

MackKay

ON MONEY

BY FINANCIAL ADVISER CHRIS MACKAY

“Left home a boy, died a man”. A tear jerker epitaph on one of the many Anzac graves we visited on the Gallipoli peninsula earlier this year. The area is full of cemeteries, 31 in all, beautifully maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

We did a pilgrimage to “Gallipoli” on a beautiful sunny day in late August this year. This and my last article are my extremely abbreviated history lessons on what I reckon it was all about. As an aside, the town of Gallipoli (Gelibolu) is miles away from where all the action took place and is on the Sea of Marmara side at the end of the Dardanelles Strait. The whole area where the Allied campaign took place is called the Gallipoli Peninsular.

Assuming you have read the October/November *Vibrant Hutt*, (along with my deliberate typo!) you will remember Churchill in early 1915 had sent the navy in to sort out the troublesome Turks but to no avail. In March, after a month of unsuccessful naval attacks, the Pommy navy limped off with its stern between its sails as it were. Metaphorically speaking, the British (sea) lion licked his wounds on the Mediterranean islands of Imbros and Lemnos and set about organising a huge army to have another crack at capturing the peninsula. This would silence the guns and remove the mines that had caused the navy to retreat in the first place. The theory had been once the navy could get through the straights, they could sort out Constantinople, open up the Black Sea ports and provide support to Russia, their mateskies.

They did not have spy-planes and Google Earth in those days, but the Turkish defenders were not dumb and figured with the British navy withdrawing after their battering, the Allies would be back but with a huge army the next time to undertake a land attack. The Turks got cracking and had plenty of time to deploy an army for the

defence of the Dardanelles. They strategically planned where they should place their various army divisions and tried to second guess where the Allies would land.

General Sir Ian Hamilton, big chief of now around 80,000 troops (British, Kiwis, Aussies, French, British Indians and Canadians), and his “really clever” team decided the best beach landings where the troops should come ashore. Hamilton, in collaboration with General Braithwaite, his Chief of Staff, General Birdwood the commander of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzacs), no doubt Lord Kitchener (the British Secretary of State for War) and Winston Churchill (First Lord of the Admiralty) appear to have decided April 25, 1915 was going to be the date of the “top secret” invasion.

However it was a moon lit morning, for the Turks could easily see the Allied ships steaming towards their coast. By 4:30am, the British ships started their covering fire while thousands of brave boys jumped out of the landing boats and waded and floundered their way towards the shore at various beaches along the coast, planned meticulously over the previous month as part of the Allies’ grand military strategy. The Brits were to land at some, the Anzacs at others, and the French up the coast as a distraction.

But it seems the grand strategy was not that smart or indeed strategic at all. There seems to be conflicting stories but one theory was the Anzacs should have landed at Brighton Beach. Yes that’s what it’s called. This was a nice flat area, heavily defended, but nevertheless a more logical place from which to launch an offensive if backed up by ships’ artillery. Instead, the Anzacs discovered they had been shipped ashore

just a bit further north up the coast, in rough terrain with a really steep hill to negotiate.

It was as if the plan to get to Upper Hutt was via a landing at a nice flat Petone Beach, but instead, the troops get sent ashore a few miles around the coast at Pencarrow on a hard-to-walk-on stony beach, and then have to scale the bush covered steep sandy and crumbly hills while having bullets raining on them from above.

Some Anzac naval commander was heard to have said, “Explain to the colonel that the damn fools have taken us a mile too far north!”

Born in India but pommy trained, General Birdwood, the Anzac boss, initially recorded, “The boats missed their bearings in the dark”, but then did a 100 per cent reversal and claimed to his Aussie superiors 12 days afterwards, that landing at Anzac Cove (subsequently named that by the Turks in honour of the Kiwis and Aussies) and also at North Beach was his idea. Who knows what was correct? What is true though is that it was a huge cock-up. No one quite knew what was going to happen and where they were meant to land. If the hierarchy had indeed pinpointed the precise spots, and that’s where the troops ended up, then the top brass were idiots. If the soldiers were dropped off at the wrong places, then what a stuff up extraordinaire!

According to Mustafa Askin’s ‘Gallipoli – A Turning Point’, from which I have sourced much valuable research, “many officers, even battalion commanders did not know the general landing plan. There was great confusion. Officers below battalion level knew nothing. They were merely told to go ashore and land somewhere on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Most junior offices had no maps

or sketches. As soon as they reached the beach, they looked for shelter. Some ran, some stumbled from the weight of saturated uniforms. Some threw their haversacks and iron rations away. Many huddled in their shelter of the bank. Some concentrated on their rifles, safety-catches pulled back and bayonets attached ready for the next stage. Some were shivering, others were scared and unable to move beyond the cliff that gave some protection from Turkish bullets beating down.

