

Ernest Robert Fairlie

A Brief History

Bruce Fairlie

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Ernest Robert Fairlie: A Short History
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Ernest Robert Fairlie

was born on Saturday 8 August, 1885 in the Western Victorian town of Lexton. On 8 May 1915, still short of his thirtieth birthday, he lay dead on a dry plain about a mile from the town of Krithia on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey.

He has no known grave.



1 Early Days

Ernest's father, Walter Fairlie, emigrated to Australia from Glasgow, arriving in Melbourne in April 1853 [1]. Walter was unusual for immigrants of that time; he had been relatively well educated. He had been apprenticed to a writer (solicitor) for four years and was employed as a general clerk [2] before he left Glasgow.

1.1 Melbourne

For three years after his arrival in Melbourne, Walter ran an agency in partnership with Robert Pringle (who immigrated on the same ship) based (upstairs) at 248 Great Lonsdale Street East. They received and wrote letters, sought missing friends [3–6] and imported and distributed Scottish-made confections and marmalades [7].

1.2 Lexton

In 1856, Walter purchased the general store in Lexton, a picturesque town at the eastern end of the Pyrenees Range, 160 km from Melbourne. John Semple and John Roxborough had established this business in 1854 as a butchers shop and general store. The store was located at the intersection of Goldsmith Street (now the Sunraysia Highway) and Williamson Street (now the Lexton - Talbot Road), diagonally opposite the Lexton Hotel (now the Pyrenees Family Hotel) [8]. Walter ran the store on his own until 1864 when John Roxborough joined him in partnership. The store was divided into two sections - a butchers shop, run by John Roxborough and a grocery store, run by Walter.

The store was quite successful, enjoying a number of profitable government contracts (see for example [9] and [10]) and the partnership continued for twenty-four years.

The partnership was fruitful in more ways than the successful operation of the store. In 1870, Walter married Catherine (Kate) Cameron, John Roxborough's sister-in-law. Catherine was born in Prahran, Victoria on 7 July 1850, 22 years after Walter. Her parents, John and Christina, had arrived in Melbourne in 1848. From 1853 to 1867 John owned and operated the Balmoral Castle Hotel, a well known landmark in Commercial Road, Prahran.



Figure 1: *Walter and Catherine on their Wedding Day, 30 March 1870.*



Figure 2: *The Fairlie Family in about 1895. Front row: (left to right) Teenie, Ernest, Walter, Kit, Catherine, Archie, Janet. Back row: Will, Ted, Walter, Alex, Harold [11].*

Walter and Catherine set up a family home in Lexton. They lived in a double brick home immediately behind the store in Williamson Street while the Roxborough family lived in premises attached to the store [8]. The area of land around the Fairlie's house was big enough for them to have their own cow.

They wasted no time in starting a family. Their first child, Christina Lockhart (Teenie) (1871-1925) was born on 14 March 1871. Then followed Walter John (1873-1947), Alexander Charles (Alex) (1874-1948), Janet (1876-1953), William Cameron (Will) (1877-1959), Edward James (Ted) (1879-1961), Harold Allan (1881-1968), Archibald Douglas (Archie) (1883-1948), Ernest Robert (Ern) (1885-1915) and finally Catherine Flora Mabel (Kit) (1887-1953). The children were fortunate to be born into a very loving and caring family. They were raised by parents who, while they had very strong moral values, also taught their children to be tolerant and understanding.

The family were relatively well off. They employed a maid; her name was Mary-Anne. The family had a piano and they would often gather around the



Figure 3: *The Lexton Store in about 1903, after Walter had sold it [8].*

piano and have a sing-a-long. Walter was a quietly spoken and gentle man. He had a great love of reading, in particular the classics. All the children were encouraged to read. He had an excellent library, including both novels and books of poetry. Walter and Catherine were members of the Lexton Presbyterian church. Walter had been part of the building committee for the original church [12] and they were amongst the members of the congregation who donated money in 1876 to re-build the church.

As well as operating the general store, Walter was active in many aspects of community life in Lexton. In 1856, soon after he arrived in Lexton, he signed a petition for the building of a government school in the town [13]. He held the position of Postmaster from the end of 1872 until 1889 when his eldest daughter, Christina took over the position [8]. He was a Justice of the Peace (Territorial Magistrate) for most of his time in Lexton [14] and was one of the Licensing Magistrates for the Lexton Licensing District from 1872 until at least 1885 (see for example [15]). In 1888, the partnership between Walter Fairlie and John Roxborough was dissolved on John's death. On 31 July 1888, the following advertisement appeared in the *Talbot Leader* [8]:

Lexton Stores Lexton
Walter Fairlie

begs to inform his old customers that he has recommenced business as *General Storekeeper* at the old established Lexton Store, founded in 1854 by the deceased Messrs. Semple and Roxborough and suc-

cessfully carried on for the last 24 years by the late firm of Fairlie and Roxborough. The stock is entirely new and he begs respectfully to solicit a share of local support.

Walter continued to run the store by himself until about the end of 1891 when failing health led him to sell the store and move to Melbourne.

2 Education

Little is known of Ernest's early life in Lexton. As he was six years old when the family moved to Melbourne, it is probable that he would have attended the local primary school in Lexton (where his eldest brother, Walter, was a Pupil Teacher) for at least a part of 1891.

2.1 Primary School

In Melbourne, the family lived at 35 Canterbury Road, Toorak [16] for about twelve months before moving to 109 Williams Road, Prahran in 1893 [17]. Ern attended the local school, Toorak State School (No. 3016 established in 1890; it later became the Toorak Central School) from 1892 until 1897 [18].



Figure 4: *Toorak Central School.*

2.2 Hawthorn College

Prior to 1901, Victoria made no provision in its Education Acts for a State-run system of secondary education. The Merit Certificate, awarded by the elementary schools at the conclusion of Grade 8, marked the end of formal schooling for most children. The only route from there to the University was via the privately operated grammar schools.

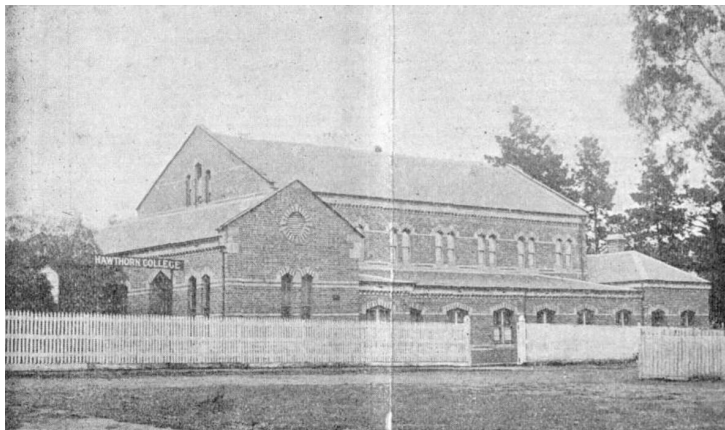
In 1887, Professor Pearson, a member of the Board of Commissioners of Education, noted [19, p. 143] that “it was an anomaly for the State wholly to maintain elementary schools and to subsidize the University, while making, at

the same time, no attempt to bridge the gap that separated the two". Given the huge vested interests in continuing the exclusivity of the grammar schools, great political difficulty was associated with the creation of High Schools at that time. He therefore did the next best thing by creating

... a system of scholarships on such a liberal scale and so devised that clever girls and boys from all parts of the colony might participate in its advantages. Under it, 200 scholarships of the annual value of £10, tenable at an approved secondary school, were awarded. [19, p. 144]

The first examinations for the award of these scholarships were held in 1886 when 313 candidates sat. However, the financial restrictions brought on by the depression of the 1890's saw the number of scholarships reduced in 1891, with a further reduction to just 75 in the following year. In 1893, the scholarship scheme was discontinued completely, not to be re-introduced until 1901. Then,

... in 1894, the offers of several of the leading secondary schools to grant scholarships on somewhat similar lines to those that the Department had been following were accepted, the arrangements for carrying out the examination being undertaken by the Department. The aggregate value of those offered in 1896 was said to be about £5,000. [19, pages 144-145]



In 1897, at 12 years of age, Ern won one of these scholarships that entitled him to attend Hawthorn College for three years.

Hawthorn College was located in Minona Street Hawthorn (accessed from Burwood Road) in the area then known as Hepburn Hill¹. It was founded by George Coutie in 1910 [20]. Much of the original building is still standing today and is known as the Augustine Centre.

Figure 5: Hawthorn College in 1901 [20].

The prospectus for the College in 1902 [20] places great emphasis on preparation for the Matriculation examination, noting that:

¹My mother and I both attended kindergarten in buildings once associated with the college



Figure 6: Hawthorn College Buildings Today - the Augustine Centre.

Passing the Matriculation Examination is practically compulsory, not only for those who desire to enter the University, but also for those who aim at securing admission into first-class commercial houses. Hence this examination constitutes one of the best tests of the thoroughness of the senior work in secondary schools. Hawthorn College has, since 1893, passed no fewer than one hundred and thirty-eight (138) pupils in this examination.

and proudly presenting a comparison of their results with those of other Melbourne schools [20].

Ernest Fairlie was one of the successful candidates at the 1901 Matriculation Examination [21]. He was awarded a prize for "Various Subjects" in the Best Matric. Form prize list at the Hawthorn College speech day held on 13 December 1901 [22].

Among those who passed the Matriculation Examination at Hawthorn College in 1901 was

Owen (later Sir Owen) Dixon. Dixon attended the University of Melbourne (B.A., 1906; LL.B., 1908; M.A., 1909) and was admitted to the bar in March

1901. Latest Matriculation Results. 1901.

Hawthorn College obtained 18 Passes in the Matriculation Examination in 1901.

	No. of Passes Dec., 1901.	Totals since 1893.
HAWTHORN COLLEGE	14	152
Scotch College	26	201
Wesley College	19	135
C.E. Grammar School	8	93
St. Francis Xavier's	6	81
C.E.G.S., Geelong	3	61
All the other Boys' Schools in Hawthorn, Kew, Camberwell, Surrey Hills together	3	71

1910. Appointed K.C. in 1922, he became its “outstanding lawyer and its greatest advocate” [23]. He was appointed to the High Court in 1929. After serving as Australian Ambassador in Washington during the Second World War, Dixon was appointed chief justice in 1952, a position he was to hold until he retired twelve years later.

3 Teaching

Ernest now had to decide where his future lay. With a good Matriculation pass, he was qualified to enter the University. However, without the support of a scholarship, it seems unlikely that his family’s financial state could support such a choice. He could, as the Hawthorn College prospectus suggested, have “secured admission into a first-class commercial house”. He chose, however, to enter the teaching profession.

In making this decision, he was no doubt influenced by his eldest brother Walter who was already a highly regarded teacher. Walter had attended the Teachers’ Training College from 1889 and by 1897 had been appointed Head Teacher at the Invermay Primary School, a small school north of Ballarat. He was certificated in 1901. He had a long and illustrious career in and around Ballarat, becoming Head Master of the Urquhart Street School in Ballarat in 1931. He was also very active in union affairs, becoming President of the Victorian State School Teachers’ Union in 1917.

3.1 Teachers’ Training College

Ern attended the Melbourne Teachers’ College from 1902. He was appointed a Pupil Teacher on probation from 12 November 1902. He began his teaching career at the Campbellfield State School (No. 143) on the northern outskirts of Melbourne, and remained there for the following two years while he continued his training

3.2 A Brave Rescue

During the summer holidays in 1902/3, Ern joined a number of his friends at a camp, initiated by ‘Bert Lavers, on the foreshore two or three miles (about 4 km) south of Frankston in the area known today as Davey’s Bay. The camp was quite substantial, with two sleeping tents and a provisioning tent. Many of the party had been required to return to Melbourne at the end of the Christmas break, and by early January only Ern and five others remained. They were:

- Robert Bertram, 18. Robert lived in Chatsworth Road, Prahran, close to where Ern now lived.
- Frederick Biddle, 17. Matriculated with Ern at Hawthorn College.

- Herbert Lavers, 19. Also an old-boy of Hawthorn College and then a student at the Melbourne Art Gallery.
- Keith Lavers, 15. Brother of Herbert.
- Herbert Sissons, 16. Another ex-Hawthorn College student now studying engineering at the Working Men's College (now RMIT University).

The boys had been in the habit of swimming three or four times a day, and at about 12:30 p.m. on Monday 5 January went for their usual pre-lunch swim. They discovered that the strong Westerly wind that had blown for the last day or so had produced a very heavy swell, with large rollers breaking on the beach, creating a number of strong undertows and rips. 'Bert Lavers, Sisson and Biddle, none of whom could swim more than a few strokes, were the first to enter the water. Lavers remained in the shallows while the others proceeded into the surf. He warned them of the approach of a particularly large wave which knocked them over. They quickly found themselves out of their depth and in some difficulty, and shouted for help.

Ern, the only strong swimmer in the group, immediately plunged into the water and, after some difficulty managed to rescue Biddle, who was by now totally exhausted and only semi-conscious. While attempting to rescue Sisson, Bert Lavers had found himself in difficulties as well. Ern joined hands with Bertram and waded in once more with the intent of reaching Sissons, but had not gone far when they became separated. Seeing his companion being carried out by a strong rip, Ern swam to him and managed to drag him almost to the beach where he lost his grip on the now semi-conscious Bertram. Keith Lavers ran into the surf and grabbed Bertram just in time to stop him being carried out to sea once more.

Sissons and Bert Lavers had meanwhile disappeared and were not seen alive again.

Despite every attempt by Constable Grey and a number of others to recover the bodies, they were defeated by the rough weather on that and each the following few days. The bodies were not recovered until late in the afternoon of Saturday 10 January. Sissons' body was found washed up on a rock ledge about half a mile (0.8 km) closer to Frankston, while the remains of Herbert Lavers was found floating in the water near Frankston pier, more the two miles (3.5 km) away.

The two boys rescued by Ern required medical attention in Frankston, but were allowed to return to their homes in Melbourne two days later.

