

THE GALLIPOLI GAZETTE

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE GALLIPOLI MEMORIAL CLUB LTD



Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022)

The Gallipoli Club membership mourns the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In her 70 year reign she provided the rock on which modern Britain was built under the leadership of 15 Prime Ministers.

As Princess Elizabeth she enlisted in the British Auxiliary Territorial Service where she learnt basic motor mechanics and how to drive a lorry. She and her family also endured the bombing blitzes of London.

She ascended the throne aged 25, in a country that was emerging from the shadow of war and oversaw the realignment of the British Empire as a Commonwealth of self-governing nations with 15 nations recognising her as their Head of State.

Her devotion to duty remains an example to us all that is expected be followed by her son and heir, King Charles III. God save the King.



Vale Alf Carpenter (1917-2022)

Gallipoli Club legend Alf Carpenter passed away in his beloved Hunter valley in September, aged 105

Club members are mourning the death of our dear friend and long-time club member Alf Carpenter who served as President of the 2/4th Australian Infantry Battalion Association for over 30 years.

Alfred Clive Carpenter was born in Wagga Wagga on April 22, 1917. At 17 years of age, Alf had a job as a hardware buyer in the retail industry when he joined the military reserve, the 50th Battalion Militia in 1934. He rose to the rank of sergeant. Automatically called up when war was declared,

Sergeant Carpenter joined the 2/4th Australian Infantry Battalion when formed on November 3, 1939 at Ingleburn Camp NSW.

They sailed on the *Strathnaver* for Palestine on January 10, 1940. The 2/4th fought valiantly in North Africa and then in Greece where the allies and Greek forces pushed back the Italian advance until the might of the better armed German reinforcements invaded and reversed the allied advance.

Alf and his mates were rescued by *HMS Hasty* which took troops to Crete. His strongest memory of the 1941 battle was watching Nazi paratroopers falling from the sky above the airport at Heraklion on the north coast of Crete.

"I can also remember what wonderful people the Cretans were," Alf said.

After the Battle of Crete was lost, Alf embarked for the Egyptian port city of Alexandria on the destroyer *HMS Imperial*. This ship was severely damaged in bombing by the Italian Air Force on May 28, 1941. The Australian troops had to jump from *Imperial* which was beyond repair, to *HMS Hotspur*. They watched as *Hotspur* scuttled *Imperial* in the Mediterranean before completing the journey to Egypt.

As the Regimental Sergeant Major, Alf had to muster the men once they landed. Of the 1000 men on the roll who left to fight in Greece, Alf mustered only 400.

The 2/4th then served in Palestine and was later assigned to the Northern Territory in preparation for the defence of Darwin. Later they served in Papua New Guinea fighting it's way to the north western region around Wewak.

While a member of the 42nd Landing Craft company he was helping land troops near the Buka Passage, north of Bougainville, when the Japanese attacked his flotilla of landing barges. Alf had to swim out to sea to escape the raid and save his life.

The other soldier swimming with him was a retail worker from Wallsend in the Hunter Valley.

In all, 109 members of the 2/4th were killed in action, 237 wounded and 195 taken prisoner of war. The battalion was disbanded on October 12, 1945, but its memory has been kept alive by the strong Battalion Association.

Alf personally kept alive the memory of these fallen comrades through a life time of service for returned service personnel. In addition to the Gallipoli Club and the 2/4th Association, he was President of the Thirty-Niners' Association, a veterans' group whose membership was restricted to those who heard the call first up and enlisted by December 31, 1939.

In 1946, the same soldier who swam for his life with Alf sent a telegram to him suggesting he move up from Wagga Wagga and help set up a general store in Warners Bay, which is how Alf became a citizen of the Hunter Valley.

After selling that business he became an agent for the *Kellogg's* and *Pick-me-Up* food brands.

Alf and his wife, Marjorie, later headed overseas. Among his many careers, Alf was a Yogi Ramacharaka instructor (a mix of Hinduism and yoga) in India, taught Tai Chi on the Great Wall of China and toured many countries in a hypnotism show with Marjorie where he performed under the name of 'Kim Karson'.

Back in Australia, Alf became involved with the Gallipoli Club when it became the meeting place for the 2/4th, including on Anzac Day.

Alf recalled that once, when the Club faced financial problems in the high inflation era of the mid-1970s, the 2/4th Association one week helped pay staff wages.



