme, is "one of the most interesting in the whole history of human disillusion". O'Flaherty wrote that the horror of the war was for him and his generation a "wonderful lesson in the defects of the European system of civilisation". In the proper desire to remember the dead we must not return to the language of heroism that millions died to destroy.

# Gallipoli: 'Shrapnel burst as frequently as the tick of a clock'

## THE IRISH TIMES WEEKEND

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Irish participation was marked by an unprecedented level of involvement in the Defence Forces... the President's green laurel wreath, standing out among the other 64 paper wreaths, had the inscription: On behalf of the people of Ireland  
Peter Marough at the commemoration ceremony in Gallipoli, page 6



President Michael D. Higgins, Prince Harry and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Gallipoli yesterday. (AP/WIDE WORLD)



**Building a time machine**  
The DeLorean story

KEITH DUGGAN WEEKEND REVIEW



**A crippling injury**

## **Peter Murtagh**

**The Irish Times, April 25, 2015**

There are white carnations on the graves of the erstwhile forgotten Irish of V Beach this morning.

They were put there by a president and by his wife, and by two princes of the army in which they fought and died.

One is on the memorial grave stone tablet of Robert Ludlow, formerly of Magdaline Terrace in Galway.

There's one for Capt Walford VC and one for Petty Officer William Medhurst, a young sailor who rowed the Dublins and Munsters on to the beach at Sedd-ul-Bahr, where they were mown down.

As the bullets peppered his boat and the Irish men died or fell into the sea wounded, Medhurst dived in to help, sustaining fatal wounds in the process.

Britain's Prince Charles singled out Walford and Medhurst for special floral attention.

V Beach cemetery contains the bodies of some 700 soldiers who landed at Cape Helles in late April 1915. Only about 200 have been identified, and most of them were in the Royal Dublin and Royal Munster fusiliers.

Above them now on the cliff top sits the huge obelisk that is the Helles Memorial, inscribed with the names of some 21,000 British, Irish, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, Pakistan and Sri Lankan soldiers who died in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign and who have no known grave.

Twenty-five thousand other Commonwealth soldiers are interred in cemeteries that dot the peninsula.

The sun was setting after yesterday's 100th anniversary memorial service – entitled officially the Commonwealth and Ireland service – when Prince Charles and his son Prince Harry went down to the beach, followed by President Michael D Higgins and his wife, Sabina.

As the sun nudged the cliff top and the light grew golden, they strolled along the rows of ankle-high memorial tablets, so many of which state simply, *Their glory shall not be blotted out* – which is, more or less, exactly what happened, glory or not.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission historian Glyn Pryor explained for the princes and the Higginses some of the details of what happened at V Beach - the press remaining at the sort of distance expected on such occasions.

But as their wandering through the graves continued, the formalities began to loosen. A large bunch of white carnations was produced and split between the four for placing at will. They were scattered liberally.

At the top of the cemetery, Sabina called her husband to come quickly. She was standing at the tablet for Company Sgt-Maj D Danagher of the Munsters who died, aged 37, on April 25th, the first day of the landings. His grandson became the first Labour mayor of Limerick, a fact known to the president.

“Isn’t it great that we found him?” said Sabina to her husband as they placed three flowers on his memorial stone.

And then she strolled to the cemetery’s altar – *their name liveth forever* – and left the remainder of her flowers there for the others. Walking back towards Prince Charles she said: “May they all rest in peace.”

The dead of Gallipoli were remembered at three separate ceremonies on the eve of Anzac Day, April 25th, when Australia and New Zealand remember their dead from a campaign that forged in those countries a sense of identity that has endured.

The first ceremony was, appropriately, at the Turkish memorial, the giant Mehmetcik monument to the estimated 100,000 Turks who died and perhaps double that number who were wounded.

As the Turkish memorial ceremony came to a close, a Turkish frigate, sailing at a stately pace, led a sail-past of Cape Helles, the Turkish vessel followed by an Allied one, and by a Turkish one again, and then another Allied one, until 11 ships passed, the largest of them being HMS *Bulwark*, an amphibious assault ship.