This unfortunate incident was reported widely across Australia, articles appearing in newspapers in South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales. As might be expected, the reports varied considerably in the details of what had actually taken place in the lead-up to the tragedy. What appears above is my best effort to distil a logical story from the more detailed of these reports, in particular [24–29].

A magisterial inquiry was held before Captain Sherlock J.P. on Tuesday 13 January [30], [31]. A verdict of accidental drowning was returned. During the course of his evidence, Frederick Biddle said that it was only through the gallantry of Fairlie that his and Bertram's lives were saved. He hoped that some recognition would be given to Fairlie "for, although exhausted, he had again plunged into the water to rescue others". Constable Gray said that Fairlie's heroic conduct had already been reported to the Royal Humane Society. Captain Sherlock said that he would supplement the report.

On 17 March 1903 it was announced [32] that Ernest Fairlie had been awarded the Royal Humane Society of Australasia's bronze medal for his part in the rescue. Robert Bertram was awarded the Society's certificate for his attempts to rescue Herbert Sissons, while a record was placed in the archives noting the conduct of Herbert Lavers, who lost his life in attempting to rescue Herbert Sissons. The distribution of the awards took place in the Melbourne Town Hall on Monday 31 August [34] [35] in the presence of Audrey Lady Tennyson (the wife of the Governor-General), Sir Edmund Barton (Australia's first Prime Minister), the Bishop of Melbourne, and Sir John Forrest (the Minister for Home Affairs). From 65 applications to the Society during the year, 30 awards had been made including nine bronze medals, six of which had been awarded to Victorians. The directors of the Society "strongly desired the extension of swimming baths in schools, and trusted the Director of Education would use his influence in this direction". Lady Tennyson made the presentations of awards to the Victorian recipients. Ern's citation reads [36]:

That the Courage and Humanity displayed by Ernest Fairlie of Chatsworth road, East Prahran, a State-School teacher aged 17 years, in rescuing Leslie Biddle of Powlett street, East Melbourne, 17 years of age, and attempting to rescue Herbert Sissons of Mitchell street, Brunswick, 16 years of age, a student, on 5 January 1903 at Beachleigh near Frankston, call for the admiration of this Court and justly entitles him to the Bronze Medal of this Society which is hereby awarded.



Figure 7: The Bronze Medal awarded to Ern in 1903 [33].

3.3 Back to Teaching

Ern continued to apply himself diligently to his teacher training and at the end of 1903 obtained his Second Class qualification. He obtained good reports from his inspectors ("Willing - steadily improving"; "A good student teacher") [37] and completed his formal training at the end of 1904, obtained his First Class quali-



Figure 8: *Carlton Primary School (No. 2365).*

fication on 1 April 1905. In July 1905 Ern was transferred to the Carlton (Queensberry Street) State School (No. 2365 - the school is defunct but the buildings remain, now classified by the National Trust) where he was appointed as a Pupil Teacher. He apparently did not impress the inspector at this school who stated: "Too heavy and stolid in manner. He is a good general teacher, but he is not suited to a school such as this."

In May 1906, Ern began his mandatory period of teaching in country schools. He was appointed Head Teacher at the Purdeet State School (No. 1223), a

small school located 10 km south-east of Penshurst in the Western District of Victoria. He was obviously much better suited to this environment. In August 1906, his inspector's report said:

He has been energetic and earnest in arranging, preparing and carrying out his school work. He has won the good will of the scholars and parents. He is a good teacher. 83 Good.

Ern was promoted to Sixth Class teacher from 24 July 1908 and was transferred on 31 August to be the Head Teacher at the Boram Boram State School (No. 2454). This was another small school although larger than that at Purdeet. It was located 4 km north of Penshurst. A report from an inspector very soon after he arrived at Boram Boram (28 September) stated:

He has made a very good start in his new school. Desires to excel and has the capabilities to do so. 85. V. Good.

He was to stay at Boram Boram until the end of 1910. During 1910 he began studying part time towards a Diploma of Education, passing two first-year subjects (Deductive Logic and English Part I) at the examinations in November 1910 [38].

The last of Ern's inspector's reports at Boram Boram (19 September 1910) states:

A very good teacher. Very earnest in his work and diligent in his studies. Keeps himself up to date. Shows good interest in his work. Has very nice style with children and is much thought of by all parents. Uses very good methods and has improved his teaching prowess still more. His school is in a very satisfactory state. 90. V. Good.

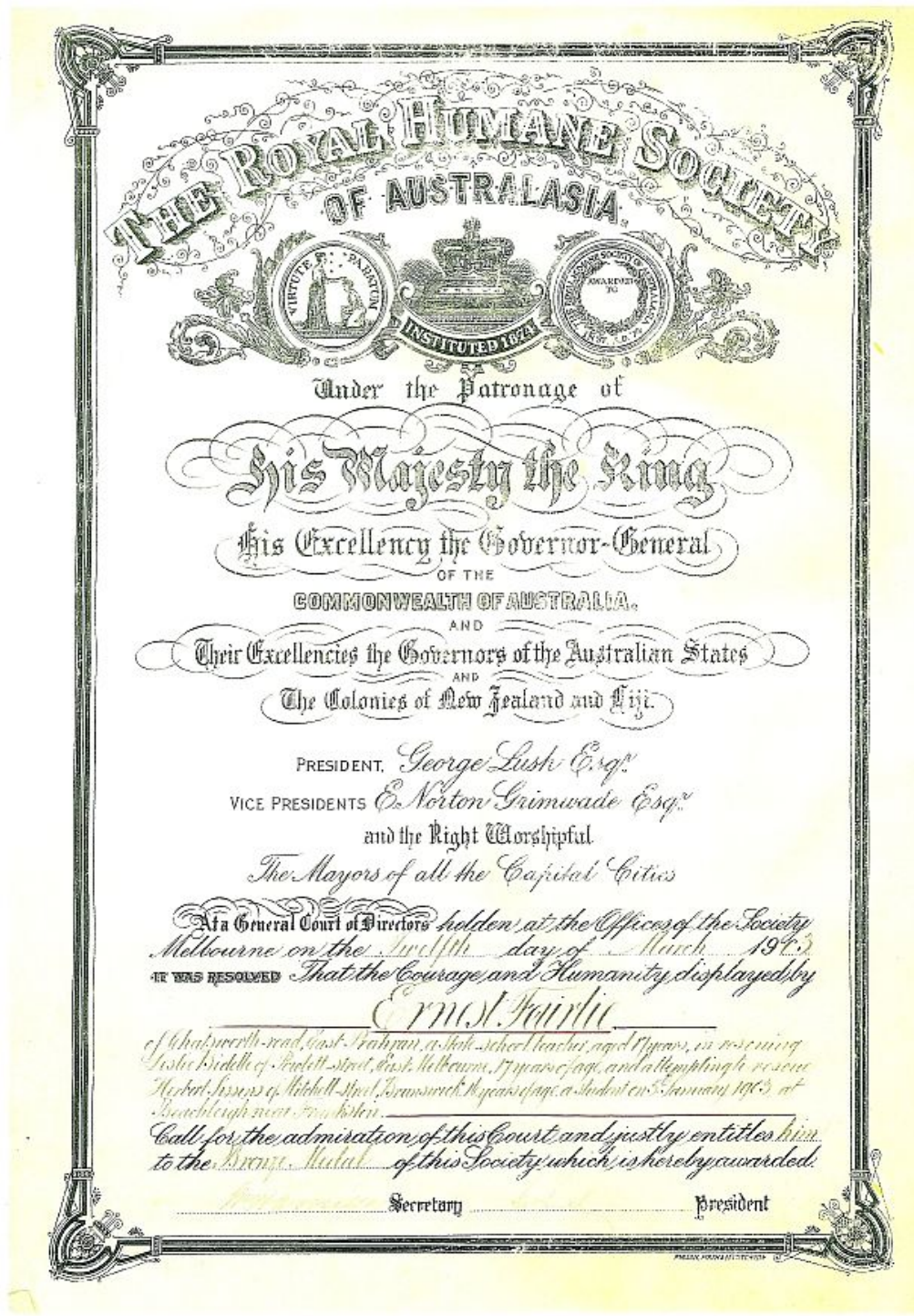


Figure 9: Certificate awarding Bronze Medal to Ernest Fairlie [36].

Ern spent 1911 as a Temporary Assistant back at the Carlton (Queensberry Street) State School. This time he made a much better impression, his inspector's report of 20 February, 1912 stating:

Very good and effective – thoroughly in earnest. Seen at this inspection to gain the confidence of a junior class (of which he was in charge) and taught them quite as well as his old 6th class. 92.

He continued his studies, passing a further two first year Diploma of Education subjects (Education A and Pure Maths I) in November of that year [39]. This completed the requirements for the first year of the Diploma course.

In March 1912, Ern was appointed as a Temporary Assistant at the Melbourne High School² and he remained there for all of 1912. During the year he completed the requirements for his Diploma of Education and was duly awarded the Diploma on 23 December, 1912 [40].

In February 1913 Ern was transferred, again as a Temporary Assistant, to Higher Elementary School No. 3750. This was the embryonic Essendon High School, the first State high school in metropolitan Melbourne. The school opened on 4 February 1913 and was upgraded to high school status on 4 March 1914.

Ern was to spend just two months at Essendon. He was transferred to the Shepparton Agricultural High School at the end of March 1913. While at Shepparton, Ern was promoted to 1st Honours, *qualifying* him to be appointed Head Master of any of the largest schools in the State, regardless of how improbable such an appointment might have been.

From 1 January 1914, Ern was appointed as 3rd Master at the Melbourne High School. He ceased duty there on 9 September 1914, "to join Expeditionary Force".

By this time, Ern had become an extremely competent teacher, well respected by his pupils, their parents and the education authorities. He had obtained glowing reports from his inspectors, being awarded marks that Walter, his eldest brother, could not match at an equivalent time in his career. It is a great pity that such a promising career should be cut short by events shortly to take place.

4 Enlistment

Despite ceasing duty at Melbourne High School on 9 September, Ern actually enlisted in the A.I.F. at the Melbourne Town Hall on 8 September 1914 [42]. He

²At this time, Melbourne High School was still a co-educational school, and remained at the site of the Melbourne Continuation School in Spring Street, Melbourne (currently occupied by the Royal Australian College of Surgeons building). Melbourne High did not move to its current South Yarra site and became a boys only school until 1927

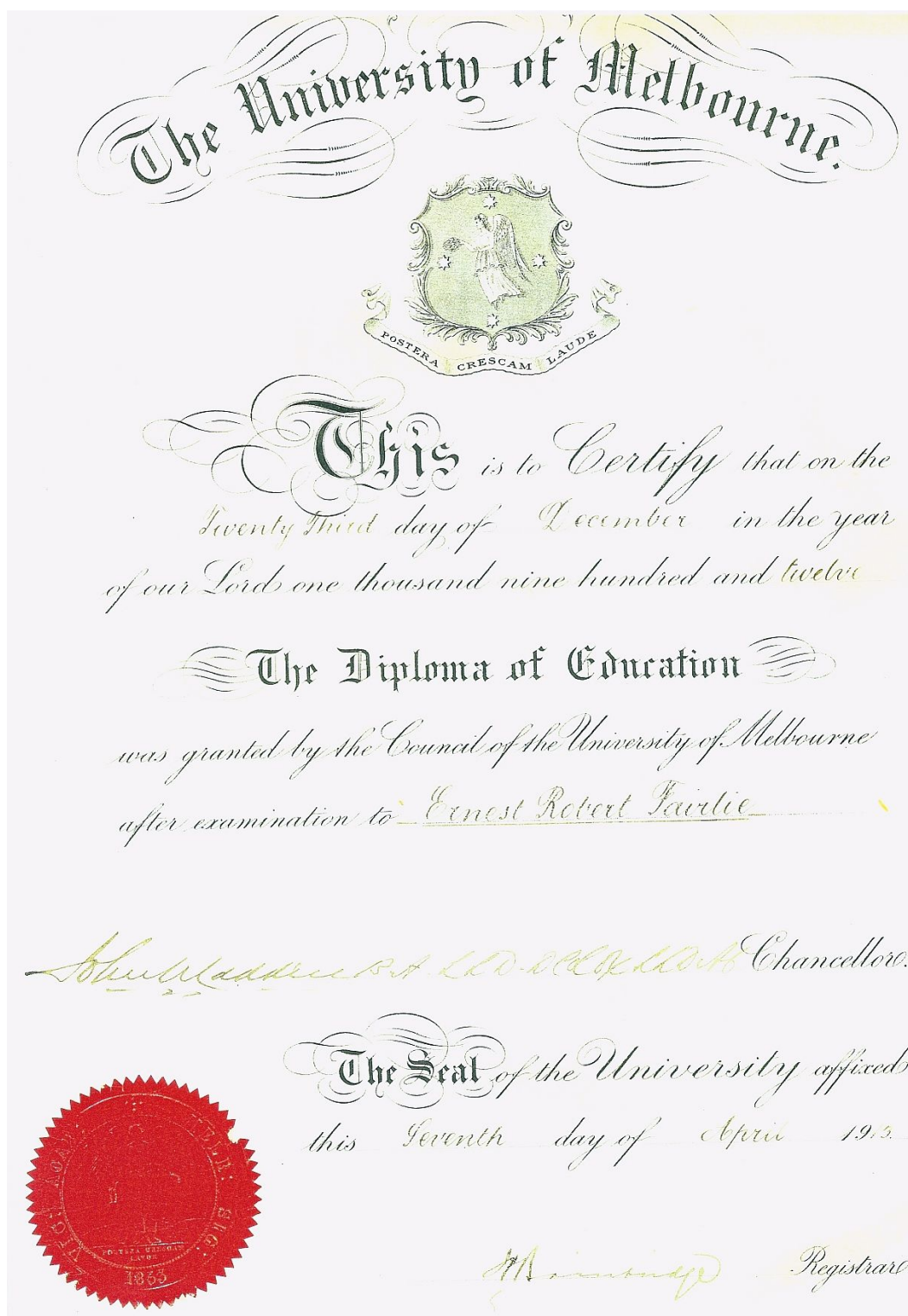


Figure 10: Diploma of Education [40].



TEACHING STAFF, 1913:—Standing (left to right): Miss Taylor, Miss Kewish, Miss Clutterbuck. Seated: Messrs. W. H. Callister, F. Treyvaud, H. Liddelow, E. Fairley (killed Great War).

Figure 11: *Shepparton Agricultural High School Teaching Staff, 1913 [41].*

attested that he would serve “. . . in the Australian Imperial Force from 8/9/14 until the end of the war, and a further period of four months thereafter unless lawfully discharged, dismissed, or removed therefrom.” He successfully passed the medical examination and was appointed as a private soldier to A Company, 5th Battalion, A.I.F., Regimental Number 993³.

The 5th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the A.I.F. Like the 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions it was recruited entirely from within Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade. The 5th Battalion was made up of recruits from recruiting depots located south of the Yarra, as well as past members of the old Victorian Scottish Regiment and Victorian Rifles. ‘A’ Company was made up almost entirely of ex-members of the Victorian Scottish Regiment. As Ern had been a member of the Victorian Scottish Regiment for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years [42], his appointment appears to have been entirely appropriate.

³Regimental Numbers are sometimes referred to as Service Numbers, but were only unique within a soldier’s Battalion [43]. They were allocated, starting at number one, pretty much in the order of enlistment. Thus, Ern was about the 993rd to enlist in the 5th Battalion

4.1 Broadmeadows Camp

The 5th Battalion had begun recruiting in early August, with the first attestations made on 15 August. On 19 August, the first draft of 790 men were marched into camp at Broadmeadows. This camp was the main centre for the induction and training of recruits. It was established at "Mornington Park", a property loaned to the government by Mr R.G. Wilson. Initially, conditions at Broadmeadows were spartan; it was an entirely tented camp with little infrastructure in place. Clothing and equipment were also in very short supply, a result of the ordinance organisation still being set up for operation in peace time rather than war.



Figure 12: *Recruits Arriving at Broadmeadows Camp [44].*

Several more drafts of men arrived at Broadmeadows until 29 August when the Battalion reached its authorised strength and the recruiting depots were closed. However, on 2 September, permission was obtained to recruit up to 5% over strength. These recruits were used to make up for wastage, mainly due to men being discharged as medically unfit. Ern was one of these final recruits to the Battalion.

Most of the recruits were men who were currently serving in the Citizen Forces or had seen service in the Militia or other military unit. Basic recruit training could therefore be limited to the first two weeks in Camp. Musketry was carried out at the Williamstown range, companies being transported to and from the range by train. During the latter part of the Camp, the Battalion took part in Battalion versus Battalion manoeuvres, and eventually two Battalions

working as a Brigade against the other two Battalions of the 2nd Brigade.

Unlike later units, the 2nd Brigade (and the 1st Battalion) was made up of mostly older men, with an average age of about 25 (only about 20% were under 21). They were also predominantly (90%) unmarried. However, Bean [45, pages 43-4] notes that:

The first fine rush to enlistment brought to the 1st Australian Division a class of men not quite the same as that which answered to any later call. All the adventurous roving natures that could not stay away, whatever their duties and their ties; . . . all the romantic, quixotic, adventurous flotsam that eddied on the surface of the Australian people concentrated itself within those first weeks upon the recruiting offices of the A.I.F. The men who would not wait for commissions as officers, which were to be had almost for the asking by any educated Australian if he chose to go to Great Britain; . . . the men whose greatest fear was that they would not be "in" whatever was going, and that the war might be over before they reached the fighting, these were the material with which the ranks of the twelve infant battalions of the 1st Australian Division rapidly swelled.

Why was Ern originally enlisted as a Private? His age and education, should have made him a prime candidate to become an officer. But as Bean [45, page 54] notes:

. . . promotion of selected men from the ranks was the system by which the A.I.F. obtained nearly all its officers. But in the original 1st Australian Division the great majority were selected from those who were officers already. Only 24 officers out of 631 had never served before; 68 were, or had been, officers of the Australian permanent forces, including 23 Duntroon graduates; 16 were officers of the British regular army; 15 were British officers who had retired; 99 were thus professional soldiers.

5 The "Great Adventure" Begins

Many who enlisted in those early days of the A.I.F. saw it as a chance for a great adventure, an opportunity to see the world as well as to serve King and Empire. They were to find that the reality of war was very different. Nevertheless, at the time, the men of the 2nd Brigade could not wait to be on their way. The original plan had been for the horses to leave in slower ships from about 26 August, with the troop transports to follow as they were ready. But the presence of German battleships along the route to be taken by the transports led the Australian Government to insist that the transports should not leave without a protective convoy.

A number of false alarms raised the hopes of those at Broadmeadows, only to have them dashed when nothing eventuated. Finally, the order came to break camp and early on the morning of Wednesday 21 October, the Brigade boarded a train that would take them to Melbourne.

5.1 A Note on Sources

From this point in Ern's life, right up until his death in May 1915, very little information specific to him is available. His Army Personnel File [42] is unusually terse. The two entries in his service history note just the ship on which he embarked, and that he was killed in action. There is no record of his promotion to Lance-Corporal, but we know that this happened before he reached the Gallipoli Peninsular. Had he already been promoted before he left Australia? Or was it not until the troops were already in Egypt? We will probably never know.

Hence, what follows is a general account of the movements and activities of the 5th Battalion, the 2nd Brigade and the greater Australian Infantry Force. Wherever possible details of immediate application to Ern are included, but these are sparse. Unfortunately, the War Diaries of the 5th Battalion [46] and the 2nd Brigade, [47] [48] from their formation up until early April, are very brief. War Diaries do not exist (or at least are not held by the Australian War Memorial) for the period from early April to the middle of May for either the 5th Battalion or the 2nd Brigade. The War Diary for the 2nd Brigade [49] includes a note that the original diaries for this period, at least for the Brigade, had been lost.

Fortunately, personal diaries of several individuals whose movements mirrored Ern's do exist: a crew man on the ship carrying the 5th Battalion [50]; a medical orderly who was in Egypt [51] and Gallipoli [52] with the 2nd Brigade; and several members of the 5th [53, 54, 55], 6th [56] and 7th Battalions [57]. For many details, however, we are reliant on the official War History so capably created by Bean [45].

5.2 Leaving Melbourne



Figure 13: HMAT A3 Orvieto.

The troop ships had been chartered by the Government from amongst the largest ships then in Australian waters. They had been hurriedly converted to troopships by adding mess tables and hammocks throughout their lower decks. The ships were numbered A1 to A28, and among them the finest, if not the largest vessel, A3, the *Orvieto*, was reserved for the Headquarters staff of the Brigade. The 5th Battalion was fortunate to share this relatively comfortable ship.

The *Orvieto* was a passenger ship of 12,130 tons displacement with an average cruising speed of 15 knots and a maximum speed of 18 knots. She was owned by the Orient SN Co. Ltd. of London and had been on her way to Australia when war was declared. As a passenger ship, she carried 235 first class, 186 second class and 696 third class passengers. As a troop ship, she carried 91 officers and 1,347 other ranks.

From the train, the troops were marched down City Road and along Bay Street to Railway Pier where the *Orvieto* was moored.

Word had quickly spread through the city that the troops were on their way and before long a large crowd had gathered at the gates to Railway Pier, Port Melbourne wishing to bid farewell to the troops. At about half-past two the crowd tried to rush the gate, but they were restrained by pickets with bayonets fixed.



Figure 14: 5th Battalion March Along Railway Pier to Embark on HMAT Orvieto [58].

As the *Orvieto* was the fastest of the ships departing Melbourne, and given her special status with the commander of the 1st Division, A.I.F., General (later Sir) William Bridges and his Headquarters Staff on board, she was the last to cast off. But well before this, the crowd broke through the gates and rushed along the pier. Just after three o'clock, the *Orvieto* pulled out and started on her long voyage. Alfred Hotton, one of *Orvieto*'s crew, described the scene in his diary [50]:

The military band on board struck up the National Anthem as the ship pulled away from the wharf at 3 p.m. Soldiers crowded the decks everywhere and rigging up to the masthead was crowded with soldiers, looking like one mass of khaki, from mast to deck. Many small craft followed us as close as they dare to come and turned back and lost to sight very soon.

5.3 In Convoy

The presence of German warships in the Indian Ocean meant that the Australian Government required that the troop ships should travel in convoy with accompanying war ships for protection. As Australia's southern coastline was considered to be relatively free from German influences, the troop ships made their individual ways from their ports of origin around Australia and New Zealand to a meeting point in King George's Sound, the harbour of the city of Albany on the South coast of Western Australia.

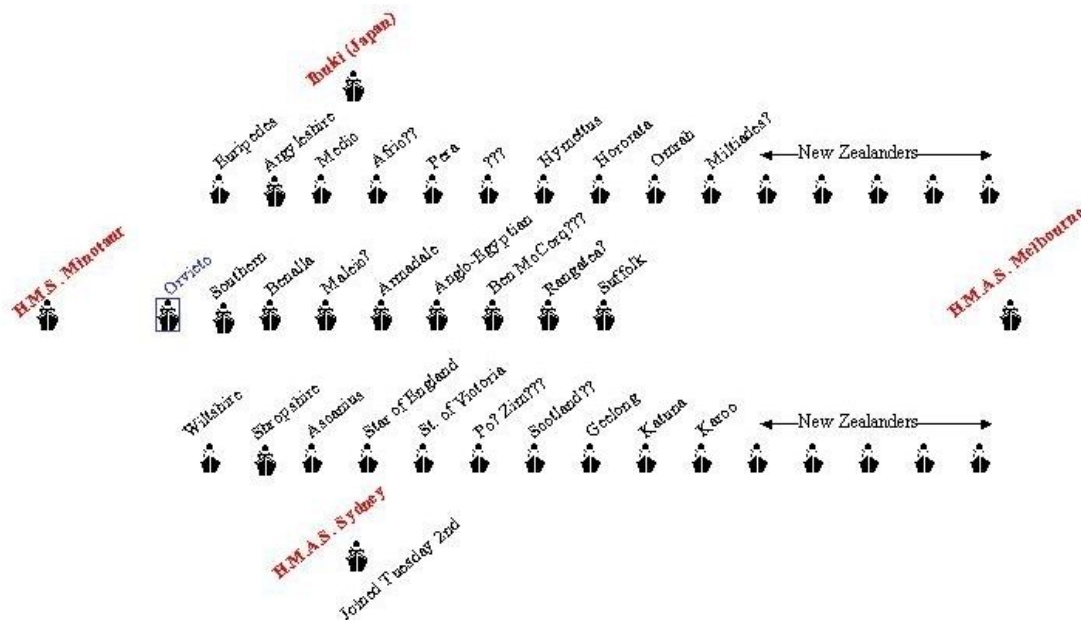


Figure 15: Arrangement of Convoy [45].

The first ships arrived in King George's Sound on 24 October. On 26 October, the *Orvielo* arrived. Eighteen ships were already in the outer harbour. All day others were arriving from every part of Australia. Ten ships carrying the New Zealand contingent arrived on 29 October. They were accompanied by five cruisers including the Japanese *Ibuki* and the British *Minotaur*. This completed the convoy, with the exception of two ships carrying the Western Australians who would join the convoy later on its way to the Indian Ocean.



Figure 16: “*Emden beached and done for*”. Painting by Arthur Burgess [59].

At 6:25 a.m. on 1 November, the cruisers *Sydney* and *Minotaur* up-anchored and moved out to sea. By 8:55 a.m., the convoy was complete, and thirty-six transports and three escorting cruisers moved ahead. Two days later the *Ibuki* and the two Western Australian ships joined the convoy. At that stage, the convoy was arranged as shown in Figure 15, with the *Orvieto* the leading ship in the centre line, the one from which all orders were taken and sent to other ships of the convoy.

The speed of a convoy is limited by the best speed of its slowest ship. In this case it was the *Southern*. She could barely make 9 knots and that only under the very best of conditions. She was considered [50] to be “the lame duck of the fleet; if it were not for we could get along much quicker”. She was also costing the Australian Government a considerable sum for the hire of the other ships in the convoy for the extra days the voyage took.

At 6:24 a.m. on Monday 9 November, a radio signal was heard from the Cocos Island station: “S.O.S. Strange warship approaching”. Nothing more was heard. *Sydney* was therefore instructed to make all speed for the Cocos Islands. She sighted the German cruiser *Emden* at 9:30 a.m. and engaged with her. At 11:10 a.m., she sent a signal: “*Emden beached and done for*”. An order from General Bridges brought work to a stop and gave the troops a half-day holiday.

News was then received that the German raider *Konigsberg* had been defi-

nately located on the coast of Africa. The *Konigsberg* together with the *Emden* had, up until that time formed the basis of the naval threat to the convoy. With one destroyed, and the other thousands of miles away, the transports could push on unguarded. Three Australian transports and the New Zealand transports were sent on ahead to Colombo to obtain coal and water.



Figure 17: Australian Troopships Lying Outside Colombo Harbour [60].

Orvieto arrived at Colombo at about 1:30 p.m. on 15 November. About 8:00 p.m. the next evening, the captain of the *Emden*, three officers and 45 its crew were transferred to the *Orvieto* where they were to remain until being off-loaded in Port Said.

The convoy sailed from Colombo on 17 November, *Orvieto* being amongst the last to weigh anchor at about 11:00 p.m. Following an incident-free passage, the convoy reached Aden on the morning of 25 November. After taking on stores and coal, the convoy departed, bound for Suez on 26 November.

Since before their departure from Melbourne, there had been an expectation that the convoy would take the troops to England where they would complete their training before joining the battle on the Western Front. However, on the night of 27 November, General Bridges received a telegram from Sir George

Reid, the Australian High Commissioner in London, stating that [45]:

Unforeseen circumstances decide that the force shall train in Egypt and go to the front from there. The Australians and New Zealanders are to form a corps under General Birdwood. The locality of the camp is near Cairo.

The reason for this late change in plans was, at the time, unclear. While many explanations were suggested, the real reason was the poor state of the camps where the Australians were originally headed. These camps had been set up on and around Salisbury Plain and had no permanent accommodation. With the onset of winter the camps had turned into "archipelagos of tents in a knee-deep sea of mud" [45]. When it became clear that the long-promised huts could not be completed in time for the arrival of the Australians, the Australian High Commissioner intervened with Lord Kitchener to have the convoy re-routed to Egypt.

The *Orvieto* carrying General Bridges and the *Maunganui* with Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, the commander of the New Zealand force were allowed to make their own speed ahead of the other transports to Suez. After passing through the canal, *Orvieto* arrived at Port Said at 6:30 a.m. on 1 December. The following morning, 'A' Company, 5 Battalion (Ern's company) under the command of Major Sakar disembarked and proceeded, as an advance party for the Brigade, to Cairo by train. The ships left Port Said later that day bound for Alexandria where the remainder of troops started disembarking early in the morning of 3 December before proceeding to Cairo by train.

5.4 Egypt

Mena Camp, named after the Mena House Hotel on its outskirts, was located about 10 miles (16 km) from the centre of Cairo on a stretch of sandy desert overlooked by the Pyramids. Initially, conditions at Mena were fairly primitive. Given the difficulty of locating and shipping tents for 20,000 men in the short time since the decision was taken to divert the Australians to Egypt, most slept under the stars for the first few weeks.

At Mena, training was carried out for eight or more hours every day except Sunday, often including a march of several miles out to and back from the training area. These marches, through soft sand and with full kit and heavy packs, quickly hardened up the men. Once again the training was to focus on operations initially as companies, then as battalions and finally as brigades. If time permitted, the intention was to exercise as a whole division.

Late in December, Major General W. R. Birdwood, who was to command the combined Australian and New Zealand forces arrived in Egypt from India. His first duty was to organise the disconnected units of the two forces into a unified army corps. He sent General Bridges his plans for the constitution of

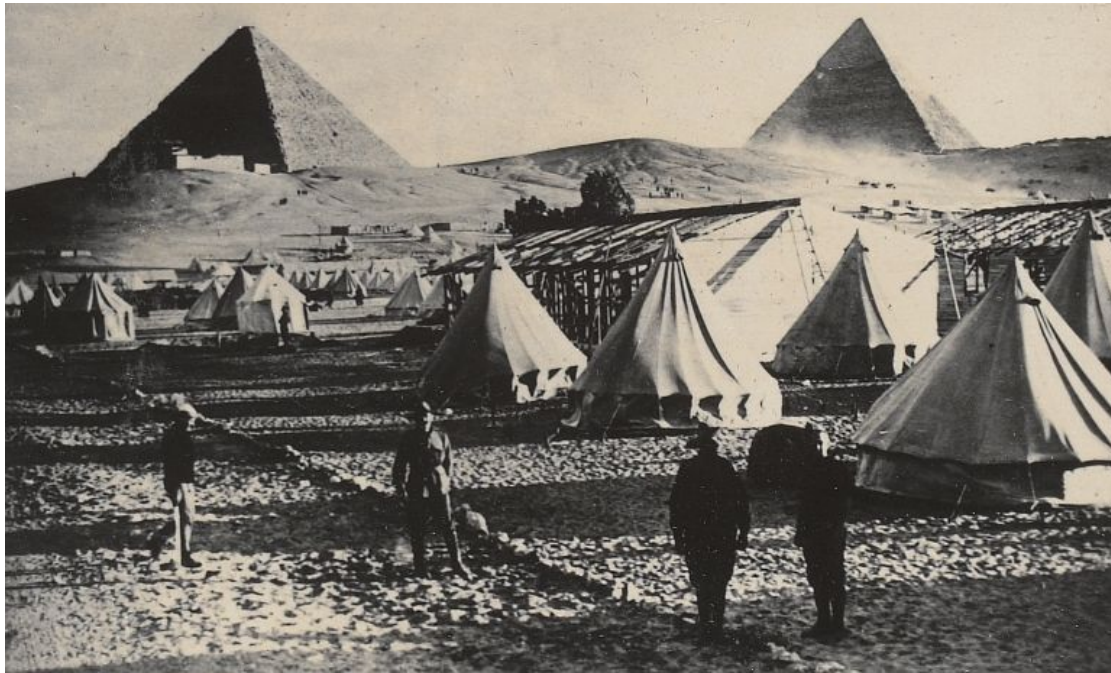


Figure 18: *Mena Camp [61].*

the army corps on 24 December. At the wish of the commanders, it was to be called the “Australian and New Zealand Army Corps”. This was very quickly shortened to ANZAC.

In January 1915, in an attempt to convince Turkey to withdraw from the war, the British War Council authorised a naval attack on the Dardanelles, with the ultimate objective of taking Constantinople. By the beginning of March it was clear that this attack had so far been a failure, and was very unlikely to succeed without the addition of a land force of considerable size.

After some consideration, Lord Kitchener agreed in principle to a land attack on the Gallipoli Peninsula, landing at Cape Helles and proceeding up the Peninsula to Gaba Tepe. This was only to proceed if the naval effort had definitely failed to breach the Dardanelles. The addition of British and French troops to the ANZAC brought the total number of troops available to over 75,000. The officer chosen as the supreme commander of this force, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (M.E.F.), was General Sir Ian Hamilton.

By 22 March, following the loss of several ships to mines, the decision was taken to proceed with the land attack and, as Bean puts it [45], “. . . the tragedy of Gallipoli was born”.



Figure 19: *The 5th Battalion on Parade in Egypt [61].*

5.5 To Mudros

Private Thomas Murphy arrived at Mena Camp with the second reinforcements to the 5th Battalion on 1 April 1915. He kept a detailed diary [54] of his movements throughout the war. For Saturday 4 April, it records [54, p 2]:

Drilling in the desert all morning, afternoon off, no leave. Told by the Colonel we were leaving for the front next day. Excitement great.

The 5th Battalion attended a Church Parade on the morning of Easter Sunday 4 April, and were then marched, in full marching order, to Cairo. There they boarded a train which departed at 1:30 a.m. the following morning, arriving in Alexandria at 7:00 a.m. where they proceeded directly to their troop ship for embarkation at 9:30 a.m. The 5th Battalion was allocated to transport A12, the *Novian*, a twin-screw ship of 6,388 ton. This was a very different ship from the *Orvieto* that had brought them to Egypt. Rather than a passenger ship like the *Orvieto*, the *Novian* was a cattle carrier before being converted for use as a troop ship. By all reports, the food on board was bad and the accommodation worse. The very rough seas encountered on their departure from Alexandria did not help, and many of the men became sea-sick.

The *Novian* took Ern and the 5th Battalion to Mudros Harbour on the Greek island of Lemnos, arriving on 8 April. The troops all remained on their ships

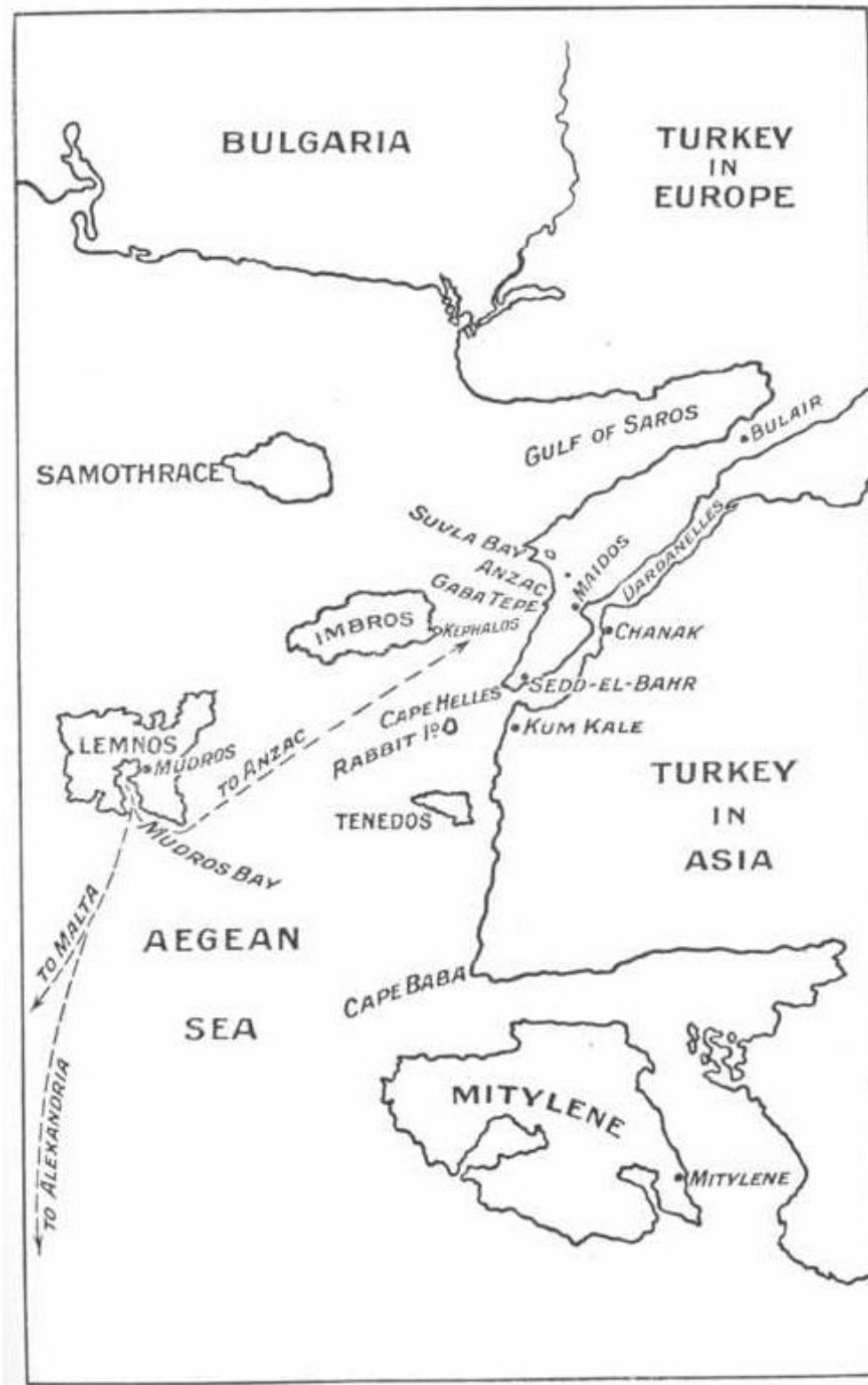


Figure 20: *The Theatre of Operations [62].*

for the next two weeks, there being insufficient space or accommodation for them to go ashore. Their boredom was relieved somewhat by the distribution of back-pay and the arrival of letters from home. The locals also brought out boats laden with fruit and the troops took the opportunity to have "great feeds of stuff"[54].

General Hamilton now distributed his "operation order" for the landing of the M.E.F. General Birdwood heard for the first time (although he had probably received "hints" while still in Egypt) that his Army Corps had been allotted to the landing at Gaba Tepe while the British and French troops would carry out the landing at Cape Helles. The first troops were to land soon after dawn under cover of a naval bombardment. The landing was planned for the morning of 23 April.

They set about practising climbing down the sides of their ships on swinging Jacob's ladders in full marching order, rowing the boats ashore and landing themselves on the beach. In this case, full marching order meant [63]:

Packs full of greatcoat and clothing, 48 hours of rations in a haversack, 250 rounds of ball cartridges, two blankets and ground sheet, rifle, and a pick or a shovel.

As a precaution against them getting into difficulties if they found themselves in deep water, they were ordered to leave shoulder flaps and belts undone to allow quick shedding of their heavy load of equipment.

On the morning of 20 April, the order came that the movement of the first troops would begin the following morning. However, a strong wind blew up that prevented the small boats going about their work within the harbour, necessitating a twenty-four hour delay. The wind continued to blow at gale force through 21 April and the departure was again postponed. Towards evening on 22 April, the wind moderated sufficiently for the movement of troops between ships to begin.

At dawn on 24 April, the ships carrying the 1st and 2nd Australian Brigades began leaving Mudros to rendezvous in the Bay of Purnea on the northern coast of Lemnos. The *Novian*, carrying the 5th Battalion, left Mudros at 11:00 a.m. and anchored in the Bay of Purnea at about 4:00 p.m.

Late that afternoon, the *Novian* left Purnea to join the other ships off the island of Imbros. Just before dark, the platoons were inspected on deck by their junior officers, to ensure [45]:

... that each man had two empty sandbags rolled around his entrenching tool; that the pouches of his equipment were filled with 200 rounds of ammunition; that the heavy packs, crammed with the soldier's simple wardrobe, were fastened over the shoulders with two loops in such a way that the could be thrown off immediately if a boat was sunk; that the magazines of rifles were empty (no shots were to be fired before daylight); that water bottles were filled; and



Figure 21: ANZAC troops practising their Gallipoli landing at Mudros [64].

that each man carried, tied behind him, two little white bags which contained two extra day's rations.

The orders for the landing directed that the troops wear their field service caps rather than their slouch hats. These were considered similar enough to the Turkish “Enveriye” headgear to lead to possible confusion at a distance. From photographs of troops on their way to the landing it is clear, however, that this directive was not universally observed.

At 11:00 p.m. the whole fleet moved off slowly, bound for Gaba Tepe. The troops were told to get as much sleep as they could , but as Collins observed [56]:

Everyone is too excited to even think about going to sleep.

On *Novian*, the 5th Battalion were roused (any that had managed to sleep) at 2:00 a.m. and fed a hot breakfast at 3:00 a.m., just as the moon was about to set.