Regimental Sergeant Major Alf Carpenter in WW2

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Editorial

This edition of the Gazette pays respect to two people who have been prominent in the lives of Club members, Queen Elizabeth II and long-time Club member, Alf Carpenter, who also led the 2/4th Association for more than 30 years.

The Queen, who served in World War Two, before becoming the longest reigning monarch in British history, was an example to us all for her wisdom and sense of duty couple with the ability to adapt to changing times, most notably moving from heading a paternalistic Empire to being the beloved leader of the benevolent British Commonwealth of Nations.

In his 105 years, Alf Carpenter packed a lot into his life a you will see from the obituary within – and it took the death of Queen Elizabeth to shift his picture and obituary from the front page. Alf was in great spirits and fully functioning mentally when I last saw him on Anzac Day. He was only in a wheel chair because of the length of the march which he never missed because it was part of his personal tribute to the hundreds of men under is control in World War Two who have passed away.

We also look at the sacrifice of the people of the English village of Tyneham who were ordered to move out to allow training for the eventually D-Day operations, but were never allowed to return, even in peace time.

In addition, we meet Gladys Baker, the widow of a New Guinea magistrate who was awarded the MBE for her assistance to soldiers and others after the Japanese invasion of Rabaul in 1942 while still running her plantation on New Britain.

Retired British Army Officer and journalist, Patrick O’Neill, who has written in recent editions about the Russian-Ukraine battle looks at another historical side of the conflict with a supernatural twist.



*On behalf of our Patron and Directors, I extend
our sincere best wishes to all of our Members
for a Happy and Merry Christmas and
good luck for the coming year.*

*John Robertson
President*

Presidents Report Summer 2022

I was hoping to have some positive news on the redevelopment front, but as we go to press we still have a number of items outstanding. We were expecting to have settled with AMP earlier this month but have not come to an agreement on final amounts. I will advise you all by separate cover when we finalise. We are, however, pushing ahead. We are developing a design for the museum space and have prepared the documentation for lodgement of the Development Application. The strata committee have given adjoining owners consent.

Since my last report we have lost our oldest member, Alf Carpenter. Vale Alf. Also of course we saw the death of our longest serving monarch HRH Elizabeth II and the ascension of HRH Charles III. I wish him well, but his predecessors Charles I & II didn't have such a good track record.

We continue to be active within the Scholarship Fund and have been accepted for membership of the Dawn Service Committee.

The Board continues to meet regularly face to face where possible and via tele-conference.

Keep safe, keep well and keep smiling.

John Robertson
President

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PUTIN THE BODY-SNATCHER - Grave-Robbing by Russian dictators.

Former British Army officer, Patrick O'Neill, continues his series on the Russia-Ukraine war



Prince Grigori Potemkin

One aspect to Vladimir Putin's withdrawal from the City of Kherson has involved a bit of body-snatching. He has ordered the bones of Prince Grigori Potemkin to be removed from the Cathedral of St Catherine in Kherson for safe-keeping in Russia. This cultural

heist also included a statue and various memorials to the man who had become Catherine the Great's lover, statesman, general and Russian conqueror of what is now much of South Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. This is a man it seems that Vladimir Putin very much wishes to emulate, but this isn't the first time an autocrat in the Kremlin has tried to do a bit of body-snatching.

Joseph Stalin, as with Putin, had a somewhat 'individual' understanding of Russian history. While he also admired Prince Potemkin, he held a particular fascination for one of Russia's more formidable Uzbek (Turkic) invaders, who's conquests terrorised much of central Asia and Eastern Europe.

Timur - or Tamerlane - who died in 1405, was the last of the great nomadic conquerors of the Eurasian steppes. Generally known as 'Timur the Lame' due to a distinct limp he had, thanks to an



Map of Tamerlane's Empire

old battle wound, his Turkic Empire stretched from West China to Anatolia (Turkey), from Afghanistan to Russia, as he sought to reinstate the Empire of his forbearer Genghis Khan. Timur's Great Grandson Babur, another brutal conqueror, went on to become the Mogul Emperor of India. Since Timur is said to have caused the death of 17 million people, it's little surprise that he was much admired by Stalin. Indeed, Timur was probably Russia's most successful conqueror who ruled much of what eventually became the Russian and Soviet Empire.

There is an impressive bust of Timur crafted in the 1940's by a famous Russian anthropologist Dr. Mikhail Gerasimov, a scientist who pioneered the process of facial reconstruction from skulls. He also made reconstructions of other long-dead Russian despots like Ivan the Terrible. But this bust of Timur, who died over 600 years ago was a forensic work of art, done almost from 'life'.



Bust of Tamerlane

Stalin was obsessed with Timur. They both shared a similar nickname. Timur means 'Iron' in the old Turkic language while 'Stalin' means 'Steel' in Russian. Maybe Stalin admired his brutality. It is claimed Timur caused the death of five percent of humanity during his life.



Joseph Stalin



Gur-e Amir Mausoleum

So in 1941 Stalin - now USSR *Generalissimo* - sent Mikhail Gerasimov to Timur's magnificent *Gur-e Amir* Mausoleum in Samarkand to open up his tomb, verify that the body inside, was indeed that of Timur and bring it back to Moscow for examination. He also ordered Gerasimov to use his forensic reconstruction skills to bring Timur's likeness back 'to life'. But there was a

problem. The local Uzbeks in Samarkand knew that Timur's tomb was inscribed with a rather ominous warning:

When I rise from the dead, the world will tremble'.

It was known as the 'Curse of Timur' and they pleaded with Gerasimov to leave the tomb well alone warning of apocalyptic dangers. Reports of the warning delivered by the mausoleum's keeper Masood Alaev's, were sent back to Stalin, who replied impatiently: *'arrest Alaev for spreading false rumours and panic. Open the tomb immediately!'*

These were of course the times of Soviet state atheism, when all religions were persecuted. Stalin had already ordered the destruction of many religious shrines Christian, Muslim and Buddhist throughout Russia. So, no one would dare refuse the command of the 'Red Tsar', on a medieval superstition. On 20 June 20, 1941 the Jade slab that covered Timur's remains was lifted in the *Gur-e Amir*, revealing another ominous inscription on his casket:

'Whosoever opens my tomb shall unleash an invader more terrible than I'

This second warning was also ignored. As Timur's embalmed body was removed from its jade tomb; his now empty sarcophagus flooded the maus-

oleum with the fragrance of embalming oils - still pungent after 500 years. This was also interpreted as a dire warning, but Stalin's orders were not to be ignored. Gerasimov and his team plus the remains of Timur, were loaded onto a plane and flown to Moscow.

The plane had barely touched down when Timur's Curse seems to have been invoked as 24 hours later on June 22, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa. The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, then one of the greatest invasions in human history, had begun.

Of course, many on Gerasimov's team were loyal communists, but as the Red Army initially crumbled before Hitler's invasion, no one wanted to risk being denounced as superstitious or defeatist, despite the fact that Hitler seemed to be falling into the category of the casket inscription *'an invader more terrible than I'*. At heart Russians, particularly Uzbeks, were still a superstitious lot. If the news got out, that Hitler's invasion was seen as divine retribution, the invocation of the 'Curse of Timur' would challenge Soviet policy on State Atheism; besides they all wanted to see how superstitious Stalin would turn out to be.

Not that Stalin needed superstition to inform him of the peril he had got himself into. He had already been warned about Hitler, by his own intelligence staff. The British had warned him. His famous spy Richard Sorge in Tokyo had warned him that the German invasion was imminent. If he hadn't already 'liquidated' many of his senior Generals in the great purge, they too would have warned him.

And with the news of defeat after defeat, even Gerasimov was warning him. As he did his facial reconstructions, and examinations of the body of Tamerlain (proving that he had a hip wound and it was



Potemkin's tomb

indeed the body of 'Timur, the lame') even this scientist wondered if there was some truth to the curse of Timur.

The war was going badly for Russia. Hitler's panzers were advancing on Moscow, while a bitter battle was developing on the Volga over the city called after Stalin himself - Stalingrad. Those close to Stalin became more convinced that behind his inscrutable, atheist exterior, Stalin was also a very superstitious man. They didn't have to wait long to find out. In November 1942, Stalin ordered Timur to be flown back to his Mausoleum in Samarkand.

Here the legend kicked in again. While Timur's body was in transit back to Uzbekistan, his plane flew close to the battlefield at Stalingrad and, sure enough, a couple of weeks later, after Timur was safely back in his grave, the Germans surrendered!