Fifteen hundred men from three battalions had landed on a front of nearly 800 metres long. The soldiers were all mixed up. They were supposed to advance, but in the confusion and excitement most did not know what to do. Many waited, then saw men rushing up the wild and difficult hillside, pulling themselves up under fierce machine-gun fire which pattered like 'rain on an iron roof'. On the way, they met some Turkish troops. They fought and continued to advance in the same spontaneous, disorganised fashion away from the beach.

By 5.30 a.m., the [Anzacs] had reached their first objective, Plugge's Plateau. Once the last Turkish elements had been dealt with there, the battle reached a critical point. Sharp sniping and occasional machine-gun fire was enough to force men to fling themselves down into Shrapnel Gully, where those at the bottom sought cover behind banks of earth.

Turkish machine-gun fire went on all day long. Men lost touch with their comrades. They rushed backwards and forwards. It was almost impossible to achieve coordination in such an extended line of men. Even so, some commanders led their men over the top and reached the second ridge where, under heavy fire, [the Anzacs] were pinned down. They could not dig trenches because of machine-gun fire sweeping through the bushes and shrapnel bursting every few minutes, causing many casualties. Despite everything, the Anzacs held on grimly. They could not see where the firing was coming from, which was [from] the Turkish stronghold on the third ridge.

As the morning wore on, along the front men laid down and waited for the Turks to advance. Wherever there was shelter, there were groups of 40 or 50 men, not knowing what to do. Some wandered down to the beach, exhausted or lost. Some sought information or seized any excuse to leave the firing line. Many came with casualties, in one instance a wounded officer carried by six men. Some commanders worried they would not be able to hold the line but

there were enough strong and brave men who stayed where they were. Some advanced over a mile inland and one small party even penetrated far enough to see the glistening Dardanelles beyond and beneath them, but were later forced back.

By the middle of the day, the gullies of the second ridge, the ragged slopes of the rise known as 'Baby 700' and the narrow strip of land leading to it, called the 'Nek', were all a killing ground for Turks, Australians and New Zealanders alike. Baby 700 was to change hands five times that day and was covered by the dead of both sides. The New Zealanders fought tigerishly and hung on to the edge of the Nek for as long as they could before giving up.

Mustafa Kemal [Kemal Ataturk], Commander of the 19th Division in reserve near the Narrows, was on field manoeuvres with his 57th Regiment when news of the landing reached him. This regiment was in the firing line less than three hours later. By then, Kemal was organising the rest of his division to move forward. Faced with these fresh troops under skilled command, the Anzacs had no hope of breaking the Turks that day. A partial withdrawal took place as part of a general pullback, but the Anzacs' fierce bravery was admired by the Turks, who named the Nek 'Hill of Courage' after their action there.

Later, Anzac field commanders were

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A disclosure statement is available on request and free of charge.

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watching their troops staggering down the rocky tracks when the Turks launched a savage attack against them. Units were scattered and fragmented. Communication was difficult. Mustafa Kemal had stopped them. The urgency of the Allied assault and the impetus of the thrust inland were gone. Birdwood had spent the day aboard his ship offshore. Late in the evening, his two divisional commanders [Scottish born, Australian trained and dead 20 days later], General Bridges leading the Australians and [English soldier] General Godley, the Anzacs, asked him to come ashore so Birdwood could hear their informed opinion and make his own assessment of the situation. Both

generals were suggesting, almost insisting on, 'an immediate evacuation'. In the event of the almost-certain heavy attack by the Turks next morning, a complete debacle would take place, for there were no fresh troops available to reinforce them. Birdwood reluctantly dictated a message to Hamilton aboard his flagship, *the Queen Elizabeth*. Hamilton [complete and utter incompetent murderous dickhead that he was] replied that re-embarkment was impracticable. The units had to make a supreme effort to hold their ground. His signal back said, 'You have got through our difficult business, now you have only to dig, dig, dig until you are safe.' With the help of darkness, the exhausted Anzac troops dug in. At least they could stand up to wield picks and shovels. But the Turkish

fire did not stop, so one minute they were digging, the next shooting. This continued all night long. By morning they had a section of trench dug. April 25, the first Anzac Day, ended without a breakout. Trench warfare began at Gallipoli."

This is a long extract, and possibly slightly biased in favour of the Turks, but nevertheless, that commentary based on events that happened on that very first Anzac Day seem to sum up the rest of the eight terrible months wasted on a futile effort to capture what was clearly unwinnable.

According to Wikipedia, 2,721 of our brave young Kiwi lads died at Gallipoli. About a quarter of those who landed there. 4,752 or close to half who landed, were wounded. In all, 44,092 Allied troops died including 8,709 Aussies, 21,255 Brits, and an estimated 10,000 French. 80,000 Turks are thought to have died. Over 250,000 from both sides were wounded.

Over 120,000 brave young men effectively slaughtered, and for what?

