



HELM



Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

April 2018

email: helm@md1729.com

GALLIPOLI 100

This year is the final year of the four year centenary commemoration of World War One, which spanned 1914 to 1918. In 2015 a re-enactment of the dawn landing was carried out by surf boats from Aust, NZ and Turkey to pay respects and honour the sacrifice and bravery of the ANZACS on the Gallipoli (Gelibolu) Peninsula.



The ill-fated British-led World War I invasion tried to secure a naval route from the Mediterranean to Istanbul through the Dardanelles, and take the Ottomans out of the war. On April 25, 1915, some 16,000 Australian troops landed on the shore. The objective was to land at dawn in the lowlands at Gaba Tepe and push across the valley to Midos, then take the ridge of hills at Chonuk Bair. As it turned out, Gaba Tepe was used by Turkish observers with a phone line to hidden inland guns, which constantly shelled the ANZACS on the open beach.

But a strong current swept the landing boats to the north and the Australians landed at Ari Burnu. They now had to head straight up the steep hills for Chonuk Bair. For many, the rising of the sun that day would be their last. This was the start of a fierce battle that lasted for eight months, with huge losses on both sides of the trenches. Around 44,000 Allied troops (Over 8,000 Aust.) and 86,000 Ottoman soldiers died. The heroic campaign was a costly failure. In December 1915, the force was evacuated.

Sat 29 Apr 1939

The Longreach Leader



- Landing 1
- Gallipoli 100 2
- Gordon Richardson 3
- Dawn service 4
- Home Tribute 4

*The port town of Albany, WA, is considered to be the birthplace of the Dawn Service tradition. It was the departure place of the first convoy of Australian and New Zealand troops to fight in World War I on November 1, 1914. The National Anzac Centre in the Princess Royal Fortress, Albany, overlooks the harbour from which over 41,000 men and women departed for the Great War.



4972 1066 Caves Beach; Blacksmiths

Kindly supporting the community

– including Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club; this edition of HELM newsletter.

THE GALLIPOLI 100 EXPERIENCE 2015

Around 2001, Dr Paul Cooper and a few mates who love surf boats began talking about the centenary of WWI and how best to commemorate it over a few cold ones. The basic concept of rowing ashore at the dawn service was elaborated on to add a surfboat race of 100 kms. By 2009, Paul Murphy who organises Military History Tours and is a part of the Surf Life Saving movement and a sweep became involved. Now clear goals were established. These events aimed to raise awareness for the Centennial Commemorations; promote Surf life Saving and surf boat rowing in Turkey, Australia and on the global stage; and promote fellowship between the Anzacs and the Turks. In 2010 a trip was made to Turkey to gauge their interest and gain support; get necessary approvals and identify various issues. Australian and New Zealand representatives took part in inaugural Surf Carnivals on Birc and Kum Beaches.

From then on annual trips were made to Turkey, to check the many and varied conditions on the course, and coach the Turks in the finer points of surf boat rowing on the Black Sea. These endeavours were supported whole heartedly by the Australian Surf Rowers League. Due to the uncertain nature of accommodation, a ship, the MSC Opera, was leased to become a floating hotel and the base; anchored at Canakkale for 9 days leading up to and including the events and give the rowers and their families the opportunity for some sight-seeing. (Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, the Battlefields, The Nek, Lone Pine, Shrapnel Valley, Anzac Cove.) All clubs in Australia and New Zealand were asked to express their interest in the 2 day surf marathon and dawn landing. Soon 70 crews and 35 boats were registered. Many of the rowers had family ties with Gallipoli, with ancestors who volunteered, many making the ultimate sacrifice. Many adorned their boats with names of the fallen; along with "Lest we forget". As word spread, even a crew from Goulburn wanted to participate, borrowing a boat from North Bondi and practising on Lake Narrambulla. The two-day race would travel from Eceabat, down the Dardanelles, through the Aegean Sea before finishing at North Beach, just north of Anzac Cove. (Anzac Cove is considered to be protected waters, therefore no landing could be made there.) The wooden surf boats were about 25 years old and had an uncanny resemblance to the dories that carried the brave diggers to Anzac Cove in 1915. Each boat had 2 crews for the 2 day race.



There are many links between surf life saving and the army. Even during war campaigns surf carnivals and life-saving events were still held. Members of surf clubs who joined up were given ranks of corporal, sergeant or even lieutenant because of their commitment and training, and the lack of an established army. The red and yellow flags used on beach patrols resulted from the influence of returning Diggers who used to signal ships for supplies or reinforcements. Modern surf boats are an extension of the dory used to land on the beaches.



