

Marlow remembers Gallipoli

Seventeen servicemen from the town including a 15-year-old died in the campaign

THIS weekend marks the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign, one of the most controversial conflicts of the First World War. Across the globe, commemorative events will take place to remember more than 110,000 Allied and Turkish servicemen who died on a small peninsula in modern-day Turkey.

While the campaign is often associated with the Australian and New Zealand armed forces, the Allied forces also included French, British and wider Imperial soldiers and sailors in their ranks. Seventeen men and boys from Marlow and the surrounding area were among those killed during the nine months of fighting.

The Ottoman Empire had joined the First World War on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary in November 1914. At that time, its lands covered much of the Middle East as well as modern-day Turkey. Its entry into the war was seen as a threat to the Allies, especially Russia and Britain whose Empire at that time included Egypt.

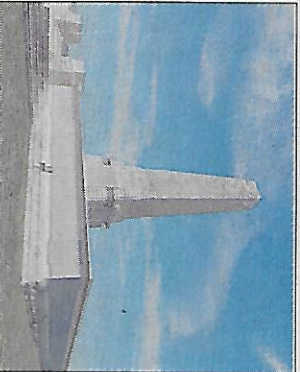
The Allies initially launched a naval campaign in February 1915 to try and capture Constantinople and take the Ottoman Empire out of the war. When that failed, they landed troops on the Gallipoli peninsula, 200 miles from Constantinople with the hope of quickly marching on the city.

However, the Allies were under-prepared, lacked the right resources and were poorly led



British troops fighting at Gallipoli.

Picture courtesy of Imperial War Museum



Helles Memorial. Picture courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Scimitar Hill today. Picture courtesy of The Gallipoli Association

were eventually driven back in the face of heavy shell and machine-gun fire. Much of the scrubland over which they had to cross had caught fire in the shelling and the soldiers had to bunch together to avoid the fires. This in turn made them easy targets for the Turkish machine-guns. Of the 321 officers and men who started the attack, 140 were killed or wounded.

In addition to the dangers posed by the Turkish forces, the Allies had to contend with a range of illnesses brought on by the climate, scarce water supplies and poor sanitary conditions. It has been estimated that at least 145,000 British servicemen fell ill during the campaign, sometimes with fatal consequences.

On the same day that his regiment was attacking Scimitar Hill, Private Jack Langley of the Royal Bucks Hussars died of pneumonia in hospital in Cairo. He is buried in the war memorial cemetery there.

Jack was born in Marlow in 1881 and had been a student at Sir William Borlase's School between 1889 and 1894.

He was a member of the Old Borlaseans Committee and a keen member of Marlow Rowing Club. On hearing of his death, the club flew its flag at half mast as a tribute to "the memory of one of the many gallant members who answered the call", praising Jack's "generosity, high spirits and



Jack Langley's grave in Cairo War Memorial Cemetery. Picture courtesy of the War Graves Photographic Unit

age when he enlisted in March as a Rifleman in the 8th Hampshire Territorials (Isle of Wight Rifles). Like many of those who were wounded or became ill at Gallipoli, he was evacuated by ship to receive hospital in Egypt. However, he died on the journey on board H

Constantinople with the hope of quickly marching on the city.

However, the Allies were under-prepared, lacked the right resources and were poorly led. They had also badly underestimated the resilience of the Turkish troops who faced them.

Right from the initial landings on April 25, the Allies suffered heavy casualties in repeated attacks across rough terrain on well-defended Turkish positions. They made very little progress and eventually withdrew their forces in January 1916. By then, more than 120,000 British servicemen had been killed, wounded or were missing.

One of the early casualties was Lieutenant-Colonel Owen Godfrey-Faussett who was born in Marlow in 1867 and was related to the Wethered family. A career soldier and a veteran of the Boer War, he was the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, Essex Regiment at



Private Sherry Clanchy.

Helles Memorial. Picture courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission

the time of the Gallipoli landings. He was reportedly called out by name by the Turkish troops and shot as he climbed from his dug out.

Another early casualty was Sherry Clanchy from Cambridge Road in Marlow. He was employed before the war as a gardener and then a chauffeur. He enlisted as a private in the Royal Marine Light Infantry soon after the war started and was killed on May 4. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial in Turkey, along with the names of five other men from Marlow who died during the campaign. His elder brother James was also killed later in the war in France.

Three men from Marlow died on the same day in the campaign when their regiment, the Royal



Private Sherry Clanchy.

Schmitar Hill today. Picture courtesy of The Gallipoli Association

Bucks Hussars, took part in an operation to capture Schmitar Hill. The Hussars were a long-established volunteer regiment as opposed to being part of the regular army. Although they were initially intended to serve only at home, many volunteered for overseas service and, in any case, the British Army increasingly needed reserves from outside the regular army given the large number of casualties already incurred during the war.

The Royal Bucks Hussars left England in April 1915 and were first sent to Egypt for training. They landed at Gallipoli as reserve forces on August 18 and were almost immediately thrown into the fighting. While they seemed initially to make good progress in their attack on Schmitar Hill, they



Private Jack Langley

the many gallant members who answered the call", praising Jack's "generosity, high spirits and readiness for any harmless fun".

His father, also called Jack, was a JP and Chairman of Marlow Urban Council. He also subsequently chaired the Appeals Tribunal which, from March 1916, heard the cases of those men from Marlow who appealed against being conscripted into the army. He was subsequently to lose another son, Walter, who was killed on the Western Front in August 1916 and a stepson, Hedley Foster, who was killed the following year.

Another casualty of illness was the youngest soldier from Marlow to die in the campaign. William North from Station Road was just 15 when he died from enteric fever on September 30.

Before the war, he had been working in a hatter's shop in the High Street and was clearly under-

he was evacuated by ship to hospital in Egypt. However died on the journey on board Hospital Ship "Glenart" and like many others, was buried at sea.

The matron on board the wrote to William's mother describing him as a "a dear and so good, and both Sister and I were very fond of him and I heartache to both of us when went". William kept a short of his time during the camp which was printed in the So Bucks Free Press the following year.

All the men and boys mentioned in this article are commemorated on the war memorial in All Church in Marlow.

Marlow Remembers World One is an association for research and commemorate the conflict affected the people of our town. For more go to <http://www.marlowww1.org>



Cairo War Memorial Cemetery. Picture courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission