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All Articles or Letters to the Editor for publication should be sent to the Honorary Editor as soon as possible and not later than 1st March 1991. They should be typed in double spacing. Please put full captions including names, ranks, places, date, etc, on the back of photographs which will be returned if requested.

THE SHEET ANCHOR

Volume XV Number 2 *WINTER 1990*

CONTENTS

THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN - 1915

by Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Wilson RM 34

DEFENCE OF KUWAIT - 1928

by Bob Riddings 44

FANNING - GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

by Major R S Billett, R Aust Inf 49

CLOSING MEMORIES OF WOOLWICH DIVISION

by Sergeant Major T W Holdstock 54

REMINISCENCES OF A WARTIME OFFICER - Part VI

by Major Patrick D A Ennor RM 57

THE BATTLE OF NAVARINO - 1827

by Lieutenant (later General) Thomas Hurdle 61

"YOUNG ALBERT JOINS THE T'MARINES" 64

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The Gallipoli Campaign 1915

by Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Wilson R.M.

Some Experiences of a Sergeant serving with the Chatham Battalion RMLI in the Royal Naval Division

At the beginning of the First World War it was clear to the Allies that a sea route must, if at all possible, be opened from the Mediterranean to the Russian Black Sea ports, to take urgently needed munitions to the hard-pressed Russians and to bring out shipments of wheat fromm the Ukraine. It might also be possible to mount an attack in the area of Constantinople, the capital of Turkey in Europe.

The route was closed by minefields in the Dardanelles, between the Ægean and the Sea of Marmara, covered by shore batteries mounted on the Gallipoli peninsular, and on the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles. Attempts were made to force a passage by naval action alone, sweeping the mines under counter-battery fire from the heavy guns of the capital ships. But bombardment from the sea was unsuccessful, and the French and British battleships were sunk by mines.

An expeditionary force under General Sir Ian Hamilton was assembled to drive the Turks and their guns back along the Peninsular well beyond the Narrows towards the Bulair Lines. It had four units of about one Division each:

A fully trained French Division of French Territorials and Senegalese

The 29th. Division of British regular troops

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, which had too little training for war, but a tremendous fighting spirit

The Royal Naval Division.

The RND had a regular Brigade of RMLI Battalions from Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth, with one mixed battalion. Though regular, they had large numbers of new recruits. The two Naval Brigades were formed around the Royal Naval Reserves for whom billets could not be found in ships of the Fleet. Numbers were made up with young officers and men from the RNVR, many of whom had made their mark in civilian life. Finally there was a considerable number of men from the Durham and Tyneside coalfields who had volunteered for service, but for whom the Army had no capacity.

The eight Naval Battalions were not numbered, each carried the name of a distinguished Admiral, such as Hawke, Hood, Benbow and Drake. Six of them had a Guards officer as CO or 2nd in Command. The RN Division fought with great courage and distinction in Gallipoli and on the Western Front, and resisted, with equal determination and success, the misguided efforts of short-sighted Army Generals to deprive them of their naval ranks, traditions and parlance.

The assault on the Peninsular was at dawn on April 25th. The French launched a highly successful diversionary attack on the Asiatic coast at Kum Kale. 29 Division landed at five beaches on Cape Helles and the ANZACs landed north of Gaba Tepe. The RN Division was kept as floating reserve while threatening a landing at Bulair Lines.....

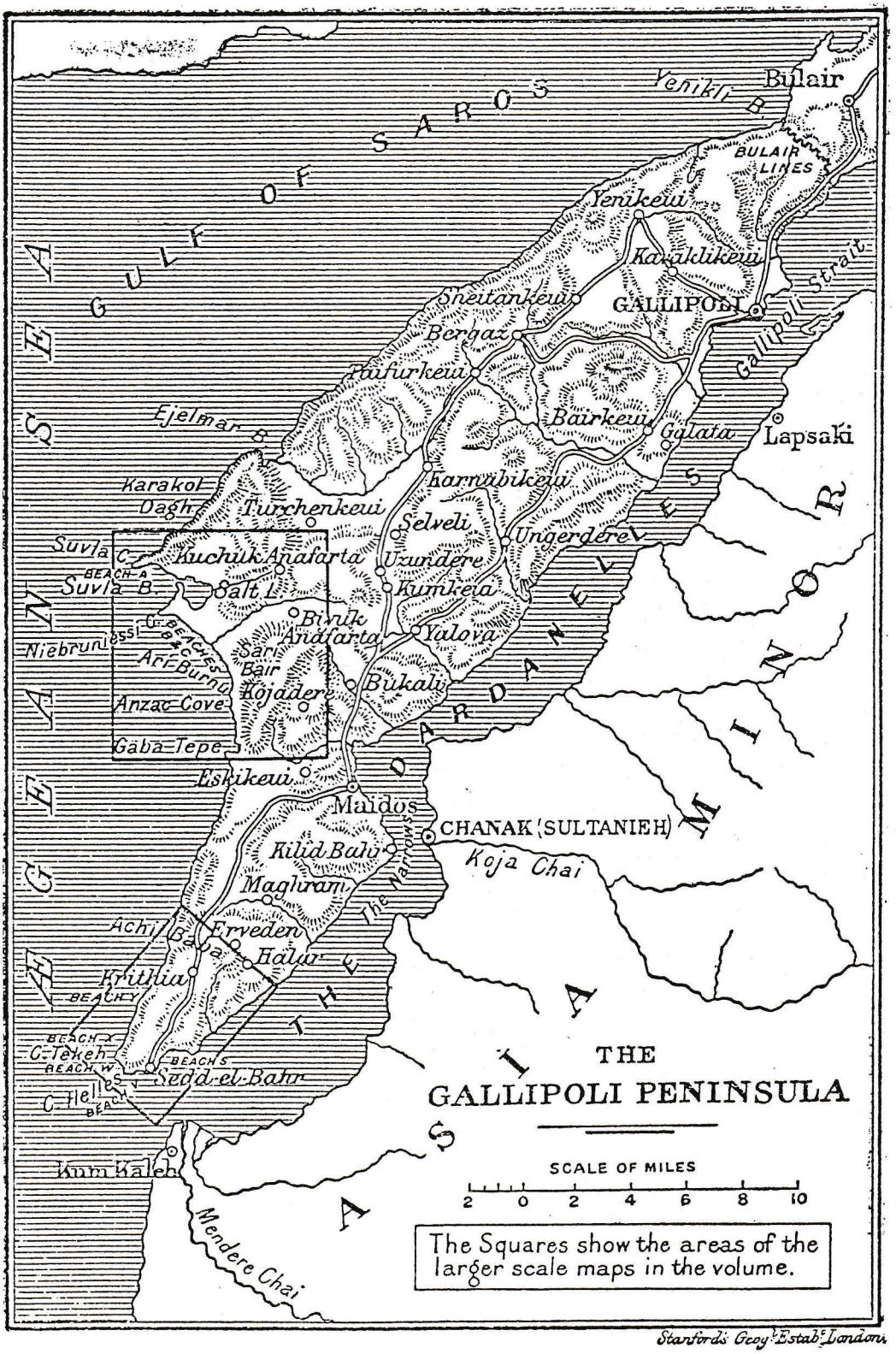
Chatham Sergeant B I 'Tug' Wilson was posted to the machine guns of the Chatham Battalion RMLI. He kept a diary from which extracts have been used to illustrate this account. The battalion embarked in the troopship *Cawdor Castle* on 5th February, where they remained until landing in Gallipoli twelve weeks later, apart from nine days under canvas at Port Suez. Conditions on board were very poor:

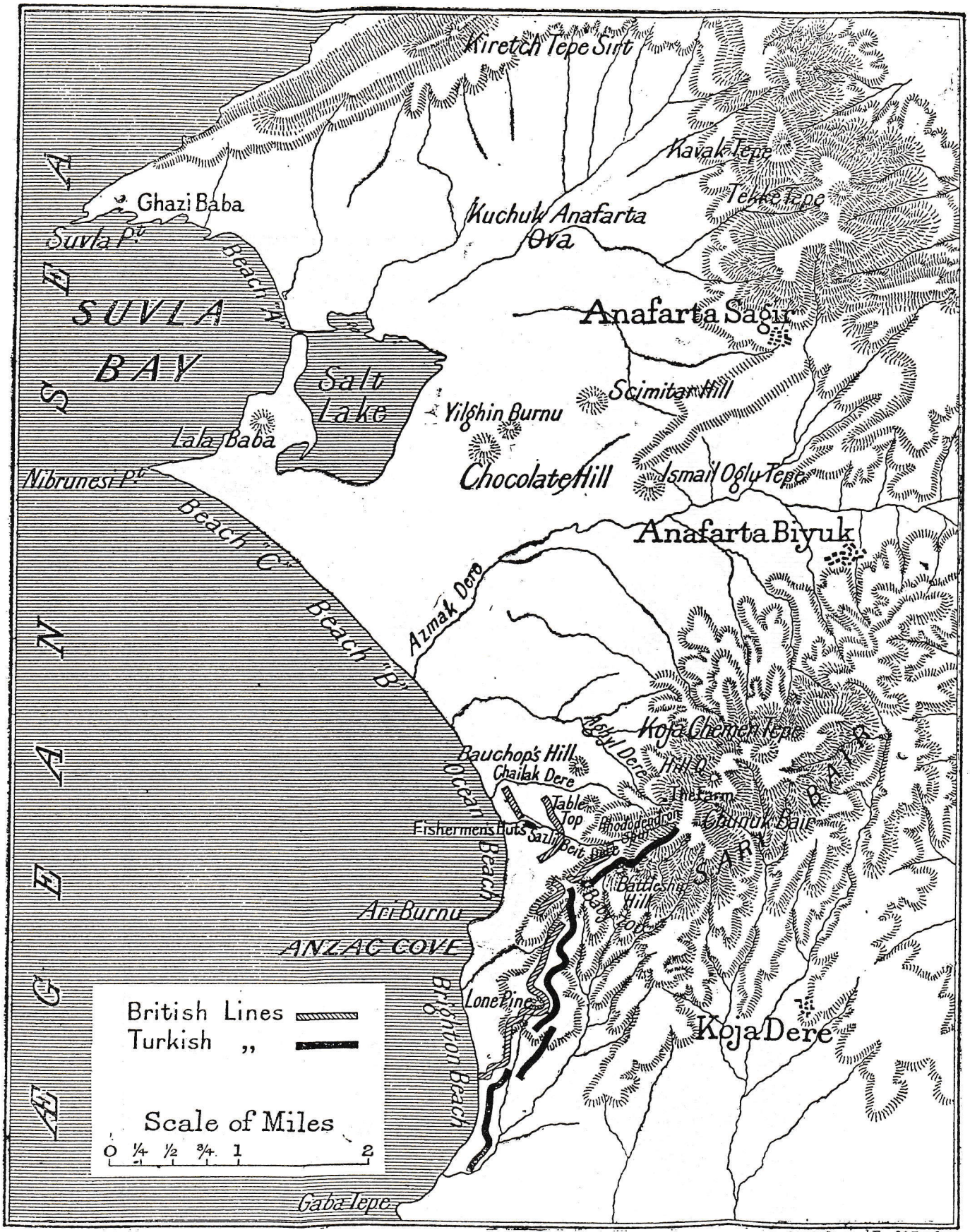
> **Saturday March 20th** at Lemnos..... For tea today we had very weak tea and bread - this has to last until breakfast time.....

Sunday March 21st at sea..... Put to sea at 6 am in search of lighters which had broken loose whilst in tow by a tug in yesterday's gale. It seems fanastic to send a troopship with a thousand men on board to do this work with enemy submarines about.....

Friday April 9th at sea..... Colonel Parsons gave a lecture after tea on the characteristics of the Turk. He said they were bad shots, with no initiative and a horror of night fighting.....

How utterly wrong this proved to be!




Tiretch Tepe Sirt
Kavak Tepe
Tekke Tepe
Ghazi Baba
Suvla Pt.
Kuchuk Anafarta Ova
Beach "A"
SUVLA BAY
Anafarta Sagir
Salt Lake
Scimitar Hill
Yilghin Burnu
Lala Baba
Chocolate Hill
Ismail Oglu Tepe
Nibrunesi Pt.
Beach "C"
Beach "B"
Anafarta Biyuk
Azmak Dere
Koja Chemen Tepe
Bauchop's Hill
Chailak Dere
Table Top
Rhododendron Spur
Fisherman's Huts
Sazli Beit Dere
Ari Burnu
ANZAC COVE
Battleship Hill
Lone Pine
Brighton Beach
Koja Dere
British Lines
Turkish ,,
Scale of Miles
0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 2
Gaba Tepe
Stanford's Geog.l Estab.t London.

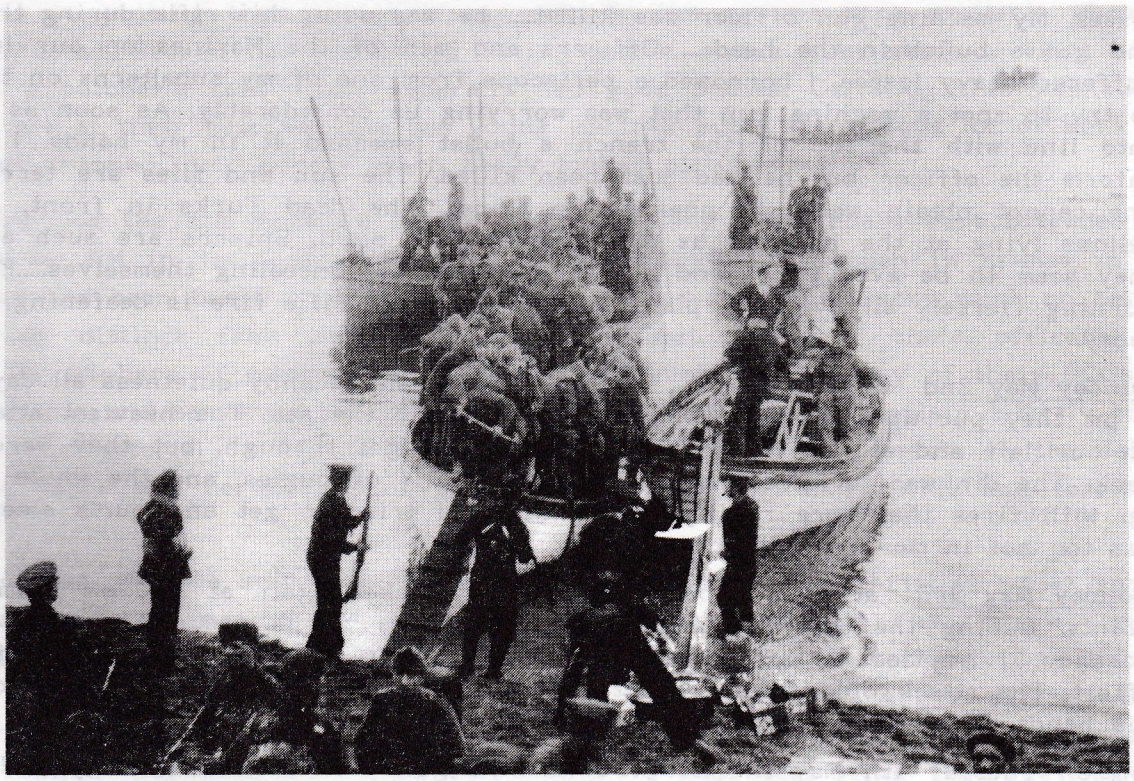
'ANZAC-SUVLA.

Saturday April 25th at Gulf of Saros..... At 5.30 am we were lying off Bulair Lines. The battleships *Canopus, Dartmouth* and *Doris* and others commenced to bombard..... the din is terrific and the whole Gallipoli Peninsular seems a mass of fire and smoke.

On this day the ANZACS landed at Anzac Cove. Behind the beach was a sandy cliff about 100 feet high covered with dense scrub and cut up in all directions by deep nullahs so that the field of fire was not more than a few yards and it was impossible to maintain direction. All over the broken hills there were isolated fights to the death, and utter confusion. Snipers were everywhere. The Turks attacked continually for two days and a night. The ANZACs had won a bridgehead, but had suffered heavy casualties and were almost exhausted.

Wednesday April 28th at Gaba Tepe..... At 10 am, the ship steamed round to where the Australians had landed on 25th. They require reinforcements..... We got down into the boats at 5 pm being taken in tow by a trawler, eventually landing on the beach in the rain. What confusion! - everyone shouting orders, or asking for this or that battalion. Our battalion waited for a guide to conduct them to the trenches; it was now pouring with rain. At last we commenced to move up in pitch darkness. The wounded were coming down on stretchers in a continuous stream. It was hard work scrambling up this hill in dense scrub. The machine guns had to halt very often as we were manhandling all the guns and ammunition. We arrived at, or just below, the crest of the hill at 4.30 am. We were utterly worn out, so lay down on the slope of the hill and dozed off..... B Company went up last night and numbers of them are coming back wounded. If seriously they have to be slid down the hill by ropes, it is so steep and rough.....

Thursday April 29th at Gaba Tepe..... Another day hanging around. At 6 pm, however, I received orders to take my gun and crew with QMS White and his crew to the firing



No 4 Company of the Plymouth Battalion, Royal Marines Light Infantry, land on V Beach at Sedd-el-Bahr on the southern tip of the Gallipoli peninsular near Cape Helles on 4 March 1915, but after meeting strong opposition and losing 22 killed and 22 wounded, they withdrew later that day. This picture clearly shows the bleak landscape

line. Our orders were not very definite - no one knew exactly where we were wanted or how to get there. It was a hard climb with our guns in pitch darkness. Our hands were torn with the scrub.. We arrived just below the crest of the hill at 8 pm, but we could obtain no definite instructions of any kind. QMS White and his crew got into the firing line at about 10 pm. Orders came back to me that I was to remain where I was..... The trenches were so full of dead and wounded that it was difficult to move. The gun's crew and I got as close to the ground as possible. The Turks were shelling the beaches heavily - the shells just screeched over our heads. I must have dozed off to be awakened by the voice of an Australian Sergeant shouting 'Give 'em a good three feet'. I looked up and saw them dragging dead Australians over the crest and burying them close by where we were lying.

Friday April 30th at Gaba Tepe..... At 4 am a message came by runner to get my gun and crew into the firing line. In daylight this was a risky business as the line was dug about 30 yards over the crest, and on the crest one was in full view of the Turks..... I got over safely..... the crew came up soon afterwards and we commenced to mount the gun on the parapet. At 6 am an order came to fix bayonets and stand by - the Turks were advancing in force. They rushed on, blowing bugles and shouting 'Allah'. Our fellows were taking a heavy toll of them and 50 yards from our position they turned back. Things again became quiet and snipers hidden in the scrub became active. We lost very many men; it was impossible to show yourself over the parapet, it meant certain death if you exposed yourself for a second. It is very pitiful to see the trench piled up with dead and wounded. To move them out in daylight is out of the question, they just have to wait there until dark. I managed to eat a little corned beef and biscuit washed down with water thick with sand.

Saturday May 1st at Gaba Tepe..... At dawn the Turks attacked in mass and the situation looked critical, but before arriving at the trench they retired with heavy losses, My machine gun officer was killed..... he was using his rifle during the attack and got a bullet in the head..... Officers and men of the Marines on our left have suffered heavy losses. I borrowed a periscope from one of my subalterns on the right to try to spot a machine gun that was worrying us considerably. As soon as I got it into line with the top of the trench a bullet smashed it in my hands. I went to inform the officer but he had just been killed. The sun and flies are terrible and one cannot obtain water to quench the thirst. The dead Turks in front, and our fellows lying at the back of us are beginning to smell. Snipers are such a menace; they seem to be everywhere and are very clever at concealing themselves.....Fires are burning fiercely all over the place and artillery and rifle fire is deafening. No rest today.

Sunday May 2nd at Gaba Tepe..... There has been an uncanny quietness all day but, at 7 pm they put up a great effort to drive us into the sea. The heaviest attack came on our left and at one time I thought they had got through, but they were driven back. The din was terrific - shouting and blowing of bugles, and the whole place lit up with fires that were raging in the scrub. I tried to get an hour's sleep but it was too hot in more ways than one.

Monday May 3rd at Gaba Tepe..... The devils attacked again at 3.30 am from several points. During the attack I caught about 30 in a bunch coming towards our gun position. I emptied a belt of ammunition into them at 60 yards range with good effect. The attack died down..... about 8 am a Turk jumped into the trench and put up his hands. In very good English he said 'No fight, no food'.....

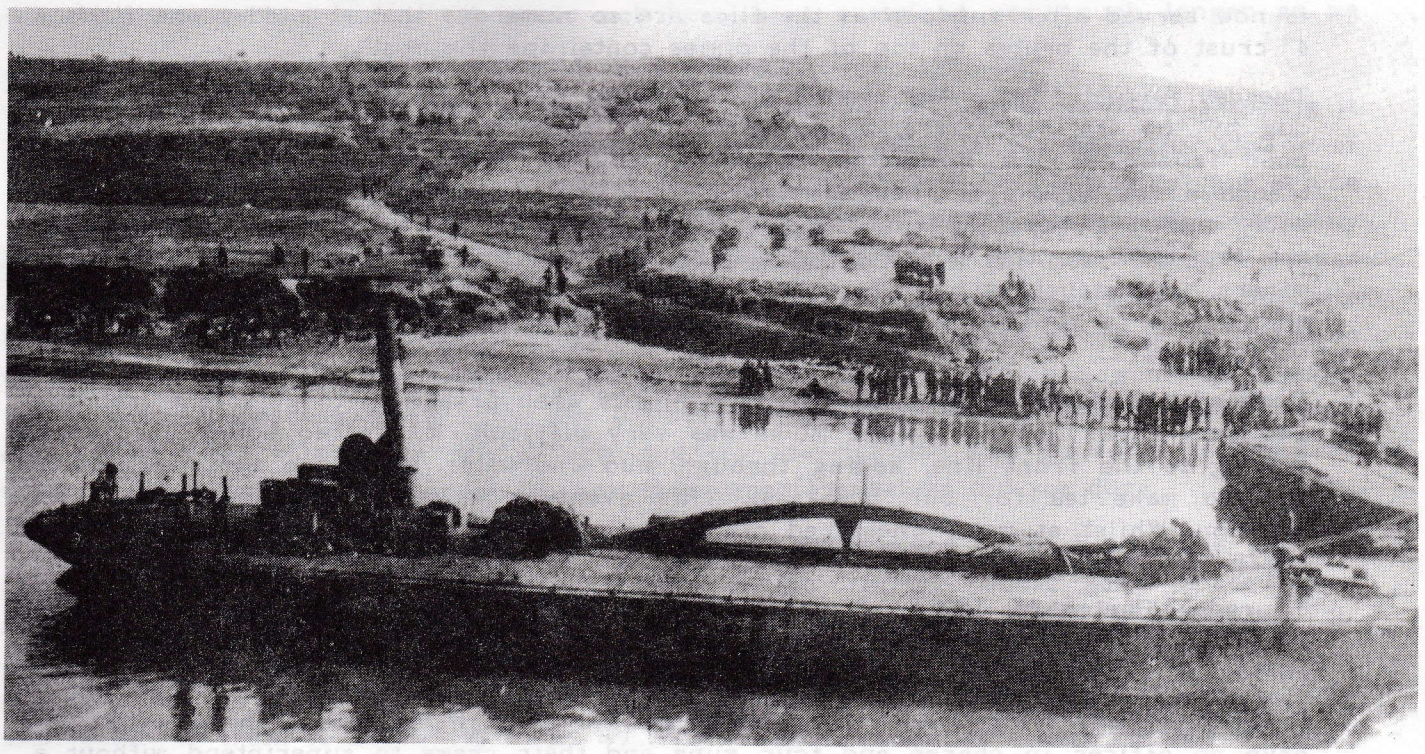
At 6 pm on Tuesday 4th May the Marine's machine gun crew was relieved by a Naval Air crew, and returned to the beach for a rest, where they were given bully beef and biscuits. That night, while asleep beside his gun Sergeant Wilson was wounded by a stray bullet. It was not a serious wound, the bullet entering the right leg beside the shin, lodging in the calf muscles. With an advanced surgical post on Mudros the bullet could have been removed so that he could have been back on duty within a month.

He was, however, evacuated to the base in Egypt, where the inefficiency of the back up services was beyond belief. He was moved by train to hospital in the Citadel, Cairo, and put in a ward where the beds were alive with hordes of bugs. Food was disgraceful, 'very little meat, perhaps two potatoes and always stone cold'..... 'At breakfast the tea arrived at 7.30, followed by bread and butter at 8 am; no milk, very little sugar. No clean clothes yet, so I took my shirt off, washed it, waited for it to dry and put it on again. I shall do my underpants tomorrow....' (This was ten days after leaving Gallipoli). He received no pay, so could not buy a cup of tea in the canteen for a week after arriving in Cairo.

The bullet was removed on May 31st, 25 days after the wound. He finally returned to his unit on July 30th. During his absence the Royal Naval Division had moved to Cape Helles. The Allied line had been pushed along the Peninsular about 3 miles, but was held short of Krithia village and the dominating hill of Achi Baba, which both remained in Turkish hands for the whole campaign. Achi Baba overlooked the Allied country right through to Cape Helles. Static trench warfare conditions prevailed - a week in the line and a week in the so-called 'rest camp', about 3 miles behind, near Morto Bay. 'Rest camp' was no rest - digging with pick and shovel all day under constant shell fire. Getting backwards and forwards between the line and rest camp was no picnic..... 'It is about as fatiguing a job as I know getting through the communication trench. Everyone going or coming, completely bunged up with equipment. You find yourself jammed into the side of the trench with another's rifle digging into your side, or a mule loaded with ammunition just sidles you into the side and refuses to budge. A sweating, swearing mass of troops and mules.....'

By this time the conditions under which the men lived were a worse enemy than the Turks:

> **Wednesday August 11th** at Rest Camp..... Another quiet day, free from worry except from these awful flies. 60% of our battalion is suffering from dysentry including myself - this scourge makes one very weak and depressed. If only we could get some green vegetables it would be a Godsend..... I can't help noticing how yellow everyone looks, with eyes very bloodshot. I can just about drag myself round and all food makes me sick..... Have several septic sores on my hands and knees which won't heal.