A scream of seven Turkish Air Force RF5 jets tore through the sky. And they did it again and again and again, as if to make a point. Four Turkish military officers, dressed in period uniforms of 1915, rode horses in the field in front of the Helles Memorial.

The ceremony was a textbook example of one of the things the British do well: a degree of pomp, lots of circumstance and everything running smoothly (if a little late).

When Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the two princes and President and Mrs Higgins arrived, a 54-strong guard of honour, drawn from sailors from HMS *Bulwark*, snapped to attention.

Irish participation was marked by an unprecedented level of involvement by the Defence Forces. The President was accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs Charlie Flanagan and Chief of Staff, Lieut-Gen Conor O’Boyle.

Six members of the Defence Forces also participated – Company Sgt Jim Aherne, 7 Infantry Battalion; Naval Service Petty Officer Cormac de Barra; Piper Sgt Joe Meade, 7 Infantry Battalion; Naval Service Petty Officer Kevin Meade; Sgt Tracy Walsh of the Air Corps; and Airman Michael Whelan.

The President's green laurel wreath, standing out among the other 14 poppy wreaths, had the inscription: *On behalf of the people of Ireland.*

The Chaplain General to the British Land Forces said they were gathered to recall the courage of those who had died and to pray for the countries represented.

Company Sgt Ahern gave a reading. It was from a letter written by Royal Dublin Fusilier Capt Paddy Tobin to his father, three days before he was killed on August 13th, 1915.

In it, Capt Tobin described trying to cross a sand spit at Suvla Bay. *Shrapnel and high explosives were bursting as frequently as the tick of a clock,* he wrote.

They never found Billy Tobin, but his name is on the Helles Memorial and he was remembered yesterday.



## **Gallipoli as seen through writers' eyes**

**Eileen Battersby**

**The Irish Times, April 25th, 2015**

It was 4am, still dark, with just a glimmering light, on the morning of April 25th, 1915. The sea was likened to black glass. Survivors would later describe how calm it all seemed in the predawn mist a century ago today. Warm too. The moon had set. Some would admit to even feeling excited. Officers were eating breakfast, confident that the men were ready. It was travelling into the unknown but they had been in training in Egypt. They were ready, or so they thought.

“Soon the troops were fallen in and the rum ration issued. The night was warm and still, and were peaceful” recalled Sapper Geoffrey Robin, 1st Field Company, and Australian Engineers: “Then down the rope ladders and into the boats alongside – no easy journey with rifle and full kit and box of gun cotton. As the boats filled they were taken in tow by the pinnaces and moved clear of the ship and lay in parallel lines headed for the shore like runners on their mark waiting for the pistol....

“There was a little talk in undertones, but most of us were busy with our thoughts. Most of us hoped we would get ashore before any trouble started. Loaded as we were, any man going overboard knew his number was up...”

The Gallipoli campaign was doomed from the start. The landing parties ran into fire that simply never ended. Devised by Winston Churchill, then Britain's First Lord of the Admiralty, Gallipoli or the Dardanelles was his greatest disaster.

For Australians and New Zealanders Gallipoli is remembered with pride and sorrow. Memorial gatherings taking place at dawn today across Australia and New Zealand will begin with a solemn gesture, a moment's silence. It is more deeply felt than Armistice Day because the events at Gallipoli are associated with the emerging nationhood of Australia and New Zealand. It is yet another of history's many ironies: the Great War had begun with an assassination motivated by nationalism. Nationalism tore the Balkans apart; idealists had lost patience with empires and soldiers went to war and paid the price.

Long before the eight-month-long Gallipoli stalemate during which the Allied forces were subjected to relentless sniper attack from the Turks who knew their topography, the Ottoman empire had already become the Sick Man of Europe. The Turkish nationalists, inspired by Young Turk leader Enver Bey, were seeking independence.

The Ottoman Empire was dying as was the Austro-Hungarian one which had once extended from Vienna to Russia. Imperial Vienna retreated into a provincial city, its fall lamented by its great chronicler Joseph Roth. Meanwhile Australia had become independent from the British empire in 1901, and New Zealand had followed in 1907. However, a lingering loyalty to the crown remained. Also about one-fifth of the Anzac forces had been born in Britain. Even so, the differences in military etiquette were obvious. The Anzac officers seemed more relaxed and mixed with the ordinary soldiers. Of the many telling quotes gathered in war historian Richard van Emden's most recent book, *Gallipoli – The Dardanelles Disaster in Soldiers' Words and Photographs*, a collaborative project undertaken with military historian and archivist Stephen Chambers, is a comment from Private Charles Watkins, 1/6th Lancashire Fusiliers, 42nd Division: "Officers and privates would be seen hobnobbing together, discipline and military etiquette being quite unknown to them. 'Saluting's a thing for Pommie bastards – not for Austro-lyan boys like us'. But still, we had a great affection for the 'Cobbers' – those wild Australian boys..."

Elsewhere an Australian soldier Private Charles Duke, 4th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force rather politely recalled: "One's first sensation of being under fire was of feeling remarkably naked and uncovered, you felt you would like to have anything between you and the shells – even an umbrella."

It does describe the appalling reality. There was no cover, nothing to hide behind. Motor shelling and sniper shot coming from all direction by an often invisible foe. It was all bare hill side with scrub; the landing parties were completely exposed on a peninsula that was as beautiful as it was to prove terrifying. The combined Anzac forces numbering 74,000, of which 10,000 died, were facing an enemy capable of exploiting the terrain which consists of natural ridges. Under the constant bombardment it was impossible to move the dead bodies which immediately attracted flies in the heat. This of course introduced another deadly element, dysentery.

No war is glorious. Yet writers have been able to immortalise the tragedy and the valour as well as the human drama of sons and fathers; husbands, brothers lost. Artists tend to respond more to the reader than to the historian.

Russell Crowe's recent movie *The Water Diviner* is a human story, inspired by an Australian father who did travel to Gallipoli looking for his lost sons. It is intended to appeal to the emotions as well as raise the awareness of one of the less publicised chapters of the Great War. *The Water Diviner* is a drama, not a history lesson.

The Great War has inspired literature, yet very little of it is about Gallipoli. That is, it will be argued, because it was such an almighty disaster for the Allies; the British lost 25,000 men, the French 10,000 while Turkish losses amounted to an estimated 86,000 out of 400,000.

For British, German, French, Belgian and even US writers, the Western Front, and the Somme or Ypres; Verdun or Passchendaele continue to intrigue. This makes a memoir such as *The Burning of the World* by the Hungarian artist Bela Zombory-Moldovan so important. Aside from it being a beautiful piece of writing, the horrors of war described through an artist's eye, it is about events on the Eastern Front. Zombory-Molodovan was deployed to Russia.

An Australian interwar classic, *My Brother Jack* (1964) by George Johnston, did not so much write about Gallipoli as describe the damage it inflicted on a generation of men. The narrator David is the son of a Gallipoli veteran father whose war experiences have left him violent and unstable. For David the maimed around him have left him convinced that most men are missing limbs. It is an anti-war book and rather than glorify the Anzac spirit it focuses on the legacy of horror.

The first landing had been delayed by two days because of bad weather, a sudden storm. One soldier bound for Gallipoli who died on the way, on the island of Skyros was the English poet Rupert Brooke. Between his death and the dawn landing two days later were the series of arrests on April 24th, when hundreds of Armenian intellectuals and political leaders were detained throughout Istanbul, then Constantinople.

There is no victory to be celebrated today, but thousands of lives lost in hillside skirmishes played out in appalling conditions and all for a plan that very few actually believed would work. The Anzac legacy is about a sacrifice made by men of whom Australia and New Zealand are very proud.

On that very human note – as if what could be more human than war – is the wonderful good luck that so many soldiers wrote diaries, memoirs and letters. Equally valuable is that so many soldiers disobeyed orders and took cameras. Military authorities banned the possession of personal cameras. But many soldiers, particularly officers, disregarded the rules and the photographic archive from Gallipoli captures the horrors.