6 Gallipoli

6.1 The Landing

As the boats carrying the first wave of troops (half of the 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions of the 3rd Brigade) approached the shore, it became apparent that they were not being landed at the expected location. In fact, they were nearly a mile (1.6 km) further north. It has become common amongst contemporary commentators to lay the blame for this at the feet of the naval officers in charge of the boats. But considering that they were navigating on a pitch black night, in unknown waters, and with a northerly setting current of unknown magnitude, an error of less than a mile might well be forgiven. As it turned out, the error in the landing place may have saved the troops from being landed on a much better defended beach, with barbed-wire entanglements both on the beach and in the water, covered by well dug-in machine guns. The cliffs at the north end of the beach where they landed also provided considerable shelter from the Turkish artillery at Gaba Tepe. This has raised the question of whether an order may have been issued at the last moment, changing the landing place [65].

The historical record is very sparse, and at times contradictory. At this distance in time, it is unlikely that we will ever be sure of exactly what happened. However, as we shall see, wherever the Navy might have deposited them, the troops could not have achieved the outrageous objectives given to them.

The major complication introduced by the error in landing place was to create confusion amongst the (mostly junior) officers who had been the first to reach the beach. Their carefully planned movements could no longer be executed, and their advance up the steep hills rising from the beach degenerated into a rather disorganised rabble. This confusion was exacerbated by the mixing of companies and battalions that resulted from the unintended crossing of the courses of some of the boats on their way to shore.

Nevertheless, the training at Mena prevailed, and officers and non-commissioned officers led groups of men from many different Battalions into the attack. They were continually under fire from both small arms and shrapnel from Turkish field guns at Gaba Tepe. While casualties had been high in the boats as they approached the shore, they now became truly alarming. Despite all this, the ANZAC managed to drive the relatively small Turkish force holding the beach back several hundred metres from their original positions.

The plan of the landing was for the 2nd Brigade to go ashore immediately after the 3rd and to provide protection on its left flank. To do this, it was to be put ashore to the north of the 3rd Brigade. The plan was for the Brigade to form up in companies once on the beach and then make their way along the ridges to their objective north of the 3rd Brigade. The 5th Battalion, the one with the furthest to go, would be landed first. But there were problems with getting tows for the boats from the *Novian*, and dawn had well and truly

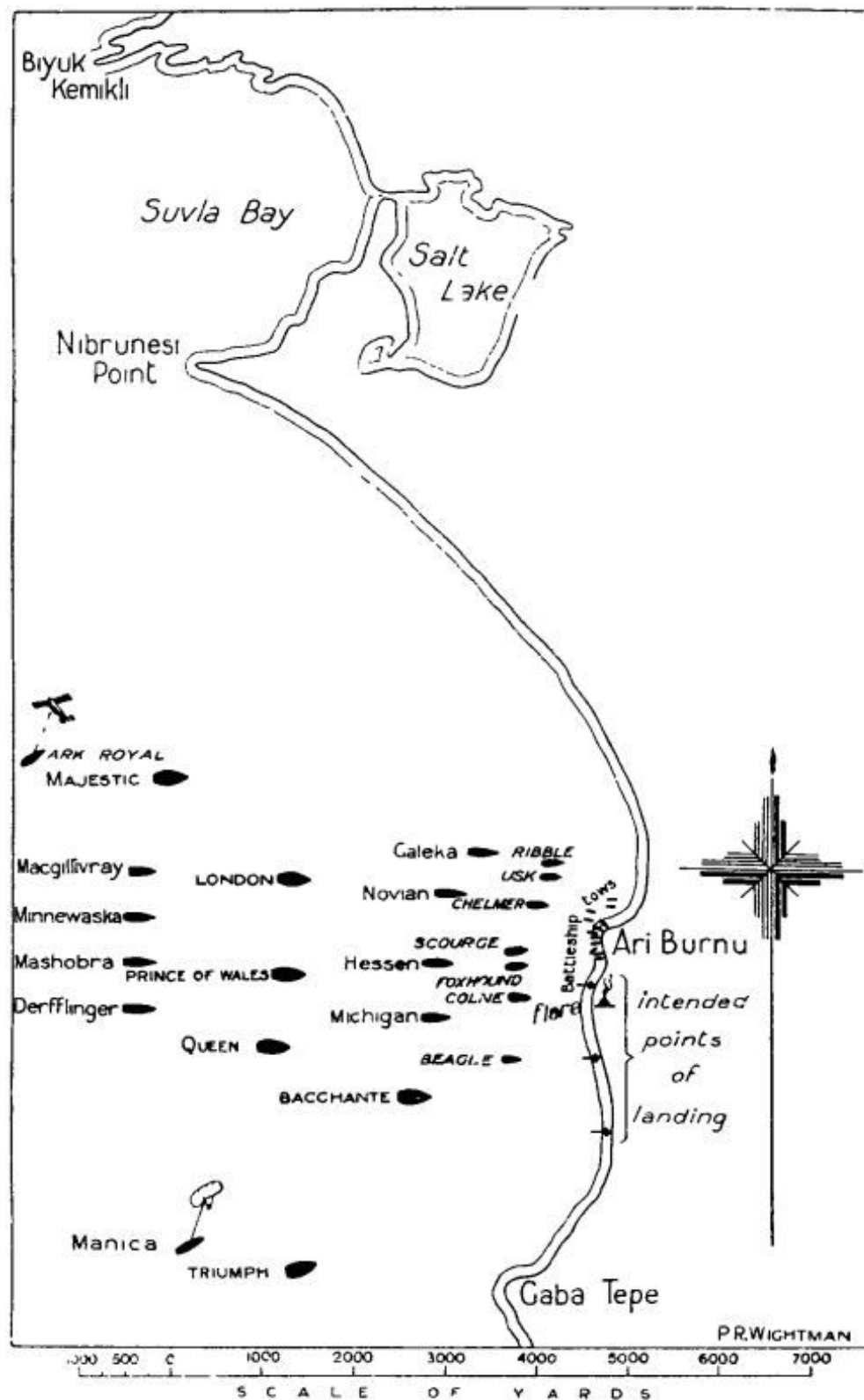


Figure 22: Ships off Ari Burnu at the Time of the Landing of the 3rd Brigade [45].

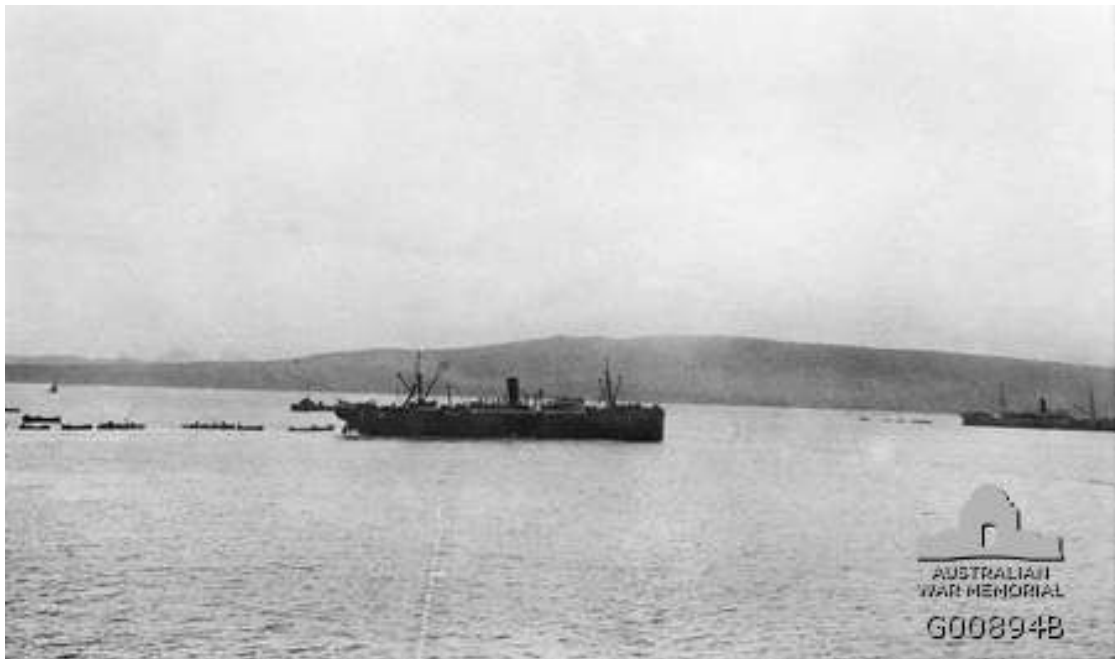


Figure 23: *Sunrise over Chunuk Bair; Boats of the 6th and 7th Battalions Leaving the Galeka and the Novian (centre) arriving with the 5th Battalion and Headquarters of the 2nd Brigade [66].*

arrived before 'A' Company of the 5th disembarked at 5:30 a.m., well after the 6th and 7th Battalions.

Rather than reinforce the northern flank as had originally been planned, the 2nd Brigade was diverted to the right. Since the 3rd Brigade had been landed too far north, this flank was now seriously undermanned. It was also thought that any counter attack would come from that direction as a large number of Turkish reinforcements could be seen in the region of Gaba Tepe. They therefore proceeded up The Razorback towards 400 Plateau and Lone Pine where the Australians were attempting to establish a battle line. A detailed description of these movements is given by Bean [45, page 383]. Shortly before noon, some 200 yards beyond the crest of Lone Pine, Major E.F.D. Fethers, the commander of Ern's 'A' Company, was shot dead by a sniper.

By the middle of the day, the Turks had set up at least four batteries, three of which formed a semi-circle around the 400 Plateau and Lone Pine. Any Australian who stood up could be seen by Turkish artillery observers around nearly half the horizon. The whole of the area was raked by small arms fire from all directions as well as being ravaged by the regular arrival of shrapnel bombs. Despite all this, and using every last man of their reserve forces, the Australians managed to retain a hold, however tenuous, on the 400 Plateau and Lone Pine as evening approached.

6.2 Anzac Cove

Originally, the crescent of beach where the majority of the Australians and New Zealanders had landed was referred to simply as “the beach”. Gradually it came to be known as Anzac Cove, the name by which it would be remembered. General Hamilton described the beach in his First Gallipoli Despatch [67]:

The beach . . . is a very narrow strip of sand, about 1,000 yards in length, bounded on the north and the south by two small promontories. At its southern extremity a deep ravine, with exceedingly steep, scrub-clad sides, runs inland in a north-easterly direction. Near the northern end of the beach a, small but steep gully runs up into the hills at right angles to the shore. Between the ravine and the gully the whole of the beach is backed by the seaward face of the spur which forms the north-western side of the ravine. From the top of the spur the ground falls almost sheer, except near the southern limit of the beach, where gentler slopes give access to the mouth of the ravine behind.

The Turks continued to bring in reinforcements and managed to push the ANZAC back somewhat from their most forward positions. The men dug in and the fighting degenerated into classic trench warfare - generally a stalemate, but punctuated by brief and fleeting gains by one side or the other. In fact, the positions that both sides found themselves in on 27 April were pretty much identical to those in place when the area was evacuated eight months later.

At 6:00 a.m. on April 29th, the fourth consecutive day of their struggle, the remaining men of the 2nd Brigade were withdrawn from among those of the Wellington Battalion on the 400 Plateau. The New Zealanders were left to garrison the line. To that time the only food the troops had was what they carried with them - two day's of iron rations. Iron rations consisted of:

- Two or three hand-fulls of small oval biscuits;
- A small tin of bully beef; and
- An oval tin with a lid that contained tea and sugar and two cubes of beef stock.

In addition they had access to the iron rations carried by their dead comrades - by this stage a not inconsiderable resource.

In four days and four nights of intense fighting, the 2nd Brigade had lost sixteen officers and 434 other ranks killed and wounded. While at times almost isolated and continually under strong attack, it had held the most vital position in the area. But at a terrible cost.

The following day, the 5th Battalion was mustered at Shell Green. The Battalion's losses amounted to 30 killed, 259 wounded and 251 missing out of an original complement of 31 officers and 942 other ranks - it had been reduced by almost half since leaving Egypt.



Figure 24: *Wounded Troops Collect on the Beach in the Afternoon of 25 April [68].*

The 5th Battalion spent 1 and 2 May reorganizing and refitting while bivouacked in Mule Gulley. Then, on 3 May, they were sent back to the front line to relieve the 6th Battalion in the trenches.

Although there is no direct record in his personnel file, Ern was promoted to the rank of Sergeant effective from 2 May. No doubt this was to make up for the large losses during the landing and subsequent fighting. There is no official reason why this promotion was not recorded, but it was to remain unacknowledged in Australia for at least the next twelve months, and was still causing problems five years later.

6.3 The Second Battle of Krithia

By the beginning of May, troops of the M.E.F. had obtained a foothold at Anzac Cove and at Cape Helles. But that was all they had achieved. Neither group had come close to attaining its objective. At Anzac Cove, the front line was generally at the “Second” ridge - the location where all but the most advanced elements had been ordered to dig in. The British at Cape Helles had managed to advance nearly two miles (3.2 km), just short of half way to their primary objective, Achi Baba. In attaining even this position their losses had been

horrific. Exclusive of the French, from 25 April until 2 May, the British lost: 177 Officers and 1,990 other ranks killed; 412 Officers and 7,807 other ranks wounded; and 13 Officers and 3,580 other ranks missing.

The Staff of the General Headquarters had, from the beginning, been more intimately involved with the operations at Cape Helles than at Anzac Cove. In correspondence between General Hamilton and Lord Kitchener, their anxieties centred mainly on the taking of Achi Baba. On 4 May Kitchener cabled to Hamilton:

I hope the 5th will see you strong enough to press on to Achi Baba anyway, as delay will allow the Turks to bring up more reinforcements and to make unpleasant preparations for your reception. The Australians and New Zealanders will have had reinforcements from Egypt by then, and ... could spare you a good many men for the advance.