Naval cutters landing men of the Plymouth Battalion on Y Beach on 25th April. The Chatham Battalion landed three days later on V Beach near ANZAC Cove.



A First Aid Post in the trenches. Casualties who had just arrived, awaiting evacuation to the rear. (Original photo supplied by Sgt P Jarvis)

Monday August 16th..... Moved up into the front line this morning....What a 3 mile drag it was in the boiling sun with kit and guns! During the day I made a cup of tea and had a slice of bread and marmalade - the most I have eaten for a week. What a business it is to spread the marmalade on bread with the myriad of flies. As soon as you open a tin they simply cover it like a cloud, and getting a portion in your mouth without swallowing a dozen of the things is a work of art..... The hot meal of the day is now served after sundown as the flies are so numerous that at midday one finds a 4" crust of the brutes on top of the dixies containing the meat.....

Tuesday August 17th..... The trench we occupy is known as the 'Worcester flat'. It was dug by the 4th Worcesters. In no-man's-land in front of us there are at least 200 poor fellows of the Worcester Regiment lying as they died attempting to take a trench a few days ago. They came up against several formidable redoubts and were badly cut up by machine gun fire - it is impossible to go out and bury them - they are too close to the Turk's lines. On the reverse of the medal we learn that the miners have struck at home for more money, thereby prolonging the carnage. I feel I should like to give them a peep at those poor chaps in front. I believe their strike would be off.....

Wednesday September 15th..... Raining in torrents when preparing to go to the trenches and very dark. Loading up the mules was very difficult. It was two hours hard work getting to the front line, wading through mud and water. Wood too wet to kindle a fire to make tea for our breakfast. This evening commenced digging a new gun position. Whilst at work unearthed one of our fellows who had been buried in the parapet.....

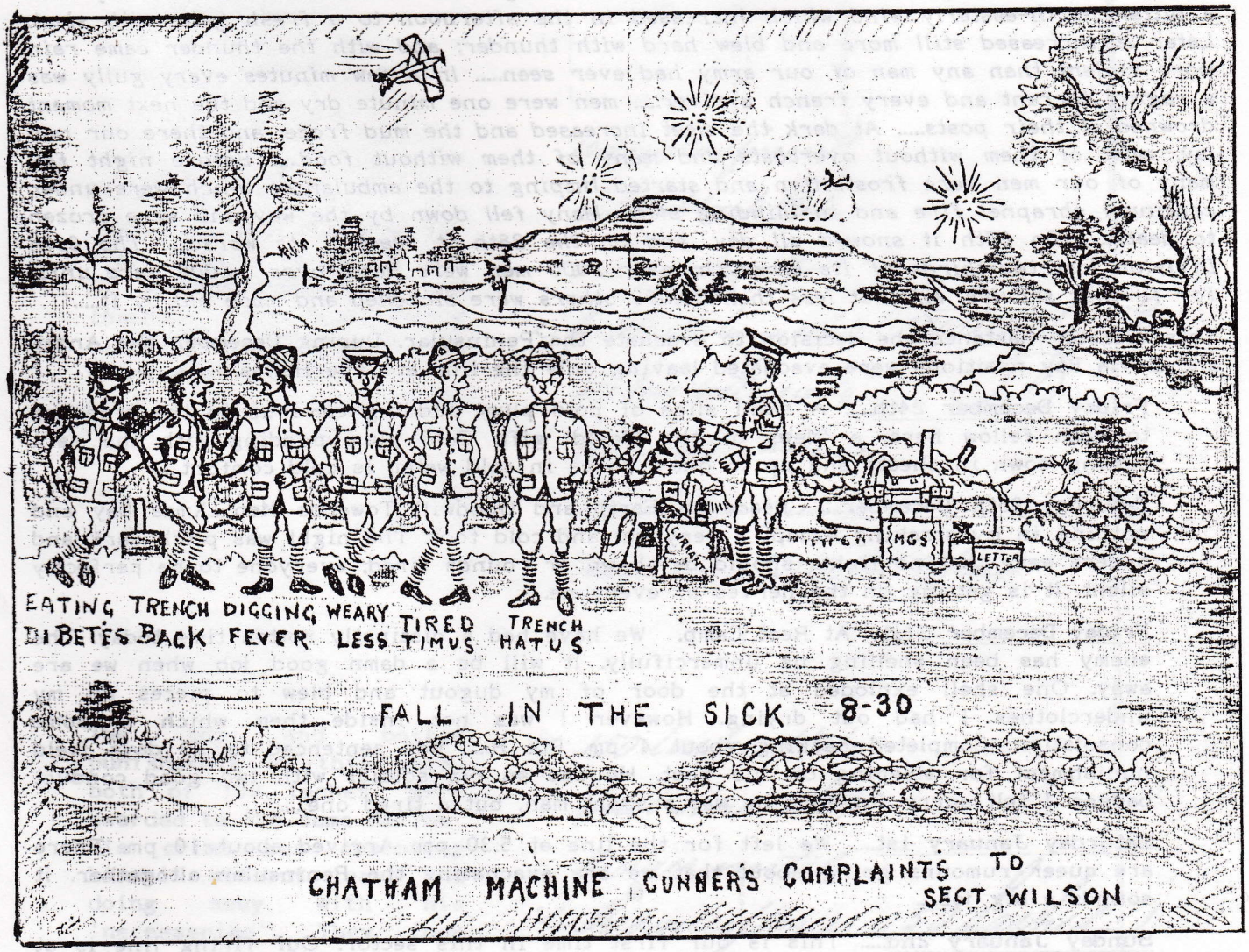
Thursday September 16th..... Finished gun position at 3 am after a hard night's work..... one is always crashing flat on the stomach to avoid being seen when the star shells are being sent up.....

Friday September 17th..... Have been fixing up two guns in the new firing line today. I have no officer in charge and four guns and their crews to superintend without a single NCO to help me..... (On landing in April there was a sergeant to every gun)... The percentage of sickness in the battalion is enormous. Those on duty are wrecks and trickle around more dead than alive.

Tuesday September 21st..... Some staff officers have been around this morning and complained of the smell of dead Turks and our own fellows lying out at the back of our gun position. They have been there since about the end of June. With five of the gun's crews I went out this evening to bury them. Most of them were Turks and a few fellows of the Border Regiment..... They were in such a bad state of decomposition that it was only possible to dig shallow graves alongside the bodies and push them in with a shovel.. I made certain of obtaining the identity discs of our fellows. This was a pretty beastly business. Before we got back into the trench a devil of a fusilade started on our right and spread towards our position. It had the effect of keeping us pinned close to the ground for a considerable time. Rations were up when we got back - but feeling too sick to eat lumps of cold meat and bread. One can realise why - when we had no water for washing of our hands. We are nearly savages in Gallipoli.....

Wednesday October 27th..... Left this morning at 5 am for the firing line. I managed to drag myself along in the dust and heat but no good except to lie down on the firestep. This evening I feel a little improvement. It's not the fighting one gets, it's the conditions; food, climate, etc, that beat one.

Thursday October 28th..... Targets have presented themselves today and we have done a lot of firing. One of our positions looks down into one of the Turk's trenches. We always have one or two spectators, including officers. I'm afraid someone will be getting sniped, as they are fairly careless in their eagerness to see the poor old Turk getting machine gunned.....



During August 1915 thousands of men were evacuated with dysentry from the Gallipoli peninsular. This cartoon was sketched by Private Greenwood (later killed in action) and was given to Sgt Wilson.



Royal Marines digging trenches into the hard rock formations, typical of the Gallipoli peninsular.

Between 26th and 28th November a terrible blizzard struck the Peninsular. John Masefield, in his book on Gallipoli (1916), records, *'The 26th began as a cold, dour Gallipoli day with a bitter north-easterly wind which increased in the afternoon to a fresh gale, with sleet. Later it increased still more and blew hard with thunder; and with the thunder came rain more violent than any man of our army had ever seen..... In a few minutes every gully was a raging torrent and every trench a river..... men were one minute dry and the next moment drowned at their posts..... At dark the sleet increased and the mud froze, and there our men lay, most of them without overcoats and many of them without food..... Before night fell many of our men were frostbitten and started limping to the ambulances which were under continual shrapnel fire and in blinding sleet. Many fell down by the way and were frozen to death..... On 27th it snowed all day, and on the 28th it reached its worse..... The 29th Division lost two-thirds of its strength, over 2000 men were dead, over 10,000 were unfit for further service, and not less than 30,000 others were sickened and made old by it.....'*

This disaster hastened the decision to evacuate the Peninsular. During December the Anzac and Suvla Bay positions were evacuated leaving only the line at Cape Helles.

Friday December 24th..... A small slice of cold plum pudding came up to the trenches to each fellow here, a 'News of the World' gift. Cold plum pudding with the rain coming down in sheets and up to one's knees in cold water is cold comfort.....

Saturday 25th December..... 'Peace on Earth and Goodwill Towards Men'...Xmas Day and nothing in my stocking except a very wet and cold foot. The night was pitch dark and orders were that no lights should be shown or rounds fired; everyone to be perfectly silent. It is getting on the nerves of everyone.

Friday December 31st At Rest Camp. We have had a distinctly rotten time today. The enemy has been shelling us unmercifully. It will be a damn good job when we are away. One shell exploded at the door of my dugout and blew to pieces all my underclothes I had out drying. However I was not inside them which is some consolation. Completed packing about 4 pm. Pte H..... was sentenced to 90 days field punishment for sleeping on his post. He was an old soldier with two good conduct badges. I felt sorry for him, he was a smart man, but a tired one.....

Saturday January 1st..... We left for the line at 5.30 pm. Arrived about 10 pm. There are queer rumours going about that we are evacuating the Peninsular altogether. It sounds a big job....

Sunday January 2nd..... This is our first time in this sector. Our firing line is at the foot of a huge cliff with the Turks at the foot of another cliff opposite, about 200 yards away. The French told us that the Turks or themselves had not fired a shot

for weeks - a sort of mutual agreement. Pte P..... of my gun's crew was sentenced to 30 days field punishment for sleeping behind his gun. He had already done two nights without sleep.....

Monday January 3rd..... It is obvious we are going to evacuate..... It's a sorry thought that we are going to leave all these hundreds of fellows buried here..... One can only hope that we can steal away without further sacrifice of life.....

Wednesday January 5th..... The suspense of waiting becomes acute. Guns, stores and troops are moving away daily. The firing line is very thinly manned - one sentry every 30 yards or so and no-one allowed to talk above a whisper. These huge cliffs towering above us, and in the inky blackness of night threading one's way around the line, which entails going through hundreds of crosses..... It's a job to keep one's nerves under control..... One is thankful when day breaks.

Friday January 7th..... Another cold, weary night has passed... A terrific bombardment from the Turks this afternoon, including Asiatic Liz, which enfilades our trenches... Tonight some of my battalion withdrew to the beach, including 3 of my machine guns. I am left behind to bring on the remaining 5 guns..... I am rather glad to know that I shall not be here until the last night..... It is rumoured that all troops are to be clear of this accursed Peninsular by 4 am on the 9th..... The nights are simply nightmares, if only the Turks came on with any dash we would all be annihilated, there are so few men in this sector of the line.

Saturday January 8th..... At 7.30 pm I started off to the beach with 4 guns and their crews. Gazing round as we trudged on one saw hundreds of men across the Peninsular, moving like ghosts to the beach. As I stole past the cemeteries full of British and French soldiers I felt a pang of sorrow to think we were leaving them behind after nine months of fighting, thirst, flies and shellfire, and it looked to me all to no purpose. I arrived with my party on the beach at 11.30 pm, where I found thousands lined up as if going in to a cinema - waiting their turn to cross to the *River Clyde*..... I eventually crossed to the *Clyde* about midnight. I jumped into a lighter and was conveyed to the *Princess Ena*..... I wonder if it is possible for people who have not had our experiences to realise the pleasure of feeling you were safe off the Peninsular.

The Royal Naval Division had suffered terrible losses on Gallipoli. Douglas Jerrold, in his history of the RND, wrote *'By the middle of October the effective strength of the Division had sunk to 3,200. Since April 25th, out of more than 16,500 men of unmatched physique and still unimpaired determination, over 13,000 had become casualties, killed, wounded or evacuated sick.'*

The Division spent the next four months in occupation of the islands of Tenedos or Imbros, manning a defensive line at Stavros on the mainland, or at the main base at Mudros.

Thursday March 4th at Stavros..... General Trotman visitied the trenches and expressed satisfacton at the gun emplacements. It's a lovely day and it's a treat to feel so full of vim. The troops are beginning to look wonderfully fit.....

The four months respite enabled the Division to recover its health and strength whilst its future was being argued in Whitehall. It raised a unique problem, being manned by naval ratings and administered by the Admiralty while fighting under Army orders. It was at last decided to move the Division to the Western Front.

The four RMLI Battalions were reorganised into two; Sergeant Wilson was promoted and appointed a Company Sergeant Major. For his services in Gallipoli he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and the French Croix de Guerre with palm.

Since submitting this previously unpublished account of his father's experiences with the Chatham Battalion at Gallipoli, we have learned of the sad death of Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Wilson on 15th September 1990 at the age of 78.