“The queer thing is, that when I look back upon that ‘Great failure’, it is not the danger or the importance of the undertaking which is strongly impressed,” recalled Sergeant John Hargrave, 32rd Field Ambulance, RAMC, 10th Division, “so much as the jumble of smells and sounds and small things. It is just these small things which no author can make up in his study at home.”

Most readers interested in Gallipoli will have read, or might wish to read Eric Bush's memoir, *Gallipoli* (1975); Charles Bean's *Gallipoli Mission* (1949), Peter Hart's *Gallipoli* (2011) and E. M. Forster's *England and the Middle East: the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire 1914-1921*. There is also *An Anzac Muster* by William Baylebridge, a variation of *The Decameron* or *The Canterbury Tales*. Baylebridge, born Charles Blocksidge in 1883, was apparently in Egypt during the Gallipoli campaign. He published his *Anzac Muster*, a series of 27 stories, in 1921. One of the tales, *The Apocalypse of Pat McCullough: The Sergeant's Tale*, is a prediction come true. In it McCullough introduces the theme of the sanitising power of war tourism. It is weirdly prophetic and as ambivalent as ever: wars are about remembrance, not celebration.

John Le Gay Brereton (1871- 1933) was Professor of English at the University of Sydney and his specialist area was Elizabethan drama. He remains best remembered for two poems, *ANZAC* and *Transports* – both published soon after the landings at Gallipoli – which may well be read or recited somewhere in Australia or New Zealand today by someone standing by a memorial:

*“Within my heart I hear a cry  
Of loves that suffer, souls that die,  
And you may have no praise from me  
For warfare's vast vulgarity;  
Only the flag of love, unfurled  
For peace above a weeping world,  
I follow, though the fiery breath  
Of murder shrivel me in death.....  
Because they welcomed grisly pain  
And laughed at prudence, mocked at gain,  
With noble hope and courage high,  
And taught our manhood how to die.*

From *ANZAC* by John Le Gay Brereton.

## **Gallipoli – should Britain have steered well clear of it?**

**Niall Biggar**

**The Irish Times, April 25, 2015**

One hundred years ago today the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers poured out of the *SS River Clyde* onto “V” beach at Gallipoli. Of the first 200 men, 149 were killed outright. One eyewitness account has it that the Dublins lost 21 officers and 560 men in just 15 minutes.

This was but one dreadful moment in the futile, four-year long abattoir of European civilisation that was the first World War. Britain should have kept well clear of it. Had she done so, about a million Britons and members of her empire-including 49,000 Irishmen-would have been spared violent deaths on the shores of Turkey and in the mud of northern France. The British should never have fought.

While not held by most English-speaking historians, such a view was vigorously argued by Niall Fergusson in his 1998 book, *The Pity of War*. Last year it found fresh and polemical voice in Douglas Newton’s *The Darkest Days: The Truth Behind Britain’s Rush to War, 1914*. Through an hour-by-hour analysis of the British cabinet’s deliberations in late July and early August 1914, Newton argues that Sir Edward Grey, Britain’s foreign secretary, was unconditionally committed to the entente with France and Russia for geo-political reasons, and manipulated both the cabinet and parliament to make sure that Britain entered the lists on their behalf.

At one point Newton speaks through Ireland’s own John Dillon. In a letter of August 12th, 1914, Dillon wrote: “The violation of Belgium gives only a very convenient excuse . . . to solidify the Party and the Country. I never had any doubt that Grey’s policy would end in a great European war. And that whenever it suited Russia to advance – then we would sink and would inevitably go in . . . The blame is hard to apportion – no doubt – the German war party must bear a good share. But I cannot resist the conviction the greater share of the guilt lies with the new English foreign policy identified with . . . Grey”. But Dillon was wrong.

Grey’s commitment was to France rather than Russia, and it was not unconditional. He assumed, correctly, that France was not planning to launch a first strike on Germany. Paris deliberately kept one step behind Berlin in its military preparations so as to make its defensive posture unmistakable, and as late as August 1st it reaffirmed the order for her troops to stay 10 kilometres back from the Franco-Belgian border.

At the same time Grey strove to discourage Germany from precipitating war with France by refusing to promise British neutrality. Nevertheless, on August 3rd Germany launched an

unprovoked attack on Belgium and France, claiming that French troops had crossed the border and French aircraft had bombed Nuremberg. Both claims were false.

Why did Germany invade? Because it feared that France would attack in support of Russia.

According to Christian just war reasoning, however, the mere threat of attack is no just cause for war. Only if there is substantial evidence that an unwarranted threat is actually in the process of being realised would the launching of “pre-emptive” war be justified; and in this case there was none. It isn’t justified to initiate a “preventative” war simply because one fears that an enemy might attack. War is far too destructive and hazardous to launch on simply speculative grounds.

It isn’t true, therefore, to claim, as Dillon did and Newton does, that Grey and his supporters wanted Britain to join France and Russia in launching an aggressive war against Germany, simply to counter the threat of its rising power.

On the contrary, their Realpolitik was disciplined by moral and legal considerations. Basic to their justification of British belligerency was that France should have suffered unwarranted attack. And were Germany to make that attack by invading Belgium, moral justification would acquire legal force, since Britain was a guarantor of Belgian neutrality by international treaty.

For sure, Britain’s national interest in her own security was also engaged. The Belgian coast faced London and the Thames estuary, and so it had long been British policy to keep that coastline free from hostile control and the threat of invasion.

It’s true, therefore, that, in seeking to bring Britain to the defence of France and Belgium, Grey also sought to forestall German domination of north-western Europe.

Not all national interests are immoral, however, and this one is unobjectionable. What’s morally crucial is that Britain did not help initiate a preventative war to maintain a favourable balance of power.

Germany had suffered no injury, nor was it under any emergent threat of suffering one. Unprovoked and on a fabricated pretext, it launched a preventative invasion of France and Belgium to establish its own dominance.

In response, Britain went to war to repel an unjustified attack on a neighbouring ally, to maintain international law, and to forestall a serious and actualised threat to its own national security, in which it had a legitimate interest. It was right to fight. The deaths of those Irishmen at “V” beach were dreadful, and the Gallipoli campaign they inaugurated ended in failure. But the larger war of which it was a part was justified. So those dreadful deaths,

though pitiable and tragic, were not pointless. And since the war was eventually won, nor were they futile.

## **Irish newspapers supported British effort in first World War, conference told**

**Ronan McGreevy**

**The Irish Times, April 26, 2015**

Irish mainstream newspapers were willing participants in the recruitment of Irishmen into the British army during the first World War, a conference has heard.

Mark Durcan, the editor of the Century Ireland website, said there was “nothing remotely surprising” about press support to bolster the recruitment campaign for the war in November 1915.

The request was made to the editors by Lord Wimborne, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Irish newspapers were supportive of the war for the most part, but were critical of its prosecution and fiercely opposed to conscription, he told the Gallipoli 100 conference in Kells, Co Meath.

However, they were also highly critical of the quality of reports from the front which they published in their own newspapers, as they were mostly syndicated reports from other news agencies and were heavily censored.

Both the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times* cast doubt on the veracity of their own news reports and decried the extreme censorship of the war office.

Instead, much of the truth of what really went on was gleaned from letters that soldiers sent home from the front which were eagerly published in the newspapers.

Opposition to the war was fostered mostly by the “mosquito press”, Mr Durcan said, smaller publications which showed great resilience in continuing to publish even while the authorities tried to shut them down.

He identified the disastrous Gallipoli campaign as a key changer of attitudes towards the war in Irish newspapers.

All the mainstream papers were critical of the conduct of that campaign and there was widespread outrage at dispatches from the British commander in Gallipoli, Sir Ian Hamilton, who failed to give sufficient mention to the bravery of the Irish troops at Gallipoli.

The “ghastly failures” of the Gallipoli campaign were already contested, contributing to a change in mood in the Irish population even before the Easter Rising took place, Mr Durcan suggested.



Conference organiser Myles Dungan said Dublin journalist William Russell, who was one of the first war correspondents, is remembered as having played a critical role in exposing the incompetent nature of the Crimean War to the British and Irish public.

However, newspapers regressed badly in the first World War “and allowed themselves to become mouthpieces of the government and the military”.

Such a stance generated a crisis of public confidence in the credibility of news media. “It was as if the huge journalistic advances of the 19th century had never happened. Journalism had been preparing for half a century for just such a challenge as the Great War.

“To have succumbed to strict and unyielding censorship would have been sad but understandable – but the British press went far beyond obeisance towards outright propaganda and lies.”

Mr Dungan said the ordinary soldiers had become disillusioned by the coverage that he read about in the newspapers.

“The brutal reality of their lives was at odds with the often jaunty accounts of the correspondents and this, understandably, antagonised and disillusioned the soldiers,” he said.

“As Phillip Knightley has put it, the ordinary soldier ‘felt he had found the press out and as a result he lost confidence in his newspapers, a confidence to this day never entirely recovered’.”

# **Peace reigns at last as Anzacs pay solemn tribute to soldiers slaughtered in Gallipoli**

**Peter Murtagh**

**The Irish Times, April 27, 2015**

True worshipers are those who tread gently on the earth, said the Rev Lance Lukin, quoting the Koran. And then the principal chaplain of the New Zealand Defence Forces added his own take: “Tread gently on this gentle soil,” he urged.

The soil was at Chunuk Bair, the highest point reached in the hills of the southern Gallipoli Peninsula by the invading Allied forces in April 1915. From here, they caught a tantalising glimpse of the Dardanelles, the gateway to their ultimate prize – Constantinople, as Istanbul was then known.

His audience was the 3,000 or so mainly New Zealanders for whom the soil of Chunuk Bair truly is sacred – to the memory of the 2,779 Kiwis who died, and to the 5,212 others wounded, during a campaign whose lasting effect was not the stain of defeat but the creation of a deep sense of nationhood back home, a feeling that succeeding generations have nurtured.

The ceremony bookended a day of commemoration on Saturday that began with the traditional dawn service at Anzac Cove, the name for the Australia New Zealand Army Corps that landed there on April 25th, 1915. They came ashore as a rising sun made silhouette a jagged escarpment of Chunuk Bair, a ghostly outline the troops named the Sphinx because it reminded them of a shape they saw by the Nile during pre-deployment training.

In ancient Egyptian mythology, the sphinx was a kindly but ferocious guardian at the gateway. At Anzac Cove, it looked down on slaughter that, just as for New Zealanders, Australians came to see as the wellspring of their sense of identity. “What they showed here is what we are” was how one Australian woman explained to me her presence at the place where 8,709 of her compatriots died and 19,441 were wounded during the April to December 1915 campaign.

She was one of some 10,000 people, plus about 500 dignitaries, among them President Michael D Higgins and his wife, Sabina; the prime ministers of Australia and New Zealand; Prince Charles and his son, Prince Harry; the Turkish minister of EU affairs, Volken Boskir, and numerous senior military officers from many countries, who filled a huge amphitheatre that looked out on to the Aegean from whence came the invading forces 100 years ago to the morning.

There was an embracing stillness about the setting, the silence broken not so much by a dawn chorus but marked by the occasional chirrup of a single bird. Many of the 10,000, wrapped in sleeping bags and woollies, had been waiting since 5pm on Friday for this, the 5.30am dawn service on Saturday.

It began with a rendition on the didgeridoo by classical performer William Barton. He made musical sounds at times feathery, screaming and whispering, that seemed to speak to something deeply primal.

A giant screen displayed, in words and pictures, some of what happened here and the names of some who died. Each had an epithet, the last being: "He saved others. Himself he could not save."