In December 1915, a "secret" evacuation started and for once, the Allied military bosses did a good job. The Turks did not realise, we are told, the Allies were heading back from whence they came and by December 20, the Anzacs were gone. By January 8, 1916, the rest of the Allies had done a runner too.

The big chief General Sir Ian Hamilton was recalled to London and his military career was over. Lord Kitchener, hitherto almost invincible, was sidelined by his colleagues and died in 1916. Churchill was demoted from First Lord of the Admiralty, a job he got back during World War Two. Just like our own Winston in the recent election, there was a memorable line quoted: "Winston's back". Luckily no one remembered what a crap job he (they?) had done the last time. It was not the Poms' finest hour. And it should have been the last time they ever again commanded any NZ armed forces.

You may remember (from the last article) my grandfather Archie Williamson, born on the same day as King George VI, missed Gallipoli by catching measles at Trentham. Yvonne Airey, *Vibrant Hutt's* writer/photographer told me two of her Tasmanian uncles were not so lucky. They were mown down and killed early on. I counted at least five MacKays/McKays/Mackays on various memorials mostly at Chunuk Bair, not relations I knew about, but they may have been if I go far enough back.

Chunuk Bair was home to some of the Kiwis' bravest actions, but all for what? It just made you want to cry. When you have two sons in their 20s and start thinking about how

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you would have felt to be getting the telegram from the war office, it puts it all in perspective.

I feel privileged to have walked where so many brave young New Zealand men spilled their blood and were buried. I am proud to be a Kiwi.

“THOSE HEROES THAT SHED THEIR
BLOOD
AND LOST THEIR LIVES ...
YOU ARE NOW LYING IN THE SOIL OF
A FRIENDLY COUNTRY.
THEREFORE REST IN PEACE,
THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
THE JOHNNIES
AND THE MEHMETS TO US WHERE
THEY LIE SIDE BY SIDE
HERE IN THIS COUNTRY OF OURS ...
YOU, THE MOTHERS,
WHO SENT THEIR SONS FROM FAR
AWAY COUNTRIES,
WIPE AWAY YOUR TEARS;
YOUR SONS ARE NOW LYING IN OUR
BOSOM
AND ARE IN PEACE.
AFTER HAVING LOST THEIR LIVES ON
THIS LAND
THEY HAVE BECOME OUR SONS AS
WELL.”

(Ataturk, 1934)

(A memorial at Gallipoli)

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local suppliers wherever possible, continuing to work closely with many well established and iconic Lower Hutt business partners (many close by in Wingate) including Metco Engineering, Orrsum Lazer services, Metalart, Melbar Engineering and Packaging Products. Work is provided for 79 local employees.

Precision continue to support local colleges – Taita, Naenae and St Oran’s – and Billy Graham’s not-for-profit Naenae Boxing Academy.

ACCENT ON SUSTAINABILITY

Precision’s commitment to sustainability is a major ongoing emphasis. Practices in place include *traceability* of raw materials, *recyclability* and *optimisation and waste minimisation*. Precision is a member of the NZ Green Building Council. Programmes underway include Enviro-Mark and Environmental Choice. They have undergone waste and energy audits in 2007 and 2009 and have committed to identifying and minimising their carbon footprint and thus their impact on the environment.

Precision – proud to be a real Hutt Valley business “we work where we live”.

PULSE of THE HUTT

BY LOWER HUTT MAYOR
RAY WALLACE



Supporting business and building confidence in Lower Hutt as a good place to be is important for our communities within the valley.



Walking the talk: Lower Hutt Mayor Ray Wallace and his Deputy David Bassett enjoy a chat over a cuppa at Robert Harris Coffee Shop. The pair are committed to supporting local businesses.

I have been active in promoting job creation and prosperity for the city and there has been positive news with government committed to encouraging development of scientific organisations in Lower Hutt.

This can be taken as good news for our region, providing an anchor that will encourage business development and boost confidence.

Vibrant Hutt is a good example of a publication committed to promoting business. The various business awards to organisations within our community also acknowledge the good work being done to build prosperity in the valley.

Stokes Valley is an example of a smaller community actively stimulating interest and recognition in their own enterprises which contribute to the well being of the community

Our Business Community deserves our support as residents. Times have been tough, so we should be shopping locally.

We have been active in supporting business enterprise and the new night market is a further effort to draw people from surrounding areas to our city centre.

Lower Hutt has a strong sense of

community and volunteers are a key part of encouraging participation and support for those who need it. My platform, when I became Mayor just over a year ago, was to encourage greater participation in the running of our city. I have actively gone into the community to make myself available and accessible to our citizens.

This included a series of Mayoral Clinics which continue across the city and greater activity within community committees and boards.

The year end is always a good time to take stock and plan for a better year next year and I am pursuing the ideal of continuing to develop our city as a good place to live.

Wishing you all the very best for the holiday season – take care and be safe on the roads.

Ray Wallace.

Ray Wallace
Mayor Lower Hutt

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follow me on Facebook.