DEFENCE OF KUWAIT – 1928

by Bob Riddings *(RMHS)*

Seamen and Royal Marines Land from HMS *Emerald*

The old walled town of Al Kuwayt (Kuwait) in 1928 was a Moslem community of mixed cultures. The ruling family of Al Sabah dated their autonomous sheikhdom from 1756. To thwart the increasing influences of the Germans and the Ottoman Turks in the 19th Century, a Treaty of Agreement with Great Britain was signed in 1899, and then as a protectorate in 1914. The northern borders of Kuwait were agreed with Iraq in 1923, but oil from Kuwait was not in production until just after World War 2. An unfortunate casualty of the oil port expansion requirements was the destruction in 1957 of the mediaeval wall and towers, except for three Gates. With oil wealth came Kuwait's independence in 1961, followed immediately by a territorial claim from Iraq. Prompt action in 1961 by Royal Marines of 42 and 45 Commandos, supported by the commando ship HMS *Bulwark* and military units deterred any overt action by Iraq. This is an account of an earlier and no less prompt action to defend Kuwait by Seamen and Royal Marines in 1928.

In January 1928, the light cruiser HMS *Emerald* visited the port of Abadan and enjoyed the post-Christmas hospitality of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company before a short routine call at Kuwait. The ship's arrival at Kuwait was expected to cause a sensation, but an earlier visit by the battle-cruiser HMS *Renown* had left the locals rather blasé. More interest was shown over a desert raid by some of the Akhwan tribe led by Dawish just outside the ancient walled town of Al Kuwayt. A number of camels and sheep were stolen and their shepherds put to the sword. The Sheikh of Kuwait acted promptly by despatching twenty cars, each with twelve eager warriors in hot pursuit. The raiders had not considered the use of cars and were completely surprised about 90 miles out of the town. After a short fierce fight the booty was recovered and heavy casualties inflicted upon the raiders.

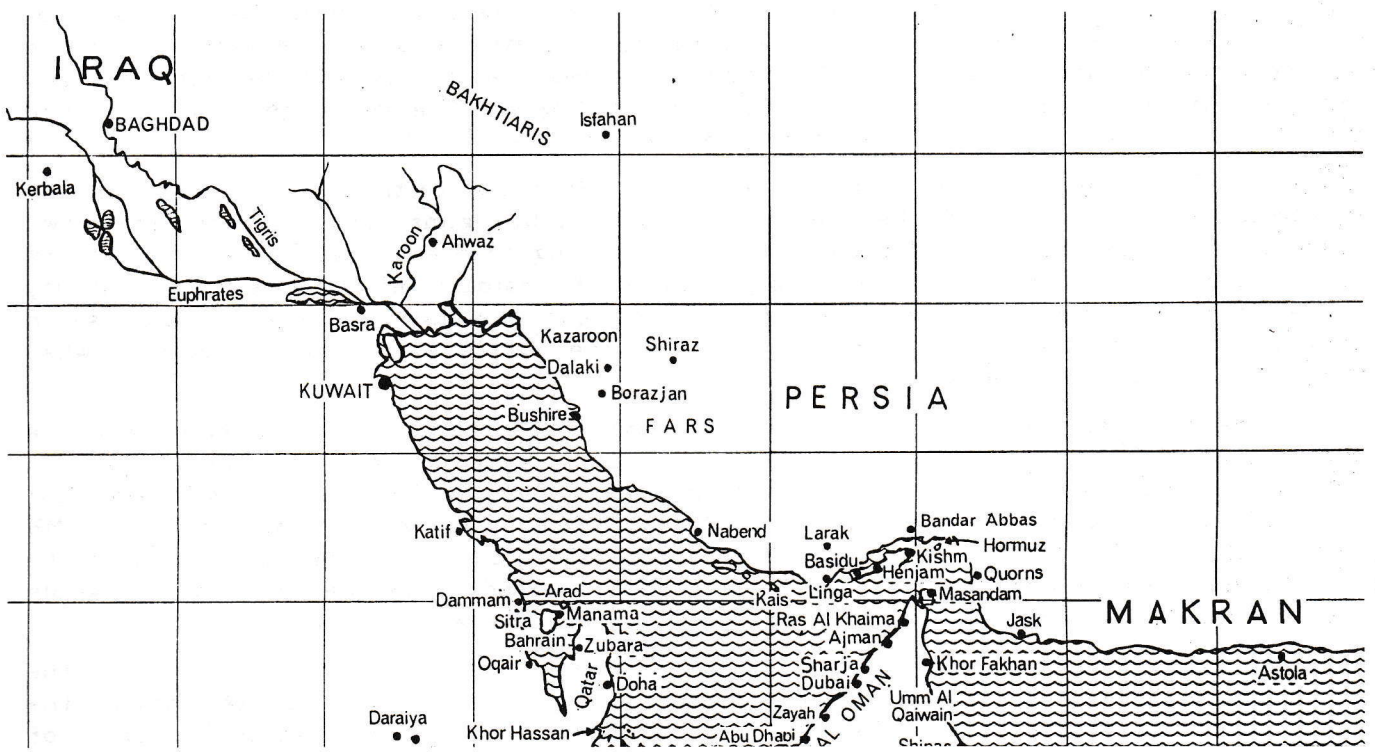
The Sheikh's success enabled the ship's company to make the most of their short stay although the facilities and shopping were limited. The old town of Al Kuwayt was built right up to the water's edge with small houses crowded together leaving little room for vehicles. The British Residency was on the sea front near many fishing and pearl-diving dhows drawn up ashore with their sterns overhanging the narrow streets. The Bazaar was small, clean and interesting but nothing of local or unique manufacture. Coffee pots of quaint shapes, rose water jugs, trinkets, daggers, swords and rifles of many makes could be haggled over without rancour. Local Arabs, who sat round sipping coffee took scant notice of the visitors. The narrow streets built for camels were quite unsuitable for motorised vehicles and nearly all led to the market place. Here veiled women sat around under palm mats and hawked foodstuffs mostly hidden by myriads of flies.

Outside this crowded maze of houses and beyond the Wall were a few well-owning Arabs who struggled against the barrenness of the soil and devasting attacks of locusts with little success. Surrounding the inhabited area was a Wall of 3 to 4 miles in length and stretching from the sea to the sea. The Wall was made of mud and some cement, interspersed with 31 towers. The greater part of the Wall had runs of firing steps and loopholes for rifles or other weapons above it. There were four Gates (South, East, North and Main). Near the South Gate were two palaces, one for the Sheikh of Kuwait and the other belonging to the Sheikh of Mohammerah. The latter had been an ardent supporter of the British in the 1914/18 War, but had been detained by the Persians in Teheran as a prisoner.

The Sheikh of Kuwait's Palace was a large white building of typical Arabian design. The style of some of the interior furnishing was a cross between a cheap English boarding house of the 1920s and the front window of a large London department store. The receiving room had evidently been fitted out by Waring & Gillow after the Sheikh's last visit to London; a carpet of apple green, yellow splashes and red roses, cheap prints on the walls, and a large gilt mirror over the mantlepiece were relieved by dusty imitation flowers.

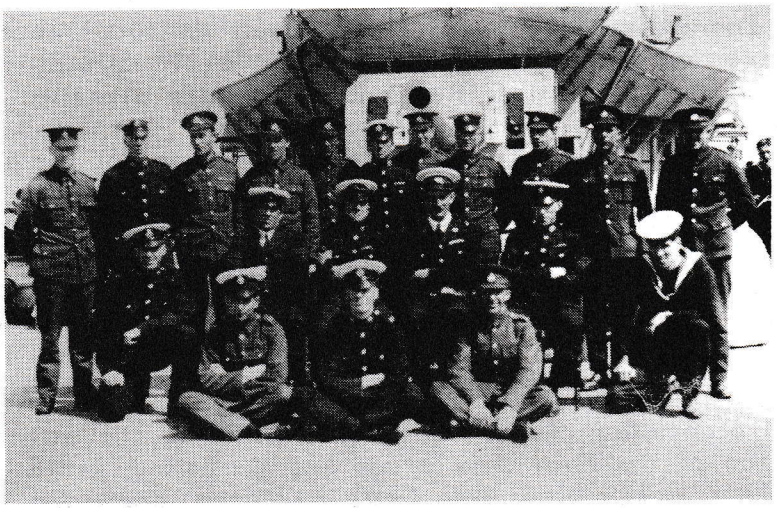
The officers and crew of HMS *Emerald* were happy to leave Kuwait on 30th January 1928 for full speed trials at Bushire and then on to the flesh-pots of Karachi for docking. Their reveries were spoilt when the Political Resident at Bushire signalled on 13th February that the situation at Kuwait was unsatisfactory and were instructed to return at speed. The OCRM (Capt E C Heathcote RM) was ordered to provide for landing guards for the British Residency and the Hospital. The peaceful scene ashore with the Residency flags fluttering on arrival on 16th February, enabled the Captain (as Senior Naval Officer) to arrange a rehearsal for the landing in support of the Kuwait Defence Force. The general plan was that the Seamen and Royal Marines would land as platoons and be split into sections, each manning a tower with Lewis guns. A photograph of a tower shows the Lewis Gun clearly with a sandbag emplacement. The intervening gaps in the Wall and some of the towers would be manned by the more numerous local Arabs.

The setting for the landing and occupation of the Wall was romantic in the extreme. The Seamen and Marines standing on top of the Main Gate, armed and tin-hatted, gazed out across the desert like characters from P C Wren's book *Beau Geste*. As Force Commander, the



ship's Commander I M Palmer RN was mounted on a fiery Arab steed and was attended by two Midshipmen on horseback, which added to the picturesque scene. The Sheikh's Arab Army was seldom in the town, but an advance force under the 24-year-old Sheikh Abdulla was at Jahra, some 15 miles south. The feast of Ramadan was on, so the Arabs were inclined to be sleepy and bad tempered. However the young leader was keen to parade his army which included 50 horsemen and 200 infantrymen. Their weapons were of Turkish, German and British make, old 'jezails' (long Afghan muskets) and even gas piping lashed to wood. Nearly all had swords or daggers and some of the cavalry had spears. Troop reviews consisted of wild, noisy dashes by the infantry, followed by their equally noisy cavalry at full gallop.

The success of the trial landing was due to many exercises and the ship's recent activities in Shanghai, Nanking and elsewhere in China. The weather was good although windy, but reliable military intelligence of the rebel's intentions was scarce. Bazaar



Royal Marines of HMS Emerald pictured on the fo'c'stle of the ship a few months before the landing.

rumours of a Holy War, that hardy annual Jehad of the desert prevailed. The main body of desert raiders were under Dawish who was certainly acting without the sanction of Ibn Saud. Messengers who had been sent to Hedjas King returned to confirm that Ibn Saud had acknowledged his inability to control the turbulent Dawish. The messengers had travelled 300 miles in the desert without even changing their camels!

On 18th February a small flight of RAF aircraft and a section of armoured cars on reconnaisance bombed and attacked the raiders with Lewis guns. One aircraft came down safely in the desert but the pilot was killed when trying to destroy his plane. The loss of their camels, sheep and cattle considerably reduced the raiders' effectiveness and mobility in the desert. A few days later the RAF carried out a punitive attack on the Dawish Headquarters at El Safar. However by this time the rebels had learnt to scatter when attacked by air and the damage was minimal.

To make a clear field of fire, the main armament was resited about 1½ miles from the north corner of the Wall. It was also hoped to obtain some shelter from the 'shamal' or north wind which blew constantly. Soon after the RAF's attack on El Safar on 24th February, a strong southerly gale convinced the Senior Naval Officer (Capt H G C Franklin RN of HMS *Emerald*) that in an emergency a landing would be difficult. There was no pier and the ship's boats were inadequate for the task. It was decided therefore to land the whole Defence Force with stores and form a tented camp within the Wall.

HMS *Emerald* had no ready-made tents and it was necessary to borrow them from the Sheikh. Space for the Naval Camp was allocated on 29th February, with the RAF having the only small tents available. On the same day a Flight of aircraft and a Squadron of armoured cars arrived and pitched their tents just outside the East Gate, but were unable to defend themselves. The Naval Advance Party of one Platoon and half the HQ were landed on 1st March and a strong SE breeze made for a wet landing. The Royal Marines were in their natural element ashore and advised freely on the technical side of pitching camp. It was a cause of much amusement later, when the only tents which failed to withstand the first big wind were those pitched by the Corps. It was only a quarter of a mile from the landing place to the Naval Camp but the high wind and soft sand made it very hard going, even with the camels and donkeys carrying the stores and ammunition needed for a long stay ashore. The constant high wind and the first cold night ashore suggested that the current song *'....Till the sands of the desert grow cold'* was no myth. The official reply to a fervent request to 'Splice the Mainbrace' was received with loud ironical cheers. It read 'Not approved'. Extra allowance of cocoa may be issued.'

On Saturday 3rd March the weather improved and the balance of the Naval Defence Force was landed without incident. Two sloops, HMS *Crocus* and HMS *Lupin*, arrived the same day and contributed a platoon each, bringing the RN/RM element ashore to a total of 200 men. The major deficiency was in ammunition. At the maximum rate of fire it could all be



The Naval camp at Kuwait, March 1928

expended in five minutes, but some ammunition and machine guns, complete with belts of the correct ammunition, were later borrowed from the RAF.