Ethereal notes, no words, came from a choir and all the while, the night was drawing to a close, light of the day winning, gradually, but no direct sun came to break through the clouds. Dignitaries lined up but the moment and the mood belonged really to the setting and to the 10,000. They were solemn, serious and attentive to all they were part of.

The speech of the day belonged to New Zealand prime minister John Key. He saluted, he said, the Anzacs who died here "as I salute those who fought against them". Had situations been reversed, and Turks invaded his country, he had no doubt that brave young men in New Zealand would have acted the same.

It was a comment of startling generosity, one that matched the oft repeated words of Atatürk, the Turkish commander on Chunuk Bair and nation builder of post-Ottoman empire Turkey, who in 1934 wrote to Anzac mothers, telling them their dead sons and husbands were at peace in the soil and were now also the sons of his country.

Turkey's sons are remembered at the 57th Regiment Martyr's Memorial near Chunuk Bair, a honey-coloured stone campanile atop a tiered lawn of memorial stones to just a few of the 86,692 Turks who died at Gallipoli, along with 164,617 who were wounded.

Rows of bright red Turkish flags fluttered as the dignitaries decamped for another service of remembrance.

Wreaths were laid, including by President Higgins who participated at all ceremonies associated with the Gallipoli 100 commemorations.

As the dignitaries walked among the Turkish headstones, an enthusiasm seemed to grip Sabina Higgins as she placed red carnations on almost every stone, rushing from one to another. "I'm admiring your energy," whispered Prince Harry as she rejoined the VIPs.

There was conspicuous warmth throughout the weekend between President Higgins' and his wife and the British royal party, particularly between the president and Prince Harry who were seen chatting regularly like old friends.

There was something about the New Zealand ceremony, something intangible that hit the emotions. As at the dawn service, pride of place was accorded to Maori tradition, with three members of the NZ defence forces setting the tone by performing the Karanga – the Call to Gathering. It too was ethereal, a scream-like lamentation from our world into the spirit world. “There is no way to sanitise what happened here 100 years ago and nor should we try,” said Mr Key. But, he added, events had given Kiwis a sense of identity and, ultimately, their sovereignty.

Lt-Col William Malone led the Wellington Infantry Battalion's assault on Chunuk Bair at 3am on August 8th, 1915. “My sweetheart,” he wrote to his wife before it began, “everything promises well as victory should rest with us.” Of his 760 men, he and 710 others perished as they mounted the summit. Kiwi reinforcements held it for less than two days before being overwhelmed by Turkish forces.

“We are now all of us friends,” said Chaplain Lukin, ending his remarks in Maori – “Peace and happiness.”

## **An Irishman's Diary on the anti-conscription Archbishop of Melbourne and the pro-conscription prime minister**

**Padraic Collins**

**The Irish Times, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

One hundred years ago, on April 25th 1915, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) landed at Gallipoli in what is now Turkey.

The Anzacs suffered massive casualties, but the battle is often considered to be the foundation stone of modern Australia.

Less well remembered, but equally important from an Irish Catholic perspective, was the battle over conscription in Australia in the following two years. When the 1916 conscription plebiscite failed by 51 per cent to 49, the then prime minister Billy Hughes blamed “the selfish vote, and the shirker vote and the Irish vote”.

A Baptist who was raised in Wales, Hughes's main opponent in the lead-up to the second referendum 14 months later was Daniel Mannix, the Cork-born, Maynooth-educated, Archbishop of Melbourne.

Physically, the archbishop towered over the short prime minister. As Brenda Niall writes in her book *Mannix* (Text Publishing), he was so tall as a child that when the inspectors came to his school in Charleville to choose those ready to move from the Sisters of Mercy to the Christian Brothers, the nuns hid him in a cupboard.

Intellectually, Hughes and Mannix were a match for each other. Hughes was an umbrella repairer who had become a barrister, and Mannix had been president of St Patrick's seminary at Maynooth. In the battle for hearts and minds during the second referendum campaign, Hughes said Mannix was “a man to whom every German in the country looks . . . if you follow him you range yourself under the banner of the deadly enemies of Australia”.