So was Stalin superstitious? We will never know, but it does seem that he was destined to suffer at the hands of the superstitious. Eleven years later Stalin himself died. He ordered that his own body should be embalmed and placed in the mausoleum alongside his predecessor Vladimir Lenin. But his past would soon catch up with him, superstition playing an intriguing part.

At the 22nd Russian Communist Party congress when his murderous crimes were revealed, a self-described 'witch' and spiritualist Darya Lazurkina, who had herself suffered 20 years in a Gulag at the hand of Stalin, got up and said before 5000 delegates:

'Yesterday I consulted comrade Lenin and he seemed to stand before me as if alive. And he said to me "it is unpleasant for me to lie next to Stalin who has caused the party so much harm."

The delegates, who were no doubt, all atheists, good communists who accepted the doctrine of dialectical materialism, rejecting religion and superstition, rose in 'spontaneous applause'. That night (Halloween) after only 6 years in the Lenin

Mausoleum, Stalin's body was quietly removed and reburied in the Necropolis under the Kremlin wall, beside many other less significant party 'comrades'; some of whom may have perished at his will.

Which brings us back to Russia's neo-tsar Vladimir Putin; our latest grave robber! According to Catherine the Great's biographer Simon Sebag Montefiore, this may be the ninth time that Potemkin's bones have been moved!

After the death of her lover, Catherine the Great was so smitten with grief, that his grave in St Catherine's Orthodox Cathedral in Kherson soon become a pilgrimage destination for those loyal to Russia's Tsaritsa, although her son had other plans.

Tsar Paul hated his mother. He also hated Potemkin, demanding that the Prince's bones be dug up and reinterred in an unmarked grave. He later directed that the bones be scattered in a nearby gorge. It was one of Tsar Paul's last directives as he himself soon died, so it was not known if this last directive had been carried out. But in 1818 a search of the Cathedral Crypt revealed that the Potemkin bones were still there, so his grave was reinstated.

After the Bolshevik revolution, it was opened again. Once more it was rumoured that the revolutionaries had mockingly scattered his remains. After another inspection, it appeared that Potemkin's bones had been numbered and placed in a bag inside his coffin. Again in 1980, his grave was once again opened for a bone 'audit' and the Prince's remains were still there - that was until last month!

Maybe Vladimir Putin would like to replace Potemkin as conqueror of Ukraine, but he's not doing too well at the moment, which suggests yet another journey for Prince Potemkin's bones. It seems that a pattern is emerging. Following the Revolution, the Romanov body-parts took nearly a century to find their final resting places. And another problem remains – what to do with Vladimir Lenin.

His much-embalmed body still lies in his mausoleum in Red Square. The visitor's queues may not be as long as they once were, but the keepers of Lenin's tomb have their work cut out for them. Every other year Lenin's body is submerged in a solution of glycerol, formaldehyde, potassium acetate, alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, acetic acid and acetic sodium. Indeed, it needs a team of anatomists, biochemists

and surgeons working round the clock to maintain his body.

It's worth recording the words of Lenin's widow Nadezhda Krupskaya: *"Do not erect monuments to him, build places in his name, or organize ceremonies in his memory. All this was a burden to him"*. I wonder what Potemkin would have said?

Richard Sorge

Richard Sorge (1896-1944) was a German-Azerbaijani journalist and Soviet military intelligence officer active before and during World War II. He worked undercover as a German journalist in both Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan. His codename was "Ramsay". He is considered one of the most accomplished spies.

Sorge is most famous for his service in Japan in 1940 and 1941, when he provided information about Adolf Hitler's plan to attack the Soviet Union which was not heeded by Stalin. In mid-September 1941, he informed the Soviets that Japan would not attack the Soviet Union in the near future. A month later, Sorge was arrested in Japan for espionage. He was tortured, forced to confess, tried and hanged in November 1944. Stalin declined to intervene on his behalf with the Japanese.

Historians have argued that Sorge's biggest coup led to his undoing because Stalin could not afford to let it become known that he had rejected Sorge's warning about the German attack in June 1941.

He was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union in 1964.