The word 'Kuwait' means 'little fort', but the length of the Wall to be manned and defended continuously presented great difficulties. Changes from the first rehearsal's plans resulted in No 3 Platoon taking over the north end of the Wall to the East Gate, while No 1 Platoon was allocated from the East Gate to the Main Gate. The Royal Marines Platoon from HMS *Crocus* enjoyed a good arc of fire from the Main Gate to the sea, and were supported with a 2 pdr Pom-Pom on the Main Gate.

The Platoon from HMS *Lupin* occupied the south end of the Wall and had a clear arc of fire. The HQ was in the Main Gate with a machine gun, and for night firing two sections were given searchlights which illuminated the desert for a considerable distance. The 3 pdr saluting gun was later landed to support the north side of the East Gate.

Even with the reinforcements, all the towers could not be manned by the Naval Force. Arabs continued to occupy some towers and crowded the 'Beau Geste' style firing steps in noisy anticipation. Some 20,000 Arabs rebels were rumoured to be marching on Kuwait. A message, purported to have been sent by Ibn Saud, was urging all his followers to join in a Jehad against all other tribes. There were other rumours, too, of troops from India, Gurkhas perhaps, although they were never confirmed. At that time the rebels were nearer Basra which would have been easier to capture and a richer prize than Kuwait.

Having landed all available forces, the 5th March was chosen to have a combined exercise of the Kuwait Defence Force (under the SNO, Captain Franklin) and the Sheikh's Arab Army. The KDF all stood to arms at their action stations on the Wall and had a grandstand view of the Arab Army assembling at the Main Gate near the Naval camp. From every point flowed a stream of Arabs under their group leaders. Small bands of men in flowing robes with group banners fluttering from lances, and with the sun glinting on their swords and accoutrements, presented a mediaeval scene. The hot dusty air reverberated with the beating of many drums and to the shouts of excited men. At intervals a group would stop and execute a wild war dance around their leader who grew frenzied in a fanatical zeal.

The large crowd around the Naval camp suddenly stopped as if by silent signal, and then charged pell mell straight through the middle of the camp with blood curdling yells. The small local camp guard was quickly overrun, and thinking they were under real attack, gallantly defended their precious ammunition dump. In the confusion and excitement many rifles were fired and some Arabs accidentally injured. One warrior fell down a deep well, and on being rescued was hauled up grinning broadly, but given a sound beating for being so careless.

With the Wall and towers fully manned, the SNO conducted the Sheikh and the Political resident around on an inspection. At intervals during the day the Arabs left their positions on the Wall in groups to face East and performed their worshipping with great dignity. At sunset the Naval Force was reduced and some stood down and returned to camp. The Arabs went to their tents and houses to await the welcome evening gun which allowed

them to start eating. The total numbers available for defence were about 2,000 men, but only some 40% had reliable weapons. Many of the Sheikh's gallant allies would continue to back him providing the Defence Force was seen to be winning. The first sign of defeat would probably involve a quick change of sides.

Each day failed to produce the tell-tale cloud of dust on the horizon, and air reconnaissance drew a monotonous blank. Ahmed, the Sheikh of Kuwait, was however a contented man. His worries about the enemies beyond the Gates and those inside coveting his palace and authority were almost non existent while the Naval Force was in place. Ahmed continued not to sleep in the same room two nights running, and very few Arabs were allowed to live inside the palace. Most inhabitants were Nubians as guards to his person, and the harem, which was topped up by the Nubians from the town. The Sheikh was short, dark-bearded, and due to his sedentary life, inclined to corpulence. The sight of sailors and Royal Marines doing their PT exercises inspired him to do likewise. In the cool of the evening, with his chosen friends, he would drive out to a quiet place in the desert. Picking up his 'skirts' he would sprint for about 200 yards with his Nubian guards and friends panting behind. The Sheikh was very hospitable and enjoyed entertaining the officers with old films, sipping endless cups of coffee and an unpopular, sickly sweet sherbet concoction.

Regular reconnaissance by aircraft and armoured cars ensured that a warning of any attack on Kuwait would be received. On 14th March the armoured cars, on a 14 day patrol in the desert, encountered a small raiding party of rebels who were attacked and prisoners taken. Information gained confirmed intelligence from another source that the main force was already in action on the Iraq border area near Basra and not Kuwait. The Sheikh was cheered by the confirmation that Kuwait was not a target and decided to have another review of his army outside the Main Gate. This review followed the same noisy and boisterous pattern as before but was tinged with some relief that the raiders were not threatening Kuwait. The sailors and Royal Marines continued their military vigilance on the Wall, and in the Naval camp, where scavanging 'pieards' or pye-dogs provided a valid and useful test of a sentry's markmanship. A Chief Petty Officer's errant black pet lamb was torn to pieces by these dogs and the Sudanese cook's meals were suspect for days!

Inaction and uncertainty, coupled with a hot windy desert, are not conducive to good soldiering. To maintain morale by the defended, and discipline by the defenders, the SNO proposed a Naval Tattoo as an alternative to the Sheikh's noisy Army reviews. Both the seamen and marines put on an excellent demonstration of PT and Drills, which were watched with interest by a respectful crowd around the football ground, but the most popular item was a mock battle. The plot was simple and pure Royal Tournament. An unspecified outpost of the Empire under the flag was represented by a guard and some sailors around a camp fire. The 'enemy' were noisy, mounted, cannibalistic savages dressed in awe inspiring clothing, who attacked and captured the outpost. The Moslem crowd gasped when they realised that men were to be crucified and then eaten. With more noise, the sailors and Royal Marines were rescued just in time. The Tattoo ended with a formal march past which, to the delight of the Sheikh and his Arab subjects, included a salute from the 'savages'.

News that HMS *Enterprise*, a sister ship of the *Emerald* was to relieve the Naval Force meant preparations to re-embark. The proposed date of 30th March was cancelled as there were further rumours of rebel activities in the desert. The two platoons from HMS *Crocus* and *Lupin* were to remain ashore pending the change over. Meantime a violent storm and high winds, with swirling eddies of sand and rain, flattened the entire Naval camp. Some sought shelter in the towers, and next day the Royal Marines and a few RN Officers moved into the Sheikh of Mohammerah's palace.

Early on Monday 2nd April, HMS *Enterprise* arrived and the re-embarkation of the *Emerald's* crew commenced, including the RMs still in the palace. The landing party from *Enterprise* then occupied the palace pending the recovery of the tents and flattened Naval camp. By nightfall on the 2nd April, all the *Emerald's* landing party was back on board to enjoy a bath, remove their beards and prepare for sea. No-one regretted the experience ashore, where young men became 'veterans' in a week. The reduced crew left aboard had had their problems and the boat's crews deserved great credit for their support in all weathers. On 4th April, with Kuwait safe in the care of HMS *Enterprise*, *Emerald* put to sea with the prospects of a good run ashore in Bombay.

FANNING – GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

By Major R S Billett, R Aust Inf *(RMHS)*

The call came at about 1100 hours..... "Hello, is that the Curator of Arms, Museum of Victoria?"

"Yes it is, Major Bill Billett speaking, how can I help you?"

"I have a small cannon that was recently brought back to Australia from a small island in the Pacific and I wonder if you could help me identify it. I would also like some advice on the design of a suitable carriage for it."

"Which island? I have travelled round the Pacific a little."

"Oh I doubt if you would know it, it is quite remote."

"Try me."

"Fanning Island."

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Fanning Island[1]. My mind went back to swaying palms and those long Pacific swells, surf, sharks and coral sores. The year was 1959, LCM 24[2] was laying alongside a cargo vessel in the anchorage at Christmas Island, back-loading stores after the last British series of Nuclear tests[3]. This activity was often punctuated by long periods of inactivity, or fighting for Spanish Mackerel as bait for sharks. Not being the world's greatest angler, I tuned the radio to the international distress frequency..... you never know. There it was, a real 'May-Day', an Australian voice.

"'Elp, 'elp, I've run out of beer. May-Day, May-Day"

I called my stoker to confirm what I was hearing, it was a genuine May-Day.

"Unknown station, this is LCM 24. Identify yourself and location, over."

"LCM 24, this is Bill Frew on Fanning Island; we have a problem here. The ship collecting the Copra crop has run aground on the reef."

"Fanning Island, this is LCM 24, message received. I will pass your message to my control station on Christmas Island. Listen in for their reply. Out."

The message was relayed to craft control on the craft net frequency and on to the First Lieutenant. I cannot remember his name[4], but he was famous for having the 'Nelson Touch'. He was also known for his quick reaction to craft coxswains to the presence of Black Marlin in the anchorage or lagoon passage. On this occasion his reaction was equally fast; by the time LCM 24 tied up and secured engines, an RAF Hastings aircraft was on its way to Fanning to 'free drop' stores. These stores included beer packaged amongst soap powder. We were not to be far behind. The Officer Commanding Royal Marines (OCRM), Capt George Wheatley had issued a warning order to prepare four craft for the trip to Fanning Island, 175 nautical miles north-west from our position at Port London on Christmas Island. We had no radar, the OCRM had a Radio Direction Finder (RDF) set that he had built himself, also a Dutchman's Log, again the work of his nimble fingers.

A detachment of four LCMs from No 6 Minor Landing Craft Squadron, Royal Marines, was to depart that very evening for Fanning Island to render assistance to the grounded vessel, and away we went.

A Fleet Supply Ship, *Fort Beauharnois* was to follow us to provide radar cover to ensure the safe landfall at Fanning. That night the long swell did provide some consternation. At times the craft would be down in the trough and lose sight of the others for lengthy periods. This was no night exercise on Poole Harbour and there were no buoys or signposts. We did not see *Fort Beauharnois* during that long night, she appeared astern during the following morning.

It was said that you could miss an atoll from a few miles at sea. On Christmas Island they used to say the highest point was 15 feet, the top of the canteen roof[5]. We need not have been concerned though, around 1600 hours the MV *Beaverbank*[6] appeared in the distance out of the mist thrown up by the surf. She was high, but not too dry, on Danger Point. This may sound suspicious but see Admiralty Chart 2971 for confirmation. About an hour later our small flotilla entered the lagoon through a fast tide-race, quite an experience for a novice LCM coxswain. At the jetty there was a small welcoming party, Bill Frew, the staff of the Cable and Wireless repeater station, and some Gilbert and Ellis Islanders. We had made it.

Beaverbank had called at the island to off-load stores and to pick up the annual crop of copra, when she had run aground. Because the coral atolls rise so abruptly from the ocean bed, there are few safe anchorages. Large vessels drift along the outer edge of the reef

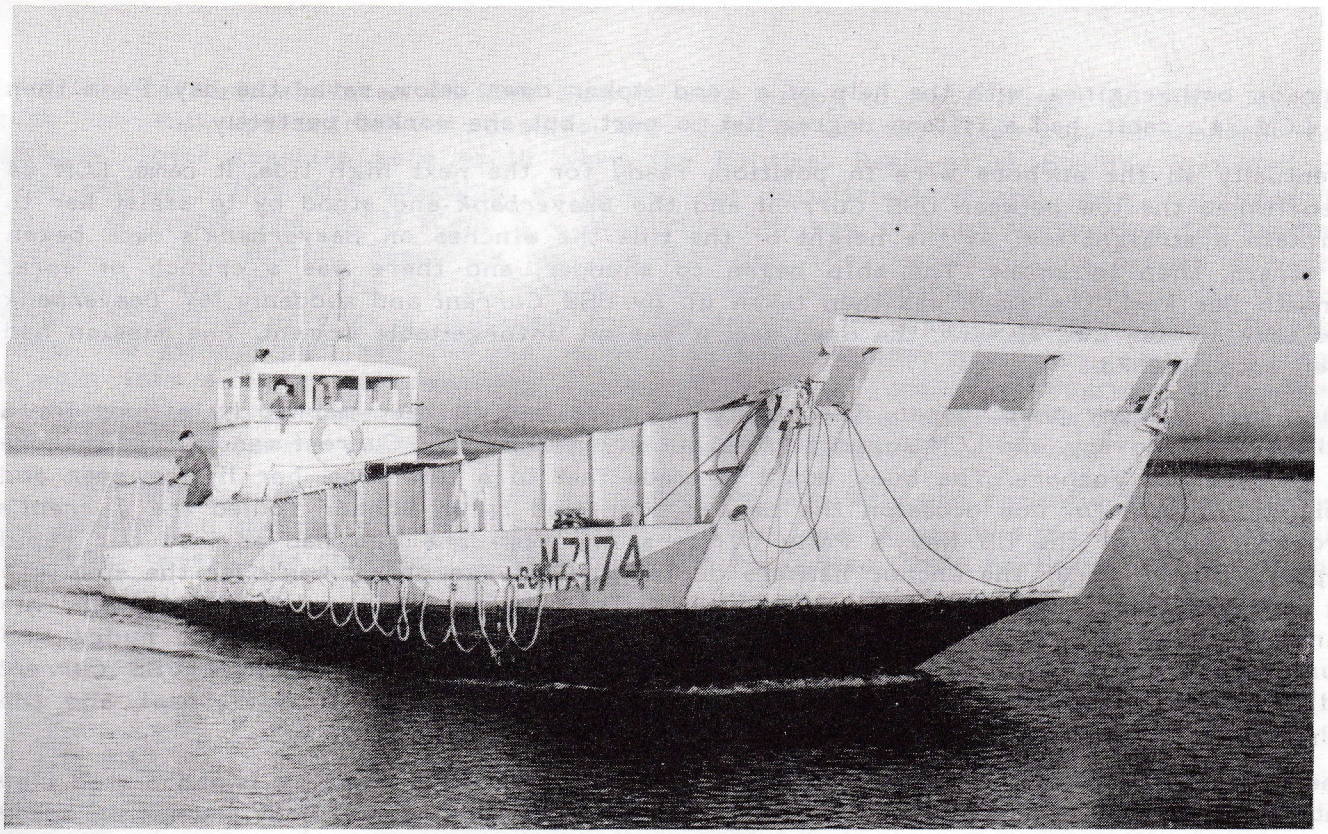


MV Beaverbank, 5,690 tons, high and dry at Danger Point.

as the islanders tend the ship from small boats. The exact cause of *Beaverbank's* demise in this case is not known to the author, a touch of wind at the wrong moment, or an extra large wave, had put her on the reef.