He told journalist Keith Murdoch (Rupert Murdoch's father) that “the bulk of Irish people led by Archbishop Mannix . . . are attacking me with a venomous personal campaign”.

Hughes would later bemoan the Irish in Australia to British prime minister David Lloyd George: “[The church's] influence killed conscription. One of their archbishops – Mannix – is a Sinn Féiner. And I am trying to make up my mind whether I should prosecute him for statements hindering recruiting or deport him.”

Mannix was more measured in returning fire. He used enlistment statistics to show that Catholics were signing up in proportion to their share of the population, but did concede that: “I understand that not enough nuns are volunteering”.

The archbishop addressed mass rallies where he said the working class would pay the highest price in the war and that their sacrifice would be forgotten when it was over. Though based in Melbourne, newspapers throughout Australia reported his words.

The second referendum was lost by a greater margin than the first, with almost 54 per cent voting against conscription.

To say there was no love lost between Hughes and Mannix would be a vast understatement, but it was love that eventually made them friends.

On August 9th, 1937, just days before her 22nd birthday, Hughes's beloved daughter Helen died in a London nursing home. The cause of death was described as "complications after abdominal surgery", and there were rumours that she had had an abortion.

Until her death certificate was found in 2004, the true cause of Helen Hughes's death was known to very few. She had been pregnant when she left Australia and, in London, endured a 24-hour labour before giving birth to a son by caesarean section. She died from septicaemia.

Vincent Duffy, a Catholic who was acting secretary to the Australian High Commission in London, took charge of the baby. After his daughter's death, Hughes changed his will. He left the then huge sum of £5,000 to the baby, called David, and another £5,000 to Duffy, who appears to have fostered the child.

In her book, Niall suggests that Mannix knew the truth about Helen's death, and perhaps played some part in its aftermath. The then prime minister, Joseph Lyons, was a Catholic and knew Mannix well. He could have directed Duffy, through the High Commission, to help Hughes with the birth and death certificates and the care of the newborn child. And baby David, on Mannix's instigation, may have been kept in a London convent until his future was decided.

All that is known for certain is that Hughes, to the astonishment of his secretary, called to the archbishop's house in 1937, and they continued to meet and exchange letters after that.

Both men lived to a great age. Hughes died, aged 90, in October 1952, and Mannix died, aged 99 in November 1963. He was Archbishop of Melbourne, and still *compos mentis*, until the day he died.

With thanks to all the contributors particularly Peter Murtagh who reviewed the copy and provided photographs. For more information on Gallipoli and the decade of centenaries go to [www.irishtimes.com/century](http://www.irishtimes.com/century)

The list of Irish war dead from the First World War can be accessed at <http://imr.inflandersfields.be/search.html>

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission website can be accessed at <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx>

## **Suggested further reading**

*Field of Bones, an Irish Division in Gallipoli - Philip Orr*

*Neither Unionist nor Nationalist: The 10th (Irish) Division in the Great War 1914-1918 – Stephen Sandford*

*Ireland's Great War – Kevin Myers*

*The Glorious Madness: the Irish and World War One - Turtle Bunbury*

*Beneath a Turkish Sky – Philip Lecane*

*Gallipoli 1915 – Peter Doyle*

*They Shall Grow Not Old: Irish Soldiers and the Great War - Myles Dungan*

*Ireland and the Great War – Keith Jeffery*

*The Pals at Suvla Bay - Henry Hanna; foreword Lieut. Gen. Sir Bryan T. Mahon*

*A Coward If I Return, A Hero If I Fall - Neil Richardson*

*Gallipoli – Peter Hart*

*The Tenth Irish Division at Gallipoli - Bryan Cooper (who served in Gallipoli) and it can be accessed here:*

*[https://archive.org/stream/tenthirishdivisi00cooprich/tenthirishdivisi00cooprich\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/tenthirishdivisi00cooprich/tenthirishdivisi00cooprich_djvu.txt)*