Gladys Baker

Mrs Gladys Henrietta Loveday Baker (1897-1946) was awarded the MBE for the help she gave after the fall of Rabaul in 1942. To an article, written by Gordon Thomas and Keith (J.K) McCarthy, published in the "Pacific Islands Monthly" magazine soon after her death we have added Gladys' own words of how she coped with traumatic experiences that confronted her after the Japanese invasion of Rabaul.

A well-known resident of New Guinea, Gladys Baker died at her plantation in the Witu (Vitu) Group on December 29, 1946 after a short illness.

In 1920, she moved to Misima Island, Papua, to marry William Baker, the Resident magistrate. For years she accompanied her husband to the various districts in Papua to which he was called by his duties. In the late 20's he left the government service for the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, where he had successfully tendered for the estate of Langu plantation, on Vitu, Island, north of New Britain Island and due west of Rabaul.

At Langu, the Bakers established a home well-known throughout the Territory for its comfort and hospitality. In 1934 William Baker died, after a short illness, and his widow remained on the property to develop it and to use her own words 'to perpetuate a memorial for Bill'. Here she remained managing the coconut estate until even after the Japanese invasion in 1942.

We will continue to story in Gladys's own words.....

"After Japan attacked and when women and children were being evacuated from New Britain I asked permission of the Administration to remain. I thought maybe there might be use for my medical knowledge and I thought that my 'mud-ticket', which I gained because of my knowledge of New Britain waters, might be required.

That last Christmas of 1941 at Langu was the closest I could make it the same as all others. I arranged the usual sing-sing for the natives but I doubted if we would ever have another Christmas on Langu for a long time. Almost a week before Christmas the first of many Japanese reconnaissance planes came over. Nearly all of them would come down low and circle the house at



Gladys Baker MBE

Langu. In case of bombing I made the natives take shelter in the reinforced concrete culverts I had helped them build. Some Zeros came too with the Rising Sun glinting on their wings and I hated the scream as they dived to look at Langu and at the plantation anchorages.

Just after Christmas I was granted permission to remain in the Territories. The last ship carrying women and children had gone. As far as I knew I was the only woman left.

On 19 January the natives told me that Praed Point at Rabaul had been bombed and gave me details of the bombing which I later found to be accurate. The news came by drums and smoke signals down the main-land of New Britain and my boys picked it up. It was a clear day and they had seen the smoke signals on the mainland 64 miles away. The following day all radio news from Rabaul ceased and later I learnt from the natives Rabaul had fallen.

There was a small steamer anchored at Witu – the *Lakatoi* -and I tried to persuade the crew to leave for Australia but they thought the run would be too risky. On January 24th I loaded my ship's tender – *Langu the Second* – and set out for the mainland to make food dumps which I was sure we would require later. I was sure if any Australians escaped from Rabaul they would make down the coast. *Langu the Second* had only 9 knots and was 27 feet long. I had with me a boat's crew and we established our dumps along the Aria River. I left a cutter on the mainland with eight boat's crew – boys from my own plantation – with instructions to return to Witu immediately and tell me if they had any news of Australian soldiers.

On my return trip on 14 February a Jap seaplane circled my small ship's tender and looked about to land. I told the boys what to say in case the Japanese did land and come across to investigate us. I hid in the bilge under the after-decking. There was a slap as the seaplane landed and the motors roared as it taxied close. Next I heard footsteps on the deck accompanied by a flood of fluent Pidgin. The Japs had boarded us and were questioning the natives. The native boys told one of the two in answer to his questions that their master had gone to Sydney a long time ago and that they were going back to the plantation on Witu to pick up a load of workers to take them back to their villages on the mainland. I remember that strangely enough I was not frightened of the Japanese.

Perhaps that was because a rat in the bilge water was running about and brushing against my bare leg – I was wearing only shorts and shirt. I bit my lip till blood ran to prevent myself screaming and giving myself away to the Japanese. The Japs seemed satisfied with my boys' explanations, gave them a cigarette and a biscuit each, went back into their plane and took off. And it wasn't a rat after all. It was only some cotton waste. When I came up my face was covered in a black scum of oil, and pitch from the decking had blackened my back. I saw then that three of the boys had spread a sail over the decking and pretended to mend it all the time the Japanese were on board.

I got back to Langu and two days later the cutter returned. The boys told me of 18 Australian soldiers who were at Linga-Linga Plantation at Talasea. The Australians, the head boy told me with tears in his eyes, were 'Sick fella masters too much'. I immediately loaded the ship's tender with food and medical supplies. I overloaded dangerously because I had 15 tons by measurement on a 5½ ton boat and at midnight on the Sunday, with three natives and a half-caste girl, Emma Leahmann, we crossed to Iboki. I found the 18 Australians there and met the Assistant District Officer, Keith McCarthy. Keith put me in charge of the Iboki camp and the next morning five of the Australians who were well enough left for Cape Gloucester, on the western end of New Britain.

They were to wait there until the other 13 were well enough to travel and join them. They meant to try to get to Finschhafen on the New Guinea mainland, near Lae. I cooked for and nursed the 13 boys who were sick, and meanwhile Keith McCarthy with Rod Marsland went back to Tol Plantation which was the scene of the Japanese Massacre. I nursed the boys for about a week, then an order came back from McCarthy telling me to send them to Gloucester. I prepared the boys for the trek, and they went by canoe and launch.

Finschhafen had fallen before they left Cape Gloucester, and the 18 boys got to Madang from where they went overland to Moresby and did not get to Australia until 2½ months after I did. With the Australians gone from Iboki, I got the ship's tender out and sailed up the coast towards Rabaul to see if I could find more troops. A little way up I saw a boat stranded on a reef and thought it might have been an enemy boat. I left the ship's tender to go on up the coast in charge of the boys, while I returned to Iboki in a canoe. However, that night the boat on the reef got off and came into Iboki. To my relief it was a Mission boat and they were surprised to find a woman to welcome them. They had on board 35 boys of the 2/22nd Battalion (based in Rabaul) in charge of Captain E.S. Apel who is now Lieutenant-Colonel. Some of them were very sick and others were wounded. A few days later the ship's tender came back with 15 Diggers, a Guinea Airways boat brought more.

Escapees continued to trickle in until we numbered 191 in all. Some of the boys had lost all their clothes and were wearing lava-lavas, and all of them were bearded.

I remember being struck by the number of ginger beards. I worked night and day caring for them and feeding them. In sixteen days I could only snatch 13 hours sleep. Two of the boys were badly wounded and one of them whose name I think is Bill Collins of Cronulla had been shot up by the Japs in the Tol Plantation Massacre.

After he was captured he broke away with his hands still tied together. The Japs fired at him and hit him in the shoulder, another shot went through his wrists and miraculously severed the cord which bound him. They had already taken his boots and he wandered in the bush for four days. Brambles and thorns cut his legs badly. He went back to the massacre scene and helped two soldiers who had been bayoneted and left for dead, up a steep incline to a native house. The Japanese came, set fire to the house and Collins alone was able to escape.

Many of the sick had severe tropical ulcers, and malaria and dysentery had struck many others. The fever cases were more severe than usual because of the poor diet the men had been subjected to. Their systems were craving for salt and sugar. However, whilst in camp, we were able to kill a bullock or some goats every day and this with a small helping of rice, tea and jam, helped pick the boys up. Water was a difficulty and the natives brought us water by canoe from a distance of 12 miles sealed in long lengths of bamboo. On March 15th we had a round-table conference attended by all Army officers and by the Captains of the boats of the small mosquito fleet which by now was assembled at Iboki. It was finally decided to go with the fleet back to my plantation to see if the steamer which had been there when I left was still sheltering. Early next morning we arrived at Witu and fortunately the steamer, the *Lakatoi*, was still there. We put the sick soldiers into an improvised hospital while the others, with natives, set to work cutting leaves and small trees to camouflage our tiny fleet. We camouflaged the steamer – a ship,

by the way, of 170 tons – by mixing camouflage colours from a combination of red, white, black, grey, blue and yellow paint which we found on the island. With other soldiers I went to my plantation and we killed as much livestock as the ship's refrigerator would hold. I had no time to collect many personal belongings or papers.