That evening we were briefed that a US Naval salvage vessel was on her way from Pearl Harbour to assist in the refloating of *Beaverbank*. In the meantime we were to ready our craft and make good any damage sustained on the trip from Christmas Island. My craft LCM 24 was in good shape. She had been reinforced to carry Centurion Tanks when she was in the Rhine Squadron. The pumping and flooding system was also in good order and the saddle tanks had been filled with fresh water before the passage up, so we could enjoy a shower to wash off the salt. Remember that old saying "I've put more salt on my fish and chips than you've sailed over!"

From memory an attempt was made to tow the ship off the reef with the *Fort Beauharnois* while the LCMs kept her straight against the current. This was unsuccessful, and further attempts had to await the US salvage vessel. She arrived soon after. The USS *Current*, a salvage vessel of the Escape class was a business like craft, manned we were told by ex-tug crews and longshoremen. She looked good, clean, efficient and ready for work. At high



An LCM (Landing Craft Mechanised) of the 7000 Class similar to those deployed to Christmas Island with Royal Marines crews.

tide that very day there was another attempt to free *Beaverbank*. Again we tried to steady the towing vessel with our LCMs, and this try also ended in failure. It had also caused damage to the ramps of the other LCMs. Mine was fine, which meant that from then on LCM 24 would enjoy the lion's share of the heavy work.

After the initial attempts to refloat the ship had been unsuccessful, more deliberate efforts were planned. The next arrival on the island was one Captain Cook - yes we were told that was his name! He made a spectacular landing inside the lagoon in a RNZAF Sunderland flying boat. The task was taking on an international flavour. The next visitor was a Japanese seaman from a Japanese Tuna boat with appendicitis to be treated by the island's Australian doctor. Unfortunately the Japanese seaman died.

Salvage work began in earnest. The plan was to lay a pattern of large recovery anchors from the bow and stern of the *Beaverbank* in a fan shape to seaward. This sounded easy enough, but in practice it was quite difficult. The large five-ton anchors were slung under LCM 24 by USS *Current*, which took place out to sea well beyond the surf zone. They were rigged so that they could be released by cutting a sisal rope, over a wooden block, with an axe. With the anchor under the LCM the next task was to steer in towards the *Beaverbank* and turn when we were within Schermully gun range. A wire hawser was flaked along the seaward gunwale of the grounded ship. The gun was fired carrying a light line across the gap between the two vessels, a manilla 'messenger' line was then hauled back to the LCM pulling the hawser end with it. The end was secured to the anchor and the LCM turned out to seaward until the hawser was paid right out, the axe was then used to part the sisal rope and the anchor fell to the seabed below. This routine was repeated a number of times until all the anchors were in position, I think nine were laid. At times the ocean swell rose all the way up the side of the *Beaverbank*, taking the LCM to within heaving line range. This happened on one of the last runs. When the line was fired we were low in the trough, the swell then took us upwards and forwards under a previously deployed hawser. It was like 'knit one, pearl one'. "Get us out of here, skip" yelled an American PO. He need not have worried as I was doing that for all of us! Emergency revs and a short

turn on both engines, with the help of a good stoker down below, saved the day. From then on LCM 24's cabin had a fifteen degree list to port, but she worked perfectly.

Eventually all the anchors were in position, ready for the next high tide. It came. LCM 24 then linked the tow between USS *Current* and the *Beaverbank* and stood by to assist her to maintain a straight tow. At the height of the tide the winches on *Beaverbank's* deck began to strain, then to smoke. The ship began to shudder, and there was a crunch of coral beneath her keel. The slack was then taken up by USS *Current* and suddenly MV *Beaverbank* was back in her own element, the open sea. It was an unforgettable moment. The mission had been accomplished.

Then the recovery phase began. The salvage anchors had all been marked by a buoy for a subsequent recovery, and LCM support was again given while USS *Current* manoeuvred inshore to recover the anchors. The buoy would be made fast to a line from her lifting gear and hoisted inboard. On one occasion the hawser connected to an anchor fouled the *Current's* propellor. One of the US Navy's Petty Officers, the same one who had advised our rapid departure from under the anchor hawsers during the salvage phase, was over the side with an oxy-acetylene torch before you could wink. They called him the 'wizard'. I think his surname was White. We were not far off the reef and once again we had to nudge USS *Current* away from possible harm. After another week the task was complete. USS *Current* sailed north to her Pearl Harbour base. We said our farewells to *Beaverbank* and the inhabitants of Fanning Island and set out for Christmas Island.

The return voyage was memorable too. After an hour's run from Fanning Island a stud blew out from the front of one of the two Grey Marine Diesel engines. Without slackening speed a cardboard funnel was rigged to catch the arterial flow of oil into a jerrican. Every half hour the contents of the can were poured back into the engine, with one thumb over the hole to stop further loss during the process. LCM 24 had the coolest running starboard engine in the mid-Pacific that night!

The journey to Fanning Island had taken 36 hours, the return took 48. During the second night Christmas Island could be heard trying to contact the returning group. It seemed that the lead craft was not receiving, but we were. We tried to contact the lead craft by radio and aldis lamp, but it was a violent night and our effort was to no avail. After several attempts, frustration won and the following radio conversation took place:

"LCMs, LCMs, this is Christmas Island. Can you hear me?..... Over."

"Christmas Island, this is 24. read you loud and clear..... Over."

"24, this is Christmas Island, loud and clear. Locstat?..... Over."

Not being then proud owner of a Dutchman's Log or an RDF set, I didn't rightly know.

"Christmas Island, this is 24. Somewhere between Fanning Island and your location..... Over."

"24, this is Christmas Island, can you see the lights on North West Point?..... Over."

"Christmas Island, this is 24. Negative..... Over."

This must have worried the First Lieutenant, mind you it was of some concern to us too.

"24, this is Christmas Island..... Steady as you go. Call in one hour..... Over."

"24..... Wilco, over."

Dawn came, and so did the island, right over the ramp. It was a good sighting.

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Yes, I knew Fanning Island. The cannon is a short howitzer type, four feet long with a thirty eight inch bore, and a bore diameter of four inches. Its weight is marked as 6 cwt - 2 qtrs - 9 lbs. The caller on the telephone was a Warrant Officer in the Royal Australian Corps of Signals and his unit had been installing improved communication facilities on Christmas Island last year (1989), also on Fanning Island. The cannon was found on the latter island in sand in front of the Greig memorial, and the islanders gave it to the signalmen.

This memorial was erected in honour of Hugh Greig. In the First World War, the German cruiser *Nürnberg* had landed a party of men in 1914 to sever the submarine cable[7]. Following their departure Hugh Greig had dived into the water and effected a repair. The memorial lists the visits of Fanning in 1798; HMS *Dido* in 1865; HMS *Caroline* in 1888; and Hugh Grieg 1885-1956. The cannon is proving a little difficult to date. Sand has taken the fine edge of the Royal Cypher, it is thought to be that of GR IV, 1821, but it could be earlier. It may have come from HMS *Dido*, but that has yet to be proven. Just the sort of puzzle a curator of arms likes to be involved with.

There must be many incidents in which units of the Corps have been involved, which may not have received the attention of the Press and therefore, could be lost from our collective history of the Royal Marines. This one was only recalled after thirty years by a strange coincidence.

1. Discovered by an American, Edmund Fanning. 3°52'N, 159°20'W.

2. Landing Craft Mechanised (LCM) of the 7000 series, Her full number was 7124. See Jane's Fighting Ships 1961-62, p 287.

3. Christmas Island, now named Kiritamati, was the site in the mid-Pacific for Britain's Nuclear Tests in the late 1950s. No 6 Minor Landing Craft Squadron Royal Marines provided ship-to-shore support for Task Force *Grapple*. *Grapple* Z was the code name for the last test series.

4. The Navy List for 1959 indictates that Lt Cdr B D Davidson RN was XO for HMS *Resolution* at the time.

5. The mean height was in fact 5-12 ft. The highest spot was on 'Joes Hill' at 42 ft.

6. MV *Beaverbank*, 5,690 tons. See Lloyds Register of Ships 1959-60, entry No 03656.

7. A W Jones, The Official History of Australia in the War 1914-1918 Vol IX The Royal Australian Navy, University of Queensland Press, St, Brisbane. p 560.

Major R S 'Bill' Billett joined the Corps in 1954 and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt (SD) in 1963, serving in the Falkland Islands and in 43 Commando besides PRORM. He retired in 1970, subsequently joining the Royal Australian Infantry, and is now the Curator of Arms at the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne.

BOOK REVIEW

41 Independent Commando RM in Korea by Lt Col Peter Thomas RM *(Royal Marines Historical Society)*

This reprint of 41 Commando's operations in Korea in 1950-1952 is an updated version of Special Publication No 8 first published five years ago. It now contains many new photographs taken by former Mne Les Coote, making a total of over 50 plus maps. It has been republished to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the unit's formation and is now complete with a glossy cover as a permanent reminder of the gallant part played by the unit both with 1st Marine Division, US Marine Corps, in the battle for the Chosin Reservoir, and in raiding along the coast behind enemy lines. It contains appendixes on clothing, equipment, casualties and honours and awards.

(Available from The Publications Officer, Maj J C Beadle MBE MC RM, 18 Clarence Parade, Southsea, Hants, PO5 3NU at £4 + 60p p&p)

CLOSING MEMORIES OF WOOLWICH DIVISION

By Sergeant Major T W Holdstock *(Written in 1869)*

The punishments up to 1868 were flogging, drumming out and discharge with ignominy.

Flogging took place in rear of the barracks early in the day, but none since 1866. Drummers used to do the flogging, for which they received three farthings a day. This was discontinued when flogging was abolished. Each drummer gave twelve strokes; if more were to be inflicted, the next drummer came in. The flogging was under control of the drum-major, who gave the time each stroke should be given - generally every thirty seconds - in order that the drummer could disentangle his 'nine tails'. A doctor had charge of the man physically, and could stop the punishment at his discretion, as many did. Drummers used to practice flogging in their barrack room; the three farthings a day they got was called 'flogging money.'

Drumming Out was a sad affair, in which the whole Division took part. After the victim had been stripped of his facings, ornaments, buttons, etc, by the drum-major in the centre of the parade, he was marched round the large square, formed by the men on parade, under the charge of the Provost Sergeant. The drums and fifes followed playing the 'Rogue's March', to the front gate when he would be handed over to the drum-major, who would take him into a small room to the side of the gate and there tattoo a B.C. on his left breast. The prisoner was then kicked out of the gate by the smallest drummer boy into the arms of a civil policeman, who took him away to gaol to do any imprisonment in addition awarded to him.

Discharge with Ignominy was similar to drumming out, but without the drumming. The man was simply stripped of ornaments, buttons, etc, tattooed, marched to the gate and kicked out.

All these punishments were discontinued in 1868.

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Pay was given out on parade, if fine, and under the colonade if wet, three times a week. There were no fires in the barrack-rooms, but hot pipes, and no meals were taken in the barrack-rooms, which were simply bedrooms.

The barracks being of nearly white brick, was played on by the boat's crew every Saturday. There were two fine colonades, upper and lower. All meals were taken down in the basement, where the only fires were.

Passes, called the '11 o'clock passes' were the only ones given; no night passes, unless special. Belts, when going out after sunset, were not allowed to be worn, as they used to come into use in street fights, which did occur at times, if an unpopular regiment happened to be stationed at Woolwich, or a quarrelsome draft paid off from sea.

It was quite a common sight to see Marines 'pay off' after being away on a four or five years commission, march into barracks looking half sailor and half marine, because in those days their clothing was not sent out to them as it is now, when a marine looks as smart coming home as he does going away.

The barracks were always full of men, as no large ships ever fitted out there. The last big ship commissioned at Woolwich Dockyard was the *Bristol* frigate, 42 guns, and the old line-of-battle ship *Meemee*, three-decker, for China in 1868. She took a large draft, and the last Woolwich detachment to return to barracks from a large ship was that from the old *Victoria*, 104 guns, and now a coal hulk in Portsmouth.

The detachment at Deptford was relieved every three months and was quite numerous. The annual sports were held on Woolwich Common.

The last wife of a marine who embarked with her husband paid off early in 1865. Her name was Perry, whose son eventually became a drummer boy and her husband a nurse in the naval hospital. Her duties on board being more that of a laundress for officers' washing.

Extracts from the Woolwich Division Punishment Book of 1824

Sentence.	Punishment.	
150 lashes to be put under stoppages till his necessaries are made good—	Accordingly / JS	
200 lashes to be drummed out of His Majesty's Service as a disgrace to him	200 lashes & drummed out	2
10 days confinement with the black hole on bread & water & further to bring up all his duties and to complete the time of his former punishment ordered by the field officer	Accordingly JS	2
150 lashes to be put under stoppages until his necessaries are completed	150 lashes	1

The charge which led to this punishment read:

Pte John Edwards

'Irregular and unsoldierly-like conduct in taking indecent liberties whilst in bed with Pte Gerrant Alebury, 76th Company, on the night of the 7th inst.'

Pte Samuel Berry

'Irregular and unsoldierly-like conduct in going out of barracks when confined thereto and absenting himself from Tattoo on the evening of the 8th inst.'

The top and bottom punishments on this page, both of 150 lashes, were awarded to the same Marine. His crime was absenting himself without leave and doing away with his 'necessaries'. They took place only three weeks apart!



A group of officers of Woolwich Division c1860. The Royal Marines Light Infantry formed the Fourth Division in 1805. After various moves, the Admiralty built Cambridge Barracks, Woolwich, for them in 1848 where they remained until the Division closed in 1869.

Many of the old marine pensioners, who could not get into Greenwich Hospital, joined the battalion of 'enrolled pensioners', who used to drill on Woolwich Common. They had their own drums and fifes, and it was a noted fact that one side drummer had a wooden leg, and could march past with any of them.

The band of the Division wore white cloth tunic and shako until 1867, when it was changed for the present scarlet and gold one now in use. The splendid drum and fife band was second to none, Guards not excepted, under that splendid drum-major Charles Duncan, a handsome fellow, 6 feet 2 inches in height. In the picture of the drum and fife band, T W Holdstock, afterwards Sergeant Major at Chatham, is looking over the left shoulder of another drummer, who is holding a son of the Sergeant Major with his right arm (February 1867).

The drummer with the three Crimean medals flogged the last man who had to be flogged at Woolwich. He used to say before flogging a man *"Lord strengthen my arm and harden my heart."* The drummer immediately below him, and next to the bugle-major, was the son of the last woman who embarked on a man-o'-war with her husband, an officer's servant.

Until the Division was broken up the drum was used as much as the bugle for calls. The 'fall in' for parade was drummed, also 'first post, reveille, retreat, officers' dinner call, defaulters' and the 'roast beef of Old England' by one drummer and one fifer at dinner time.

Sir Michael Costta came down from London to hear the splendid band play their last programme under Mr Winterbottom. At the end he said, with tears in his eyes, *"What a sin to break up such a band."*

This brings us up to March 1869 when the men, at a full parade, were informed that the Division would be dissolved by March 31st 1869. The Adjutant, Capt Stragham, a splendid man, read the Admiralty Order, and informed each company which Division it was to be transferred to. The Chatham party left first, Portsmouth March 9th and Plymouth later to finish up. Before dismissing the parade, the Commandant, Colonel Suther, addressed the parade, his last words being *"act on the square."*

REMINISCENCES OF A WARTIME OFFICER — Part VI

by Major Patrick D A Ennor *(RMHS)*

A few days before we sailed from Gibraltar, Force 'H' came in after the bombardment of Genoa. The Royal Marines Band on the quarterdeck of one of the ships played 'Oh, Oh, Antonio' as she entered harbour. We manned our ship's sides and welcomed each of our old friends, *Renown, Ark Royal* and *Sheffield* as they came in with 'Three Cheers and a Tiger'. A farewell visit to chums in the *Renown* followed and then we set sail once more for 'England, booze and beauty'.

But our Commanding Officer could not bear to see us idle and we had not been out of harbour long before a map exercise was arranged. For this we sat in Company groups, the CO and Battalion HQ staff directing the exercise. On the second morning of this, Cuttles, surrounded by his Company officers, was snoozing peacefully. This evident lack of interest in the exercise was not at all to the taste of Colonel Williams, and he determined to score off Cuttles. Accordingly he said, "Major Cutler, you are now the Battalion Commander. Give your orders". Consternation then ensued. Someone prodded Cuttles into life, Lawrence Podmore showed him the place on the map, Jack Daw gave him some idea of the scheme, and he began to fumble and improvise through the opening paragraph of his orders, while trying to determine how on earh he could have got himself into such a situation, and how on earth he should get himself out of it. All this took some time and the CO, getting impatient, reminded him, "Major Cutler, Major Cutler, what's the time, what's the time?" (meaning, of course, in the scheme and that Cuttles, by his dilatoriness, was wasting time - that valuable munition of war). But Cuttles interpreted him literally; a glance at his watch, and back came the answer in a flash "A quarter past twelve - and we missed our gin through this exercise yesterday." No-one's gravity was proof against this and that was the last of the exercise. In fact it could not have been sustained very much longer as we shortly ran into very heavy weather.

The ship rolled and tossed, climbing up the waves and sliding down them, 'shipping it green' over the bows, with the wind howling, everything awash and a perpetual clatter of crockery smashing in the pantries. The fiddles[1] were set upon the dining tables but at one time, any sort of formal meals were quite impossible and we ate where we could. Any furniture which was not secured to the deck careered about in the most peculiar manner and armchairs often used to roll from one side to deposit their occupants in the opposite scuppers. Even moving about the ship, particularly on the upper deck and going up and down ladders, was quite hazardous, and I was always afraid that someone's arm would get caught in the heavy doors that gave on to the promenade deck. Casualties were in fact very light and there was, I think, one broken arm and the sea-sickness had gone completely. Even those who had been the least nautical, now considered themselves old sea dogs.

Our trip took a long time as we could not make much speed in the heavy seas, and our course took us nearly to Iceland, but if the rough weather caused some discomfort, I suppose it also gave us some protection as the conditions were quite impossible for U-boats. Eventually we passed through the Kyles of Bute and anchored off Gourock; in a very few days we moved into billets at Kilmarnock, and almost the whole unit went on leave. I went south by train to see my wife and my mother and, for the first time, my son.

[1]Fiddles - *racks fitted to mess tables in rough weather to prevent crockery, glasses, etc. from sliding to the deck as the ship rolls and pitches.*

All too soon my short leave came to an end and I rejoined the Battalion at Kilmarnock, but I had so many good friends in 2 RM and Colonel Nick had created such a band of brothers and such a sense of family, that returning after leave was very much less wretched than it might otherwise have been. In Kilmarnock the officers were lodged in a temperance hotel. I was rather horrified at this remembering my father's adjuration that such places should always be avoided (even at the direst extremity) as there were invariably bugs in the bed! On what authority he based this slanderous charge I do not know, but I very much doubt if it was from first hand experience! However I need not have worried as, in a couple of days, Peter Picton Phillipps had himself and his Company officers securely incarcerated in the Secondary School in which the Company was billeted. Schools do, of course, make excellent billets, although in this case the plumbing arrangements were rather disproportionate to the stature of our men. The abbots of Craufurdland Castle, on the Glasgow side of Kilmarnock, were most hospitable to us, so much so that I remember, in the rather dim light of their dining room at one Sunday supper, when we were waiting on ourselves, busily offering a dish of poached eggs. It transpired that they were, in fact, halves of baked potatoes with a knob of very yellow butter in the middle of each half.

Peter Picton Phillipps, who had been such a conspicuous feature of our battalion since Bisley days, departed while we were at Kilmarnock. He was taken into hospital, at - of all places - Gleneagles, but discharged himself next day, rather I fancy to the relief of the hospital staff as he had refused to be parted from the armoury of pistols, Tommy gun and grenades with which he was permanently accoutred. Peter did not however come back to us but went off to raise and command a Beach Group unit. With him went Marine Halpin who had been a very useful member of the Company, a good soldier, and who was just as smart as his master was scruffy.

From Kilmarnock we were soon moved to a hutted camp at Pollock on the outskirts of Glasgow. This camp had been laid out shortly before the war on the principle of 'dispersal against air attack'. It was dispersed all right, and it must have been nearly a mile from our Company area to the Battalion HQ area. Here we had rather a disaster - in the typical way of contractors all manner of old rubbish, paint, drums, lengths of timber, half bricks, had been left lying about around the huts and with the passage of time had become obscured by grass. In crossing over some of the waste ground between the huts, Marine Sign, my MOA, managed to trip over some of these excrescences and sprained his ankle so badly that he was carried off to hospital, and as he was not discharged within the prescribed period, was struck off our strength. As soon as this state of affairs became known I began to agitate violently and learnt that he was to be sent by the Holding Battalion on a course in the duties of an officer's servant. This was too much. Sign had been in the Battalion for 18 months, he was a very good soldier, an excellent shot, he was most efficient in his duties as a component of our Company HQ in the field and he had been taught all about the domestic side of the job - by me. And yet the pundits of some base unit on Hayling Island were now presuming to instruct him in his duties and in the process obstructed his return to the battalion. My vehemence communicated itself to Tyndale-Biscoe who had been Captain of Marines in the *Dorsetshire* and had now become our adjutant, and by a combination of threats and diplomacy, he succeeded in arranging for Sign's withdrawal from the course and return to me.

At this time I had the pleasure of welcoming Charles Verdon to the Company. He had won the Sword of Honour in his batch of regular Second Lieutenants, and I was honoured and surprised that he had not been sent to a Company commanded by a regular officer. I

remember being rather overwhelmed by the punctiliously correct attitude which he always adopted towards me and by his skill in demonstrating the quick release procedure with a rolled anti-gas cape - regarded as a highly important piece of military knowledge in those days. Alas Charles did not stay long with us but was appointed to the *Prince of Wales* on commissioning. I am glad to say that he survived all the subsequent ordeals and I think I must have been the first brother officer he met after the defeat of Japan. He and his Captain of Marines, Claude Aylwin, came to luncheon with me in Colombo in 1945 on their way home for repatriation.

At this time we were continually embarking in ships for exercises, which I understand were frequently the cover for genuine embarkations for what proved to be abortive expeditions. We never returned to the same quarters after one of these embarkations and our next station was at Galashiels. Here we had a pleasant interlude in being detached as an independent Company to Lauder where we were in rather poor billets but rather enjoyed our separate existence. David Miller had now joined and his newly-wed wife Mavis managed to find rooms in Lauder. John Goldie and S.O. Kenrick were the other Company officers.

The people of the Border being fond of hunting there were plenty of good horses about and their owners seemed quite pleased to bring them up from grass if we would feed and look after them. In this way I was lent two very nice horses which we stabled in the farm which was one of our billets. During the time I had been Transport Officer designate for the expected pack animals I had made a note of the men with experience with animals intending to empress them as muleteers, Two of these were Beeson, my former squad associate, and Kittle, and as soon as I had succeeded to the command of C Company, I had lost no time in putting them into Company HQ. So the grooms were available when the horses eventuated. Beeson had been in a racing stable, and a hunt servant, while Kittles had driven a butcher's cart which generally had good ponies. Certainly this was summer when coats are at their best, but the two young marines put a tremendous lot of work into the way they groomed their horses which really looked pictures.

At this time the 8th Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were brigaded with us and 1st Bn RM in 1st Guards Brigade. The 8th Argylls had been in France in 51st Division and had been badly knocked about. They prided themselves very much on being a territorial as distinct from a Territorial Army unit. Many of their officers were landowners or members of established families in Argyllshire and many of their NCOs and men were tenants and servants. The 8th Argylls themselves used to complain bitterly of the dilution of the material in the unit which had taken place as a result of the fall of France, but there was certainly still plenty of evidence of clan spirit and territorial connection.

Most of the officers seemed to be related to one another. Six christian names and six surnames were shared amongst the whole battalion and certainly, in one case, a Company Sergeant Major habitually addressed his Company Commander as 'Master Ian'. One morning waiting to land for an exercise near Inverary I noticed that an Argyll officer, Barry Erskine, whom I knew well, standing next to me on the deck had no map. When I commented on his he replied "Goodness no! I know this country a good deal better than the chap who made the map." Barry, who was a particularly charming young man, was killed in North Africa.

Most of our exercises were carried out in the Loch Fyne area and we were often embarked in the *Winchester Castle*, with the 8th Argylls and our Brigade HQ. We had many distinguished spectators including the King, the Prime Minister and many of the Service

Chiefs. I remember one conference in the ship presided over by General Alexander when there must have been 20 or 30 General or Flag Officers present.

The late Duke of Argyll, McCallum Mhor, the Chief of Clan Campbell, came to lunch one day in the *Winchester Castle* with our Brigadier, who for some reason was delayed, and it developed upon David Miller and me to entertain the Duke. We did not have to do much searching for conversation as the Duke was full of indignation at the (then) novel practise of poaching his fish with explosives, and shooting the deer by artificial light with automatic weapons. Such proceedings and the resultant revolting cruelty, have now developed into quite a regular industry which it is difficult to suppress, but this was the first that had then been heard of it.

In addition to the landing craft, the ships still retained some of their own boats and some of the most nautically minded amongst us used sometimes to organise a crew to take these away for a sail. John Goldie who was one of our keenest wet bobs - he had been Captain of Boats at Eton and was an enthusiastic yachtsman - was in charge of one of these expeditions when the wind died and they became completely becalmed. They finally had to pull the heavy boat back about two miles, which must have been an exhausting task, and made them wish that they had spent their make and mend afternoon in a less enterprising manner.