GORDON RICHARDSON – SWANSEA CAVES BEACH SLSC SWEEP - BROULEE WOMEN’S CREW



Gordon is a life member of Caves Beach SLSC, with over 50 years of racing in surf boats as a sweep and a rower. He joined as a cadet lifesaver in 1959, aged 15, proudly wearing the lightning bolt cap to many victories. Gordon acknowledges the club’s older athletes, such as Ken Murray; Don and Mick Ellercamp, who mentored and bred success. Success came in the form of 9 Aust. medals, 12 NSW medals, 2 World Masters. He was also nominated for the Hunter surf boat crew of the century. Gordon is now passing his knowledge down to the next generation through the surf club and by coaching at Swansea High. 2012 saw him sweeping for his grandson at the Aussies, where they finished fourth. In 1996 he instigated a volunteer project to build and race a boat, which helped to bond the club. This was to be repeated in 1998, when club stalwart, Tommy York became ill. Again they banded together and hustled to get another boat built in a short space of time. Two major international events have burned bright for Gordon. In 2012 he rowed in the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, the boat being just in front of the Queen’s barge, as they made their way along an 8 km stretch of the Thames, between Chelsea and the Tower Bridge. A more poignant opportunity arose to participate in the Gallipoli 100 as sweep for the Broulee women’s team. Gordon became involved through his contacts with the surf club movement and his model surf boat replica making. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to pay tribute to the soldiers, as his grandfather who had served in WWI; the many life savers who fought at Gallipoli; and the many who did not return.

A fleet of 26 Australian; 4 New Zealand; and 5 Turkish boats proudly paid tribute. The Broulee team shared the Queenscliff boat as the second crew. It took 2 months to refurbish the 25 year old wooden boat, of a similar shape to the boats that brought the soldiers ashore at Anzac Cove; aptly named “Eternal Spirit”. There were 6 stages along the coastline of the peninsula where the Anzacs had fought. Heading south from Eceabat on the east coast, through The Dardanelles, round Cape Helles, then north into the Aegean Sea, to North Beach just past Anzac Cove. The surf marathon was held over 2 days, (22-23 April) returning at night to their floating hotel, the Italian ship MSC Opera, which was moored with 2 others at Canakkale.

In the words of the girls from Queenscliff and Broulee “On Anzac Day an organised service will be held at a beach close to Lone Pine. We will be involved by rowing our boat ashore carrying descendants of Gallipoli veterans. We will be met by descendents of Turkish soldiers who fought at Gallipoli. Together in friendship we will lay a wreath in memory of those who fought.” Usually the seas are quite rough, but this time they were smooth as glass. At 4.30am the beach was lit up and Gordon swept his crew onto the beach. On landing their oars were raised upright as a salute to those who lost their lives.



Many thanks to Gordon for sharing his story, experiences and photos.

Far Left: Anzac Cove 1915;
Left: Gaba Tepe today.

SPEECH EXCERPTS - DAWN SERVICE 2015 - MAYOR OF GELIBOLU – M. MUSTAFA OZACAR

“LET THE SCENT OF FLOWERS AND PEACE SPREAD FROM GALLIPOLI, ON THE CENTENNIAL.... “

“In ancient times, people used to call Gallipoli the ‘BEAUTIFUL CITY’....

That day, we fought on Anzac Cove, today we embraced on Hamzakoy Cove....

The Turkish Republic was established on October 29, 1923, founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk., who said: “Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives.... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore, rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmetts to us where they lie side by side in this country of ours... You, the mothers who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well”

The letter sent by an Australian mother to Ataturk is also unforgettable:

“The warmth of your words eased our sorrow for our sons who vanished in Gallipoli, and our tears ended. Your words are a consolation to me as a mother. Now we are sure that our sons rest in peace in their eternal rest. If your Excellency accepts, we would like to call you ‘Ata’, too. Because you have said at their graves of our sons what could only be said by their own fathers. In the name of all mothers, our respect to the Great Ata, who embraced our children with the love of a father.”

In conclusion: We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love; and then we will return home.”

PAYING TRIBUTE AT HOME IN 2015.



At *Swansea RSL*, the *Rising Sun Memorial* was installed. 8m wide and weighing 2.5 tonnes, it was transported from WA. Created by Smith Sculptors, it is a twin of the Memorial in Onslow, WA, symbolising the rising of the sun in the East and setting in the West; inspired by the Army’s insignia, that was worn in WWI as a badge, on the side of the upturned edge of the slouch hat, which has become part of the digger tradition.

The Anzac Memorial Walkway. The 450m stainless steel walkway, above a beach that is quite similar to Anzac Cove, lists the names of 11,000 Hunter people who served in WWI; and incorporates 3860 names of enlisted families. Partially funded by BHP in recognition of the company’s centenary and their link to WWI – having been established in Newcastle in 1915 to provide steel rails to the Western Front.



© Material contained in this publication is not available for use, duplication or modification in any other publication without the express permission of the editor. It is published under the auspices of Lake Macquarie and Districts Historical Society Inc.

Disclaimer: Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this newsletter, however, the accuracy of statements or opinions expressed in articles cannot be guaranteed.

**'When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,
For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today.'**

John Maxwell Edmonds