On the night of 19 March we were all on board the *Lakatoi*. I played poker with some of the men while we were waiting to sail and lost £11. I was holding fours all the time. Next afternoon we sailed and we prayed for luck. I piloted from Witu through the Dampier Straits and dropped anchor at Umboi Island in the Straits on the 21st. Some of the boys went ashore for a wash at the creek, and on the after deck we built a place to cook for the troops. Next day we sailed again, passed Finschhafen in broad daylight and followed the main Japanese water route past Gasmata. This is rather a feat considering we had no charts of any description with us and the Dampier Straits through which we passed is thickly studded with outcrops of reef, and is known for its tricky tides. With the help of a Papuan native boat crew we managed to get to the Trobriand Islands, and once there the Papuan bois could pilot us on to the D'Entrecasteaux Group where we were to meet the Laurabada – the Papuan Government Yacht – having previously contacted by tele-radio Army and Navy authorities at Port Moresby. After giving us more medical supplies they piloted us through the China Straits, and we trusted in luck and providence that we'd meet up with Australia sometime, somehow – still having no charts.

We arrived in Cairns on Saturday, 29th March. [China Straits to Cairns – approx. 850 km.] The civilians and officers were billeted in hotels and the troops were taken to a camp for the night where doctors and nurses took charge of them. The next morning (Sunday) a special train was made up and although I was offered help for the train trip I preferred to carry on alone. On the journey I made it a practice of devoting each hour to a particular carriage to continue the medical treatment which I had been giving the troops from the start of the evacuation.

The Red Cross and the Queensland people were marvellous – bringing supplies of food and clothing to the train for the boys. On the following Wednesday I handed over to an Army Medical Officer at Exhibition Camp, Brisbane.

When we started our evacuation I weighed 11 stone, five pounds; when we handed the troops over at Brisbane – although I didn't know it then – I weighed seven stone, one pound."

Keith McCarthy ended his article:

"Mrs. Baker returned to Witu and her Langu home late in 1946. 'Sinbada has returned!' would be the joyful news cried around the villages on the island. One can imagine how she felt, as she once more stepped ashore in that beautiful place. Within a very short time a matter of days rather than weeks she was dead. Her courageous heart may

be stilled for ever, as she sleeps in the earth that she loved so well. But her indomitable spirit will serve us as an imperishable and inspiring memory. She was buried in front of her beloved plantation home.

Editors Note:

In recognition of their work in helping the troops in their escape, Gladys Baker and Keith McCarthy were later awarded an MBE.

After a convalescent period, Gladys joined the Australian Army Medical Women's Service and was placed on the reserve list in 1944 with the rank of lieutenant. Keith gained fame as a WW2 Coast-watcher. He was appointed to the first Papua New Guinea Legislative Council (1951) and was elected to the first Parliament of Papua New Guinea (1964).



Gladys Baker (second from right) with the first people to return to Rabaul after WW2. Sadly, she died only weeks after this photograph was taken. The ship, MV Reynella, was a passenger and freight vessel built in Italy for the Lloyd Triestino Line in 1926. The ship was seized by the Australian Government at Fremantle in 1940 when Italy entered World War II and was renamed.

Tyneham – the British village that died in WW2

We visit the ghost village of Tyneham whose residents were ‘temporarily’ moved out as part of the plans to invade France in the push back against Hitler’s forces in WW2.

The village of Tyneham dates back to the Iron Age and the area was a source of a specific building material, Purbeck marble, for construction during the Roman occupation of England two thousand years ago.

In late 1943, the British War Office requisitioned the village and 30 square kilometres of surrounding heathland around the Purbeck Hills for use as firing ranges for training troops. The War Office moved 225 people with the last person leaving a notice on the church door:

Please treat the church and houses with care; we have given up our homes where many of us lived for generations to help win the war to keep men free. We shall return one day and thank you for treating the village kindly.

This measure was supposed to be temporary for the duration of the war. While the sacrifice of the locals was significant in the eventual, successful D-Day landing (see *Gallipoli Gazette: Winter 2022*) the ‘temporary’ order became permanent. In 1948 the Army placed a compulsory purchase order on the land and it has remained in use for military training since then.

In 1975, despite the local area being littered with scraps of equipment used as target for gunnery training, the Ministry of Defence responded to complaints from tourists and locals and re-opened the village and footpaths across the ranges to weekend bushwalkers and throughout August to summer holiday-makers.

The land has also become a haven for wild life.

Most village buildings have fallen into disrepair or have been damaged by shelling.

Fifty years ago, most of the manor house, with parts that dated back to the 14th century, was pulled down by government order.

The most prominent building is St Mary’s Church. It and the nearby school are now museums.

Tyneham fared better than the nearby hamlet of Goathorn, as it was further inland. Goathorn was also evacuated and the surrounding area taken over by the military. The hamlet was subsequently lost to heathland but the pier, which once boasted a tramway, remains. The village and beach were used as a training area before the D-Day landing.