An exercise from Galashiels involved me personally in the most taxing physical strain I had ever experienced in going for two nights and three days with no sleep and practically no rest. Much emphasis was laid by superior commanders on the vital necessity for sub-unit commanders to get some period of sleep, but time and the enormous distances both in depth and front over which we were habitually deployed, made it impossible for an infantry Company Commander to observe this council of perfection. The horse had gone and our establishment, and our envisaged role, did not allow of any form of mechanical transport. Having been allotted a defensive position to establish, the Company Commander had then to walk round each of his platoon areas and each section post - often widely separated from each other. Back at his Company HQ he would find a summons calling him to an 'O' Group at Battalion HQ possibly a mile or more away. These journeys to and fro, he and his faithful orderlies performed on foot. Once more back at his own Company HQ he would have to hold his own 'O' Group and by then it was nearly 'H' Hour for the dawn attack!

Our Commanding Officer, although most punctilious himself over the observance of Sundays, was strongly opposed to ordering the men to go to church. We very seldom had church parades. When we were at Lauder I felt that it would be right to conform to his custom; I therefore indicated that I and my Company Commanders would attend Sunday church, and that I hoped as many men as possible would do so too. Quite a number did. The worthy Minister chose, as the subject of his protracted discourse, to inveigh against the sin of indulgence in the good things of life - especially food and drink. My insubordinate officers of course insisted when we came out of church that these remarks had been addressed chiefly at me, and we thought that we would recruit our strength by a pre-lunch drink at the local inn, as a slight variation from our rather dreary little Company Mess. We had, of course, not reckoned with the Scottish Sabbath and as we turned away from the inn door which remained resolutely barred against us, we walked straight into the Minister! He must have felt that, while his strictures had been justified, his admonition had fallen on stony ground. For my part I felt that I had been ill-rewarded for my virtuous example.

To be continued

The Battle of Navarino – 1827

by Lieutenant (Later General) Thomas Hurdle

The official account of the battle states *'The* Asia *led in, followed by the* Genoa *and* Albion, *and anchored close alongside a ship of the line, bearing the flag of the Capitana Bey, another ship of the line, and a large double banked frigate, each thus having their opponent in the front line of the Turkish fleet'.*

The *Albion's* opponent is therein stated to be a *"a large double banked frigate".* This is the only mention of the *Albion* (in which Thomas Hurdle was serving.)

The *Asia* was even nearer to the ship of the Egyptian Bey than to the ship of the Capitalan Bey - and both are represented as *"effectually destroyed by the* Asia's *fire - falling to leeward mere wrecks".*

It is stated *'the smoke was so thick during the action that the guns of the Asia* were pointed from the flag at the masthead of the Capitalan Bey's ship' - it was the only object discernible.

The truth is, her cable nearest to the Asia was quickly shot away, when the strong current soon carried her past her other anchor, till it brought her up alongside the *Albion.* Her masts, yards and rigging were then, apparently, in perfect order. She continued to ride by that anchor until two days after the action.

The *Albion* passed very close to the ship of the line (the *Genoa's* opponent) and immediately anchored, swinging to the current, which soon swept her port quarter to the starboard bow of a very large Turkish frigate, whose crew made a most gallant and determined effort to board. It may be here mentioned that 40 Marines were stationed below the *Albion's* guns, and two or three hours before she entered harbour, of the 72 Privates called 'small-arm men' stationed at her poop under the Captain of Marines, 40 were taken away and stationed below to carry powder from the magazine to the powder boys, and 20 more were taken to man four guns on the quarterdeck, leaving only twelve Privates on the poop - a small force to resist the impetuous and resolute attempt to board.

The collision was not at first observed on the quarterdeck; there were no bluejackets, nor any naval officer, but Mr Addington the boatswain, reached the poop at the moment of collision, and letting himself down by rope, with an axe kept on the poop, quickly cut the frigate's cable.

The Captain of Marines having been one of the first persons killed, the command had devolved on to the senior subaltern *(Hurdle himself),* who had enough to do to repel the Turk's attempt to board. A Sergeant touching his left arm was shot through the head, and a Private on his right hand was shot through the shoulder; he himself was obliged to use a double-barrelled pistol twice.

The boarders having been called, the Subaltern was about to board with his men, when the Captain called to him through his speaking trumpet, "Don't board!" On looking along the port side he saw an immense ship (evidently a line-of-battle ship) approaching fast with the current; she seemed likely to scrape the *Albion's* side. She proved to be the Capitana Pasha's ship, which the *Asia* thought she was then engaging, by directing her guns at a flag at her supposed masthead.

An active seaman of the *Albion* ran his boarding spike through the Turkish captain's back before he could get to the main deck. Immediately flames rose up to ten or twelve feet above her taffrail, from materials set on fire on the after part of the frigate's main deck.

The gallant boatswain, who had cut the cable, got on the frigate's bowsprit, and was in the act of hauling down her Jack, when he lost his arm by a musket ball. The Marine officer, though ordered not to board, seeing he was disabled, hastened over to him, took the flag from him and gave it to a sergeant on the poop; he then rushed back again to aid Mr Addington, in which he was assisted by a late boarder, in getting him over the awkward

ropes of the frigate, on board the *Albion* again - not any too soon, as the current was moving her astern.

As soon as the fire appeared the boarders hurried back to the ship, and some had to make fearful jumps to regain the vessel.

The 86-gun ship now opened fire on the *Albion*, and was for a short time joined on the same (port) side by the 76, she being very much nearer to the *Albion* than to her opponent, the *Genoa*.

The *Albion* was engaged on her starboard side with the double-banked frigate; a Turkish line-of-battle ship, about 300 or 400 yards astern, also opened a raking fire on her for some time. The Marine officer was slightly wounded in the hand by a musket ball from the 86, which he concealed so far as to prevent being returned wounded.

The *Albion* was in excellent firing order, and was closely engaged with her huge opponent more than three hours, when she ceased to fire. At this time the current moved the stern of the 86 nearer, so that her broadside looked across the *Albion's* bows towards the *Genoa*; she then suddenly fired six or eight of her lower deck guns at the *Genoa*; a broadside from the *Abion* now silenced her. She was then a 'perfect wreck'.

When the Marine officer the next morning boarded her, her immense fore and main masts each lay in three pieces on her deck, her bowsprit was shot away close to her head, her mizzen-top-mast, her mizzen top, and the yard on which the spanker is set, were shot away; there did not appear to be a square foot in her side that a round shot had not passed through, and her quarterdeck was encumbered with splinters. Her rigging on both sides was hanging down in the water with about sixty dead bodies entangled in it on the port side which we boarded.

The Turkish Secretary (said to be of more importance than the Admiral) who was writing his depatches on board the *Albion*, stated the Capitana Pasha's ship lost 650 killed and wounded and the 76, 400. The then condition of the former fully justified the statement, large as it was.

In about 15 or 20 minutes after the frigate was on fire she blew up, at which time one of the large plate glasses in the *Albion's* light room fell out; a man in the magazine promptly replaced it, holding it fast until secured. The accident, which might have been fatal, was attributed to the blowing up of the frigate.

Sir Edward Codrington, at an early hour after the action, wrote to the Turkish Admiral, and to the Pasha commanding on shore, that if a single shot or musket ball should be fired at anyone of the allied ships or boats, all the Turkish vessels remaining in harbour would be destroyed. No answer having been returned to Sir Edward's letter, and as there were two small men-of-war in an angle of the fortress, thought to be fire vessels, that might be used against the combined fleet at night, Sir Edward (who said he would not *order* anyone on the service) called for volunteers to capture or destroy them. The senior subaltern of the *Albion* volunteered, and three times the number of Marines required volunteered to go with him. About 2 pm he went in the barge with the Commander, Norman Campbell, who was also a volunteer. The different boats had rendezvoused alongside the *Asia* when the Turkish Admiral went on board her. He solemnly pledged his word that no shot should be fired, upon which the expedition was abandoned and all returned to their ships.

Of the three Captains of Marines seriously engaged, two were killed and the third mortally wounded, surviving about 48 hours.

The Lord High Admiral (the then Duke of Clarence) acquainted Sir Edward Codrington that in future he should promote surviving officers into the vacancies of Marine Officers killed in the action, and that Commissions would be sent to Sir Edward to fill in the names of officers entitled to them. Sir Edward told the Captain of the *Albion* to acquaint his senior Marine Officer that as soon as he (Sir Edward) received the Commissions he would insert his name in one and send it to him immediately.



The Battle of Navarino - dismasting of the Turkish and Egyptian admirals' ships. (Sketch by Col C Field from a small aquatint of the period)

Compared with the number of Captains of Marines killed or mortally wounded in the Battle of Trafalgar, the similar casualties in the Battle of Navarino were very much greater in proportion, viz, in Trafalgar, of 23 Captains of Marines present, two were killed or mortally wounded; at Navarino, three were killed or mortally wounded. The Captain of Marines mortally wounded was promoted Brevet Major. On his death being reported, Captain Seward of the *Glasgow*, the only other Captain of Marines in the Squadron (whose ship only entered harbour when the action had nearly ceased) received the Brevet Major in his place.

Two of the subalterns of Marines, whose Captains had been killed, were of 15½ and 16½ years standing as *Second Lieutenants*, and at least one of them had seen some good active service. His Captain of Marines was killed very early and the ship he belonged to (the *Albion*) bore a most distinguished part in the action and captured the Capitana Pasha's ship, and yet no promotion was extended to either of them. The Lord High Admiral intended to do so, but he had not the power - it would have required an Order of the King in Council.

Denuding the poop of Marines increased the difficulty of effectually resisting the attempt to board; but it afterwards enabled the *Albion* to maintain such a rapid and destructive fire on her powerful adversary - the Capitana Bey's ship - as greatly facilitated her surrender. The Russian line-of-battle ships came in last, and suffered severely from the batteries on the Island of Spacteria. One of their officers, who spoke English, when on board the *Albion* next day, expressed his admiration and astonishment at the *Albion's* fire from both sides; his expression was "she appeared like a *perfect fire devil*".

Notes

1. The Battle of Navarino Bay was the last major battle of sail of the line. The next major clash at sea was Jutland, 89 years later, between ships of a rather different design.

2. Twenty seven years later in 1854, Thomas Hurdle, by this time a Lieutenant Colonel, commanded 1,000 Marines landed in the Crimea from the fleet, and saw action at Balaklava.

"Young Albert Joins T'Marines"

(with apologies to the late Stanley Holloway)

Said Mrs to Mr Ramsbottom, whilst talking one day as folks do,
"It's time our young Albert were working, and earning a shilling or two.
But I've better ideas for the youngster than working in factory or pit.
I'm going to let him be soldier, and for King and Queen do his bit."

So off went Mrs Ramsbottom, a'leading young Albert by hand,
To a place where an overfed Sergeant said, "Eh, but my lad, th'art just grand.
Now to make this young feller a guardsman - why that be a terrible sin,
But I know of a marvellous reg'ment to put the gradeley lad in."

So they put him into a regiment, called 'Jollies' (because they don't smile)
And they fitted him out with a tunic, which were t'last word in fitting and style.
Now Albert soon made all the bloomers that Sam made 'fore he went above,
And the Sergeant said Albert were surely Ma's gift to the nation 'With Love'.

Still they passed him for duty and sent him, to a ship of His Majesty's Fleet,
Where they made him a sentry immediate (T'were summat to do with his feet).
Soon words like 'belay' and 'avast there' came to young Albert quite pat,
I'd tell you some more that he's using, but I think there's a law against that!

One day whilst at drill on t'fo'csle, young Albert his musket he drops,
And the Sergeant a'giving the orders, just looks at the duffer and stops;
"Now what do you think you're a doing?" he shouted as moustache he sucks,
And Albert replied "Well, between you and me, you couldn't drill two blinking ducks!"

Now Sergeants don't like to be spoke to like that, although the speaker's a dunce,
So he yelled to a Corporal and two other blokes, "Put Albert in chokey at once."
When they sounded off 'Captain's Defaulters', young Albert was up there next day,
And the Captain looked at him sternly, and said, "Well lad, what's tha' got to say?"

Well that fair flummoxed young Albert, 'cos he'd said quite enough as it were,
So he to the Captain said never a word, but simply continued to stare.
Then the Captain said "Well lad, I'll give thee a chance, as you're young and quite stupid, it seems,
Still Albert said nowt, but he stood there quite smart (he had on his best blues) and beams.

"You know you've commited a serious crime, your career in the service 'twill ruin,
But I'll let you off, as from what I can see, you didn't know what you were doing."
Young Albert, he gulps and jumps at the chance, of getting away with it so,
And after he'd spent a distressing half hour, saying "Sorry" t' Sergeant, ye' know.

The Sergeant, he listened in patience, to what Albert had got to say.
Then said "I accept your regrets, but I vow you'll remember today."
Young Albert he stood there a'blinking his eyes, and said "Sarg I 'ppreciate my luck.
But tho' I regret, it don't alter the fact, that you couldn't drill One Blinking Duck!"

(by A.R.P., HMS Iron Duke, 1937)