This telegram provided General Hamilton with any further support which he may have needed for a decision that he had already made; the thrust should be made with all available strength from Helles, and that the operations at Anzac Cove should be, at least for the present, confined to holding on. All British reinforcements were already being directed to Helles. In addition, having the ability to transfer his troops by sea more quickly than the Turks could do by land, he had decided (as Kitchener also suggested) to bring two brigades of Australian and New Zealand troops from Anzac Cove to reinforce the offensive at Helles. He had already discussed his plans with General Birdwood on 3 May and he ordered his two Division Commanders, Generals Bridges and Godley to select their two best Brigades, and to withdraw them from the line immediately.

Hamilton decided that the attack should begin on 6 May by which time everything would be in readiness. The reinforcements were therefore ordered to move south from Anzac Cove on the evening of 5 May. Rumours had been running rife all day that the 5th Battalion was to be withdrawn from Gallipoli as Murphy recorded in his diary [54, page 7].

Wed. 5th May: The 2nd Brigade are warned to be ready to go aboard a boat. We are expecting a rest. 3rd reinforcements arrive and after dark we are put on a small lugger, the Clacton. We steam off to an unknown place.

As it turned out, their journey was to be only as far as the southern end of the Peninsula and certainly did not involve much rest.

To maintain the secrecy of the troop movement, it was intended that the troops should embark immediately after nightfall and make the two hour sea journey under cover of darkness. They should be safely ashore at Helles before daybreak. The 5th Battalion therefore left the trenches at 4:00 p.m. and assembled on the beach. As happens with many plans, this one did not proceed as intended. The ships that were to carry the troops were delayed by high

seas. The troops spent a very cold night on the beach at Anzac Cove. The New Zealanders were the first to leave, embarking soon after midnight. By the time the last of the Australians left the beach it was almost daylight. The 5th Battalion did not go ashore at Helles until 6:00 a.m. on 6 May.



Figure 25: *View of the Beach at Cape Helles from the Area Where the 2nd Brigade Camped on 6 May [61].*

The scene that greeted the 5th Battalion on its arrival was in complete contrast to that at Anzac Cove. A white road wound down a gentle hillside, between olive-trees, to a wide undulating depression shaped somewhat like a spoon. Beyond this, rising again gently, the country culminated five miles away in a peak that reached across the complete Peninsula. Instantly the troops recognised it as Achi Baba. In contrast to the dry dwarf-holly of Anzac Cove, the land was sprinkled with elms, growing in rich fields of green wheat, and beyond these spread wide patches of open heath.

The Australian Battalions moved a few hundred yards into the valley to a place where five slender white-stone water-towers rose from the flats. To the left of these, in a field of green wheat watered by a tiny muddy stream, Brigadier M'Cay gave the order to dig in. They struck water at a depth of 18 inches (45 cm) and were forced to build the turf up into tall breastworks to provide some sort of protection against the Turkish shrapnel.

General Hamilton was strongly inclined towards neutralising the advantage enjoyed by the enemy machine-guns during the long approach of his troops towards the Turkish position by employing a night attack. "It would be good tactics," he held, "...to cross the danger zone by night and overthrow the

enemy in the grey dawn" [69]. On the other hand General Hunter-Weston, who would actually command the troops on the ground, was much opposed to a night operation. He believed that in the darkness there would be a real danger that the different parts of the line might lose direction and touch, and even fire upon one another. As on several other occasions, the army commander abandoned his own more imaginative judgement for the plan of a subordinate. Despite the shortage of ammunition, he was forced to rely solely upon the effects on the enemy of a concentrated bombardment for the success of the attack.

The battle was scheduled to commence at 11:00 a.m. that morning (6 May) at the conclusion of half an hour of heavy bombardment. The Australians were initially held in reserve and, after drilling their new recruits and assigning them to platoons, they were free to "... stroll through meadows knee-deep in poppies, purple lupin, white daisies, and yellow flowers, and, in the glorious weather which lasted throughout this battle, ... to watch the fight from a knoll behind the Haji Ayub Farm" [69].

By nightfall, under extremely heavy enemy fire and with significant losses, the British had managed to advance less than half a mile (0.8 km) up the slope on the left flank. On the right, the French had fared little better, but had managed to close to within a few hundred metres of the enemy.

Further heavy bombardment preceded the resumption of the attack at 10:00 a.m. the following morning. Once again the British were held up by fierce enemy machine-gun fire, and by 2:00 p.m. the attack had stopped altogether. The New Zealand Brigade was swung into the action, but by nightfall the overall advance had been negligible. General Hunter-Weston recommended and General Hamilton agreed that the attack be re-commenced for a third time on the following morning.

This attack was to be made by the New Zealand Brigade moving up the centre of the peninsula. But by midday the New Zealanders had come to a complete standstill, having lost heavily while gaining only a little ground on the left. No Turkish line had thus far been reached. About 3:00 p.m. General Hunter-Weston ordered the New Zealand brigade to repeat its attack at 5.30 p.m. No alteration of plan was proposed. Colonel Johnston of the Auckland Battalion telephoned to the headquarters of the division, protested that to continue the attack in daylight could only lead to the destruction of his force, but the directions issued to him were definite.

At 4:30 p.m. these orders were cancelled and replaced with new ones. General Hamilton was now on shore and had established his headquarters at a position where he could observe the progress of the battle. With the French reporting that they could advance no further on the right, Hamilton was faced with the choice of either accepting that the attack had failed, or committing his entire force to one final push forward across the entire line. He chose the latter.

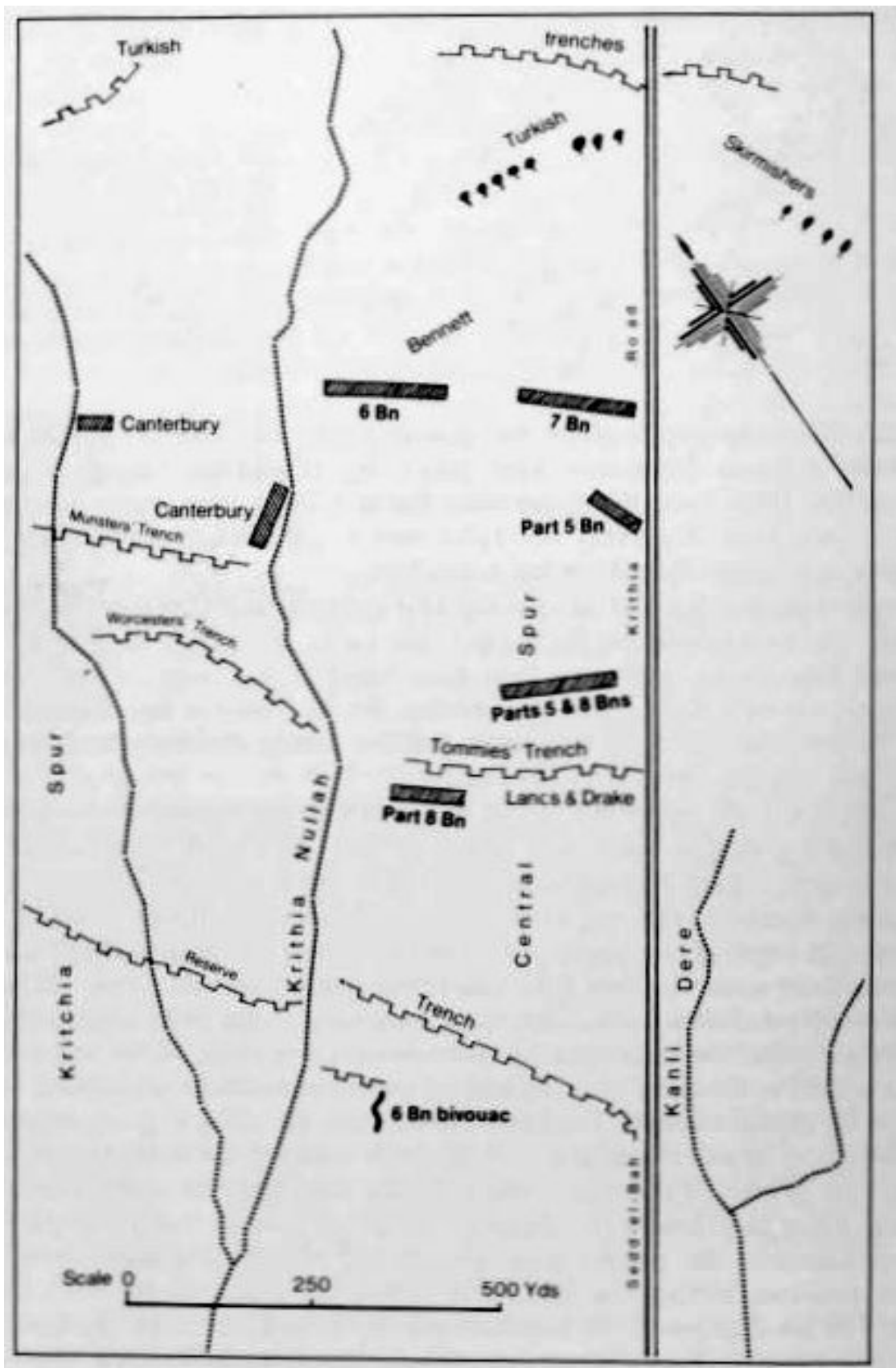


Figure 26: Approximate Positions of the 2nd Brigade at 6:30 on the Evening of 8 May [45].

In his Second Gallipoli Despatch [70], Hamilton states that:

At 4 p.m. I gave orders that the whole line, reinforced by the 2nd Australian Brigade, would fix bayonets, slope arms, and move on Krithia precisely at 5.30 p.m.

When he made this order, Hamilton was aware that the Australian brigade had, according to his orders given that morning, just reached the Krithia Nullah, and was now lying in close reserve. He therefore assigned to it the task of advancing up the Central Spur. The only problem was that the Australians were completely unprepared to carry out these orders. Brigadier M'Cay had, in accordance with Hamilton's order, brought his Brigade forward using the cover of a small creek bed to provide some protection from enemy fire. They reached a position just short of the reserve line at about 3:45 p.m. when M'Cay ordered them to dig in for the night and to cook their evening meal. At 4.55 p.m. a message was delivered to brigade headquarters. It read [69]:

You will be required to attack at 5.30 p.m. precisely between the valley you are now in and the valley just S.E. of [the] Krithia-Saddel-Bahr road. Move forward at once until you are in line with N.Z. brigade on your left and your right on the valley S.E. of Krithia road. This will be in advance of the Composite Brigade trenches. The Composite Brigade under Colonel Casson will support you. Your objective is the ridge beyond Krithia, with your right somewhat thrown back to join hands with the French or 2nd Naval Brigade who are at present on the French left.

From G.O.C. Composite Division, Hill 138, 4.20 p.m.

By the time M'Cay issued orders to the Battalions (who were by this time eating their evening meal), it was doubtful whether it was humanly possible to comply with the G.O.C. order within the time allowed. It required that the men gather their kit, get organised into their platoons and cover the half to three-quarters of a mile to the front, all within less than half an hour. Certainly there was no time for any detailed planning. M'Cay's hurriedly written operation order informed the Battalion commanders that [69]:

... the brigade was to attack between the valley it was now in and that running east of the Krithia road: that the 6th and 7th would form the front line and supports, the 6th being on the left and the 7th on the right, while the 8th and 5th would form a general reserve moving forward direct to their front.

The details of the subsequent movement and of the battle in general are described by Bean [69] in great detail. As Bean had accompanied the troops to Cape Helles and was with M'Col at the time the Brigade began to move towards the front, these are some of the very few first-hand accounts by a

war correspondent of fighting on the Peninsula. The veracity of his account is backed up by his observations [71, Chapter XXI: At Helles] when he re-visited the site of the battle in 1915.

Despite the difficulties, when 5:30 p.m. came, the 6th and 7th Battalions had taken up the required formation and were only a few hundred yards short of the required position. The two Battalions advanced at a fast walking pace against a growing storm of Turkish small arms fire. Turkish artillery shells were bursting overhead, their fire answered by the British guns. Shortly they came upon a trench occupied by British troops. This trench was officially known as the “Composite Brigade’s Trench”, but from that moment it became known among Australians as the “Tommies’ Trench”. While M’Cay was aware of the existence of some sort of front line near this position, to most of the battalions it came as a surprise. They were not sure whether their aim was to reinforce this line or to proceed. M’Cay temporarily established his headquarters near the left end of the trench beside two solitary olive-trees. According to Bean [69],

About three minutes later, other lines of the 6th and 7th having come up meanwhile and flung themselves down, the brigadier scrambled on to the parapet, periscope in hand. “Now then, Australians !” he said. “Which of you men are Australians? Come on, Australians”

As the brigadier’s cry was echoed up the trench, men scrambled up from every part of the trench and over its dry parapet. They flung themselves forward into increasingly dense storm of small-arms fire.



Figure 27: *Charge of the 2nd Brigade at Krithia. Painting by Charles Wheeler [72].*

The 6th and 7th Battalions managed to advance some two or three hundred yards past Tommies' Trench, but at a terrible cost, in particular to officers and non-commissioned officers, who were continually exposing themselves to urge the troops forward. The Turkish lines were now in sight, a little over 600 yards ahead. But the leading troops were under fire from machine guns on their right. The French were supposed to have brought the line forward on this side, but there was no sign of them. The 5th Battalion was therefore ordered to move to the right.

By about 6.30 p.m., after advancing about 500 yards from Tommies' Trench, with both flanks far ahead of the British and French front lines, the front line of the 2nd Brigade came to a stop. To proceed further was suicidal, so the men were ordered to dig in. Bean summed up the situation:

Such was the advance of the 2nd Brigade at Krithia. In its actual attack, lasting little over an hour, it had moved about 1,000 yards across open moor land under heavy fusillade, the second half of the advance - beyond the Tommies' Trench - being made in the teeth of rifle and machine-gun fire such as Australians seldom again encountered during the war. Although in that short space they had lost 1,000 men, the advancing lines had shown not the least sign of wavering. On neither flank was the rest of Hamilton's line as yet in touch with them.

Private Murphy described his personal experiences[54, p 8]:

Sat 8th May: Our Brigade moves out in Battalions and are told to charge. We press on under heavy fire and are up to the first line [of] trenches held by the British. We rest for a while and then out in the open and the machine guns open fire on us. Also shells bursting everywhere. We gain 800 yards and entrench ourselves. Terrible casualties.

As night approached, Hamilton knew that the great effort of his army had failed. Before 7:00 p.m., an order was sent to all parts of the front to push on 'till dark and secure a good line for the night. This message marked the end of the battle.

6.4 The Aftermath of the Battle

The advance having ended, the army was left to reckon the cost. As darkness fell, the battlefield for half a mile behind the front line was filled with the cries of the wounded. This was particularly true for the narrow strip of grassland behind the 2nd Brigade. The losses of both ANZAC brigades had been extremely heavy. From an original strength of 2676, the New Zealanders had lost 11 Officers killed with 26 wounded and 109 other ranks killed, 491 wounded

and 134 missing, a total of 771 casualties. The Australians fared even worse. From an original strength of 2900, the 2nd Brigade lost 16 officers killed with 32 wounded and 166 other ranks killed, 507 wounded and 335 missing, a total of 1056. Brigadier M'Cay had himself joined the list of wounded when he was shot through the leg, breaking it, at about 2:00 a.m.



Figure 28: *The Next Morning* [61].

A Church of England Chaplain attached to the British 29th Division, Reverend O. Creighton, described the scene at an aid post early on the morning of 9 May [73, page 85]:

There was a mass of wounded. The bad cases had started coming in during the night. They came in all day. Terrible stomach and head wounds. The Australians, who were the vast majority, were wonderfully plucky. I saw the Brigade-Major lying on a stretcher in the open. "My, it was grand to see the boys charge! There was the Brigadier, and he shouted out, 'Now boys, at them!'". People who saw it said it was a great charge, but utterly reckless. They don't seem to understand fear, and even the wounded were only anxious to get better and have another go! But what a terrible waste it all seemed of such magnificent men!

Some idea of the horrific conditions that the Australians experienced can be gleaned from the account of the battle written by Albert Young ('A' Company, 7th Battalion) in his diary [57]:

8 May: . . . Dug in, but had no sooner finished than we had orders we were to attack. Then began another day and night of horror, most of our Company being wounded. Just before we moved up I was made a Sergeant, but it was not much good to me as somewhere around 6:00 p.m. I was shot in the right leg. A chap helped me to bandage it up but I had to wait until dark before he could help me make my way back a bit. But I could not get far and had to lay in the open all night and what with the cold and the loss of blood I was in a pretty bad way.

9 May: As soon as it was daylight I got some chaps to help me back to a trench where I was safe from enemy fire. I remained lying in the trench until some time in the afternoon when I was carried back on a stretcher for about 3 miles and was put in an ambulance and taken to the base hospital where I remained all night.

Sergeant Young was transferred to a hospital ship and thence to a hospital in Alexandria where he died, his leg wound having become gangrenous.

It was recognised by many of the Australians that the same advance could have been completed after dark with almost no loss. In each of the ANZAC brigades, there was a growing conviction that they had been needlessly sacrificed. In the case of the 2nd Brigade, the blame quickly settled upon M'Cay. Bean [69, page 42] provides a vigorous defence of the man:

He had, it is true, driven his troops hard, and perhaps too swiftly for good order; in personally directing almost every company he had put needless pressure upon eager men. These things lost him the popularity which his great personal bravery might have gained. But the plan of attack was not his. He but vigorously carried out his part of the plans for the Second Battle of Krithia, which, limiting themselves almost to the routine of an Aldershot field-day, in three days expended an army in merely approaching the enemy.

The 5th Battalion, even though it had been in reserve for much of the advance, suffered as badly if not worse than the other battalions. On entering the battle, the battalion was composed of 30 officers and about 1000 other ranks. On withdrawal, there remained just seven officers and less than 400 other ranks. Those killed included Sergeant Ernest Fairlie.

We have no definite information on exactly when or where Ern was killed. His personnel file infers only that he was killed at Cape Helles some time between the battle commencing and the withdrawal of the ANZAC. However, we have a number of first-hand reports from diaries and letters that provide some detail.

The diary of a fellow member of the 5th Battalion, Frederick Heatley Symonds provides an approximate time and a place for Ern's death. In his entry for 8 July [74], Private Symonds describes the advance on that evening:

We advanced over several lines of trenches which had Ghurkas and Tommies in them. Our men were going down everywhere, but we kept going. It was nothing to take cover behind dead comrades, although such cover is only from sight of enemy, as a man won't stop a bullet, but it's wonderful what you'll cover behind when advancing. The machine gun fire was very hot. We never fired a shot, even after passing the firing line, which half of us did not know was the firing line. Lots of us were carrying picks and shovels to dig in with. We lost a terrible number of men in the advance, and our artillery had to cease fire for a while at the last, as we had advanced right into their fire zone and were receiving some of their shells. There seem to be dead and wounded Australians everywhere. Just before making the last rush, Lieutenant Hamilton, of one of the other companies, asked me to alter his kit for him, and after we went ahead I lost him. He tried to get back to his own lot again, and, I heard later, got badly wounded - shot in the neck, back and thigh; it will take him all his time to pull through. The country we were advancing over was mostly flat, and very hard to take cover on except where there were trenches. When I got within about 50 yards of where we dug in I saw a Sergeant Fairley (sic), of A. Coy, 5th Battalion, shot in the groin and hand, and he was lying right in an exposed position. The machine gun fire was pretty hot there, so I picked him up and took him back to the nearest bit of cover, about 20 yards, and dressed his wounds as best I could. He was shot through one rump and out just above the groin - a very nasty wound; the poor chap was in great pain. After that I came across so many wounded that I put most of my time in carrying them back to cover. It was their only chance, and the firing line started digging in, so I thought as they were opening fire it was the best thing to do, as I knew there could be no stretcher bearers up probably till the next night.

A report from a Private Clarence Hayman that was published in the Melbourne High School magazine "Ours" in December 1915 [75] adds some further information:

My reason for writing is really a very sad one. To-day, for the first time, I have had fairly circumstantial news, almost conclusive, of the death from wounds of Mr. Fairlie. Since our landing I have been endeavouring to get tidings of Mr. Fairlie and any of our boys. It is a really harder matter here than at home, I believe; but this afternoon I was going through the fire trenches, when I suddenly remembered that Ern's battalion was occupying that part, and I turned and asked after him. Strangely enough, it was one of his company, who was, perhaps, his greatest friend in the company, that I asked, and he

told me that Ern had been hit by shrapnel, had many wounds, and died in the dressing station. He further stated that he had seen his grave, and was only too sure he was dead.

He then went on to say what a fine fellow Sergeant Fairlie was – he had got the well-deserved step after the landing here, and a commission was not far off. We spoke mutually of his many characteristics. His friend said: “He was too much of a man to be a soldier. There was no roughness in his character”. He also spoke of the love Fairlie bore to the School, and told of how he had received a crowd of letters from students and others who had seen his name in the Gazette – that is, while we lay at Mudros waiting for this dread game to begin. We shook hands to the memory of a brave, fine character, and so parted.

Lieutenant Aubrey Liddelow (later promoted to Captain with the 59th Battalion and killed at Fromelles, France on 19 July 1916) was with the 7th Battalion at Helles and was fighting in the same area as Ern on the evening of 8 May. Aubrey was a teacher at Melbourne High School and lived just 10 minutes walk from the Fairlie residence. His description of the circumstances of Ern’s death is contained in a letter sent to Janet Fairlie by George Osborne, another teacher at Melbourne High School [76]:

It appears that he [Ern] was struck by a shrapnel shell when leading his troop, for he had been promoted to a position of Sergeant and a commission, Lieut. Liddelow says, was in sight, and so severely wounded that without suffering he passed away very shortly afterwards in the hospital. Saw his grave and his name and rank on the wooden slab which marked the last resting place of himself and other heroes.

Your loss is very great but how satisfying it is to know that he died as he lived – a hero.

It therefore seems very likely that Ern died as a result of wounds received some distance beyond Tommies’ Trench, close to the left side of the Krithia road at about 6:00 p.m. on 8 May 1915. He probably died later that night.

Whenever and wherever he was killed, Ern has no recognised grave. It is highly likely that his remains were removed to the Redoubt Cemetery. This cemetery was begun by the 2nd Brigade following the battle, and it continued in use until the evacuation. It is located in about the same position as that reached by the 5th Battalion on the night of 8 May. There are 2,027 graves, the vast majority of which are unidentified.

In his Second Gallipoli Despatch, [70] General Hamilton stated:

Not until next morning did any reliable detail come to hand of what had happened. The New Zealander’s firing line had marched over the



Figure 29: *Redoubt Cemetery, Cape Helles [61].*

cunningly concealed enemy's machine guns without seeing them, and these, re-opening on our supports as they came up, caused them heavy losses. But the first line pressed on and arrived within a few yards of the Turkish trenches which had been holding up our advance beyond the fir wood. There they dug themselves in. The Australian Brigade had advanced through the Composite Brigade, and, in spite of heavy losses from shrapnel, machine-gun, and rifle fire, had progressed from 300 to 400 yards. The determined valour shown by these two brigades, the New Zealand Brigade, under Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston, and the 2nd Australian Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier-General the Hon. J. W. McCay, are worthy of particular praise.

The position reached by the Australians remained the front line until 28 May when the Manchester Territorials advanced 200 yards farther under cover of darkness, scarcely losing a man. The two ANZAC brigades were relieved from the line on the night of 10 May and returned to their own force at Anzac Cove a week later. But they returned without more than 1800 of their comrades.

7 In Memoriam

7.1 Sad News

The first news of Ern's death reached his father by way of a telegram sent from Egypt on 18 June 1915 and delivered by "a clergyman" [42]. It stated that:

No. 993 Lance Corporal Ernest Robert Fairlie, 5th Battalion, 1st Australian Division, was killed in action at the Dardanelles.

It included neither the date on which he died nor any further details. It was not until 8 April 1916 - 11 months after the event - that some very meagre additional information (that he was killed between 8 and 12 May, and that he was killed at Cape Helles) was received.

Ern's death was included in the Department of Defence's 45th List of Casualties which appeared in *The Argus* on 29 June [77] (although notice of his death had been published in the Family Notices section several days earlier [78]).

Ern made a will [79] on 9 September 1914 (the day after he enlisted) that bequeathed:

- The proceeds of his Life Insurance policy to be shared by his sisters Janet and Catherine;
- All his books to his brother Walter;
- All other personal belongings to his sister Janet to be "apportioned among my friends as she may think fit";
- All his money and property not mentioned already, including his share of the property at Block 21, Mount View Road, Malvern, to be shared equally between his five brothers.

He made his friend Adam Scouller the executor of his will.

Notice of application for probate of the will was published in *The Argus* on 29 September 1915 [80], and probate was granted to Adam Scouller by the Supreme Court of Victoria on 26 November [81]. Ern's estate consisted of:

- The vacant block of land with a frontage of 50 feet to Mount View Road and a depth of 130 feet and 1 inch, valued at £118-15-0;
- Furniture and books valued at £3;
- Life Insurance policy with Australian Mutual Provident Society, Melbourne, valued at £350, and
- Ern's deferred military pay amounting to £12,

for a grand total of £483-15-0.

Before Ern left Australia he had arranged for four shillings out of his daily pay of five shillings to be shared between his father Walter and sister Janet [82]. Following Ern's death, Walter and Janet were each granted a War Pension of £39 per annum as from 22 August 1915 [42]. Walter's pension ceased on

his death on 2 June 1917. Janet's pension was cancelled on 15 August 1917 "in view of your present circumstances". Ern's eldest brother, Walter, wrote a letter to the Department of Defence on 22 March 1921 in which he stated:

I consider that my sister (Janet) has been very shabbily treated at the hands of the Defence Dept. The brother who was killed was her main support – the other brother who was home has had a nervous breakdown and is a handicap instead of a help and my sister herself is in very poor health. All that she has is a half share in the cottage partly bought by the insurance on my brother's life. She has no income and is dependent on the earnings of a younger sister and the small sum she gets for taking care of three children of a brother who has no wife. If my brother Ernest had shirked his duty to his country he would now, in all probability, have been in receipt of £850 per annum under the award and he could have supported my sister in comfort. All the Defence Dept. did was to give her 15/- a week for two years and then refuse any further help. The ground of cancelling the pension was a remarkable one "in view of your present circumstances" 15th Aug. 1917. It has been my wish to have the whole matter brought prominently before the authorities but my sister is a very proud woman, even if desperately poor, and so far she has not given me permission to place the matter in the hands of those who could appreciate the justice of her claim.

Prior to the war, the Education Department had offered "that men on active service would be promoted automatically as if teaching" [84, page 149] so Walter's estimate of Ern's earning potential is quite possibly an underestimate. But why would Ern alone be expected to continue supporting his sister? Walter also tried to make a case that Janet had taken "the place of the mother for years" and was therefore entitled to a pension. However, their mother Catherine did not die until October 1907, by which time Ern was 22 years old and away teaching in the country. In their reply to Walter's letter, the Department of Defence referred all questions regarding War Pensions to Department of Repatriation. I can find no record of whether Walter did refer this matter to Repatriation or whether and how it was resolved. Information received from the Australian Archives indicates that all correspondence relating to Ern's pension has been destroyed.

On 17 April 1916, Walter Fairlie received Ern's identity disc and on 19 April he received a package



Figure 30: Ern's Identity Disc [83].

from Egypt containing Ern's personal effects. The package contained [42]:

- two note books;
- letters;
- cards;
- a Testament;
- poems, and
- a fountain pen.