Some villages in Norfolk also suffered a similar fate due to that county being among the nearest to Europe when the Allied invasion was being planned.

The Norfolk village of Stanford was evacuated and never returned to its owners. It is still used by the British Army and was also used in the film of the television series, *Dad’s Army*.

Tyneham has also become a film set. In 1985 the village was used for the filming of *Comrades*, the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, who were transported as convicts to Australia after being found guilty of forming a trade union. The church had a fibreglass tower and large grave-stones added by the film makers and Post Office Row was fronted with fibreglass cottages. During the filming, Tyneham’s original 1929 K1 Mark 236 telephone kiosk was destroyed and the film company sourced a replacement.

The village was also the setting for the climax to the Mike Ripley comic-thriller *Angel’s Share* (2006).



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Sadly, Alf lost the site of one eye later in life due to being hit in the head in 1941 by shrapnel from a German mortar in fighting near Heraklion during the Battle of Crete. However, a cornea implant in his nineties gave him back 25 per cent of the sight in the eye and Alf proudly reminded people at 100 that he still held a driver's licence.

In 2011, Alf was one of six Navy and Army veterans aged between 88 and 101 who were taken to Crete

by the then Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Warren Snowdon on a four-day visit for the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of Crete. The group attended a number of events including a commemorative ceremony at the Hellenic-Australian Memorial, at Rethymno, on Crete.

In 2016 he was part of the Australian contingent that returned to Crete for the 75th anniversary of the battle.

Last NSW *Rat of Tobruk* honoured

Ernie Walker OAM, the last remaining member of the *Rats of Tobruk* died recently at his home at Penrose in the Southern Highlands, aged 106.

The veteran, has been remembered at his funeral in the Southern Highlands for having a mind as "sharp as a tack".

Mr Walker was a member of the defiant garrison that earned legendary status after spending eight months defending the Mediterranean port of Tobruk during 1941.

He was also involved in the Kokoda Track Campaign.

Mr Walker lived out his last few decades with his wife Bev in the small village, where he pursued his love of horses.

More than 100 people attended his funeral at Bundanoon with a Guard of Honour assembled along the walkway to the Holy Trinity Anglican Church.

His stepson, Trevor Hind, told the congregation his father was "a man's man, a hard worker, a gentleman and a good bloke".

Local farrier and long-time friend Curly Charlwood said Mr Walker was known for his forthright nature.

This week Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton paid tribute to Mr Walker in parliament.

"Ernie was an extraordinary member of what is known as the greatest generation — one of the famous *Rats of Tobruk* and a veteran of Kokoda," Mr Albanese said.



"Pride In Our Heritage"



"The Landing" 25th April, 1915

THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN THE BEGINNING – "THE LANDING"

Men of the 1st Australian Division A.I.F. (Australian Imperial Force) landing under heavy Turkish fire at ARI BURNU, 4.30am on 25th April, 1915. The beach was later named ANZAC COVE.

The name "ANZAC" originated in Egypt early in 1915 where the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps were training. The Corps Commander, Lieut. Gen. William Birdwood, used the abbreviated title of the Corps, A.N.Z.A.C., as the code word for the Corps in preparation for the Gallipoli Campaign – a word that was to make history and be revered by Australians and New Zealanders for all time. An "ANZAC" was an Australian or New Zealand soldier who served in the Gallipoli Campaign. The term "an Original ANZAC" identified those men who participated in the initial landing on the 25th April, 1915 – the 1st Australian Division, A.I.F.

The Campaign ended on the 18th December, 1915, following the evacuation of all Allied troops from the Peninsula.

In the 8 months period of the Campaign, Australian casualties were:

Killed in action and died of wounds	8,079
Wounded in action and missing	<u>17,924</u>
Total	<u>26,003</u>

Our Club was originally "The Gallipoli Legion Club" until November, 1967 when it became "The Gallipoli Memorial Club" – a memorial where the legend of GALLIPOLI would be firmly entrenched as an inspiration to future generations of Australians.

It was founded and developed by the GALLIPOLI LEGIONS OF ANZACS, those "ANZACS" who survived the Gallipoli Campaign and following that, the Campaigns of France and Belgium until the Armistice on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.