

APRIL 25, 1915 and TODAY

Memories of Landing---Soldiers Talk of Fateful Hour

MEMORIES of the first landing at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915, are now rapidly becoming dimmed by the passing of time.

Today most of those who survived the horror and glory of that birth of a nation are scattered in many walks of life, and many of them are reluctant to talk of their experience. Most of them have a few outstanding recollections which will last for ever, but it is only of the more humorous that they will talk. The horror they prefer to forget or pass lightly over with a shrug of the shoulders and the remark, "Let us forget all that part." The officers that do talk at all freely are more inclined to praise the gallantry of their men than to relate their own exploits. The men talk of their officers.

To Major H. S. W. Parker, his brother, Harold Parker, and Colonel E. J. H. Nicholson belongs the honor of being the only members of the Australian Imperial Forces to be at Anzac from the beginning to the end. They were attached to artillery headquarters, and were not at any time relieved.

A DUCKING

The most vivid recollection of Colonel S. R. Roberts, D.S.O., V.D., now Deputy Director, Posts and Telegraphs in this State, is of a ducking in the early hours of the morning.

"After we left our battleship," said Col. Roberts, "and were near the shore, one of the men in the launch who had an oar was instructed to test the depth. The oar must have struck a rock, for it did not seem very deep. We were all ordered overboard, and promptly found the water right over our heads. I think I did a diver's trick, and crawled along the bottom for a time, to avoid the bullets.

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"I am convinced that a mistake, caused by the running currents, saved us from wholesale slaughter. In the seven miles' journey from the battleship to the shore our little boats were carried a mile to the north, and landed at the wrong spot, but I believe we would never have landed at the right one."

THE "MIDDIES"

Major H. S. W. Parker, D.S.O., V.D., was landed between 6.30 and 7 a.m., together with his brother—later Lieut. Harold Parker—and Col. E. J. H. Nicholson.

"The first thing which impressed me," said Major Parker, "was the remarkable bearing of the little 'middies' in charge of the whaleboats in which we landed. Despite the hail of bullets, they seemed as happy as sandboys. Probably they did not realise the meaning of it, any more than we did. When we landed we started to dig a dugout near a small creek for protection. It was only a temporary affair, as we expected to commence the march on Constantinople the next day. The first night was drizzling rain, and I had the pleasure of patrolling the beach to prevent the landing of any further artillery, as we thought we would not want them. Another thing was the amazing amount of personal belongings, left on the beach by rank and file, immediately after the landing. Having received the command for battle order, personal effects had to be discarded and secured again later."

Major Parker was attached to Divisional Headquarters of the Australian Divisional Artillery, and acted as A.D.C. to Colonel Talbot Hobbs, who was G.O.C.

TO THE SKYLINE

"We were landed in the evening, about 5.30," said Col. E. L. Margolin, D.S.O. "We made for the shore in small lighters under pretty heavy fire. When the boats grounded we jumped out into water waist deep, and when we reached the shore we were formed up and led off to a gully in something like Indian file. Col. Pope, who was in charge, pointing to the distant skyline said 'See that skyline up to it.' We

was in charge, pointing to the distant skyline, said, 'See that skyline, go to it.' We get there, and there we stayed for six days on what was ultimately called Pope's Hill. We had 70 or 80 men, and after removing a few Turks found that we were a very mixed company, men having been drawn from different battalions and from the New Zealanders.

"My outstanding memory is for the exquisite manner in which a sailor handed me out of the boat," said Col. H. Pope, C.B., who had command of the 16th. "He was one of the most polite men I have ever met, particularly when there were several dead sailors lying around.

"My men were in several boats, and, of course, we landed at different points. Consequently we became a bit mixed, but when I had collected about 100 men I pointed out a forming place in the scrub. A British officer who was to act as guide arrived. After we had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile he waved his hand towards the skyline and said that was the spot.

GRIM BARRICADE

"We made off towards it, but at one point on the march of about a mile a string of mules crossed our path and divided the column. There was nothing for it but to go on. When we got there we cleaned out a few Turks, and with ridiculous trenching tools scooped out shallow holes in which we lay down for protection. I soon found that our best protection was a good row of dead Turks, as other Turks would not cross their own dead. Consequently we concentrated for the next six days on building up a good barricade of dead Turks."

A PRIVATE'S VIEW

"Months, weeks, and days went by, with training and more training, for what?" said a member of the rank and file, who was in one of the first boats to touch bottom. "The days and nights of trials in all the arts of leaving our battleship had passed; we left for the last time to land and fight. We didn't know this when we

and fight. We didn't know this when we left the battleship just after midnight. A few hours more and we did, and so did the enemy.

"A midnight meal, a line-up on the quarter-deck, a brief religious service, a rest, down the rope ladders to our boats once again, but for the last time. A quite move-off, then in the haze before the dawn an eerie view, indistinct, a ping of a bullet in the water, and then a shower. It was our baptism of 'hell's fury let loose.' Then, perhaps for the first time, we realised that it was war.

"Overboard into deep or shallow water, packs off in many cases on the beach, a rush up the hills, and at them. These brief but vivid details are indelibly imprinted on our minds, and the first hour of fight showed a spirit of friendship and co-operation in a new light never to be forgotten."