Of these items, it appears that the only one to survive is a letter - a hasty note (see Figure 31) written by Ern to his father in pencil on the night before the landing [85]. It reads:

24th April '15

Dear Father

We are waiting on troopship *Novian* just off the Coast of Europe – ready to land tomorrow on Gallipoli Peninsula – “’Tis the battle eve”. We all feel confident & in good spirits, We expect heavy fighting as anything may happen – so we are all prepared for any sacrifice knowing that our cause is righteous & trusting in the Great Father above. Am leaving this in my pocket to be posted should the worst come. I am thinking of you all tonight. God bless you all. Do not grieve over any mishap to me. “God’s will be done”.

Best love to all.

Yr. loving son Ern

Did Ern keep a diary in one or other of these note books? What happened to the other letters and poems? Unfortunately, so far as I can determine, none have survived.

7.2 Medals

Ern was entitled to receive the standard set of three World War 1 Campaign medals. These were:

1914–1915 Star: Awarded for service in a theatre of war between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915.

British War Medal: Instituted by King George V in 1919 to mark the end of World War I and to record service given. It was awarded for service in a theatre of war between 5 August 1914 and 11 November 1918.

Victory Medal: Authorised in 1919 to commemorate the victory of the Allied Forces. Although each Allied nation issued its own ‘Victory Medal’, Australians were awarded the medal issued by Great Britain.



Figure 32: A WW I Campaign Medal Set.

24 April '16

Dear Father

We are waiting on
 troopship "Norra" just off the
 Coast of Europe - ready to land
 tomorrow on Gallipoli Peninsula
 - "Tis the battle eve". We all
 feel confident & in good spirits.
 We expect heavy fighting so
 anything may happen - so we
 are prepared for any sacrifice
 knowing that our cause is
 righteous & trusting in the
 Great Father above. Am leaving
 this in my pocket to be posted
 should the worst come. I am
 thinking of you all tonight.
 God bless you all - Do not
 grieve over any mishap to
 me. "God's will be done".
 Best love to all
 Yr. loving son Ern.

Figure 31: Ern's letter to his father [85].

As Ern's father, Walter, had died by the time these medals were issued, they were forwarded to his eldest brother, Walter. He received the Victory Medal on 12 September 1922 and the 1914–1915 Star and the British War Medal on 31 October 1923.

A memorial medallion was issued after the First World War to the next-of-kin of all British and Empire service personnel who were killed as a result of the war. The medallion features an image of Lady Britannia surrounded by two dolphins (representing Britain's sea power) and a lion (representing Britain) standing over a defeated eagle (symbolising Germany). Around the outer edge of the medallion are the words 'He died for freedom and honour'. Next to Lady Britannia is the deceased soldier's name⁴, with no rank provided to show equality in their sacrifice. The medallions were made of bronze, and hence popularly known as the "Dead Man's Penny", because of the similarity in appearance to the somewhat smaller penny coin. 1,355,000 plaques were issued, which used a total of 450 tonnes of bronze. The plaque was accompanied by a commemorative letter from King George V which stated:



Figure 33: *Memorial Medallion.*

I join with my grateful people in sending you this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War.

(Signed by George V)

A Commemorative Scroll designed to accompany the Memorial Medallion (but generally issued somewhat later) was also presented to the next of kin. Underneath the message shown in Figure 34 the serviceman's name, rank and honours was written by hand in red ink. The first scroll issued to Walter had Ern's rank incorrectly listed as Lance-Corporal. A replacement scroll with the correct rank of Sergeant was received on 12 May 1922.

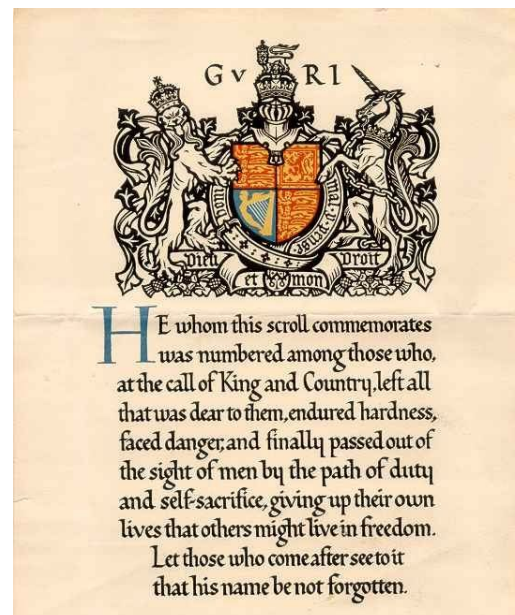


Figure 34: *Commemorative Scroll.*

7.3 Remembrance

Ern's death was reported in many areas in which he had lived and worked. Among the first to appear was a report in the Shepparton Advertiser published on 24 June [86] which read:

⁴Private Ernest Horner, 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers, whose name is on the plaque in Figure 33, was killed in action at Ypres on 18 July 1917. Private Horner served at Gallipoli.

LANCE CORPORAL FAIRLIE

Lance-Corporal Ernest Robert Fairlie (killed), was very popular in Shepparton during the year (1913), he was teacher of English and history at the local High School and greatly esteemed by both staff and students of that institution. He proved a very successful teacher, and many were the regrets expressed to-day on its becoming known that he had been killed at the Dardanelles. The deceased was born at Lexton (Ballarat district), and was 29 years of age. He was educated at the Training College, Melbourne, and had almost completed his B.A. degree. From Shepparton he was transferred to Melbourne High School, and it was from there that he enlisted.

The same newspaper published on 5 August a report of a meeting of the Shepparton High School Council [87] that read:

The death of Mr. E. Fairlie (late of the teaching staff, Shepparton High School), while fighting in the Gallipoli peninsula, was referred to at the meeting of the High School Council yesterday. The members rose from their seats and carried the following resolution: "That this council records in the minutes its sorrow at the death of Mr. E. Fairlie (one of the High School Teachers), and communicates to his relatives its sympathy with them in their bereavement."

In a report on a later meeting of the council, the Advertiser reported on 7 October [88] that:

PHOTOGRAPH OF SOLDIER – TEACHER WHO WAS KILLED

The High School Council met yesterday afternoon . . . The secretary reported that a large picture of Mr. E. R. Fairlie (late of the teaching staff), who was killed in the war, had been framed and hung up – in the room in which they were meeting. The photograph was admitted to be a very good one, and the chairman observed that the scholars had subscribed towards it.

The Melbourne Argus published all of the official Casualty Lists as they were made available by the Defence Department. Ern's name was among those in the 45th list published by the Argus on 29 June [77]. The Argus had already published an obituary to Ern in their 26 June edition [78] that read:

LANCE-CORPL. ERNEST ROBERT
FAIRLIE

(Killed) was, during 1913, teacher of English and history at Shepparton, Agricultural High School, he was then transferred to the Melbourne High School, from where he enlisted. He was born at Lexton (Ballarat district). His father resides at East Malvern.

On 6 July the Argus published a photograph of Ern [89] under a headline "AUSTRALIANS WHO HAVE FALLEN". The photograph is attributed to the Darge Photographic Company which had the concession to take photographs at the Broadmeadows and Seymour army camps. It is therefore likely that this photograph dates from September or October 1914.

The Ballarat Courier published an obituary to Ern, accompanied by a photograph (presumably supplied by his brother Walter as it appears to have been extracted from a family photograph), on 5 July [90]. It read:

BALLARAT AND DISTRICT MEN
LANCE-CORPORAL E. R. FAIRLIE.

L-Cpl Ernest R. Fairlie (killed in action) was the youngest brother of W. J. Fairlie, State school teacher of Ballarat. He was born at Lexton in 1886, where his father was a J.P., councillor, and active public worker for many years. He gained a State school scholarship when 12 years of age and entered Hawthorn College, where he matriculated. While at the college he gained the Royal Humane Society's medal for conspicuous bravery in saving from drowning two other college mates. He entered the Education Department at 16 years, gaining his diploma of education, and was just finishing his last examination for B.A. degree when he left for the front. At the time of enlisting he was on the staff of the Melbourne High School, and had every promise of a most successful career.

Although Ern only spent two months teaching at the high school in Essendon, he was included in the Roll of Honour published by the Essendon Gazette on 22 July [91]. The article also included an obituary that read:

Messrs. Edgar C. Holmes B.A., and John H. Carse, members of the staff of the Essendon High School, have enlisted. Captain A. V. Deeble is already at the front. In addition Lance Corporal E. H. Fairlie, recently killed in action, was one of the first masters appointed to the school.



Figure 35: Photograph published in *The Argus* [89].

Ern's death is mentioned a number of times in *Ours*, the journal of the Melbourne High School and his name is included in the Roll of Honour published in the December 1919 issue [92].

7.4 Memorials

For as long as Australians have gone to war, we have built war memorials to recognise their service, and remember those who did not come home. From the 1850s to today, we have commemorated those who served, and we have been particularly generous in the erection of memorials to those who died in the First World War.



Figure 36: *The Helles Memorial* [93].

Ern's name is included among the 21,077 names on the Helles Memorial. This memorial is both a memorial to the Gallipoli campaign in general and in particular to those men who fell in that campaign and whose graves are unknown or who were lost or buried at sea in Gallipoli waters. The United King-

dom and Indian forces named on the memorial died in operations throughout the peninsula, the Australians only at Helles. The memorial stands on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. It takes the form of an obelisk over 30 metres high that can be seen by ships passing through the Dardanelles. On the East side of the base of the memorial is an inscription reading:

IN HONOURED MEMORY OF THE UNITS AND SHIPS
WHICH FOUGHT ON GALLIPOLI OR IN THE
DARDENELLES AND OF THESE 20504⁵ BRITISH
SAILORS AND SOLDIERS AND 248 AUSTRALIAN
SOLDIERS WHO FELL IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD
1914 - 1916 AND HAVE NO KNOWN GRAVES



Figure 37: *Shepparton High School Memorial Gates [94].*

⁵The discovery of additional fallen who have no graves after the creation of this inscription is the reason for the discrepancy between the numbers of names quoted on the inscription and in the text.

Ern is remembered on the Shepparton High School Memorial Gates [94]. These are located at the entrance to the school in Hawdon Street, opposite Rea Street Shepparton. The gates consist of two brick pillars and metal gates. On the North pillar there is a metal plaque with the words:

SHEPPARTON HIGH SCHOOL

ERECTED TO COMMEMORATE
THE SERVICES RENDERED BY
EX-STUDENTS IN WORLD WARS
1914 - 19 AND 1939 - 45
LABOUR CONQUERS ALL

Another metal plaque on the South pillar lists the names of the fallen:

SHEPPARTON HIGH SCHOOL

IN MEMORIAM
WORLD WAR 1914-19
CAYGILL L. FAIRLIE E. J.
NORTHILL T. - TEACHER
WATSON D. SWINBURNE H. L.
- TEACHER



Figure 38: Honour Board at Essendon High School [95].

followed by the names of those killed in the Second World War. Ern's second initial is incorrectly recorded here, as it is in a number of obituaries and memorials.

Despite teaching at the school for just two months, Ern's name is included on the Honour Board at the Essendon High School.

At Melbourne High School, while there is no Honour Board, the names of those in the Melbourne High Community (old-boys and teachers) who died are recorded in a Memorial Roll that is kept in the foyer of the school to this day. It would appear that news of Ern's death was one of the first of that community to reach Melbourne. The history of the school, "Strong Like its Pillars", records that [96, page 65]:

The grim reality of was soon evident. In June 1915 came the news that Ernest R. Fairlie had been killed in action.

Ern was one of about 1500 men, residents of the City of Malvern who went to war. Of these, 184 were killed. Their names are recoded on a memorial cenotaph known as the Soldiers' Memorial. The memorial is designed in Gothic

style, the ground plan having the form of a cross. It is built from dressed grey Harcourt granite. The four faces of the central pier have polished panels bearing the names of the fallen in sunk and gilded lettering. The inscription on the memorial reads:

IN MEMORY OF
THOSE BRAVE MEN
RESIDENTS OF MALVERN
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
IN THE GREAT WAR
1914-1919.

ERECTED BY A
GRATEFUL ENGLISHMAN



Figure 39: *The Malvern Soldiers' Memorial.*

The “grateful Englishman” was Malvern resident Charles Wood [97, p. 155]. The memorial was first erected near the Malvern Cricket Ground and dedicated on Sunday 18 March 1922. It was moved to the front of the Malvern Town Hall in about 1932, and to its current location in Central Park, East Malvern, in 1992.

Malvern Council was slow to create its own memorial. Almost ten years after the war had ended, Paul Montford’s design for a sculpture of a man, woman and child, ‘to be executed in Italian marble instead of native stone’, was accepted. When the group was unveiled on 23 August 1931 [97, page 156] with a ‘stirring address’ by local member Sir Stanley Argyle, a new agony – depression – was already underway. The R.S.L. praised this ‘Memorial to their fallen comrades . . . [it] gives expression to sentiment of the highest standard’. It was, as well, ‘one of the



Figure 40: *The Malvern Civic Memorial.*

very few, if not the only one, recognising the sacrifice of those who stayed at home'. The soldier, in the uniform of an ordinary infantryman, and the woman, with a child on her knee, look down at the laurel wreath that surrounds the arms of the A.I.F. and a Book of Remembrance, in which are engraved the names of the men who died in the war. The memorial, known as the Malvern War Civic Memorial, is located in the foyer of the Stonnington Town Hall.

Finally, Ern's name is recorded in the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial. The Roll of Honour records and commemorates the names of all of Australia's war dead. It takes the form of a long series of bronze panels in the Memorial's Commemorative Area and the Roll of Honour database, which is accessible via the Memorial's website. Records in the Roll of Honour database contain the personal particulars, unit and the date of death of each person. Ern's record [98] includes the photograph included here on page seven.



Figure 41: *Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour Panel 43.*

Ernest Robert Fairlie

On Friday 28 December, 1917, Ern's brother Arch and his wife Amy had a child, ultimately to be their only child. They named him Ernest Robert, no doubt to honour the memory of his recently deceased cousin. On 11 July 1940, Ernest joined the Australian Infantry Forces (2/22 Battalion) and was posted to Rabaul.

On 25 January 1942 he was listed as "missing presumed dead".



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